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**Statutory Guidance for**

**Part-Time Timetables**

**Updated September 2024**

**Introduction**

The Local Authority seeks to support the education of all pupils and whilst we strive to ensure that an appropriate school place is found for all our pupils to thrive, we recognise that sometimes for a few pupils, part-time timetables are appropriately used to support those with health, medical or school phobic issues. In addition, the [2022 Exclusion guidelines](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf) allow the use of part time timetables in one limited circumstance, where a pupil is re-integrating into school life and full-time education following a suspension or period of off-site direction.

A part time timetable or reduced hours is defined as an agreed part-time programme that includes sessions which do not involve attendance at any provision.

A part-time timetable could be part of an outcome of a Vulnerable Pupils HOT clinic, Education Placement Panel or at Rapid Response Group meeting. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Safeguarding Risk assessment must be competed. A referral should be made as soon as possible after suspension or referral off site to ensure that appropriate support is being provided to the pupil and their family.

This document should be read in conjunction with statutory guidance on Attendance, Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), Suspensions and Exclusions.

Links to these documents can be found here:

* [Mental Health and Attendance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)
* [Working together to Improve School Attendance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)
* [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf)

**What is a Part-time/Reduced Timetable?**

“Full-time” is not defined in law but for recording purposes, it is defined as the time a pupil would normally have in their school (at least 5 hours per day). 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 children in their area receive such an education. Generally, anything less than 25 hours a week is considered part-time. 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. As a rule, schools are only permitted to provide less than full-time education, including placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, in very exceptional circumstances.

**What is NOT Considered a Part-time/Reduced Timetable?**

* A pupil who spends part of their week in school and part in alternative provision.
* A pupil who is attending individual tuition only (approved by professionals/Local authority Inclusion placement panels\*) but dual registered with a school.

If a pupil is subject to a part-time/reduced timetable in line with the guidance as above – please use Barking and Dagenham Education’s Pupil Absent Movement form (PAM) to notify:

* EHC Coordinator for pupils with EHCPs.
* Relevant Education Inclusion Partner (EIP) for all other pupils.

**What the Law Says**

It is important to highlight that there is no current statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable. Ofsted has made it clear that if one is agreed, it must be demonstrably in the interests of the child and not the school. The Department for Education guidance, ‘[Working together to improve school attendance’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf) reinforces this.

Ofsted, in their report published in November 2013 entitled ‘[Pupils Missing out on Education’](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/18825/1/Pupils%20missing%20out%20on%20education.pdf), defined pupils missing out on education as pupils of compulsory school age who are not accessing full-time education (either in school or in alternative provision) and in its guidance to schools and local authorities. Ofsted advises that all schools, including academies, free, independent, private, and non-maintained schools, must monitor pupils’ attendance through their daily register. This report also established the principle that all local authorities should hold a register of children in receipt of part-time/reduced provision.

Finally, the local authority also 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 their entitlement to provision tracked (this is done through the PAM form).

**Purpose of Part-time Timetables:**

Part-time timetables should focus on what is best for the young person, not on what the school believes it can accommodate. It must be clear that the part-time school attendance is better for the pupil than full time attendance.

In certain circumstances it is recognised that it may be in the best interests of the young person for them to attend school on a part-time basis. This may be to help the young person gradually integrate back into the school setting. However, the aim should be to achieve a return to full time education as soon as possible, normally within six weeks of the start of any part-time arrangement. It is not considered appropriate for pupils to be denied their entitlement to full time education by placing them on a part-time timetable for an extended period of time.

Reduced time in school is primarily suggested on the grounds that the pupil cannot cope with being in school for a full day. A part time timetable is part of a library of options for a school to make necessary adjustments to meet the needs of a particular pupil. It may also be the case that a part-time timetable reduces the likelihood of exclusion.

**Who may need part time timetables:**

The purpose of a part time timetable is to support a pupil who is unable to attend school due to health needs. There may be occasions when this support is also provided to students who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) for whom the LA is planning full time provision for. The aim of the service is to ensure that what each pupil receives enables them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.

A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil’s behaviour and must only be in place for the shortest time necessary. 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.

**What Counts as Exceptional Circumstances?**

It is up to the Headteacher to decide what counts as exceptional circumstances. But they should be prepared to justify with evidence as to why the pupil is NOT receiving a full-time education.

