

Applecroft School



Use of Part-Time Timetables for Compulsory School Aged Children Policy

Person Responsible:	Assistant Headteacher
Review Cycle:	Annual
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1) Introduction:

School Vision:

'To create a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life.'

School Mission Statement:

'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives.'

School Values:

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience

2) Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is intended to protect children and young people and schools, 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). This guidance is for children who are on a reduced timetable relating to non-disciplinary matters, i.e., illness and not behavioural matters, because the latter has a different legislative framework.

3) Reduced Timetable Definition:

For this guidance, a reduced timetable means an agreement made with a pupil and parent or carer and, in some circumstances the Local Authority, that the number of hours spent in education is reduced for a **time limited** period of generally no more than six weeks. The reduced timetable must be reviewed at least after 4 weeks. Schools

should consult with all appropriate agencies involved with a pupil, prior to implementing a reduced timetable (EHCP Coordinator, Social Worker, health professional, Advisory Teacher, Virtual School).

Schools and education settings have responsibilities to ensure that all pupils on their roll receive a full-time education and achieve good outcomes. This includes children who may not yet be of statutory school age (4 years old). All settings are expected to have a reintegration support plan in place. Schools have a statutory duty to report to the Local Authority any pupil not receiving full time education.

For those children and young people considered unable to attend school for medical reasons, the Local Authority's guidance on Access to Education for Children and Young People Unable to Attend School for Medical Reasons should be followed. This is available on The Grid.

This guidance is not intended to be applied to those children and young people where flexi-schooling is in place. In such cases, provided that the school has a mechanism in place for ensuring that the child attending the alternative provision and the child's total educational programme is full-time, this arrangement would not be considered as a reduced educational provision.

Responsible Officers:

Richard Woodard, Head of Access, Inclusion & Alternative Provision,
Silvia Hundal, Access Lead.

4) Background and Context:

It is recognised that there may be occasions when a child or young person 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 poor emotional wellbeing at school and is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with full-time attendance. In these very exceptional circumstances, it may be reasonable for schools to consider placing a pupil on a reduced timetable for a short, agreed period. It is expected that as the pupil's ability to cope improves, unmet needs are addressed, and the school's offer is adapted, their attendance will improve. It is expected that the pupil will be re-integrated back into full-time education.

This guidance explains the legal position regarding such reduced timetables, it clarifies responsibilities and identifies the best practice to be adopted. Schools should take account of this guidance 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 receiving claims on educational negligence grounds, in respect of a failure to educate.

5) The DfE Perspective:

The document '*Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities*' (DfE May 2022) states:

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their 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 should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. 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 treat absence as authorised.

6) The Ofsted Perspective:

The report titled *Pupils missing out on education* (Ofsted, November 2013) 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).

Given 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 and report to governors on a termly basis. At Applecroft School, this information is contained in the termly Headteacher's report to Trustees.

The Ofsted report states schools, including academies and free schools, should:

- *with immediate effect, stop unlawful exclusions and provide suitable support for children and young people with behavioural difficulties.*
- *establish clear accountability for the achievement, safety and personal development of all children and young people who are on the school roll but not accessing school in the usual way, and for the quality and amount of provision made for them.*
- *inform the local authority of any part-time education arrangements, regardless of the type of school.*
- *keep children and young people on the school roll during periods of illness or custody (or for as long as it is relevant), in line with Government policy and guidance.*
- *respond quickly to any early signs of children and young people's raised anxiety or dips in their progress, attendance, or engagement in learning.*
- *give governors sufficient information about children and young people who are not accessing school in the usual way, so that governors can challenge the amount of provision being made and evaluate its effectiveness.*

7) 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 'fulltime' 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 (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 (Y1 and Y2)	21 hours
Key Stage 2 (Y3 to Y6)	23.5 hours

DfE guidance states that in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a reduction in educational provision to meet a young person's needs.

A reduced timetable **must not be treated as a long-term and permanent solution**. The arrangement should always **specify an end-date** by when it is expected that the child or young person will return to full-time education (or when an alternative will be provided). The reduced timetabled must be **reviewed regularly** in the light of any

changes to the child or young person's circumstances and any adjustments or extensions made. 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 or young person is unable to access full-time education due to a diagnosed health need, schools and local authorities must follow the Department for Education guidance Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE, 2023).

