

Reduced Timetable Policy

September 2024

Children & Adults' Directorate
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
ME4 4TR



Reduced Timetable Policy

Guidance on the limited use of reduced timetables in exceptional circumstances September 2024

This guidance is relevant to all schools, including academies and independent, special, pupil referral units and alternative provision settings, hereafter referred to as schools. Reduced timetables are sometimes referred to as “part-time timetable” or “reduced educational provision”. The term reduced timetable is used in this guidance.

Flexi schooling, whereby education provision is split between home and school in a planned and effective arrangement by request of the parent / carer and with the agreement of the headteacher, is considered different to a reduced timetable and not part of this guidance. Refer to Elective Home Education policy for further clarity.

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Policy

1. The law and reduced timetables

- 1.1. The law states that all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have; see 5.1, 5.5 and 5.6.
- 1.2. Department for education guidance, see 5.2, allows for a pupil with a medical, physical or mental health condition, that prevents them from attending full-time education, to be eligible for a temporary reduced timetable to meet their individual needs whilst progressing towards a full-time attendance.
- 1.3. Consequently, a reduced timetable is used in very exceptional circumstances and where it is in the pupil's best interests and supporting their return to statutory full-time attendance. As such, the reduced timetable must be kept under constant review.
- 1.4. Absence from either the morning or afternoon session in a school day must be recorded as authorised by the school using the appropriate codes. See annex 1 for details of the codes required when recording absence for a pupil with a reduced timetable.
- 1.5. A reduced timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.
- 1.6. Schools are required to hold data on authorised reduced timetables and report this data to their local authority regularly, and record absence from school using the appropriate DfE attendance code.

2. Local authority statutory duties and guidance

- 2.1. Medway Council has a duty to ensure that all children and young people access a full-time education suitable to their age. This is a basic right of the child and includes any necessary, reasonable adjustments and support for any special educational needs so that the pupil can access their right to a fulfilling and full-time education.
- 2.2. Medway Council regards the use of reduced timetables as a last resort in improving the access to education of a pupil with a medical, physical or mental health condition. It guides schools to only consider reduced timetables in exceptional circumstances and as part of wider support first approaches. In line with 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', reduced timetables must not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.
- 2.3. Local authorities must maintain a central database of all pupils not accessing full-time education, including pupils on reduced timetables.
- 2.4. Medway Council will:
 - 2.4.1. monitor the use of reduced timetables, ensuring statutory compliance is in line with 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'
 - 2.4.2. share intelligence across teams within the Education and SEND directorate
 - 2.4.3. monitor the use of reduced timetables which extend beyond 6 weeks
 - 2.4.4. respond to parent / carer concerns through liaison with the school

3. Safeguarding considerations

- 3.1. Schools continue to have safeguarding responsibility for all pupils. Pupils who fit the criteria for a reduced timetable, even when there is parental / carer responsibility for consent, are still the safeguarding responsibility of the school, whether the pupil is on or off-site.
- 3.2. Risk assessments that determine significant risk to the pupil off site, negate any possible support that a reduced timetable could offer. Reduced timetables cannot be considered as part of a supportive plan in those vulnerable circumstances.
- 3.3. Even greater care should be taken to consider the benefit of reduced timetables with pupils who are already vulnerable. The assigned professional must inform other services involved to inform their risk assessment in all situations where a vulnerable pupil is being considered for a reduced timetable:
 - 3.3.1. Children in Care (CiC) must be discussed in consultation with the virtual school headteacher and social worker to gain joint agreement and support.
 - 3.3.2. Pupils who are supported with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), must be discussed in consultation with the local authority SEND officer.
 - 3.3.3. Pupils who are subject to a child protection plan or where they are considered, child in need or the family is being supported by an Early Help worker, then the school must consult with the child's social worker or Family Support worker. In addition, reduced timetables can only be implemented following a core group meeting or multi-agency meeting that has been convened prior to implementation.
- 3.4. Annex 2 contains further information on completing a risk management plan.

4. Implementing a Reduced Timetable

- 4.1. If a school implements a reduced timetable, then the following aspects are good practice and should form part of the understanding of, and documents shared with all stakeholders:
 - 4.1.1. an assigned professional to monitor and lead on the plan and be the single point of contact between home, school and agencies. This person will either be the headteacher or their representative.
 - 4.1.2. written and signed agreement of both the school and the parent / carer the pupil normally lives with. Without an agreement, the school is suspending the pupil and must follow separate suspension protocols.
 - 4.1.3. an agreement which includes:
 - 4.1.3.1. a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan, providing details on all supportive measures to enable the pupil back into full-time education. This may be in the form of a pastoral support plan, individual learning plan, personal education plan, or an education, health, care plan.
 - 4.1.3.2. regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents / carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
 - 4.1.3.3. 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. A reduced timetable should not exceed 6 weeks and build up over that period to the full-time expectation. 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 reduced timetable for a prolonged period.
 - 4.1.3.4. details of the hours, dates and times the pupil will be attending school
 - 4.1.3.5. work and support the school will be providing whilst the pupil is educated away from school
 - 4.1.4. written assessments of risk with measures to minimise risk and ensure safety, including informing virtual school, social worker and SEND officers as required. See annex 2 for an exemplar of headings, requirements and proforma.
 - 4.1.5. signed agreement should the pupil return to full time education before the plan ends.
 - 4.1.6. commitment to a scheduled reintegration meeting where further support may be necessary once the pupil is full-time.
 - 4.1.7. free school meal daily entitlement must be sustained.
- 4.2. **Schools must:**
 - 4.2.1. **report** the reduced timetable information to the local authority by returning the fully completed Reduced Timetable School Parent / Carer Agreement to the local authority. This includes for pupils who are of non-compulsory school age. A copy of the Agreement is in Annex 4 and available from reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk
 - 4.2.2. **evaluate** the use of reduced timetables upon pupil academic progress and ensuring quality assurance of provision.
 - 4.2.3. **demonstrate effective communication** with parents/carers and local authorities with regards to progress towards the pupil receiving their statutory entitlement to full-time education and the school delivering their statutory duty.

5. Key documents

- 5.1. [Education and Skills Act 2008](#), Section 4, [subsection 436A Education Act 2006](#)
- 5.2. Department for Education: [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#) (Dec 2023)
- 5.3. Department for Education: [Children Missing Education](#) (Aug 2024)
- 5.4. Department for Education: [Keeping children safe in education](#) (Sept 2024)
- 5.5. Department for Education: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (Aug 2024)
- 5.6. Department for Education: [School Admissions Code](#) (Sept 2021) section 2.17

6. Complaints procedure

- 6.1 Resolution regarding complaints about the Reduced Timetable Policy should be made to the Reduced Timetable Lead Officer in the first instance:

Reduced Timetable Lead Officer
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Chatham
ME4 4TR

e-mail: reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk;

- 6.2 If the complaint relates to the actions of the Lead Officer, contact:

Lead Professional: Quality & Inclusion
School Effectiveness
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Chatham
ME4 4TR

Review Date: September 2025

Annex 1 - Recording absence for pupils with a reduced timetable

The Local Government Ombudsman established in its report, *out of school...out of mind* (LGO. 2011) that the number of hours of teaching per week considered to represent full-time education is as follows and can be used as a guide when preparing a pupil for full-time attendance:

Reception & Key Stage 1	21 hours
Key Stage 2	23.5 hours
Key Stage 3	24 hours
Key Stage 4	25 hours

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 X or C2).

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(7) or (8) for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time.

Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.

Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Under compulsory school age

In cases where a parent / carer wishes their child to begin school on a part-time basis in line with the school admissions code, schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence for sessions the pupil is not expected to attend. This must be agreed between the school and the parent / carer they normally live with and must end at the point at which the pupil reaches compulsory school age. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed by the school and the parent / carer with whom the pupil normally lives with.

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 65 - 70.

Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(6) to temporarily reduce the timetable of a pupil of compulsory school age to part-time, if the school and a parent / carer who the pupil normally

lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school.

Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because they are subject to a part-time timetable in line with an agreement between the school and a parent / carer the pupil normally lives with that the pupil should temporarily be educated part-time.

Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education, but only part-time at the school in question (e.g. dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision or flexi schooling) this code must not be used and the appropriate code for why the pupil is not in school for that session should be used.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

[\(DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance\)](#)

Annex 2 – Essential aspects to be included on a risk management plan

Reduced timetable - individual risk management plan

The risk assessment must be completed by the assigned professional who will be overseeing the pupil's reduced hours provision **before** any agreement is made with parents / carers; this must be recorded on the reduced timetable agreement form with the parent/carers signature.

In line with the school's safeguarding responsibilities, it is important that the school carries out its own risk assessment to ascertain that it is safe for the child to not be in school full-time. It is recommended that a visit to the pupil's home is made and clear information obtained about who is responsible for the child when they are not attending a school session. This must be in partnership with the identified agency representative in 3.3.

