

Reduced Timetable – Best Practice Guidance

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

1. Introduction

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any student missing education (as set out in ['Pupils Missing Out on Education'](#), published by Ofsted in November 2013 and the Local Authority inspection framework for children in need of help and protection). Any pupil on a reduced timetable is deemed to be at risk of missing education.

It is important to highlight that there is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in certain 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.

Milton Keynes Council (MKC) is committed to ensuring every child's right to a full-time education offer and that a decision for a reduced timetable should only be undertaken where this is in the pupil's best interest and that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from parent/carer (or the Virtual school for looked after children and/or the SEN team at the local authority where appropriate).

The Sufficiency and Access team will monitor and review these cases, and where a pupil is not back in school full-time the processes within this document will be followed.

1. 2. Full-time education

All education should be suited to a child's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special educational need. The assumption is that students should receive full-time education (i.e. 25 hours).

It is illegal for schools to discriminate against students on the basis of their SEN or disability.

A timetable is considered reduced when it consists of something less than that which is provided to the majority of the student's peers in that setting.

3. When might a reduced timetable be used?

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 4 categories.

1) 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 student who is not currently successful on a full-time basis,

to regain success. This would be a closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behavioural, emotional or social needs.

2) Medical reasons

A student has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be part of a “medical plan” agreed between the school, parents/carers 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) 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.

4) Children accessing school for the first time

As part of a planned transition into Key Stage 1, particularly where the child has an SEN need, and professionals and parents agree that the child will benefit from a staged transition into school. For these children the expectation would be for them to be ‘full time’ no later than their fifth birthday.

4. Safeguarding considerations

Looked after children, or children subject to Early Help or a social care plan are amongst some of our most vulnerable pupils and maybe placed at greater risk if placed on a part time timetable. Therefore, a part time timetable should only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances, when all other interventions have been tried and with agreement of the relevant professionals (e.g. Virtual School, Social Worker etc.).

5. Good practice

When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, then the following considerations should be undertaken:

- a) A clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an appropriate intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil. A detailed assessment through the school’s SEN / pastoral team should be in place to establish if there are wider needs and identify what support is required from external agencies.
- b) Parental permission in writing, acknowledging responsibility for their child when not attending school during the period. Without this a reduced timetable can be construed as unofficial exclusion, which is unlawful. If the parent has not requested leave, the school could be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum.

- c) Where the pupil is a looked after child, a reduced timetable is only considered when all other interventions have been tried and that they have the written agreement of the relevant Virtual School.
- d) In addition to the above where the pupil has an EHCP the SEN Caseworker should be involved to ensure the EHCP is up to date and can still be delivered through this and where necessary to arrange an interim review. The reduced timetable needs to ensure that the child or young person can still receive the additional support given to their special educational needs or disability.
- e) It has been discussed and agreed by the appropriate professional stakeholders in a meeting. If the child is on a Child Protection Plan, the child's social worker should provide their given written agreement.
- f) The provision of sufficient and appropriately differentiated work for any time the pupil is not attending school. Provided the pupil 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 and 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 they will continue to have contact with the rest of their class and key staff.
- g) The impact of a reduced timetable on travelling and transport arrangements or the pupil's access to Free School Meals.
- h) An action plan (Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Learning Plan, Personal Education Plan etc.), agreed with the parents and pupil demonstrating a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of 6 weeks. The school must ensure the student has active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention. Details needed for the plan include:
- The proposed timetable to get back to full-time (within 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.
- i) A thorough risk assessment before implementation giving consideration to safeguarding measures for the duration. There must be written agreement about who is responsible for keeping the child safe for the time they would normally be in school. Risk assessments should follow the 5 steps identified by HSE:
1. Identify possible hazards e.g. check with Children Missing Exploited and Trafficked (CMET) team to identify any existing concerns of CSE / CCE
 2. Decide who may be harmed and how
 3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution

4. Record your findings and implement them
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 student engaging in criminal activity or substance misuse whilst not in receipt of education during the school day.

