

# Guidelines for Classroom Release Time



NZSTA

**NZEI · TE RĪU ROA**  
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# **Guidelines for Classroom Release Time**

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These guidelines were prepared by NZEI, NZSTA and the Ministry of Education in accordance with the terms of settlement, to assist schools in designing their policy for classroom release time (CRT) entitlement and use.

The CRT policy for your school must conform to the provisions of the Primary Teachers Collective Agreement 2004-2007 (PTCA).



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## Preface

The settlement of the 2004 Primary Teachers Collective Agreement (PTCA) contained provision for the introduction of classroom release time (CRT), effective Term 4 2005.

The settlement requires that each school prepare a policy for use of CRT. The responsibility for preparing the policy should be delegated by the Board of Trustees (Board) to the principal, who then completes the work in consultation with the teaching staff. It is recommended that the principal brief the Board on the issues before starting the process.

The final operational policy should be minuted at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees.

These guidelines were prepared by NZEI, NZSTA and the Ministry of Education in accordance with the terms of settlement, to assist schools in designing their policy for CRT entitlement and use.

A template policy is available with these guidelines or can be downloaded from the NZEI or NZSTA websites on [www.nzei.org.nz](http://www.nzei.org.nz) or [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz).

The school policy on CRT must conform to the provisions of the Primary Teachers Collective Agreement 2004-2007 (PTCA). These provisions are attached as Appendix one

Remember: the school must have a policy on classroom release time in place before the end of Term 3 2005.

## Principles which should underpin the CRT policy

The intent of classroom release time is to 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 useful for the school's teaching and learning programmes, the teacher's professional growth and the learning needs of the students.

Appropriate evaluation of the effective use of classroom release time should be part of the school review process.

The consultation process for the implementation of CRT should allow for involvement of the teaching staff.

# Definitions

**For the purpose of this provision, the following definitions shall apply:**

**1. Classroom Teacher** – A full-time teacher who holds prime responsibility for the planning, implementation, assessment, evaluation and reporting of a sequential programme for a group of students within a school, excluding:

- the principal
- itinerating resource teachers.
- itinerating teachers
- teachers wholly released by entitlement staffing
- teachers bound by another collective agreement

From 2007 “A full-time teacher” will be replaced with “A teacher employed for 0.8 or more”

## **2. Teacher providing the release**

– The description in these guidelines for a teacher who is employed to teach in lieu of the classroom teacher in receipt of classroom release time.

# Staffing/ resourcing classroom release time

Effective from Term 4 2005, schools will receive additional staffing from the Ministry of Education to resource the classroom release time

The method of delivery of the staffing was not available from the Ministry at the time of going to print so will be advised separately. That advice is available on the NZEI and NZSTA websites, [www.nzei.org.nz](http://www.nzei.org.nz) and [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz).

Boards need to plan for the cost of CRT when employing teachers from Board funds as the Ministry of Education will only provide CRT staffing for teachers paid from Teacher Salaries.

Any teacher employed full time from a mixture of entitlement and board funding is entitled to full classroom release time. The Ministry however, will only fund the proportion that is entitlement staffing.

For more information see the ‘CRT - Frequently Asked Questions’ handout

# Intent, purpose and potential uses of classroom release time

It is intended that each school should determine the best use for CRT within the parameters of the principles in these guidelines.

Each classroom teacher who is entitled to classroom release time must receive the entitlement of 10 hours per term, but the allocation of that entitlement is flexible. It may be one hour per week or even two days per term depending on the needs of the school. The school policy must describe the purpose and the method of allocation where possible.

The school policy should also describe the use of CRT.

It is important that CRT should be viewed differently to any release time already provided to teachers for specific ‘non classroom’ responsibilities such as management and responsibility. The school may want to identify this additional ‘release time’ as part of the classroom release time policy in order to maintain the distinction.

Some schools already use Board funds to provide release time to all teachers. Such schools may need to review that policy in tandem with

the introduction of CRT. There is a separate section in these guidelines to assist schools with this process.

## Policy on classroom release time

The policy for classroom release time must be designed in consultation between the principal and the teaching staff in accordance with Clause 5.30 of the PTCA.

Employment legislation requires all parties to act in good faith. In 1993, the Employment Court defined ‘consultation’; the principles defined are attached as Appendix Two and should form the minimum basis for the school’s consultation process.