Examples might also include:

* A family bereavement prevents a pupil from attending full-time education.
* A medical condition such as diagnosed anxiety has become a barrier to attendance.
* A pupil joining a school/area has significant needs and a reduced timetable would help them become used to routines and the school.
* Reintegration following a fixed-term suspension to ensure that a robust support package is in place to reduce the risk of further suspensions.

**When is a Part-time/Reduced Timetable Not Appropriate or Lawful?**

The use of part-time/reduced timetables is inappropriate without parent/carer consent, for indeterminate periods of time, or, where relevant, without multi-agency input.

Examples below detail when part-time timetables should be avoided:

* As a strategy to deal with behaviour difficulties
* Whilst awaiting a start date for a child’s new school
* To avoid a suspension or permanent exclusion
* Because the child has a disability or special needs
* When requested by a parent once the child becomes of compulsory school age
* To assist with staffing difficulties in school

To reiterate, a part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil’s behaviour on an ongoing basis. Instead, in relation to ongoing behavioural issues/needs schools should refer to their school/academy Inclusion (SEND) and behaviour/relationship policies. Additionally, and fundamentally they should refer to policies and procedures related to their use of alternative provision and ordinary available provision (OAP).

**10 Key Good Practice Points**

1. The local authority should be informed through the form (PAM) and process when every part-time timetable starts, if it is modified, or extended and when it ends.

2. A part-time timetable should only be considered after all other assessments and support options have been considered: Schools must make every effort with evidence to provide a full-time education for all children and young people. Evidence should be collated to show how work has been done to avoid part-time timetables.

3. All appropriate multi-agency referrals have been made and all agencies working with the child participate in the decision.

4. Prior to placing a child on a part-time/reduced timetable, schools should conduct an assessment using support provided from the LA school improvement and or SEND teams to establish whether there are wider needs and identify the support needed from external agencies.

5. Decisions related to any part-timetable should take full account of any existing or potential safeguarding issues. A risk assessment should be conducted addressing any actual or potential safeguarding, welfare, offending or harmful behaviour and/or concerns that may result from a change in the pattern of school provision is essential.

6. A part-time/reduced timetable must not be treated as a long-term plan and should be time limited. The maximum length of a part-time timetable is usually half a term. The arrangement should always specify an end date by when it is expected that the child will return to full-time education (or when an alternative will be provided). Any part-time/reduced timetable arrangements must be regularly reviewed, considering any changes to the child’s circumstances and the initial review date to take place within the 2 weeks of the start date of the reduced timetable. If this time needs to be exceeded schools are strongly advised to discuss the situation with their nominated local authority officer (Education Inclusion Partner and/or EHC Coordinator).

7. A part-time/reduced timetable should provide a means of achieving reintegration to full-time education swiftly. It should never be used as a form of inadvertently excluding a pupil from school for part of the school day or as permanent provision.

8. A child on a part-time/reduced timetable could be a ‘persistent absentee’ in law should the number of sessions the child is not expected to attend constitutes more than 10% of all available sessions.

9. The objectives of any part-time/reduced timetable should be clearly recorded in writing and understood.

10. Any proposal to use a part-time/reduced timetable arrangement must be discussed with the parent/carer and pupil before the arrangements start. There should also be a step-up plan, where the child's hours are increasing each week until they are full-time, and support is put in place for a successful reintegration. A parent/carer must consent (and not be ‘coerced’) to a part-time/reduced timetable by signing an agreement form with the school (please see example in Appendix 1). The agreement form must make explicit that they are consenting to the arrangements; that they are taking responsibility for the pupil when they are not in school; and that they are guaranteeing that the pupil will be supervised off-site.

**Part-time Timetables: Additional Considerations - Vulnerable Groups**

Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan

* The Pupil’s EHC Coordinator must be informed of any decision to implement a part-time timetable.
* Pupils with an EHCP should have an interim review of their plan prior to a part-time timetable (or any change of provision) commencing. Should a part-time timetable be agreed at the review, it should be time-limited with an end date by which full-time attendance is expected.
* It is unlawful for schools to discriminate against pupils based on their special educational needs and/or disability.
* A staged part-time/reduced timetable should only be used for a pupil with an Education, Health & Care Plan in limited circumstances and when agreed with relevant agencies such as the Education Psychology Service.
* A pupil should not be put on a part-time/reduced timetable just because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination. Special educational needs in some circumstances may also be a disability and therefore constitute a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
* Schools must ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan is delivered to meet the child’s needs and secure their statutory entitlement.

