Appendix : New Features in StaffCover 2017

1. Emailing Cover-slips to the Absentee as well

When you email a cover-slip to the person doing Cover, you now have the option to copy this email to the person who is absent / being covered for. This can be useful if you want the two teachers to liaise, and/or want a missing teacher to know who covered for them.

There are three options, all to be found at Customize Overview ➡ Emails ➡ Cover Slip Setup.

Copy the email to the person being covered:
Never / Always / Planned only

Notes:

a) 'Planned (absence) only' means that the person being covered will only be emailed if their absence was planned (so, for example, they will not be bothered if they are ill).

b) The email sent to the coverer is simply "cc" (carbon-copied) to the person s/he is covering for.

c) If a teacher is covering 2 (or more) teachers today, then his email (asking him to do Cover) is copied to both (all) the teachers he is covering for.
For example: teachers AB1 and AB2 are both absent, and being covered by CO. The email describing this cover is sent like this:
To: CO
Cc: AB1, AB2

d) If the covered person has 2 email addresses (separated by a comma) then the email is copied to both their email addresses.

e) A message is appended to the email saying: 'Note: this email has been copied to the person** you are covering for, as requested'. (** or 'people' if more than one).

2. Email testing / checking

When first setting-up your emails at the start of the year, or if you have a problem, then sending emails out to all your colleagues who are providing cover today, is probably not what you want to do.
Instead, it is easier if you just have those emails sent to your own email account, so you can check that they look correct, before sending them to colleagues.

You can now do this, as follows:
Go to Customize Overview ➡ Emails ➡ Cover slip setup, tick ☑ Send all emails to myself and then enter your email address in the box that appears. Now when you send emails, they will be sent to your email inbox, rather than to your colleagues – so you can check them.

When you are happy and ready to send emails to your colleagues, untick this option before you send the emails.

3. Rooms

On the Rooms Out-of-Action Screen <Shift-F6> you can say, for example, that Room 7 is unavailable because of a 'Flood' (or an 'Exam', or 'Maintenance', or another reason).

Then on the main Cover Display/Review screen <F5>, if you select the 'Edit Notes or Room' button and look to choose a Room, the drop-down list of Rooms will now say *Rm 7 Flood so that you know it's unavailable.
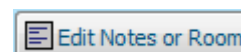
4. Displaying a Calendar on a phone or computer

When emailing someone who is covering, you can now choose to attach an 'ics' file (internet calendar file) to their email. *In principle,* if the user has Outlook, they can just click/run this file, and Outlook will post this covering event into their calendar.

Note: we find that different versions of Outlook [Outlook 2007, Outlook 2010, Outlook 2013, etc] treat .ics calendar files differently, so if you are thinking of using this method we recommend that you test it first with your version of Outlook.

It may also work for other applications for phones and computers, including Google Calendar, Apple Calendar (formerly iCal), IBM (Lotus) Notes, Yahoo! Calendar, Evolution Calendar, eM Client, Lightning extension for Mozilla Thunderbird and SeaMonkey, Nokia Calendar, etc.

Depending on the version of Outlook, the person receiving the email can click on the .ics file attached and then on the 'Copy to Calendar' button:
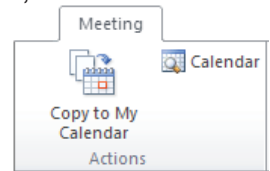
The event appears in their Calendar:
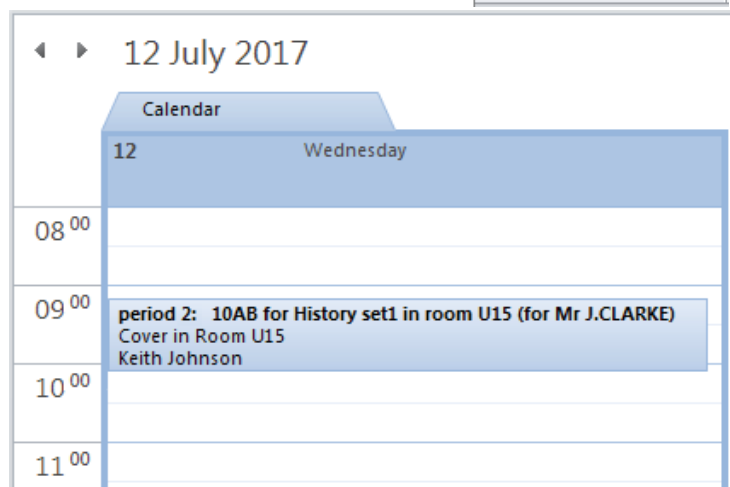
An alert/reminder will pop-up in Outlook 60 minutes before the Cover is due, and again 40 mins before, and again 20 mins before. You can 'dismiss' it in Outlook once you have read it.

