



## **LNCT Agreement 15: Agreement on the 35 Hour Working Week for Teachers** (Revised July 2026)

### **Introduction**

- This agreement applies to all teachers and is based on the Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements for Teachers (SNCT Handbook, Part 2 Appendix 2.7)
- The SNCT Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements for Teachers (WTA) states: *“The individual and collective work of teachers should be capable of being undertaken within the 35 hour working week”*
- The arrangements set out in this agreement apply to all grades of teachers, including those in promoted posts. The term ‘teachers’ will be used throughout the rest of this agreement to refer to all teacher grades
- The provision in this agreement will also apply on a pro rata basis to teachers who are contracted to work less than the full 35 hour working week and to those on fixed term contracts
- One of the key elements of the SNCT Code of Practice is the emphasis on enhancing the professional status of the career of teaching, providing greater professional autonomy for individual teachers and ensuring a collegiate and participative style of management. Teachers will agree the range of collective activities contributing to the wider life of the school on a collegiate basis
- The Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements for Teachers indicates a range of activities, which can be undertaken within the 35 hour working week. This provides the basis for all agreements in relation to working time.

### **35 Hour Working Week**

SNCT conditions of service set out the definition of a working week for teachers as follows:

- 35 hour week for all teachers working full-time.
- Maximum class contact time of 22.5 hours per week.
- Personal preparation and correction time of 7.5 hours per week, equal to 0.333 of class contact time
- The remaining time of five hours per week will be referred to as the balance of time and will be agreed by the School Negotiating Committee (SNC) in each school, in line with school and local priorities for collegiate and individual activity and as set out in the school calendar.
- All tasks which do not require the teacher to be on the school premises can be carried out at a time and place of the teacher’s choosing – teachers will notify the appropriate manager of their intention in this respect.
- All divisions of time are pro rata for part time staff. Working patterns should be considered in relation to working days per annum and staff development days. Part time staff will undertake a pro rata amount of WTA activities on those days when the teacher is employed. The exception to this rule is parents’ meetings when part time teachers will comply, on a pro rata basis, with the arrangements agreed for the school, as per SNCT guidance (Part 2, section 3.9).

- Within the 35 hour working week, individual teachers will exercise their professional judgement in relation to the prioritisation of tasks. In exercising their professional judgement, teachers will require to take account of objectives determined at school, local and national level.

## **Class Contact Time**

- In timetabling, Headteachers will ensure that non-contact time for teachers is arranged in reasonable blocks of time to ensure meaningful activity can take place. As a guide, minimum units of time of 30 minutes should be adopted and should be timetabled on a regular basis, better facilitating use of time.
- In primary schools, specialist teachers may be timetabled to take a class on their own to enable the pupil timetable to work to maximum efficiency and to facilitate weekly maximum class contact time of 22.5 hours for all teachers.
- Where non-contact time falls on a day on which the teacher is absent from work but would normally otherwise be employed, SNCT advice is that there is no requirement to transfer non-contact time to another day. This applies equally for periods of absence and closure days due to public holidays or other events. In the case of staff absence and/or school closure, when calculating class contact / non-contact time, a normal five day week should be assumed, ie non-contact time is not pro rata and the usual allotted times should be adhered to during shortened school weeks. Any variance to this must be agreed at SNC level and can be referred to LNCT for advice.
- Where there is collegiate agreement in an SNC to adopt a more flexible approach to working hours (SNCT Part 2, Appendix 2.17) over a period of two to four weeks, this must be agreed at LNCT. Such an arrangement must meet SNCT criteria and be arranged prior to each academic year.
- Provisionally Registered Teachers' maximum class contact time is 18.5 hours per week during terms one to three of the academic year. This can be gradually increased to 22.5 hours over the course of term four, subject to agreement amongst the Provisionally Registered Teacher, supporter and Headteacher, and assuming the Standard for Full Registration has been met.

## **Preparation and Correction Time**

- Under the terms of the SNCT agreement, teachers are entitled to undertake preparation and correction activities at a time and place of their own choosing. In recognition of the paramount importance of ensuring the health and safety of children and young people, each school will have an agreement on how this entitlement can be exercised to ensure sufficient staff availability during the pupil day. Each school should ensure a clear mechanism is in place to affect this, including the process for teachers to inform their line manager of their intention to be off school premises.

