



It's

About

Time

2023 - 2025

TOOLKIT

**Frequently Asked Questions –
Secondary teachers (Appendix 10)**

Appendix 10: Frequently Asked Questions - Secondary teachers

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Timetabled contact and non-contact time

1. We don't have a five day cycle – must we give teachers five hours in each week?

Where a school has a non-regular timetable (not a five-day cycle) the equivalent non-contact time over the cycle can be calculated using the following formula:

Maximum timetabled contact over 5 days times the length of cycle divided by 5

So, for a full time teacher without additional time allowances (20 contact hours over 5 days):

Cycle length (school days per cycle)	Max timetabled contact hours per cycle
4 day	16
6 day	24
7 day	28
9 day	36
10 day	40

A six-day timetable that delivers a maximum of 24 hours timetabled teaching time and 6 hours non-contact over the six days meets the entitlement for secondary teachers in the STCA and ASTCA.

There is an expectation that the non-contact time will be distributed as regularly as possible throughout the cycle. The required consultative process of developing timetable policy and processes will allow schools with nonstandard timetable structures to apply the entitlements in ways which meet both the operational needs of the school and the guaranteed noncontact entitlements provided by the collectives.

2. What is timetabled time?

'Teaching time' is defined by the STCA and ASTCA as including supervision, non-scheduled supervision time of students, teacher noncontact time, administration duties or other directed or non-directed duties.

'Timetabled time' is the time when students collectively are scheduled (or are normally scheduled) for learning activities and teachers individually may or may not be teaching them.

'Timetabled contact time' is time when a teacher is scheduled (or is normally scheduled) for student contact during the timetabled time. Registered full time secondary teachers without permanent units can be timetabled for up to 20 hours contact.

When students are engaged in learning activities then teachers scheduled to be with them are engaged in teaching or supervision of learning which constitutes timetabled contact time. This can include learning activities such as academic mentoring programmes in whanau time.

'Timetabled non-contact time' is time when a teacher is scheduled (or is normally scheduled) to be free from teaching or supervisory duties while student are timetabled for learning. Registered full time secondary teachers without permanent units must be timetabled for a minimum of 5 hours of non-contact time (i.e. 20 hours contact maximum).

Activities that fall outside the times when students collectively are scheduled for learning are not timetabled time. They do not count as either contact or non-contact time for the purposes of the provisions.

Examples are given below – based on the format of a traditional timetable and for a secondary teacher.

WHOLE SCHOOL TIMETABLE

In this example of a school timetable the shaded areas represent the 'timetabled school day'. The unshaded areas are outside the timetabled school day and do not count as timetabled time for the purposes of part 5 of the STCA.

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pre-form time	Pre-form time	Pre-form time	Pre-form time	Pre-form time	Pre-form time
Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time
Period 1	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 2	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Lunch time					
Form time					
Period 4	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Afternoon break					
Period 5	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
After school					

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER TIMETABLE– Example 1

In this example of a full time, experienced base scale teacher’s individual timetable the grey areas represent the ‘timetabled contact time’. The black areas represent the ‘timetabled non-contact time’. The white areas are outside the timetabled school day and do not count as timetabled time for the purpose of part 5 of the STCA.

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning briefing					
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 1		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	
Period 2	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Lunch time		Duty			
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 4	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group
Afternoon break				Duty	
Period 5	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
After school duty					Duty

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER TIMETABLE– Example 2

In this example of a full time, year 1 base scale teacher’s individual timetable the grey areas represent the ‘timetabled contact time’. The black areas represent the ‘timetabled non-contact time’. The pale grey areas represent the BTA advice and guidance periods. The white areas are outside the timetabled school day and do not count as timetabled time.

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning briefing					
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 1		Scheduled learning group	BTA	Scheduled learning group	
Period 2	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	BTA	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	BTA	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Lunch time		Duty			
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 4	Scheduled learning group	BTA	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group
Afternoon break				Duty	
Period 5	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	BTA
After school duty					Duty

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER TIMETABLE– Example 3

In this example of a full time, HoD with two permanent units the grey areas represent the 'timetabled contact time'. The black areas represent the basic 'timetabled non-contact time'. The pale grey areas represent the unit holders additional 'timetabled non-contact time'. The white areas are outside the timetabled school day and do not count as timetabled time.

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning briefing					
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 1		Scheduled learning group	PU N/C	Scheduled learning group	
Period 2	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group		Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Lunch time		Duty			
Form time	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group	Form group
Period 4	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	PU N/C		Scheduled learning group
Afternoon break				Duty	
Period 5	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
After school duty					Duty

3. Are the form times and assembly times counted as timetabled time?

Form time is not considered part of the timetabled day unless:

- ❖ it is extended wholly or partly into a normal timetable period (i.e. when students would usually be taking curriculum instruction) or
- ❖ the form teacher is required to deliver or supervise some form of learning programme during the form periods (such as aspects of the health curriculum or academic mentoring)

In either case that part of the form period becomes timetabled contact time.

