

# Cover Policy

## Shooters Hill Sixth Form College

Adopted and ratified by the Governing Body on:	<b>9 March 2017</b>
Review Date:	<b>March 2020</b>
Accountability:	<b>Governing Body</b>
Responsibility:	<b>Governing Body</b>

## Principles

Shooters Hill Sixth Form College (SHC) is committed to full implementation of the statutory position on cover without breaching teachers' other entitlements under the STPCD, for example to PPA time and to Management and Leadership time.

SHC recognises that the intention of the new provision is to reduce teacher workload and will, therefore, respect the spirit as well as the letter of the statutory provisions. SHC also undertakes not to request that teaching assistants work beyond their proper role. Teaching assistants on specialist SEN study programmes and in certain specific circumstances agreed at a senior level with their full agreement and whom the Principal is satisfied have the necessary skills and experience, may have the opportunity to 'act up' to cover classes but will be paid at an appropriate rate higher than LSA rates for doing so.

SHC is committed to providing the highest quality of teaching and learning for all its students. This is best achieved with each class taught by a qualified teacher, supported by teaching assistants.

## College Calendar

To ensure that the system for managing cover is robust, the College will publish a calendar for each college year. This will be done, following consultation with the College staff and their trade union or professional association representatives.

Each member of the teaching staff will also receive an annual teaching timetable. It is accepted that teaching timetables cannot be 'set in stone', so there may need to be variations to the timetable during the year in light of significant changes that arise (e.g. a long term sickness absence, or a change in practice which is required by statute). The Principal will, however, make every effort to minimise the need for changes to individual timetables in the best interests of the teacher and the students. It will be important to ensure that, in the circumstances where changes have to be made to a teacher's timetable during the year, this is not for reasons that compromise the spirit and intention of the National Agreement.

## Reporting of Absence

If you will be unexpectedly absent from the College please ensure that you email [staff.absence@shc.ac.uk](mailto:staff.absence@shc.ac.uk) so that we can arrange cover or notify students of a change to their timetable. You will also need to provide a completed cover sheet. If too ill to email, this information can be given by phone, by calling the absence line on 0208 3199413.

- Notification of your absence including all relevant cover forms and resources should be received no later than **8:00am** on each day of your absence.
- Notifications should also be made for reasons other than sickness i.e. appointments, delays due to traffic or if you are attending a course. Known absences, such as appointments should be communicated to HR at least 48 hours in advance. Absence in order to attend Doctors, Dentist and hospital appointments will count as sickness absence.
- Please note that if the absence is going to be for longer than one day, notifications should be made on a daily basis or in advance if possible.
- HR needs to be informed when staff return to work either in person or by email.
- All absences up to and including 7 calendar days in length must be covered by the completion of a self-certification form which should be passed to HR on your first day

returning to work. All absences exceeding 7 calendar days will need to be supported by a Doctors Certificate. All forms can be found T:\\_WholeCampus\Forms.

All notifications of Absence should include the following information, where relevant to the staff member:-

- Your name
- Your Line Manager's Name
- The reason you are going to be absent

If you are a teacher:-

- A completed 'Staff Cover Sheet' should be completed for every class scheduled for each day of absence and emailed to [staff.absence@shc.ac.uk](mailto:staff.absence@shc.ac.uk)
- A completed 'Cover Work Sheet' should be completed for every class scheduled for each day of absence and emailed to [staff.absence@shc.ac.uk](mailto:staff.absence@shc.ac.uk) detailing all lesson materials and work to be completed.

If a teacher fails to set appropriate work (without reason) for their students, they will be contacted by a member of the HR Team asking for work to be provided. Persistent failure to set appropriate work will be followed up by your line manager and may ultimately result in disciplinary action.

If for any reason a member of staff is unable to set work for their students such information will need to be provided by the Curriculum Leader / Co-ordinator.

Cover sheet and lesson materials must be emailed in before 8am to [staff.absence@shc.ac.uk](mailto:staff.absence@shc.ac.uk).

### **Particular Circumstances in which this Cover Policy will Apply**

#### **Split Classes**

A class whose teacher is absent may be split and shared between other classes. As this is a form of cover, splitting of classes will now occur only 'rarely' and when other strategies for providing cover have failed.

#### **Educational Visits**

As educational visits are planned activities, teachers will not be asked to provide cover if a colleague is absent on a visit, unless there is an emergency, or a member of staff is under allocation and has priority cover as part of their timetabled lesson.

At SHC many trips and enriching activities involve teachers swapping groups so a teacher will teach another group within the same programme area instead of their scheduled group who have been taken off site. This is considered swapping rather than cover.

