

Principals Kit – Classroom Release Time (Primary)

Classroom release time – primary teachers

Primary teachers are entitled to time out of the classroom each term to do other work such as:

- planning
- evaluation
- reporting
- personal professional development
- research
- syndicate meetings

During their absence, their class is taught by another staff member.

Full-time permanent teachers and reliever teachers employed for at least 1 term are entitled to 10 hours of classroom release time each term.

Part-time teachers employed for at least 1 term at 0.8 full-time teaching equivalent are entitled to a proportion of the 10 hours of release time each term. For example, a teacher working 0.8 is entitled to 8 hours of release time, and a teacher working 0.9 is entitled to 9 hours.

Board responsibilities – classroom release time

Your school's board sets the policy on what classroom release time can be used for. It can delegate the development of the policy to the principal, in consultation with teachers.

The Board needs to approve the final policy and make sure it meets the provisions of the Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement.

NZEI Te Riu Roa, NZSTA and the Ministry of Education developed a set of guidelines for the entitlement to and use of CRT at its inception in 2004/5. [These can be viewed here.](#)

The actual clause in the current primary teachers collective agreement is: [Clause 3.28 – Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement](#)

Classroom Release Time Frequently Asked Questions - Primary Teachers Collective Agreement (PTCA)

What is CRT?

Classroom Release Time (CRT) has been available to full-time classroom teachers since Term 4 2005. It was first negotiated as part of the PTCA in 2004. Schools are provided with staffing to cover the release time. CRT is available to full-time teachers for 10 hours per term and to those teachers working 0.8 or more on a pro rata basis. CRT is not available to principals.

How much time do teachers get?

Classroom teachers (as per the definition in the guidelines) will be entitled to 10 hours per term. Part time teachers employed for at least 0.8FTTE per week and who are permanently employed or long term relieving for at least a term are entitled to a prorated amount of the 10 hours CRT per week.

Are job sharers entitled to CRT?

Yes, provided this is a genuine approved job share and the time will be allocated on the basis of how the job share is split.

Who decides how it can be used?

Each school must have a policy on the use of CRT. This policy will have a list of what CRT is to be used for. The process for designing the operational policy is through consultation between the principal and teachers. Before starting the process, the principal should provide a briefing for the Board, confirm that the Board has delegated responsibility to the principal and the final policy should be presented to the Board and minuted at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Is there a requirement in the guidelines for the need to enhance students learning rather than it just being to provide coverage while the teacher is out of the room for an hour?

Yes, the purpose of CRT is that it should be implemented in ways which address teacher workload while maximising benefits for student learning. Emphasis should be given to identifying and implementing the use of classroom release time so that it is professionally meaningful for the school's teaching and learning programmes, teachers' professional growth and the needs of the students.

Can the hours be accumulated?

Yes - The 10 hours must, wherever possible, be allocated within the term. This could be by giving one hour per week or even by giving two full days per term. The policy will say how it is allocated. In certain circumstances, part or the whole amount may be carried over into the next term but cannot be carried over into another school year. Again, the policy will describe those situations.

Can a teacher 'donate' their time to someone else?

No.

Is it the school's / the principal's / or the teacher's time?

The school receives the staffing, the principal, in consultation with the teachers, designs the policy for use, and the teacher receives the time.

Does it mean principals end up covering CRT?

No. The school is provided with staffing to cover the classroom release time.

Will schools/kura be able to cluster their CRT to cover the classroom release time?

Schools / kura have the ability to transfer staffing. Schools/kura considering this should talk to NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa to receive advice and information before taking this action. An example of this may be a group of kura wishing to employ a Te Reo specialist teacher.

Do classroom teachers have to plan the programme for the teacher providing the release?

CRT is not intended to create extra work for the classroom teacher, but it may change the planning processes. Over time a professional relationship between the classroom teacher and the teacher providing the release will develop to ensure the continuity of learning. The teacher providing the release should be expected to liaise with the classroom teacher before they undertake the release time. This is to ensure their planned activities fit with the teacher's long term and/or daily plan. The teacher providing the release would normally be expected to plan the detailed activities they will teach within the parameters of the classroom teacher's unit plans. Continuity for the class should be the objective for both teachers.

If a teacher changes schools mid-term, does she/he take her/his entitlement with them?

Each school must have its own policy, and those teachers joining that school mid-term will need to fit into the policy in place. For some teachers that may mean a change in the way CRT is allocated to them, particularly for the remainder of that term.

What happens if it is a regular slot and the class teacher is on camp or a trip or some other planned activity?

The school should take account of planned events and activities when allocating CRT time to teachers and organise CRT accordingly.

Can CRT be used to provide physical education (P.E.) in the school?

