

## Cover Supervisor Training Handout

### What is a Cover Supervisor?

A cover supervisor works across a school supervising classes in the absence of timetabled staff. They deliver work that has been set by a teacher and manage the classroom ensuring that all pupils remain on task and behave well.

In addition to covering classes, cover supervisors may have duties at break and lunchtime and during form time or may be asked to invigilate exams.

### What do Schools Expect of You?

- Fulfil the duty of care towards the pupils in class
- Be flexible
- Be organised
- Equip yourself with and use the School's key staff names
- Be prepared
- Be professional

### Duty of Care

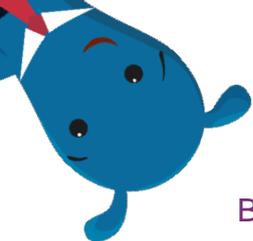
Fulfil the duty of care towards the pupils in class, this is the most important role that you will perform.

- Register the pupils in the class within the first 5 minutes and return this information to the school office. Registers may be taken using SIMS software, a link to SIMS training can be found on the further resources page.
- Know where the students in your care are at all times – if a child leaves the classroom for any reason (e.g. toilet break, music lesson, appointment) write down their name and the times they left and returned to the classroom.
- Find out the School's emergency, discipline and safeguarding procedures and follow them. These should be handed to you as you arrive at the School in the School's information pack.
- If you have any safeguarding concerns, report them to the child protection officer; the school office can let you know who you can report to.
- Do not take any school or pupil information home with you, leave it all in school. Also make sure you log out on any devices you have used at the end of each session as they may contain pupil data.

### Be Flexible

- The School needs you to be able to adapt to changes made during the day. Your timetable may change as the School needs to respond to staffing changes.
- Schools will want you to use any subject knowledge you have, however you may be asked to supervise subjects outside your area of expertise.
- Face challenges and changes with a smile. Flexibility is a key part of the cover supervisor's role.





## Be Organised

- 🌀 Arrive early enough to collect your timetable for the day and familiarise yourself with the school information pack.
- 🌀 Ensure that you have the necessary log-ins and passwords that you will need. Do not let the pupils have access to this information and log off at the end of your session.
- 🌀 Find out where your lessons are and be on time to classes. Your classes may be at different ends of an unfamiliar school; use the map in the school information pack and don't be afraid to ask for directions.
- 🌀 At the end of the session, leave clear and concise feedback for the teacher including both positive and negative behaviour using pupils' names. This will help you to build a more lasting relationship with the pupils as you may return to the same school.
- 🌀 Ensure the classroom is left tidy. Remember to leave the completed work where you have been instructed to do so.
- 🌀 Accurate timekeeping is key so make sure you know when the sessions end. Ensure that you leave enough time to collect in the completed work, put any resources away and dismiss the class.

## Equip Yourself With and Use the School's Key Staff Names

- 🌀 Find out who you should report to at the end of the day and who to ask for if you need help during the day.
- 🌀 Knowing the names of the head of year or head of department will let the pupils know that they are accountable.
- 🌀 If there are other members of staff in the classroom with you, find out their names before the lesson begins and discuss how to work together. They will be able to assist you as they are more familiar with school behavioural policies, key staff names and where everything is.

## Be Prepared

- 🌀 Usually work will be set ready for you to follow with the necessary books or worksheets provided. Occasionally work will not have been set. If this happens you will need to send a note with a sensible child to the department office or another classroom to find what to do.
- 🌀 Use your initiative and have activities to engage the class while advice is sought.
- 🌀 In your bag have a pencil case containing stationery you may need during the day.
- 🌀 Wear a watch as you may not be able to rely on the School's clocks and your phone will be turned off and put in your bag.

## Be Professional

- Although you are not the pupils' regular teacher you should still expect and model a high standard of behaviour and create a positive and calm atmosphere.
- Meet the pupils at the classroom door.
- Introduce yourself to the pupils at the start of the session – write your name on the board.
- Teach what has been set by the School unless instructed otherwise by a senior member of staff.
- Interact with the pupils throughout the lesson assisting them where you can.
- Dress appropriately at all times in smart/casual wear (no jeans or trainers). You may be required to teach PE so have suitable clothes with you.
- Ensure that your mobile phone is switched off and put away. Only check your phone during authorised break times. This will protect you from safeguarding allegations.
- Do not put yourself in vulnerable situations – don't be alone in a classroom with a pupil; don't turn your back on pupils especially in a small environment such as stock rooms or store cupboards; don't use slang words or phrases as these can be misinterpreted and cause offence; don't talk about your personal life as this compromises your professional persona; don't consume alcohol or any recreational drugs on school premises or attend school whilst under the influence of these; don't lock pupils in the classroom, no matter what their behaviour.

## What don't Schools Expect of You?

- You will **not** need to do any planning
- You will **not** need to do any marking
- You will **not** need any subject-specific knowledge
- You will **not** need to set homework

## Behaviour Management

Successfully managing the behaviour of the class is a core skill of the effective cover supervisor. In this section we will look at some strategies that can help you to:

- Establish positive behaviour at the start of each session.
- Maintain positive behaviour during the class work time.

Remember, always read the School's behaviour policy on arrival at the School and adhere to it.

As a cover supervisor you will continually meet new classes of pupils so establishing your behavioural expectations and settling the pupils to their work quickly are key to a positive session. Your role at the beginning of each session is to...

- Greet the children before they enter the classroom.
- Introduce yourself and write your name on the board.
- Take the register.
- Ask the children to get their equipment and planners out on their desks.
- Read the instructions for the lesson and explain the objectives using clear language.
- Hand out the necessary resources.

Sounds simple and quick but it's often not. Let's look at some skills that can help.

## Strategies for Settling a Class

- Do not shout – shouting is a tiring and ineffective strategy.
- Retain a calm persona at all times.
- Be positive and state what you require not what you don't want to see or question why pupils are misbehaving.
- Use the pupils' names - knowing the children's names is extremely helpful so try and learn a few as soon as possible. You may have been provided with a seating plan, if not you can see names on the front of their exercise books.
- Have a cartoon/image/thought/question on the board ready for them when they arrive in class.
- Give out responsible tasks such as handing out books or other resources.
- Write names on the board under a smiley face/tick.
- Use praise – “Well done for having your books ready; thank you for sitting ready to listen; I can see that Izet is ready to learn.” Use rewards – “I'm going to give Paul a merit as I can see he's ready to learn.”
- Close down irrelevant requests – “When you see me after the lesson, we can resolve this situation. Put your hand down for now, thank you.”
- Clap a pattern for the students to copy.
- Count down from 5-1 and/or raise your hand in the air.
- If pupils are fiddling with something, use a descriptive cue – ‘you are fiddling with the blinds’ - followed by directional cue – ‘look this way and listen’.
- “Thank you” once they're calm.
- Acknowledge that you are not their usual teacher and you may do things differently.

## Maintaining Positive Behaviour

- Start by setting out your expectations concisely: “I expect you to work in silence and complete the work that your teacher has set. If you need help, put up your hand. Thank you.”
- Do not stay at the front of the class or sit at the desk - move around the class and work with the pupils.
- You may be supervising a subject in which you have expertise so use your knowledge. Alternatively you may have less knowledge of the subject than the students; be honest and use the resources available to try to assist where you can.
- Some lessons require the pupils to talk to each other; explain that a sensible noise level will need to be maintained or they will be required to work in silence.
- Use and refer to the school's behaviour policy consistently to reward students and remind them of the consequences set out for incorrect behaviour. Referring to the School's behaviour policy makes the interaction with the pupils less subjective and more professional.
- Praise students as a class and individually for positive behaviour. Pass this onto their teacher on your feedback and let the pupils know that this will happen.

## Physical Contact with Pupils

In your role, circumstances may arise where physical contact with pupils may appear appropriate; for instance, a pupil's behaviour could become threatening or violent or you may need to comfort a distressed child.

It is essential that you are fully aware of the Department for Education's Advice on Use of reasonable force as this gives clarity on proper physical contact with pupils.

This is to be used in conjunction with the behaviour policy specific to the school that you are working in. Be aware that some schools do operate a no-touching policy. These policies and advice exist to protect both yourself and the pupils in your care.

Please read the Department for Education's Advice on Use of reasonable force using the link below.

**Note:** You will need to confirm that you have read the advice during the assessment.

Do not hesitate to send for help where necessary.

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