



Transforming Lives

The Hub Alternative Provision Centre

Cover and Absence Policy

Context Statement

The school policy on cover arrangements reflects the movement towards a position where teachers may only be asked to cover rarely for absent colleagues as set out in the National Agreement 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload', which was signed in January 2003.

'Rarely covering' is an integral part of the overall package of contractual change set out in the National Agreement, and is designed to raise standards by freeing teachers and Headteachers from tasks which do not require their professional skills and expertise, and enabling them to focus on their core function of teaching and leading and managing teaching and learning. It should not be seen in isolation from the rest of the National Agreement.

The school will adopt a 'robust system' to deliver contractual entitlement and ensure that advance cover arrangements take account of all foreseeable events and are based on historic data relating to staff absence patterns. However, 'rarely cover' does not mean 'never cover' and teaching staff may be expected to cover for absent colleagues in situations involving unexpected or unforeseeable events and where no other arrangement can be made in the time available.

Policy Statement

1) Types and Definitions of Absence

Absence occurs when the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is absent. 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 will be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for students.

In the case of absence requests for reasons other than personal illness, the school will adhere to the Leave of Absence Regulations for Teachers agreed by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council as part of teachers' conditions of service. These set out the recommendations covering various situations and whether leave of absence should be granted and, if so, whether this should be with or without pay.

As part of the procedures to manage absences and cover, the school will monitor, analyse and record patterns of absence (planned and unplanned) and levels of associated cover. This information should cover the historical pattern of absence of past years and will be used to inform possible future revisions to the policy and will allow the school to monitor budget provision to facilitate use of supply teachers where appropriate.

2) Strategies for Managing Absence

The school will adopt a range of strategies to cover for absent colleagues in situations involving foreseeable absence, including the following:

- a) engaging supply Teachers/supply Cover Supervisors;
- b) using support staff whose job description incorporates cover supervision.

Training needs will be addressed through links to the school CPD programme and overseen by the school's CPD Coordinator which in the case of The Hub Alternative Provision Centre is the Headteacher.

A clear system of supervision and support for staff delivering cover supervision or specified work will be implemented through the school's line management structure and is currently Headteacher.

3) Managing Absence through the School Calendar

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.

To reduce demand for cover the school will:

- Normally allow the equivalent of 2 timetabled days of teaching staff to be out of school on CPD/educational visits and activities, apart from 'red days' or 'red weeks'.
- Identify 'red days' or 'red weeks' to indicate pressure times on the calendar. On these occasions it may not be possible to allow anyone out of school.
- Not authorise routine medical and dental appointments in school time. Emergency appointments or non negotiable appointments with consultants, however, will be with salary.

The school calendar will provide for the school's annual teaching timetable 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 school may need to review or revise timetables during the year in light of significant changes (e.g. a long term absence or other significant educational development) and will seek to do so well in advance and in consultation with staff and their union representatives.

Changes to the calendar may take place after consultation, but efforts will be made to ensure that these are not a frequent occurrence and are of benefit to the whole school community.

The following issues will be addressed when drawing up the school calendar:

- What kind of events might be deemed foreseeable on the basis of historic experience, in the normal local experience and/ or as part of the evolving pattern of provision;
- Including activity weeks or days (which then become a teacher's normal timetable in those weeks/on those days) in the calendar to facilitate the continuation of educationally valuable visits or trips or the maintenance of enhanced learning opportunities for students in keeping with the school's ethos (i.e. not every week of the school year will necessarily be the same).

Where trips or events are planned and published on the school calendar teachers will be advised in advance when and if it affects them.

Information about groups to be taken out of school and those whose teaching will be affected by the staff and pupil absence involved, should be submitted well in advance by the member of staff in charge of planning any trip.

4) Types of Cover

The Headteacher will exercise professional judgment in determining what should be regarded as a 'short-term' absence for these purposes. A number of considerations will be taken into account when deciding whether the use of cover supervision is appropriate or not. The key factors are as follows:

- the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
- the length of time a particular group of students would be working without a teacher;
- the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of the term;
- planning and preparing lessons and courses for students;
- delivering lessons to students. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
- assessing the development, progress and attainment of students;
- reporting on the development, progress and attainment of students.

