

South Ayrshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee For Teachers

Absence Cover Agreement (JNCT 1.19)



Version Control

Version	Date Issued	Last Review Date	Author	Update Information
1	2016	2016		
2	November 2024	November 2024	J Galloway	Document reviewed and updated to reflect changes to DSM, current terminology and post designations.
3	November 2025	November 2024	N Campbell	Review of document – no changes

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1. INTRODUCTION

The provision of absence cover in every school will be agreed by the DSM committee. It is important that all members of staff are aware of the agreement and that they are given up-to-date information throughout the session regarding the use of the absence cover budget. The head teacher, as the person responsible to the authority, retains the right to make decisions in relation to this aspect of the management of the school.

The agreement provides for the allocation of a staff replacement cost budget to each primary, secondary, and special school. The budget, is proportionate to the number of teaching staff on the complement of the school. It is designed to provide adequate resource to cover the cost of short-term supply cover. Schools will use a large part of their budgets to cover staff absence due to illness, attendance at training, etc. Schools may also release teaching staff for other professional activities in connection with the work of the school.

There may be a small number of cases where factors such as exceptional levels of illness among staff will mean that the budget cannot cope with all the demands made upon it. In such circumstances the school's resources may be supplemented but only after careful investigation to ensure that the budget has been properly managed at school level.

The agreement will operate on a financial year basis. A sum will be delegated to the school for the full financial year.

2. EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE

The Council agrees to maintain appropriate teaching staffing standards in line with its commitment to raising attainment and will make every effort to ensure that no permanent teaching staff will be made compulsorily redundant during the period of the agreement.

3. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Council will continue to provide resources at the level included in the DSM scheme.

4. ABSENCE COVER

The first of the following sub-sections sets out general guidelines whilst subsequent sections relate to the position in relation to primary, secondary and special schools respectively.

A General

Cover arrangements are a devolved issue to be agreed by South Ayrshire's Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers:

- (a) School arrangements for the provision of cover should follow the process agreed by the schools DSM committee.
- (b) Maximum class contact time and preparation and correction time should always be respected.
- (c) Internal cover duties should be distributed on an equitable basis, having regard to the respective workloads and remits of all staff.
- (d) Promoted staff should receive an appropriate amount of management time.
- (e) The timetable commitments of staff who may not have prime responsibility for a class but who do have contractual duties in areas such as, EAL, and pupil support should normally be respected.
- (f) The timetable commitments of staff who may not have prime responsibility for a class but who do have contractual duties in areas such as, EAL, and pupil support should normally be respected.
- (g) In primary schools the splitting of classes should be avoided and only resorted to in exceptional circumstances.
- (h) In secondary schools the amount of cover to be provided internally should take account of fluctuations in workload over the school session.

B Primary

1. Each school will be delegated a budget, proportionate to its complement of teaching staff, from which it will be expected to finance such provision of supply staff as might be felt necessary in respect of:

- (a) periods of absence not referred to in section 2 below.
- (b) internal re-arrangements of class commitments necessitated by staff development or similar causes.

2. Resources will be retained centrally to finance the provision of:

- (a) cover from the first day of maternity leave.
- (b) cover from the first day of a period of foreseen long-term absence (i.e. absence indicated by medical certificate or similar document as likely to extend beyond the period stated in section 3 below).

- (c) cover for long-term absence, other than on account of maternity, in accordance with the terms of section 3 below.
- (d) cover for absence on account of trade union duties falling within the scope of the authority's agreement with teachers' trade unions.
- (e) cover for jury duty after the third day of absence.
- (f) cover, considered necessary following discussion between the head teacher and the Service Lead, Education Support for absence resulting from participation in the work of SQA, GTC or other similar national body.
- (g) cover, considered necessary following discussion between the head teacher and the Service Lead, Education Support, for absence resulting from participation in the work of the authority, for example as a member of an appointments committee; and
- (h) cover in other circumstances where it is agreed that an undue burden might otherwise be placed upon the school.

