

# **ST. DAVID'S HIGH SCHOOL**

## **COVER POLICY**

**Reviewed by Governors:  
October 2025**



# COVER SUPERVISION POLICY

## Introduction

The National Agreement on '*Raising Standards and Tackling Workload*' makes clear that the objective is for teachers at a school to rarely cover at all.

### A: Rarely cover

1. From September 2009, teaching staff will not normally be expected to cover for absent colleagues except in emergencies.  
**Emergencies** include situations whereby:
  - a member of staff becomes unwell during the day and has to leave work
  - a member of staff has to go home to deal with an emergency
  - we find ourselves in a position where we have used all three cover supervisors to the limit of their capacity and we cannot secure the services of a supply teacher despite our best efforts to do so. In these unusual circumstances, the overriding responsibility will be to ensure the adequate supervision of the young people in our care
2. Teaching staff will have a timetable that includes PPA, teaching commitments and Leadership and Management time, but no time when they can be **expected** to cover.
3. If members of staff have 'surplus' periods on their timetable, this will not be used for cover, except in emergencies. When teachers have non-teaching time on their timetable, they can expect this time to be directed to include duties such as coaching KS3 and KS4 students, mentoring KS4 students, supervision of the SSC, attending meetings, coaching staff, observing good practice, or team teaching
4. CPD and training – forward planning is essential. All training must have supply paid for unless a member of staff has been approached in advance and he or she has agreed to provide cover within the accepted definition of what constitutes 'rarely cover' at St. David's
5. Unless they are considered to be an essential part of the curriculum (eg Geography field trips) visits that need cover will have to have the cover costed into them unless inter departmental arrangements have been made and agreed in advance with all the staff involved. These costs will be met from faculty funds unless other means of funding can be secured.
6. For 'special events' taking place in school, teachers may be asked to supervise students other than those they would normally be teaching at that time but any arrangements within departments to combine / collapse teaching groups should not add to the individual teacher's workload for the lesson in which the arrangement takes place. Such arrangements need to be arranged by and/or approved by Heads of Faculty. Certain days will be designated as Curriculum Enrichment Days (CEDs) when the normal timetable may be re-arranged and teaching duties reassigned. This will not result in increased workload or less PPA time for individual teachers.

7. Meetings with parents should be arranged to take place during non-teaching times. There will be exceptional cases where this is not possible. (For example, when multi-agency meetings are necessary.)
8. The school calendar must be planned in advance and information properly communicated. Once the calendar has been published, further requests and/or amendments will need to be discussed with the School Senior Leadership Team before any announcement is made in briefing. Subject teachers will have every right to insist that students should attend their lesson(s) as planned even if this means that they miss the opportunity to participate in an 'extra'/ out of school activity. Where there is any dispute over this, the Headteacher will weigh the evidence and reach a decision in the best interests of the learner(s)
9. When members of staff are notifying school of absence, it is essential to follow the correct procedure and telephone the school office 01244 687940 by 8 am at the latest or Amber Forshaw on 07872 023421 from 7.30 am.
10. All non-emergency medical and dental appointments in school time must be kept to a minimum, though it is recognised that hospital and specialist appointments can be difficult to obtain out of hours. Staff should make every effort to be in school before and/or after such appointments.
11. Leave of absence requests are to be dealt with according to the school's staff management of absence policy.
12. All staff, including support staff, will have a return to work interview with the Headteacher when trigger points are reached:
  - a. Three occasions in six month or
  - b. Ten days or more in six months ( A Day is defined as normal contracted daily hours)
  - c. Unacceptable patterns of absence, e.g. regular Monday absence
13. Whenever a teacher is required to (rarely) cover a lesson, a record of this will be entered onto a database, which will be updated weekly. The database will contain details of every member of staff and the number of cover lessons he or she has undertaken. These arrangements are intended to ensure there is openness and transparency – and that rarely cover means precisely that.
14. In return, staff would expect the Headteacher to continue to respond sensitively and flexibly to requests for leave of absence.
15. 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 pupils being on study or examination leave. Teachers may be directed to use gained time to cover for a colleague. This should, however, only happen rarely in accordance with the new provisions.