**Children in Care**

As corporate parents, Barking and Dagenham Council requires that looked after children receive a full-time education. A part-time/reduced timetable should only be implemented for children in care in limited circumstances and only with the consent of both the child’s social worker and the Virtual School Head. A PEP meeting should be held before any part-time timetable begins.

**Children Subject to a Child Protection/Child in Need Plan**

Children on child protection/child in need plans are very vulnerable and may be at greater risk if placed on a reduced timetable. Therefore, a part-time/reduced timetable should only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances; only where it has been agreed following a multi-agency meeting, such as a core group meeting for children with a child protection plan; and only with the agreement of the child’s social worker/Virtual School.

**Reception Age Pupils**

For reception age pupils, it is customary practice to stagger admissions and gradually integrate the children into school. For the untimetabled sessions, reception children are not expected to attend, the registration mark would be code X. This code can only be used for the first three or four weeks of the academic year. This is not considered to be a part-time/reduced timetable and there is no need to notify the local authority of these children in this circumstance.

A small minority of children who are not ‘school ready,’ may need an extended integration period to support their emotional and developmental needs. In this circumstance, the child would be regarded as being in receipt of a part-time/reduced timetable and an appropriate plan must be agreed in partnership with parents and signed consent recorded.

The school must notify the local authority of these arrangements. The agreement must focus on ensuring that full-time attendance is achieved no later than the term following the child’s fifth birthday. The correct code for the session the child is not expected to attend is code C regardless of whether the child is of compulsory school age or not.

**Unlawful Exclusions**

A part-time/reduced timetable that does NOT have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process, and/or the consent of parents/carers may be considered an unlawful exclusion by Ofsted. In addition, using part-time/reduced provision as a strategy to deal with behaviour concerns or to avoid a formal exclusion would also constitute an unlawful exclusion.

**Safeguarding**

Schools must have regard and consideration for the safeguarding issues and the impact this might have on a child when considering a reduced timetable. Schools have a safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their roll and therefore must be aware that even with parental agreement to any arrangement they make, they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils off-site during school hours.

**Risk Assessment**

When considering a part-time timetable, schools must consider the safety and wellbeing of the pupil in terms of whether a reduced educational offer would increase their vulnerability and place them more at risk of potential harm. A risk assessment should be conducted to address:

* The safety and wellbeing of the child as it is likely they will be spending more time at home
* Any Child in Need/Child Protection concerns
* The risk of the pupil engaging in criminal activities (the Youth Offending Team should be consulted in the case of known offenders)
* The risk of substance misuse, child sexual exploitation or other criminal exploitation, while not in receipt of education during the school day

Where a pupil moves school and has at any point been on a part-time timetable, all information relating to this should be sent to the receiving school.

**Process:**

Before a part time timetable is put in place, a discussion agreeing the way forward should take place between the school, the parents and the pupil (see the Appendix 1). It is important that parents voice is considered, and that the discussion is child centred.

Parents who will not or do not engage appropriately or in a reasonable period, may not be supporting their child suitably. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) or an early EHC plan review should be considered. This may need escalating as a cause for concern or even a safeguarding issue.

The objectives of any part-time timetable should be clearly understood at the outset. All Parents/carers must sign a consent form agreeing to the part-time timetable and is to be kept on the pupil’s school file.

All schools within Barking & Dagenham are expected to provide the Local Authority’s Education Core Team with a list of pupils of statutory school age who are on roll, but not in full time education. This list should be submitted on the **15th of each month** via a pupil mobility form known as the PAM form.

**Support:**

If a young person is unable to attend school due to health needs the borough has a home tuition service run through the Erkenwald Centre.

Tuition is provided on a 1.1 basis in the core subjects – English and Maths. This can take place within the home or a suitable alternative location depending on the needs of the student.

**Children who have medical needs will be offered**

* 1 hour per day for 5 days per week (5 hours per week)

**If the Child has an EHCP plan**

* 2 hours per day for 5 days per week (10 hours per week)

**Monitoring:**

The aim of a part timetable is to support the child to reintegrate back in full time mainstream education. It is therefore important that school and home continually monitor the pupil’s experience of tuition.

* The tutor should provide regular reports which is emailed to professionals directly.
* After each block of 5 weeks the tuition requirements should be revisited to ensure that they meet the needs of the pupil.
* School should maintain regular contact with the family and the pupil to ensure familiarity and relationships are maintained.

Nearly all students are reintegrated back into full time mainstream education but there are some who are reintegrated into full time education within alternative or specialist provisions if this is deemed to be appropriate to their level of need.

