

# **ADVICE ON DEVELOPING DIRECTED TIME BUDGETS (Applies to Northern Ireland only)**

## **1. Responsibility For Producing A Teacher's Directed Time Budget**

- 1.1. Each teacher is entitled to a Directed Time budget and it is the professional duty of principals in all schools to ensure a Directed Time budget is prepared for, and gives due regard to, the individual responsibilities of each teacher in their school. This is not a new requirement and has been in place since 1987<sup>1</sup>. While it is accepted that many schools have long had processes in place for constructing time budgets, it is nonetheless important that reference is made to this advice moving forward as some elements supersede existing guidance.
- 1.2. Principals and each member of staff should seek to reach agreement on a teacher's Directed Time budget; teachers do not have freedom to decide for themselves how they allocate their time. Principals should plan the use of teachers' hours carefully in conjunction with the school calendar. If they do not, there could be a danger that staff will exhaust their obligatory hours before the end of the school year.

## **2. Teachers' Terms and Conditions**

- 2.1. The Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 (The Jordanstown Agreement) remains the core reference point for the terms and conditions of:
  - Principals – Schedule 1;
  - Vice-Principals – Schedule 2 (in addition to the duties of a teacher set out in Schedule 3); and
  - Teachers (including middle managers) – Schedule 3.
- 2.2. In addition, Appendix 2 of TNC 2020/01 provides further clarification on teachers' terms and conditions of service and should be read in conjunction with this advice.

## **3. Directed Time**

- 3.1. Directed Time means time spent on any activity which the Principal has determined that a teacher shall undertake. A teacher shall be available to perform such duties at such times and such places as may reasonably be specified by the Principal. All the time that a teacher is required to be on school premises is included in Directed Time. For a full-time teacher it will not exceed

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference: [Teachers' \(Terms and Conditions of Employment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 1987](#) and [DE 1987/26 Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service](#)

1,265 hours per year nor apply to more than 195 days. This includes 5 Non-Teaching “reasonably contiguous” days (Baker days) and 5 optional Staff Development days.

- 3.2. At times, a Principal may not need every teacher to work on the same 195 calendar days or 1,265 hours. For example, an examinations officer may be reasonably directed to attend school when other staff are not in attendance but the 195 days and 1,265 limits apply.
- 3.3. Schools have always been dependent on a commitment from teachers beyond the legal minimum requirement. Schools would find it impossible to include within a teacher’s 1,265 hours all of the time currently given by teachers to benefit children and young people in such activities as games, drama, music and school trips. The extent of this commitment is for each teacher to determine for himself or herself. A teacher cannot be directed to undertake duties beyond 1,265 hours on 195 days.
- 3.4. A teacher’s Directed Time of 1,265 hours per year is the basic legal requirement for a teacher to satisfy their contractual obligations. Time spent off school premises in preparing and marking lessons is not included in a teacher’s Directed Time.

#### **4. The Components of Directed Time**

- 4.1. The teacher’s central focus in school is improving the quality of pupil learning and achievement. Supervision, cover, allocated pastoral duties, planning, preparation and assessment, Continuous Professional Development, and giving information to parents are all components of a Directed Time budget.
- 4.2. Voluntary after-school activities are not mandatory in the Directed Time budget but may be included, for instance residential school trips, sports groups, music classes, and clubs. If the Principal reasonably directs that a teacher should attend an after-school event it must be included. Normally, this should be in line with the school calendar.
- 4.3. Where a separate contract (not a teaching allowance) is paid, the Principal should not include the activity in the Directed Time budget.
- 4.4. The 1,265 hours per year, which a teacher is required to be available to work is split up into a number of elements:

##### **4.4.1. Class Contact Time**

A teacher may not be required to teach, as distinct from supervise, children in a formal situation for more than 25 hours per week in a primary or special school and 23.5 hours per week in a post primary school.

The weekly limits of 23.5 hours class contact time in a post primary school

and 25 hours in a primary or special school will include any time a teacher is involved in class cover.

Teachers cannot be asked to cover at all (or supervise) when it was known and agreed in advance that an absence would exceed 2 days (other than covering for primary 1, 2 or nursery colleagues).

Teachers in schools of fewer than 222 pupils, nursery (in primary school), primary 1 and primary 2 teachers are not required to provide such cover.

#### 4.4.2. Supervision – Teaching Staff

It is recognised that classroom supervision is not an effective use of a teacher's time. Supervision occurs when a teacher is asked to engage in activities outside the classroom where there is no active teaching taking place. Supervision may include tasks such as morning and afternoon breaks, wet break times, arrangements for the arrival and departure of pupils, bus supervision, school assembly, examinations etc. In certain circumstances, a teacher may be required to supervise, as distinct from teach, the class of an absent colleague.

Where a teacher is not required to supervise at morning or afternoon break, or where this is done on a rota basis, this period must still be defined as Directed Time.

