



**Rutland**  
County Council

# Guidance for schools on the use of reduced timetables

January  
2019

# Reduced Timetables: Statutory Guidance and Local Protocols for Rutland Schools

## Purpose of the Guidance

**This guidance is intended to protect both student and school, 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).**

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any student missing education and to identify children in need of help and protection. Every school, through its safeguarding duties, has a responsibility to protect children who are absent or missing from education. Any student on a reduced timetable is deemed to be at risk of missing education.

Rutland County Council remains committed to every child's right to a full-time education offer and makes clear the requirement that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from a parent/carer (or the Virtual School for Children Looked After and/or the SEND lead Officer where appropriate). As such schools are expected to inform Rutland County Council of the use of reduced timetables within their school as outlined on Page 7.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. It is important to highlight that there is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however in 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 reduced or part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

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. This term should not be confused with 'flexi-schooling' arrangements, whereby parents who electively home educate their children enter into an agreement with a school to deliver part of the curriculum.

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## Full-time education is defined in statute as:

**Key Stage 1**  
21 hours

**Key Stage 2**  
23.5 hours

**Key Stage 3**  
24 hours

**Key Stage 4  
(Year 10)**  
24 hours

**Key Stage 4  
(Year 11)**  
25 hours

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## Safeguarding considerations

Schools have safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on roll and therefore must be aware that even with parent/carer agreement to any reduced timetable arrangement they make, they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils on roll who are off-site during school hours. 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.

## Legitimate and Lawful Reduced Timetables

Reduced timetables should only be used in very limited circumstances and for a defined period of time. For example:

- Where there are behavioural difficulties and the school is trying a part-time timetable as an intervention to avoid permanent exclusion.
- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.
- As part of a staged reintegration following an extended period of absence.
- On entry into school where a child has specific individual needs not previously identified or known and as such the child requires a phased entry to facilitate positive transition.

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 marked, assessed and that constructive feedback is given to the pupil.

Any child on a reduced timetable should have regular reviews with a plan to return to a full-time education within clear and reasonable timescales. Parents and carers should be fully involved and contributing to this process

Reduced timetables must be pre-planned and agreed by all those parties supporting the child, including the parent/carer and children should not be sent home for a cooling off period during the day when they may have periods of challenging behaviour.

Any child requiring a reduced timetable may warrant further assessment to understand needs and appropriate levels of support. This includes engaging with wider assessment processes for further information, advice and support for the child, including Early Help Assessments, educational psychology support and Inclusion referrals etc.

When the reduced timetable is introduced because of behavioural difficulty, it will only rarely be appropriate to repeat the intervention. Different interventions need to be utilised if the reduced timetable failed the first time around.

## **Illegal Exclusions**

The Office of the Children's Commissioner has investigated illegal exclusions and its report, 'Always Someone Else's Problem' 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. Head teachers and governing bodies have a shared statutory duty to ensure their schools act within the law at all times.

(p.38, Always Someone Else's Problem (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2013))

In addition, the Statutory Guidance on School Exclusion from the Department for Education makes it clear that:

'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending pupils home 'to cool off', are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be formally recorded.

(Para 13, Exclusion from maintained school, academies and pupil referral units in England (Department for Education, 2012, updated 2017))

This guidance ensures that there is a clear understanding of the law within all Rutland schools and that every child's right to a full-time education is robustly supported.

## **Pupils with a Medical Need**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide education provision to children out of school due to on-going medical needs if this is expected to be above 15 days either consecutive or cumulative. Where a pupil has an on-going medical condition, which necessitates missing more than 15 school days a result of the condition, schools are required to inform the Local Authority Inclusion Team by contacting Rutland County Council Inclusion Services at [send@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:send@rutland.gov.uk) or 01572 758496, and be supported by robust medical evidence.

## **Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)**

A reduced timetable should only be used for a pupil with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) in very limited circumstances. A pupil should not be put on a reduced 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.

Schools should ensure that the provision made in the ECHP is used to meet the child's needs.

Where a reduced timetable is being considered for a pupil with an EHCP the school must first convene an early annual review to secure the agreement of both parents/carers and the SEND Case Officer and to ensure that all elements of the provision are met through the reduced timetable arrangement. Under the SEND Code of Practice, all parties, including parents and young person, must be given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the Annual Review meeting (SEND Code of Practice, para 9.176) and updated reports must be shared with participants prior to the review.

This means that no reduced timetable can begin with immediate effect. If it is required as an emergency measure, however, the annual review must be convened within two weeks of the start date with the SEND Case Worker involved in planning and review.

## Children Looked After

Children Looked After are some of our most vulnerable pupils and therefore a reduced timetable should only be implemented in very limited circumstances when all other interventions have been tried. It must never be implemented without the written agreement of the Head of Virtual School, contactable [hbushell@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:hbushell@rutland.gov.uk) or 01572 758213.

## Children subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan

Children in Early Help or open to Social Care **may be placed at greater risk if placed on a reduced timetable**. Therefore any part-time arrangement should only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances when all other interventions have been tried. Any reduced timetable should only be implemented following a multi-agency review meeting.

