



COVER POLICY



INTRODUCTION

The term “cover” refers to any occasion where the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach.

Finham Park 2 is committed to raising the standards of achievement of all students. Teaching and learning is most effective when the class teacher is delivering her/his timetabled lessons, and it is widely accepted that covering for absent colleagues is not a good use of teacher time. Teachers can best use designated non-contact time for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) and collaborating with other colleagues to enhance learning within the school community.

Following the National Agreement on “Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: 2003” and in line with more recent national and local initiatives, the school has developed new ways of managing cover and currently operates a “**Rarely cover**” policy with the teaching staff.

It is clearly the case that teachers will occasionally be absent from the classroom and that their lessons will need to be covered. It is also essential that whole-school planning and management procedures ensure that cover requests are kept to the minimum. All staff must ensure that cover is considered when additional activities, visits, training and development activities are planned. Consideration of cover demands resulting from planned events are brought to the weekly Ops meeting (Operational management) and excessive cover demands may mean such requests are modified or refused. There is a set procedure to follow in the planning of any activity outside school involving students. The school keeps up to date records of staff cover needs throughout the academic year and also from previous years, thus the on-going impact on curriculum classes can be assessed.

Objectives

This policy establishes the following procedures:

- Agreed procedures for requesting cover.
- Agreed procedures for managing cover.
- The system of Cover Supervision using Learning Supervisors
- The use of supply staff from external agencies.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Cover Policy lies with the Deputy Headteacher ([Curriculum and Staffing Experience](#)).

The day to day management of cover procedures is held by the Cover Manager.

The Learning Supervisors are managed by their Line Manager.



PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COVER POLICY

Requests for cover

There are 3 main types of requests for cover and the procedures regarding each are detailed below:

- Emergency cover (unplanned): These requests include sudden illness, accidents, emergency medical treatment, personal or family emergencies etc. If a teacher cannot attend work, they must phone the Cover Manager **before 07:45 hours on the day in question. The number is (024) 77710725**. There is an answer phone in operation outside school hours. Staff should not leave messages on the main school answer phone as these may not be read until after 08.00. Email information can also be sent to **sharan.bhachu@finhampark2.co.uk** and **s.mason@finhampark2.co.uk** and copied to the relevant subject leader or department. This might include work information for the missed classes. It is important not to rely solely on Email communication for if the network is "down", information will not be received in time. If an emergency occurs while the teacher is in school then the request should be made to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher. If the absence is short term, teachers will be expected to provide cover work information under most circumstances. For longer absences the class teacher will not be expected to provide cover work information. This responsibility is delegated to the subject leader.
- Cover for professional absences (known in advance): This includes absences in connection with Professional Development, Performance Management or any other arranged professional meetings. Applications for CPD absences are made by completing the **External CPD Request Form**, which then needs to be agreed by AHT and Cover Manager. For other requests, staff should complete a **Request for Cover Form (see appendices)** available from the Cover Managers, via FROG, or hardcopies in the staff room. This form should be submitted to the Cover Manager with as much notice as possible. A minimum of one week's notice is preferred. All cover requests will be taken to Ops for consideration, but agreement is not automatic; a personal discussion with the Deputy Headteacher would be advisable.

It is expected that teachers will normally arrange all meetings in their allocated non-contact time. The main factor for the agreement of cover requests will depend on the extent of prior commitments in the school diary. The Cover Manager has a record of existing future commitments in the Academic Year Diary and it is advisable to check the date suitability prior to submitting any requests.



- Cover for Personal Absence (known in advance): Such applications need to be sent to the Headteacher for approval via the Headteacher's PA. If Leave of Absence is formally agreed by the Headteacher, the Cover Manager will be informed and cover will be provided for the absence.

