Allowances for support staff

Which contract applies

The Birmingham School Workforce Contract applies to all support staff in community, community special, voluntary controlled, maintained nursery schools and our pupil referral unit.

Allowances payable under The Birmingham School Workforce Contract

SEN allowances in special schools and units

Under the Birmingham School Workforce Contract existing SEN allowances for teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants in special schools and units will continue to be paid as they have been under Single Status.

Where a Teaching Assistant or Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) supports a child or children for all or part of their working week, the Special Educational Needs Allowance would be paid on a pro rata basis. The allowance is currently £1507.28 for full time hours (36.5 per week all year round) per annum.

See separate document – 21. SEN Allowances Guidance

Sleeping-in allowances (residential special schools)

Sleeping in and night working

This is where the employee is asked to sleep in at a residential unit or school and to wake and to attend to their duties in the event of an incident or resident needing attention. An all-inclusive grade can be agreed which includes the requirement to do 'sleep-ins'.

Employees required to sleep in on the premises shall receive an allowance of £43.12 (as of 01.04.25 pay award). This allowance covers the requirement to sleep in and up to 30 minutes call out per night, after which the additional hours provisions will apply.

Honoraria and acting up arrangements

These are not termed allowances but are additional temporary payments for an employee temporarily undertaking part of the duties attached to a

higher-graded post. Acting up arrangements are different, in that the employee temporarily undertakes all the duties of a higher graded post, usually in the absence of a post-holder. Full details:

1 Honoraria

What Are Honoraria Payments?

A temporary special payment made when an employee takes on extra responsibilities that are normally part of a job graded higher than their own whilst still working in their substantive role. An honoraria payment can also be used when someone undertakes additional work on a specific project whilst still working in their substantive role, but this project would be additional to the duties and responsibilities of the job.

How Honoraria Payments May Be Used

Honoraria payments can be used as a temporary measure to maintain essential levels of service and also may be used for some duties that need to be covered as a result of the extended absences of another employee or a vacancy, particularly where the duties of the vacant job are shared between other employees instead of asking one of them to act up into the whole post.

Honoraria payments cannot be used to cover the annual leave of another employee.

Criteria

- Honoraria can be paid for a maximum three-month period or one school Term for employees to whom the Birmingham School Workforce, after which time any extension to the honorarium will need to be submitted. In certain circumstances, honorariums can be paid for up to a maximum of 12 months. In such circumstances a clear business case, authorised by the head teacher, will need to be submitted to Birmingham City Council outlining the reasons why an honorarium payment is required for such an extended period. In exceptional circumstances where there is a requirement for a honoraria payment to extend beyond 12 months, a further business case outlining the reason for the extension will be required, signed not only by the head teacher but also the Chair of the appropriate Governing Body Committee, responsible for pay. However, in these

circumstances where there is a need to pay a honoraria payment for such an extended period of time it is recommended that the school review the duties of the post holder and consider a new job evaluation or a new generic match rather than pay a temporary allowance.

- Honoraria payments can only be paid after a minimum of four weeks.
- When offering an honorarium payment, head teachers should be mindful of equal opportunities and the Equality Act 2010.
- Payment of an Honorarium (and any extensions to it) must be authorised by the head teacher. Without the appropriate authorisation, the payment cannot be processed.
- Honoraria can be removed with 4 weeks' notice
- Honoraria should not be paid where the duties and responsibilities can form part of the My Appraisal or Performance Management objectives which could be set for the employee's substantive job.
- Honoraria are not transferable upon changing post.
- Honoraria payments will end on a fixed date, after which the employee's pay reverts to the level at which they were previously paid (including any pay protection).

Honoraria Payments

- The payment of an honorarium potentially undermines the general principles of equality within the wide Birmingham grades. To mitigate these risks honoraria will be paid at a fixed annual sum based on the grade of the employee's substantive post at the same frequency as basic pay.
- These amounts are the maxima that can be paid. Headteacher's discretion will need to be applied in determining the amount of honoraria to be paid, **ensuring the maximum is not exceeded for that particular grade.** For example, if an honorarium is being paid because an employee is carrying out half the duties of another post, then the payment should be 50% of the maximum that can be paid for the employee's substantive post.

