



V. STAFF DEPLOYMENT, RIGHTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The return to school could result in some teacher gaps. School leaders can identify these and monitor strategies to ensure they are resolved. However, since the return to school could also result in extra demands on teachers (for instance, extra shifts) school leaders will therefore be key for protecting **the rights and working conditions of teachers and education support staff**, ensuring they comply with national teaching standards and labour laws.

Guiding questions for school leaders

Staff scheduling

Have you considered:

- monitoring teacher gaps that might arise during the return to school process due to teacher attrition, long term absences or classroom reorganization issues and communicated these to local education authorities?
- consulting with staff, teacher organizations, and local and central authorities about fair and equitable staffing arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of male and female teachers to cover adjusted school schedules?
- identifying volunteers (parents and community members) who can assist the teachers on a temporary basis?
- consulting with staff, teacher organizations, and local and central authorities about the workload that can reasonably be expected of teachers and other education support staff during the back to school process?
- if family obligations of male and female teachers need to be considered in rostering decisions for teaching staff?
- if members of your staff not able to return to service immediately and if so are they aware of their rights for leave and sick pay?
- if some members of staff considered more vulnerable to COVID-19?

- If yes, does the school have enough protective measures in place for them to return to work, or can they continue to work from home?
- If yes, can they continue to work from home and support remote/distance learning in teams/pairs with teachers who are back in the classroom?

Adapting working conditions

Have you considered:

- communicating clearly to newly recruited teachers about starting work, compensation, work schedules, incentive packages and other working conditions?
- clearly defining work objectives for teachers and education support staff (and how they will be evaluated) especially when the usual structures have been compromised in an emergency or post-crisis situation?
- consulting with staff, teacher organizations, and local and central authorities, as relevant, to review and revise staff supervision and support plans in light of the emergency context?
- postponing or adapting teacher performance evaluations to account for the impact of the crisis on the roles of staff and changes in teaching practices due to physical distancing measures?
- exploring how teachers and other staff can be recognized and rewarded in their performance evaluations for the extraordinary working conditions they have experienced and the skills that they are gaining during the COVID-19 crisis?

Rights of teachers and education support staff– Key points

- Increased responsibilities beyond current norms should not be mandatory.
- Measures such as double shifting should be reflected in teacher remuneration, benefits or other mechanisms to motivate teachers to accept additional responsibility.
- Amendments to employment and working conditions should be developed through social dialogue with staff and their representative organizations, including any changes to regular salary and benefits. Where appropriate, such changes can be done through collective bargaining.
- Sick leave should also take into consideration the need for teachers or staff to self-isolate if they present symptoms or come into contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Leave arrangements should also be in place for staff who need to take care of sick family members.

 **Tips**

Postpone teacher evaluations. It would be best if teacher performance evaluations are postponed. If they do go ahead, they need to account for changes in teaching practices due to physical distancing measures. Where performance evaluations must be conducted, these should have a formative function that reviews how teachers have implemented innovative pedagogical approaches to ensure all children have access to continued learning opportunities and a socio-emotionally supportive learning environment.

Keep teachers motivated. Reach out to local and central authorities, and teacher organizations, as relevant, to work out how best to ensure teachers and other staff are paid in full and on time, and to explore other opportunities to ensure that staff members feel valued for their work. Special consideration will also have to be made to determine how best to retain female teachers, as teaching is frequently a female dominated profession, particularly at lower levels of the education system, and the continued engagement of female teachers is critical to ensuring girls return to school. UNESCO (2020) [Supporting teachers and education personnel during times of crises, Issue note 2.2](#)

 **Resources & further reading**

- [Guiding principles on the COVID-19 pandemic](#), Education International, 2020
- [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#), International Labour Organization, 2020
- [ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966](#), ILO & UNESCO, 1966
- [Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools](#), UNICEF, WHO & IFRC, 2020
- [Supporting teachers and education personnel during times of crises, Issue note 2.2](#), UNESCO, 2020