Reduced Timetables Policy for Schools and Local Governing Committees

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1. Introduction

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils. On rare occasions it may be in the best interests of a child to offer a reduced timetable for a short period of time to enable them to return to full time education confidently following a period of difficulty. This guidance sets out Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust's position on the use of reduced timetables.

For the purposes of this guidance, a timetable is considered to be reduced when it consists of something less than that which is provided to the majority of the pupils in that setting. It is important to highlight that there is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in ***exceptional circumstances*****,** schools may decide to implement one, for a time-limited period, to meet a pupil's individual needs. A reduced timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, schools must never discriminate against pupils on the basis of their special educational need and/or disability, including those with social emotional and mental health difficulties. Not providing full time education is likely to amount to discrimination if the reason for it is a child's SEND.

Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust is committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer and makes clear the requirement that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from parent/carer (or the Virtual school for looked after and previously looked after children and/or the EHCP Co-ordinator at the Local Authority where appropriate).

This guidance is not intended to be applied to those pupils where a flexible learning programme has been put in place (see Flexi Schooling, section 3). Provided that the school has a mechanism in place for ensuring that the pupil is attending the alternative provision and the pupil's total educational programme is full-time, such an arrangement would *not* be considered as a reduced timetable.

2. Legislative Context

All children of statutory school-age have the right to a suitable, full-time education. While 'full-time' is not defined in law, the LGSCO (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman) provides the following definition:[1]:

- Reception and Years 1 to 2 (children aged 5 to 7): 21 hours
- Years 3 to 6 (children aged 7 to 11): 23.5 hours
- Years 7 to 10 (children aged 11 to 15): 24 hours
- Year 11 (children aged 15 to 16): 25 hours

[1] **'Out of school … out of mind?', LGO (Updated January 2016)**

Early Years Foundation Stage children who are aged four by 1 September but who may not have reached compulsory school age also have the right to a full time place if their parents would like them to have one.

Note that the hours above relate to direct pupil contact time. The DfE expectation is that the full school week should be 32.5 hours, which will include lunchtime and breaktime. The reduced timetable should be clear about actual times that the pupil will be present in school which may or may not include break or lunchtime depending on the circumstances.

3. When might a reintegration plan and reduced timetable be appropriate?

In general, schools should not place pupils on a reduced timetable; however, **in exceptional circumstances,** there may situations when this may be appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil to support reintegration to a full time timetable. In any circumstances, this intervention should only be used a part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it is likely that a pupil being considered for a reduced timetable would fall within one of these categories:

a) Part of an in-school support package

School, parent/carer and other professionals agree that a short-term **(no longer than 6 weeks)** reduced timetable would support a student who has become disaffected, to regain success. This would be a closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behavioural, emotional or social needs.

b) Medical reasons

A student has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be part of a "medical plan" agreed between the school and health professionals. Statutory guidance '*Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*' states councils should provide suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) as soon as it is clear the child will be away from school for 15 days or more. The Trust guidance on medical needs should be adhered to in these circumstances. See Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust Medical Needs Policy here: Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org)

c) Reintegration or Transition

As part of a planned transition or reintegrate on into school (no longer than 6 weeks) following an extended period out of school e.g. following an exclusion, nonattendance, school refusal.

4. Safeguarding Considerations

Section 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2007 places a duty on Local Authorities, Trusts and schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Schools must consider safeguarding issues and the impact this might have on a child when considering a reduced timetable. 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.

It is clear that where a child is not in school, their vulnerability is likely to be increased. When deciding whether a reduced educational provision is appropriate, consideration must always be given to the welfare and safety of the child/young person. This must be part of the risk assessment process. 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.

As this type of intervention is likely to have a significant impact on the family, it should only be chosen, if at all, after all other strategies have been implemented, reviewed and exhausted and the guidance provided in this document is adhered to.

When a child is Looked After or subject to Early Help or social care plan or involved with the Youth Offending Team, a reduced timetable should be agreed and reviewed (every 2 weeks) with the parent/carers and the other professional(s) working with the child.

