

Specifying the Global Settings in Cover 7

Cover Diary Settings

These settings determine how staff are prioritised when providing cover and how Cover monitors and records the amount of cover done by members of staff. The settings defined in the **Cover Diary** panel on the **Global Settings** page have a direct impact on how the Cover Diary functions and on its appearance. To change the Cover Diary settings, select **Tools | Cover | Global Settings** to display the **Global Settings** page.

When you have finished, click the **Save** button to save the changes.

The screenshot shows the 'Global Settings' window with the 'Cover Diary' tab selected. The settings are as follows:

Setting	Value
Consecutive Day Cover Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff Weighting Active	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Half Period Cover Mode	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff Offset Active	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fulfill Assignment Requirements Left to Right	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cover Supervisor Credited with Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max. Amount of Cover Per Day (in minutes)	110
Max. Amount of Cover Per Week (in minutes)	180
Reference Start Date for Cover Totals	03/09/2008
Minimum Time for Absences (in minutes)	10
Minimum Time for Closures (in minutes)	15
Student/Invigilator Ratio	30

In the **Cover Diary** panel, the following settings are available:

■ Consecutive Day Cover Protection

Select this option to prevent staff from being suggested for cover if they were absent from work on the previous day, regardless of the reason.

■ Staff Weighting Active

Select this option to ensure that the staff weighting calculation is taken into account when suggesting free staff members for cover. An individual staff weighting limit can be defined for each staff member via **Tools | Cover | Manage Staff Weightings and Offsets**.

If a staff member has almost reached their staff weighting limit (by providing their defined limit of cover), their name appears at the bottom of the list in the **Available Staff** panel on the Cover Diary. Other members of staff who have not provided as much cover appear at the top of the list. This ensures that all staff members who can provide cover, do not exceed their staff weighting limit and that a fair, proportional approach to assigning cover is in place.

■ Half Period Cover Mode

Select this option if you want all timetabled periods to be split into two and considered separately by Cover. This enables you to assign two staff members to cover one timetable period, each of them scheduled for only half of the period.

*NOTE: The **Half Period Cover Mode** option can lead to very short assignment requirements, e.g. if you have five minute registration periods, **Half Period Cover Mode** splits these into a three minute and a two minute session. Ensure that your **Minimum Time for Absences (in minutes)** and **Minimum Time for Closures (in minutes)** are equal to or less than your shortest half-period. Cover automatically removes assignments that are shorter than these minimum values.*

■ Staff Offset Active

Select this option if new members of staff join your school part-way through the year. These staff members can be given an offset figure via **Tools | Cover | Manage Staff Weightings and Offsets**.

This ensures that Cover counts them as having provided as much cover as a member of staff who has been in school for the entire school year. Assigning an offset figure to new staff members ensures that their names do not automatically appear at the top of the list in the **Available Staff** panel on the Cover Diary.

■ Fulfill Assignment Requirements Left to Right

Selecting this option ensures that each time an assignment is made on the Cover Diary, the next cell on the current absence row is highlighted. When the row is complete, the cell on the next row is highlighted. If this option is not selected, the highlighted cell moves vertically from top to bottom, instead of from left to right.

■ Cover Supervisor Credited with Cover

Select this option if you want staff members who are recorded as Cover Supervisors to be credited with the amount of cover provided. Cover credits and limits do not normally apply to staff recorded as Cover Supervisors because they are employed specifically for this purpose. If this option is not selected, a record is maintained of the number of covers provided by a Cover Supervisor, but the total hours covered remains at zero.

■ Max. Amount of Cover Per Day (in minutes) and Max. Amount of Cover Per Week (in minutes)

The figures entered in these fields enable Cover to place a ceiling (in minutes) on the amount of cover permitted by individual staff members. Once this ceiling is reached, the individual concerned is removed from the **Available Staff** list, although they can still be assigned by deselecting the **Free** check box in the **Available Staff** panel on the Cover Diary. It should be noted that these ceilings do not apply to staff who are recorded as Cover Supervisors through **Focus | Person | Manage Classroom Staff**.

■ Reference Start Date for Cover Totals

This date is usually set to the start date of the current academic year but some schools prefer to return the cover totals to zero at the beginning of each school term. This date represents the period from which the record of covers is maintained for each staff member. The only column on the Cover Diary that reflects the individual total for a staff member is **Covers To Date**. The other columns, **Covers this Week** and **Covers in this Academic Year**, reflect the correct information regardless of the reference start date.

■ Minimum Time for Absences (in minutes)

Enter a figure in minutes to represent the ceiling above which an absence must be covered, e.g. a five minute staff absence is unlikely to cause concern or require a stand in teacher, but for a 15 minute absence, it may be deemed necessary to cover the class.

■ Minimum Time for Closures (in minutes)

Enter a figure in minutes to represent the ceiling above which a closure must be covered, e.g. a five minute room closure is unlikely to cause concern or require an alternative location but for a 15 minute closure, it may be deemed necessary to relocate the class.

