

Cover protocol

The routines set out in this protocol have been developed in line within current policy and consultation with the NASUWT representative. They will be applied from September 2018 and be reviewed annually. They are compliant with all guidelines relating to cover in that the stated aim of the School is that staff should, beyond their nominal teaching allocations, rarely, if ever, be asked to cover for known staff absences, (a known staff absence being defined as one for which there has been at least two working days' notice of), and that, wherever possible supply staff will be deployed to cover classes for absent colleagues.

Please note that all of the points in the following protocol are designed to reduce the generation of cover which, by definition, will reduce the need for cover to be carried out.

- All staff have a nominal teaching allocation that reflects their roll within the school. Often teachers are timetabled below this for a variety of reasons including classes in sixth form not running. Staff under their nominal allocation will be allocated cover on a priority basis to ensure that contact ratios across the staff are fair and equitable as far as possible/reasonable. After the threshold of nominal weighting has been reached cover will only be requested from this member of staff as an absolute last resort and when all other options, including the merging of classes, allocation of classes to a central location and other reasonable options have been considered.
- Detailed records of all aspects of cover in the school will be kept and updated each day. Requests by individual staff to review their own data can be made at any time. MA/RS will provide and discuss data as requested.
- All requests for absence that involve the generation of cover should be made to MA/SLT via email. SLT approval must be gained for all requests.
- If absence from school is required, immediate communication/request should be made to MA/SLT. Should internal cover arrangements be made, then the SLT/MA must be informed so as to ensure the cover is recorded. A minimum of 48 hours' notice is required for an appointment request. Only in cases of emergency can this be avoided. This can then be raised through command to help improve service level for tutor issues.
- Medical appointments, maintenance tasks to quarters and or other routine activities that are needed during work hours should, whenever possible be requested for non-teaching periods. The medical centre and polyclinic are aware of the demands of teachers and have said that they will be flexible if requests are made to manage appointments around lessons. If you are unable to secure an appointment for a non-teaching period or after school time then this should be reported to **SLT** so that evidence based representations can be made at Command level. Please understand that this comes with the caveat that our health and access to essential services is a key priority for the

school and that we fully support staff getting treatments they need. Non urgent appointments at MRS should always be sought on the Wednesday afternoon slot set aside for teaching staff.

- The cover officer will put the cover list on the staff room notice board before the start of each day. This list must be checked by all staff. Cover requirements will be shown in SIMS, and individuals who are covering a lesson will receive a reminder slip.
- No staff can 'refuse' to do the assigned cover. Appeals to be exempted from any cover must be directed immediately to **SLT** not MA, and will only be agreed under exceptional circumstances.
- If there is a reason that someone cannot be used for cover, MA should be made aware at the beginning of the day.
- Meetings and or other activities should be planned for non-contact periods. The cover officer should be made aware of these so that cover requests are not then made.
- All staff are requested to consider carefully how classes and colleagues are impacted upon by cover. For example, if a class has to be missed, then consider missing an upper school one as it is likely you will have more contact time with this class, the class will be smaller and easier to manage for your colleague and you may be able to set exam related cover work which requires little direct supervision by a colleague, rather than automatically assuming a KS3 is less important. Please also try to ensure that, as far as is possible; the same class is not hit disproportionately.
- In cases of unplanned absence cover work should be set whenever reasonably possible and within keeping of national guidelines. When setting work please try to be mindful that a colleague covering the lesson may well have work of their own that needs to be done. So careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the work set and the likely input needed by the staff member covering it. If you are not in a position to set work please ensure that MA and line manager, head of department, is made aware of this.
- In a situation of known absence then appropriate full lessons that require delivery by supply staff is the expected norm.
- In the case of both types of absence cover work and notice of absence should be given to the HCA or line manager and MA so that they may be ready to assist either a member of staff or supply staff with the work if required.
- All unplanned absence, for example illness or medical appointments at short notice, must be communicated to the office at the earliest possible convenience either by text or email.

Richard Sproson – to be reviewed February 2020