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Reduced Timetable Policy

Non-Statutory

Reviewed annually

Signed by:  (Chair of the Trust)

Date of last review: 29/2/24

Date of Next Review: February 2025

Reduced Timetable Policy

Guidance on the limited use of reduced timetables in exceptional circumstances Sept 2020

* This guidance is relevant to all schools, including academies and independent, special, pupil referral units and alternative provision settings, hereafter referred to as schools. Reduced timetables are sometimes referred to as “part-time timetable” or “reduced educational provision”. The term reduced timetable is used in this guidance. (Flexi schooling, by request of the parent and by agreement with the headteacher, is considered different to a reduced timetable and not part of this guidance; refer to Elective Home Education policy for further clarity.)

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1. The law and reduced timetables

- 1.1. The law states that all children have a right to full time education; see 5.1.
- 1.2. Department for education guidance, see 5.2, allows for a pupil with a medical, physical or mental health condition, that prevents them from attending full-time education, to be eligible for a reduced timetable as part of a range of supportive measures to help the pupil take their right to a fulltime education.
- 1.3. Consequently, a reduced timetable is a rare, short term, time limited action which should offer support back to statutory full-time attendance and must be kept under constant review.
- 1.4. Absence from either the morning or afternoon session in a school day must be recorded as authorised by the school because schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils of two sessions per day. See annex 1 for a guide to the hours of fulltime education.
- 1.5. Schools are required to hold data on authorised reduced timetables and report this data to their local authority regularly. Attendance data is recorded daily in the school's regular register for all pupils.

2. Local authority statutory duties and guidance

- 2.1. Medway Council has a duty to ensure that all children and young people access a full-time education suitable to their age. This is a basic right of the child and includes any necessary, reasonable adjustments and support for any special educational needs so that the pupil can access their right to a fulfilling and full-time education. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education. Local authorities have a duty to hold schools to account and challenge when statutory provision is being infringed.
- 2.2. Medway Council regards the use of reduced timetables as a last resort in improving a pupil with a medical, physical or mental health condition. It guides schools to only consider reduced timetables in exceptional circumstances and after exhausting all other strategies within those limiting circumstances. Consequently, there is no basis for implementing a reduced timetable as a sanction for undesirable behaviours. See DfE guidance, [*Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(May 2022\)*](#) Pg 18 section 43 & 44.

- 2.3. If the criteria for a legitimate, temporary reduced timetable are met, then the following aspects are good practice and should form part of the understanding of, and documents shared with, all stakeholders:
- 2.3.1. an assigned professional to monitor to lead on the plan and be the single point of contact between home, school and agencies. This person will either be the headteacher or their representative.
 - 2.3.2. written agreement from those with parental responsibility, (without this the school is suspending the pupil and must follow separate suspension protocols).
 - 2.3.3. written plan showing all supportive measures to enable the pupil back into their statutory education. This may be in the form of a pastoral support plan, individual learning plan, personal education plan, or an education, health, care plan
 - 2.3.4. written objectives and timescales for implementation, recording of daily school review against the objectives, and mid-plan evaluation of impact involving relevant multi agency consultants. A plan period should not exceed 6 weeks and build up over that period to the fulltime expectation. (Refer to 4.4.4 in exceptional cases)
 - 2.3.5. written assessments of risk with measures to minimise risk and ensure safety – see annex 2 for an exemplar of headings and requirements
 - 2.3.6. signed agreement that the pupil is able to return to full time education before the plan ends if progress is swifter than anticipated.
 - 2.3.7. free school meal daily entitlement must be sustained.
 - 2.3.8. commitment to a scheduled reintegration meeting where further support may be necessary once the pupil is fulltime. This should be consistently recorded on the reduced timetable review notes.

