

SSTA has always recognised that Supply Teachers are an important and essential part of the education service. Schools are unable to function without an experienced and professional group of teachers. SSTA insists that the supply teacher shortage has been as a direct result of the lack of understanding and respect of the importance of supply teachers. A short term fix in 2011 is now causing severe problems in schools.

Supply teachers take this career path for a number of different reasons that includes time for caring responsibilities, returning to the profession after a period away, flexible engagements to allow time for other activities, and those seeking experience to gain further experience before taking-up a permanent teaching position.

All teacher release from school is dependent upon the provision of supply teachers. Access to Professional development, changes in school qualifications, changes in curriculum, school visits and the internal school development priorities are not possible without supply teachers. This is without the normal staff absences such as long and short term sickness cover, maternity and paternity leave, public responsibilities/duties.

The supply teacher should be a valued member of the school community and not just the poor relation for whom nobody wants to take responsibility. Supply teachers have an entitlement to proper contracts of employment and salary that reflects the importance of the role.

SSTA is seeking

- **a restoration of supply teacher pay levels,**
- **a national coordinated register of qualified supply teachers that are GTCS registered**
- **a single PVG check for all supply teachers**
- **an entitlement to Continuing Professional Development**

Working with local authority employers, the Scottish Government needs to ensure that the register is centrally managed on behalf of all local authorities to address the crisis that exists today and protect the service for the future. The SSTA is totally opposed to the privatisation of education by introducing private supply agencies that exploit teachers by paying as little as £50 a day with no contribution to the teachers' pension scheme.

Schools need to be reminded that

- When cover is used, limits on class sizes still apply
- Senior classes with pupils under 16 need to be supervised by a teacher
- Grouping classes together in a hall is a potential health and safety risk when teacher:pupil ratios are compromised.