



Heartlands High School

Rarely Cover Policy

March 2023

Cover Policy at Heartlands High School

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to minimise staff absence in order to provide the highest quality of education for our students. There will be occasions when staff do need to take an unplanned absence. An unplanned absence due to illness or unforeseen circumstances should be notified on the day in person by telephone by **7.15am at the latest**. There is an absence line answering machine on the following number which all staff should use to report an unplanned absence: 0208 826 1232

Staff should leave a clear message stating who they are, the nature of the absence and the likely length of the absence. Where possible they should also make contact with their Line Manager to discuss the cover situation. Where possible staff should call in using the above protocols on the second and subsequent days of absence (until they either have a Doctor's Certificate covering the absence or return to work).

The objectives of this policy are:

1. To minimize the amount and impact of staff absence.
2. To improve continuity and stability of teaching for all students.
3. To secure an entitlement for all pupils to high quality learning opportunities.
4. To reduce the impact of rarely cover on staff in line with the most recent School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document and in recognition of the fact that cover is not the best use of teachers' time

Definitions

Absence and the need for cover, occurs when the person who has been timetabled to take a particular class or group is absent. The absence could be for a variety of reasons, including internal and external activities as well as sickness. It could be short or long-term. All types of absence should be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil.

Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time is a contractual entitlement for all teachers with timetable teaching time and **cannot** be used for cover purposes. Similarly, leadership, where relevant, Line Management and NQT, ITT Management time(s) should not be used for cover.

Cover is the work undertaken by a Teacher, Cover Supervisor or an HLTA. Cover supervision occurs where pupils undertake pre-prepared work, staff are expected to take an active role in

the class. Cover supervision can be used for short-term absence but it is not an appropriate way of covering medium to long-term absence or of dealing with a class when a teacher is not timetabled to teach them.

SAM is the trust software used for requesting and tracking leave requests and absence. This is cloud based and available to all staff on or off site.

The Definition of 'Rarely Cover'

Teachers should be required to provide cover in accordance with paragraph 50.7 only rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable (this does not apply to teachers who are employed wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing such cover).

'Unforeseeable circumstances' for the school include those which are unforeseeable on the basis of historic experiences, normal local experience and the evolving pattern of provision.

No fixed hours cover limit will be set as this is incompatible with the requirement to cover being linked to exceptional and emergency situations.

Key staff:

- SLT Cover lead
- Curriculum and Scheduling Manager
- Learning Support Manager

Cover Strategies Types of absence are carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil. Cover statistics and management strategies are reviewed by the lead for cover every half term.

Heartlands High School has a range of strategies for providing cover for absence, including through Cover supervisors, Higher Level Teaching Assistants and supply teachers.

Non-use of Initial Teacher Training(ITT) and Newly Qualified Teachers(NOT) to carry out cover

ITT and NQT colleagues will **not** be subject to carrying out cover requests.

Known Absences

Short term known absences can take the form of INSET, meetings during a school day, planned appointments at hospital and curriculum-related visits/trips. All short term absence whether it

be for 1 period or for the whole day are applied for either through the school's procedures for CPD via School IP through SAM. The Head Teacher will review each SAM request and a decision will be made based upon the merits of each case. INSET and Cover requests will be granted under the discretion of the Cover lead. The school reserves the right to cancel or postpone CPD / INSET events at short notice if it is deemed operationally necessary for the smooth running of the school.

The school employs Cover Supervisors to undertake, in the first instance, the supervision of students in a situation of planned absence. After three days of planned absence a specialist long term Cover Teacher will be appointed.

Medical Appointment

Staff should make every effort to plan medical appointments outside of the school core hours. There are times when this is not possible and teachers should complete a SAM request.

Unplanned Unknown Absence

Short term unknown absences may take the form of (but not limited to) sickness, dependency leave, medical emergencies, safeguarding emergencies or personal unforeseen circumstances. The school will monitor patterns of absence to ensure that the cover that teachers are required to do is kept to a minimum in recognition of the fact that cover is not a good use of teachers' time. Patterns of sickness and other absences will be monitored across the year to determine when the school needs to increase the level of supervision and cover available for staff.

First Day of an Unplanned Absence:

Unplanned absence will be covered by Cover Supervisors under Rarely Cover arrangements for the first three days of an unplanned absence. HLTAs will be used after Cover Supervisors. HLTAs will have their admin periods protected from cover requests.

Teaching staff will only be used on the first day of an unplanned absence in emergencies when it has proved impossible to source adequate cover from Cover Supervisors and HLTAs, despite all possible efforts.

Second and Third Days of an Unplanned Absence: For the second and third days of such an absence Cover Supervisors and HLTAs (ideally from the relevant curriculum area) will be used in the first instance to provide a significant proportion of the cover generated by such occurrences. We will not use teachers. On rare occasions and once the recourses of HLTAs and Cover

Supervisors has been exhausted we may use supply teachers.

Fourth Day Onwards of an Unplanned Absence: On the fourth and subsequent days of an unplanned teacher absence Supply Teachers will be deployed to cover the timetable of the absent colleague. Supply Teachers should be issued with an induction pack from the Office on arrival at HHS.

Pupils with an EHC Plan:

Pupils with an EHC Plan may require in-class support.

In order to secure this the Learning Support Manager should check the cover list each day (by 8.00am) and arrange for the re-deployment of LSAs / HLTAs from this department to attend lessons for pupils who require such support.

If an LSA is absent the Head of Learning Support (TR) should where possible re-allocate appropriate staff from within the department to cover the gap.

Cover for Meetings:

For meetings, release from teaching is not normally available. No protection exists for formal meetings. Pre-planned Line Management meetings need to be identified and the Cover Lead notified at the beginning of the academic year.

If a parental meeting cannot be arranged outside of school hours a leave of absence must be completed and submitted as a SAM request.

Unfortunately, all such meetings may be subject to last minute cancellation should cover occur that impacts the smooth running of the school.

Cover Delivery at HHS:

All staff are required to check the cover email daily and to deliver cover as required. Cover is emailed to all staff by 8.00am each morning. Staff can also check their home page on BromCom to see if they have been allocated a cover.

All known activities requiring cover will be listed in the Staff Bulletin for that week. Staff must then check the day before with the cover lead that the visit / INSET activity etc. is still able to take place.

Ensuring fairness

1 Subject specialists-where possible subject specialist teachers (or HLTA's allocated to the curriculum area) will be used to cover lessons.

2 Statistical covers since the beginning of term. A running total is kept and we aim to ensure that the allocation of cover is fair and equitable.

3 Statistics of cover will be placed in the staff room at the end of each term. We aim to achieve parity by the end of the Academic Year.

Expectations of Cover staff:

Those covering for colleagues are expected to play an active part in the delivery of the cover work. They should register attendance on the electronic system / class list provided and leave a note for the substantive teacher as to work achieved, student behaviour, etc. If a Beginner Teacher is involved in the delivery of the lesson the cover teacher must still be present in the room or (on the Learning Coordinator's instruction) in an adjoining area known to the Beginner Teacher).

Setting work for covered classes, providing class lists and seating plans and ensuring that both work and lists/plans are with the appropriate person in good time is the responsibility of the absent teacher - as per the Heartlands Sickness Policy. Clearly, in cases where it is not feasible or reasonable for the absent teacher to set and pass on the work, it becomes the responsibility of the head of subject/curriculum team who should also ensure access to the teaching area and briefing of the cover teacher. A class landscape and seating plan should be available to the covering teacher. If a student teacher is involved in the delivery of the lesson, the cover person should be informed in advance

In the event that we do use Supply Teachers there should be an induction pack available for their usage.