

Hurworth School Cover Policy

Accepted by: Board of Directors October 2009
Leadership Team Lead Reviewer: Head of School
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1. Introduction

The National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' (2003) provided the basis for work by schools to create time for teachers and Head Teachers/Head of Schools to focus more of their time on teaching, and leading teaching and learning. From September 2009 teachers at a school should only rarely cover for absent colleagues.

It is worth remembering however that **rarely does not mean never.**

The contractual changes apply to all teachers at the school, including the Head Teacher/Head of School, teachers on the leadership spine and ASTs whether on permanent, fixed term or temporary contracts and pro-rata to teachers on part-time contracts.

Schools need to have robust systems in place to ensure that from 1 September 2009 teachers cover for absent colleagues only rarely. A 'robust system' is one which delivers this contractual entitlement and would be expected to deal with all foreseeable events but would not be expected to deal with unforeseeable events. **Teachers, including the Head Teacher/Head of School should cover only rarely, for absence which is not foreseeable.**

This policy outlines how Rarely Cover will be managed at Hurworth School.

2. Definition of Absence

Absence, and the need for cover, occurs when the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is absent. The absence could be for a variety of reasons, including internal and external activities as well as sickness. It could be short or long-term. All types of absence should be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil.

Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time is a contractual entitlement for all teachers with timetable teaching time and cannot be used for cover purposes.

3. Definitions

Foreseeable Events

In consultation with all stakeholders this is a list of foreseeable circumstance when cover may be required and could be planned for using normal timetabling procedures

- Teachers carrying out Appraisal planning and review meetings
- Teachers carrying out classroom observations as part of Appraisal or monitoring standards of teaching and learning

- School Events e.g. Preparing for Life Day, SMSC Day, GCSE visits, Sporting Tournaments/Town Sports, Transition Activities etc.
- Provision of CPD opportunities such as course attendance, departmental INSET sessions etc.
- GCSE examination period e.g. examinations & booster classes
- Health & Safety Audits
- External Trade Union Meetings
- LA/external subject meetings
- Governor meetings/Interviews
- GCSE standardisation/moderation meetings
- Planned attendance at hospital/doctors for consultation appointments
- Jury service (fourth day of absence)

Unforeseeable Events

The following are examples of what would generally be considered as not being foreseeable absences:

- Member of staff involved in a major accident on the way to work
- Emergency hospitalisation
- Early start to maternity leave due to complications
- Major road closure due to serious accident
- Extreme weather conditions, not previously forecast
- Member of staff injured while at work
- Compassionate leave
- Member of staff taken ill at work
- Member of staff involved in an accident/assault at work

Specified Work / Cover Supervision

The Head Teacher/Head of School will be clear when allocating support staff to cover responsibilities whether the work to be undertaken is specified work or cover supervision.

Specified work can only be undertaken by Level 4 and Level 3 Teaching Assistants. Cover Supervision can be undertaken by Cover Supervisors, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Teaching Assistants.

Cover supervision occurs where no active teaching (i.e. specified work) is taking place and, under the supervision of a member of support staff, pupils undertake pre-prepared work. Cover supervision can be used for short-term absence but it is not an appropriate way of covering medium to long-term absence or of dealing with a class when a teacher is not timetabled to teach them. Medium or longer-term absences should be covered by a teacher.

Specified work is defined as the following activities as stated in Section 133 Regulations issued under the Education Act 2002:

- planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
- delivering lessons to pupils; this includes delivery via distance learning or computer- aided techniques;
- assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
- reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils;

4. Cover Strategies

Following consultation with all staff and recognised union representatives, the following strategies will be used:

In the event of an absence the school will employ a supply teacher from the fourth day of absence (this needs to be determined by the school, based on the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil).

- All Teaching Assistants are trained to an appropriate standard to be able to provide short-term cover for teacher absence if necessary
- Long-term absences will be covered by a supply teacher

5. Exceptions

The only exceptions to the application of the contractual limit are teachers employed wholly or mainly to undertake such cover.

6. Principles

This section establishes the principles upon which this policy is based:

- A school calendar will be published for each school year which will provide the annual teaching timetabled including activity weeks for every teacher (teaching timetables are not frozen in time and there may be in-year variations in timetabled teaching arrangements and variations from year to year).
- The absence of the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is the trigger for cover
- The school will monitor and analyse the patterns of absence to ascertain both the main causes of absence, which have triggered the need for cover, and the impact of such absence on pupils' learning
- The school's Leave of Absence Policy will be reviewed to ensure it reflects the fact that school employees generally have fixed term times and cannot book annual leave throughout the year in the same way as many other workers
- Any additional responsibilities of support staff, arising from cover supervision/ specified work, will be paid at the appropriate rate (Level 3 / Level 4 Teaching Assistant)
- The guaranteed PPA time of teachers at a school forms part of the legal conditions of employment and cannot be used for cover
- Cover for absent teachers will be shared equitably among all teachers in the school (including the Head Teacher/Head of School), taking account of their teaching and other duties and of the need to ensure that teachers and the Head Teacher/Head of School may be required to cover only rarely, in the case of circumstances that are not foreseeable
- A record of the amount of cover undertaken by each teacher will be kept