

Guidance for Schools on the use of Reduced Timetables for Children Looked After (CLA)

October 2016

We recognise that use of a reduced timetable for a short period is an exceptional measure in any Swindon school. This guidance is intended to protect both pupil and school, should a reduced timetable be used.

It is important to highlight that there is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances, schools may need to implement one in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full time for a short, agreed period.

Swindon Borough Council remains committed to children's right to a full-time education and makes clear the requirement that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented **without the school acquiring written agreement from the parents/carers, Virtual School and social worker. It must only be used as a short-term strategy, with a clear review plan agreed.**

Schools have a safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their roll and, therefore, must be aware that even with parental/carer agreement to any arrangement they make, **they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils on roll who are off-site during school hours.**

The DfE perspective

In the FAQ section of its guidance document Advice on School Attendance (DfE, September 2014) 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.

1. Introduction This section of the guidance is applicable for all pupils.

- 1.1 The local authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any pupil missing education. Any pupil on a reduced timetable is deemed to be at risk of missing education and therefore needs to be identified and tracked.
- 1.2 The document '[Pupils Missing Out on Education](#)', published by Ofsted in November 2013 and the new Local Authority inspection framework (Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection) which now includes the requirement for each authority to report robustly on school age children who are not in full-time education, both support the need for us to have guidance in place for pupils on reduced timetables.
- 1.3 It is important to highlight that **there is no statutory basis** upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, **in exceptional circumstances**, schools may decide to implement one for a time-limited period in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time to reintegrate into full-time provision.
- 1.4 Swindon Borough Council remains committed to every child's right to a full-time education offer and makes clear the requirement that **a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from** the Virtual school for looked after children and/or the SEN team at the local authority where appropriate if the child has an EHC or statement.

2. Full-time Education

- 2.1 All education should be suited to a child's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special educational need.
- 2.2 The assumption is that pupils should receive full-time education consistent with their Key Stage.
- 2.3 A timetable is considered reduced when it consists of something less than that which is provided to the majority of the pupil's peers in that setting.

3. When might a reduced timetable be used?

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3.1 This is not an exhaustive list but it is likely that a pupil being considered for a reduced timetable would fall within one of these 3 categories

3.2 Part of an in-school support package

School, parent/carer and other professionals agree that a short-term (no longer than 6 weeks) reduced timetable would support a pupil who has become disaffected, to regain success. This would be a closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behavioural, emotional, social or mental health needs.

3.3 Medical reasons

A pupil has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be part of a “medical plan” agreed between the school and health professionals. Please see Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs before offering a reduced timetable for this reason.

3.4 Reintegration

As part of a planned reintegration into school (no longer than 6 weeks) following an extended period out of school e.g. following an exclusion, nonattendance, school refusal etc.

5. Good Practice

Best Practice Guidance for Schools

When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, the school:

1. Must be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil. A detailed assessment must be in place to determine additional support required for all pupils on reduced timetables.
2. Must not pursue a reduced timetable without parental permission as this can be construed as an unofficial exclusion which is unlawful as the parent/carer has not requested leave for their child and/or the school could be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum.
3. Must have signed parental permission, evidenced on the pupil file prior to the commencement of a time limited reduced timetable. If the parent does not agree, the

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reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances the school will have to consider alternative interventions.

4. Establish a Personal Education Plan for the reduced timetable which details:

- The proposed timetable to get back to full-time (in the case of categories 1& 3 this shouldn't usually be any longer than 6 weeks.)
- How the assessed risk and safeguarding measures will be managed
- Details of the review schedule.
- The supportive interventions that will accompany this reduction in time at school.
- Outcome and exit strategies. How will all parties know that it is successful?
- The named person responsible for the plan within the school.
- Consideration should be given to whether alternative provision should be considered to meet need

The school must ensure the pupil has an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention.

5. If the pupil is still on a reduced timetable as the time limit approaches, a multi professional review must be held to organise full time education. A maximum of one further period should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances with parental/carer agreement and the plan revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate.