8) Local Authority Responsibilities:

Under Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 'A local authority shall (so far as their powers enable them to do so) contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental health and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education, are available to meet the need of the population of their area.'

The information provided by schools on reduced timetables, will be used by the Local Authority to:

Collect, analyse and monitor data relating to children not in full time education (Ofsted Framework: Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services, August, 2023).

Analyse data relating to the use of reduced timetables to inform service delivery at a local and a county level.

9) Schools Responsibilities (including academies, Free Schools, UTCs, Special Schools, ESCs and Primary Behaviour Service):

- To provide full-time education to all children on roll and appropriate support to enable pupils to participate in education full-time.
- To inform the local authority of any instance of a child or young person being placed on a reduced timetable, so that the local authority is aware of the arrangements (Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, updated 14th July 2023).
- To report reduced timetables through the HCC Reduced Timetable Portal found on this link HfL Grid
- Schools are responsible for the safeguarding of all pupils on roll. Schools remain responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils on roll who are off-site

during school hours - even if a parent/carer agreement to any reduced timetable arrangement has been made (Ofsted, July 2023). Schools must effectively consider:

- Any safeguarding concerns
- How any safeguarding concerns have been assessed and mitigated.
- Any Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals, or missing episodes highlighted.
- Identify the adult responsible for safeguarding, during these time of absence from school.
 - To record the child or young person's attendance, using appropriate registration code; in order that both the school and HCC Statutory Attendance and Participation Team (SAPT) can monitor when the child or young person began and ended their reduced educational provision.
 - To identify and name the school's key person responsible for liaising with the family, monitoring the RTT, reintegration and the safeguarding plan.
 - To ensure effective communication with parents or carers and key professionals with regards to progress towards the child or young person's full re-integration to school.
 - To ensure that arrangements for a reduced educational provision do not discriminate against a young person's **access to free school meals**.
 - To provide information to trustees about any children placed on reduced timetables, so that trustees can fulfil their responsibilities to monitor the school's provision.

The information on reduced timetables will allow schools to:

- Fulfil their obligation to inform the local authority when a child or young person is placed on a reduced timetable.
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability in the use of reduced timetables.
- Create reports for use in monitoring and analysing data relating to child or young people on reduced timetables.
- Inform school trustees about children on reduced timetables.

10) Safeguarding considerations for schools:

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, schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils on roll who are offsite during school hours. If evidence suggests that the child

or young person will be exposed to **significant risk if not in school**, then a reduced timetable should not be considered an option.

11) Assessing the Risk:

Completing a robust risk assessment in keeping with DfE guidance [Keeping children safe in education 20243 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101322/keeping-children-safe-in-education-20243.pdf) which addresses any actual or potential safeguarding, welfare, offending or harmful behaviour (concerns that may result from a change in pattern of school attendance is essential).

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

- 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 child or young person as well as their risk of engaging in criminal activity or substance misuse whilst not in school. These factors must be considered when undertaking a risk assessment:

- The child or young person is '**looked after**' by the local authority (Virtual School & Social Worker must be consulted).
- The child or young person is subject to a **Child in Need** or **Child Protection** (Social Worker must be consulted).
- The **risk of** the child or young person to **CSE** (Child Sexual Exploitation), as not attending school full-time will increase their vulnerability.
- The **risk of substance misuse**, while not in receipt of education during the school day.
- The **risk of radicalisation** is increased as the child or young person may become isolated and disengaged, making them more susceptible to being groomed or radicalised.

- Any factors that may affect school transport, these factors must be shared with the School Admissions and Transport team, if the child is eligible for transport.

The school must be totally satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding and care of the child or young person during the period, when they would otherwise have been expected to be in school. The school must secure a written

agreement from the parents, or carers about who is responsible for the welfare of the child or young person, for the sessions when the child will not be accessing education at the school where they are on roll.

