

Sibsey Free Primary School



Rarely Cover Policy

Approved by: Headteacher

Date: July 2023

Last reviewed on: May 2021

Next review due by: July 2025



Aims of the Policy

1. The Governing Body of Sibsey Free School will operate within this policy to ensure Teachers and the Headteacher provide cover for absent colleagues only rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable, as detailed in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

Absence

2. Absence occurs when the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is absent. This is the trigger for cover. 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 should be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil. Teachers, including the Headteacher, should cover only rarely, and only for absences which are not foreseeable. Circumstances that are foreseeable are contained within the School Teacher' Pay and Conditions Document.

3. The School will analyse its historical patterns of absence to ascertain both the main causes of absence, which have triggered the need for cover, and the impact of such absence on pupils' learning. This will be used to ascertain events that are foreseeable and therefore do not require the provision of cover by a teacher.

4. The School will monitor and analyse patterns of absence (planned and unplanned) and levels of cover and manage these appropriately.

5. Where a teacher is used to provide cover it must be shared equitably among all teachers in the school (including the Headteacher), taking account of their teaching and other duties and properly recorded.

Cover Strategies

6. The Governing Body will ensure that teachers cover only rarely by utilising the following options:

- a) Use of supply teachers;
- b) Use of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) as part of a wider school role;
- c) Employ a teacher on a short-term contract.

7. Supervision is not a good use of the time of a teacher, and teachers providing cover should normally expect to teach rather than to supervise pupils. Pupil standards are paramount.

8. Higher Level Teaching Assistants can only be used for short-term absences and will not be used as the remedy for the medium or long term absence of a teacher. Short term absences may be covered with a supply teacher or Higher Level Teaching Assistant. Medium and long-term absences will be covered by a qualified teacher and may include the use of HLTAs where appropriate. With the deployment of a supply teacher in the case of long term absence the agreed timetable may be revised if there are good educational grounds for doing so. Such revisions will be subject to consultation with staff and their union representatives.

9. The Headteacher will determine what should be regarded as a 'short-term' absence for these purposes and will be clear when allocating support staff to cover responsibilities whether the



work to be undertaken is specified work or cover supervision. Cover supervision occurs where no active teaching (i.e. specified work) is taking place and pupils undertake pre-prepared work under supervision.

10. The Headteacher will take into account, when deciding whether the use of cover supervision is appropriate or not:

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

11. Covering a class during the absence of the teacher is a responsible role, involving as it does taking sole charge of a group of pupils. School management will ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge before being given charge of a class. Staff carrying out a cover role will be appropriately trained and graded.

12. Specified work is defined as:

- a) planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
- b) delivering lessons to pupils. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
- c) assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
- d) reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

13. The Regulations state that Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) can carry out specified work subject to a number of conditions:

- HLTAs must only carry out the 'specified work' in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher in the school;
- HLTAs must be subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the Headteacher of the school; and
- the Headteacher must be satisfied that the HLTA has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out the 'specified work' (paragraph 6 b) refers).

14. The School will ensure there is a system of supervision in place and support for staff delivering specified work.

15. All teaching assistants can undertake elements of specified work under the supervision of a qualified teacher. This includes working with individual pupils (TA1 and above) and small groups (TA2 and above). However where Teaching Assistants are actively delivering a lesson to a class they should be either qualified to HLTA level or carrying out the work as part of the HLTA process. Qualified HLTAs providing cover will be paid at Unqualified Teacher Rate.

16. 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 179 of the section 3 Guidance



to the STPCD 2009, following consultation with staff and their union representatives. The school calendar will also provide for the school's annual teaching timetable for every teacher. When appropriate the School may need to review/revise its timetables during the year in light of significant changes (e.g. a long term absence or other significant educational development). If any such amendments need to be made they must be made on a no detriment basis. In such cases it will do so well in advance and in consultation with staff and their union representatives.

