

## School rarely cover policy

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For staff based in City Schools/Colleges and other establishments including centrally based teachers)

Human Resources  
Education and Children's Services  
Last reviewed: Pending

Although this document refers to the Headteacher, it also applies to the Principal / Line Manager / governors as appropriate. Where there is reference to teacher in this document amendments will be required if the school decides to apply this policy to other staff.

## **SCHOOL RARELY COVER POLICY**

### **Background and Scope**

The National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' signed in January 2003 provided the basis for creating time for teachers and Headteachers to focus more of their time on teaching, and leading teaching and learning. The Agreement included an objective that teachers should only rarely cover and, in 2007, schools were advised that they should expect to achieve the position in which teachers only rarely covered for absence from September 2009. From 1 September a new provision will be included in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) as an individual contractual right of every teacher to 'only rarely' cover for absent colleagues.

The changes in relation to 'rarely cover' include the requirement that every school has in place a clear policy and robust system that does not require teachers or the Headteacher to provide cover for absence other than rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable. 'Foreseeable circumstances' for the school include events that are foreseeable on the basis of historic experience; events that are foreseeable in the normal local experience; and events that may be expected as part of the evolving pattern of provision (see paragraphs 3 & 4 overleaf). Educational visits are planned activities.

The guaranteed PPA time of teachers forms part of the legal conditions of employment and will not be used for cover, and only in exceptional circumstances should the Headteacher consider postponing a teacher's planned CPD to undertake cover for an absent colleague.

The following policy recognises that a number of teachers have a specific contract to provide cover similar to cover supervisors, so in these circumstances this rarely cover policy does not apply.

Guidance on this matter was issued by the National Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009. What follows is a 'model' rarely cover policy for City schools, developed by the Leicester City Workforce Development Local Partnership. It is envisaged that the provision of a single policy for local authority schools to consider, and hopefully adopt will help overcome a multitude of local arrangements and potential operational difficulties in City schools.

## **Aims of Policy**

1. The Governing Body of \_\_\_\_\_ School will operate within this policy to ensure teachers provide cover for absent colleagues only rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable, as detailed in the STPCD.

## **Absence**

2. Absence occurs when the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is absent and is the trigger for cover. The type of absence could be for a variety of reasons, including internal and external activities as well as sickness. It could be short-term or long-term. All types of absence should be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil. Teachers, including the Headteacher, should cover only rarely, and only for absences which are not foreseeable.
3. The School will analyse its historical 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. This will be used to ascertain events that are foreseeable and therefore do not require the provision of cover by a teacher.
4. The School will monitor and analyse patterns of absence (planned and unplanned) and levels of cover and manage these appropriately.
5. Where a teacher is used to provide cover it must be shared equitably among all teachers in the school (including the Headteacher), taking account of their teaching and other duties.

## **Cover Strategies**

6. The Governing Body of \_\_\_\_\_ School will ensure that teachers cover only rarely by utilising the following options, taking into account appropriate guidance (See Appendix):
  - a) engage supply teachers; \*
  - b) employ support staff (directly or in collaboration with local schools): \*
    - as cover supervisors, where cover supervision is the core part of their role (when not required for cover, they could be assigned, e.g., to provide additional support to teachers in class or to carry out administrative tasks); \*
    - as discrete cover supervisors whose sole role is to provide cover supervision; \*
    - as Teaching Assistants/ Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) as part of a wider school role \*

NOTE: In accordance with the Teaching Assistant Career Grade, Teaching Assistants at Level 1 & Level 2 cannot undertake cover

supervision, which is a level 3 activity. Whilst Specified work is a level 4 (HLTA) activity

- as pastoral managers who may be required for part of their time to provide cover; \*
  - in a multi-faceted role of which a part is cover or cover supervision; \*
- c) employ teachers specifically for cover (directly or in collaboration with local schools); \*
- d) use agency staff; \*
- e) employ a teacher on a short-term contract.\*
- f) other (please specify)

(\* **DELETE as appropriate**)

