


Children's Services

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES FOR PUPILS OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE NUMBER:	CS401
PUBLICATION DATE:	August 2019
AUTHORISING OFFICER:	Jo Fisher
AUTHORISING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE:	
AUTHOR OF PUBLICATION:	RICHARD WOODARD
POST:	COUNTY LEAD ACCESS & INCLUSION
TEAM:	INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR LEARNING – COUNTY HALL, HERTFORD
REVIEW DATE:	AUGUST 2020
TARGET AUDIENCE:	ALL SCHOOLS
PUBLISHED BY	CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Hertfordshire County Council

Guidance on the use of reduced timetables for pupils of compulsory school age

August 2019

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is intended to protect both student and school, should a reduced timetable be used, and ensure that no child is excluded illegally through the imposition of a reduced timetable (sometimes referred to as 'part-time' timetables).

All schools and services providing education to children of compulsory school age, regardless of their arrangements for governance including:

- Local authority maintained community and foundation schools
- Sponsored and converter academies
- Free schools
- University Technology Colleges
- Studio Schools
- Education Support Centre (ESCs) and Primary Behaviour Services

What is this guidance about?

The guidance sets out the legal position with regard to the use of reduced timetables for pupils of compulsory school age, clarifies the respective responsibilities of the local authority, schools and parents/carers and provides guidance on best practice, including procedures for ensuring robust monitoring of the arrangements.

Responsible officers:

Richard Woodard, County Lead for Access and Inclusion

Background and context

It is recognised that there may be occasions when a child is unable to attend school full-time, due to, for example, recovery from illness, exceptional family circumstances, pregnancy, or returning home from a period in custody. Also, there may be instances when a child is experiencing severe behavioural difficulties at school and is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with full-time attendance. In such circumstances the law permits the temporary use of a part-time/reduced timetable. This guidance explains the legal position with regard to such timetables clarifies responsibilities and identifies best practice.

The DfE perspective

In *the DfE document named School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities* (DfE. July 2019) the DfE poses the question whether a school can place a pupil on a part-time timetable? The answer given is as follows:

As a rule, no. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

The Ofsted perspective

In a report entitled *Pupils missing out on education* (Ofsted. November 2013) Ofsted highlighted concerns that children not accessing full-time education tend to have lower aspirations, limited levels of achievement and, most seriously, face potential safeguarding risks (such as child sexual exploitation and trafficking). As a consequence of the report's findings, Ofsted has strengthened its approach to monitoring local authorities' and schools' arrangements for managing attendance. Local authorities are now required to obtain from all schools, regardless of their arrangements for governance, up-to-date and accurate data on all children not accessing full-time education. Schools are similarly required to maintain data on pupils on their roll but not attending full-time.

The legal position

All children of compulsory school age are legally entitled to receive a suitable full-time education and local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that all such children in their area receive such an education. There is currently no legal definition of what constitutes 'full-time' education. It may nonetheless be useful for it to be borne in mind that in state schools children of compulsory school age normally receive around five hours of education a day for about 190 days a year. The Local Government Ombudsman established (in its report *Out of school...out of mind* (LGO. 2011)) that the number of hours of teaching per week considered to represent full-time education is as follows and can be used as a guide:

Reception and Key Stage 1 (R, Y1 and Y2)	21 hours
Key Stage 2 (Y3 to Y6)	23.5 hours
Key Stage 3 (Y7 to Y9) and Y10	24 hours
Y11	25 hours

As a rule schools are only permitted to provide less than full-time education, including placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, in very exceptional circumstances.

A reduced timetable must not be treated as a long-term plan. The arrangement should always specify an end-date by when it is expected that the child will return to full-time education (or when an alternative will be provided) and be reviewed regularly in the light of any changes to the child's circumstances. A temporary reduced timetable should provide a means of achieving re-integration to full-time education. It should never be used as a form of exclusion from school for part of the school day or as permanent provision.

If a child is unable to access full-time education due to a diagnosed health need, schools and local authorities must follow the Department for Education guidance *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs* 2014.

Responsibilities

The local authority is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all children of compulsory school age who are not receiving a suitable full-time education, receive this unless they are deemed to be medically unfit to do so, or it is otherwise considered to be in the best interests of the child's mental or physical health not to.
- Collecting and monitoring data about all children of compulsory school age who are not accessing full-time education, from all schools and services in the local area regardless of their individual governance arrangements (ref. Ofsted Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspection of local authority children's services November 2017)

Schools (including academies, free schools, UTCs, studio schools, ESCs and Primary Behaviour Service) are responsible for:

- Providing full-time education to all children on roll and appropriate support to enable pupils to participate in education full-time;
- Informing the local authority of any instance of a child being placed on a reduced timetable, so that the local authority is aware of the arrangements (The Framework for School Inspection and Subsidiary Guidance on inspecting attendance Ofsted Sept 2015)
- Providing information to governors about any children placed on reduced timetables, so that governors can fulfil their responsibilities to monitor the school's provision.

