

**Reduced Contact Time for Teachers in Primary Schools
Guidance for Schools - Session 2006-2007**

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework for future arrangements to facilitate the release of teachers from class contact during the pupil day thus reducing class contact time to 22.5 hours per week. For the purposes of this paper, the teacher who covers the class to allow this to happen will be referred to as the Reduced Contact Time Teacher (RCTT).

1. Background

The National Agreement, "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century", provided that with effect from August 2006 the maximum class contact of all teachers in all sectors would be reduced to 22½ hours per week.

The experience of the first phase of class contact reduction in primary schools, (to 23½ hours from August 2004), has demonstrated that the change has brought significant benefit to teachers. It has enhanced teaching by providing focused time for the correction, preparation and reflection necessary to support children's learning. This has helped to support an effective learning environment for pupils.

The key principles for effective implementation have been, and will continue to be, flexibility and consultation.

2. Management and organisation of arrangements for RCT

A sufficient level of core staffing will be allocated to each school to allow the reduction in class contact time to take place.

While there are many benefits which accrue from these arrangements, the diversity of settings means that it is neither practical nor desirable to impose one solution on all schools. Principles should be consistent across the city but much of the detailed organisation will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher and management team in consultation with staff.

This will give management teams the opportunity to

- build on effective practice
- engage in a collegiate way with staff
- enhance the feeling of ownership felt by staff
- react to local circumstances, needs and aspirations

3. Entitlement

- In the event that, following consultation, there is agreement that the standard pupil week for all pupils will be 25 hours (from August 2006) further guidance will be issued
- Full-time teachers will have a reduction of 2½ hours from the 25 hour pupil week
- Part-time and job-share teachers will have a weekly class contact maximum defined by the pro rata proportion of 22½ hours

- Support for Learning teachers will have maximum class contact of 22½ hours per week.
- Supply teachers will have maximum class contact time of 22½ hours per week (equivalent to a daily class contact maximum of 4½ hours). Guidance on operational arrangements for supply teachers undertaking short term work has been agreed and is contained in a separate paper issued to Head Teachers.
- Newly Qualified Teachers participating in the Probation Induction Scheme will have maximum class contact of 0.7 FTE. This will amount to 15.75 hours per week in session 2006/07. Fuller details of working hours arrangements are contained in a separate paper agreed by the DNCT.
- Visiting Teachers will also have a maximum class contact of 22.5 hours per week. Two hours of RCT will be provided by release from timetabled class commitment for a full afternoon session (typically 1.15pm -3.15pm). This time will be available to individual visiting teachers for their personal preparation and correction but arrangements will be made, where desired, to facilitate collaborative work among visiting teachers. The balance of RCT will be provided through a deferred start to class contact until 9.10am each school day. While the fundamental principle remains that it is good practice for Visiting Teachers and class teachers to work collaboratively, there will be occasions when the Visiting Teacher will teach the class without the presence of a class teacher thus allowing that teacher to have appropriate reduced contact time.

4. The Reduced Contact Time Teacher (RCTT)

It is important that the focus is not solely on the operational arrangements for the covering of classes. The proposed model must also have a positive impact on learning and teaching. To this end it is proposed that each school will use part of the Reduced Contact Time to focus on enhancing teaching and learning in literacy.

From August 2006 one hour of the 2.5 hours of RCT will be utilised to engage pupils in enhanced literacy work. This development will be supported by in-service training and additional resources. The aim of this work will be to raise attainment and to sustain raised levels of attainment in all aspects of literacy.

Use of the other 1.5 hours per week of Reduced Contact time will build on successful practice from the previous two sessions. The RCT teacher will be asked to undertake work in another agreed and specific area (or areas) of the curriculum or a cross curricular aspect such as PSD throughout the whole school.

The RCT teacher will be responsible for

- all aspects of the management of the class which he/she is teaching
- planning, delivering, assessing and reporting on the identified area/areas of the curriculum

The RCT teacher role will be open to any member of the permanent teaching staff in a school including the NQT mentor. A shared arrangement where two teachers share a class and each undertake 0.5 FTE as RCT teacher may also be considered.

The selection of the most appropriate person to undertake the role of RCT teacher will be dependent on a number of issues

- strengths and aspirations of individual members of staff
- area(s) of the curriculum which is/are to be focussed on during RCT

Expressions of interest will be sought by the Head Teacher. The expectation is that every effort will be made to secure the selection of the RCT teacher through a consultative process but ultimately it will be a management decision within the overall context of class allocation.

In addition, due account will require to be taken of the following:

- Involvement in the role of RCT teacher will be reviewed annually taking account of class organisation and school development priorities
- A teacher should not normally be deployed in the RCTT role for longer than two consecutive sessions
- It may be necessary, in a small number of cases, for the RCT post to be shared between two schools
- Liaison and consultation with the class teacher on issues regarding children's progress will be part of the school's working time agreement
- The RCT teacher will also have a maximum class contact of 22½ hours

5. Timetabling

Head Teachers will have a degree of flexibility in the way that non-contact time is apportioned and allocated. A planned timetable will require to be drawn up, shared with staff and kept under regular review. Non-contact time will be arranged in blocks of time which are sufficiently long to be viable for the curricular activity taking place and purposeful for the released teacher to make effective use of. Accordingly, blocks of non contact time should be arranged in reasonable blocks eg 45 minutes in duration. It should be noted that this guidance on blocks of time shall also apply to Support for Learning teachers. This time should be respected by other staff and free from interruption.

In weeks which are less than the normal 5 pupil days because of holidays, INSET etc. the normal timetabled arrangements for class contact reduction will nevertheless be sustained for the pupil days which remain. Head Teachers should have regard to this in constructing the timetable for RCT to avoid the same teachers each year experiencing detriment through loss of RCT on the occasional holiday days etc.

6. Use of Non- Contact Time

- The time will normally be available to the individual teacher as part of their 7.5 hours allowance of Personal Time for preparation and correction
- Through negotiation and agreement, some of this non-contact time can be used for appropriate collegiate activities eg discussion of forward plans, meetings for Staff Development and Review and other activities detailed in the Working Time Agreement in DNCT/4. Where such agreement has been reached and arrangements made for such activities to be undertaken within the pupil contact day and during the teacher's non-contact time, this should be clearly noted as time from within the 190 hours which are allocated for collegiate activities eg Forward plan discussions – 4 x 0.5 hours over the year = 2 hrs collegiate time, to be done during RCT. This would leave a balance of 188 hours for other collegiate tasks.
- On occasions where all or part of the RCT for that week is used for agreed collegiate activity, the minimum personal allocation of 7.5 hours for preparation and correction will still be available to the teacher. All or part of this time may be outwith the pupil day

7. Absence of Staff

Absence of any member of staff will be covered as usual. Guidance on strategies to manage teacher absence has been agreed by the DNCT and issued to Head Teachers.

8. Location

Non-contact time may be undertaken at a place of the teacher's choosing. The teacher should notify the school's HT if they are to be off site during this time. Paragraph 3.12 of the Guidance for Schools on Working Time (DNCT/ 4 Revised for session 2005 -2006) gives further information on this matter. This might be facilitated by the introduction of an off-site log.

9. Accommodation

A suitable area where teachers can work undisturbed should be provided, wherever possible.

10. Monitoring & Review

The implementation of the reduction of class contact will continue to be monitored. The DNCT is committed to regular review of these arrangements.