

Reviewed: July 2025

Reduced Timetable Policy

1. Introduction

This policy explains how we and why implement the appropriate and agreed use of reduced timetables (sometimes referred to as 'part-time' timetables), within the current legal and safeguarding framework for learners deemed medically fit to attend school. Further to the report, learners missing out on education, published by Ofsted in September 2018, the DfE now issues guidance on the use of reduced timetables within schools.

2. Guidance

The guidance below is intended to protect both the learner and Northumberland PRU, where a reduced timetable is being considered for a time-limited period. There is guidance for parents/carers available: School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. The named officer for Children Missing out on Education in Northumberland is Jill Atkinson.

3. Definition of full-time education

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable. The assumption is that learners should receive full time education consistent with their Key Stage and/or DfE guidance to local authorities when placing learners in alternative provision, although there is no statutory definition of full time.

"There is no legal definition of full-time education contained in the various Education Acts in relation to either maintained or independent schools. In providing full-time education to learners, maintained schools should consider DfES Circular 7/90 and Guidance 00432/2003 as to the number of hours recommended for learners at each key stage. Neither publication imposes a statutory requirement on schools, they provide guidance only. Circular 7/90 establishes a general guide to good practice on lesson times." (House of Commons Hansard written answers Feb 2007)

Circular 7/90 (DES, 1990) states that, as recommended:

Governing bodies of all maintained schools should take as a general guide to good practice:

- Children aged 5 to 7 (Reception and KS1) - 21 hours;
- Children aged 8 to 11 (KS2) - 23.5 hours;
- Children aged 12 to 15 (KS3 & Y10) - 24 hours;
- Children aged 15 to 16 (Y11) – 25 hours.

Registering as an Independent School (DfE, August 2019) DfE states: *Generally, we consider any institution that is operating during the day, for more than 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education. This is because the education being provided is taking up the substantial part of the week in which it can be reasonably expected a child can be educated, and therefore indicates that the education provided is the main source of education for that child.*"

4. Implementation

4.1 Why do we use a reduced timetable?

In some circumstances for some learners, we may need to implement a reduced timetable in order to support a learner who cannot attend school full-time for a short, agreed period of time in order to best meet the needs of the learner at that time. The decision must always be made in the best interests of the learner. It is better to have a learner accessing a reduced timetable and experiencing success including building trusting, positive relationships with staff rather than attending full time and having negative experiences e.g. repeated suspension.

Northumberland PRU will endeavour to ensure that our learners receive a full educational entitlement wherever possible and achieve good outcomes so as the learner's ability to cope improves, unmet needs are addressed and the offer is adapted, the learner would be re-integrated into full-time education.

4.2 When might we use a reduced timetable?

Every case is unique but examples of why we would consider a reduced timetable include:

- as part of a planned induction into Northumberland PRU
- following an extended period out of school following exclusion, non-attendance, school refusal;
- following an extended absence due to ill health or other medical reasons;
- if medical opinion about the learner's health (physical and/or mental) means that full-time education would not be in their best interest;
- if a learner is repeatedly assaulting staff and causing injury;
- if data suggests that the learner has significant behavioural problems during a particular part of the day e.g. mornings or afternoons, or on a particular day of the week;
- if a learner is in crisis, and where it may be in the child's interest to suspend academic challenge and to revert to a more nurture/relational/sensory approach in order to meet their SEMH needs;
- as a temporary fixed-term, closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behaviour or social/emotional/mental health needs, whilst alternative arrangements are being made to meet the individual needs or to coordinate with therapeutic intervention or other services.

4.3 How do we operate a reduced timetable?

In circumstances where we consider it is necessary to establish a reduced timetable for a learner, we will:

- Attempt to convene a meeting to discuss the proposals for a reduced timetable with parents/carers and with allocated social workers;
- Endeavour to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding and care of the learner during the period when they would otherwise have been expected to be in Northumberland PRU;
- Secure a written agreement from the parents/carers about who is responsible for the welfare of the learner for the sessions in question and update the learner risk assessment to address any actual or potential safeguarding, welfare, offending or harmful behaviour concerns that may result from a change in the pattern of attendance;
- Notify the Local Authority regarding any reduced timetable for a learner;
- Act to ensure that the impact of a reduced timetable on travelling and transport arrangements does not discriminate against the learner or impede their access to education;
- Ensure that arrangements for a reduced timetable do not discriminate against a learner's access to free school meals;
- Ensure that arrangements for education set out in the plan are inclusive and that the learner is able to participate in the universal offer during the re-integration;
- Agree with the learner and parents/carers a route back to a full educational entitlement by clearly defining objectives, milestones and support for the duration of the plan;
- Set and provide work for learners to do at home if appropriate, for when they are not receiving tuition including where possible supported remote learning through Google Classroom; completed work must be returned to school so that marking and feedback can be provided by staff;
- Record the learner's attendance, using the appropriate registration code, in order that both the school and the LA can monitor when the learner began and ended their reduced timetable;
- Establish robust arrangements for monitoring and regular review of the plan;
- Ensure effective communication with parents/carers and key professionals with regard to progress towards the learner's full re-integration;
- Ensure welfare checks are carried out by relevant staff as often as is deemed necessary by the risk assessment;
- Record the revised hours on Northumberland PRU's MIS/cpoms when appropriate.

5 Reduced timetables for children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE, 2013) states:

Where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child because of reasons relating to their physical or mental health, LAs should provide part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests. Full and part-time education should still aim to achieve good academic attainment particularly in English, Maths and Science. In these circumstances, the number of hours in the reduced timetable will be agreed with medical professionals and reviewed in line with their recommendations.

6. Monitoring

The implementation of a reduced timetable must be discussed and agreed in principle by the Headteacher first, who will then inform the local authority. Reduced timetables are reviewed weekly and changes reported to the Access & Inclusion Team
Termly reports are provided to the CEO and LGB on reduced timetabled learners.

Policy to be reviewed annually.

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