

# Primary School Teacher interview questions

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## What to expect

Primary school teacher interviews usually test three things: how you plan and adapt lessons, how you handle real classroom situations, and how you communicate with parents and colleagues about student wellbeing. Panels often include the principal or deputy principal and a senior teacher, and they listen for practical detail rather than general statements about loving teaching.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience managing behaviour, differentiating instruction or working with colleagues, usually answered with a specific example.
- **Scenario / judgement:** Live classroom or parent situations where the panel wants to hear your immediate response and follow-up, not just a theory.
- **Process / curriculum:** Questions on how you plan units, assess progress and report against year-level outcomes.
- **Safety and child protection:** Questions checking your understanding of mandatory reporting and Working With Children Check obligations.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about communicating with parents and carers, particularly around difficult conversations.

Expect an opening question on your teaching philosophy or why you want to teach at that school, then a run of scenario and behavioural questions covering behaviour management, differentiation and parent communication, and a closing section on child safety obligations and your availability. Some schools ask for a short lesson demonstration, a writing sample of a lesson plan, or a response to a written scenario before the interview itself.

## 1. Tell me about a time you adapted your teaching to support a student with additional learning needs.

### Why they ask

Checks whether you can differentiate instruction rather than just apply one program to a whole class, given the role's requirement to support students with disability, giftedness and diverse language backgrounds.

### How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the student's situation, the specific adjustment you made to lesson content or assessment, the action you took over time, and the result for that student's engagement or achievement.

### Example answer

*"I had a Year 3 student on an individual learning plan who was reading well below year level and disengaging during whole-class literacy blocks. I broke the reading task into smaller chunks with a simplified text at his level, paired him with a peer for shared reading, and checked in with him individually twice a week. Over the term he moved from avoiding reading tasks altogether to completing them independently, and I noted the change in his progress report to his parents."*

## 2. A student in your class becomes disruptive during a lesson and starts pulling other students off task. What do you do?

### Why they ask

Behaviour management is a core daily task in this role, and the panel wants to see a calm, proportionate response rather than an escalation.

### How to structure your answer

Talk through it as a judgement-under-pressure sequence: immediate in-the-moment response, what you do if it continues, and what follow-up happens after the lesson.

#### **Example answer**

*"First I'd use a quiet, non-confrontational cue, moving closer to the student or giving a brief redirection, so I don't stop the lesson for everyone else. If it continued I'd remove the student briefly to a calm space using our whole-school behaviour steps, and keep the rest of the class working. After the lesson I'd talk to the student one-on-one about what happened, and if it was part of a pattern I'd loop in the wellbeing team and note it for a conversation with the parents."*

### **3. Walk me through how you'd plan a term's literacy program for a Year 2 class.**

#### **Why they ask**

Tests whether you understand the actual planning process behind curriculum delivery, not just that you can deliver a single lesson.

#### **How to structure your answer**

Answer as a step-by-step walk-through: starting point (curriculum outcomes and prior assessment data), sequencing of content, how differentiation is built in, and how you check progress along the way.

#### **Example answer**

*"I'd start with the Year 2 Australian Curriculum outcomes for reading and writing and look at where the class sat from end-of-previous-term assessment data. I'd sequence the term around a few key text types, building in phonics and comprehension activities each week, and plan differentiated tasks for students reading above and below level from the start rather than adjusting on the fly. I'd use short formative checks every couple of weeks to see who needs more support, and finish the term with a summative assessment that feeds into the semester report."*

### **4. What would you do if a student disclosed something to you that raised child protection concerns?**

#### **Why they ask**

Every teacher has mandatory reporting obligations under state child protection legislation, and schools need to confirm you understand the process, not just the concept.

#### **How to structure your answer**

Treat this as a safety compliance question: state what you would and wouldn't do yourself, and the correct escalation path.

#### **Example answer**

*"I would listen to the student without asking leading questions, reassure them they'd done the right thing telling me, and not promise confidentiality. I would then follow the school's child protection procedure and report it straight away to the principal or designated child safety officer, documenting exactly what was said as soon as possible afterwards, rather than deciding myself whether it needed to go further."*

### **5. How do you handle a parent who's unhappy with their child's progress or behaviour report?**

#### **Why they ask**

Reporting to parents and managing that relationship is a listed core task, and schools want to see you can stay professional under pressure.

#### **How to structure your answer**

Answer as a communication approach: how you open the conversation, how you handle disagreement, and how you close it with a clear next step.

### Example answer

*"I'd start by listening properly to what's worrying them before responding, since often they just want to feel heard. I'd bring specific examples of the student's work and assessment results rather than general impressions, and if we disagreed on the way forward I'd suggest a follow-up meeting with the learning support team involved. I'd always finish with an agreed next step, like a follow-up check-in date, so the parent leaves with a clear sense of what happens next."*

## **6. Describe a time you worked with a learning support team or specialist on a student's individual learning plan.**

### Why they ask

The role requires ongoing collaboration with colleagues and support staff on student wellbeing and learning goals, and panels want evidence you can work as part of a team rather than in isolation.

### How to structure your answer

Use STAR: the student's situation, who you worked with, the specific actions you contributed, and the outcome for the student.

### Example answer

*"I had a student with a diagnosed learning difficulty in maths, and I worked with the school's learning support teacher to set realistic term goals for his individual learning plan. I adjusted my classroom tasks to match those goals, gave the learning support teacher regular updates on how he was going in class, and we reviewed the plan together at the end of term. He met most of his adjusted goals, and the plan carried forward into the next year with clearer targets."*