Managing cover for short-term and long-term absences

- Cover arrangements: Short-term absence is determined by the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained and the length of time a particular group will actually be working without a teacher. **Cover for short-term absence will initially be provided by the school's Learning Supervisors, and any staff in school with some spare capacity.** If teacher absence is particularly heavy due to increased illness, and Learning Supervisors support resources are being used, teaching staff may be asked to provide cover in such circumstances. The SIM's Cover 7 system allows staff to be chosen on the basis of how many covers have been done in the current academic year, and whether staff are full time or part time. Staff may be asked to provide "rarely cover" on a couple of occasions during each half term should the need arise for either unplanned or known in advance absences. ~~Staff will~~Staff will also be used to cover "on call" absences. Any staff cover required will be allocated first thing each morning and staff nominated will be contacted via e-mail. **Long-term** absences for reasons such as long-term sickness or maternity leave, will normally be covered by a qualified teacher either recruited by the school on contract or bought in from an established supply agency. The school has established sound working relationship with 2/3 local supply agencies and only accepts experienced staff expected to actively engage in Learning and Teaching as expected of a main scale teacher. Full disclosure details are filed for all such supply staff, who are also logged on the SIM's Person database.
- Gained time: Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will sometimes have study leave during and after external examination periods. Teachers normally taking such exam classes are often released from their teaching commitments. This time is now known as "**gained time**". Where teachers acquire non-contact time due to educational visits or other activities, the guidance below for "gained time" also applies.

The invigilation of all public examinations will be covered by external non-teaching invigilators.



Headteachers can direct teachers to undertake specified activities in “gained time” such as developing curriculum delivery; creating teaching materials or learning resources; constructing lesson plans and policies; taking groups of students to provide additional learning support; working on transition activities; participating in CPD activities. Subject Leaders are required to monitor the productive use of gained time in their subject area.

Teachers may also occasionally cover in “gained time”. This is likely to be the case where trips or other additional activities are agreed so teachers may be required to provide the additional cover for absent teachers.

The System of Cover supervision using Learning Supervisors

Cover supervision occurs when the normal teacher is absent, hence no active teaching takes place, but the students continue their learning by carrying out pre-prepared cover work under the supervision of either a Teaching Assistant/Learning Supervisor, or another Teacher. Cover supervision will only be used for short-term absences whether unexpected or known in advance.

Cover supervision delivered by our Teaching Assistant/Learning Supervisors is a responsible role, taking sole charge of a class group of students. Teaching Assistants/Learning Supervisors, with experience and training, have acquired the appropriate skills to carry out their role. They are an established team of staff at Finham Park 2 and are respected members of the school community. Teaching Assistants/Learning Supervisors are based in subject areas and as well as taking cover lessons, they are involved in many other aspects of the work of TA support. They are involved with a mentor group, and intervention during the teaching day and occasionally are used to assist out of school student activities and OOHS.

Some guidance regarding the deployment of Teaching Assistants is given below:

- Responsibilities for the setting of Cover Work by/for absent teachers. The Subject Leader is responsible for ensuring that suitable Cover Work is set for any group whose teacher is absent. In larger departments, this task may be delegated to another member of the department team. If an absence is known in advance then it is expected that the individual teacher concerned ensures that he/she sets suitable Cover Work for their classes. It is also advisable that department team's plan a selection of “off the shelf” lessons already prepared for unexpected absences. Teachers are responsible for marking and assessment arising from Cover Work.

- Guidelines to ensure that the Cover Work set is clearly organised, suitable and sufficient. Cover Work includes any task(s) which enable students to continue their learning under the supervision of a Teaching Assistant/Learning Supervisor,



or other teachers who are not normally assigned to the class. All Cover Work should be set out on the agreed pro-forma for Cover Lessons (available electronically or paper copies from the main staff room, or FROG). Cover Work set must be appropriate to the group and the point the students have reached in the scheme of work. The Cover Work should be accessible for all students in the group including those with Special Educational Needs. The Cover Work must be sufficient to occupy all students for the duration of the lesson and extension tasks should be included for this purpose. The Cover Work must provide explicit instructions regarding any learning resources required. These learning resources should be provided or be readily available to the Teaching Assistant. Cover Work should include homework if it is required to be set for that lesson. Cover Work should include a seating plan. The Teaching Assistant / Learning Supervisor will take a register of the class using PARS.

