



Rarely Cover Policy

Beacon Hill School and Specialist College for Business and Enterprise

Introduction

The Governing Body accepts its responsibility within the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document to take appropriate actions to ensure that members of its teaching staff are rarely required to cover for absent colleagues. This policy has therefore been developed to achieve this objective through ensuring arrangements are in place for anticipated cover for absent colleagues.

School Aims

This policy will help to deliver the aims of Beacon Hill School in the following ways:

- *promoting ambitious expectations for individual improvement to achieve excellence for all*, by ensuring that teaching staff, under normal circumstances, are not called upon to provide cover for absent colleagues, particularly by allowing their non-contact time to be kept free, they are therefore able to plan and undertake classroom activities. In this way individual pupil improvement is further enhanced.
- *valuing communication and providing the time and opportunity to make it effective*, through robust cover planning to ensure that teaching staff are not routinely removed from their usual classroom setting. This prevents any barriers to communication caused by cover provision, and allows for effective communication between all parties.
- *promoting an happy, healthy atmosphere of security, trust and respect*, by consolidating the school's normal timetabling, allowing for a consistent approach to teaching and behaviour management. Effective cover planning means that classroom staff are not regularly called away from their normal duties and thus ensures that routines remain unaffected by absences. Routine and consistency allow pupils to feel secure in their environment, with staff whom they trust and with whom they have built respectful relationships. Furthermore, changes to staffing, which may be potentially unsettling for pupils, are avoided and thus the happy atmosphere within the school is not altered.
- *empowering all individuals equally and so meets diverse needs*, by maximising the effectiveness of teaching staff resulting in further pupil progress, as discussed above, and also by allowing school leaders to use their management time on activities which have a direct impact on pupil achievement and staff development. Thus the needs of pupils and staff alike are not sidelined by absences.
- *celebrating achievement for everyone*, by empowering all staff to fulfill the remits of their own role to the best of their ability, without being diverted from these targets by providing absence cover. This then has a direct effect on pupil achievement.

Rationale

The Governing Body feel that the benefits of a well planned proactive cover strategy for our school will result in :

- *For pupils* – a more consistent approach to behaviour management through using school based staff more familiar with the ethos and routines of the school. Also, ensuring the orderly planning of work in the classroom will contribute to pupil progress.
- *For teachers* – an appropriate use of their time, resulting in improved morale and enabling use of non-contact time to be focused on Teaching & Learning, contributing to pupil progress.

- *For support staff* – the furthering of skills and experience and the development of improved career progression routes within school. This will ensure continuity within the school over cover, planning and delivery in the classroom.
- *For school leaders* - school leaders being able to use their management time on strategic activities that will have real impact on pupil progress, together with providing the opportunity to focus on the professional responsibilities and development of all staff.

The Governing Body therefore believe that cover is best dealt with in a structured and comprehensive way to ensure pupils receive the very best support available when staff or absent. We believe the implementation of this policy will have the desired impact on the standards and achievement of pupils within school.

Scope

We recognise that such arrangements will only work where the school have robust procedures in place to ensure that under normal circumstances teaching staff will not undertake such cover. This policy ensures that only in exceptional circumstances, which could not be reasonably anticipated, would teaching staff be requested to undertake such duties.

To ensure that this aim is achieved the Headteacher will arrange for the monitoring of all absences to ascertain the level and pattern of cover that can be anticipated. For the 2009/10 academic year the amount of teaching absence in school was as follows:

Number of ½ days lost due to teacher absence			
	Sickness Absence	Absence (other)	Total Absence
Autumn 2009	56	6	62
Spring 2010	54	26.5	80.5
Summer 2010	64	0.5	64.5

In addition to the overall number of ½ days that require cover, governors also recognise that the length of such absences will have a direct impact on the appropriate use of resources. The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring this breakdown of absence to ensure cover can be accommodated. The number of instances where cover was required for more than X days is as follows:

Number of Absences requiring cover for more than X days		
Autumn 2008		
Spring 2009		
Summer 2009		

Governors recognise that absence levels may vary from one year to the next and have therefore determined that it would be reasonable to make provision of absence rates of +10% of those identified.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

Will have a strategic role to monitor, evaluate and scrutinise the operation of this policy to ensure their overriding objectives are achieved. The Governing Body have delegated responsibility to the school staffing committee to undertake this task. This committee will receive an annual update on absences and any reported breaches of the policy, requiring cover by teaching staff. Where a change in this policy is required this will be forwarded to the full Governing Body, after appropriate consultation with staff.

The Headteacher

Will have operational responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that appropriate cover can be accommodated. This will be achieved by being responsible for ensuring procedures are in place to maintain a detailed calendar of school events/activities, inclusive of teaching timetables, the monitoring of sickness and other absences, together with ensuring leave of absence requests are objectively assessed prior to approval.

Senior Management

To provide the Headteacher with the information they require to carry out their role, through the provision on a termly basis of statistical evidence relating to absence levels, their frequency, length and the ability of school to cope with cover arrangements.

Staff

To follow the school sickness reporting procedures, ensuring that cover arrangements (both short and longer term) can be reasonably be expected to be accommodated. In addition, where requests for leave of absence are made they should be done at the earliest opportunity to ensure cover can be reasonably accommodated.

Strategies for Absence

The Governing Body recognise the need for differing strategies to meet the varied needs for cover arrangements within school. In recognising this position, we have delegated responsibility to the Headteacher to undertake an audit of cover arrangements available to school under these differing circumstances and anticipated usage based on past absence¹.

Based on this audit of cover arrangements available to the school, the Governing Body have determined that cover options will be prioritised as follows:

<u>Short term – unplanned</u> 1. T.A. Level 3. 2. Supply Teacher	<u>Short Term – planned</u> 1. T.A. Level 3. 2. Supply Teacher
<u>Long term – unplanned</u> 1. T.A. Level 3 2. Supply Teacher 3. Fixed Term Teacher	<u>Long term – planned</u> 1. Fixed Term Teacher 2. Supply Teacher 3. H.L.T.A. 4. T.A. Level 3

It is expected that only in exceptional circumstances will the above provisions fail to provide sufficient cover for absent staff, upon which teachers may be called upon to cover.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Headteacher via their Senior Management team will arrange to assess the impact of this policy on eliminating the need for cover by members of the teaching staff. In doing so they will agenda the item for a meeting of the senior management team, where on a termly basis they will discuss:

¹ The audit of requirements will be based on both anticipated absence and the school teaching timetable and calander of events/activities where cover may be required.

- The number of ½ days of absence and whether this is within the tolerance levels anticipated within this policy.
- The number of absences greater than X days and whether this is within the tolerance levels anticipated within this policy
- Whether cover arrangements are currently sufficient to accommodate the level of absence being experienced by the school
- The impact of cover requirements on support staff workloads, development needs or training
- The Budgetary implications of cover arrangements and whether they are in line with anticipated costs.
- Impact on delivery of the curriculum or standards within school

Where tolerance levels are outside of those anticipated within this policy then appropriate adjustments will be undertaken to ensure future trends are accounted for in providing cover.

Where budgetary implications are outside those anticipated a review of alternative cover arrangements may be required to determine if a more effective method of cover is available.

Annual Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body, following recommendations from the staffing committee as to the appropriateness of amendments following consultation with staff.