Best practice

When a school considers that full-time education would not be in the best interests of a child's physical or mental health, and is considering placing him/her on a temporary reduced timetable, it should proceed as follows:

1. Consult with relevant agencies to determine the education and support provision that would best meet the child's individual needs, for a fixed term.
2. Complete a detailed action plan, agreed with the parents and pupil. The action plan shows a clear path to planned reintegration from reduced provision to full-time attendance over a maximum of a six week period. Where appropriate, the child should be actively involved in this planning. The plan should be reviewed if there is a change to his/her circumstances or needs. An example is shown in Appendix A.
3. If the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, consult with the local authority's SEND team to ensure that the EHCP is implemented fully under a reduced timetable. The school should also consider whether it is appropriate to arrange an interim review, if for example the child's needs have changed and it is considered that this could impact on the ability for the provision to meet his/her needs.
4. Confirm, in writing, which adults will be responsible for the duty of care for the child during school sessions when he/she is not attending; (schools retain full duty of care for all children who are on the school roll if they are receiving education off-site).
5. **Obtain written consent to the arrangements from the child's parents/carers.** Should parents/carers not agree to the reduced timetable, it cannot be implemented, as without parental agreement a reduced timetable would be considered to be an unlawful exclusion.
6. Keep a central record of the arrangement and reviews and notify the local authority, using the form provided for this purpose (see Appendix B to this guidance).
7. Record the child's absence from school for sessions when he/she is not in attendance as authorised absence (register code C).
8. Provide sufficient and appropriately differentiated work for any time the student is not attending school. Provided the student is medically fit, the combination of work completed at home and in school must constitute full time education. The school should consider how work for when the student is not in school will be provided, sent

home and marked and how constructive feedback will be given. Also consider how the student will be kept in mind and feel included in school life, e.g. how will they continue to have contact with the rest of their class and key staff.

9. Inform the local authority when the child returns to full-time education.

Safeguarding Considerations

Schools have a safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their roll and therefore must be aware that even with parent/carer agreement to any reduced timetable arrangement they make, they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils on roll who are off-site during school hours. If evidence suggests that the child will be exposed to significant risk if not in school, then a reduced timetable should not be considered an option.

Notifying the Local Authority about pupils of compulsory school age who are on a part-time timetable

Please return the attached form (available on SIMS or at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>) using Anycomms Plus within five school days of a pupil starting and ending a reduced timetable.

The information provided will be used by the Local Authority to:

- Discharge its safeguarding responsibilities to collect and analyse data relating to children not in full time education (Ofsted Framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers November 2017).
- Analyse data relating to the use of reduced timetables to inform service delivery at a local and a county level.

The information will allow schools to:

- Inform the Local Authority when a pupil is placed on a reduced timetable.
- To demonstrate transparency and accountability in the use of reduced timetables to create reports for use in monitoring and analysing data relating to pupils on reduced timetables.

Further information and advice

Schools and parents can seek further information and advice from their Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) area teams.

Appendix A: Reduced Timetable Re-integration Plan

Name: Year Group:		Class/Tutor:	Meeting with parents:	Start date:	End date:
	Plan	Review 1		Review 2	
Objectives (what change do we want to see?)					
Success Criteria (what will the change look like?)					
What will the school do?					
Details of any Work Experience (if appropriate)					
Details of any alternative curriculum (if appropriate)					
Additional resources					
Outcomes					
What will parent/carers do?			What the pupil needs to do		
Parent/Carer signature:			Pupil signature:		
Designated teacher with responsibility:					

Pupils on Reduced Timetables
Form for schools/academies to use to notify the local authority
Statutory School Age Only

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. Advice from the Department for Education (November 2016) states that any part-time timetable must be time limited and the decision to implement it must have the agreement of the pupil's parents. Pupils on part-time timetables should be recorded using register code C (authorised absence) for the sessions they are not in school. As part of the *Framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers* (Ofsted November 2017); local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school-age children in their area who are not in full-time education.

School/Academy: _____		
LA number: _____	DSPL Area: _____	

Pupil's Name: _____
UPN No: _____

Date of Birth: _____
Year Group: _____
Ethnicity: _____

SEND: Yes/No	EHCP: Yes/No
Details	

Child Looked After: Yes / No	<u>OR</u>	Previously Looked After: Yes / No
-------------------------------------	-----------	--

PSP / Risk Management Plan in place: Yes / No
Reduced Timetable Reintegration Plan in place: Yes / No

Child Protection Plan: Yes / No	Child in Need: Yes / No
--	--------------------------------

Date when pupil started the part-time timetable: _____

What were the reasons for the part-time timetable? (please circle)

New School Behaviour ASD Support with home life Medical Following exclusion
Transition to Special School Mental Health Reduce anxiety CAMHS recommendation Flexi school
Improve attendance Other (please state) _____

Details of part-time timetable (including number of hours attending school each week):

When is the part-time timetable due to be reviewed? _____

Date part-time timetable ended, if applicable: _____

If the part-time timetable has not already ended, please notify the LA when it has. _____

School contact name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email address: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date Local Authority informed: _____

Please upload to AnyComms Plus to LA service ISL-Behaviour (file type Part-time Timetable) within 5 days of pupil starting or ending a part-time table.

The information provided by this form is intended to enable schools which find it necessary to utilise a part-time timetable to demonstrate greater transparency and accountability. The information provided will be monitored by the local authority on a half-termly basis and will be used to support schools to more effectively discharge their responsibility to ensure that all children are able to access suitable, full-time education. The information collected will also be used to support both schools and the local authority to more effectively discharge their respective safeguarding responsibilities.