

STAFF SHORTAGE POLICY

Introduction

At Enable Ireland School Sandymount, we are dedicated to creating a supportive, nurturing, and consistent educational environment tailored to the unique needs of our students. Given the complex needs of our student population, staff absences can have a profound impact on their learning, routine, and emotional well-being. This policy has been developed to address staff shortages in a way that minimises disruption to our students' educational programs while ensuring their health, safety and well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish procedures for addressing staff shortages.
- Maintain continuity in the educational experience of all students during staff shortages.
- Prioritise the health, safety, and well-being of students.
- Establish clear communication channels with parents and guardians.

Scope

This policy applies in situations where teacher and SNA shortages arise and substitute staff cannot be immediately secured. It adheres to health and safety guidelines, the guidelines provided by the Department of Education and focuses on best practices in special education.

Procedures in the Event of a Staff Shortage

a. Assessment of Staffing Needs

- Staff must advise management of their intended absence as early as possible by contacting the principal (or in absence Deputy Principal). If sick, staff should send a text to the principal no later than 7.00am on the morning of the first day of absence. By 1pm on the first day of absence they should inform the Principal of their intention to return to work or if they will require further days off.
- The principal and management team will evaluate staffing availability and the needs of each class at the start of the school day.
- This assessment will ensure that resources are allocated to meet the highest priority needs while maintaining a safe learning environment.

b. Class and Student Prioritisation

- Staff may be reassigned to ensure that the most complex needs are met without compromising safety or educational continuity including reallocating teachers from other class groups when necessary and on health and safety grounds.
- On a day with high staff shortages the following activities may not be possible; swimming, activities outside the school grounds and following physiotherapy programmes including the use of walkers and standers.
- Where no substitute teachers are available, or on the first day of a teacher absence when no substitute teacher is provided, the students from the effected class will join other classes. The



following will be considered when deciding which class a student joins; how many students are in each class on the day, the individual student's needs, ability and age. When possible, students will join classes they are familiar with in order to establish some consistency for the student. Each teacher will make a class division list at the start of the year. SNA's will continue to support the students, moving with them to join other classes and when required moving between classes to provide stability, care, and tailored support. This is critical to the students' well-being and safety.

- All teachers are requested to leave a folder in the office for use if they are absent. The folder should include worksheets/art activities and plan of work for Day 1 of absence, plan of work (with resources and activities that can be photocopied by sub) for Day 2 and 3 of absence, the class timetable, details on each pupil, class division list and a fortnightly Plan.

c. Decision-Making and Communication

- In the unlikely event that the health and safety of the students cannot be ensured, due to a high numbers staff absences. As a last resort the principal in consultation with the Board of Management, may decide to temporarily send some student's home.
- Parents will be promptly informed via telephone or other preferred communication channels. They will be given the reasons for the decision and the expected duration their child will not be able to attend school.

Preventative Measures

To reduce the impact of staff shortages, Enable Ireland Sandymount School will:

- Maintain a list of substitute staff for swift contact during absences.
- Collaborate with the Board of Management and the Department of Education to address ongoing staffing challenges.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding, Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle, Principal

Date: 2 April 2025