- Communication between Teaching Assistants /Learning Supervisors and teaching staff. The establishment of good working relations between teachers and Learning Supervisors is essential. It would be helpful when planned absences occur, for teachers to prepare Cover Work well in advance so that there could be the opportunity for discussion between the teacher and the Learning Supervisor. There are also occasions where the Learning Supervisor gives feedback to the teacher regarding any particular issues that have arisen. Learning Supervisors should also ensure that any resources are collected and returned in the manner indicated on the pro-forma
- Guidelines on the management of student behaviour under Cover Supervision. Teaching Assistants/Learning Supervisors will endeavour to maintain a calm, positive and constructive learning environment in the classroom. They will follow the agreed school procedures concerning student discipline and rewards. If any students become uncooperative or show inappropriate behaviour, Teaching Assistant/Learning Supervisors will issue sanctions in accordance with school procedures. Urgent / serious concerns should either be referred to the [on-call](#) staff or, after the lesson, to the Subject Leader.

Emergencies / Accidents. Learning Supervisors are expected to follow school procedures relating to accidents and emergencies.



Appendix 1

COVER REQUEST FORM – Teaching Staff only

Name: _____ Dept/ team _____

Reasons for request: _____

Date of request (must be at least one week in advance): _____

Date of activity: _____ **Time of Absence:** _____

Please give details of classes, mentor group and duties that need to be covered:

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Mentor period					
P1					
P2					
Break					
P3					
P4					
Lunch					
P5					
After school					

Cover work to be left with (please use school cover proforma) _____

Mentor period to will be covered by _____

OOSHL to be covered by (arranged by requester) _____

Signed (member of staff) _____

Approval Process:

Process	Initials and Date Completed	
Cover Request Form submitted to Cover Manager (at least one week in advanced)		
Confirmation of capacity for this cover	YES	NO
Reasons if cover refused		
If confirmed passed to Ops Meeting		
Ops Approval of Cover Requested	YES	NO
Reasons if cover refused		
If approved by Ops passed to Headteacher		

Signed: _____ (Cover Manager)



Signed: _____ (R Plester - Headteacher) Paid / Unpaid

Appendix 2

Leave of Absence Request Form For Associate Staff

Fill in this form if you are requesting:

- Personal leave of absence (can only be signed off by your Line Manager)
- CPD

Name: _____ Dept: _____

Reasons for request: _____

Date of absence: _____ Time Period: From _____ To _____

Please give details of any work that may need to be covered:

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI

Date of request (must be at least one week in advance) _____

Signed (member of staff): _____

Agreed: **YES / NO** Signed: _____ (Line Manager)
(To be paid / unpaid – manager please circle)

For office use only: **Paid / Unpaid Leave **Recorded on SIMS Yes/No **delete as necessary	Completed by HR _____
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Appendix 3

FINHAM PARK 2 – COVER PROFORMA

Please leave in a prominent place or with a member of staff to give to the ~~cover~~ teacher/cover teacher.

Usual teacher:		Day:	Date:
Class:	Room:	Period:	Start time:
Included with this pro forma (please tick)		Seating plan: <input type="checkbox"/>	Register: SIMS

Big Picture: stage in module – prior/future learning	
Learning Objectives	
Learning Activities: Step-by-step breakdown of student activities, including resources etc. Homework	
Review: Allow minimum of 10 mins.	
End of lesson: Details re return of equipment, books etc.	
Feedback from covering staff	

Signed: _____



This form must be returned to usual teacher or subject leader. Any concerns/ praise must be followed up.

Appendix 4

External CPD Request Form for Teaching & Associate Staff

Name		Dept/Team	
Proposed training and course provider			
Location of training			
Course fee		Expenses (these must be kept to a minimum and will <u>not</u> be approved retrospectively)	
Reason for training? And how will you disseminate this to your dept/team?			
Date of request		Date of training	

Please give details of Mentor groups, classes and duties that need to be covered (if applicable):

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Mentor period					
P1					
P2					
Break					
P3					
P4					
Lunch					
P5					
After school					

Cover work to be left with (use school proforma)		Mentor period to be covered by	
Duties to be cover by			

Signed/Agreed by Cover Manager	YES	NO	
Signed/Agreed by Assistant	YES	NO	



headteacher			
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<i>For Cover Manager use only – Details of known absence for the requested day/periods:</i>

COVER POLICY

Written by P Kay
Reviewed by L Rose/A Robinson
Reviewed by P Kay/A Robinson
Reviewed by S Mason/S Bhachu
Next Review Date

January 2011
September 2017
February 2019
September 2020
February 2021

Approved by Governors: **10 November 2020**

Signed:

Headteacher

Date: **10.11.20**

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date: **10.11.20**