Unless employed under a separate contract as a mid-day supervisor, a teacher shall not be required to undertake mid-day supervision.

#### 4.4.3. Non-teaching Days

Full-time teachers are required to be available for work on 195 days per year, of which at least 5 are non-teaching days. These 5 days must also be accounted for within the 1,265 hours.

#### 4.4.4. Teaching Allowance and Special Educational Needs Allowance Duties (Including SENCO)

Some teachers will be in receipt of Teaching Allowances or Special Educational Needs Allowances that will have specific duties attached that are additional to teaching. Where this is the case these duties must also be allowed for within the Directed Time budget of 1,265 hours.

#### 4.4.5. Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA)

The Pay & Workload Agreement, April 2020, guarantees that 10% of a teacher's Directed Time (i.e. 126½ hours per annum) is set aside for Planning, Preparation and Assessment. (PPA). This dedicated PPA time will enable a teacher to raise standards through individual and collaborative professional activity. The Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987, in regard to working

time, states that a teacher shall be available to perform such duties at such times and such places as may reasonably be specified by the Principal. School managements should ensure that a teacher's PPA time is not eroded by demands and should be kept available for teachers to individually prepare, work, plan, mark and meet collaboratively with their colleagues.

#### 4.4.6. Other Professional Duties

There is a range of other professional activities that go on regularly within schools. If a teacher is expected to carry out any duty that is deemed reasonable, then it must also be accounted for in the Directed Time budget. Due attention must be paid to the Strategy for Teacher Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland (TNC 2011/1), particularly where a teacher volunteers to take on additional duties on an unremunerated basis.

##### 4.4.6.1. Attendance at School Assembly

Attendance at School Assembly is included in Directed Time. Leading an assembly is considered to be class contact time in the Directed Time budget.

##### 4.4.6.2. Conducting Registration of Pupils

Registration is included in Directed Time. If a teacher is required to deliver learning or pastoral work, this period of time is considered to be class contact time in the Directed Time budget.

##### 4.4.6.3. Participation in Extra-curricular Activities

Schools have always been dependent on a voluntary commitment from teachers, in an extended professional role, beyond the legal requirement. Schools would find it impossible to include within a teacher's 1,265 hours all of the time currently given for the benefit of children and young people in the form of voluntary activities such as games, drama, music and school trips.

##### 4.4.6.4. Attendance on Residential Trips

Teachers cannot be directed to take pupils on educational visits involving overnight stays. Where this takes place on a voluntary basis, it is a matter of negotiation between the teacher and the Principal as to the amount of Directed Time that will be allocated to this activity out of the annual Directed Time budget.

##### 4.4.6.5. Participation in Evening Meetings

Evening meetings are included within Directed Time. These should normally be included within the schedule of meetings provided in the

school calendar at the beginning of the academic year. It is recommended that schools develop locally agreed provisions which provide a degree of flexibility for when such meetings need to be rearranged due to exceptional or unforeseen circumstances.

See Appendix 2 of TNC 2020/01 in relation to travel expenses.

## **5. Application of Directed Time to Substitute Teachers Engaged Through NISTR**

- 5.1. NISTR should be used for immediate, unplanned, short term teaching cover or to fill vacancies that are short term and planned to last no more than 6 months. If a temporary teacher is engaged up to 6 months, Directed Time should be applied and it would be appropriate to have a proportionate Directed Time budget.
- 5.2. A temporary teacher should not be treated less favourably than a comparable permanent teacher. For example, if a temporary teacher is engaged for a complete week in a primary school on a full-time basis they should have no more than 25 hours class contact time.
- 5.3. Part-time teachers have the pro-rata equivalent of 1,265 hours.

## **6. Contingency**

- 6.1. Contingency time is the time left following the allocation of Directed Time commitment. It is recommended that each teacher's Directed Time budget includes an element of contingency time to ensure there is flexibility to accommodate situations that may arise and are unaccounted for within the Directed Time budget. TNC 2011/8 recommends that an element of contingency time should be set aside to ensure that there is a level of flexibility. However, in some schools it may be more beneficial to ensure that all Directed Time is accounted for at the beginning of the year and then to reallocate time, if necessary from another aspect of the Directed Time budget to any unplanned events that will require dedicated time.
- 6.2. If it is determined, for instance that every teacher should be in school 15 minutes before the beginning of teaching time and 15 minutes at the end of each teaching day, school leaders should ensure that this time is included in the Directed Time budget.

## **7. In-year Variation**

- 7.1. There are times, usually predictable well in advance, when the pattern of the school day/operation of the set timetable is disrupted e.g. start of school year, end of term, GCSE/GCE examinations in May/June. Not every week in the school year is the same, for example the beginning of the school year, end of

term, exam and report writing periods. Likewise, teaching time does not have to be the same in each week but cannot exceed the 23.5 / 25 hour limit in a single week.

