

Paper Plane

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When you've been at the same school for a long time, things get comfortable. All the kids know you, most of them have had siblings taught by you, their parents know you, you are part of the scenery. You know how things work, who to avoid during report writing time, which photocopier is least likely to break down, which classrooms have the best air-conditioners and you get all the in jokes.

You even understand references to staff who left the college years ago and remember the time that part of the gym roof (thatched) dropped onto a visiting dignitary at a disastrous school assembly back in 2009. It's safe to stay put and be comfortable. This year is a big one for me — I'm starting at a new school.

Being the new teacher is almost like being the new kid who arrives in the middle of the year, when friendship groups have already been forged and alliances made. It can feel as though you are on the fringe of the action and you struggle to remember the dozens of names of people you are being introduced to.



My new school is at least double the size of my old one, so I have taken a screen shot of the map of the buildings and will no doubt look like some sort of confused tourist navigating my way around the campus in a desperate effort to arrive at class on time.

I have been taken on two separate tours of the place, but feel like I finished the second one more confused than when I started. I am basing all of my navigations on the central hub — the canteen. If I get really lost, I'll follow the wafts of dim sims back to my base and then proceed from there.

Of course, being new, I am going to be an unknown quantity for the students at the school. Having been in the one place for so long, I've had very few issues with classroom management as students knew who I was and what I was about.

The thought of having to go in cold and re-establish myself is alarming and I have thoughts that Term 1 may well be reminiscent of my experiences as a substitute teacher. "I've asked you to sit down several times now, Jayden. This is the final time ... because I said so, that's why." "Mr Blake has left this work for you to complete, so it's important you ... yes, I am a real teacher. Thanks for checking."

I had the opportunity before the end of last year to move some of my belongings in to my new office and was handed my ID card, school lanyard and carpark pass. This made the change feel real and as though I had already stepped into my new role before the break and accelerated my need to rush out and buy an entirely new range of stationery. Surely if I have all new pens and whiteboard markers everything will be fine.

Christina Adams is a member of the Australian Education Union (Victoria) and a stand-up comedian