

Title: Cover arrangements Secondary

Number: D3

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The teachers' agreement for the 21st Century agreed a working week of 35 hours for all teachers. From August 2006, the maximum class contact time within this is 22½ hours. All secondary schools have a teaching week of 27½ hours. In any given week no teacher should be expected to have more than 22½ hours class contact time, leaving 200 minutes in the teaching week during which teachers cannot be expected to take classes. Registration, which involves class contact, counts as part of the 22½ hours.

The time within the 35 hours has been divided into class contact time and a personal allowance of one third of class contact time for preparation and correction, with the remaining time subject to agreement at school level, and including a number of collective activities. Staff meetings, such as departmental meetings, do not count as class contact time.

During the normal running of a school, it will be necessary for teachers at times to take classes for which they have not been timetabled: this may be due to illness, sudden emergencies, meetings with parents of other staff, etc. Normally this will be done on a fair and equitable basis, with factors such as the amount of non-contact time teachers have, their duties, and the number of times they are asked to take classes being taken into account. It would also be expected that teachers were not taken at times when they had pre-arranged meetings, if this had been notified in advance.

In a week when there are less than five days, for instance when there is an Inset day or a public holiday in the week, it will be assumed that this was in fact a normal day, and there will be no different arrangements made for this week. Thus if the day on which there were no classes had a full teaching commitment, these classes will be assumed to have taken place, but equally, if a substantial number of non-contact periods were on this day, it will be assumed the teacher had this time.

Teachers who are given additional non-contact time for professional, management or pastoral duties would in a normal week receive this allocation, but in emergencies it may be necessary to use this time to cover classes. The impact that this will have on the ability of the teacher to then carry out these duties should be considered by management.

Mentors and NQTs who are given additional non-contact time to carry through the mentoring programme will however retain this, and should count the allocated time as class-contact time. This should be timetabled, to allow the manager to know which periods to avoid.

If a teacher is absent for one or two days then a decision should be made by the headteacher, or the member of staff delegated to deal with staff cover as to whether it is necessary to bring in a supply teacher. In doing so discussion should take place with the Principal Teacher involved, or in their absence with departmental staff, as to whether the department can cope with the absence. The teaching load of the absent teacher should be taken into account in reaching this decision, as well as the non-contact time the teachers providing the absence cover have available.

If the absence is for three days or longer, then a supply teacher should be employed if available. If no supply teacher is available, then the above arrangements will continue to apply.

If a teacher is in dispute over the allocation of a class, they should contact the manager who has asked them to take the class, and explain why. If they are unable to resolve the dispute, they should take the class under protest, and raise the issue with their line manager, head teacher, or union representative at the earliest opportunity.