## **8. Lunch Break Entitlement**

- 8.1. All teachers are required to have a break of at least 30 minutes.
- 8.2. Teachers in a primary or post primary school are required to have a break of at least 30 minutes between the hours of 12 noon and 2.00pm.
- 8.3. Teachers in nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools are required to have a break of at least 30 minutes between the hours of 12 noon and 2.30pm.
- 8.4. Lunch breaks are unpaid and do not count towards Directed Time and teachers are not required to remain on school premises during lunchbreak.

### DIRECTED TIME BUDGET CHECKLIST

- Have the 195 days been identified?
- Are the following included?
  - all the time a teacher is directed to be on school premises (including parent consultation meetings);
  - 10% PPA time;
  - an annual schedule of meetings provided in advance of the academic year;
  - all meetings, including for those with teaching allowances;
  - time to be spent preparing the written report to parents on the progress of their children;
  - time for PRSD meetings, evidence collating and reporting;
  - class contact time (inclusive of cover);
  - all the supervision in which a teacher must engage;
  - non-teaching days.
- If the teacher is in receipt of a teaching allowance and/or Special Educational Needs allowance, are the associated duties allowed for within the Directed Time budget?
- Is the time made available to the SENCO proportionate and appropriate to the needs of pupils in the school?
- Are all the responsibilities included in the Directed Time budget consistent with a teacher's professional duties (see Appendix B)?
- Has due attention been paid to work/life balance?

### PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

The following aspects of a teacher's professional role are provided for information. The list is neither exhaustive nor intended to be applied in full to any individual teacher.

#### Teaching (including allocated time to undertake cover)

- Teaching time
- Cover
- Assembly<sup>2</sup>
- Extra-curricular / Co-Curricular activities (see Section 3.2, Appendix 3 of TNC 2011/08)

#### Professional Communication

To include activities and participation in meetings which will support:

- effective teaching and learning;
- professional collaboration;
- school development planning and action planning;
- self-evaluation processes, e.g. review and development of teaching schemes, curricular provision;
- cooperation with the reasonable demands of inspection activity;
- partnership with parents.

#### Internal

- whole school;
- department / key stage / year group;
- pastoral roles;
- safeguarding / child protection;
- working groups;
- governors.

#### External

- parents;
- external agencies;
- stakeholders;
- Area Learning Communities (ALCs);
- clusters;
- shared education partners;
- reporting;
- work placements (e.g. student teachers).

---

<sup>2</sup> Allocation of time in relation to assemblies may include time for teachers to lead assembly AND time for teachers to attend assembly to assist with supervision of pupils (see Organisational Responsibilities section below)



## **Individual Planning, Preparation and Assessment for Effective Learning**

Undertaken by individual teachers (10% of 1,265 hours)

- Medium and short term planning, done in collaboration with other teachers, as appropriate.
- Evaluation and review of teaching and learning.
- Preparation to support effective learning, e.g. sourcing resources, preparing displays, gathering equipment.
- Assessment for learning, in accordance with school policy.
- Statutory assessment.

## **Teacher Professional Learning**

- Individual and collaborative professional learning activity, internal and external.
- Induction and EPD.
- PRSD.

## **Guidance, Advice and Support for Individual Pupils and Associated Administration**

Direct engagement with pupils, parents, other agencies supporting pupils.

- Pastoral support.
- Careers advice.
- Guidance to support learning and achievement.
- Behaviour management.

## **Organisational Responsibilities**

Activity to support the effective and efficient operation of the school as a safe learning community.

- Pupil registration duties.
- Recording and reporting using SIMS.
- Administration arising from SEN / safeguarding / anti-bullying.
- Requisition of resources for learning.
- Break supervision.
- Attendance at assembly<sup>3</sup>.
- Safe travel between split sites.
- Risk assessments as required.

## **Post Specific Responsibilities**

Duties associated with a post holder as set out in individual job descriptions and taking account of school development plan priorities.

---

<sup>3</sup> Allocation of time in relation to assemblies may include time for teachers to lead assembly AND time for teachers to attend assembly to assist with supervision of pupils (see Teaching section above)

### REFERENCES

Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 (and the Amendment Regulations of 1988, No. 299)  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/terms-and-conditions-regs-87.pdf>

The Working Time Regulations 1998  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1998/386/regulation/12/made>

PPA Time Policy Statement (TNC 2009/8)  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/tnc-2009-8-ppa-policy-statement-2.pdf>

Workload Agreement TNC 2011/8 – incl. cover and Directed Time budgeting Appendices I-IV  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/workload-agreement>

Jordanstown Agreement DENI Circular 1987/26  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/1987-26-teachers-pay.pdf>

Agreement Between Management Side and Trade Union Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC 2020/1)  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/agreement-between-management-side-and-trade-union-side-teachers-negotiating-committee>