- Where two or more employees are receiving an honorarium to cover the duties of another post, the total payment for all employees must not exceed the maximum amount that can be paid within that grade.
- Payment will be calculated based on the number of days during the period (inclusive of annual leave, public holidays and intervening weekends) divided by 365.
- Honoraria should not be paid to staff acting up to a higher grade. Where staff are acting up, they should be moved to the higher graded post (see acting up arrangements).
- **Where the school wishes to pay an honorarium to an employee on the maximum point of their grade, the amount paid should not take them into the next grade.**

Honoraria Maximum Values

Grade A: £1,000

Grade B: £1,400

Grade C: £1,800

Grade D: £2,200

GR6: £2,600

GR7: £3,000

Process For Instigating Honoraria Payments

- Payments will be on a pro-rata basis for part-time workers.
- The school must also notify the employee of the arrangements and the payment in writing.
- The duration of the honorarium needs to be supported by a business case, which needs to be submitted to Birmingham City Council for authorisation.

2 Acting up

What is acting up

A payment applied when a person carries out the full range of duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post other than their own for a period of four weeks or more continuously.

How acting ups may be used

Acting ups are a short to mid-term temporary arrangement to maintain essential levels of service. They should not be used as an alternative to recruiting into vacant posts (some exceptions may apply where there are evidenced recruitment issues or where the post is "held" from permanent external recruitment - as per guidance on externally advertising vacancies).

Acting ups cannot be used to cover the annual leave of another employee.

Criteria

- The employee must be taking on 100% of the duties and responsibilities of the post in such a way that they no longer undertake their substantive post.
- **Payment will be made at the bottom of the grade of the post the employee is acting up into**.
- If an employee is receiving pay protection which means that their level of pay is above the bottom of the grade of the post they are acting up into, then they may receive a payment at one increment higher than the spinal column point they are on with protection.
- During the acting up period, the employee will be subject to the same terms and conditions of the post they are acting up into (e.g. relative overtime payments and notice periods).
- Payments (and any extensions) must be authorised by a head teacher. Without the appropriate authorisation, the payment cannot be processed.
- All Acting ups must be offered through a competitive process with reference to the Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy.
- All Acting ups will be for a maximum three-month period or one school Term for employees to whom the Birmingham School Workforce Contract applies, after which time an extension will need to be submitted. In certain circumstances, acting ups can be paid for up to a maximum of 12 months. In such circumstances a clear

business case, authorised by the head teacher, will need to be submitted to Birmingham City Council outlining the reasons why an Acting up arrangement is required for such an extended period. In exceptional circumstances where there is a requirement for an Acting up to be extended beyond 12 months, a further business case outlining the reason for the extension will be required, signed not only by the head teacher but also the Chair of the appropriate Governing Body Committee, responsible for pay.

- Acting up payment can be removed with four weeks' notice or can be time limited due a specified reason (e.g. to cover long term sickness absence) after which the employee returns to their substantive post and their pay reverts to the level at which they were previously paid (including any pay protection).

3 Stand-in payments

What are stand-in payments?

A payment made when a person carries out the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post than their own for a single shift (or possibly longer, but for no more than four weeks).

How stand-in payments may be used

Stand-in payments only apply to posts where, if they were not covered immediately, there would be a negative impact on the provision of vital services (e.g. school kitchens, residential homes etc).

Payments

For full duties undertaken a payment based on the equivalent hourly rate will be made.

Language Allowances

A temporary language allowance (reviewable at least every two years) may be paid when an employee uses relevant language skills that they are not required to use as part of their normal job role but clearly provide demonstrable benefits to the provision of services. It would be appropriate to pay an allowance when an employee

- helps with understanding the substance of a simple written document.
- helps with understanding the substance of simple written correspondence and writing a simple response.
- provides information and verbal support to individuals who could include visitors and/or the citizens of Birmingham.

Where the use of language skills is a normal requirement of a job, this will have been weighted within the Job Evaluation score for the role and the grade will reflect this requirement. An additional language allowance would therefore amount to a double payment, so language allowances are not payable in these circumstances.

Braille and Signing

The use of Braille or Sign Language can in certain circumstances be required as part of the basic job. Equally, it can be an additional useful skill that schools may find beneficial to the smooth operation of the school and an aid to children's learning. For Signing the CACDP Level 2 qualification can be required but the Brass house Centre can carry out assessments. Braille assessments are normally available within relevant schools for students with visual impairments.