**Role of the Parents and Carers**

The role of parents and carers is central to the success of a part time timetable and their views must be taken into account when considering this option. There are related issues that can arise because of a pupil being placed on a part-time timetable, for example it can place an additional burden on the pupil’s family or carers to make special arrangements to supervise the pupil. This should always be part of the discussion around the pupil.

Parents or carers and key professionals must all be in agreement with the part-time timetable and must sign the Borough part-time consent form (Appendix 1).

A parent/carer must be clear that they are taking responsibility for the pupil when she/he is not in school and guarantee they will be supervised off site.

**Informing the Local Authority: Monitoring and Recording**

What Should Schools/Education Providers Do When a Part-time/Reduced Timetable is Agreed?

* Inform the Local authority using the online notification process and by the first day of the part-time timetable’s start date.
* Communicate the plan to the key lead agencies involved with the pupil and family/carers including the school’s SIP (School improvement partner) and EHC Coordinator/Virtual School Headteacher where applicable.
* Inform the Local authority and associated professionals of any updates and or when the part-time timetable ends.
* Inform the social worker and involve them in planning throughout the process.
* Instigate an interim/emergency SEND review where applicable and inform the EHC Coordinator.
* Instigate a PEP review where applicable and inform the Virtual Headteacher/School.

When a part-time/reduced timetable has been agreed for an individual pupil, the school must inform the local authority by completing the PAM form. Any proposal to use a part-time/reduced timetable arrangement must be discussed with the parent/carer and pupil before the arrangements start.

A parent/carer must consent to a part-time/reduced timetable by signing an agreement form with the school (please see example in Appendix 1).

**Role of the School**

Someone within the school should monitor and track pupils who are on part-time timetables.

It is important that this is both from a pastoral and a curriculum point of view. The school should ensure that the pupil receives enough experiences to be able to reintegrate socially and academically back into their schools.

A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil’s behaviour and must only be in place for the shortest time necessary. 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 both the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

The school must design a re-integration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others; teaches them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture; fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community and builds engagement with learning.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

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 the absence accordingly (see registration marks below).

Once tried as an intervention it will only be appropriate on rare occasions to have a further period with a part-time timetable beyond the initial period since it shows that the strategy was not working, and a different intervention should be considered.

**Registration Marks**

Where a part-time/reduced timetable has been formally agreed, the sessions the child is not expected to attend must be marked with code C for ‘other authorised circumstances’ unless arrangements for attendance at a supervised alternative provider are made. In that instance, code B can be used for the session but only if they attend the alternative provision on that day. By using code B, the school is stating that the education is supervised, and that the child is safe. Code B must NOT be used for work/online packages the child is expected to do at home without supervision. Even if the child does not attend the session they are expected to be in school, Code C must still be used for the sessions it was agreed they did not have to attend. No other code can be lawfully used.

**Flowchart for notifying the Local Authority for pupils on a part-time timetable**

**Appendix 1. (for completion by both parties)**

**Part-time Timetable Consent Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child's Name: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| UPN: |  | Ethnicity: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Date of Birth: |  | Gender: |  | Year Group: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Is the child looked after by Barking & Dagenham or any other local authority? | Yes / No |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| If Yes, which local authority?  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Is the child subject to a Child Protection Plan? | Yes / No |
|  |  |
| Does the child have an Education Health Care PlanIf yes who is the LA Caseworker: | Yes / No |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of parents/carers: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of lead person in school: |  |
|  |
|  |
| Reason for the part-time timetable/interventions tried: |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of meeting agreeing the part-time timetable: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Start date of part-time timetable: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Number of hours in education each week: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Review date of part-time timetable: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| End date of part-time timetable: |  |

**Timetable**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Objectives of the part-time timetable/interventions to support: |
|  |
| Any other comments relating to this part-time timetable: |
|  |

I understand my child has been placed on a part-time timetable for a limited period.

**I have discussed the matter fully with the school and agree, during the period of the part-time timetable to:**

* Take full responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school.
* Ensure there is supervision of schoolwork during those hours.
* Ensure there is a flow between school and home for marking and guidance.
* Take full responsibility for the health and safety on my child when they are not in school.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signature(Parent/Carer) |  | Date |  |

**During the period of the part-time timetable the school will:**

* Monitor the effectiveness of the part-time timetable.
* Hold a review on the agreed date.
* Provide work for the child to do whilst at home and mark all work complete.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signature(School) |  | Date |  |