



# **GUIDANCE FOR USING PART-TIME TIMETABLES**

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the legal framework in relation to the rights of all statutory school aged children to receive full time education appropriate to their age and irrespective of their needs. It is intended to assist schools in ensuring compliance with statutory guidance and to ensure that they do not inadvertently exclude a pupil illegally.
- 1.2 As well as the potential impact on educational standards a part-time timetable can present a significant safeguarding risk if not managed appropriately. Evidence shows that children and young people from vulnerable groups are more likely to be in receipt of a part time timetable than their peers and in turn are more likely to be subject of safeguarding concerns. This document sets out to ensure that the child is safe if a part-time timetable is necessary.
- 1.3 Statutory Guidance on the use of part-time timetable and exclusions is very clear:

*In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. 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 reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be 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.*

(p16 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance> )

## 2. Informal Exclusions

- 2.1 'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending pupils home 'to cool off', are not legal, regardless of whether parents or carers agree. Any exclusion of a pupil (even for short periods of time) must be formally recorded.
- 2.2 The Office of the Children's Commissioner's considered illegal exclusions in their report; 'Always Someone Else's Problem'. Which found that:

*There is a profound and troubling lack of awareness of the law on these matters, among school leaders including governors, and a school's parents and children alike. This can lead to illegal exclusions taking place by accident. Although this illegal activity may be inadvertent, it is nonetheless unacceptable. Headteachers and governing bodies have a shared statutory duty to ensure their schools act within the law at all times. (Para 13, Exclusion from maintained school, Academies and pupil referral units in England, DfE)*

## 3. Part-time Timetables

- 3.1 Guidance suggests weekly lesson times for pupils as:

Age	Hours
5–7	21
8–11	23.5
12–14	24
14–16	25

- 3.2 The application of a part-time timetable must be discussed with and agreed by parent/carers before commencing. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) or early EHC plan review is the routes to engage with parents/carers and the child. Parents who won't or don't engage appropriately, or in a reasonable period, may not be supporting their child suitably. This may need escalating as a cause for concern or even a safeguarding issue.
- 3.3 A model consent form that parents/carers must sign can be found as Appendix 1 to this Guidance. The consent form can be added to EHA, or other assessment and kept on the pupil's school file.
- 3.4 Part-time timetables must only be used in very limited circumstances for pupils not allowed or not able to attend either mainstream or special schools on a full-time basis, for example:
- 3.4.1 Where there are behaviour difficulties and the school is using a part-time timetable as an intervention to avoid exclusion, part of a pastoral support plan (PSP) or a planned reintegration package.
- 3.4.2 Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.
- 3.5 It does not refer to pupils whose curriculum has been modified but are still attending school, training, college, an alternative education provider etc, full time.
- 3.6 Key points:
- 3.6.1 A part-time timetable should be part of an outcome of a Team Around the Child (TAC) or Team Around the School (TAS) meeting and an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Safeguarding Risk assessment must be completed. However in exceptional circumstances e.g. where a part time timetable is used to ensure that a pupil is receiving appropriate support in order to prevent a permanent exclusion, then it is accepted that it is not practical to refer to TAS prior to the decision being made although an EHA must still be completed. A referral should be made as soon as possible after that to ensure that appropriate support is being provided to the pupil and their family.
- 3.6.1 The objectives of any part-time timetable should be clearly understood at the outset.
- 3.6.2 A parent/carer must consent to the application of a part-time timetable and be clear that they are taking responsibility for the pupil when s/he is not in school and guarantee they are supervised off site (see consent form).
- 3.6.3 The timetable should be for the least time possible. (Suggested maximum length of a part-time timetable is 6 weeks.)
- 3.6.4 The part-time timetable arrangements must be reviewed every fortnight to assess progress towards being able to return to school on a full time basis and to review the effectiveness of any support being provided.

3.6.5 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.

#### **4. Medical Conditions**

- 4.1 Where a pupil has an on-going diagnosed medical condition, which necessitates them missing more than 15 continuous school days (30 am/pm attendance sessions) because of the condition, consideration should be given to an EHA and/or referral to PEVP. The condition must be supported by a medical practitioner & not just on the parent's explanation.
- 4.2 Where possible and appropriate pupils should be provided with sufficient and differentiated work for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is marked and assessed with constructive feedback given to the pupil. If the education provider has a staff member with the child at the home then this would be a supervised activity and could be recorded in the attendance register as educated off site; 'B' code. If not, then the school's register should record the absence as authorised; 'C' code.

#### **5. Pupils with Education, Health & Care Plans**

- 5.1 A part-time timetable should only be used for a pupil with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) in very limited circumstances and with the agreement of the SEN Casework Team. A pupil should not be put on a part-time timetable because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination. In some cases a special educational need may also be a disability and therefore constitute a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2 A part-time timetable must only be used following an interim or annual review of a EHC plan with:
- 5.2.1 Clearly defined objectives.
  - 5.2.2 Be for a specified and limited period.
  - 5.2.3 Be kept under regular review.
  - 5.2.4 Have written parental agreement and the consent of the SEN Casework Officer.
- 5.3 An Individual Education Plan (IEP) should be agreed that clearly lays out the use of any extra provision in the statement or EHCP.
- 5.4 Where possible and appropriate pupils should be provided with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is regularly marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil.
- 5.5 Schools should ensure that the provision made in the EHC plan is used to meet the child's needs.

