



# Cover Policy

<b>Adopted:</b>	March 2016
<b>Review Date:</b>	Spring 2018
<b>Responsible for Review:</b>	Associate Head
<b>Committee for Review:</b>	Teaching & Learning
<b>Frequency of Review:</b>	2 Years
<b>Statutory:</b>	No

### Context

Schools across England and Wales have implemented a strategy that ensures teachers will rarely be required to cover for absent colleagues. There is no definition of what constitutes ‘rarely cover’. However, a reasonable interpretation could be: “rarely cover should mean not at all under normal circumstances”.

### Understanding ‘Rarely Cover’

Bungay High School have adopted the ‘Rarely Cover’ strategy. The BHS view of rarely cover is:

- Providing lesson cover in an emergency situation where not doing so puts the health, safety and well-being of students and/or staff at risk.
- Exceptional absence of staff that cannot be pre-determined (outside the analysis of trends e.g. staff illness).
- When all the school’s strategies for providing cover for absent teachers have been exhausted (all cover supervisors, staff deployed, regular supply staff deployed and no agency supply teachers available).

### Benefits of Well Planned Cover Strategies

Stakeholder	Benefits
<b>Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent approach from staff in terms of behaviour management</li> <li>• Staff are familiar with the ethos and routines of the school</li> <li>• Students are more likely to be in receipt of properly planned work during cover lessons</li> <li>• Properly planned work will contribute to student progress</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate use of teachers’ time</li> <li>• Reduction of teacher absence and turnover</li> <li>• Improved morale and work life balance</li> <li>• Enables teachers to use non-contact time in the way they have planned to use it</li> </ul>
<b>Support Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater variety of support staff roles in school</li> <li>• Improved career progression for support staff</li> <li>• Opportunities to train and move into teaching</li> </ul>
<b>School Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders have time to focus on leadership and management and strategic activity rather than stepping in to deliver cover</li> <li>• Headteachers have better opportunity of achieving their dedicated time</li> <li>• A proactive plan in place for cover management</li> <li>• Teachers are able to focus on their professional responsibilities</li> <li>• Reduction in time spent on crisis management</li> </ul>



<b>Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved monitoring of the content of planned work during cover lessons</li><li>• Planned work is more likely to link to the curriculum and programme of teaching and learning</li></ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Costs of cover supervisor employment can be planned for in advance</li><li>• Teacher supply costs reduced</li></ul>

### **BHS Cover Policy**

At BHS, we are aware of the need to continue to reduce the amount of cover for absent teachers provided by our teaching staff to fulfill the objective that teachers should only ever rarely cover for absent colleagues. This policy has been developed in accordance with the conditions outlined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2008 and applies to all teaching staff in the school that are not wholly or mainly employed to provide cover. The Policy was introduced in September 2009.

#### **5. Specific Conditions of Cover**

- BHS recognises that providing cover is not an effective use of a teacher's time.
- BHS is committed to exhausting all other reasonable strategies for providing cover before having to ask a member of the teaching staff.
- BHS will maintain a record of cover undertaken by teachers to inform planning and monitoring.
- The guaranteed preparation, planning and assessment time of teachers at a school forms part of the legal conditions of employment so cannot and will not be used for cover.

Where the need for cover is identified, we will deploy the following resources:

- Supply/cover teachers
- Cover supervisors

The Headteacher will take account of the following key factors when using cover supervisors:

- The extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained
- The length of time a particular group of students would be working without a teacher
- The proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject area over the course of the term

When members of support staff are deployed, they will always do so under the direction of a qualified teacher.



## **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation**

A member of Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of these strategies for providing cover on a termly basis to ensure that the quality of supervision and student progress and behaviour are as required and that rarely cover is achieved.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Protocol for the management of requests from teaching staff for 'Private and personal' leave of absence**

#### **Rationale**

This protocol is intended to help colleagues by facilitating a mutually supportive arrangement which will enable teaching staff to request cover for 'P & P' absence. It is not intended to extend the circumstances in which 'P & P' absence is requested, but rather to manage such requests in a fair and supportive manner. It is recognised that all cover disrupts the learning of our students and should be minimised whenever possible.

#### **The management of requests**

Requests for 'P & P' cover are made on a 'purple form' (leave of absence) which is submitted to the Associate Head. Requests are sometimes conveyed verbally to the Head or Associate Head prior to the submission of the form. The school has always supported and will continue to support requests for paid 'P & P' leave of absence for events such as:

- Moving house
- Attending the funeral of a close family member
- Attending a medical appointment (which cannot be made out of school hours)

In such circumstances, cover will be provided by our Cover Supervisors.

Under the new arrangement, cover for some 'P & P' requests will be provided by colleagues. This new arrangement will be used to cover absence in circumstances such as:

- Attending a child's nativity play
- Attending a child's graduation
- Attending a family wedding



All teaching colleagues will offer to cover no more than 3 x 50 minute sessions in a year (1 x 50 minute session per term). The Cover Manager will maintain a record of when colleagues have been used for cover under this arrangement and they will be notified in advance. They will also be made aware that the cover is to facilitate a colleague's request for 'P & P' leave of absence.

It is important to note that there is a clear distinction between cover in emergency circumstances (which comes under the 'rarely cover' arrangements) and cover under this new mutually supportive internal arrangement.