5. Best Practice Guidance for Reduced Timetables

When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, the school should:

5.1 Be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clearly evidenced and written rationale for considering a reduced timetable as a suitable intervention to supporting the needs of the pupil and the maintenance of the education placement. It is recommended that a detailed assessment through a Family Support Process should be in place to establish if there are wider needs and identify what support is required from external agencies.

5.2 Not pursue a reduced timetable without parental permission. This would amount to an unofficial exclusion, which is unlawful, as the

parent has not requested leave for their child and/or the school would be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum.

5.3 Have signed parental permission (from those that have day to day care), evidenced on the pupil file, prior to the commencement of a time-limited reduced timetable. If the parent/carer does not agree, the reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances the school will have to consider alternative interventions.

5.4 Ensure that multi-agency review meetings are held before reduced timetables are implemented for Children Looked After, children subject to an Early Help support or open to social care. If the child is on a Child Protection Plan (section 47) or Child in Need Plan (section 17), the child's social worker must have given written agreement.

5.5 Ensure that where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the EHCP Case Officer is informed to ensure the EHCP is reviewed and amended where appropriate. An early review should be convened to make the proposal known. The Local Authority must agree to the reduced timetable intervention and a reduced timetable must not interfere with additional support given to a pupil due to his/her educational needs. It is essential that short term assess, plan, do, review cycles are carried out, in partnership with parents/carers and the pupil.

5.6 Undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the pupil. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered. Risk assessments should follow the five steps identified by the Health and Safety Executive:

a. Step 1: Identify possible hazards
b. Step 2: Decide who may be harmed and how
c. Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution
d. Step 4: Record your findings and implement them
e. Step 5: Regularly review your assessment and update if necessary

The risk assessment should include the safety and wellbeing of the pupil as well as the risk of the pupil being exposed to or engaging in criminal activity, substance misuse or being at risk of exploitation or radicalisation whilst not in receipt of education during the school day. This risk assessment should be signed and dated by all parties (school, parent/carer, social worker where applicable) and regularly reviewed. A signed copy of the risk assessment should be retained on the pupil's file.

5.7 Complete a detailed reintegration plan, agreed with the parents/carers (and family support worker/social worker where applicable) and the pupil. Please see Appendix 1 for a template plan. The plan should demonstrate a clear path of planned reintegration from part-time to full-time provision over a maximum of a six-week period. The school must ensure the pupil and their parent/carers are actively involved in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention. The plan for the reduced timetable should detail:

- The proposed timetable to get back to full-time (within 6 weeks).
- How the assessed risk and safeguarding measures will be managed.
- Details of the review schedule.
- The supportive interventions that will accompany this reduction in time at school.
- How the pupil will be able to participate in the universal offer during the reintegration.
- Outcome and exit strategies. How will all parties know that it is successful?
- The named person responsible for the plan within the school.
- Consideration should be given to whether alternative provision should be considered to meet need.
- How parents/carers will be supported during the time when their child is not in school considering the pressures this may place on home life.

5.8 Provide sufficient and appropriately differentiated work for any time the pupil is not attending school. Provided the pupil is medically fit, the combination of work completed at home and in school must constitute full time education. The school should consider how work for when the pupil is not in school will be provided, sent home and marked and how constructive feedback will be given. Also consider how the pupil will be included in school life, e.g. how they will continue to have contact with the rest of their class and key staff.

5.9 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.

5.10 All reduced timetables must be within a time frame of one to six-weeks. If the pupil is still on a reduced timetable as the time limit approaches, a multi professional review should be held to organise full time education. Any extension to the reduced timetable should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances, with parental agreement, and the plan revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate. 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 was unsuccessful the first time.

5.11 Ensure that the Attendance Lead at the school keeps a central record of all pupils on a reduced timetable and has robust mechanisms in place for ensuring the regular review of these arrangements. The Local Governing Committee should be informed of any reduced timetables and make arrangements for monitoring the use of these.