## Balance of Time

- The balance of time is an annual total of 195 hours.
- The activities undertaken during this time should be agreed at school level and be clearly shown in the annual school calendar. The key consideration is that all contractual activities should be able to be overtaken within the context of the 35 hour week. 10% of the balance of time should be allocated as flexible to allow scope to react to short notice operational requirements (school/authority/national). Activities appropriate to timetable include:
  - Additional time for preparation and correction
  - Parents' meetings – including Staged Intervention, etc
  - Staff meetings
  - Preparation of records and reports
  - Forward planning
  - Formal assessment
  - PRD/PU
  - Curriculum development
  - Additional supervised pupil activity
  - CPD/CLPL activities

(See Appendices 1a and 2 for further detail).

## Reaching Agreement at School Level

- **School Negotiating Committee**
  - All schools are required to have a School Negotiating Committee (SNC) comprising members of school management and teaching staff representing the Trade Unions. In schools where there is no formal Trade Union representative it is recommended that Headteachers ensure that all staff are involved in this committee.
  - Decisions made at school level must be collegiate in nature, represent all teaching staff and result from a structured and transparent negotiating process in line with the Code of Practice.
  - The teaching staff of each school shall determine how its own SNC is to be constituted. The membership of the committee will be determined by the staff as a whole to reflect the composition of the teaching staff and include representatives of the recognised teaching associations.
  - Where teaching staff numbers are small, the SNC may comprise all teaching staff. Care must be taken to ensure that all teachers affected by the WTA, including part time staff, visiting specialists, etc have the opportunity to be involved in the process.
- **The remit of the SNC is to:**
  - Evaluate the previous year's WTA in line with SNCT/LNCT advice.
  - Negotiate school based agreements on the use of the balance of time, for approval by all teaching staff in line with SNCT / LNCT advice (Appendices 1a and 1b).
  - Produce a school calendar of events.
  - During the session, reconvene on a termly basis, to discuss any relevant matters eg, ES visit, LNCT and/or SNCT communications, any issues regarding teachers' terms and conditions, the calendar/ WTA, etc
  - Note that any changes to the agreed WTA and calendar should be discussed and agreed by the SNC.

- **The operation of the SNC:**

- SNC meetings should take place within the 35 hour working week. Time should also be made available from within the 35 hour working week for staff to consider issues relating to the WTA individually and in departments/faculties/stages.
- Meetings should be termly, with a recommendation that two take place during term four, when the calendar and WTA will require time to construct and agree.
- The committee's joint chairpersons will be the Headteacher and the representative of the Trade Union with the greatest number of members.

- **Failure to Agree:**

- In the event of agreement not being reached within the SNC, the joint chairpersons should contact the LNCT co-secretaries to seek advice.
- If a dispute remains unresolved, then the dispute should be referred to the LNCT. Meanwhile the status quo ante will prevail.
- A referral to the SNCT may proceed should agreement not be reached following LNCT support.

Signed: 

**Bryony Monaghan, Co-secretary LNCT**

**Date: 31 July 2026**

Signed: 

**Ann Skillen, Co-secretary LNCT**

**Date: 31 July 2026**

## Appendix 1a: Guidelines on WTAs and School Calendars

SNCs should agree an allocation of time between collegiate and individual activity within the balance of time since not all of the balance of time should be allocated to collegiate activities. Agreement should be based on the principles of professionalism and trust.

For staff fully committed to 22.5 hours teaching time per week the balance of time will be 5 hours per week – 195 hours per session. All time allocations for part time staff will be pro rata.

It is recognised that good practice in the arrangements made in the construction of school calendars is:

- A number of meetings of staff should be arranged across the school session for whole school/team/collegiate priorities.
- Parents' consultation arrangements should be clearly stipulated and suitably scheduled across the school session.
- During weeks which include parental consultation events, other collegiate meetings should be avoided as far as possible.

Collegiate meetings may include:

- Working groups related to the School Improvement Plan
- Department/faculty/stage meetings
- Promoted staff meetings
- SNC meetings
- Pupil Support meetings (SI, GIRFEC, etc)
- House/stage/curricular meetings
- Health and safety committee meetings

Individual meetings may include:

- 1-1 mentoring meetings
- 1-1 PRD discussions
- Professional Update
- Team meetings related to promoted staff remits scheduled outwith the school working day should also be included in the agreed school calendar.
- On occasion, it may be necessary to arrange collegiate meetings in addition to those on the calendar of events. These should only proceed following a request to and agreement through the SNC.

## Appendix 1b: Guidelines on Tackling Bureaucracy

### Appendix 2.18: Working Time Agreements – Managing Teacher Workload

This SNCT Appendix makes clear the aim of the SNCT to remove all unnecessary bureaucracy that does not contribute to teaching and learning.

“The SNCT agreed the Statement of Teacher Professionalism (Part 2: App 2.6) that the focus on teaching and learning is about empowering teachers to improve outcomes for learners. This approach brings real benefits and at a local level we need to guard against too much paperwork and overly complex processes which get in the way of teaching and learning. Everyone has a part to play in tackling excessive workload, which is:

*Anything that makes it impossible for teaching staff to complete their duties within the 35 hour week.*

The SNCT seeks to control workload through the 35 hour working week. The SNCT has issued previous guidance on Working Time Agreements (JS/05/08) and the management of workload. The SNCT requires schools’ negotiating committees to conclude Working Time Agreements, subject to guidance provided by each LNCT. Working Time Agreements should provide the context to undertake the collegiate activities set out in the SNCT Handbook (App 2.7) and should also inform the targets, time and resources in a School Improvement Plan.”

See SNCT Part 2: Appendix 2.18 for further detail.

## Appendix 2

### 1 Additional Time for Preparation and Correction

- Additional time can be made available as required by individual circumstances or workload and negotiated on an individual basis.

### 2 Parents' Meetings

- Individual schools should reach agreement on the number and duration of meetings required on an annual basis.
- Parents' meetings can take place in the evening or end-on to the school day. If end-on to the school day, then staff should be allowed sufficient time for a break.
- Up to five hours should be allocated to each meeting. This includes preparation time.
- Individual teachers should not be expected to attend parents' meetings for groups of pupils whom they do not teach.
- When an individual teacher has met with all the parents whom they are scheduled to meet then the teacher should not be expected to remain on school premises.
- It is recognised that teachers may arrange to meet parents outside the formal structure of these meetings. This should be planned from the balance of time.

### 3 Staff Meetings

- SNCs will reach agreement on the number, frequency and duration of meetings.
- Meetings may include whole staff meetings; department/faculty/stage meetings; management meetings; working groups; health and safety committee meetings; primary/secondary liaison meetings; etc.
- Most meetings will take place at the end of the pupil day but this does not preclude meetings taking place by agreement during the pupil day.

### 4 Formal Assessment

- Assessment of a diagnostic or formative nature should be considered as part of normal preparation and correction. However, time should be allocated where this is required and agreed at establishment level, when assessment is summative and part of formal process, eg end of unit tests, annual reports, etc. Consideration should be given in relation to other time being made available to any teacher, eg the use of external invigilation, SQA and preliminary examinations, S1 June timetables, student work experience, etc.

### 5 Forward Planning

- Agreement should be reached on the frequency and format of planning.
- Time must be set aside for this purpose and should consist of constructive, professional dialogue.
- Work involved in constructing the school / department / faculty improvement plan should also be included.

## **6 Career-long Professional Learning and Professional Review and Development**

- Teachers are entitled to an additional 35 hours of CLPL per annum, other than the 35 hours already committed by teachers on an individual, annual basis. Five days per annum will be designated staff development days. The aggregated hours will not exceed 35 hours in any session and ought to be the same as the normal school day on that particular day of the week. Any requirement to vary that should be discussed and agreed by the school's SNC and then communicated to the LNCT at the beginning of each academic session.
- It is recognised that some aspects of CLPL can only be carried out during the normal school day. This applies, for example, to some in-service staff development courses organised locally or nationally, but also to activities such as shadowing colleagues, etc.
- Within the WTA, sufficient time should be agreed over the academic year for the update of records and plans in the context of PRD and PU.

## **7 Additional Supervised Pupil Activities**

- Individual flexibility should be agreed with voluntary additional supervised pupil activities such as study support, educational trips and other educational activities. The key consideration is that when these take place, all contractual activities should be able to be overtaken within the context of the 35 hour week.