5) Emergency cover

Teachers may be required to 'rarely cover' in circumstances that are not foreseeable'

- when a teacher needs to go home ill or for personal reasons in the middle of the day;
- when a colleague rings in sick after 7.45a.m.
- when there are extreme weather conditions.

The above examples are not exhaustive and will be added to when and where necessary.

In these circumstances a supply Teacher will be sought if a Cover Supervisor or Support Staff member with cover supervision in their job description is not available. Teaching colleagues will be required to cover until a supply teacher can be found. Cover must be shared equitably among all teachers in the school including the Head, SLT, part-time staff and those on temporary contracts.

6) Gained Time

During the academic year, particularly in the summer term, teachers who take examination classes/ groups are often released from some of their timetabled teaching commitments as a result of pupils being on study or examination leave. For the purposes of this policy, we refer to such time as “gained time”.

The Headteacher will direct teachers to use gained time to support activities directly relevant to teaching and learning. An agreed list of these activities is as follows:

- Developing/revising departmental/subject curriculum materials, schemes of work, lesson plans and policies in preparation for the new academic year. This may include identifying appropriate materials for use by supply staff and/or cover supervisors;
- CPD activities;
- Assisting colleagues in appropriate, planned team teaching activities;
- Taking small groups of pupils (ie less than class size) to provide additional learning support;
- Supporting selected pupils with coursework;
- Undertaking planned activities with pupils transferring between year groups or from primary schools;

The above examples are not exhaustive and will be added to when and where necessary.

Approved by The Hub Management Committee – February 2016

Signed by Sheriden Hutchinson-Jones

Chair of The Hub Management Committee

Appendix 1: Absence Procedures:

A. Unplanned absence:

Illness :

All School Staff must contact the Teacher in Charge before 7:30 am on each day of absence (unless the absence is longer term and covered by a doctor's note).

If there is no message before 7:30 a.m. on the morning after the first day of absence, it will be assumed that the member of staff will be back in school that day.

It is essential that all staff give the reason for absence (e.g. flu, sickness) so that this is accurately recorded on the IPP system (Local Authority Integrated Pay and Personnel system). Inaccurate records may impact on pay. If the reason is personal or confidential, staff should state this. On return to school, teachers should contact the Teacher in Charge or Teacher in Charge and Support Staff should contact the Headteacher for a confidential conversation re. the reason for absence.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of school time.

If illness requires any member of staff to leave school during the day, they should first notify their Teacher in Charge. The Teacher in Charge will notify the Headteacher.

Staff will be required to complete and return an absence declaration form to the Teacher in Charge on their first day back at work, in line with the Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure (Schools).

B. Planned Absence

Making a request for planned absence:

Teaching Staff should complete the Request for Cover/Protected Non-Contact form. If the reason for the request is for CPD then an appropriate INSET form should also be completed and returned together with the Request Form, to the Headteacher. The teachers Teacher in Charge should also be informed.

If the reason for the request is a personal one, a Leave of Absence Form must be completed and forwarded to the Headteacher for approval together with the Request for Cover form. Once the requests are approved in principle and the form has been signed by the Headteacher, they will be passed to the Teacher in Charge. The Teacher in Charge will process the request and return the form to the teacher.

(Please see the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Leave of Absence policy for further details re. Leave of Absence).

The week before the requested planned absence, the Teacher in Charge will publish final confirmation by email. **Staff are responsible for checking their emails to ensure cover has been provided.** If the absence is not listed, the Cover Manager must be contacted as soon as possible to make an amendment. Without this amendment, the absence will not be considered authorised.

Support staff should complete the Leave of Absence Form and return this to their Teacher in Charge. If the reason for the request is for CPD then an appropriate INSET form should also be completed and returned to the Teacher in Charge. In the case of Teaching Assistants (TA), if the Leave of Absence is approved, the TA should inform the teachers who s/he would normally support, as soon as possible, of changes to usual support arrangements.