



The Robert Carre Trust

Rarely Cover Policy

This policy applies to Carre's Grammar School and Kesteven & Sleaford High School.

The National workforce agreement on teachers "rarely cover" came into force in September 2009.

Rarely cover does not mean never cover but it is the schools' intention that absences known in advance should not generally be covered by members of the teaching staff.

The Trust aims to have a bank of "supply" cover supervisors. It will also set aside money for supply teachers to cover teachers who are absent for longer periods.

For short term absences cover will not generally be provided for sixth form groups and in certain restricted cases teachers may be asked to combine small groups. For Sixth Form lessons students will be expected to undertake set work and will be registered by another department member where possible.

Teacher absences can be categorised into a number of groups:

1. Unforeseen (i.e., teachers phoning in sick less than 24hrs beforehand)

These will be covered by cover supervisors or support staff wherever possible. Where this is not possible teachers on a non-teaching period will be used. However, it should be noted that:-

- a. 'ppa' periods will not be used.
- b. Where possible 'ar' / 'curriculum support' periods show where staff are most likely to be used on cover. 'ar' (at risk) / 'curriculum support' on a teacher's timetable indicates that this is a period for which they could be used for cover
- c. Other periods will be allocated on an equitable basis where possible and in the longer term will aim to be equalized amongst the teaching staff (with teachers who teach more or less than their target teaching load having figures reflecting this). This is an aspiration which will not always be entirely possible to meet.

2. Longer term sickness:

- a. 3-10 days.
The school will generally attempt to recruit supply teachers to cover these absences, with any gaps being covered by cover supervisors (or TAs at KSHS). These staff will work under the direction of the Head of Department/Faculty.
- b. 10+ days.
In negotiation with subject leaders, every attempt will be made to employ a temporary teacher responsible for the timetable in its entirety including preparation and marking (with normal non-teaching allowances). During certain periods of the year (e.g., Summer Term), departments may be asked to adjust the departmental timetable to ensure students receive specialist training

3. Personal foreseen absences (medical/dental appointments, family events etc)

All teachers are requested to keep these to an **absolute minimum** – so, for instance, appointments for dental checkups should **not** be made at times that cause cover requirements.

If absence for a medical appointment is absolutely necessary the absence form must be filled in as far in advance as possible for permission to be given by the Deputy Head at CGS or the Headteacher at KSHS. A copy of the appointment form should be attached to the green (CGS) red (KSHS) cover sheet where possible.

All other personal absences must be discussed in advance with the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher. A sensitive approach will, of course, be taken with serious “unique” issues such as family bereavements, graduations etc. Other requests (children’s sports days for instance) will not generally be granted. These arrangements have the potential to cause bad feeling; teachers should be aware of the likely response to such requests and think carefully before making them. Reference should be made to the RCT Leave of Absence Policy.

4. Trips/events etc

This section covers all planned events with cover implications (except sports fixtures and INSET)

We cannot afford extensive supply cover, but our programme of trips is rich, varied and valuable. The following is an attempt to resolve these conflicting pressures.

NO trips or events can be assumed to be automatically allowed, however central to the curriculum or long-standing. Every trip with cover implications **must** be discussed beforehand with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher. This should take place at the earliest opportunity, preferably before the academic year starts and certainly before the Educational Visits proformas are filled in.

In particular, the first 4 weeks of each school year (at CGS) and the period from Easter to the external exams will be kept clear of all disruptions wherever possible. The Year 11 Curriculum should not be disrupted after the October half-term break (at KSHS).

Decisions as to whether a trip or event can be allowed to proceed will be based on all the relevant factors. This will include the degree of cover needed and the disruption to the Curriculum.

A trip will be allowed if it meets all the criteria and can largely be covered by cover supervisors, supply teachers and/or teachers released.

5. Sports fixtures

As foreseen events, teaching staff will not generally be expected to cover for these but nevertheless they are an important part of the school’s enrichment programme. For most fixtures it will be expected that cover will be organised from within the PE department’s resources, supported where needed by cover supervisors (although they must be consulted with in advance). This may mean the use of PE staff or the combining of groups. “Whole day” fixtures may need a different approach and a request for a supply teacher should be made to the SLT member responsible. All other absences of PE teaching staff will be treated in the same way as other teachers.

6. INSET

Teachers should give careful thought before applying for term-time courses. If they really are the best way of gaining professional INSET then permission should be sought from the member of staff responsible using the INSET forms. Cover will be arranged in consultation with the cover manager, and where this is not available supply cover will be used. This will be charged to the CPD budget. Once this budget is exhausted no further requests for such courses can be entertained.

Other issues:

Setting work

- Cover supervisors / TAs are not teachers and are not expected to set or organise work, merely to supervise and facilitate work set by teachers.
- Copies of this work must go to the Head of Department either by paper or electronically; a copy in the pocket on the staff room notice board is also often helpful as too is a copy to Reception.
- All teachers MUST set clear and coherent work for all their classes if they are absent for whatever reason.
- The work should not involve “new” explanations and if it requires resources these must be readily to hand.
- If severe illness prevents this the responsibility falls onto the Head of Department /Subject Leader
- Seating plans should be available to cover staff through Bromcom MIS

Non-teaching periods

- Each member of teaching staff will have 4 of their non-teaching periods per two-week cycle designated as “planning and preparation allowance” – ppas (pro-rata for part-time staff). Although these will not be used for cover, teachers should remain on the premises unless they have sought permission and “signed out”.
- Other non-teaching periods may be used for cover, although hopefully rarely. This cover may sometimes be needed at very short-term notice and it is the teacher’s responsibility to check the staffroom notice board and/or their Bromcom screens before the day starts (any changes or additional requirements after 8.45am will be dealt with by individual contact). Teachers on these periods should always be on the premises.

Gained time

Although teaching staff should expect to be re-deployed in support of trips, this does not apply to Year 11 and Year 13 “gained time” in the summer term. These periods will be treated as any other non-teaching period, but not as a “ppa” period.

Other absences

Absences caused by other work commitments (e.g., exam board markers) will only be granted provided full supply cover is paid for.

Approved by Trustees 15 January 2024

Next Review: January 2025 (12 months)