If you are covering 2+ lessons today, then you will still only receive a single ics file attached to your email; both (all) covers will be in that one file. All types of Cover will appear in the ics file ...for 'Absent Teachers', for 'Special Events' and for 'Special Duties'.

Notes on setting it up:
To choose to attach an 'ics' file to all the emails, go to Customize Overview ⟹ Emails ⟹ Cover Slip Setup, and change 'Format' to 'HTML + ics':
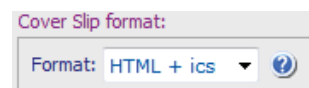
For this ics file to work, you first need to enter a start and end time against each of your periods. To do this, go to Customize Overview ⟹ Setup ⟹ Day & Period Labels ⟹ Period Times.

Each ics file has an 'Organiser' and this is taken from the final (4th) line of the cover-slip message you have entered, at Customize Overview ⟹ Emails ⟹ Cover Slip Messages:

In this example it would say 'Deputy Head'.

If you don't enter a 4th row, it will say 'Cover organiser'.
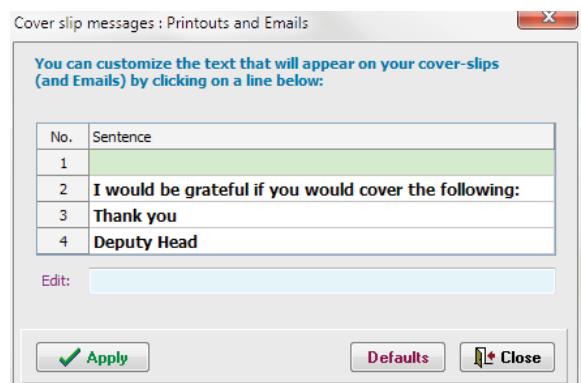
5. Lesson/Group Notes

In previous versions of StaffCover you could add some Notes to a class (eg. to 7A) … and now you can also add a (brief) Note to some or all of your lessons (eg. to note the size of the group).

To do this, go to the Locate a Class Screen <F10>, and then click on any lesson (either in the upper 'Timetable' pane, or in the lower 'Details' pane), and enter the required note.

These 'Lesson Notes' are then displayed in these places:
- on the "Locate a Class" screen
- on the "Cover Display" screen when you hover-over a lesson

Notes:
i) To remove a Note, do the same thing as adding a note, but enter a blank/empty note.
ii) To remove all Notes from the timetable, go to Notes ➡ Remove all Lesson notes (via the blue button at the bottom of the Locate a Class Screen).

6. Suspended Classes: better visibility

Because there are 3 screens where you can suspend a class or year** (Suspended Classes : F11 / Locate a Class / Suspend Years) it can be difficult to see an overall summary of which classes and years are currently suspended. This is now improved in 2 ways :

1) On the Suspended Classes Screen <F11> there is now a box next to the Locate a Class button, and also next to the Suspend Year button … if a class or year has been suspended in these screens, their box turns red and tells you the number of such suspended classes or years. To view the details, click on the button.

2) 'Summary of Today' feature: this is an existing feature, but now when you click on 'Quick Summary' the right-most column tells you about classes and years on any of the 3 screens (previously it only told you about those on the <F11> screen). So this is now an overall summary.

** Note that you can use the <F11> screen to do all your suspending, so you don't need to use the 'Locate a Class' or 'Suspend Years' features, but you may wish to sometimes as they can be quicker to use if you just want to suspend a class or a whole year from now indefinitely.

