

## TEACHERS WITHOUT A PERMANENT CLASSROOM BASE

Ideally, all teachers should have a permanent classroom base. The benefits of having such a base are numerous, including the ability to plan and prepare in advance of each lesson.

Conversely, there are significant disadvantages to lacking a permanent classroom base, including a loss of time in moving between classrooms or different school sites, having to transport materials and lack of storage facilities. Where teachers moving between classrooms or different sites are not provided with adequate time to do so, this may impact adversely on classroom management. Additionally, employers should consider the impact on the health, safety and welfare of staff who are required to move between classrooms or buildings and, in particular, run the risk of injury and potential long-term absence.

Unfortunately, many schools are overcrowded or lack sufficient specialist teaching rooms to allow the full delivery of the curriculum without using general teaching space. Some schools also operate on multiple sites, which again raises issues around the movement of teachers.

This guidance is designed for teachers to ensure that where teachers are required to move, this movement is kept to a minimum, with sufficient consideration of the health and safety implications. It is not intended to be used for ad-hoc room changes arranged between individual teachers for specific reasons.

Throughout this guidance, it should be noted that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW) requires employers to do everything reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations requires all hazards to be risk assessed. As moving around the site, or between sites, constitutes a hazard, this must be risk assessed.

### **New teachers**

Early career teachers (ECTs)/newly qualified (NQTs)/probationers should always be given a permanent classroom base.

The NASUWT has developed separate guidance for teachers moving between school sites.

### **Teachers moving within a single site**

This situation is most likely to occur in secondary schools and for primary teachers delivering planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) lessons.

Teachers who do not have a permanent base should:

- have access to lockable storage facilities;
- be provided with workstation(s) that are suitable for the work they do;
- be provided with a suitable area in which to rest and take breaks;
- have rooms that are timetabled to minimise distance travelled;
- have the use of the same room for an entire day, or not be expected to move rooms between rooms between concurrent lessons;
- be given assistance to move equipment and resources (e.g. books). (This could be via an appropriately trained member of support staff.);
- not be expected to carry heavy equipment and resources between rooms, and not be trained to do so, as this would represent an acceptance of the need;
- be provided with a trolley to move any other materials;

- avoid movements between buildings that require them going outdoors;
- not be observed teaching in lessons immediately after where they have had to move between rooms; and
- if teaching a practical subject, be timetabled in specialist rooms at least some of the time for all of their teaching groups.

In addition, movements are shared equitably across colleagues within departments, so that where there is insufficient space, all teachers move to a degree, unless there is a clear rationale not to do so, such as being an ECT or where it is deemed a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act. It would also be unfair to expect part-time teachers to move where full-time colleagues do not. This could be deemed less favourable treatment and thus contrary to regulations.

### **Disabled teachers**

Special consideration must be given to disabled teachers, especially, but not exclusively, those with mobility issues. In these cases, it is likely that ensuring the teacher has a permanent base will be considered a reasonable adjustment, and it could therefore be discriminatory to require a disabled teacher to move between classrooms or different sites.

### **Pregnancy**

If you are pregnant, legislation requires that a risk assessment is carried out on all aspects of your role; this must be regularly reviewed. Part of the risk assessment must focus on the physical environment. For pregnant teachers without a permanent base, or indeed those with one, the employer should, in consultation with you, consider the appropriateness of your teaching location(s), particularly in regard to access sanitary and rest facilities.

### **Room closures**

Where a teaching room is required to be closed for any period, a risk assessment should be carried out, especially where the closure is likely to extend to more than a couple of days. In this case, it would be unfair to expect a displaced teacher to make regular movements, and it may require a more widespread temporary re-rooming to be undertaken to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of teachers is protected and the requirements above are met.

### **NASUWT Health and Safety Representative**

The NASUWT Health and Safety Representative can be a valuable source of advice and assistance for this, or any other health and safety matter, and every school should have a NASUWT Health and Safety Representative.

If your school does not have a NASUWT Health and Safety Representative, have you considered becoming one? Full free training is provided, for which your school is legally obliged to allow you to attend, which will give you the knowledge and skills required. You also have a legal entitlement to carry out your role. This can form part of your performance management objectives, including performing a whole-school role. It is also a uniquely rewarding role, which allows you to work in partnership with school management and members to make a real and tangible difference to their working lives. For more information, contact the NASUWT as detailed below.

### **Additional advice/concerns**

If you require additional advice, or your concerns have not been addressed by your school management, please contact the NASUWT for further assistance:



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[advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk)  
[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)