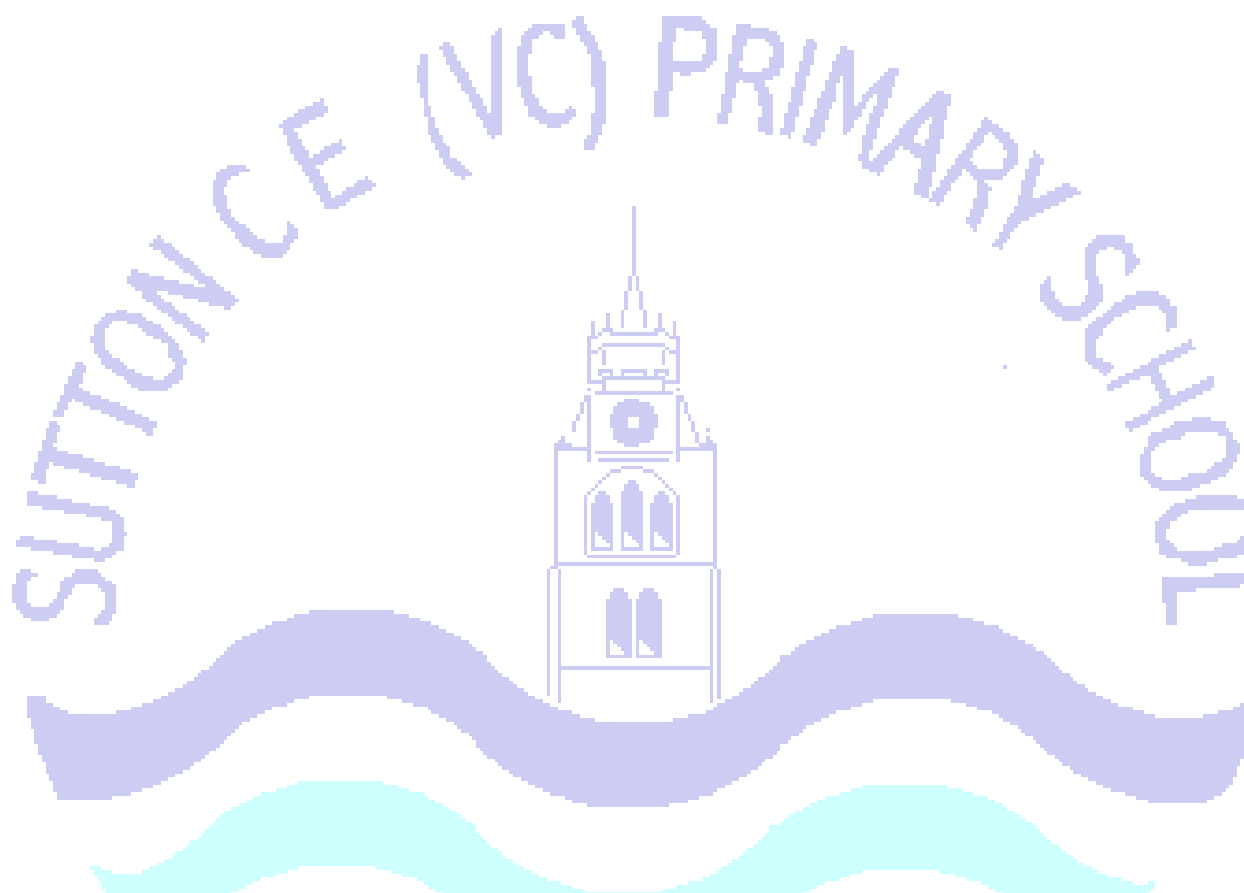




Sutton CE (VC) Primary School

Cover Supervision Policy

April 2023



Introduction

The National agreement signed in January 2003 restricts the amount of cover that each individual full time teacher may provide to a maximum of 38 hours in any academic year. The long term aim being that teachers should rarely, if ever, be required to provide cover unless paid to do so outside of their usual contracted hours.

As part of national workforce reforms, Sutton C of E VC Primary School took the decision to look at ways of ensuring high quality teaching and learning during the short-term absence of teaching staff, by introducing “cover supervision” for some absences instead of using supply teachers and/or teachers from within the school.

Paragraph 21 of “Time for Standards: Guidance accompanying the Section 133 Regulations issued under the Education Act 2002” emphasises the continuing importance and responsibilities of qualified teachers in these circumstances:

“Teachers are highly skilled professionals whose expertise and judgement is essential to effective teaching. They make the leading contribution to teaching and learning, reflecting their training and expertise. Accountability for the overall learning outcomes of a particular pupil will rest with that pupil’s qualified classroom/subject teacher and, to that end, the National Agreement states that each class or group for timetables core and other foundation subjects and for religious education must be assigned a qualified teacher to teach them (subject to the unqualified teacher provisions in the regulations).”