In special schools and special units, the SEN allowance will be taken as including any requirement for competency in Braille or Signing, so teaching assistants in schools for the Hearing Impaired or Visually Impaired or similar Special Units in mainstream schools will be paid the SEN allowance as a contractual payment, and not the discretionary Language Allowance. There will generally be an expectation that these staff will normally have proficiency in Braille or Signing before appointment. If they do not already hold such proficiency, their appointment can be made subject to them gaining such proficiency through training within two years. There are also some other support staff where use of Braille or Signing can be a required part of the job (e.g. technicians maintaining equipment). These staff will not be eligible for the Language Allowance as it should be part of the job.

There will, however, be some staff working in mainstream schools where the use of Braille or Signing is a useful additional skill that the head teacher believes is beneficial to the school and children's learning. This may

include support staff not appointed to work in Special Units for Hearing or Visually Impaired pupils but who are assisting students with these impairments and other students elsewhere in the school. In this case, use of Braille and/or Signing could be a useful skill and eligible for possible award of Language Allowance.

Criteria for language allowances

The criteria for payment are as follows:

- Employees cannot receive the allowance payment until they have either been assessed by the Brass house Language Centre to ensure they meet the level of competency as described at Level 2 of the National Language Standards level descriptors, or they currently possess a relevant language qualification equivalent to a minimum of GCSE Grade A* - C.
- Language skills must be used on a regular monthly basis to qualify for the allowance payment.
- Head teachers must satisfy themselves of the need for such skills and the frequency of usage before nominating individuals for assessment and payment.
- When considering a language allowance payment, head teachers should be mindful of the City Council's equal opportunities policy.
- Language allowances are not transferable upon changing post.
- Language allowance payments can be removed with 4 weeks' notice.
- Language allowance payments will be reviewed after a two-year period (if the employee remains in the job they were in when payment of the allowance commenced).

Competency in a language

The National Language Standards outline five levels of competency covering the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Levels 3 to 5 are most likely to apply to those staff who are required to use language skills in their job.

Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE Grade A* - C) would need to be the minimum level of competency required to attract a language allowance payment. The level 2 criteria are as follows: -

- Can understand and use routine language in everyday work contexts.
- Can understand and use routine vocabulary and sentence structure delivered at normal speed.
- Can recognise less familiar elements of language and find alternative ways of expression.
- Can read routine correspondence and non-complex documentation.
- Can respond to routine written correspondence.

The Brass house Language Centre is currently used for assessment purposes by service areas within the City Council. The Centre charges for an assessment. Any referrals for assessment must be through a head teacher or other officer at Grade 6 or higher with direct managerial responsibility for the employee to whom the language allowance relates. Individual employees must not contact the Centre with a view to qualifying for a payment.

Language allowance payments

- A fixed annual sum of £1,200 will be paid at the same frequency as basic pay.
- Payment will be on a pro-rata basis for part-time workers.
- Notifications of language allowance payments will need to be made by completing the Language Allowance Payment Notification Form on this website (insert link to interactive form). Copies of assessment evidence and relevant language qualification certificates must be attached to the form. Refer to Managers Language Allowance Checklist.

Allowances for First Aid or Fire Marshal duties

There is an annual payment of £120 for these duties (pro rata for part-time employees). The payment is subject to the employees having undertaken the necessary training (including any refresher training required) and

holding the necessary certificate. The payments are reviewed every three years.

See separate documents – 10. Fire Marshal Allowance Form, 11. First Aid Allowance Form.

Mileage Allowances

The rate at which the mileage will be paid according to the Birmingham School Workforce Contract. Employees using their own motorcycles for business use can also claim mileage.

Laundry/washing Allowances

For routine washing of standard overalls or uniform provided to employees by the school which requires the employees to wear them a weekly allowance is payable on the understanding that employees wash these items at home. Schools should request this payment when employees are recruited; Standard overalls or uniform which require dry cleaning instead of washing will attract a maximum payment per month on production of a receipt.

If other items are taken home to be washed, such as towels used in school or football strip, then a payment per item or collection of items should be made. No payment is due if the items are washed on school premises.