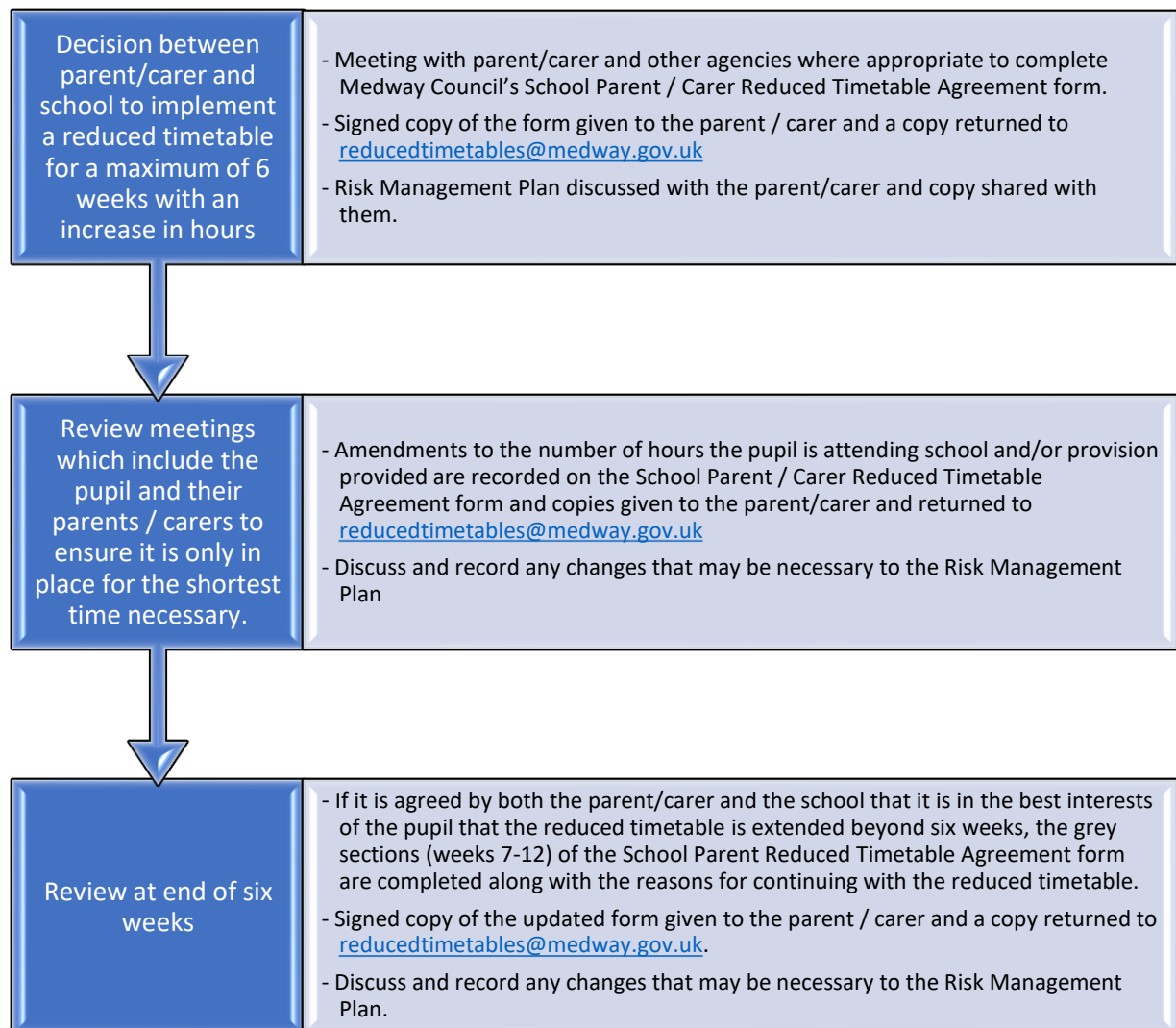
Additionally, schools need to be mindful to the risks associated with the logistics of new transport arrangements for the child who may be accessing school at different times, chaperoned by different members of the family or other parties. Furthermore, schools will need to be clear on collection and arrival arrangements. This detail must be clearly written into the risk assessment below.

Risk assessments must include as a minimum:

- pupil's name and DOB
- school
- date of first risk assessment and subsequent risk assessment reviews
- risk factors presented to the child from others, to themselves and that they pose to others
- the level of risk e.g. low, medium, high / 0-5 rating for each risk
- the preventative strategies to manage the risks
- who will be responsible for monitoring the plan, how this will be done and how frequently and any actions taken if required
- list of adults (and other agencies) who are necessary for the risk plan to be effective and their role in ensuring this.

A copy of the Risk Management Plan is available from reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk

Annex 3 – Process for reporting a reduced timetable to Medway Council



In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a reduced timetable for a prolonged period. In this instance, a new Reduced Timetable School and Parent/Carer Agreement will need to be completed after each 12 week period, with the parent / carer, and a copy returned to reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk