



**Australian Government**

**Quality Teacher  
Programme**

## Secondary case three

This case is open-ended and is designed to generate rich discussion about leadership issues affecting all head teachers.

### Setting the scene

At a co-educational comprehensive high school, a small group of students, who are generally perceived by staff as interested and cooperative, approach the head teacher about a problem they are having in their class.

*'We want to move out of this class. We're not learning anything because our teacher can't control the class.'*

*'Our teacher never has any time for us. Time is wasted with the teacher trying to get the rest of the students to stay quiet and do their work.'*

The next day the head teacher receives a phone call from another student's parent requesting that their child should be moved for similar reasons.

### Individual reflections

1. What are the key issues?
2. As head teacher, what do you do?

## Leadership issues

<b>Educational</b>	pedagogy, programs, assessment, reporting, learning styles, learning environment, learning community
<b>Organisational</b>	timelines, resources, management, systems, accountability
<b>Strategic</b>	planning, vision, values, culture
<b>Personal</b>	social skills, ethics, commitment, personal vision
<b>Interpersonal</b>	relationships, team building, conflict resolution, communication

## Focus questions

### Educational

1. What are the issues for your students out of a particular teacher's class? What are the alternatives? What are the issues for other students in the class if you move them? What message are you sending?
2. How will the teacher feel?

### Organisational

1. What resources will be required when working with the teacher and the students, and managing professional development?
2. What systems do you need to have in place to manage these issues?
3. What information will you give the parents? How will you discuss the issues?

### Strategic

1. What direction, vision, policies and strategies do you need to develop to be able to proceed in a fair and equitable manner?
2. What planning do you need to consider for future courses of action?
3. Do you need to plan a professional development activity on classroom management?

### Personal

1. What skills do you need to acquire to successfully handle a potentially explosive situation?
2. How will we show understanding for the teacher, the student and their parents?
3. How will you raise the difficult issues such as management and teaching style with the teacher?
4. How do you ensure that conversations and information are given honestly and ethically?

### Interpersonal

1. How do you build trust with the faculty and individual teachers to successfully manage this situation?
2. How do you support the classroom teacher?
3. How do you investigate the validity of the student's comments?
4. How do you address the parent's concern?
5. How do you ensure that the students who have complained will feel supported?

# Considerations

**Notes to facilitators:** It is the process of analysing the case and the issues that is important in using the cases as a professional development tool. A selection of DET policy documents made available for quick referencing by participants will support informed decision making.

If participants are from the same school, they may identify with key issues in the case and become snared in a discussion of school-specific problems. Sensitive intervention and guidance back to the case may be required.

Using the considerations or sample solutions too early may defeat the purpose and value of head teachers reflecting on the issues and their own practice. It should be remembered that a single issue case is in fact highly complex. If limited time is available, groups could analyse different leadership domains or focus on just a few issues.

## Educational

- Align faculty, school policies and procedures.
- Discuss effective teaching and learning.
- Invite experts to inspire the faculty.
- Conduct a teaching/learning survey with staff and students to formulate a set of values.
- Plan strategies for effective behaviour management.
- Plan strategies for effective learning needs of all students.
- How will you change the view of the faculty? Is it a faculty issue?
- Use the *Quality teaching in NSW public schools* discussion paper to explore units of work. Provide some units of work on effective classroom management linked to quality teaching practice.

## Organisational

- Investigate the students' complaint with the teachers, the students and the parents.
- Consider the acquisition of more effective and appropriate resources related to behaviour management.
- Plan faculty professional learning activities on handling difficult situations.
- Consider individual staff needs and future skills required.

## Strategic

- How would the teacher and the faculty envision effective teaching and learning?
- How would you like staff and students to relate to each other?
- How could this be achieved?

## Personal

- The head teacher should be honest and ethical.
- Avoid disempowering the teacher or the student.
- Consider the skills you will need to enhance relationships in your faculty and to build self esteem and confidence.

## Interpersonal

- Discuss the progress of the class with the teacher.
- Ensure that the students and parents are kept informed.
- There are other alternatives to explore before moving the student to another class.
- Plan for individual and faculty meetings to address issues of concern.

- When is it appropriate to move a student? What other teaching strategies could the teacher use to fully engage all students? How can student misbehaviour be managed?
- How do you conduct a class meeting to effectively address student concerns?
- This is a potentially explosive situation. If conflict occurs, where might it come from and how will you manage it?
- Can units of work be developed collaboratively?

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**Disclaimer**

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

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