3. Safeguarding considerations

- 3.1. Schools continue to have safeguarding responsibility for all pupils. Pupils who fit the criteria for a reduced timetable, even when there is parental responsibility for consent, are still the safeguarding responsibility of the school, whether the pupil is on or off-site.
- 3.2. Risk assessments that determine significant risk to the pupil off site, negate any possible support that a reduced timetable could offer. Reduced timetables cannot be considered as part of a supportive plan in those vulnerable circumstances.
- 3.3. Even greater care should be taken to consider the benefit of reduced timetables with pupils who are already vulnerable. The assigned professional must consult with other services involved to inform their risk assessment in all situations where a vulnerable pupil is being considered for a reduced timetable:

- 3.3.1. Children who are looked after must be discussed in consultation with the virtual school headteacher and social worker to gain joint agreement and support.
- 3.3.2. Pupils who are supported with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), must be discussed in consultation with the local authority SEND officer.
- 3.3.3. Pupils who are subject to a child protection plan or where they are considered, child in need or the family is being supported by an Early Help worker, then the school must consult with the child's social worker or Family Support worker. In addition, reduced timetables can only be implemented following a core group meeting or multi-agency meeting that has been convened prior to implementation.

4. Monitoring and reviewing with local authorities:

4.1. Monitoring and reviewing reduced timetables is essential good practice.

4.2. Schools must:

- 4.2.1. **report** the reduced timetable information to the local authority
- 4.2.2. **evaluate** the use of reduced timetables upon pupil academic progress and ensuring quality assurance of provision.
- 4.2.3. **upload** the fully completed reduced timetable plan and comprehensive risk assessment to the local authority
- 4.2.4. **demonstrate effective communication** with parents/carers and local authorities with regards to progress towards the pupil receiving their statutory entitlement to fulltime education and the school delivering their statutory duty.

4.3. Local authorities must:

- 4.3.1. **maintain** a central database of all pupils not accessing full-time education
- 4.3.2. **include** reduced timetable data in the **central record**

4.4. Medway Council will:

- 4.4.1. **monitor** the use of reduced timetables, ensuring statutory compliance and the rights of the pupil
- 4.4.2. **evaluate** their effectiveness and share good practice
- 4.4.3. **share** intelligence across directorates; including safeguarding, school effectiveness, social care and early help, attendance, admissions and virtual school.
- 4.4.4. **examine** any arrangement for statutory compliance that extends beyond six weeks in line with the child's medical needs.
- 4.4.5. **advocate** for all pupils, and support or challenge schools as appropriate

5. Key documents

- 5.1. Education and Skills Act 2008, Section 4, subsection 436A Education Act 2006
- 5.2. Department for Education: *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs* (May 2013)
- 5.3. Department for Education: *Children Missing Education* (Sept 2016)
- 5.4. Department for Education: [Keeping children safe in education \(Sept 2022\)](#)
- 5.5. [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(May 2022\)](#)

6. Complaints procedure

- 6.1 Resolution regarding complaints about the Reduced Timetable Policy should be made to the Reduced Timetable Lead Officer in the first instance:

Reduced Timetable Lead Officer
Inclusion Team
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Chatham
ME4 4TR
01634 334397

e-mail: vicky.burrows@medway.gov.uk

- 6.2 If the complaint relates to the actions of the Lead Officer, contact:

Inclusion Team Manager
Inclusion Team
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Chatham
ME4 4TR
Tel: 01634 334333

e-mail: lynn.sims@medway.gov.uk

Review Date: July 2023

Annex 1 - A guide to the hours required to represent full-time education

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 when preparing a pupil for full-time attendance:

Reception & Key Stage 1	21 hours
Key Stage 2	23.5 hours
Key Stage 3	24 hours
Key Stage 4	25 hours

Annex 2 – Essential aspects to be included on the schools' risk assessment

Reduced Hours Provision Individual Pupil Risk Assessment

The risk assessment must be completed by the assigned professional who will be overseeing the pupil's reduced hours provision **before** any agreement is made with parents; this must be recorded on the reduced timetable agreement form with the parent/carer signature.