Most assemblies fall outside the normal timetabled day and are not related to curriculum delivery. Generally then they would not count as part of the 25 hours. If they are occurring when there would be timetabled learning on other days, they count as part of the 25 hours and if teachers were required to attend then would be contact time, otherwise they would be timetabled non-contact time. Similarly, if the assembly is outside normal timetabled hours, but there is curriculum content delivery then it is in effect an extension of the school timetable and should be considered as part of the 25 timetabled hours.

Such exceptions will need to be worked through by the school and teaching staff in determining the operation of the non-contact provisions and the outcome should be reflected in the timetable policy.

See examples next page.

Assembly outside timetabled hours

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pre-form time	School assembly				
Form time		Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time
Period 1	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 2	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group

Assembly inside timetabled hours

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pre-form time					
Form time	Assembly	Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time
Period 1	Assembly	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
	Scheduled learning group				
Period 2	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Period 3	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
Lunch time					
Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time	Form time
Period 4	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Assembly
Afternoon break					
Period 5	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group	Scheduled learning group
After school					

This shows an assembly as partly timetabled time (Monday period 1) and fully timetabled time (Friday period 5)

4. So how do the form times, assembly times and other times outside learning time fit into the scheme of things?

- ❖ The school must include in its timetable policy, after consultation with its teaching staff, statements about the duties that are outside the timetabled day.
- ❖ Activities outside the timetabled school day can be used as part of the agreed compensatory mechanisms required by the Collective Agreement for cases where for genuine reason some one cannot receive their full allocation of non-contact entitlement.

5. Do we have to give five hours minimum non-contact – will five fifty-minute periods do?

The entitlement is to 5 hours per week (300 minutes per week). However, the entitlement can be met by combinations of timetabled time that are less than an hour each if those times are of a length which reasonably allow teachers to undertake the duties for which non-contact time is provided.

Five fifty-minute periods per week would leave a deficit of 50 minutes non-contract time which the school would need to devise ways of addressing either by timetable change, a general time in lieu practice, or by use of the 'genuine reason' policies it has to agree with the teaching staff in individual cases.

6. If we run a 26-hour per week timetable, are we obliged to change to a 25 hour week timetable?

No. Each individual teacher can be timetabled for only 25 hours per week, including both their timetabled contact and their timetabled non-contact time. This does not preclude a school operating or continuing to operate school-wide timetable that is more than 25 hours per week, it simply limits the use of individual teachers to 20 hours contact within that overall school timetable.

7. If we run a 24-hour per week timetable, do we have to timetable teachers for 19 hours contact and 5 hours non-contact?

No. Each individual teacher can be timetabled for up to 25 hours per week, including both their timetabled contact and their timetabled non-contact time. The non-contact time is out of the teacher's 25 hours. When a school timetable is shorter than the 25 hours the obligation on the school is to ensure that teachers are timetabled for no more than the maximum contact time.

8. How many hours can we timetable contact for year one and two beginning teachers?

Full-time Year 1 beginning teachers have 5 hours per week for advice and guidance (for which schools receive an additional staffing allowance of 0.2 FTTE or 5 hours per week) and 5 hours minimum non-contact time. These entitlements are deducted cumulatively from the maximum 25 timetabled hours. They can be timetabled for no more than 15 hours teaching.

Part-time Year 1 beginning teachers employed for 12.5 hours or more each week must be timetabled for 2.5 hours non-contact time per week for advice and guidance (for which schools receive an additional 0.1 staffing allowance). This is in addition to the non-contact time they are entitled to as a part time teacher.

Full-time Year 2 beginning teachers have 2.5 hours per week for advice and guidance (for which schools receive an additional 0.1 staffing allowance) and five hours minimum non-contact time. They can be timetabled for up to 17.5 hours.

Part time beginning teachers in their second year have normal part time non-contact entitlements.

If any beginning teacher holds permanent units the contact time identified above must be further reduced by an hour per unit per week.

9. What are teachers supposed to do during their non-contact time?

The non-contact time provisions arose from the recognition of the workload pressures on secondary teachers and the need to provide nonteaching time during the school day for them to be free to undertake work arising from their teaching duties and which required time during the school day. The collective agreement refers to the types of duties that these non-contact periods are provided for (5.1.1 (a) to (c)). Specifically:

- (a) The preparation, evaluation and assessment time that may be generated by the learning groups or by other requirements such as external examination prescriptions or the need to report on the progress of individual students;
- (b) The counselling and pastoral needs of their students; and
- (c) The administrative responsibilities of individual teachers either in respect of their curriculum or pastoral responsibilities or in respect of the general administration of the school;

These are individual duties. Directing duties during non-contact time (e.g. requiring attendance at meetings) converts them to contact time.

