

Part-Time and Reduced Timetable Protocol

Version control

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Introduction

This protocol is intended to make the appropriate use of reduced education provision for children aged 5 to 16, which are known as part-time, reduced or reintegration timetables, clear to all schools and stakeholders.

Guidance on school day and school year school attendance

Setting school term dates and holidays

School employers are required to set the term dates of their school year. Employers are the local authority in community, voluntary controlled and community special schools and maintained nursery schools, the governing body in foundation and voluntary aided schools, the academy trust in academies and free schools.

School day

Every school day must have two sessions divided by a break in the middle of the day. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's governing body.

School year

Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. If a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions because of an unavoidable event, it should find a practical way of holding extra sessions. If it cannot find a practical way of doing this then it is not required to make up the lost sessions. Academies can set their own school year.

Changes to school day and school week

The structure of the school day and school week should not be the cause of inconvenience to parents and it is unacceptable for schools to shorten their school day or school week unless it is a direct action to support and enhance their pupils' education.

Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort, to provide them with a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability. The overall number of hours of taught time is not prescribed, although guidance is given [The Length of the School Week – Non Statutory Guidance](#). The recommended taught time does not include time for collective worship, registration or breaks.

It is suggested that governing bodies of all maintained schools should take as a general guide to good practice ([School Inspection Guide to the Law, 2006](#)):

- 21 hours for pupils aged 5 to 7
- 23.5 hours for pupils aged 8 to 11
- 24 hours for pupils aged 12 to 16

It is unlawful for a school to impose a part-time or reduced timetable. However, it is accepted that a reduced timetable may be appropriate as an exceptional measure in any school and for a pre-agreed, limited period of time. Parents should be consulted when changes to a pupil's full-time timetable are being considered.

Where a child or young person has been out of school, unwell or excluded, a part-time timetable may be used as a short-term measure towards achieving full reintegration within an appropriate timeframe. A part-time timetable may only be used with the informed consent of the parents and carers and in agreement with the agencies involved in supporting the family. The threat of exclusion must not be used to influence parents to engage with a part-time timetable. Part-time Timetables can not be used to support the management of behaviours that challenge.

Where a pupil is deemed not be able to access school due to medical needs and the school has implemented and followed the statutory guidance set out in '[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)', [Summary of responsibilities when a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) and [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#) - the local authority [medical needs protocol](#) should be followed.

Schools should take account of, and act upon, the guidance provided in these to continue to improve standards of educational attainment, safeguard the wellbeing of all children and young people and reduce the likelihood to the school of charges being made in respect of a failure to educate.

This protocol sets out the legal framework of the rights of all statutory school-aged pupils to receive full-time education appropriate to their age and irrespective of their needs.

Achieving for Children regards the use of reduced timetables as a last resort and the least desirable method of managing any issues relating to a pupil and believes that such action should only be chosen, if at all, after all other strategies to address any concerns have been implemented and exhausted.

The Department for Education (DfE) is clear that part-time timetables should not be used as a solution to problems behavioural, as a sanction, or where there are special educational needs (SEN) needs.

Responsibilities of schools

Access to full-time education

All pupils should receive full-time education. All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils according to their age, aptitude and ability, taking into account any special needs. Therefore, it follows that schools could be challenged legally if it puts in place a reduced or part-time timetable for any reason.

As reduced or part-time provision is unlawful, there are no statutory criteria upon which to establish a reduced educational provision for pupils, however, DfE guidance states that in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduction in educational provision to meet a pupil's individual need. It is illegal for schools to discriminate against children by reducing their educational entitlement on the basis of their SEN or disability, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs.

A reduced educational provision must not be treated as a long-term solution and must be accompanied by a risk assessment and written plan which clearly identifies a timescale for reintegration back up to full-time provision. The timescale should be as short as possible and no more than 6 weeks.

Where a part-time or reduced timetable is identified as appropriate for a child, it is expected that the school will follow best practice as set out in this protocol to ensure that the pupil concerned is safe, is receiving the support they require and is able to return to full-time education as quickly as possible.

Part-time timetables that do not have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process, or the consent of parents or carers may constitute an illegal exclusion by Ofsted.

Reasons for the use of reduced timetables

A reduced educational provision should only occur in exceptional circumstances, where every other avenue to ensure a pupil receives their full-time education has been exhausted.

