



It's

About

Time

2023-2025

TOOLKIT

The timetabling policy (Section 4)

Section 4: The timetabling policy

Consultation – a requirement of the collective agreements

The requirement that a school must have a timetabling policy and are required to consult with its teaching staff over its timetabling policy was first introduced in 2001-02 along with the first provisions of guaranteed non-contact time (3 hours per week, later increasing to five). At the time it was accepted that teachers' work had increased (partly from the onset of NCEA) and it was also accepted that there would be unavoidable occasions where the non-contact provisions might not be met. Schools were to establish in this policy a process to deal with this, i.e. a compensatory process. These initial provisions have been expanded since.

The exact process of consultation may vary from school to school, but it is expected that the teaching staff input would normally be coordinated and represented through the PPTA branch structure, in conjunction with the NZEI branch in area schools.

Whether or not consultation has happened adequately in the past any school/PPTA branch can reinvigorate this process through a review. And, whether or not the school is contemplating changes to the student learning programmes or timetabling, a review can serve as a useful collaborative exercise in scrutinizing how things are done:

- ❖ Are we being fair and doing things for the right reasons?
- ❖ Can we improve how we do things?

Consultation

The legal definition of consultation is part of this kit.

Basic to successful consultation are transparency of process, open mindedness and full staff involvement in establishing the policy. It will take time and genuine effort must be made to accommodate the views of those being consulted; consultation is to be a reality, not a charade. Commonly consensus is sought through a consultative process but it is not a requirement. However a good faith approach would be based on mutual responsibility to seek ways to make the working environment operate effectively which will guide the staff and employer towards agreed outcomes.

Content of the policy

While the current Collective Agreements require the timetabling policy to cover particular areas, to be of most use locally the policy should expand upon these to inform local decision making about teachers' work and class sizes in particular. The essential requirements are:

1. [The non-contact entitlements](#)
2. [Class size matters](#)
3. [Other matters, including duty, which impact on timetabling practices.](#)
4. [A process for dealing with situations where the entitlements cannot be met i.e. how to compensate.](#)

1. The non-contact provisions

The non-contact entitlements ([STCA clause 5.3](#), [ASTCA clause 4.2](#)) are absolute requirements and because they have been in place for some years it is expected that they are understood and in place. Teachers cannot be required or expected to forgo any of the non-contact provisions but if a teacher agrees to do so then they must be compensated – and because these are workload controls then the compensation ought to reduce their workload in some other way.

Guaranteed time non-contact time during the school timetable provides teachers with time to do the work to support their individual teaching. When it was introduced it was acknowledged that required ‘work’ associated with teaching was valuable and had to be allowed for¹.

The effect of these provisions is to cap a full time teaching week for individual teachers at 20 hours of time-tabled teaching, i.e. contact with students in organized instructional programmes, by providing five hours of non-contact out of the notional 25 hour FTTE, with further reductions for a range of other roles and responsibilities. If the school’s timetable for students is shorter or longer than the 25 hours, the maximum for teacher contact remains at 20.

As schools have adapted their student programmes to better support and track their individual learning needs, time scheduled for individual academic mentoring has expanded. In some schools it is formalised within the designated learning periods. In others it has replaced all or part of the administrative functions of the ‘form-time’. While previously a short form time was largely administrative they may now be longer periods, assigned several times a week, with requirements on teachers to support students in broad learning programmes. This is no longer administrative time but a professional teaching activity in which students are engaged in learning within the context of the wider curriculum. 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.

A school’s policy should include all the non-contact provisions of each collective agreement are given effect in that school’s timetable. These are:

For full time secondary teachers, specialist technology teachers² in technology centres in intermediate and primary schools and those teachers in area schools teaching predominantly in year 7 – 13:

- ❖ A maximum of 20 hours timetabled teaching;
- ❖ Additional non-contact hours for each permanent unit up to three and (except in area schools) the employer is to **endeavour** to provide one additional hour for each of the 4th and subsequent units, and the employer may provide additional non-contact to senior managers;

¹ The clause says: *“The non-contact time allocations for secondary teachers are an acknowledgement of the importance to quality education of the duties other than classroom teaching (such as those referred to in [5.1.1 \(a to c\)](#) above) which teachers are required to undertake while schools are open for instruction.”*

² See Appendix 6

- ❖ For 2024 - Part time teachers³ employed for 18 (0.72FTTE) or more hours per week must have some non-contact within their paid hours (STCA clause 5.2.6(b), ASTCA clause 4.2.3(d)) – and no part time teacher can be employed for more than 22.25 hours per week, at which level 3 hours must be paid non-contact.
- ❖ From 2025 - All part time secondary teachers must have prorated contact and non-contact time. (STCA clause 5.3.4(b)).