In line with the school's safeguarding responsibilities, it is important that the school carries out its own risk assessment to ascertain that it is safe for the child to not be in school full-time. It is recommended that a visit to the pupil's home is made and clear information obtained about who is responsible for the child when they are not attending a school session. This must be in partnership with the identified agency representative in 3.2.

Additionally, schools need to be mindful to the risks associated with the logistics of new transport arrangements for the child who may be accessing school at different times, chaperoned by different members of the family or other parties. Furthermore, schools will need to be clear on collection and arrival arrangements. This detail must be clearly written into the risk assessment below.

Risk assessments must include as a minimum

- Name
- School
- Date of risk assessment
- State the identified risk heading
- List the aspects of risk relevant to the pupil within that heading

- State the level of risk – low, medium, high for each
- State the preventative strategies to reduce the risk to an acceptable level
- State how aspects of the risk are to be monitored and by whom, how frequent?
- State who is responsible for supervising, identifying further action and process of engaging effective support
- List all of the adults who are necessary for the risk plan to be effective, their role, employing body and record their acknowledgement of their involvement.

Annex 3 – What does Medway need to know in order to fulfil this policy and be statutorily compliant?

Statutory duty	Medway Council fulfilment
Medway Council has a duty to ensure that all children and young people access a full-time education suitable to their age. This is a basic right of the child and includes any necessary, reasonable adjustments and support for any special educational needs so that the pupil can access their right to a fulfilling and full-time education. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education. The local authority has a duty to hold schools to account and challenge when statutory provision is being infringed.	• Know the children and young people who are not in receipt of fulltime education. • School name of the child • Medway’s named leader for reduced timetables: Vicky Burrows – Inclusion Team • If there are safeguarding concerns, then the named officer in section 3.3 should be engaged, and their acknowledgement recorded, i.e. virtual head teacher, SEND officer and / or social worker.
Medway Council regards the use of reduced timetables as a last resort in improving a pupil with a medical, physical or mental health condition. It guides schools to only consider reduced timetables in exceptional circumstances and after exhausting all other strategies within those limiting circumstances. Consequently, there is no basis for implementing a reduced timetable as a sanction for undesirable behaviours.	Medway Council must know the fundamental reason for the reduced timetable provision. This must be recorded on the submission form to Medway Council.
If the criteria for a legitimate, temporary reduced timetable are met, then the following aspects are good practice and should form part of the understanding of, and documents shared with, all stakeholders:	

an assigned professional to monitor to lead on the plan and be the single point of contact between home, school and agencies. This person will either be the headteacher or their representative.	Name of the assigned professional to monitor the plan at the school – headteacher / or HT representative.
written agreement from those with parental responsibility , (without this the school is excluding the pupil and must follow separate suspension protocols).	Evidence of parental agreement to a reduced timetable.
written plan showing all supportive measures to enable the pupil back into their statutory education. This may be in the form of a pastoral support plan, individual learning plan, personal education plan, or an education, health, care plan	A written plan that has the capacity to support the child back into fulltime education with evidence of incremental hours of education in school.
written objectives and timescales for implementation, recording of daily school review against the objectives, and mid-plan evaluation of impact involving relevant multi agency consultants. A plan period should not exceed 6 weeks and build up over that period to the fulltime expectation. (Refer to 4.4.4 in exceptional cases)	• Written objectives to be achieved • Daily log of educated time in school • Daily recording of performance against the objectives • Mid plan evaluation • Evidence of time limited plan
written assessments of risk with measures to minimise risk and ensure safety – see annex 2 for an exemplar of headings and requirements	Written assessments of risk
Signed agreement that the pupil is able to return to full-time education before the plan ends if progress is swifter than anticipated.	Agreement to admit child before end date of plan if good progress is made.
Free school meal daily entitlement must be sustained.	Evidence that daily free school meal entitlements have been maintained.
Commitment to a scheduled reintegration meeting where further support may be necessary once the pupil is full-time.	Evidence of an appropriate reintegration meeting that proactively plans for an effective and successful full- time education.