The exceptional circumstances are likely to be:

- as part of a planned reintegration into school following an extended period out of school due to illness, disability, mental health issues or family circumstances.
- as a temporary measure, closely-monitored intervention to address significant neurological conditions that can lead to behaviour that challenges emotional or social needs. Arrangements should be made to meet the individual needs, or to

coordinate therapeutic intervention or the work of other services. Details of the purpose of the reduction in educational provision and what work is being undertaken by the school and other agencies to support the child so they are able to return full-time, must be included in the written plan.

In cases of exceptional circumstances it may be in the best interests of the pupil for a temporary reduced or part-time timetable to be put in place to meet their individual needs. In these circumstances a part-time timetable should only be put in place where the school has explored all other options for providing support to help a pupil to attend on a full-time basis, including:

- consultation with the school's attached educational psychologist;
- consultation with the education welfare service;
- use of the AfC services to identify teams or practitioners who may be able to offer support;
- use of AWPU and notional SEN budget to meet recommendations outlined in the SEN Threshold Guidance for children at SEN support level or the AWPU, notional SEN budget and EHCP funding where the child has an EHCP;
- referral to the AfC Early Help Hub for additional specialist support and guidance.

Note:

- Where a pupil is a child looked after (CLA), the school must consult with the Virtual School and social worker to gain agreement for a part-time timetable.
- Where a child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP), the school must consult with the SEN caseworker.
- Where a child is subject to a child protection plan or child in need plan or the family is being supported by a family support worker, the school must consult with the child's social worker, family support worker and the virtual school. Any part-time timetable should only be implemented following a core group meeting or multi-agency meeting that has been convened prior to implementation.

Risk assessment and safeguarding guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance identifies schools as part of the wider safeguarding system for children and recognises that all school staff are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating. It is critical that headteachers, governing bodies and members of school staff make themselves familiar with the revised guidance. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

In relation to safeguarding, where a child is not in school, their vulnerability is increased. The implementation of a reduced timetable must not have an adverse impact on a child's development or place the child at increased risk. When deciding whether a reduced educational provision is appropriate, consideration must always be given to the welfare and safety of the child or young person. This must be part of the risk assessment process (see Appendix 1).

Note: all part-time or reduced timetables should be created in consultation with the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Particular consideration should be given to the increased risk to the pupil of going missing, 'child sexual exploitation' (CSE), substance misuse, gang and youth violence, self-harming, radicalisation and other potential abuse or criminal activity and other factors that increase the risk associated with implementing a reduced timetable including:

- parental mental health problems
- parental substance misuse: alcohol or drugs
- domestic abuse issues
- child is a young carer
- parent is a single carer with limited family support
- significant debts which could lead to homelessness
- child is open to specialist children services S17 or S47
- child and family are been supported by family support worker
- parents are struggling to manage the child's behaviour in the home
- who will be looking after the child when, they are not in school
- how will the reduced timetable impact on the child's social and emotional development

Schools have a duty of care for all pupils who are on their school roll (s157 & s175 The Education Act 2002). Schools must ensure that when a pupil is not expected to attend, there is a written agreement with parents or alternative education providers about who is carrying out the duty of safeguarding for each session when the child is not expected to be on site.

Before any decision is made about reducing a child's time in school, schools must consider the following:

- Identify if there are any agencies already involved with the child or family. If so, schools must convene a multi-agency meeting to discuss the likely impact of any plan to offer reduced educational provision. This process must include consideration

of any known risks for the pupil (indicated in risk assessment and safeguarding guidance above).

- The implementation of a reduced timetable can only take place where there is universal multi-agency agreement that this is appropriate. This process must include consideration of any known risks for the pupil (indicated in risk assessment and safeguarding guidance above). As well as the multi-agency network indicated above, schools should also consult with the school's educational psychologist and the Inclusion and Education Welfare Service.
- Set a review date to take place within two weeks of the start of the reduced timetable and invite professionals who may be involved to the meeting.
- Record the planned end date (note: a maximum of six weeks on a reduced timetable is advised).

The school is responsible for the pupil during usual school hours and therefore they and the local authority must be totally satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding and care of the pupil during the period when they would otherwise have been expected to be in school. They must provide a **secure written agreement from the parents or carers** about who is responsible for the welfare of the individual in line with the agreed arrangements set out in the plan.

Recording

If a part-time timetable is considered appropriate, then the 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 using the 'C' code. This must not be masked by using any other code.

Required notification to the local authority

If the multi-agency network, parents and the school have agreed to the reduced timetable, the following process should be followed.

- Complete the [Part Time and Reduced Timetable submission form](#)
- Complete appendices **1 2 & 3** and attach to the [Part Time and Reduced Timetable submission form](#)
- Ensure the risk assessment and checklist has been thoroughly completed.
- Ensure review dates are set and include participation from school, parent, carer, young person and all other agencies involved with the case such as Family Hub, Social Work, SEN, EP, EHS, SEMH Intervention Service, Education Welfare Service or Virtual School.

The first review must be at the end of the first two weeks of the reduced timetable. Subsequent reviews should take place at least fortnightly, or earlier if any professional believes that there is a need for an earlier review.

Please ensure you inform your allocated Education Welfare Officer when a child's full-time education resumes, and the part-time timetable is no longer in place.

Note: Where a pupil moves school and has at any point been on a reduced or part-time timetable, all information relating to this (including written plans and agreements) should be sent to the receiving school.

Planning, reviewing and monitoring and support arrangements

Any reduced educational timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution to a problem. The agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with an alternative arrangement.

A written plan (Appendix 2) must be put into place identifying:

- what support will be put in place to enable the pupil to attend school on a full time basis as soon as possible
- how work will be provided to the pupil whilst they are not on the school site
- how progress will be monitored and reported
- how the pupil's safety and safeguarding will be assured when they are not on the school site

The written plan should be reviewed by the Attendance Lead on the Senior Leadership Team. The Attendance Lead will be responsible for reviewing the timetable fortnightly, checking progress, evaluating the increases in attendance and recording outcomes.

There must be a clear time frame by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, with appropriate targets to gradually increase attendance during the period agreed. This must not exceed six school weeks at the maximum.

In very exceptional circumstances, the network may agree that there is a need to extend the plan beyond six school weeks. The rationale for having to do so must be clearly identified in the review report, with clear evidence of additional planning to assist in supporting any further identified needs that may need to be addressed and supported through, for example, other specialist services.

If it becomes apparent during the agreed reduction period that progress is not being made, a review meeting should be convened to determine what further support needs to be provided or action taken.

Expectations

Schools wishing to establish a reduced educational provision for a child need to consider their position within the context of the legal requirements and considerations outlined above. The local authority's expectation will be that all occurrences of reduced educational provisions are signed off by the school's headteacher having completed the checklist advised in relation to risk assessment.

The headteacher must ensure that the decision is taken as part of a planned strategy that:

- is in the best interests of the child and there is approval and written agreement from parents and carers or in the case of a looked after child, the allocated social worker;
- has, as its principal purpose, the successful reinstatement of the pupil's full-time school attendance, re-integration and inclusion;
- is undertaken within the context of child-centred planning. Plans should include liaison with the child and take into account the facilities to support the reintegration process, and outreach support where available;
- complies with the health and safety needs of the pupil, the school and the network around the child is satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to meet the pupil's care needs when not at school;
- complies with the statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils;
- provides appropriate work for the pupil when not in school which is then marked and relevant feedback provided;
- is time limited, with a clear target of resuming full-time attendance within a period no longer than six weeks, preferably over a period in which the time in school increases steadily and incrementally (the graduated approach) in order to prevent further disaffection;
- ensures that the local authority is consulted with and involved to ensure that in cases where the child has an EHCP, the EHCP is reviewed and amended where appropriate. A meeting should be convened to make the proposal known. The local authority must agree to the intervention and a reduced educational provision must not interfere with additional support given to a student who has additional needs;

- ensures that the impact of a reduced educational provision on travelling and transport arrangements does not discriminate against the pupil or impede their access to education.

Summary

Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils.

However, in very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary reduced educational provision to meet a pupil's individual needs.

A reduced educational timetable means by agreement with the pupil, parent, carer, multi agency network and school, the number of hours spent in education are reduced for a time limited period probably of no more than six weeks.

Schools must consult with:

- the local authority caseworker for a pupil who has an EHCP
- the Virtual School if the child is looked after, previously looked after, subject to a child protection plan or child in need plan
- key professionals involved in working with the individual and the family
- the school's attached educational psychologist
- the link education welfare officer (EWO)

The headteacher can only agree to a reduced educational timetable where this has been considered and ratified as appropriate by a multi-agency network.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring any reduced timetable is being overseen and reviewed.

A risk assessment must be completed to consider needs and any known risks.

A clear set of actions in the plan for increasing hours of education must be in place with clear objectives and timeframe.

Communication with the individual, family and any key professionals involved must be shared throughout the duration of any such agreement.

The Education Welfare Service must be alerted when a part time timetable **begins and ends**.

Role of the local authority

Schools are expected to inform their education welfare officer of any pupil who is receiving a reduced timetable. The local authority will monitor the use of part-time timetables in maintained schools, special schools and academies. Where additional concerns arise, they will be raised with the school using the usual escalation processes by the appropriate team.

Further sources of information

DfE School Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

DfE (2019) Circular 7/90: Management of the school day -

[https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6134/1/School%20inspection%20-%20guide%20to%20the%20law%20part%202%20\(PDF%20format\).pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6134/1/School%20inspection%20-%20guide%20to%20the%20law%20part%202%20(PDF%20format).pdf)

DfE Keeping children safe in education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

DfE Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Children's Commissioner (2017) Always someone else's problem

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Always_Someone_Elves_Problem.pdf

DfE (2016) Children missing education.

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Ofsted (2013) Pupils Missing Out on education

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18825/1/Pupils%20missing%20out%20on%20education.pdf>

Always someone Else's Problem (2007)

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/pages/category/exclusion-from-school>

Appendix 1: Risk assessment for reduced or part-time timetable

When completing this plan, please consider the following:

- any social care, medical or Virtual School plans which indicate Safeguarding concerns
- any safeguarding concerns from other professionals
- how time not in school would be supervised and monitored

Pupil name			DOB
School name			
Date of risk assessment meeting:			
People involved in the risk assessment	Name:		
	Role:		
Details of hours in and out of school during this period			
Risk Assessment:			
Schools must consider whether there are any risks or concerns pertaining to: • parental mental health problems • parental substance misuse: alcohol or drugs • domestic abuse issues • child is a young carer • parent is a single carer with limited family support • significant debts which could lead to homelessness • child is open to specialist children services s17 or s47 • child and family are being supported by family support worker • parents are struggling to manage the child's behaviour in the home • social and emotional development whilst a reduced timetable is in place • child sexual exploitation (CSE)			

• criminal exploitation • young person's substance misuse • gang and youth violence • self-harming • radicalisation other potential abuse or criminal activity before deciding to implement a reduced time table

Where any of these risks are identified the school MUST consider if an Early Help or SPA referral is required. If any of the above factors are identified when completing the risk assessment for a reduced timetable, serious consideration should be made by the senior member of staff and designated safeguarding lead as to whether a reduced timetable will increase these risks.

Other risks			
Identified risk	How will this risk be mitigated?	By whom?	Does this satisfy safeguarding and education law requirements?
How will the pupil's welfare and safety be monitored and supervised when not in school? (please give details of any variables)			
How will the school ensure continuity of education?			
How will the school ensure the pupil is able to feel included and cared for, during this period?			
How will the child's social and emotional development be promoted during the reduced timetable?			
Headteacher's name:			
Signature:			
Date:			

Appendix 2: Written plan for a part-time timetable

Please consider the following when drawing up your plan

- Best lines of communication during this period
- How will this pupil experience school during this period? Who will they see? Where can they be and when? How will friendships be supported? Are there any key school events or activities coming up that need taking into consideration?
- Will the reasons for this plan require any intervention to take place at certain times, either at school or home?
- Written plan to be updated every two weeks (schools can use this template or may choose to use their own internal written plan)

Pupil name				DOB	
School					
Days/times _____					
Timetable:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursda y	Friday
Week 1					
Time in school					
Timetable:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursda y	Friday
Week 2					
Time in school					
Where will they be when not in school and with whom?					
Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursda y	Friday
Where?					
With whom?					
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursda y	Friday
Where?					

