

10 December 2021

Dear Principal

RE: Use of classroom assistants to provide cover for teachers

The Education Authority has noted an increase in the number of queries being raised in relation to classroom assistants being asked to provide cover for teachers and the appropriateness of this practice.

Please be advised that the current Classroom Assistant Job Description states the following points:

- Supervise groups of pupils, or individual pupils on specified activities including talking and listening, using ICT, extra-curricular activities, and other duties, as directed by the class teacher/officer.
- Provide continuity of adult care of e.g. supervising play and cloakrooms including hand washing, toileting etc.
- Such other duties as may be assigned by the principal/outreach teacher/education authority officer within the level of the post.

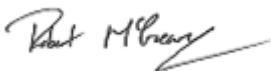
This note is to serve as a reminder that under current agreements Classroom Assistants work under the direction of the class teacher and should not be asked to provide cover outside of the scope of their job description. Classroom Assistants should not be asked to provide extended cover.

In circumstances where a teacher will be absent for a period of time substitute cover should be arranged, however, we recognise that current pressures are making this very challenging. Where no substitute teacher is available, we would ask that you use Circular 2021-25 to guide you in the provision of remote learning. All schools should continue to contingency plan for staff absences as a result of the pandemic.

Link to Circular 2021-25: Further guidance for schools on supporting remote learning to provide educational continuity – December 2021

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202125-further-guidance-schools-supporting-remote-learning-provide-educational-continuity>

Regards.



Robbie McGreevy
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“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”