



South Dartmoor Community College

Executive Head teacher | Mrs J Veal
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Empowering everyone to be the best they can be.



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Dear Parent / Carer

RE: TEACHER ABSENCE PROTOCOL

We all know how important a high-quality curriculum, its enactment, and the relationship that students have with their teacher is. We always strive to ensure that students have the very best learning experiences and having a consistent teacher, who is a subject specialist delivering the curriculum, is a vital part of that. We have worked hard at SDCC to ensure all classes are taught by subject specialists. However, we are human and absences, planned (e.g. fixtures) or otherwise (e.g. illness), do happen. Encouragingly the continued trend of a reduction in staff absence and lessons that require covering, continues to follow a downward trend. We have almost 30% less absence than the same period last year.

Historically lesson absence has been 'covered' by, more often than not, non-specialist unfamiliar adults coming into school, who, despite good intentions are not as invested in the students and the school as our staff are. This can cause all manner of untold problems, not least with behaviour (sometimes with students who have done absolutely nothing wrong who then become stressed and upset), and regularly the resulting work delivered is not of a good standard and takes more clearing up, upon the member of staff's return. Our now established cover system continues to demonstrate high levels of support to students and staff in the event of a teacher absence. To date this year every single lesson has been staffed by a member of the SDCC teaching team meaning that no child has been taught by an external agency member of staff.

We continue to dedicate two IT suites to 'cover' which are equipped with individual desk top PC's each with headphones to enable students to access the bespoke online SDCC 'Curriculum Map'. This is an interactive resource that all students access through class charts and or a Teams cover group. They click on their year group and the term and then on the subject that they are missing and they immediately have access to high quality lessons and resources which directly align to, and support, the curriculum that they are studying. In addition to this, students also have access to our Super Curriculum which is a series of resources designed to broaden students' knowledge and experience. These resources provide students with links to 'something to read, something to watch, something to listen to and something to do'. As with the Curriculum Resource Map, Curriculum Leaders invest a significant amount of time in producing the Super Curriculum and it is updated monthly. The Super Curriculum is available to everyone, cover lesson or not, through the website. Finally, students can also, once they have completed the online learning for that lesson, should they have time, complete any outstanding homework.

The expectations in the cover room are consistent with those in all other lessons and students receive praise in recognition of good work. Conversely the systems remain in place to maintain a positive, constructive learning environment by removing those who are disrupting the learning of others. What this cover system ensures is that students continue to learn in a safe and calm, purposeful environment, with staff who know the school and the students.

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Having embedded this new system since the start of term, we are delighted with the system and the provision for students: the quality of provision in the event of teacher absence has significantly improved. If you have any further questions or feedback please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Best wishes



Mrs J Veal
Executive Head teacher

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