3. For the purposes of clauses 2(b) and 2(c) above, cover shall be funded centrally on the following basis:

- (a) Arrangements for the provision of immediate cover may be made on an exceptional basis by Service Lead, Education Support in respect of schools where all teaching staff are full-time class committed.
- (b) Long-term absence cover will be funded centrally from the day following the day shown in column 2 (i.e. maximum length of short-term absence) below, FTE Teaching Complement comprises of basic staffing entitlement and reduction in class contact time:

TEACHING COMPLEMENT (FTE)	MAXIMUM LENGTH OF SHORT-TERM ABSENCE
1-4.9	4
5-5.9	5
6-6.9	6
7-7.9	7
8-8.9	8
9+	9

C Secondary

1. Each school will be delegated a budget, proportionate to its complement of teaching staff, from which it will be expected to finance such provision of supply staff as might be felt necessary in respect of:

- (a) periods of absence not referred to in section 2 below and not exceeding 20 consecutive working days; and
- (b) facilitating internal re-arrangements of timetabled commitments necessitated by staff development, internally determined examination arrangements or similar causes.

2. Resources will be retained centrally to finance the provision of:

- (a) cover from the first day of maternity leave.
- (b) cover from the first day of a period of foreseen long-term absence (ie absence indicated by medical certificate or similar document as likely to extend beyond 20 consecutive working days).
- (c) cover for long-term absence from the 21st day of any single absence.
- (d) cover for absence on account of trade union duties falling within the scope of the authority's agreement with teachers' trade unions;
- (e) cover for jury duty after the third day of absence;
- (f) cover, considered necessary following discussion between the Head Teacher and Service Lead, Education Support, for absence resulting from participation in the work of the SQA, GTC or other similar national body.
- (g) cover, considered necessary following discussion between the Head Teacher and the Service Lead, Education Support absence resulting from participation in the work of the authority, for example, as a member of an appointments committee; and
- (h) cover in other circumstances where it is agreed that an undue burden might otherwise be placed upon the school.

D Special Schools

The arrangements indicated above in relation to primary schools will also apply to special schools.

Secondary schools with supported learning centres should apply secondary school arrangements.

E Resources and Virement

- (a) On behalf of the authority, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, to manage the absence cover budget as efficiently as possible. It is recognised, however, that there may be instances where, as a result of abnormal levels of staff absence, additional resources may require to be provided. Such additional allocations will, however, be made only following thorough investigation by the Service Lead, Education Support
- (b) Schools will be reimbursed for any outlay on absence cover which, in terms of the agreement, should have been the subject of central funding.
- (c) Where central budgets are liable to fund cover in relation to any absence it will continue to have responsibility for the funding of any replacement cover.

The absence cover budget allocated to each school is included in the DSM Scheme and is also included below for information.

Primary Absence Cover

Primary	
Fixed Primary	daily rate x 2 days
Variable Primary	(1.5 days x fte of class committed staff*) x daily rate (*no absence cover is provided for promoted post management time)

Secondary Absence Cover

Basic staffing formula (incl. staff in ASN bases/units):	
Variable Secondary	(1.5 days x fte) x daily rate

Special Absence Cover

Basic staffing formula	
Fixed Special	daily rate x 2 days
Variable Special	(1.5 days x fte) x daily rate

- (d) The budgetary resource is intended to meet, each school's absence cover requirements within the terms of the agreement. Prior to the end of the financial year schools will have the opportunity to make alternative use of any unspent resources from the budget originally allocated. Through the consultation process schools will be able to exercise the following options:
 - i devote the resources to alternative uses such as the purchase of additional staff development or classroom supplies.
 - ii carry forward a surplus into the following financial period as set out in Section 3.5 in the DSM Scheme

- iii some combination of i and ii above

It should be noted that, as arrangements for virement will be made in advance of the end of the financial period, precise calculation will not be possible and schools over-estimating the resources available to them will be required to carry forward a deficit.

5. MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed within a 3-year period unless there is a need to review prior to this date.