



It's

About

Time

**2023 - 2025**

**TOOLKIT**

**The framework for timetabling  
(Section 2)**

## Section 2: The framework for Timetabling

### 2.1 Prerequisites

The prerequisites on schools in terms of timetabling arise from legislation and the collective agreements. These include the Education and Training Act and a statement of national education and learning priorities issued by the Minister under section 5 of the Education and Training Act. New constraints or requirements can arise from new government, Ministry or school initiatives.

### 2.2 Staffing Order – the teaching resource

The *School Staffing Order In Council*<sup>1</sup> delivers a number of full-time teacher equivalents (FTTEs) each year to schools for curriculum, administrative and guidance and pastoral functions. This is the staffing a school is guaranteed will be funded by the Ministry of Education for the year (GMFS). It is based largely on the school's roll.

Each FTTE is 25 timetabled hours per week. Salary payments and leave are based on the teaching week being composed of a 25-hour timetable, and 0.2 being 5 hours or one school day. With 5 hours non-contact for each full-time teacher, up to 20 hours can be for timetabled teaching each week.

Schools may employ staffing from specific sources such as TFEA, STAR, etc and most employ more teachers than their Ministry funded entitlement using their operations grant or locally raised funds.

### 2.3 Collective Employment Agreements – working conditions

The Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) and Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement (ASTCA) provide some specific parameters about hours of teachers' work and class size that are legal obligations. These are prefaced with a commentary that there are a range of factors affecting a teacher's work as well as the number of classes they are timetabled for: including preparation, assessment, administrative and pastoral duties relating to the students and the extent to which individual teachers may participate in extra-curricular programmes.

[STCA Part Five: Hours of Work](#) details requirements that:

- ❖ All work can be completed within 1816 annual hours unless there is an additional payment
- ❖ the teaching staff must be consulted about the school's timetabling policy;
- ❖ teachers' timetabled contact with students has an upper limit;
- ❖ there are limits to duties required of teachers when schools are not open for instruction;
- ❖ the average class size for individual teachers is no more than 26, and
- ❖ when a school cannot meet some of these there are compensatory mechanisms.

[ASTCA Part Four: Hours of Work](#) has similar requirements, except for average class size limits.

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<sup>1</sup> An Education (School Staffing) Order in Council is made annually under Section 58 of the Education and Training Act 2020 and establishes the entitlement and limitations on staffing.

## 2.4 Teacher supply

Staff turnover and secondary teacher supply impact on individual schools and the particular programmes they are able to run for students. Comment on this is beyond the scope of this advice.

### *Summary*

Within the legal and contractual framework in which it operates a school has to balance the expectations around what it will offer student against the level of available resourcing it has. A school's Charter will have established clear goals in relation to the external requirements, some of which will be met in the context of the timetable and will be reflected the required timetabling policy.