# Teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants

## 1 Grade B teaching assistants and cover

## Birmingham School Workforce Contract

Grade B teaching assistants can be asked to provide cover supervision in one of two circumstances, either for a short time in an emergency, normally for a period of less than a whole lesson until the teacher returns or other arrangements are made, or for a very short period of planned absence for less than a whole lesson. Cover supervision of this kind should be for no more than two sessions a week and should be for the class in which they normally work.

In schools a Grade B teaching assistant may be asked to provide cover supervision on a regular basis throughout the school for up to two sessions a week. The work should be set by a teacher, and the duties of the teaching assistant are to ensure that pupils undertake the planned work and maintain good behaviour.

Teaching Assistants should not be asked to undertake more than 2 hours per week on more than one occasion within the term.

## 2 Definitions of cover

The term “cover” refers to any arrangements for a class or group of pupils when the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach.

“Cover Supervision” describes the situation when those arrangements do not involve “Specified Work” as defined in government regulations (i.e. active teaching) but appropriate supervision. The cover supervisor is not teaching but supervises pupils who are undertaking pre-prepared exercises or suitable activity and is expected to ensure that pupils are appropriately occupied and maintain good behaviour.

Cover supervision is only one of a range of strategies which a school may adopt to reduce significantly the amount of cover for absent colleagues which teachers at school are required to carry out.

## 3 Specified work – higher level teaching assistants

Specified work is defined in statutory regulations as each of the following activities:

- planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils.
- delivering lessons to pupils.
- assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
- reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

When a school wishes to use someone other than a teacher to undertake specified work it may do so only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- The person undertakes specified work in order to assist or support the work of a teacher
- The person is subject to the direction and supervision of a teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the head teacher
- The head teacher is satisfied that the person has the skills, expertise and experience to carry out specified work

In determining whether a person has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out specified work the head teacher may have regard to

- such standards for higher-level teaching assistants, or guidance concerning school support staff as may be published from time to time by the Secretary of State; and
- such guidance as to contractual matters relating to school support staff as may be published from time to time by any local education authority or other employer.

In the light of the regulations and of the statutory guidance on cover published by the Secretary of State and accompanying the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, the authority has determined that specified work is to be undertaken by Grade C higher level teaching assistants and not by Grade B or Grade A teaching assistants.

Further information on the assessment of people for the role of higher-level teaching assistant can be found in the section on higher level teaching assistants.

## 4 Cover and PPA time

In the case of Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA time), the teacher has not been timetabled to teach in the first place, so arrangements made for the class do not come within the definition of cover.

Schools should either employ additional teachers to teach classes whose teachers are taking PPA time, or, in accordance with the statutory guidance accompanying the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, may use higher-level teaching assistants for specified work. Teaching assistants should not be used for this purpose.

## 5 SEN Allowance for Teaching Assistants and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants

The payment of a Special Educational Needs Allowance is made in recognition of those instances where there is a substantial element of working directly, exclusively or mainly with children who have special educational needs in recognition that this work is over and above the normal requirement of a Teaching Assistant/Higher Level Teaching Assistant.

### Special Schools and Schools with a Special Unit

The Special Educational Needs Allowance is payable to all Teaching Assistants and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants working in Special Schools and Schools with a Special Unit.

The payment of the Special Educational Needs Allowance should be awarded automatically when a Teaching Assistant/Higher Level Teaching Assistant takes up their role in a Special School or School with a Special Unit. It should continue to be paid for the duration of their employment as a Teaching Assistant/Higher Level Teaching Assistant at the Special School or the Special Unit. Once they leave the Special School or Special Unit or cease to be employed as a Teaching Assistant/Higher Level Teaching Assistant in that school, the allowance ceases.

## Mainstream Schools

Introduced in 2014, Teaching Assistants and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants employed in a mainstream school may be eligible for the Special Educational Needs Allowance in instances where there is a substantial element of working directly, exclusively or mainly with a child or children who have special educational needs which is over and above the normal requirement.

There may be circumstances where following assessment by an external agency that a child or children are identified as having special educational needs, but the Education Health Care (EHC) Plan is pending. The payment can also be made in these circumstances too.

This payment is not made automatically on appointment. The school must make a formal request for payment through their HR/payroll provider. Payment is based solely on the hours worked with a child or children with special educational needs, which may be part or all of the Teaching Assistant/Higher Level Teaching Assistant's weekly working hours.

## Ending Payment

When the payment is in respect of support to a named child or children, the Special Educational Needs Allowance should only be paid on a temporary basis for as long as that child continues to have that need. When the need is no longer required, i.e. the child leaves or there is no longer an EHC Plan for the child, the allowance should cease.

Additionally, schools are advised to review the payment of the allowance on an annual basis, or review on a shorter termly basis if the school is aware that the EHC Plan is temporary.