7. Supervision is not a good use of the time of a teacher and teachers providing cover should normally expect to teach rather than to supervise pupils. Pupil standards are paramount.
8. Cover Supervisors, Higher Level Teaching Assistants can only be used for short-term absences and will not be used as the remedy for the medium or long term absence of a teacher. Short term absences may be covered with a supply or cover qualified teacher, medium and long-term absences will always be covered by a qualified teacher. With the deployment of a supply teacher in the case of long term absence the agreed timetable may be revised if there are good educational grounds for doing so. Such revisions will be subject to consultation with staff and their union representatives.
9. The Headteacher will determine what should be regarded as a 'short-term' absence for these purposes (see Leicester Amplification). The accepted local definition of short term absence is 3 days in secondary and 1 day in primary/special) where the Headteacher will be clear when allocating support staff to cover responsibilities whether the work to be undertaken is specified work or cover supervision. Cover supervision occurs where no active teaching (i.e. specified work) is taking place and pupils undertake pre-prepared work under supervision.
10. The Headteacher will take into account, when deciding whether the use of cover supervision is appropriate or not:
- a) the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
  - b) the length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without a teacher;
  - c) the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of the term.

11. Cover supervision is a responsible role, involving as it does taking sole charge of a group of pupils. School management will ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge before being given charge of a class. Staff carrying out a cover role will be appropriately trained.
12. Specified work is defined as:
  - a) planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
  - b) delivering lessons to pupils. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
  - c) assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
  - d) reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.
13. The Regulations state that HLTA's (locally level 4 Teaching Assistant) can carry out specified work subject to a number of conditions:
  - HLTA's must only carry out the 'specified work' in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher in the school;
  - HLTA's must be subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the Headteacher of the school; and
  - the Headteacher must be satisfied that the HLTA has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out the 'specified work' (paragraph 6 b) refers).
14. The School will ensure there is a system of supervision in place and support for staff delivering specified work.
15. Only when all other strategies for providing cover have failed will the consideration be given to split or combined classes.

### **School Calendar**

16. To ensure the system for managing cover is robust, the school will publish a calendar for each school year, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 164 of the section 3 Guidance to the STPCD, following consultation with staff and their union representatives. The school calendar will also provide for the school's annual teaching timetable for every teacher. When appropriate the School may need to review/revise its timetables during the year in light of significant changes (e.g. a long term absence or other significant educational development). If any such amendments need to be made they must be made on a no detriment basis. In such cases it will do so well in advance and in consultation with staff and their union representatives.

### **Annual Review of Policy**

17. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body of \_\_\_\_\_ School

by the Chair of Governors -----Name -----

on -----Date -----

## RELATED DOCUMENTATION

- Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement
- The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and Guidance on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions
- The Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003
- The Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007
- Time for Standards: Guidance Accompanying the Section 133 Regulations Issued under the Education Act 2002
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) Professional Standards
- Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (The Burgundy Book)
- School Support Staff: the Way Forward (NJC for Local Government Services 2003)
- WAMG Note 10
- WAMG Note 12 (Effective Deployment of HLTAs)
- WAMG Note 17 (Effective Deployment of HLTAs to Help Raise Standards)
- WAMG Note 22 (The Appropriate Deployment of Support Staff in Schools)
- Guidance for Schools on Cover Supervision (WAMG Guidance)
- Guidance for Schools on HLTA Roles for School Support Staff (WAMG Guidance)
- Time for Standards: Remodelling Cover – Resource Pack
- Rarely cover - WAMG statement  
[http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rarely\\_cover\\_wamgstatement.pdf](http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rarely_cover_wamgstatement.pdf)
- Rarely cover – WAMG LA letter  
[http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rarelycover\\_wamgletter.pdf](http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rarelycover_wamgletter.pdf)
- Rarely cover – School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document  
[http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rareleycover\\_stpcd.pdf](http://www.socialpartnership.org/upload/resources/pdf/w/rareleycover_stpcd.pdf)
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- The Leicester Amplification