

Communication about our school's practices when staff are absent

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a staff we acknowledge student wellbeing and the importance of continuing the teaching and learning program during staff absences as paramount and use these beliefs to guide the procedures and practices we enact when staff are away from school. Although the reasons for staff absences can be many and varied, they tend to fall into two categories; absences that are **expected** and **planned for** including extracurricular programs, sporting events, professional learning and long service leave and absences that are **unexpected** including personal illness, bereavement, care of family members, personal emergency and booked relief staff that are suddenly unavailable.

When making decisions about expected absences we can plan for and usually book in advance a relief teacher. With unexpected absences, our staffing officer will attempt to engage a relief teacher for that day. If the absence is longer than a day, our preference is to secure the same teacher for the duration to ensure consistency and continuity of the program. Unfortunately, at times, our staffing officer is not able to secure a relief teacher for the day, so the class is split.

We acknowledge that splitting a class is not ideal; however, in every case the school will minimise disruption to the class as much as possible. In some instances we utilise learning assistance, library, specialist and executive staff (please note that all of these staff have a teaching load) to cover classes. Teachers at our school teach and plan collaboratively to implement units of inquiry across all learning areas so when a class is split the first priority is to split them across the same year level so students can participate in the collaboratively planned activities. When it is not appropriate to split a class to their year level, students will take work with them to complete in other classes. For example, inquiry research, summative task write up, maths exercises, handwriting, reading and response engagements or class projects. When a class split occurs the following procedure will be followed wherever possible:

- The class to be split will have the roll marked before the split
- The class will be given the expectations for the day
- The students will be given appropriate work to achieve for the day
- The students will be taken to their class for the day
- A list of students and classes will be distributed to the front office so that students can be located quickly
- The work done by students during the day will be discussed and reviewed by the teacher the following day
- An email and school app will be sent home that day informing parents that a relief teacher was not available to take the class

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions in relation to managing staff absences, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, phone or in person.

Yours sincerely,
Anna Wilson
Acting Principal