The staffing provided to schools to deliver CRT can be used in a range of ways (including recruiting a P.E. teacher) provided that it is confirmed policy and the CRT is available to all the full-time classroom teachers.

How should CRT be used?

It should be implemented in ways which address teacher workload while maximising benefits for student learning. The template policy (see below) contains a list of ideas of how CRT could be used.

Can it be used as planning time?

That is one possible use. One example is that a school could engage three CRT release teachers to release three classroom teachers at the same time to enable them to plan co-operatively for the coming term or year.

Can a teacher be employed to teach a specific subject?

Yes, if the school policy decides this is how CRT will be provided and they have the staffing to do this.

Does the teacher have to remain on the school site?

All teachers are required to remain on school grounds during the day unless the principal has agreed otherwise. The same rules apply for the CRT time unless the school policy includes an agreement that CRT might be taken off site for specific tasks.

Can CRT time be used for additional and/or management responsibilities?

No. It is classroom release time and the policy needs to define what it can be used for. The policy should be consistent for all teachers.

What does the school do if no certificated teacher can be found to provide release for the teacher receiving classroom release time?

If the school cannot find a certificated teacher to employ in the classroom release teacher position, then it may be possible for the school to employ a suitable person who applies to the Teaching Council for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT). It is important to note that the LAT will be granted only for a specified short period of time, for that school, for that specific position as outlined in a job description and will not be granted for permanent employment. The principal must provide evidence to the Council that a certificated teacher cannot be found. Any employment arrangement of this nature should be used only until a certificated teacher can be found.

Can CRT staffing be used to provide smaller class sizes rather than release time?

No. While NZEI Te Riu Roa policy supports smaller class sizes, the two initiatives should not be confused. Schools are required by the PTCA to provide CRT with the staffing they receive.

Can schools increase class sizes to help provide CRT to each teacher?

Schools should not do this. They are provided with additional staffing for the specific purpose of providing CRT.

Is the CRT time additional to the 0.2 and 0.1 FTTE beginning teacher time allowance provided to schools for provisionally registered teachers?

Yes, the 0.2 (and 0.1 in the second year) provided to schools for the advice and guidance programme of provisionally registered teachers is in addition to the staffing schools receive to provide CRT.

Classroom Release Time – Policy Template (Primary Schools)

This is an operational policy designed in consultation between the principal and teaching staff of *[insert school name]*. The policy is written in conjunction with clause 3.28 of the Primary Teachers Collective Agreement 2019-2022.

Intent and purpose

- The intent of classroom release time is to address teacher workload while maximising benefits for student learning.
- The use of classroom release time will be professionally useful for the school's teaching and learning programmes, the teacher's professional growth and the learning needs of the students.
- Add school-designed statement/s here

Use of Classroom Release Time

This policy contains a list of the most common uses for classroom release time in our school. The list may be amended from time to time through consultation with teachers. The principal and individual teachers may also agree to other uses from time to time.

Add school-designed statement/s here, e.g.

In our school classroom release time will be used for:

- Planning (Add school options)
- Evaluation Reporting Personal professional development
- Observing other teachers
- Reading/Research
- Syndicate meetings
- Assessment
- Any other use agreed to from time to time between teacher and principal

The above are only examples. Each school will compile its own list.

Allocation of Classroom Release Time

Example one: Each teacher will be rostered one hour per week. The roster will be generated by (insert name or position e.g. DP), taking into account where possible the requests of individual teachers.

Example two: Each teacher will be allocated two hours per fortnight. The roster will be generated by (insert name or position e.g. DP), taking into account where possible the requests of individual teachers.

Example three: Each teacher will be allocated 2 days per term. The roster will be generated by (insert name or position e.g. DP), taking into account where possible the requests of individual teachers.

Example four: Each syndicate will determine each term the basis for allocating the CRT to entitled teachers.

[Insert school option here] *NB: where school sessions prevent allocation of precisely 10 hours of classroom release time, the school shall endeavour to provide as close as possible to the 10 hour entitlement including, where needed, advanced or delayed entitlement across the 4 terms of each school year.*

When CRT cannot be provided for genuine reasons

Where for genuine reasons, during term planning or at short notice, it is not possible to provide CRT to an individual or group of teachers the school will:

- Record the reason for non-delivery
- Endeavour to reallocate the CRT at a later date in that school year
- Review the CRT policy if required
- Use the record of non-delivery when reviewing the policy
- Insert school comment/s here

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed in (insert date) or as required in the following instances:

- Staff turnover
- Recruitment/retention issues
- New education initiative (e.g. introduction of specialisation)
- Concern about benefits to student learning
- Any other genuine issue or concern

[Insert school comment/s here]

Signed

Principal

Date

Recorded in Board Minutes

Date