



PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT RELATING TO STAFF ABSENCES AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS

School Context

North Ainslie Primary School is an ACT government school which works within the parameters of the ACTDET policy framework. It is situated in an inner northern suburb of Canberra. It is a culturally and linguistically diverse school, which provides education for approximately three hundred and fifty students. North Ainslie is particularly unique because it is home not only to a mainstream primary school but also to an introductory English centre for migrant and refugee children (IEC), and to a learning support unit for students with autism (LSU). The school also provides mainstream integration for a number of children with learning disabilities. Our school community is one which covers a broad socio-economic base.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the effective management of staff absence. The school executive and teaching staff of North Ainslie acknowledges that student well being and the need for ongoing curriculum programs during staff absence is essential.

Rationale

There are many reasons for staff absence and they fall into the following two categories:

1. Staff absence that is expected and planned for include:

- Extra curricular programs
- Professional Development
- Long Service Leave

2. Staff absence that is unexpected may include:

- School need
- Personal illness
- Bereavement
- Care of family members
- Personal emergency
- Booked relief staff suddenly unavailable

Implementation Guidelines

When making decisions about staffing absences the executive and teachers believe the following guidelines are necessary.

Expected Absences

Extra Curricular Programs and Professional Development

- The school participates in extracurricular programs in response to parent and teacher requests (eg. chess, band). Participation very often requires that a teacher leave the school to supervise large numbers of students.
- Primary School Sport Association carnival policy advocates that schools should continue to provide teacher attendance to ensure that sporting opportunities are available for all students.
- Departmental or outside funding for most events is not available and therefore any cost of employing an additional teacher needs to be covered from the school staffing budget.
- The circumstances of every extracurricular event have to be viewed individually. We take into account the impact on remaining class sizes, staffing and daily programs before making any decision.
- The class teachers are consulted.

Long Service Leave

Long service leave taken by a classroom teacher is always covered by the Department and replacement staff booked ahead of the time of absence.

Unexpected Absences

There are times when teaching staff need to suddenly come off class for short periods of time due to:

- Attendance at urgent meetings (e.g. mandatory reporting).
- Personal reasons (illness or emergency).

A teacher may phone in on the morning of the absence due to;

- Personal / family illness
- Personal emergency

If unable to notify the staffing officer on the day prior to absence teachers are requested to ring the staffing officer between 6:00am and 7:00am.

In every case when a teacher phones to advise pending absence the staffing officer will attempt to engage a relief teacher for that day.

Splitting classes

It is acknowledged that splitting a class is not ideal however on some occasions a class split may be necessary.

An example is; 25 students attending the Northside swimming carnival with a teacher. 14 students from that teacher's class will remain at school (eg. half a year 5/6 class).

In every case the school will minimise disruption to the class as much as possible.

When a split is required:

- The first priority is consideration of the needs of the whole school and we do this in order to manage our staffing budget to achieve the following school priorities:
 - The maintenance of small class sizes from K-6
 - The early intervention learning assistance program
- We may in some instances utilise learning assistance, library, specialist or executive teachers (please note that all teaching staff have a teaching load).
- We may opt to place the students who are remaining at school in alternative classes especially if a number of students have been taken out of school.
- Teachers at NAPS work and plan collaboratively to implement units of inquiry across all learning areas.
Students who are sent to classes in their own team area will therefore participate in programs which have been designed by all teaching team members. Students are given extension tasks when appropriate.
- When it is not appropriate to split classes into the relevant year levels the students will endeavour to continue class programs e.g. unit of inquiry research, class writing or maths tasks, and unfinished homework projects.
- Class splits have social benefits: permitting students to build relationships with other teachers and students in the school while providing opportunities for students to be encouraged to accept mentoring roles when placed in junior classes.

Guidelines

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 to be split will be given expectations and directions 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
- Lunch orders will be dispatched to the host class
- A list of students and classes will be left at the front office so that students can be located promptly
- The work done by students during the day will be discussed and reviewed by the teachers the following day.