7. Other improvements

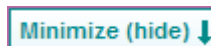**There are many other improvements, for you to explore in *StaffCover 2017*.**

a) **Spring-clean / Tidy-up:**

When printing and emailing cover-slips, etc … a copy is kept on your hard-disc each time.
If you want to free-up space on your hard-disc, you can ask *StaffCover* to remove the old copies of these files. Go to File ➡ Spring clean, enter a year you wish to delete and click Apply.

b) **Quick minimize**
Because you may want to leave *StaffCover* running throughout the morning
(as people phone-in sick) but jump to other programs easily, there is now a quick way to minimize *StaffCover*, either from the opening screen, or from any of the 4 Today's Cover (input) screens <F1>-<F4> or from the Cover Review Screen <Shift-F8>. In each case, just click on the button labelled 'Minimize (hide)'; this will move *StaffCover* down to the task-bar at the bottom of your Windows desktop. To restore it to full size, click on the icon on the task-bar.

c) **'Master' Cover Timetable Printout <F6>**
You can now choose to show the (main) Subject for each absent teacher – in the left-hand menu, just tick 'Show Staff subject ?'.
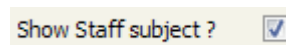
Other improvements, continued...

d) **More than 125 periods**
Previously, schools with more than 125 periods in their cycle in *TimeTabler* had to choose to omit some of those periods before it would be allowed/imported into *StaffCover*.
Now you can enter timetables with up to 250 periods (providing you do not use 'half-period Cover').

e) **Review Screen <Sh-F8>**
By default, this screen will now show your Absent Teachers in the sort-order you chose on the Teachers Screen (eg. alphabetically), rather than in the order you entered them on the <F4> Screen. [If you wish to change it back, go to Style ➟ Sort Absent Teachers ➟ by order entered on <F4> screen.]
It will also change the sort order on the printouts of the 'master' Cover Timetable and Cover Slips.

f) **Review Screen <Sh-F8>**
This screen now warns you if any Supply Teacher has not been fully used (by highlighting any such teachers in yellow in the key at the bottom of the screen). This can be useful to know, as you are paying them and you may decide (for example) to swap-in an unused Supply Teacher to replace some pre-booked cover. Click the blue (?) next to this key to see more details.

g) **Class sorting**
You can now sort your classes by Year/Alphabetically, via: Customize Overview ➟ Basic data ➟ List of Classes and then tick 'Sort alphabetically'.
The classes will appear in Year-then-alphabetical order on various screens (eg. the Small change to timetable Screen, the Suspended Classes Screen, the Locate a Class Screen, the Cover Slips, etc.).

h) **Unavailable Rooms**
If you say that a room is unavailable today (at Rooms ➟ Room overview) and that you have moved the lesson to a new room … then if someone Covers this lesson, s/he will now be told that the room is the new room, not the old one (an asterisk will warn you/him/her that this is a new room).

i) **Cover Display <Sh-F8> : Style**
There are now more choices on the 'Style' menu, so you can customize the presentation of cover even more to your liking:
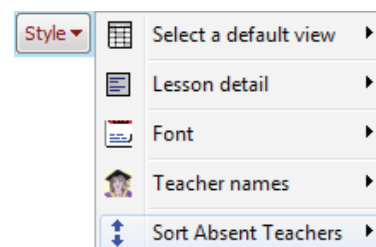
j) All reported bugs have been fixed.

Features added into *StaffCover 2016* after its first release, that you may not be aware of:

1) Customize Menu ➟ Customize Overview
'Cover Limits' has a new option: 'If a teacher reaches his Weekly Limit'.

2) Review Cover Timetable Screen <Sh-F8>
This now has extra options on the 'Export' button.
For example, 'Full export to Excel' – this provides a more verbose copy of the Cover Timetable.

3) 'Above/below average' scoring
This has been improved to give better results if you have lots of part-timers (staff with a cover-loading other than 20).

4) Statistics ➟ Teacher Variables:
This now includes max/week & max/year figures, and is sorted.

5) Move a lesson to a new room
This now warns you if the room is already designated to have a different lesson moved to it.