10. What about staff meetings or PD during the timetabled non-contact time?

The non-contact time provisions arose from the recognition of the workload pressures on secondary teachers and the need to provide nonteaching time during the school day for them to be free to undertake work arising from their teaching duties and which required time during the school day.

Schools wishing to use time for whole staff activities will need to use the mechanisms they operated prior to the introduction of guaranteed noncontact time, such as:

- ❖ Teacher-only mornings/afternoon/days.
- ❖ Providing contact time above entitlement for the purpose.
- ❖ Providing time in lieu as compensatory.
- ❖ Deferred starts or early finishes to the day.
- ❖ Using the call back days of [part 5.4](#)

11. What about sustained silent reading sessions or academic mentoring (or similar programmes) during the timetabled non-contact time?

If students are engaged in learning activities then teachers are engaged in contact time. If SSR sessions or academic mentoring programmes are part of the school's wider learning programme then they would be part of the timetabled time and constitute timetabled contact within the timetabled day for the teacher overseeing them. This would apply regardless of when the activities were undertaken during the school day.

The school and staff will need to determine into which category any particular programme falls using the guidelines in this advice. The timetable policy document should record the status.

12. What about academic mentoring in form time?

In some schools academic mentoring is formalised within the designated learning periods (like English or Maths). In others it has replaced all or part of the administrative time within the traditional 'form-time'.

What is important is not what the period of time is called or scheduled, but what activities are being undertaken by the teachers and students in that time.

Academic mentoring is a teaching and learning activity within the context of the wider curriculum, not an administrative one. Regardless of whether the name of the allocated time remains 'form class' the component that is the academic mentoring time is teaching and learning; it is contact time.

When a designated 'form class' or 'whanua time' etc involves a teaching and learning component that portion of the designated time is contact time.

Average class/group size

13. Does this mean an average of 26 across the whole teaching staff?

No. The average applies to each individual teacher with two or more learning groups. The average class size across all staff maybe 22.7 but it may vary teacher by teacher above or below this. It is the figure for the individual teacher which applies.

14. Does this mean no learning group in the school can be larger than 26?

No. The maximum group size is established by the school's policies. This provision does not prevent individual learning groups from being more than 26 students. Individual teachers can have one or more learning groups of over 26 students, as long as they have smaller groups to balance this.

15. Doesn't this mean someone could have a learning group of 10 and a learning group of 42?

Yes, however it would be hard for schools to justify educationally or on health and safety grounds such large learning groupings to parents, students or teachers. Most schools currently endeavour to keep them at 30 or below.

16. What if some groups are with a teacher for more periods than others?

The mechanisms for calculating average class size in section 5 of this guide deals with learning groups seen for different numbers of periods. This means that very large or very small groups which are taken for just one period do not have an undue effect on the average class size.

17. Can a teacher have an average class size of more than 26?

Individual teachers may have enough learning groups over 26 to make their average greater than 26. If that is so, if there is genuine reason and if the school cannot reasonably make adjustments to reduce it then the teacher would continue with the higher average but would be compensated through the agreed mechanisms.

18. Why does the average class size not apply to teachers with just one learning group?

This would have the effect of creating a maximum learning group size for some teachers. The balance for larger groups than 26 is that the teacher is only responsible for one group of students.

19. What about homeroom teachers at years 7 & 8?

If they have one learning group for which they are continually timetabled that group may be larger than 26.

20. What about learning groups that have more than one teacher at the same time?

When there are two teachers with a learning group at the same time then for the purpose of calculating the average class size for each teacher the roll should be divided between them. For example, when two teachers are taking a combined group of 50 students for PE the count would be 25 students for each teacher.

21. What if a student is temporarily included in a learning group?

If a student is temporarily included with a learning group, but not added to the official roll (e.g. a student is placed with the group for a period as time-out) then this will not alter the teachers average class size.

22. What if a student is temporarily absent from the learning group?

If a student is temporarily away from a group, but not deleted from the official roll (for example a student is away ill for a week) then this will not alter the teachers average class size.

23. What if I do an emergency relief and the group is bigger/ smaller than my average class size?

Temporarily relieving in a learning group which is not part of your normal timetable will not change your class size average. If the relief reduces your non-contact time below your entitlement the compensatory mechanism applies for the reduced non-contact, not for the average class size provision.

