



Staff Cover Policy

Originator: Ian Graham-Wells
September 2020

Introduction

Marshfields School is aware of the need to continue to reduce the amount of cover for absent teachers provided by our staff to fulfil the objective that staff should only ever rarely cover for absent colleagues. This policy has been developed in accordance with the conditions outlined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2019 (STPCD) and applies to all staff who deliver lessons in the school. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Further improve the learning culture across the school
- Reducing the amount of external cover teachers in the school, as the attitude to learning of students and outcomes from the students are not consistent with those found in lessons staffed by internal persons
- Further reducing costs

We are totally committed to the implementation of 'rarely cover' as we believe that it will help to raise standards by freeing staff 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. In addition, this policy aims to ensure that effective learning in the classroom continues even in the teacher's absence.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school absence policy. The school by looking closely at the school calendar and leave of absence authorisation will endeavour, where possible, to reduce the need for cover.

Rarely cover

Marshfields definition of "rarely cover":

- Providing lesson cover in an emergency situation where without doing so, the safety and well-being of students and/or staff are at risk
- Exceptional absence of staff that is not "foreseeable" (outside the analysis of trends, e.g. staff absence)
- When all the school strategies for providing cover for absent teachers have been exhausted

Specific Conditions of Cover

- The school recognises that providing cover is not an effective use of a member of staff's time
- The school is committed to exhausting all other reasonable strategies for providing cover before having to ask a member of the school staff
- The school will maintain a record of cover undertaken by teachers to inform planning and monitor. SLT will monitor the impact of cover on staff and ensure that it is as fair and equitable as possible.
- The guaranteed PPA time of staff at the school forms part of the legal conditions of employment so cannot and will not be used for cover
- Where a need for cover (short term) has been identified the school will use the Cover Supervisor's in the first instance where available.
- When staff are required to cover, a priority list will be referred to in order of, staff who are not up to full load, a limit of two covers in a half term where possible and where possible no more than one a week. Teaching staff not at full load may be asked to cover for a TA absence
- Agency staff are also used to cover for short term absence where required but only if the Cover Supervisors are not available.

- The Headteacher will exercise her own professional judgement in determining what should be regarded as short-term absence
- Teaching Assistants (TA) are managed in Subject Teams. In the event of a TA absence and no staff cover available the subject leader will decide how to allocate TA's to ensure appropriate support across lessons
- Teacher absence cover will be prioritised over TA absence cover
- TA absence cover will be prioritised on the need to cover practical subjects in the first instance

The following factors will be considered when deciding to use external agency staff vs cover supervisors to cover:

- 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

Where the Cover Supervisors are used to cover for staff absence they will always do so under the direction of a qualified teacher and will be subject to the regulations made under section 133 of the 2002 Education Act and the accompanying guidance.

School calendar

The school calendar will be published at the beginning of each academic year. It will include specific activity weeks/days (which then become a teacher's normal timetable in those weeks/on those days) to facilitate the continuation of educationally valuable visits or trips or the maintenance of enhanced learning opportunities for students in keeping with the school ethos.

Leave of absence

The school will follow the Leave of Absence Policy.

Gained time

- Teaching staff can be directed to undertake the following during gained time:
- Developing/revising departmental/subject curriculum materials, schemes of work, lesson plans and policies in preparation for the new academic year
- Assisting colleagues in appropriate, planned team teaching activities
- Taking groups of students to provide additional learning support
- Supporting selected students with coursework
- Undertaking planned activities with students transferring between year groups or from primary schools
- CPD activities

In exceptional circumstances where teachers are directed to cover during gained time it will count towards rarely cover.

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

A member of SLT will monitor the effectiveness of these strategies for providing cover on a termly basis to ensure that the quality of cover and student progress and behaviour are as required.