6. Ensure that where pupils have a Statement for special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the Local Authority must be involved to ensure the Statement or 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 timetable must not interfere with additional support given to a student due to his/her educational needs.

7. Must undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the pupil. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered.

Risk assessments should follow the five steps identified by the Health and Safety Executive:

Step 1: Identify possible hazards

Step 2: Decide who may be harmed and how

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Step 5: Regularly review your assessment and update if necessary

The risk assessment should include the safety and wellbeing of the pupil as well as the risk of the pupil engaging in criminal activity, or substance misuse whilst not in receipt of education during the school day.

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8. Must provide appropriate work for the pupil when not in school which is then marked and relevant feedback provided

8. Consider the school's legal position in regard to the wellbeing of the pupil during school hours. The Department for Education have given the following advice:

“Cases where children are placed on a reduced timetable are likely to be rare and unique in each individual case. If a school has a concern regarding its legal obligations with regards to safeguarding a pupil on a reduced timetable they should seek their own legal advice on a case by case basis.”

Good practice: Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

Drawing on the experience from the LGO they have identified six recommendations based on examples of good practice in councils:

- Consider the individual circumstances of each case and be aware that, potentially, a council may need to act whatever the reason for absence (with the exception of minor issues that schools deal with on a day-to-day basis) – even when a child is on a school roll.
- Consult all the professionals involved in a child's education and welfare, taking account of the evidence in coming to decisions.
- Choose, based on all the evidence, whether to enforce attendance or provide the child with suitable alternative education.
- Keep all cases of part-time education under review with a view to increasing it if a child's capacity to learn increases.
- Adopt a strategic and planned approach to reintegrating children back into mainstream education where they are able to do so.
- Put whatever action is chosen into practice without delay to ensure the child is back in education as soon as possible

6. Monitoring and Reviewing

6.1 The school must

- a) Complete the PEP including the reduced timetable form and send to Swindon Virtual School Administrator as soon as it becomes operational. (Within 48 hours of reduced timetable starting) School must retain a copy of the PEP and reduced timetable form on the pupil file. Where a school is found to be operating a reduced timetable without having reported it, a formal letter will be sent from the Head of Education to the head teacher and chair of governors.

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- b) The designated teacher should be responsible for reviewing the programme fortnightly, checking progress against incremental increases in attendance and recording outcomes and amendments.
- c) Send a copy of subsequent reviews and increases of time, up to a maximum of 6 weeks to Swindon Virtual School Administrator

KMcDermott@swindon.gov.uk

- d) Record the child's attendance accurately on the attendance register:

C Code: Leave of absence authorised by school

To be used when a pupil has a reduced timetable that includes sessions which have been mutually agreed not to involve attendance at school or an alternative provision (the school must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the care and welfare of the pupil during the time when they would otherwise be at school).

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

D Code: Dual registered

To be used where a pupil is registered at two schools. The D code only applies in Swindon where a pupil is attending a school other than their home school and where that school is coding the pupil's attendance and making a return to the LA. E.g. when a pupil attends a PRU for all or part of the week.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

See pages 7-12 of [School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#)

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- d) Monitor the overall use of this strategy within the school and report this to governors termly.
- e) Ensure effective, regular communication with parents/carer (and Virtual School as necessary) with regard to progress towards full-time reintegration to school.

Sonja Joseph

October 2016

Headteacher Swindon Virtual School

Pupils on Temporary Part-Time Timetables: Form for schools/educational settings to use to notify Swindon Virtual School

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 2014) 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 June 2015); local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school-age children in their area who are not in full-time education.

Academy/School: LA number	
Pupil Name: UPN:	
Date of Birth:	
Year Group	
Ethnicity	
SEND Yes/No	(please detail)
PEP in place	
Start of part time timetable	

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Reason for part-time timetable	
Details of part-time timetable	(include number of hours attending school each day/week)
Review date of part-time timetable	
Date part time timetable ended	
Date Virtual School informed	
Designated teacher name and contact details	

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