With whom?					
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What will be the school's educational focus during the times the pupil is in school? Pupil's stronger subjects first? Core curriculum?	
What education is the pupil expected to undertake when not in school? (Please be specific about subjects or amount to be completed, resources needed etc.)	
How will work be monitored, marked, assessed and returned? Who are the key people who need to be involved in this?	
How will the pupil's social and emotional wellbeing be supported and developed when in school?	
How will the pupil's arrival and departure each day be managed? By whom? What will be their procedures and routines?	
If the outcome of the first review is positive, what would be the increase in the timetable over week 3 & 4?	
Scheduled review dates	

Appendix 3: Notification of a temporary reduced timetable

Pupil name		NCY	
School name		DOB	
SEN status	No Additional Need Additional Support EHCP	Child in Care	Yes No
SEN area of need	Cognition and learning Social, Emotional and Mental Health Communication and interaction Sensory and physical or medical		
Date of early help assessment		Child protection	Yes No
Risk assessment completion date		Child in need	Yes No
Plan under which reduced the timetable is monitored or reviewed (attach plan)	eg PEP, EHA, IEP		
Describe where education taking place	eg School, off site, alternative provider		
Reason for temporary reduced timetable (please tick all that apply)			
Medical physical health (supported by medical professionals)			
Reintegration plan			
Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA Toolkit completed)			

Medical mental health (supported by medical professionals)	
Other (please describe below):	
Total hours per week in school or off-site supervised education activity eg 15 hours	
Planned start date of reduced timetable (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Planned review date (within two weeks of the start date) (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Planned end date when the pupil will return to full-time provision (within six weeks of start) (DD/MM/YYYY)	

A reduced timetable can only proceed with parents' signed consent to the plan and cannot be enforced by a school or insisted upon under threat of exclusion.	
Parent or carer agreement to this plan (<i>Original must be signed</i>)	
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	
By submitting this form the school is confirming that the use of a part-time timetable for a limited period has been judged appropriate, review arrangements have been agreed and any safeguarding issues have been fully taken into consideration. A copy of the formal agreement made with parent/carers' signature must be kept at school	
Headteacher's signature	
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	

Please scan a signed copy of the following documents on the day that a reduced timetable begins:

- The risk assessment for reduced or part-time timetable (Appendix 1)
- The written plan for a part-time timetable (Appendix 2)
- Notification of a temporary reduced timetable (Appendix 3)

Please do not send originals. It is important you retain the original signed copy for your records.

Appendix 4: Reduced timetable checklist

Before considering a reduced timetable: use this checklist as an additional tool to ensure that you are satisfied that all processes, risk assessments, internal and external factors have been considered		
	Yes	No
Is there medical evidence from a consultant to confirm that the child is currently too unwell to be in school? If YES: then follow the AfC medical policy guidelines. If NO: undertake appropriate actions indicated below.		
Have Early Help services been consulted for advice, guidance and intervention?		
If the child has Emotionally Based School Avoidance has the ERSA Toolkit been used and completed?		
Has there been a consultation with the EWS and has their advice been implemented, reviewed and refined?		
Has the school's educational psychologist provided advice? Has this been implemented, reviewed and refined?		
Has the school's EWO offered advice and guidance? Has this been implemented, reviewed and refined?		
If the child is a child in need or on a child protection plan, has the social worker and Virtual School been alerted to the specific concerns in school about the child and offered support with these?		
Where the family is receiving support from a family support worker, have they alerted to the specific concerns in school about the child and offered support		
Where there are no other agencies currently known to be involved with the family, has the school completed an early help assessment? Has the outcome of this been actioned?		
Is this child or young person in care? Has the virtual school been consulted?		
Does this child have an EHCP? Has the school liaised with the case coordinator?		
Can the school evidence the targeted, evaluated and effective use of AWPU and notional SEN budget to meet recommendations outlined in the SEND Graduated response; and any additional funding, such as EHCP, pupil premium.		

Where every member of the multi-agency network, parents and school have agreed to a reduced timetable		
Does the child have special educational needs or a disability? Is the school absolutely certain that a reduced timetable for the child could not be disability discrimination under the Equality Act 2010?		The reduced timetable cannot be implemented
Is the multi-agency network certain that the reduced timetable could not be viewed as an illegal exclusion?		The reduced timetable cannot be implemented
Have the parents consented to a reduced timetable?	Unofficial exclusion and/or discrimination are unlawful even if the parent has given consent for the reduced timetable	
Has a risk assessment been completed e.g. Appendix 1 of the reduced timetable protocol?		This is a requirement
Has a referral been made to SPA where there are specific factors involved in the case as indicated in Appendix 1 of the reduced timetable protocol?		This is a requirement where appropriate
Is the reduced timetable clearly time delineated, and no longer than six weeks?		This is a requirement
Have review dates been set, with the option to increase to full time education more rapidly than after six weeks?		This is a requirement
Does the plan clearly explain how the reduced timetable will support reintegration back into sustained, full-time education?		This is a requirement