Similarly, if you are receiving compensatory for an average class size of more than 26 then temporarily relieving in a very small learning group will not alter your entitlement to the compensatory mechanism(s).

24. What happens in the fourth term when seniors go?

The absence of senior students at the end of the year will not change your established average class size. They remain on the official roll.

25. What happens in the students are added to, or taken off a group roll during the year?

Long term or permanent adjustment to a learning group roll will require a recalculation of your average class size.

If you are over an average of 26 you are entitled to the compensatory provisions. If you were over 26 and the change puts you on or under 26 then you cease to be eligible for the compensatory provision, except that any deferred compensatory outstanding from prior to that change will still apply.

26. What happens if there are timetable changes during the year?

If there are timetable changes increasing or decreasing the timetabled contact with your learning groups, or changing the groups you have assigned then this will require a recalculation of your average class size.

When over an average of 26 you are entitled to a compensatory provision. If you were over 26 and the change puts you on or under 26 you cease to be eligible for the compensatory provision (but any deferred compensation from prior to the change will still apply).

If the change is a short term (such as shortening afternoon periods one day to accommodate an early finish for a special event) then this will not change your established average class size.

27. What happens if I supervise assemblies?

Only groups timetabled for teaching/learning are included in the average class size calculations.

28. What happens about my form group?

Only groups timetabled for learning/teaching are included in the average class size calculations. If form time includes a teaching/learning component then the form group would be included in the calculation.

29. What happens about a group for sustained silent reading?

Any group timetabled for teaching/learning activities for which you are responsible on an ongoing basis should be included in the average class size calculations; this includes sustained silent reading sessions.

30. What happens at the start of the year?

In the first two weeks of schools it might reasonably be expected that group rolls and timetable allocations are still in a state of flux as students arrive unexpectedly and/or shift options. While it will be necessary for timetablers to monitor average class sizes through this period, it is not unreasonable for assessing the application of clause 5.9 that the branch and employer agree that the formal calculation of average class size is to be done at the start of the third week of the first term.

31. We are a large school/junior high school and cannot avoid having lots of large learning groups with our current staffing allocation. What low/no cost compensatory mechanism are open to us?

The school may have income from fee paying students etc that can be used to provide additional teachers to reduce group size, or to provide relievers for time in lieu etc. However, a number of non-cost mechanisms could be agreed, for example:

Whole staff

- ❖ Reducing contact time (e.g. operating 5*50 minute periods per day instead of 5*60)
- ❖ Periodic early finishes/late starts
- ❖ Change currently scheduled parent interviews/other meetings to within-school time

Individual

- ❖ Release from sports days/swimming sports days

- ❖ No form group
- ❖ No/reduced grounds duty
- ❖ Release from attendance at assemblies
- ❖ Release for periods when day relievers are available for cover
- ❖ No extracurricular activity
- ❖ Release from exam supervision

Part time non-contact

32. We have a permanent part time teacher on 16 hours per week. Do we have to give them extra hours?

From the start of 2025 the school must give the teacher non-contacts proportionate to those of a full time teacher. There are two ways to do this:

Maintain the teacher's hours at 16 per week but to reduce their teaching time to 12.8 hours and timetable them for 3.2 hours non-contact. This will not change their pay and the hours they are employed for stays at 16.

Maintain their teaching time at 16 hours per week but provide them with an additional 4 hours timetabled time as non-contact. This will increase their paid hours to 20 per week and their pay would increase in proportion.

33. How do we work out how many hours non-contact we should be endeavouring to give?

- ❖ If you start with how many hours you want to employ them for:

Non-contact hours = total hours times 0.20

Contact hours = total hours times 0.8

- ❖ If you start with how many hours you want them to teach for:

Non-contact = teaching hours times 0.25

Total hours = teaching hours times 1.25

34. We have two part time teachers at 12.5 hours each. Are we better off having a full timer instead?

The non-contact time applies equally to the full time teacher and the two part time teachers. There is no gain to be made in having a full time teacher rather than the two part time teachers.

25 hours of teaching/learning time covered by 2 part timers at 12.5 hours each => Total cost to school staffing = 1 FTTE

A full time teacher = 20 hours teaching and 5 hours non-contact.

Two half time part timers with proportionate non-contact each have 10 hours teaching and 2.5 hours non-contact = 25 hours in total = 1 FTTE.

35. We have three part time teachers respectively employed for 10 hours, 8 hours and 7 hours. Do we have to give any of them noncontact?

From the start of 2025 all of these teachers teach must be given prorated non-contact time.

NZ Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) It's About Time Toolkit 2023-25 Email: enquiries@ppta.org.nz