For those teachers in area schools teaching predominantly in year 1– 6:

- ❖ Full time teachers shall have a maximum average timetabled teaching time of 23.5 hours per week, decreasing to 23 hours per week from the start of term 3 2024.
- ❖ From term 1 2025, Full time teachers shall have a maximum average timetabled teaching time of 22.5 hours
- ❖ From term 1 2024, teachers employed part time for 0.80 FTTE per week will have a maximum average timetabled teaching time equivalent to 0.94 of the hours they are employed, decreasing to 0.92 of those hours from term 3 2024.
- ❖ From term 1 2025, the maximum average timetabled teaching time will be equivalent of 0.90 of the hours they are employed.
- ❖ The maximum timetabled classroom teaching time referred to above may be averaged out on a per term per teacher basis.

Except in area schools, employers must *endeavour* to provide part time teachers employed for 12 hours (0.48FTTE) or more with one hour of non-contact time for each 4 hours of teaching.

A process for circumstances where, for genuine reason during timetabling or at short notice, it is not possible to provide the non-contact time entitlements, i.e. when there must be agreement and some compensation.

Where a teacher is not timetabled for regular learning groups, determining if they are within the entitlements is determined by the total number of contact hours they have with students in each week. If this time is equal to or less than their entitlement then the requirements of the STCA are met.

For example:

³ See Appendix 7

A teacher with no permanent units is within minimum entitlement if they see students by appointment through the timetabled school week for 20 hours or fewer (25 hours less five hours non-contact) in a week.

A teacher with one permanent unit is within minimum entitlement if they see students by appointment for 19 hours or less in a week (25 hours minus five hours non-contact minus 1 hour unit time).

A teacher with 8 permanent units is within minimum entitlement if they see students by appointment for no more than 17 hours in a week (25 hours minus five hours non-contact minus 3 hours unit time).

Examples of teachers without regularly scheduled learning groups may include:

- ❖ RTLBs
- ❖ Guidance Counsellors
- ❖ Regional Health School Teachers
- ❖ Senior managers without timetabled classes

Additional time allowances

The basic non-contact entitlements are **in addition** to a range of other time allowances⁴ in the STCA and ASTCA.

Additional staffing is provided by the Ministry of Education to a school for teachers who have these time allowances. There can be no reason for failing to provide these time allowances.

Teachers	Clauses	Staffing to the school	Maximum teaching hrs/wk
Te Atakura	STCA 3.7 ASTCA 2.11	0.5 FTTE (or 12.5 hours = 2.5 days)	$25 - (12.5 + 5) =$ 7.5hrs/wk
Beginning teachers'	STCA 3.8 ASTCA 2.10	PRT 1 – 0.2 FTTE (= five hours) PRT 2 – 0.1 FTTE (not in area schools) (PRTs year one employed between 0.5 and less than full time receive 0.1 FTTE ie 2.5 hours/week)	$25 - (5 + 5) =$ 15 hrs/wk $25 - (5 + 2.5) =$ 17.5 hrs /wk

⁴ See Appendix 8

HOD of Beginning teachers'	STCA 3.8A ASTCA 2.14	0.04 FTTE for each HOD per BT 1 and 2 (equivalent to 1 hr/week which can be used flexibly)	example $25 - (5 + 3 \text{ units} + 1) = \mathbf{16 \text{ hrs/wk}}$ (or used in blocks of time)
Specialist classroom teachers	STCA 3.8B	0.14 FTTE or 0.32 FTTE for schools greater than 1200 students.	$25 - (5 + 4) = \mathbf{16 \text{ hrs/wk}}$ or $25 - (5 + 8) = \mathbf{12 \text{ hrs/wk}}$

Specialist teacher	ASTCA 2.15	0.08 or 0.16 FTTE (depending on the size of the school)	$25 - (5 + 2) = \mathbf{18 \text{ hrs/wk}}$ $25 - (5 + 4) = \mathbf{16 \text{ hrs/wk}}$
Overseas teacher time allowance	STCA 3.8C	0.1 FTTE for the school to be used after discussion with the overseas teacher on how to use this time to provide professional advice and guidance	This may release the overseas teacher from teaching at times for this purpose.