In March 2005 NZEI asked its members what they thought would be a good process for consultation. Feedback indicated that teachers most wanted:

- Information circulated before any meetings held to discuss CRT
- Time to go away and think about issues after a meeting and before having to give a final response
- An ability to influence what the CRT should be used for
- An outcome that described how they would receive the CRT

All of the above are consistent with the Employment Court's principles for consultation.

NZEI, NZSTA, and the Ministry had the task of providing schools with a draft policy and guidelines to assist schools. If schools prefer to design their own policy they should note that to conform to the provisions in the collective agreement the school's policy should include:

- A statement indicating that classroom release time is an entitlement in the PTCA
- A statement on purpose
- A statement on the use of Classroom Release Time
- A statement on how the time will be allocated
- A statement about the events that may cause a school to be unable to deliver classroom release time and what happens in such an event
- A date and/or process for review of the policy

A policy template is available (handout 1) and can be completed and downloaded in electronic form from the NZEI or NZSTA websites on [www.nzei.org.nz](http://www.nzei.org.nz) or [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz).

Remember the school must have a policy on classroom release time in place before the end of Term 3 2005.

More information is available in 'CRT - Frequently Asked Questions' handout.

The process for consultation will vary depending on the size and type of your school. If you want to talk through the process before starting the consultation contact your local NZEI and NZSTA office.

## Establishing the policy

The following is an example of 'best practice' advice.

### 1. Preparation

The policy design is a responsibility delegated to the principal. As stated in the preface it is recommended that the principal brief the Board prior to starting the process and that the delegation of authority and the briefing be recorded in the Board minutes. Before that meeting it would be useful for the principal to gather the following information to present to the Board:

- A briefing on classroom release time
- The current release time in your school, the purpose and how it is resourced
- The staffing entitlement the school will receive from the MoE to resource the classroom release time
- The cost to the Board of providing CRT for board funded teachers

- Initial ideas on how the staffing could be used to provide CRT and any personnel issues (e.g. availability of relievers)
- How consultation with teaching staff will occur
- How and when the CRT will be reviewed

## 2. Dealing with the other forms of release time whilst introducing CRT.

Almost every school already has some form of formal or informal time for one or more of its teachers. The most common are management release time, beginning teacher release and that generated by ICT and technology in intermediate and full primary schools.

All current release time allocation may need to be reviewed as part of the development of classroom release time to establish:

- What release time is resourced through entitlement or additional staffing (e.g. Management Time Allowance or Beginning Teacher Time Allowance)
- What release time is delivered through school organisation e.g. through class size or technology curriculum
- What release time is resourced through board funding, or alternative funding

The question that needs to be asked is “should the school review any or all of its current allocation of this time? The answer is more likely

to be “yes” if the board is currently funding release time or the school has previously organised its resources to provide classroom release time.

If a school chooses to review its current release time practices in conjunction with the design of its upcoming classroom release time the following should be observed in the policy redesign.

- The classroom release time resourcing must be used only for CRT
- Any other entitlement staffing allocated for, or that generates, release time should continue to be used for the purpose it is provided to the school
- Beginning Teacher Time Allowance must be kept separate from and is additional to CRT
- Teachers should not be asked to use their CRT for additional responsibilities or management tasks. The use of CRT should normally be consistent across all classroom teachers

Although schools are not obliged to continue existing release time, those that currently provide such time are encouraged to identify and discuss this practice with teachers and review it where necessary.

The classroom release time policy **must** identify the allocation and use of CRT and **may** include a description and use of other release time provisions.

### 3. Meeting with teachers

The consultation process will require meeting(s) with teaching staff. The principal should consider what information needs to be circulated prior to the meeting, including the intended timeframe for the consultation process and the process for confirming the final decision on school policy.

The preparation of these guidelines has revealed a very wide range of teacher expectations for both allocation and use of CRT. Key issues to be faced will include:

- expectation by some teachers that how CRT is used is an individual choice
- concern that teachers' views on the proposed use will be ignored
- concern that the CRT will be used to generate additional work for teachers
- a view that CRT is in addition to any current school release time policy
- concern about what will happen to the teacher's class during CRT
- concern about the availability of suitable relievers and the issues surrounding that concern

The answers to the 'Frequently Asked Questions' in Handout 2 should help to address most concerns.

There are two suggested ways to conduct the initial meeting on classroom release time. One is to provide a draft policy with the school's view included, the other is to start

with a blank policy draft and let the meeting generate the draft policy. Staff room culture will determine the best approach. If the former is chosen it is recommended that the draft is circulated ahead of the meeting along with any necessary explanation.

If the school intends to deal with current release time policy as part of the introduction of CRT, it is recommended that information about this is also circulated, including any resourcing issues.