Work undertaken during gained time will, however, not necessarily come within the definition of cover as 'supervising and so far, as predictable teaching any pupils whose teacher is not available to teach them'. There is a list of duties within the guidance section of the STPCD which sets out the duties which it will be reasonable for a teacher to be directed to undertake if classes are absent:

- 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 pupils to provide additional learning support;
- Supporting selected pupils with coursework;

- Undertaking planned activities with pupils transferring between year groups or from primary schools;
- Where the school has a policy for all staff to release them for CPD during school sessions, gained time may be used for such activities.

## **B: Cover supervision and strategy**

Definition:

'Cover supervision' occurs when there is no active teaching taking place. Students will continue their learning by carrying out pre-prepared exercises under supervision.

- a) Cover supervision will be undertaken by effectively deployed support staff with appropriate skills and training to provide continuity until the usual teacher returns.
- b) Cover supervision includes these core elements: -
  - i. supervising work that has been set relevant to the age group and the point the students have reached in the curriculum to assist with continuity.
  - ii. managing the behaviour of students whilst they are undertaking this work to ensure a positive learning environment;
  - iii. responding to any questions from students about how to complete tasks;
  - iv. dealing with any immediate problems or emergencies according to the school's policies and procedures;
  - v. collecting any completed work after the lesson and returning it to the appropriate Faculty.
  - vi. reporting back as appropriate using the school's agreed referral procedures on the behaviour of students during the class, and any issues arising.
  - vii. Taking a class register using the SIMS Lesson Monitor System.

## **C: When is the use of cover supervision appropriate?**

Cover supervision should only be used for short-term absences. These might be known in advance (for example, where a teacher has a medical appointment or is undergoing professional development) or unexpected (for example, absence due to illness).

Longer term absence – e.g. due to long-term sick or maternity leave should be covered by an additional suitably qualified teacher whenever this is possible.

The Headteacher will exercise his professional judgement in determining what should be regarded as a "short-term" absence for these purposes. There will be a number of considerations which the Headteacher will need to consider when deciding whether the use of cover supervision is appropriate or not. The key factors are:

- a) the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
- b) the length of time a particular group of students 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.

### **d) Who should be deployed to undertake cover supervision?**

The Headteacher or a delegated member of the SLT will determine the appropriate system for delivering cover supervision.

When existing members of support staff are carrying out cover supervision duties, formal recognition should be given to the extended role and the terms of their contract should be reviewed in accordance with the first guidance note issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (April 2003).

## **e) Skills, knowledge and training**

Cover supervision is a responsible role, involving as it does taking sole charge of a group of students and it will require staff to have an enhanced CRB disclosure.

In particular, staff undertaking cover supervision should:

- a) be familiar with the full range of school policies, particularly those regarding health and safety, equal opportunity issues and special educational needs (SEN);
- b) have the necessary skills to manage safely classroom activities, the physical learning space and resources for which they are responsible;
- c) understand and be able to use a range of strategies to deal with classroom behaviour as a whole and also individual behavioural needs.

Adequate training for staff for whom cover supervision is part of their job remit is important. Relevant training materials are those used to assist teaching assistants in meeting the National Occupational Standards with particular reference to standards 3-1 'Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour'; 3-10 'Support the maintenance of pupil safety'; and 3-5 'Assist in preparing the learning environment'.

Other suitable training might include: training in school, especially on relevant policies and procedures;

website <http://www.remodelling.org/index.php>.

The job profiles are available at <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/conditions/education/support/index.html>

Available to view via <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/skills/teaching/download.html>.

Further information about TA induction training and the way in which they link to the National Occupational Standards can be found

at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/teachingassistants/training/>.

The HLTA standards can be accessed via <http://www.tta.gov.uk/about/hlta/index.htm>.  
<http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/conditions/education/support/index.html>