

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

Supply teachers have a vital role in raising and maintaining high educational standards in schools. Campaigning to secure professional entitlements for supply teachers is a key priority of the NASUWT, together with securing decent pay and working conditions for all supply teachers.

The main factor for supply teachers in determining their duties is whether or not they are employed in accordance with the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). The duties of teachers in community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools are set out in the STPCD. In addition, many academies employ teachers in accordance with the STPCD. The key duties of a teacher in the STPCD relate to teaching and are to teach, plan lessons and assess pupils' work.

The arrangements in the STPCD for paying supply teachers reflect the fact that contractual duties are not different for supply teachers in comparison with other teachers. The STPCD includes a series of other teacher duties in addition to these key duties, including communicating with parents or carers and contributing to the development, evaluation and implementation of the school's policy, practices and procedures. These duties may well involve working outside the pupil timetabled day on certain days where a supply teacher is contracted to work. With the exception of planning, preparation and assessment, all of the duties directed by the school will fall within the 1,265 hours' directed time budget, which will be spread over 195 days within the school year.

As the STPCD does not differentiate between supply teachers and other teachers, schools can have a reasonable expectation that, if a supply teacher is being paid under the STPCD, they would carry out all of the duties of a teacher. Situations sometimes exist where this causes problems, however – for example, if a school calendar groups together a series of after-school parents' evenings in a very short space of time, which happens to coincide with a period of supply teacher employment. Supply teachers should contact the NASUWT for assistance if they consider that the weight of duties placed on them is unfair.

In circumstances where an agency assigns a supply teacher to a school, and the agency does not employ the teacher in accordance with the STPCD, then working hours and duties should be set out in the terms of the assignment.

Many private schools, and some academies, do not employ teachers in accordance with the STPCD. These schools should set out in their contract of employment the duties which they expect teachers, including supply teachers, to perform.

NASUWT members are advised to exercise caution before agreeing to accept assignments from supply agencies and schools which vary the number of hours worked per day. In some of these circumstances, teachers may only be paid for actual lessons taught, taking no account of the other duties undertaken by the teacher and thereby reducing teachers' pay substantially.

The NASUWT is fully aware of the potential for exploitation of supply teachers which can be involved with these working arrangements. Also, in some cases, school managers take no account of the contractual position of supply teachers before directing them to carry out duties. If you consider that the demands placed on you by a particular school or manager are unreasonable, please contact the NASUWT for advice.

Where a member believes that they are being treated less favourably than other teachers in the school where they are employed in respect of the allocation of their duties, they should contact the NASUWT for advice.

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