2. Class size matters

Both the STCA and the ASTCA require references in the timetable policy to class size as a factor which influences the timetable.

The STCA also requires a specific reference to clause 5.9, the average class size provision. This provision is not in the ASTCA.

The STCA requires that employers will use reasonable **endeavour** to achieve, for each individual teacher with more than one class, an average class size (based upon the teacher's timetabled learning groups and the roll of each of those groups) of no more than 26 students. When this average cannot be achieved for a teacher there is to be a compensatory process in place, just as there is for when non-contacts cannot be provided.

Calculating the average

To calculate the average for each teacher four variables may need to be taken into account: the number of classes, the number of periods, the length of periods and the number of students.

Same length periods:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} \text{Class 1} & & \text{Class 2} & & \text{Class 3} & & \text{Class 4} & & \text{Class 5} \\ (25 \times 4) & + & (28 \times 4) & + & (21 \times 5) + (27 \times 4) & + & & + & (26 \times 3) \\ & & & & & & & & \\ = 503 / 20 = 25.15 \text{ average} \end{array}$$

When learning groups are timetabled for different numbers of periods of different lengths then average class size is the sum of the number of students on each group roll times the total number of minutes that the teacher is timetabled to be with the group in a cycle divided by the total number of minutes in a cycle the teacher is timetabled to teach.

To illustrate this situation: A teacher has 5 learning groups. The size and number of contact minutes for each group is given in this table and the average class size is calculated:

Learning group	Roll	Minutes	Roll*minutes
1	20	150	3000
2	25	240	6000
3	28	200	5600
4	30	190	5700
5	12	200	2400
Totals		980	22700
Average class size			22700/980 = 23.16

Normal day to day fluctuations in the group learning time (e.g. shortened periods) or student attendance (e.g. a student absence or the temporary addition of a student for supervision purposes) will not change the average class size.

Permanent additions to, or deletions from, the official group roll or ongoing changes to the time the teacher is in contact with a learning group or groups will alter the average class size for that teacher and a recalculation of the average class size for that teacher should follow such changes.

When a teacher provides temporary relief cover for a class this will not change their average class size. This situation would be covered by the non-contact provisions if they exceed their contact time.

Below are examples (all with periods of one hour) of different average class size situations.

Teacher	Learning group	Learning group	Learning group	Learning group	Learning group	Average
Home room Year 7	30 for 25 periods					30.00
Science	18 for 4 periods	21 for 4 periods	28 for 4 periods	28 for 4 periods	30 for 4 periods	25.00
Head of Maths	18 for 4 periods	21 for 4 periods	28 for 4 periods	15 for 3 periods		20.87
Deputy principal	12 for 4 periods	31 for 4 periods				21.50
Music	30 for 2 periods	32 for 2 periods	20 for 3 periods	8 for 4 periods	12 for 4 periods	19.79
	28 for 2 periods			32 for 2 periods		
English	30 for 4 periods	32 for 4 periods	28 for 4 periods	18 for 4 periods	25 for 4 periods	26.60

These examples illustrate that:

- 1 Individual classes can be larger or smaller than 26.
- 2 Average class sizes for individual teachers may be less than 26.
- 3 A balance of large and small learning groups can achieve an acceptable average class size.

When a teacher's average class size exceeds 26

A compensatory mechanism applies when a teacher has an average class size of more than 26 and how and what will happen should already be determined by the timetabling policy. These compensations agreed for this situation may or may not be the same as those applied for exceeding weekly contact time and the timetable policy should be clear if different mechanisms are to operate.

In the examples above only the English teacher generates the compensatory provisions. The home room teacher has a group greater than 26 but because it is their only group the average class size provision does not apply.

In responding to the class size average of the English teacher the school may consider things like:

- ❖ The possibility of moving students from these learning groups to other equivalent groups within or between option lines to reduce some of these group sizes;
- ❖ Exchanging one or more of these groups with other teachers in the option lines who have learning groups which are smaller and who also have average class sizes less than 26; Applying a compensatory mechanism.

3. Other matters, including duty, which impact on timetabling practices

Following consultation there should be statements on the school timetable policy on the range of other duties teaching staff may have, i.e. whatever aspects of student supervision a school determines is necessary. Some schools choose not to use teaching staff for some of this but many do.