### In summary the key points for schools to consider are as follows:

- A reduced timetable should be a response to an assessment of need which has identified that use is appropriate in the circumstances.
- When a child is Looked After or subject to Early Help or a Social Care plan, a reduced timetable should only be used in the most exceptional circumstances and should be done in consultation with other professionals and the family.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken to evaluate the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the pupil.
- A reduced timetable plan should be completed, agreed with the parents and the pupil demonstrating a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of six weeks. The school must ensure the pupil has active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention.
- Parent/carer and child (where appropriate) must consent to a reduced timetable.
- The reduced timetable should be for a limited period. The suggested maximum length of a reduced timetable is six weeks.
- Any reduced timetable arrangements should be regularly reviewed.
- The objectives of any part-time timetable should be clearly understood by all parties.
- Parent/carers must indicate how they will guarantee the pupil's safety off site and how school work will be supervised.
- Provided the pupil is medically fit, the combination of work completed at home and in school must constitute full-time education.
- Must ensure that the impact of a reduced timetable on travelling and transport arrangements or the pupil's access to Free School Meals does not discriminate against the pupil or impede their access to education.

## Marking the attendance register

Schools can approve educational activities that take place away from the school providing they meet the requirements set out in regulations and guidance.

According to the Department for Education'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.

(p.8, Advice on School Attendance (Department for Education, 2013))

The same DfE guidance also provides specific guidance about the use of the B code. It states:

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.

(p.8, Advice on School Attendance (Department for Education))

In respect of part-time timetables, it states:

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.

(p.15, Advice on School Attendance (Department for Education))

### See Appendix B for use of Attendance Codes

Where a pupil is attending alternative provision as part of their part-time timetable it may be appropriate to 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.

## Data Exchange and Reporting

Rutland County Council has a legal duty to ensure that Rutland children have access to efficient full-time education, appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that he or she may have. Rutland County Council therefore has an important role to play in monitoring this provision and particularly where any young person is not receiving their full legal entitlement.

Establishing the identities of children who are not in receipt of their full-time entitlement is a priority for all concerned and is an important step in ensuring that they are kept safe from harm.

## Rutland Schools Responsibilities

All Rutland schools and academies must therefore ensure that robust processes and procedures are in place where a child is not in receipt of their full legal entitlement and must inform Rutland County Council of the name of the child together with details of the provision, for monitoring and tracking purposes, this includes;

- A full record of all children placed on a reduced timetable during the academic year which is recorded within the reduced timetable monitoring form (Appendix B) and returned termly to Rutland County Council Inclusion Service via Any Comms: SEND.
- Rutland County Council Inclusion Service are alerted and sent, via Any Comms: SEND, a copy of reduced timetables, including plans for reintegration, for all children who are on a reduced timetable for longer than six weeks.
- Where a reduced timetable is used for a child with a child protection plan Rutland County Council Children's Service is informed and a copy of the reduced timetable is sent securely to the relevant social worker.
- Written agreement is sought from the Head of Virtual School for a Child Looked After where a reduced timetable is being considered by contacting: [hbushell@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:hbushell@rutland.gov.uk) or 01572 758213.

## Rutland County Council Responsibilities

Rutland County Council will:

- Collate the reduced timetable monitoring forms on a termly basis for reporting use by schools in Rutland.
- Report the known numbers of students on reduced timetables to the Rutland Education Performance Board.
- Raise with the Governing Body where a pupil has been on a reduced timetable for longer than six 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 25 hours) or where a pupil is identified as being on a reduced timetable and has not been reported to Rutland County Council.
- Refer any incidences of reduced timetables exceeding six weeks, with no imminent plan for full-time reintegration to the Education Performance Board.

**This information must be recorded and provided to Rutland County Council Inclusion Service (using Any Comms), which is a secure data exchange facility. In accordance with Data Protection Legislation, schools must ensure that consent is sought from parents/carers prior to processing this information.**

## Further advice

For further advice, and to discuss any particular circumstances or if the student is at imminent risk of permanent exclusion, you can contact the Inclusion Service at [send@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:send@rutland.gov.uk) or 01572 758496.

# Appendix A

## Reduced Timetable - Legal Requirement and Rutland Protocol Checklist

- Assessment has been undertaken and confirms the need for a reduced timetable to secure improved outcomes.
- A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure safety whilst off-site.
- The objectives of the reduced timetable and the arrangements associated with it have been recorded within the Plan.
- The parent (or person with parental responsibility) has consented in writing. If the pupil is Looked After, the Virtual School has been involved in creating the Plan.
- If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the reduced timetable plan has been agreed through an early Annual Review.
- If the pupil is accessing Early Help or has a Social Care plan, a multi-agency meeting of professionals involved has been convened to prepare the Plan.
- Arrangements have been made to review the reduced timetable / Plan within its maximum of six weeks.
- The Plan ensures that the pupil has sufficient (amounting to full-time education) and appropriately differentiated work to complete for the hours out of school. Arrangements for marking, assessment and feedback are in place.
- Rutland County Council Inclusion Service are alerted and sent, via Any Comms: SEND, a copy of reduced timetables, including plans for reintegration, for all children who are on a reduced timetable for longer than six weeks.
- The reduced timetable monitoring form is kept up to date and submitted termly to Rutland County Council Inclusion Service via Any Comms: SEND.



# Appendix B

## **Rutland County Council Reduced Timetable Monitoring Form**

Please record the details of all pupils who have been subject to a reduced timetable during the academic year. Submissions are to be made at the end of each term and sent securely to Rutland County Council Inclusion Service via Any Comms: SEND.

For any pupil where a reduced timetable exceeds six weeks notification should be sent to Rutland County Council Inclusion Service via Any Comms: SEND and along with a copy of the reduced timetable and appropriate plans for reintegration.

## Reduced Timetable Monitoring Form

**School:**

Pupil Name	Year Group	Reason for Reduced Timetable	Hours in School	Hours in Alternative Provision	Start Date	Planned End Date	Actual End Date

# Appendix C

Record the child's attendance accurately on the attendance register:

- **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 part-time 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.



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