- j) How parents/carers will be supported during the time when their child is not in school considering the pressures this may place on home and work life.
- k) Inform other services who are involved with the child/family e.g. Early Help, Community & Family Hub, Social Care, SEN, YOT, Early Support Project (ESP), Promoting Reintegration Reducing Exclusion (PRRE), Children Missing Exploited and Trafficked (CMET) Hub.

Unresolved cases:

- l) The reduced time-table should not exceed 6 weeks. If the pupil is still on a reduced timetable as the time limit approaches, a review should be held for progress and challenges to be discussed. A further period of 6 weeks should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and with parental agreement, and the plan revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate. Different interventions should be utilised if the reduced timetable is not providing sufficient progress towards successful integration.
- m) Where cases remain unresolved after two six week cycles, then the school should seek further support and advice (where this is not already in place). If solutions are not identified then the school will call and host a multi-professional meeting which will be supported through relevant Milton Keynes Council Children's Services Teams. A summary of the agreed solutions / Multi-professional meetings should be submitted to Milton Keynes Council Children Missing Education Team cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk

6. Monitoring and reviewing

The school's responsibilities:

- 1) Report the reduced timetable to Milton Keynes Council Children Missing Education Team by completing a Part Time School Timetable referral and sending to cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk as soon as it becomes operational. Also send a copy to exploitation@milton-keynes.gov.uk to notify the Children Missing Exploited and Trafficked (CMET) hub The referral should include a copy of the plan, including the number of teaching hours.
- 2) Send a copy of subsequent reviews and increases of time to Milton Keynes Council Children Missing Education Team cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk).
- 3) Record the child's attendance accurately on the attendance register.

The Department for Education's guidance on attendance codes is set out below for information:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

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

Code D: Dual Registered – at another educational establishment

This code is used to indicate that the student was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they were registered. The main examples of dual registration are students who are attending a student referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the student is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the student's attendance and absence for those sessions that the student is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

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

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 students during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those students 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](#)

- 4) Monitor the overall use of this strategy within the school and report this to governors termly.
- 5) Ensure effective, regular communication with parents/carers (and LA as necessary) with regard to progress towards full-time reintegration to school.

Milton Keynes Council Council's responsibilities are:

- 1) Ensure that reports of reduced timetables are appropriately recorded and distributed to the relevant teams for monitoring and support.
- 2) Report the known numbers of students on reduced timetables and any instances where this has not been reported to Secondary Inclusion Partnership and other key stakeholders such as and when appropriate.
- 3) Raise with the headteacher where a student has been on a reduced timetable for longer than 6 weeks and a summary of the agreed solutions or multi agency meeting has not been received by the LA, or where a student is identified as being on a reduced timetable and has not been reported to the LA.
- 4) To facilitate a half termly review meeting to consider cases that remain unresolved following the multi-agency meeting. For this to be effective, it will require broad representation, including headteachers, senior representation from Milton Keynes Council YOT, CMET, CSC, SEND services and CAMHS

Annex A - Aide Memoire

The DfE perspective

In the FAQ section of its guidance document Advice on School Attendance (DfE. November 2016) 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.

Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2013 (under review)

Planning for alternative provision

31. All pupils should be helped and encouraged to achieve or exceed the standards of a good education. Commissioners should recognise any issues or barriers, and hence a potential requirement for alternative provision, as early as possible, and carry out a thorough assessment of the pupil's needs. Schools should look to have an increased focus on the early assessment and identification of a pupil's needs before his or her behaviour has deteriorated to the extent that exclusion is the only option.

32. All pupils must receive full-time provision in total, whether in one setting or more, unless a pupil's medical condition makes full-time provision inappropriate – see the guidance document *'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'* for further information. A personalised plan for intervention should be prepared by the commissioner setting

clear objectives for improvement and attainment, timeframes, arrangements for assessment and monitoring progress, and a baseline of the current position against which to measure progress. Plans should also be linked to other relevant information or activities such as 'Education, Health and Care Plans' for children with SEN.

Contact Detail:

Children Missing Education Team

cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk