

Bramley Vale Primary School



# TEACHER COVER POLICY

18 November 2019

Reviewed by the Governing Body

TLR- 116 – 18/19

## Introduction

We are committed as a school, that when we encounter planned or unexpected absence we implement the following cover strategy:

For planned or unexpected absences of less than three days, these will be covered by the following *(or a combination of the following)*:

- Supply Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Existing teacher within the school (within their 38 hour annual limit)
  
- For planned long term absences (i.e. sickness, maternity cover, etc) and for absences in excess of 3 days, the school should use a qualified teacher *(who may or may not be a supply teacher)*.
  
- In some circumstances the school may find it necessary to split the class between other classes / year groups within the school. However all cover provided by teachers for absent colleagues counts towards their 38 hour annual limit.

## What is Cover?

Supervision of a class in the absence of a teacher occurs when there is no active teaching taking place. Pupils would continue their learning by carrying out pre-planned work under the supervision of either a supply teacher or an appropriately qualified teaching assistant. Some elements of 'specified work' would be required as outlined in the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003 and accompanying guidance (DfES/0538/2003). **Refer to Appendix 1 for clarification of 'specified work'.**

Cover supervision will include the following core elements:

- Deliver plans previously drawn up by the class teacher;
- Prepare resources, if appropriate, to support planning;
- Provide an assessment appropriate to the lesson and report back in line with the school's policy;
- Managing the behaviour of pupils whilst they are undertaking this work to ensure a constructive environment;
- Responding to any questions from pupils about process and procedures;
- Dealing with any immediate problems or emergencies according to the school's policies and procedures;
- Collecting any completed work after the end of the lesson and returning it to the appropriate teacher;
- Reporting back as appropriate using the school's agreed referral procedures on the behaviour of pupils during the class, and any issues arising.

## **Background to this Policy Decision**

In the absence of the class teacher when a supply teacher is known to the pupils and is also familiar with the ethos of the school and the school's programme of study, effective learning can continue to take place, even if cover is arranged at relatively short notice.

However, when a supply teacher is unfamiliar with the school's procedures, ethos or current programmes of work the quality of learning can be less than satisfactory. In these circumstances, we may use a suitably qualified teaching assistant or current teacher in the school.

In addition, when absence is known in advance it may be more beneficial to the class to complete work prepared in advance by their class teacher.

Therefore, under the above conditions Bramley Vale Primary School's policy will be to deploy one of the school's appropriately qualified Teachers or Teaching Assistants to provide cover to enable pupils to continue with their normal programme of work.

## **Cover Strategy at Bramley Vale Primary School**

Following consultation, a decision has been taken to implement the following cover strategy:

- For short-term absences of 1 day or less the school will provide either a suitably qualified teacher, who is familiar to the children and understands the school ethos, to cover the absence or if more appropriate a suitably experienced and qualified Teaching Assistant on the school staff.
- For absences in excess of 1 day the school will always seek to use a qualified teacher, who will be responsible for all planning and delivery of work.

The Head Teacher will need to take account of the following key factors when deciding who will provide the cover:

- (i) the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
  - (ii) the length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without their timetabled teacher;
  - (iii) the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of a term.
- As far as practicable, teachers should rarely cover for absent colleagues but in some circumstances the school may find it necessary to split the class between other classes / year groups within the school but this would not exceed the 38 hour limit in each academic year and would be evenly spread. In this situation the children would carry out the pre-planned work.

## **Roles and Responsibilities – Key Staff**

### **The Head Teacher will:**

- Ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff and stakeholders;
- Determine which of the activities within the 'specified work' fall within the competence of any supply teacher and each member of the school's support staff. Appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that appropriate supervision of that member of staff is in place when carrying out those activities.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is maintained in any cover provided for teacher absence;
- Ensure that all support staff employed by the school will have appropriate CRB clearance, i.e. 'Enhanced Disclosure';
- Ensure that the school's insurance policy covers the member of staff to a level appropriate to the work that they are undertaking;
- Ensure that all members of the support staff are aware of their responsibilities relating to health and safety and the duty of care towards pupils;
- Be responsible for decisions relating to the deployment of staff to provide cover for absent teaching staff;
- Write job descriptions for all support staff, including details of the 'elements of specified work' that the member of the support staff is expected to do while providing cover.

### **Support Staff Authorised to Provide Cover for absent colleagues**

Staff approved to undertake cover for absent colleagues should:

- Be familiar with the full range of school policies, particularly those relating to health and safety, equal opportunities, behaviour / anti-bullying, anti-racism and special educational needs (SEN);
- Have the necessary skills to manage safely classroom activities, the physical learning space and resources for which they are responsible;
- Understand and be able to use a range of strategies to deal with classroom behaviour as a whole and also individual behaviour needs;
- Be able to deliver pre-planned work.

All the qualified teaching assistant staff are authorised to carry out cover supervision.

### **In the Event of Difficulties**

In the event of difficulties arising during cover for absent colleagues a Supply Teacher should seek the support of the absent teachers line manager (team leader or year group partner) and a Teaching Assistant should seek the support of the supervising teacher.

### **Line Management**

Support staff may work under the supervision and direction of many teachers within the school or the key stage to which they have been assigned, however each member of the support staff will also have a designated line manager (team leader or year group partner).

### **Communication**

The school will endeavour to keep parents and Governors and all other stakeholders up-to-date with its cover supervision arrangements.

### **Monitoring**

A nominated member of the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor the effectiveness of this strategy on a termly basis to ensure that the quality of supervision and the pupil outcomes are such as to maintain educational and behaviour standards within the school. This will be the team leaders for that key stage and the Deputy Head.

### **Reviewing this Policy**

The school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will carry out a review of this policy. The review will be informed by the termly monitoring reports of the nominated member of the SMT. The Governing Body will review the policy in line with their current procedures.

### **Performance Management of Support Staff**

Bramley Vale School is fully committed to continuous improvement and professional development of all staff. Support staff will be part of the school's on-going annual appraisal process. Team leaders, in line with the school's Performance Management Policy, will undertake appraisal for support staff. Identifying future training and development needs will be an important part of the appraisal process.

## Appendix 1

### Definition of 'Specified Work'

The regulations specify the following activities:

- Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
- Delivering lessons to pupils. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
- Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
- Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

In this list 'pupils' includes work with individual pupils as well as groups and whole classes.

Paragraphs 13 and 14 'Time for Standards: Guidance accompanying the Section 133 Regulations issued under the Education Act 2002'.

### Persons able to carry out 'Specified Work'

There are, broadly, three groups of people that may carry out the 'specified work' set out in the regulations. They are:

1. Qualified Teachers (provided they are registered with the General Teaching Council);
2. Teachers without QTS (e.g. trainee teachers, instructors and overseas trained teachers)
3. Support staff, who may undertake the 'specified work' subject to a number of conditions. These conditions are set out in paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, as follows:
  - The support staff member must carry out the 'specified work' in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher in the school;
  - The support staff member must be subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the Head Teacher of the school; and
  - The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the support staff member has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out the 'specified work'.

"The practical effect of the Regulations is not to prevent support staff from undertaking the 'specified work', but to ensure that they do so within a proper system of direction and supervision by a qualified teacher. The Head Teacher will determine how the system of supervision is provided and by whom."

Paragraph 19 'Time for Standards: Guidance accompanying the Section 133 Regulations issued under the Education Act 2002'.

### **Useful Reference Documents**

Time for Standards: Guidance accompanying the Section 133 Regulations issued under the Education Act 2002      DfES 2003 ref: DfES/0538/2003

Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement  
DfES 2003 ref: DfES/0172/2003

Working with Teaching Assistants – a good practice guide  
ref: DfES 0148/2000

Guidance for Schools on Cover Supervision    WAMG (December 2003)

School Support Staff – The Way Forward      *National Joint Council for Local Government Services*

School Teacher's Pay and Conditions – September 2019