What is Cover Supervision?

In the absence of their class or subject teacher, pupils would continue their learning by carrying out pre-arranged exercises under the supervision of an appropriate member of the school’s support staff, e.g. teaching assistant. “Cover Supervision” occurs when there is usually no active teaching taking place. Cover supervision does not involve carrying out “specified work” as outlined in the Education (Specified Work and Registration)(England) Regulations 2003 and accompanying guidance (DfES/0538/2003).

Cover supervision includes the following core elements:

- supervising work that has been set in accordance with the school’s policy;
- managing the behaviour of pupils whilst they are undertaking this work to ensure a constructive environment;
- responding to any questions from pupils about process and procedures;
- dealing with any immediate problems or emergencies according to the school’s policies and procedures;
- collecting any completed work after the end of the lesson and returning it to the appropriate teacher;
- reporting back as appropriate using the school’s agreed referral procedures on the behaviour of pupils during the class, and any issues arising.

Background to this Policy Decision

When a supply teacher is known to the pupils and is also familiar with the ethos of the school and the school’s programmes of study, effective teaching and learning can generally continue to take place, even if cover is arranged at relatively short notice.

Experience has shown however that using unknown supply teachers to cover for short-term absences can be of limited benefit in terms of teaching and learning. In lessons where the supply teacher is unfamiliar with the school’s procedures, ethos or current programmes of work, the quality of teaching and learning can be less than good. In these circumstances, we feel a different approach to cover will be more beneficial to the pupils in our school.

When absence is known in advance, it may be more beneficial to pupils to complete work prepared in advance by their class teacher, under appropriate adult supervision. This work is likely to take the form of the reinforcement activities employed by teachers, as part of the normal education process.

Under the above circumstances, Sutton C of E VC Primary School’s policy will be to deploy one of the appropriate members of the school’s support staff to provide cover supervision.

Other factors

The Headteacher will take account of the following key factors when deciding whether cover supervision is appropriate or not:

- the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
- the length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without their timetabled teacher;
- the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of a term.

Under some circumstances, the Headteacher may find it necessary to split the class between other classes/year groups within the school.

Cover Strategy at Sutton C of E VC Primary School

- Unplanned or Planned short-term absences of a maximum of 2 days for classes assigned to a single teacher will be covered by:
 - a. Appropriate trained and qualified support staff, e.g. Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) / Teaching Assistants

or

 - b. Supply teachers.
- Unplanned or Planned short-term absences of more than 2 days* for classes assigned to a single teacher will be covered by:
 - a. Supply teachers (who will be responsible for all planning and delivery of work from the third day of absence onwards if planning is not already available).
- The Headteacher has the professional discretion to extend the period of HLTA/TA cover if deemed appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher will:

- determine which members of the school's support staff are willing to undertake specified work;
- determine which of the activities within the specified work fall within the competence and status of each member of the school's support staff and will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that appropriate supervision of that member of staff is in place when carrying out those activities.
- ensure that all support staff employed by the school have appropriate DBS clearance, i.e. "Enhanced";
- ensure that the quality of the supervision and pupils' learning is high;
- ensure that all members of the support staff are aware of their responsibilities relating to health and safety and the duty of care towards pupils;
- be responsible for the overview of decisions relating to the deployment of staff to provide cover for absent teaching staff. The administration of cover will be carried out by the appropriate member of the school's support staff;

Administration Officer, or equivalent will:

- be responsible for informing the Headteacher about forthcoming cover requirements, as soon as possible once the relevant information has been received.

Support Staff Authorised to Provide Cover Supervision must:

- be familiar with the full range of school policies, particularly those relating to health and safety, rewards and sanctions, equal opportunities, behaviour/anti-bullying, anti-racism and special educational needs (SEN);
- have the necessary skills to manage classroom activities and the physical learning space and resources for which they are responsible;
- understand and be able to use a range of strategies to deal with classroom behaviour as a whole and also individual behaviour needs;
- Attend appropriate training as directed by the Headteacher.

In the Event of Difficulties

In the event of difficulties arising while undertaking cover supervision, the member of support staff should:

- a. seek the support of their supervising teacher or line manager

or

- b. use the school's usual referral system (other than in emergencies, a teacher who is taking PPA time must be considered to be not available and their PPA time should not be encroached upon).

Line Management

Support staff may work under the supervision and direction of one or more teachers within the school or the key stage to which they have been assigned. However all members of support staff have a designated line manager who will carry out their annual performance management in accordance with the school's Performance Management/Appraisal Policy. (NB. the line manager for all class based Support Staff is currently the Assistant Headteacher).

Monitoring

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor the effectiveness of this strategy on a termly basis to ensure that the quality of supervision and the pupil outcomes are maintained.

The policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or before if required.