



Thameside Primary School:

Teaching Staff Absence, Cover & Classroom Preparation Policy

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Review date: January 2027



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| Policy reviewed by: | Sophie Greenaway |
| Key Changes: | This is a new policy |



1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out the expectations for teaching staff when absent (planned or unplanned), off-site at training, or having lessons covered e.g. for PPA. Its purpose is to ensure consistency, reduce unnecessary workload for colleagues, and reflect our school culture of **"We, Not I."**

Our aim is to ensure that:

- cover staff have the information they need
- office staff and support staff are not left to resolve classroom issues
- children's learning continues smoothly
- all classrooms are ready for use every day

All expectations within this policy are intended to be practical, proportionate, and applied with professional judgement.

2. Daily Preparation Expectations (Applies to All Teachers)

Teachers are encouraged, wherever possible, to ensure that the next day's lessons are prepared before leaving school each day. This may include:

- slides uploaded on to common
- links checked (where applicable)
- printouts prepared and copied
- manipulatives/equipment laid out or clearly labelled
- clear instructions (where applicable) for teaching assistants

This suggested preparation aims to reduce avoidable workload for colleagues and protect continuity for pupils. As such, where possible, practical resources and equipment should be prepared in advance; however, it is recognised that this is not always feasible. In such cases, resources should be clearly labelled or their location signposted in the Daily Cover Template. Expectations should be applied with professional judgement.

3. Responsibilities of Teaching Staff

3.1 Classroom Set-Up

Classroom set-up each morning is the responsibility of the class teacher or - if they are absent - the partner teacher.

It is not the responsibility of administrative or support staff to set up rooms, prepare technology, or locate resources, unless specifically agreed beforehand.



3.2 Clear Notes for Cover Staff

Teachers must keep an up-to-date master copy of the school's **Daily Cover Template** for their class. The master copy should include all standing information that does not change day to day, such as routines, timetables, behaviour expectations, technology set-up, locations of key resources, and key pupil information. This ensures that any member of staff can confidently step into the class to cover planned/unplanned absence or PPA cover.

Keeping the template current supports continuity of pupils' learning and protects the wellbeing of the person providing cover, as well as the colleague who is absent.

Lesson-specific information (such as links, slides, or practical resources for that day) is added only when a planned or unplanned absence occurs. In the case of planned absence, teachers will add this information in advance. In the case of unplanned absence, teachers are not expected to re-plan lessons or create additional resources. Reasonable actions include adding links to the cover sheet for already-prepared slides and signposting where resources are located.

Teachers are not expected to prepare cover materials during evenings or weekends. For example, where a planned absence falls on a Monday, preparation should be completed during the preceding school day. For unplanned absence, only staff who are well enough to do so will add lesson links to their cover sheet.

4. Responsibilities of Staff Providing Cover

4.1 Check the Daily Cover Notes

Cover staff must consult the class's Daily Cover Notes before teaching.

4.2 Follow Instructions Provided

Cover staff should follow the timetable, routines, and expectations as outlined.

4.3 Log Issues

Any missing or unclear information should be shared with the year group's Team Leader after cover is completed.

For external supply teachers, feedback is typically shared with the School Business Manager before leaving the site.

5. Accountability & Quality Assurance

To promote fairness, consistency and a supportive working environment:



- **SLT will periodically review templates to identify where systems or structures can be improved**, and dedicated time within directed hours (e.g. team meetings or INSET) will be provided for staff to maintain them.
- **Where expectations are not being met, the first step will always be a supportive conversation**, with the aim of identifying any barriers and agreeing helpful next steps. This process is intended to support consistency and reduce workload, not to increase individual accountability.
- **Staff who need help with workload, organisation, or capacity will be supported**, and reasonable adjustments will be explored where appropriate. Expectations remain consistent for everyone, but support is tailored.

This process is not about blame, but about ensuring professional consistency, protecting staff wellbeing, and securing the best possible learning experience for pupils. It reflects a shared, collective responsibility and a commitment to supporting one another.

6. Our Culture: “We, Not I”

We work as a team. This policy reflects our shared understanding that:

- no colleague should be left struggling when someone else is absent
- we take collective responsibility for smooth school operation
- preparation and clarity are acts of professionalism and mutual respect

By following this policy, we uphold our school culture and ensure the best for our children, our colleagues, and ourselves.

SLT, Jan 2026



APPENDIX

Daily Cover Template

(This is kept updated by the class teacher at all times so that it is ready for use not only in cases of absence, but also for all planned PPA sessions. It contains information that does not change daily.)

CLASS:

Teacher:

TA(s):

Day/date: *(complete when known)*

1. Overview for the Day

Timetable:

(Insert the standard class timetable. This remains in the master copy and only needs updating if the regular timetable changes.)

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Break Duty / Lunch Duty:

(Teacher's usual duties. Include: who, where, time)

Behaviour information (including how get attention of class):

(Clear, brief information on the class's routines for gaining attention, celebration systems, and consequences as per school behaviour expectations.)

Class Routines:

(These routines should always be kept current.)

- Entry routine:
- Lining up:
- Transitions:
- End-of-day routine:

2. Technology & Classroom Setup

Teacher usually uses:

- Class desktop
- Personal laptop
- Other: _____



Important notes

Include logins, quirks, settings, usual platforms (e.g. Teams, visualiser setup).

Location of key items:

- Remote control:
 - Visualiser:
 - Whiteboard pens:
 - Printed worksheets:
 - Exercise books:
 - Manipulatives/equipment:
 - Whole class reader (location & title):

3. Lesson-by-Lesson Plan (Completed Only When Absence Occurs)

Added by the teacher for planned absence and by the teacher "as reasonably practicable" for unplanned absence i.e. these boxes remain blank in the master copy and are populated only when needed.)

| Lesson | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subject: Learning Objective: | | | | | |
| Slides/ notebook link: | | | | | |
| Practical resources needed & where to find them: | | | | | |
| Printed resources are located: | | | | | |
| Scaffolding / SEND notes: | | | | | |



4. Key Children Information

(Kept concise, professional, and updated when circumstances change.)

| Children names | Medical Needs | SEND / Learning Needs | Extra Support or Monitoring | Behaviour Support Required | Pastoral alerts | Other e.g. collection information |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
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5. Additional Notes for Cover Teacher

Use this space only when needed for:

- Class events
- Changes to normal routines
- One-off reminders
- Known issues related to the specific day

6. End-of-Day Expectations

Standing expectations (kept in master copy):

- Ensure classroom is left tidy (with support of the children)
 - Complete parent handover (if relevant)
 - Leave brief note for class teacher