

Bury Council

Guidance on Part-time
Timetables
& Alternative Provision

September 2024
School Attendance,
Exclusions & Community
Learning Team

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes (*see chapter 8 of the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 19th August 2024*).

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.
- It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period

- Children with Special Educational Needs (without an EHCP) / Children with high anxiety for whom full time attendance at school needs to be carefully managed

Social Care

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

Schools should be mindful of the potential safeguarding implications of part-time timetables for children who are on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans, particularly where there are concerns about abuse or neglect. Education is a protective factor for these children and increasing time out of school can put them at increased risk of harm or exploitation. Part-time timetables must always be reviewed in every Core group/CIN meeting and used for as limited a time as possible. The plans to safeguard the child when they are not in school must be clear to all professionals (see section on Risk Assessments).

Looked-after children must not be placed on a part-time timetable without prior discussion with the Virtual School which oversees the child's education. A PEP should be held to discuss the proposed timetable and how it will be increased back to a full-time education offer as quickly as possible.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

A reduced timetable for a child with an EHC Plan should only be implemented in very limited circumstances and it should not be because of their disability as this is discriminatory under the Disability Discrimination Act 2001.

Where pupils have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), the Local Authority **MUST** be notified of any intention for this arrangement and its purpose. The Local Authority must agree, as should the parent/carers and/or the young person, (where appropriate).

Upon agreement that a part-time timetable be required, this should be used for as limited a time as possible and reviewed regularly, in accordance with the parent/carer, young person and the local authority.

If the LA thinks it would be inappropriate for a child or young person with an EHC plan to receive some part of their special educational provision in school/college, then they can receive that particular special education provision elsewhere. This means the child or young person would receive part of their education at school/college and part of it as 'education otherwise' (also known as 'EOTAS'). These arrangements should be described in section F of their EHC Plan, and the school/college named in section I. There is no need for the school to consent to this part-time attendance arrangement because it is special educational provision that the child or young person requires,

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 (normally using code C2).

Good Practice

Should a part-time timetable extend beyond six weeks, school should consider the following: completion of a Story So Far, convening a multi agency meeting (TAF), consultation with the Inclusion Panel and consultation with LA SEN Team, where appropriate, to consider alternative approaches.

The threat of exclusion must not be used to influence parents/carers to agree to a reduced timetable.

It is not appropriate to use reduced timetables to address concerns regarding a pupil's behaviour. The school should implement their behaviour policy in ensuring measures and interventions are in place to improve pupil behaviour. Support should be provided to all pupils to help them meet behaviour standards, making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability as required.

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 (normally using code C2).

Where a pupil is attending an off-site activity/alternative provision that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school they should be recorded as attendance code 'B'. The responsibility for the alternative provision arrangement rests with the school who should ensure it has completed its own due diligence and quality assurance checks.

This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work or engaging in remote or online learning. The Department for Education have stressed that C2 cannot be used for any online platforms.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Where a pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by the **local authority** the pupil should be recorded as attendance code 'K'. Schools must also record the nature of the provision e.g. attending courses at college.

Whether the alternative provision has been arranged by the school or the local authority schools should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Safeguarding

When a pupil is not in school, their vulnerability is increased. When deciding whether a part time timetable is appropriate, consideration must always firstly be given to the welfare and safety of the pupil.

- When a pupil is not expected to be in attendance at school, in line with the part-time timetable, school should be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in

place for the care and welfare of the child during the time they would otherwise be in school.

- Where a pupil is accessing an Alternative Education Provider the school should confirm robust arrangements are in place with providers to ensure the effective and timely sharing of attendance information in order to fulfil legal and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Schools must ensure that when a pupil is not expected to attend, there is a written agreement with parents or alternative education providers about who is carrying out the duty of safeguarding for each session.
- Following the agreement from all parties to implement a part time timetable a risk assessment should be completed by school.
- The risk assessment must consider the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and whether a part time timetable would increase their vulnerability and place them more at risk of potential harm. School should consider:
 - If parents/carer will be home during sessions of expected nonattendance
 - Increased risk in engaging in criminal activity or becoming victim to criminal exploitation
 - Drug taking or substance misuse
 - Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Hunger (particularly if the child is eligible for free school meals)
 - A deterioration in mental health
 - Gang involvement
 - Witnessing or being involved in violence, including exposure to domestic abuse
 - Radicalisation
 - Increased opportunity for online activity and exposure to harm

Recording and Monitoring Part Time Timetables

Schools must notify the Local Authority of any pupil they place on a reduced timetable.

To notify the School Attendance, Exclusion and Community Learning Team of a pupil on a part-time timetable schools are requested to complete a half termly data return which can be located via the Headteachers Hub.

Schools should submit the data return via email to schoolattendanceteam@bury.gov.uk at the end of every half term reporting and updating on the previous half term's data.

A Reception pupil on a part-time timetable who is below statutory school age should be included in a school's data return if the child's offer is different from their peers and is in response to meeting an individual need.

Schools designated School Attendance and Exclusion Officer will hold a record of all pupils in school that are accessing a part-time timetable and will work closely with the School Attendance Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to assess any potential / additional safeguarding vulnerabilities. Pupils will be reviewed routinely with school via the Targeted Support Meetings.

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans will be shared with the EHC Team and this information will be updated on their records.

Summary

- Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all statutory school aged children.
- In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interest, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs.
- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.

- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.
- A risk assessment must be completed by school for each pupil.
- Schools must ensure that when a pupil is not expected to attend, there is a written agreement with parents or alternative education providers about who is carrying out the duty of safeguarding for each session.
- Schools must report all part time timetables via a half termly data return to schoolattendanceteam@bury.gov.uk.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

It is important that schools and the local authority take due regard to their statutory duties and refer to appropriate Government guidance, depending on the needs of the pupil. The following should be considered prior to agreeing a part-time timetable:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DFE August 2024)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, Sept 2023)

Education Act 1996 – section 437 – entitlement to full-time education

Education Act 2002 – section 157, 175 – safeguarding duties

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions, statutory guidance 2014

Equality Act 2010

Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for local authorities September 2016

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