12) Best Practice:

(Annex 1)

Schools wishing to establish a reduced educational provision, need to consider their position within the context of the legal requirements and considerations outlined above. The Local Authority expectation will be that all occurrences of reduced educational provision are signed off by the schools Headteacher, having completed HCC Check List for Reduced Timetables (refer to Annex 1). The Headteacher will ensure that the decision is taken as part of a planned strategy to reintegrate the child to full-time education.

The school should proceed as follows:

1. Consult with relevant agencies to determine the education and support provision that would best meet the child or young person's individual needs, for a fixed term, no longer than six weeks.
2. Complete a detailed action plan, agreed with the parents/carers 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 or young person should be actively involved in this planning. The reintegration-plan should be reviewed regularly (i.e., each week in a 6 weeks' period), to evaluate the impact of the strategies in place.
3. In addition, consider if the child has any special educational, disability or mobility. 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. The School must be satisfied that special educational needs can be still met in part-time table.
4. Coordinate transport with the School Admissions and Transport Team if the student is eligible for transport support. Email schooltransport@hertfordshire.gov.uk **at least 5 days prior** to the start of the reduced timetable, to enable amended transport arrangements to be put in place. Be aware that transport will not be amended unless confirmation is received by the SEN Transport Team. Moreover, any amendments to transport arrangements with the SEN Transport Team will cease on the agreed end date.

5. If the child or young person is a child looked after, the school must consult with the Virtual School before a reduced timetable is considered. The school assigned Education Adviser will work with the school and the social worker, to agree a plan to support educational progress, during the reduced timetable period and the return to full-time education.
6. Confirm, in writing, which adults will be responsible for the duty of care for the child or young person during school sessions when he/she is not attending. The school must note that **the school retains full duty of care** for all children who are on the school roll if they are receiving education off-site. Refer to school's responsibilities above.
7. **Obtain written consent to the arrangements from the child or young person'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 an unlawful exclusion. **A parent signature must be obtained.** For a child looked after, the foster carer will need to defer to the social worker to obtain the agreement of the person with legal parental responsibility.
8. Keep a central record of the arrangement and reviews documentation (APDR). The school must notify the local authority of a new reduced timetable, or the changes on an existing one, by logging into the HCC Reduced Timetables Portal.
9. Provide sufficient and appropriately differentiated work for any time the child or young person is not attending school. Provided the child or young person 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 pupil is not in school will be provided, sent home, marked and how constructive feedback will be given. Also consider how the pupil 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.
10. Record the child or young person's absence from school for sessions when he/she is not in attendance as authorised absence (register code C).
11. Inform the Local Authority when the child or young person returns to full-time education, by logging into HCC Reduced Timetables Portal and updating the existing RTT.

Annex 1 - Checklist for using Reduced Timetables

It is expected practice for the Head Teacher to oversee the completion of this 'Checklist' to show evidence that the necessary decisions have taken place to ensure the child is safe. Please return to ISL Access and Inclusion.

Name of child	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Date of Birth	Click or tap to enter a date.	Year Group	Click or tap here to enter text.
School	Click or tap here to enter text.		

Decision / Action	Completed
It has been taken in the best interests of the child or young person and attracts the understanding, approval, and written agreement of parents/carers and in the case of a Looked After Child or young person subject to a CIN or CP Plan, the allocated Social Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the child in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)? Reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure the child will continue to have access to FSM for the period of the reduced timetable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of the Safeguarding Team has completed a robust risk assessment in keeping with DfE guidance Keeping children safe in education 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk) and any risks/hazards are managed. If evidence suggests that the child will be exposed to significant risk if not in school, then a reduced timetable should not be a considered option.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complies with Safeguarding best practice i.e., statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reduced timetable is for a limited period with review dates set.	<input type="checkbox"/>
A parent signature has been obtained	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appropriate and sufficient work has been set for any sessions the child or young person is away from school	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of staff has been identified to coordinate the work to be sent home, how it is to be marked, and how feedback will be provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the student is eligible for transport support the transport team is informed at least 5 days in advance and informed of the end date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
School has reported the reduced timetable through the HCC Reduced Timetables Portal found in the HfL Grid /SOLERO	<input type="checkbox"/>