Other matters which are associated with the timetable include teacher rest and meal breaks, the range of meetings and additional student activities, in fact all extra and co-curricular activities which impact on teachers' work and so should be taken into consideration.

Further considerations

Only making reference the timetabling policy to the non-contact clauses is insufficient because there are many other decisions that can usefully help shape a school's timetable and provide answers to issues. They might be about:

- i. How the school deals with school trips, camps and sports day regarding non-contact?
- ii. On what basis permanent units (and how many) are allocated to a range of responsibilities?
- iii. Will the school provide non-contact time for the work associated with fixed term units?
- iv. Will the school provide time to teachers-in-charge who only have MMAs?
- v. How are workloads kept fair and equitable for teachers who have the most challenging students, the most internal assessment, multi-level teaching, on-line classes etc?

Having transparent and understood policy derived from genuine consultation will gain more acceptance and understanding of the dilemmas faced with the tight resourcing of schools.

Note: From 2025 part time teachers may be asked to do prorated other duties. Those may be prorated over the week, the term or the year.

4. A process for dealing with situations where the entitlements cannot be met i.e. how to compensate

Genuine reason

Schools are required to have as part of their timetable policy an agreed mechanism for dealing with those situations where a teacher may, for *genuine reason*, be asked to forgo, on a temporary basis, their noncontact entitlement or exceed the average class size limit. In such instances a compensatory mechanism must be agreed to. In most schools these should be rare exceptions rather than general practice, though in large schools it may be used more extensively⁵.

What constitutes genuine reason?

It is recommended that this is agreed upon and included in the timetabling policy.

Genuine reason:

All reasonable options have been investigated and no alternative to a temporary reduction in entitlement non-contact or average class size has been found.

Applies in individual cases, would not justify a blanket incursion into the non-contact or average class size entitlements.

May be a sudden emergency that requires supervision of a group of students for its ongoing safety. It may be the absence of any available day relievers in the local area.

After all reasonable endeavours have been exhausted, one or two staff members might be asked to teach for a term, or a year, at a higher level of contact or average class size to allow the timetable to operate.

Is not simply administrative convenience, or saving money on relief cover, or to cover for inadequate planning.

Genuine reasons for seeking to use non-contact time for day relief are not the same as those that might be valid for the longer-term situation.

Intense pressure on non-contacts or average class size for individual teachers could imply that there is a structural change required in the timetable, or in the administration practices, or a need to reorganize resources to deliver the STCA entitlement.

⁵ See Appendix 2

Compensatory mechanisms

The specific compensatory mechanisms which are to be applied are to be agreed between the principal and teaching staff at each school. They may include, but are not limited to, time in lieu, reduction in other duties, a combination of these or, as a last resort, an additional payment.

Note: The intent of the non-contact entitlements is to provide adequate time for the non-contact duties of teachers. The intention of the average class size limit is to ensure teachers have manageable marking and assessment loads and adequate time to give suitable feedback to individual students. As a matter of policy the main compensatory mechanisms should be time in lieu or agreed workload reduction in other areas of the teachers duties.

In those cases where payment is the only viable compensatory mechanism for the school then this could be achieved through mechanisms such as the following:

For long term situations (e.g. timetable rigidity in a small school):

- ❖ The issuing of a fixed term unit for the duration. These are Ministry funded units.
- ❖ The issuing of a Board-funded responsibility payment at the rate of a unit for the duration. These are operations grant-funded payments⁶.

For emergency day-relief type situations:

- ❖ Issuing a fixed term unit for a period that generates the equivalent payment to the overtime rate. These are Ministry funded units.
- ❖ Issuing a Board-funded payment for a period that generates the equivalent payment to the overtime rate. These are operations grant-funded payments.

Once the agreed options are established within the policy, it will be a matter of agreement between the individual teacher and the principal about which option(s) will apply in each particular instance.

It is expected that before asking for agreement to temporarily reduce an individual's non-contact entitlement the school will have considered the alternatives, including (where appropriate to the situation):

- ❖ Temporarily increasing the hours of part time staff
- ❖ Hiring additional full or part time staff from operations funds
- ❖ Using day relief teachers
- ❖ Time table adjustments

Note: Where there is no compensatory option available PPTA strongly advises its members that they do not have to agree to a reduction in their entitlement to non-contact and the principal is advised to look for an alternative.

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

⁶ The Minister of Education provides consent pursuant to Section 580 of the Education and Training Act for Boards to make such payments.

