



**Australian Government**

**Quality Teacher  
Programme**



## Secondary case seven

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

### Setting the scene

A teacher in your faculty who was previously efficient and coping well with their classes is starting to take more time off school and is not meeting deadlines. The teacher is calling on other colleagues for assistance.

Students are starting to complain that they are not being taught and other teachers are commenting about changes in the teacher's performance and 'out of character' behaviour.

Further investigation reveals that this person is suffering a long term serious illness that is affecting their performance. This personal crisis is an ongoing long term situation.

### 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 teaching and learning issues involved here?
2. Who are the stakeholders in this situation?

### Organisational

1. As head teacher, what initial actions do you need to take?
2. What resources do you need to gather for the teacher, the faculty and the students?

### Strategic

1. How will you address all the issues in the short term and long term?
2. How will you maintain student learning?

### Personal

1. What do you need to consider in order to manage this problem?
2. Where would you go for support with this? Who can support you?
3. In what ways does the nature of the personal crisis influence your actions?

### Interpersonal

1. What strategies would you use to maintain staff relationships?
2. How do you manage privacy issues for the member of staff?
3. How do you maintain openness and honest communication with staff?
4. How do you maintain ethical standards and build trust with students, parents, staff and the teacher?

# 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

- Impact on student learning is a critical issue.

## Organisational

- Contingency plans need to be in place for leading and managing the faculty.
- Ensure that details about the Employee Assistance Program Service are made available for the faculty member.

## Strategic

- The following need to be considered:
  - a. short term and long term solutions
  - b. medical retirement
  - c. impact on student learning

## Personal

- What skills are required by you and the teacher to handle this situation?
- What personal and ethical dilemmas might you face?

## Interpersonal

- How will you address the welfare of the teacher?
- What possible impacts could there be on the faculty or the school?
- What information, in consultation with the teacher who is unwell, should be given to students, parents, and staff

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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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