

Scoil Chormaic Scoil Náisiúnta Pobail
Baile Stiofáin
Baile Brigín
Contae Baile Átha Cliath



Scoil Chormaic Community National School
Stephenstown
Balbriggan
County Dublin

Principal/Príomhoide
Ms. Deirdre Corcoran

Deputy Principal/Leas-Phríomhoide
Mr. Alan Weston

LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dáta: 05/03/2018

A thuismitheoirí/ a chaomhnóirí,

Your children are entitled to a qualified substitute teacher when a class teacher is on certified leave. However, despite all best efforts, this school has been unable to source a substitute teacher on many occasions since September 2017, as there is a shortage of substitute teachers nationwide at present.

Special Education Teachers (SET) in the school, to recent times, have not been requested to provide substitute cover for absent colleagues because they are engaged in essential full-time teaching tasks. Consequently, on a number of occasions classes have been divided up (split) and the pupils placed in different classes across the school.

I am aware that this is a disruption to the teaching and learning of your children and I have informed the Board of Management of this. In order to address the learning needs of your children, this school has put the following plan in place to support the pupils as best as possible with their learning:

- Class teachers assign weekly homework on a Monday so that pupils are able to continue with their homework for the rest of the week should a teacher be absent;
- ‘Split packs’ with work appropriate for your child are prepared by teachers and left for distribution to the pupils in the case of a class being split;
- SET teachers are assigned to particular classes and they take the class in from their line, take the roll, assign work and split the pupils to their assigned classes, and gather the class back and dismiss at home time;
- The split packs are gathered up daily and corrected;

- In the case of a qualified substitute teacher being available, an absent teacher's plans are made available to this substitute teacher to continue with the teaching and learning of the class;
- In the case of a qualified substitute teacher not being available, where possible, on the third day of a class teacher's absence, a SET teacher will take and teach the class, and continue with the class teacher's plans for teaching and learning;
- This in turn means that the SET teacher's timetable will be cancelled.

I am sure that you appreciate this is not ideal, and this school would much prefer to have a qualified substitute teacher in the case where a teacher is on certified leave*. I can assure you that staff in our school takes certified leave only when absolutely necessary. We have a very committed staff. Indeed, in the past, many staff have come to work when they should be minding their health. They are acutely aware of the substitute crisis and do their best to avoid a class being split.

Le meas,

Deirdre Corcoran

*Please also note that there are some aspects of teachers' leave which are not sanctioned for substitute cover by the Department of Education and Skills and classes will ordinarily be split in those situations.