SHC will not seek to reduce the number of educational visits as a result of the cover provisions as we recognise the educational value to students of such activities.

#### **Gained Time**

'Gained time' is the time during the academic year, particularly in the summer term, when teachers who take examination classes or groups are released from some of their timetabled teaching commitments as a result of students being on study or examination leave. Teachers may be

directed to use gained time to cover for a colleague. This would be done in consultation with the head of the curriculum area and the individual teacher concerned.

Work undertaken during gained time will, however, not necessarily come within the definition of cover as “supervising and so far as practicable teaching any students whose teacher is not available to teach them”.

SHC is permitted under STPCD provisions to direct teachers to undertake the following activities during gained time:-

- developing/revising departmental/subject curriculum materials, schemes of work, lesson plans and policies in preparation for the new academic year. This may include identifying appropriate materials for use by supply staff and/or cover supervisors;
- assisting colleagues in appropriate, planned team coaching activities;
- taking groups of students to provide additional learning support;
- supporting selected students with coursework;
- undertaking planned activities with students transferring between year groups or from primary schools;
- where the college has a policy for all staff to release them for CPD during college sessions, gained time may be used for such activities.

It is only where such activities are being undertaken with students whose teacher is absent, that the activities will necessarily be considered to be ‘cover’, in which case the ‘rarely cover’ provision will apply. (Clause 53.7 STPCD 2016).

SHC will **not** attempt to circumvent the ‘rarely cover’ provisions in relation to gained time by re-timetabling teachers so that they are no longer ‘covering’ for an absent teacher but instead are re-designated as the teacher for that class.

### **Strategies for Providing Cover**

The college will apply the following strategy in the order set out below, when an absence needs to be covered:-

- Entry level LSAs / technicians where they exist;
- An absence cover rota will be provided for staff under hours with designated priority cover time;
- Use of LRC as far as possible;
- For long term absence: deploy a cover teacher or make every effort to bring in a supply teacher. This strategy is essential for medium and long term absence.

SHC recognises that there are restrictions on the circumstances in which a learning support assistant can be deployed to do what is known as “specified work”. Specified work is defined in the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003 as:

- (a) planning and preparing lessons and courses for students;

- (b) delivering lessons to students. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
- (c) assessing the development, progress and attainment of students; and
- (d) reporting on the development, progress and attainment of students.

The Regulations set out that, in addition to these duties being carried out by an HLTA-trained learning support assistant whom the Principal is satisfied has the skills, expertise and experience, an HLTA-trained learning support assistant must only undertake 'specified' work:

- to support and assist a qualified teacher;
- under the supervision of a qualified teacher.

A learning support assistant who has undertaken HLTA training can be directed to undertake specified work within the restrictions set out above. If not, they can only undertake cover supervision.

Only in exceptional emergency situations, where none of the above options are available will teachers be directed to cover. Any requirement to cover will be shared equitably among all staff, including the Principal, and a log of cover will be kept by the college and be available for inspection.

### **Setting of Work**

SHC will not place excessive burdens of planning, preparation and assessment on teachers who are absent. Where absence is planned, it is expected that the teacher will provide details of the work to be undertaken by students during cover lessons. The HR Team must be informed of the arrangements made for any classes (email [HRTeam@shc.ac.uk](mailto:HRTeam@shc.ac.uk)). In the case of unplanned absence teachers are expected, wherever possible, to provide details of work to be undertaken by students. If this is not possible, such information will be provided by the Curriculum Leader / Co-ordinator.

In the case of short-term cover, this will include delivering provided lesson plans. In the case of medium long-term cover, supply/cover teachers will be expected to undertake 'specified work', including planning, preparation, delivery, assessment, recording and reporting.

### **Leave of Absence Arrangements**

SHC recognises that teachers cannot take annual leave in the way that employees in other occupations can. Therefore, if time off is required during the college day it can be requested under the leave of absence policy. Cover arrangements will continue to be agreed under the 2009 cover provisions.

### **Absence Management**

If a member of teaching staff is off on medium or long term sick leave; cover will be provided by long term agency staff, as we continue to operate under the 2009 cover provisions.

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

The Principal will ensure that a record is maintained each year, showing the hours of cover worked by each teacher. This will allow the Principal and the Governing Body to analyse patterns of absence, whether planned or unplanned, and identify the levels of cover required, in order to

inform the review of the cover policy each year. In turn, this will allow the College to identify the supply cover budget for the year based on sound evidence.

The Principal has overall responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the cover provision and reporting annually to the Governing Body. The cover policy will be reviewed during the summer term each year and will be discussed with college staff and their representatives. The revised policy will be published with the school calendar each year.

# Teacher Unplanned Absence Workflow



