

Guidance for schools on the use of Reduced Timetables

Revised September 2017: Portsmouth City Council

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Purpose

This guidance sets out notification and planning requirements applying to all maintained Portsmouth schools, including academies, the UTC and alternative provision settings, hereafter referred to as 'schools', in the very exceptional event of a reduced timetable being agreed for a pupil for a limited period.

Introduction

The risks for children and young people associated with reduced attendance at school for whatever reason, including a temporarily reduced timetable, are well researched. These include the risk of sexual or other exploitation, or other safeguarding risks as well as the risk of lower educational attainment. Ofsted's publication, [Pupils Missing Out on Education](#) (2013) underlines the seriousness of these risks.

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any pupil missing education. Any pupil on a reduced timetable is missing education and therefore needs to be identified and tracked. Inspection of local authority children's social care services includes scrutiny of the extent to which the authority is effectively ensuring that children in its area are not missing education. All schools in Portsmouth have a responsibility to cooperate with the City Council to ensure that the council's duties can be effectively discharged. This refreshed guidance restates expectations of schools in relation to both notification of the council and good practice in supporting children and families.

It is important to emphasise that **there is no statutory basis** upon which to establish a reduced timetable. With the agreement of parents and carers, however, **in exceptional circumstances**, a short fixed term period of part time education may in very rare circumstances be judged to be in the interests of young people who are finding full time education very challenging. This **must**, however, be for a short, agreed period that has a planned progression back to full-time within maximum of 6 weeks.

PCC remains committed to all children's right to a full-time education offer and makes clear the requirement that **a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from parent/carers** (and the Virtual School or SEN Team at the Local Authority where appropriate).

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.**

Full-time Education

All education should be suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special educational need.

The assumption is that pupils should receive full-time education consistent with their Key Stage. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils on their roll. It is illegal for schools to discriminate against pupils on the basis of their special educational needs and/or disability.

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.

When might a reduced timetable be used?

1. Part of an in school support package

The school, parent/carer and other professionals agree that a short-term (no longer than 6 weeks) reduced timetable would support a pupil who is unable to cope with full time education, to regain success. This would be a closely monitored intervention to address, manage and support the emotional needs of the young person, put in place alongside other measures to address those needs.

2. 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. Reintegration

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

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

Notification, consultation and planning

In circumstances where the school consider that it may be necessary to establish a reduced timetable for a pupil, the school must:

- Notify the Admissions, Exclusions & Reintegration Team of its intention to implement a reduced timetable for a pupil
- Convene a meeting to discuss the proposals for a reduced timetable. This **must** include the parent/carer of the pupil. This meeting must also include the LA where the pupil is a looked after child (the Virtual School) or has a statement of SEN/Education Health and Care Plan (a member of the SEN Team) and may well include professionals who form part of the team around the child

- Establish a plan (Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Learning Plan, Personal Education Plan etc.) for the reduced timetable which details:
 - the proposed timetable to get back to full-time (in the case of categories 1 & 3 this should be no longer than 6 weeks)
 - details of the review schedule
 - the supportive interventions that will accompany this reduction in time at school including the environment system changes within school and the new skills that will be taught.
 - outcome and exit strategies. How will all parties know that is successful?
 - the named person responsible for the plan within the school
 - the consideration of safeguarding measures for the duration. The school **must** carry out a risk assessment before implementation, of the child spending more time out of the school and this should be recorded formally.
 - consideration should be given in many cases to external behaviour support and/or targeted early help family support
 - consideration should be given to whether alternative provision (e.g. The Harbour School or Flying Bull Inclusion Centre) should be considered to meet need.
- Send the LA (scanned and uploaded to the correct folder on the shared secure environment (SSE)) a copy of the hours agreed and the plan upon which it was agreed

The plan and the teaching hours must be signed by the parent and without parental agreement this strategy of a reduction in hours cannot be implemented

- Consider the need to carry out an Early Help Assessment (EHA) to establish if there are wider needs and support is required from external agencies. Where this is not felt appropriate a letter from the head teacher explaining the reasons should be sent to the Deputy Director Children, Families and Education in respect of categories 1 & 3.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The school must

- Report the reduced timetable as soon as it becomes operational by sending a signed copy of the teaching hours within the morning and afternoon session (see form appendix A) and the plan upon which it was agreed. If a school is found to be operating a reduced timetable without having reported it a formal letter of concern will be sent from the Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education to the head teacher and chair of governors, seeking an assurance that reporting requirements are respected.

- Send a copy of subsequent reviews and increases of time, up to a maximum of 6 weeks
- Record the child's attendance accurately on the attendance register
 - **C Code** - 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)
 - **B Code** - to be used if the pupil is receiving off-site provision, approved by the school (this code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where the pupil is at home doing school work)
 - **D Code** - to be used where a pupil is registered at two schools. The D code only applies in Portsmouth 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. The Harbour School or Flying Bull Inclusion Centre).

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

- Monitor the overall use of this strategy within the school and report this to governors termly including the number of children and young people for whom a reduced timetable has been put in place and the outcome in each case.
- Ensure effective communication with parents/carers (and LA as necessary) with regard to progress towards full-time reintegration to school.
- Inform the LA when the pupil returns to full-time education otherwise they will continue to be logged as on a reduced timetable.

Portsmouth City Council Responsibilities

PCC will

- ensure that reduced timetables are appropriately recorded and monitored via the ONE database.
- Report the numbers of pupils on reduced timetables to
 - the Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG)
 - the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Provide a copy of plans to social care where pupil has a CP or CiN plan or is a looked after child.
- Raise with the school, where a pupil has been on a reduced timetable for longer than 6 weeks (except where this is a Y11 who has an established alternative provision plan that will yield necessary accreditation but that may be slightly below full-time).

- Refer any cases that exceed 6 weeks, and have no imminent plan for full-time reintegration, to the Deputy Director for Children, Families and Education and the independent chair of the Portsmouth Children's Safeguarding Board.

Helpful Contacts

For advice and to discuss any particular circumstances please contact:
Admissions (Exclusions and Reintegration) Team

tel. 023 92 84 1568

email. exclusions@portsmouthcc.gov.uk