

## **Statement of UNISON's position on Short term cover**

There are 3 instances where Teaching Assistants (TAs) are required to cover for Teaching Staff. In the interests of

- Protecting our members
- Not undermining the qualifications and expertise of our Qualified Teaching Colleagues
- Our commitment to ensuring that children receive the best possible education

UNISON wishes to set out the position for our teaching support members and also for the benefit of school leadership. as follows;

### **Short term Cover**

This is included in the TA job description and it refers to instances where a teacher is temporarily absent from the classroom for a short period of time **up to 20/30 minutes**. The teacher will have planned the lesson and the Teaching assistant will have received direction and be aware of the expectations of how the lesson should progress. This may be necessary as the teacher needs to take a telephone call, attend a short meeting with parents/colleagues. It may also occur at the start of a day when a supply teacher has been called for and not yet arrived.

It would be anticipated that under these circumstances that the TA would be able to call for additional support if needed without difficulty.

**No additional payment would be due to the TA in these circumstances.**

### **Teacher Absence (sickness, training or other authorised absence )**

The school should be committed to providing a Qualified Teacher to cover the absence. If the absence is planned then arrangements can be made well in advance. However, in the event that this is not possible the school may approach a TA and ask if s/he is willing to cover the class for the period of absence.

The school would need to be satisfied that the TA has sufficient knowledge of the group, experience and additional classroom support to undertake these duties. It is recognised that it is no longer necessary to have the HLTA status to act as HLTA. We do not believe that it would be reasonable for TAs to manage a class entirely on their own when there is normally a Qualified Teacher and a TA present.

**An additional payment equal to the difference between the TAs current grade and the HLTA grade would be payable for the entire period of cover provided.**

It is important to recognise that as this is not a contractual obligation Tas should not be expected to undertake this level of responsibility but rather it should be by agreement if the Ta is willing and satisfied with the support.

### **PPA Cover**

If a TA regularly covers a Teacher's PPA time then they would either;

1. Have a separate contract for the regular hours covered at HLTA rate (Grade G)

or

2. Submit a regular supply sheet to claim the uplift between their current grade and the HLTA rate.

DCC have stated that they do not agree with UNISON's interpretation of short term cover. However as we were effectively the authors of the JIQ, we maintain that it is **our** interpretation of the terms that should apply. DCC and Hay have failed to seek clarity on the meaning and it is this that has created confusion.