



MONASH
University

MENTOR TOOLKIT

Primary & Secondary Placements

Practical Strategies to Support
PST Growth

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Every Pre-Service Teacher (PST) is different, arriving with varied skill sets, backgrounds, and abilities. Requiring additional guidance is a normal part of learning and does not automatically mean a PST is at risk of failing. Early conversations, clear expectations, and timely feedback are the most effective ways to support growth.

This toolkit aligns with the Monash Professional Experience Intervention and Support Policy, providing practical guidance across **4 core areas: knowledge and skills, communication, behaviour, and wellbeing**. Use the matrix below to:

- **Identify:** Match your PST's observed behaviours to one of the concern areas.
- **Act:** Consider and apply the practical strategies suggested under that area.
- **Address:** If issues persist after trying these approaches, **contact the PPC team at edu-ppc@monash.edu** for further support and advice.

SUPPORT AREA: KNOWLEDGE & SKILL



This could look like:

- **Late Planning:** Lesson plans are late, incomplete, or lack clear goals.
- **Misaligned Lessons:** Activities do not match curriculum standards or student needs.
- **Passive Teaching:** Relying on passive tasks (like worksheets) instead of engaging learning.
- **Pacing & Control:** Lessons fall apart, or transitions fail due to weak classroom management

Practical Mentoring Strategies

- **24–48 Hour Rule:** Ask PST to submit all lesson plans 24–48 hours early for your review.
- **15-Minute Co-Planning:** Temporarily reduce the planning workload. Spend 15 minutes co-planning just *one* core component together (e.g., the lesson introduction).
- **Targeted Peer Observations:** Arrange for the PST to observe other classrooms across the school to see diverse teaching styles in action.
- **Guided Reflection:** Give the PST explicit focus criteria for their observations and direct them to use the Monash Reflection Journal template.
- **Early Team-Teaching:** Initiate side-by-side team-teaching early in the placement to build their confidence and safely maximise their time in front of the class.
- **Resource Scaffolding:** Provide 1–2 successful lesson templates or resources they can easily modify and reuse.

SUPPORT AREA: COMMUNICATION



This could look like:

- **Staff Isolation:** Hesitancy to interact or build professional relationships with colleagues and families
- **Vague Instructions:** Struggling to deliver clear directions, check for student understanding, or manage behaviour verbally.
- **Instructional Clarity:** Language/accent impacting the learners' ability to follow instructions.

Practical Mentoring Strategies

- **Staff Room Integration:** Actively introduce the PST to colleagues and encourage them to spend break times in the staff room to build professional rapport.
- **Visual Anchors:** Mandate that all spoken instructions are paired with visual aids, such as projecting them on a slide, writing key steps on the board or using images
- **Mini-Check Stops:** Break lessons into smaller blocks, using quick mini-activities to check learners' understanding before moving on. Have the PST ask individual students to repeat instructions back to the class to verify clarity.
- **Proofing:** Require the PST to review all slides and worksheets early and encourage them to use digital tools to verify phrasing, layout, and grammar.

SUPPORT AREA: BEHAVIOURAL/PROFESSIONALISM



This could look like:

- **Professional Standards & Boundaries:** Missing basic expectations like punctuality, professional dress, appropriate boundaries, or personal phone use.
- **Safety & Duty of Care:** Gaps in the application of Child Safe Standards or in maintaining proper student supervision.
- **Hesitancy & Initiative:** Standing back during tasks/routines, often due to low confidence or differing cultural norms.
- **Teamwork Isolation:** Struggling to collaborate with colleagues or engage with the school community.

Practical Mentoring Strategies

- **Day 1 Induction:** Explicitly walk the PST through school-specific rules for arrival times, device policies and staffroom etiquette.
- **Scenario Mapping:** Review real classroom scenarios together to clearly define professional student/teacher boundaries and duty of care.
- **Active Participation Tasks:** Give the PST specific, low-stakes roles during observation times (e.g., "Please scribe student responses on the board during this discussion").
- **Assigned Team Roles:** Give the PST a clear, manageable task to own during team planning sessions to build their confidence in collaboration.

SUPPORT AREA: WELLBEING

This could look like:

- **Overwhelm & Anxiety:** Visible stress caused by the busy classroom, university workload, or placement pressure.
- **Extreme Fatigue:** Signs of exhaustion from external pressures, long commutes, or poor study-life balance.
- **Isolation & Adjustment:** Signs of homesickness or difficulty adapting to the Australian school culture.
- **Disengagement:** Unexplained absences, withdrawn behaviour, or sudden changes in physical presentation.

Practical Mentoring Strategies

- **The Circuit Breaker:** Step in to lead a lesson segment if the PST is visibly overwhelmed, giving them a 5-minute cognitive break.
- **Micro-Goal Focus:** Reduce anxiety by narrowing their focus. Help them aim for just *one* small, specific success per day.
- **Empathetic Check-Ins:** Acknowledge their situation with a simple, direct question (e.g., "*I know you have a huge commute, how are you holding up today?*").
- **Monash Support Connection:** Remind the PST of Monash's free student wellbeing services, and contact the PPC team yourself to notify them that the student needs extra support.

Thank you, Mentors!

Thank you for the vital role you play in helping future teachers develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed.

Need further support? If challenges or concerns persist after using this toolkit, please reach out to the PPC team at edu-ppc@monash.edu for continued advice and guidance

