

THE MARSH ACADEMY

COVER POLICY



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Policy Statement

The school is committed to providing the highest quality of teaching and learning for all its pupils and will ensure at all times that teaching and learning is delivered by appropriately trained and competent staff.

The school will manage sickness and other absences effectively, and in accordance with its Policies, in such a way that provides appropriate support to staff but also ensures minimal impact of teacher absence on pupil progress and wellbeing.

Section A - Cover

1. Statutory Position

From September 2009 schools are required to ensure that teachers are required to cover for absent colleagues only rarely. The contractual provision applies to all teachers and the headteacher at the school, including teachers on the leadership spine and ASTs whether on permanent, fixed-term or temporary contracts and pro-rata to teachers on part-time contracts.

This requirement does not apply to teachers employed specifically for the purposes of providing cover.

1.1 Definition of rarely cover

'Rarely cover' is interpreted as meaning a teacher will only be asked to cover 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.

Teachers PPA time is part of their contractual entitlement and cannot be used for cover.

Emergency cover will be shared equitably among all teaching staff having regard to their other commitments.

1.2 Definition 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 and may be short-term or long-term.

Absence which requires cover as defined in this Section, does not include periods where a teacher is timetabled to be absent from their normal teaching duties e.g. timetabled PPA or Leadership and Management time.

1.3 Definitions of short term absence

Short term absence will normally be no longer than two weeks but the definition for the purposes of determining cover arrangements may vary according to:

- the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
- the length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without a teacher;
- the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of the term.

1.4 Gained time & Educational Visits

Where teachers are released from their timetable as a result of pupils undertaking examinations, or a teacher's class or group are absent on an education visit, such time is known as "Gained time".

Teachers may be directed to use gained time to undertake the following activities, directly relevant to teaching and learning,

- 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;
- Assisting colleagues in appropriate, planned team teaching activities;
- Taking groups of pupils to provide additional learning support;
- Supporting selected pupils with coursework;
- Undertaking planned activities with pupils transferring between year groups or from primary schools;
- Where the school has a policy to release staff for CPD during school sessions, Gained Time may be used for such activities.

2. Covering absence

All types of absence will be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil.

A teacher's absence from their timetabled teaching commitments may be planned (e.g. training course) or unexpected (e.g. sickness). Although the principles apply equally to both types of cover, the management of them may differ.

2.1 Cover will be undertaken only by staff:

- 2.1.1 who have been assessed as competent to undertake the role;
- 2.1.2 for whom all relevant employment safeguarding checks have been undertaken;
- 2.1.3 who have been inducted into the school's policies and procedures, particularly child protection, behaviour management and health and safety.

2.2 Cover will be provided in the following ways:

2.2.1 Cover Supervisors

The schools will employ Cover Supervisors who will provide short term cover for absent teachers.

2.2.3 Supply teachers/cover teachers

The school will engage the services of a Supply/cover teacher to cover for long term absence as deemed appropriate by the school management. The school will seek always to engage the service of a qualified teacher.

2.2.4 Other support staff

Support staff with specialist skills and knowledge may provide cover for absent teachers on a short term basis.

2.3 School calendar

To ensure the system for managing cover is robust, the school will publish a calendar for each school year following consultation with staff. The school calendar will also provide for the school's annual teaching timetable for every teacher. The School may need to review/revise its timetable during the year, and from year to year, in light of significant changes (e.g. a long term absence or other significant educational development).

3. Managing cover

- 3.1 All covered lessons will be managed in such a way that all pupils continue their learning. It is expected that where the absence is planned, teachers will provide details of the work to be undertaken by pupils during cover lessons. In the absence of this, and in the cases of unplanned absence, such information will be provided by the relevant Head of Department.
- 3.2 The school will expect supply/cover teachers, wherever possible, to engage in active teaching during cover lessons.
- 3.2.1 In the case of short-term cover this will include delivering provided lesson plans and recording and feedback to the teacher/Head of Department as appropriate.
- 3.2.2 In the case of medium/long term cover, the supply/cover teachers will be expected to undertake 'specified work' ie planning, preparation, delivery, assessment, recording and reporting.
- 3.3 Cover Supervisors and other support staff providing cover will be expected to:
- supervise whole classes or groups during lesson time;
 - give instructions for the lesson as provided;
 - maintain good order and keep pupils on task;
 - respond to general questions and provide general feedback to the teacher;
 - work under the professional direction of teachers.

Cover Supervisors will not be expected to undertake 'specified work'.

- 3.4 The school may employ Cover Supervisors and/or other Support Staff who have undergone particular training and/or who have particular skills/knowledge, such that they are judged competent to undertake specified work in the sort term (as defined previously) for specific lessons.

In these circumstances they may undertake specified work for these lessons. They will work under the professional direction, and under a system of supervision, of a qualified teacher.

- 3.5 All staff providing cover will be given an appropriate and proportionate allocation of paid to time to undertake:
- liaison with other staff and giving feedback;
 - providing written feedback and completion of other relevant paperwork;
 - planning, preparation and assessment where appropriate.

- 3.6 The school encourages all staff undertaking lesson cover to be a member of a relevant trade union/professional association.

4. Deployment of Support Staff

Where support staff are deployed to provide cover, the headteacher will:

- have regard to the suitability of the task to the member of staff's current role;
- the impact on their workload and whether sufficient time is available, or could be freed up;
- consider any additional training needs;
- ensure that if additional paid working hours are required this is agreed with the member of staff;
- ensure job descriptions are revised to reflect agreed changes and additional responsibilities;
- ensure pay and grading reflects any revised roles and responsibilities.

5. Monitoring

To fulfil its commitment to ensure the short, medium and long term quality of teaching and learning for all its pupils, the school will record, monitor and evaluate cover as follows:

- the overall amount of cover required (planned and unplanned);
- the number of individual teacher's lessons requiring cover;
- the number of lessons covered in each year/subject group;
- the number and quality of lessons covered by each qualified teacher and other staff;