## **6. Children Looked After**

- 6.1 Children looked after (CLA) are amongst our most vulnerable pupils and a part-time timetable should only be used in very limited circumstances when all other interventions have been tried. The Head of Virtual School must be consulted – contact details can be found at [www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk](http://www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk).
- 6.2 A part-time timetable should only be used after reviewing the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and must:
- 6.2.1 Have clearly defined objectives.
  - 6.2.2 Be for a specified and limited period.
  - 6.2.3 Be kept under regular review.
  - 6.2.4 Not be used without written parent/carer agreement and consent of the child's Social Worker and the Virtual School of the Local Authority responsible for the child.
- 6.3 Where possible and appropriate pupils should be provided with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is regularly marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil.
- 6.4 Any CLA on a part-time table must be contacted daily by the school to ensure they are safe. This must be recorded. If the school has any concerns about the safety of a child on a part-time table they must follow their safeguarding policy and procedures and contact the relevant social worker.

## **7. Pupils subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or who are a Child in Need (CiN)**

- 7.1 Any school considering a part-time timetable for a child that is subject to a CPP or who is CiN must first consult with the child's Social Worker. Any part-time timetable must only be implemented following a Core Group or CiN Meeting.
- 7.2 A part-time timetable should:
- 7.2.1 Have clear defined objectives.
  - 7.2.2 Be for a specified and limited period of time.
  - 7.2.3 Be kept under regular review.
  - 7.2.4 Not be implemented without written parental/carer agreement and the consent of the Social Worker responsible.
- 7.3 Where possible and appropriate pupils should be provided with sufficient differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is regularly marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil.

## 8. Illegal Exclusions

- 8.1 Part-time timetables that DO NOT have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process and/or the consent of parents/carers may constitute an illegal exclusion.
- 8.2 Professionals who become aware of an illegal exclusion or a pupil on a part-time timetable and have concerns around the reasons for its use, the length the timetable is in place for and/or whether it has the consent of the child's parents/carers, should notify the Education Welfare Service.

## 9. Marking the Attendance Register

- 9.1 Schools can approve educational activities that take place away from the school providing they meet the requirements set out in regulations and guidance.
- 9.2 According to the DfE's School Attendance guidance:

*An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded (Page 8, School Attendance, DfE, Nov 13).*

- 9.3 The DfE guidance also provides specific guidance about the use of the "B" code:

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

*In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school accepts a pupil being absent from school for a part of the week or day and must record it as authorised.*

- 9.4 Therefore, in most cases it would not be appropriate to use the "B" code to record the period when a pupil on a part-time timetable is not attending school. The "C" code must be used.
- 9.5 A pupil, attending alternative provision as part of their part-time timetable, may be authorised and use the "B" code for that aspect of their timetable. However, it remains the school's responsibility to monitor attendance whilst they attend alternative provision.

## 10. Virtual/Distant Learning

10.1 Technology has helped in allowing some pupils to be taught while they remain at home due to illness, excluded or on a time limited part time timetable.

10.2 There are many companies on the market claiming their distant learning packages meet DfE guidelines.

10.3 The use of 'teaching' remotely can become questionable or a safeguarding concern for schools, plus raising other questions. For example:

10.3.1 What is the supervision expected?

10.3.2 Does supervision mean that there must be an approved adult physically with the pupil?

10.3.3 Is the pupil really logged on doing the work or is a.n.other doing the work?

10.3.4 Can supervision include a conversation link by telephone/text or must it be real time, teacher to pupil, video link?

10.3.5 How should this be recorded in the school registration process?

10.4 Statutory Guidance July 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance> has not fully addressed this or qualified the term 'supervised'. Ofsted too can offer differing interpretations.

10.5 Within the above statutory guidance, it seems the 'B' code is the one that could be used for when pupils are present at an approved off-site educational activity:

Code B: Off-site educational activity:

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

10.6 Somerset County Council has sought direction and qualification from the DfE on this matter. Until we receive clarity from the DfE, SCC suggest schools consider the above and:

10.6.1 If the pupil is not 'physically' in the school the usual '/' or '\' should not be used. Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration.



10.6.2 If school send a member of staff, or approved adult, to the home to 'teach' the pupil this would be coded with a 'B' code. The pupil's parent or relative should not be placed in this position.

10.6.3 If school have a real time video link for a class, then this might be coded as a 'B' code.

10.6.4 SCC suggests that telephone or text does not meet the term 'supervised' and should not be used.

10.6.5 Sessions not supervised should be recorded as absence using the 'C' code.

## **11. Further advice**

If you require further advice on the use of part-time and modified timetables please speak to the Education Welfare Service.

## Part-time Timetable Consent Form

Child's Name:

UPN:  Ethnicity:

Date of Birth:  Gender:  Year Group:

School:

Is the child looked after by Somerset County Council or any other local authority?

If Yes, which local authority?

Is the child subject to a Child Protection Plan?

Has the pupil had a part-time timetable before?

If Yes, when?

Name of parents/carers:

Name of lead person in school:

Name of social worker (if applicable):

Name of SEN caseworker (if applicable):

Name of Virtual School rep (if applicable):

Name of EWO (if applicable):

Name of YOT worker (if applicable):

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 school work 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Other signatures (if required):

SEN Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Virtual School Rep \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Education Welfare Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

YOT Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This form should be retained with the pupil's school records and support any EHA.**