*NOTE: A cover assignment created for a duration shorter than the minimum time specified is removed automatically. Ensure that when working in **Half Period Cover Mode**, the minimum time specified is not shorter than your shortest half-period.*

■ Student/Invigilator Ratio

Enter a figure for the maximum number of candidates who can be overseen per invigilator. To enable the allocation of room closures for exam purposes, a figure must be specified in this field. The default is set to 30:1, but this figure can be changed before saving.

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Setting Staff Prioritization Rules

It is possible to define how the **Available Staff** list on the Cover Diary is filtered and ordered based on a set of **Staff Prioritization Rules**.

Once selected, the **Staff Prioritization Rules** are moved to the right-hand side of the panel and ordered, with the most important at the top of the list.

If no priorities are set and the **Staff Weighting Active** check box is not selected via **Tools | Cover | Manage Staff Weightings and Offsets**, the staff names are displayed alphabetically by surname in the **Available Staff** list.

Some of the Prioritization Rules can be set as an **Absolute Rule**, which increases the rigidity when determining the order of the staff members in the **Available Staff** list.

1. Select **Tools | Cover | Global Settings** to display the **Global Settings** page.
2. Click the **Staff Prioritization Rules** hyperlink to display the **Staff Prioritization Rules** panel.
3. Highlight the required **Available Priorities** in the **Staff Prioritization Rules** panel.
4. Click the **Add** button to copy the required **Available Priorities** into the **Selected Priorities** panel.
5. Repeat steps 3-4, as required.

The options are:

■ Amount of Cover done

Selecting this rule ranks individual staff members based on the total of credited cover provided by each of them.

■ Suspended

When classes are suspended using a 'Suspend and Free Staff' rule, Cover considers the staff scheduled with the classes to be 'free to do cover' for the duration of the suspension. The 'Suspended' prioritization rule can be used to influence the position of staff in the **Available Staff** list, who are made 'free' in this way.

■ Booked Staff

This rule selects classroom staff with a booking for the selected Cover Diary date and time.

■ Classroom Staff Role

Select this rule to ensure that the member of staff selected to cover an absence matches the role of the absent member of staff.

■ Cover Supervisor

Selecting this rule ensures that members of staff who are recorded as 'Cover Supervisors' are displayed at the top of the **Available Staff** list. Some schools add an identifier to the cover supervisor's Staff Code to enable easy identification in the **Available Staff** list.

Selected Priorities	Absolute Rule
Amount of Cover done	<input type="checkbox"/>
On Call Cover Rota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
On Call Cover Rota (b.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	<input type="checkbox"/>

■ On Call Cover Rota

Select this rule if an on-call rota has been defined. Staff members who are assigned to the rota are displayed near the top of the **Available Staff** list when assigning cover. Where more than one person is on the rota for a selected period, rota staff are used in the order in which they were added to the rota through **Tools | Cover | Manage Rotas**.

■ On Call Cover Rota (by amount of Cover done)

Select this rule if an on-call rota has been defined. Staff members who are assigned to the rota are displayed in order of ranking on the **Available Staff** list when assigning cover, e.g. staff members who have already provided cover today, are ranked lower in the list than a staff member who has not provided cover today.

■ Week Covers

This rule calculates the total number of minutes of cover that each member of staff has provided during the course of the current week. Those with the least amount of cover are offered for selection in the **Available Staff** list above those who have provided more cover.

■ Subject

Select this rule if it is considered advantageous to use cover staff whose expertise matches the subject of the class being covered. Expertise in this context is taken to mean those subjects identified on the **Manage Classroom Staff** page.

4. To set a staff prioritization as an absolute rule, select the **Absolute Rule** check box next to the relevant **Selected Priorities**. Selecting these check boxes reduces the options available to you when re-arranging cover for absences, etc. so serious consideration should be given prior to setting absolute rules.
5. To change the order of the selected priorities, highlight the selected priority and click the **Up** or **Down** button.
6. Click the **Save** button to save the settings.
7. Click the **Print** button if you require a paper copy of the global settings information.

Specifying the Location Path

It is possible for schools to create and publish all cover arrangements to a local 'website' so that all teaching staff can access the information at any time. To enable a 'website' to be built from reports that are run and statistics that are calculated, you can specify the location of a storage area for the HTML pages that are created when reports are compiled.

A shortcut to this location can be set up on each teacher's desktop by the Network Manager. This enables teachers to view the 'website' during registration so that they may inform their pupil/students of any changes to rooms or staffing for their scheduled lessons.

Alternatively, the **Cover and Absence** reports for the day can be printed and pinned to the noticeboard in the staff room where they can be viewed by all staff.

1. Select **Tools | Cover | Global Settings** to display the **Global Settings** page.
2. Click the **Location Path** hyperlink to display the **Location Path** panel.
3. Click the **Browse** button and navigate to the required storage location where the HTML pages will be collated.
4. Select the **Include Reason for Assignment** check box if you would like this to be included on reports and summaries.
5. Click the **Save** button.
6. Select **Tools | Cover | Statistics | Absence or Cover** to specify the parameters of the reports that are created.

This guide is based on the version of the software (7.124) in use at the time of publication.

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