

ST. DAVID'S HIGH SCHOOL

RARELY COVER IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

**Reviewed by Governors
October 2025**



1. NATIONAL CONTEXT:

The objective of progressive movement towards a position where teachers may only be asked to cover rarely for absent colleagues was clearly set out in the National Agreement 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload', which was signed in January 2003. Following the decision in 2007 to implement this objective from 1st September 2009, advance notice was provided in both the 2007 and the 2008 editions of the STPCD.

'Rarely covering' is an integral part of the overall package of contractual change set out in the National Agreement, and is designed to raise standards by freeing teachers and headteachers from tasks which do not require their professional skills and expertise, and enabling them to focus on their core function of teaching and leading and managing teaching and learning.

Schools need to have robust systems in place to ensure that from 1st September 2009 teachers cover for absent colleagues only rarely. A 'robust system' is one which delivers this contractual entitlement and would be expected to deal with all foreseeable events, but would not be expected to deal with unforeseeable events.

It is not possible to provide a national template for implementing 'rarely cover', because schools are at different points on their implementation journey and will have different contexts and historical patterns of absence. All implementation strategies will, therefore, have to be determined at the school level.

When considering local determinations, schools should be mindful of the fact that, whilst they may enhance the statutory provisions, they cannot reduce them. All 'voluntary agreements' should be reviewed to ensure compliance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

2. HEADTEACHER'S MEETINGS WITH ALL STAFF:

At the beginning of the school's consultation process on its absence and cover policy, the headteacher will arrange to meet with all staff (teachers and support staff) to outline and to clarify.

- a) The issues related to the implementation of the objective of 'teachers covering rarely';
- b) The relevant documentation;
- c) How the consultation with staff and union representatives on these issues will operate, emphasizing the importance of active staff involvement and of seeking to agree the way forward and stressing that the process will be carried out in a fair, open and transparent manner.
- d) The arrangements for meetings with staff and union representatives to discuss the issues concerned and the opportunities for written submissions;
- e) The desired outcomes, including the formulation of an absence policy and a cover policy, and how a reasoned response will be provided to all consultees whose views have not been taken into account in any final determinations.
- f) Before writing the draft policy for consultation we will have preliminary discussions with staff, and union representatives, to highlight the various options available and the consequences of adopting them.

3. CONSULTATION

The Headteacher will engage in genuine consultation and will involve staff and union representatives actively with a view to seeking agreement on the best way forward in the interests of staff and the school should be clearly affirmed.

All staff and recognised trade union representatives will be given opportunities to engage in discussion and consultation throughout the period concerned.

The Headteacher will invite each of the recognized unions to nominate the person with whom all initial communication should be made.

A draft policy will be produced and further consultation will take place with union representatives.

4. REVIEW

A review of this policy will take place annually.