### 4. Confirming the CRT operational policy

It is recommended that in completing the consultation process the school uses the Employment Court's principles as a check list (Appendix Two). Once the policy is confirmed it is standard practice to confirm and record that fact in Board minutes.

### 5. Reviewing the policy

A formal date for review should be included in the policy. It is recommended that during the development stage the review should take place within 12 months. The school policy should also include an indication of the triggers that may prompt an earlier review. They may include:

- Staff turnover
- Recruitment/retention issues
- New education initiatives

- Concern about student learning
- Any other genuine concern

## **6. When it is not possible to deliver CRT to a teacher**

There will be times when it is not possible to provide classroom release time to a teacher. At these times common sense must prevail.

The policy must provide for situations where, for genuine reasons during the term planning or at short notice, the CRT cannot be provided without compromising the educational requirements of students.

Genuine reasons will usually be those outside of the control of the school.

It is recommended that schools keep a log of non-delivery of CRT, including reasons, and that the log forms part of the review process.

## **7. Using the template policy handout**

The template is designed to assist schools prepare the written policy. Schools may choose to write their own. The template policy can be downloaded from the NZEI or NZSTA websites on [www.nzei.org.nz](http://www.nzei.org.nz) or [www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz).

# Appendix One

## Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement Provisions

### 5.30.1

Each employer shall, from the start of term four 2005, provide ten hours classroom release time per term to each permanent full-time teacher or a full-time relieving teacher employed for a term or more.

### 5.30.2

Each employer shall also, from the start of term one 2007, provide ten hours pro rata classroom release time per term to each part-time permanent or relieving teacher employed for a term or more, provided that they are employed for at least 0.8 FTTE per week.

### 3.3.3

Each employer shall endeavour, by at least the end of term two and no later than by the end of term three 2005, to develop a policy for classroom release time by consultation between the principal and teaching staff, incorporating the following:

- (a) The classroom release time provisions of 5.30.1 and 5.30.2;
- (b) For the purpose of 5.30.1 and 5.30.2, operational policy providing for circumstances where, for genuine reason during the term planning or at short notice, it is not possible to provide the classroom release time described above.

NB NZEI, the NZSTA and the Ministry will develop a draft guideline for use in schools, as described in the Terms of Settlement.

In addition, the terms of settlement also state the following in regard to staffing/resourcing that entitlement:

Each full-time position (pursuant to 5.30.1) in a school which is an entitlement position attracts ten hours per term staffing from the start of Term Four 2005.

Each part-time position (pursuant to 5.30.2) in a school which is an entitlement position attracts pro rata of ten hours per term staffing from the start of Term One 2007.

In short, from Term 4 2005 every full-time classroom teacher who meets the criteria in the definition is entitled to CRT, with the Ministry providing staffing for all those who hold an entitlement teacher position. The Board will meet the cost of staffing CRT for Board-funded teachers.

# Appendix two

## 12 Principles of Consultation<sup>1</sup>

1. The word “consultation” does not require that there be agreement.
2. On the other hand, it clearly requires more than mere prior notification.
3. If there is a proposal to make a change, and such change requires to be preceded by consultation, it must not be made until after consultation with those required to be consulted. They “must know what is proposed before they can be expected to give their views”.
4. This does not involve a right to demand assurances, but there must be sufficiently precise information given to enable the person to be consulted to state a view together with a reasonable opportunity to do so. This may include an opportunity to state views in writing or orally.
5. The requirement for consultation is never to be treated perfunctorily or as a mere formality. The person or body to be consulted must be given a reasonably ample or sufficient opportunity to express views or to point to problems or difficulties: “they must be free to say what they think”.
6. Consultation must be allowed sufficient time.
7. Genuine effort must be made to accommodate the view of those being consulted, consultation is to be a reality, not a charade.
8. Consultation does not necessarily involve negotiation towards an agreement although this can follow as the tendency in consultation is to seek at least consensus.
9. Consulting involves the statement of a proposal not yet finally decided upon, listening to what others have to say, considering their responses, and then deciding what will be done.
10. The party obliged to consult, while quite entitled to have a working plan already in mind, must keep its mind open and be ready to change and even start afresh.
11. There are no universal requirements as to form or as to duration of consultation.
12. Consultation cannot be equated with negotiation in the sense of a process which has, as its subject, arriving at agreement.

<sup>1</sup> CEWU v Telecom 1993 (Employment Court)

# For more information, please contact NZEI or NZSTA:

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