Where it is necessary to end the payment of Special Educational Needs Allowance earlier than anticipated, the Head Teacher should meet with the employee to give one month's notice of the termination of the payment and follow the procedure for ending the allowance. If the allowance needs to be extended, Schools should follow the procedure for extending the allowance.

## Casual Workers

Casual Workers are not entitled to an SEN payment.

## 6 Qualified Teaching Assistant - Level 3 qualifications

Teachers with full Qualified Teacher Status will be deemed to be a qualified Grade B teaching assistant. **Please note no other type of degree is considered relevant**. Otherwise teaching assistants being paid on GRB should hold one of the approved level 3 qualifications. Current awarding bodies and approved qualifications are given on the Ofqual website. Training courses provided by organisations not registered with Ofqual (such as private colleges offering correspondence courses/distance learning) are not recognised for the purposes of qualification as a teaching assistant in Birmingham. Any employee or prospective employee wishing to obtain a recognised qualification for a teaching assistant should be advised to check that the course is approved by Ofqual before enrolling. For information on previous qualifications, which remain valid for those who hold them, see below.

The most common qualifications for level 3 teaching assistants before 2010 are given below and will remain valid for those people who hold them.

Pre-2010 qualifications

- NNEB
- National Diploma Caring
- BTEC National Diploma (2 years);
- Caring Services (Nursery Nursing);
- BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies (Nursery Nursing);
- BTEC National Diploma Early Years and Childhood Studies.
- BTEC National Diploma early Years Care and Education.
- BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Teaching Assistants.
- BTEC National Diploma Early Years.
- CACHE Level 3 NVQ in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- CACHE Level 3 Certificate in work with Children – Early Years (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning APEL);
- Certificate of Higher Education Learning Assistants.

- City & Guilds NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistants
- City & Guilds NVQ Level 3 in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Classroom Support Worker Qualification – secondary (NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistant equivalent);
- NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistants (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- NVQ Level 3 Child Care and Education.
- NVQ Level 3 for Teaching Assistants.
- NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education
- NVQ Level 3 Childcare Learning and Development
- National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning in schools NVQ Level 3
- Specialist Teaching Assistants (STA)
- Foundation Degree – Learning Support
- Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies (or Early Years)
- BA – Early Childhood Studies

This list is not exhaustive, but the expectation would be the course is focused on education and learning and would not be undertaken solely online and would **include practical classroom-based training** and regulated by Ofqual.

See Gov.uk website for further guidance and information

www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification

Please ask the candidate for modules studied in the course if unsure or check with Birmingham City Council.

## 7 Teaching assistant /Grade A

It is preferable that  Grade A teaching assistants hold a nationally recognised qualification at level 2 or above in a subject relevant to the support of teaching and learning in schools.  Relevant qualifications are

those recognised as being equivalent of level 2 of the national qualifications framework (NQF).

## 8 Higher Level Teaching Assistants

### What is the difference between a teaching assistant and a higher-level teaching assistant?

In addition to all the regular duties that teaching assistants perform, higher level teaching assistants can also carry out 'specified work' as defined under the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012, in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher or nominated teacher.

The Regulations define specified work as planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils, delivering lessons to pupils, assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils, and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

The statutory guidance accompanying the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document states that whilst the primary function of HLTAs is to support and assist teachers, they may be deployed to release teachers for guaranteed Planning, Preparation and Assessment time, provided that they work under the direction and supervision of a teacher. Direction and supervision from a teacher does not mean that the teacher has to be in the classroom, but that the teacher is responsible for ensuring the quality of the specified work undertaken by the HLTA.

In addition, HLTAs may be used for short-term cover, but their deployment in this way should be balanced against the educational desirability of regularly removing them from the planned activities with the teachers to whom they are normally assigned.

In Birmingham the Single Status review provided for HLTAs to take charge of classes, but for no more than six sessions a week.

## How to become a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant

To become a HLTA the person needs to be working as a teaching assistant and have the support of both their school and their head teacher. Additionally, HLTAs need to demonstrate that they:

- Meet the 33 HLTA Professional Standards

- Achieved a nationally recognised qualification at level 2 or above in English/literacy and maths/numeracy. Relevant qualifications are those recognised as being equivalent to level 2 of the national qualifications framework (NQF)

There is no longer any government funding to train HLTAs. **Head Teachers are responsible for deciding whether a member of their teaching assistant staff has demonstrated through practice that they meet the 33 HLTA Professional Standards and to approach training providers to organise assessment**.

Further information on how to become a HLTA and to see the 33 HLTA Professional Standards can be found on the https://hlta.org.uk website.

Or

**See separate document – 16. HLTA Professional Standards**

If a school seeks to recruit a HLTA from outside the school, it will have to seek written confirmation from the current or most recent employer that the applicant has been subject to acceptable HLTA assessment.