6. Recording of Reintegration Plans and Reduced Timetables

DfE guidance 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.*[2]

In line with this guidance, schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

This mark should reflect the true whereabouts of all pupils at the time the register was taken. Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

C Code: To be used when a pupil has a reduced educational provision that includes sessions which have been mutually agreed not to involve attendance at any other institution or supervised activity. The sessions agreed not to involve attendance should be recorded as authorised absence. The school should be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the care and welfare of the pupil during the time when they would otherwise be at school. This is particularly important for pupils in the Primary phase.

B Code: To be used if the pupil is receiving off-site provision, approved by the school, including any work experience forming part of the aforementioned alternative provision. A pupil marked 'B' should be present at another institution or appropriately supervised activity agreed by the school. The school should establish robust arrangements with other providers to promote the effective and timely sharing of individual pupil attendance information, to ensure they fulfil their legal and safeguarding responsibilities and apply the correct registration codes.

A reduced timetable means that, by agreement with the pupil, parent/carer and school, the number of hours spent in education are reduced for a **time limited period**. Once a reintegration plan with a time limited reduced timetable has been agreed, where no alternative provision is being provided by the school, the pupil should be marked as an authorised absence (C code) for the part of the day they are not in school.

The school's use of reintegration plans, reduced timetables and recording of these sessions should reflect this guidance.

7. How does the Trust monitor the use of reduced timetables?

Scholarpack Recording

If a reintegration plan and reduced timetable is agreed (time limited for 1 to 6 weeks), the signed copy of the plan should be uploaded to

Confidential Documents section of the Confidential Tab within the Student Profile in Scholarpack. Headteachers can also upload the signed copy of the parental agreement to the reduced timetable. Headteachers must also mark the pupil as part time in the School Information section of the Extended Tab in the Student Profile. The number of incidences of reduced timetables will be monitored by the Trust centrally, and the process of decision making (anonymised) will be audited from time to time. If the Trust considers that a school appears to rely disproportionately on reduced timetables, support will be provided to find alternative strategies.

When to Notify the Local Authority:

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track all pupils missing or at risk of missing education. They also have a duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable full-time education at a school or elsewhere for children of compulsory school age who, *"by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise may not for any period receive suitable education unless arrangements are made for them"* (Education Act 1996, section 19). This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.

Where a pupil has been placed on a reduced timetable, the school should notify the Local Authority who will consider whether the pupil is deemed to be at risk of missing education. The LA needs to be assured that schools are not placing children on part-time or re-integration timetables for longer than is necessary and ascertain whether the provision arranged is sufficient. Other considerations may include the duration of the strategy and any representations from parents or other professionals involved with the family.

If the child is looked after or previously looked after, the information should also be copied to the Head of Virtual School (please refer to the SEND and Safeguarding key contacts posters for contact information). If the child is subject to a child protection plan or child in need plan, a copy of the reduced timetable should also be sent to the named social worker. If the child has an EHCP, the relevant Local Authority 0-25 SEND team should be informed and a copy of the signed plan shared.

Once the pupil has returned to full time education (this could be using alternative provision), all copies of the completed and fully reviewed reduced timetable plan (with closure date) must be sent to the Head of Virtual School, social worker, 0-25 SEND team where appropriate.

Please do not send originals. It is important you retain the original signed copy for your records.

8. Helpful Contacts

Please refer to the Trust Safeguarding and SEND key contacts posters for relevant Local Authority and external agencies information.

Supporting guidance:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021)*

- *Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE, 2013)*
- *The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children*, (DfE, February 2018)
- DfE Statutory Guidance on exclusions 2021
- DfE Guidance on attendance 2021
- SEND Code of Practice
- 'Falling through the Gaps in Education', Children's Commissioner (November 2018)
- School attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix 1: Reintegration Plan including Reduced Timetable

Schools should complete this plan in the exceptional circumstances that a temporary reduced timetable is introduced to meet a pupil's individual needs. Please ensure you have read Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust guidance on the use of reduced timetables before starting this process.

Date of Meeting:		**Location:**	
Name of pupil(s):		**Name of School:**	
Year Group:		**Ethnicity:**	
SEND status:			
Looked After Child (or previously looked after)	Yes/No	**Child Protection**	Yes/No
Child in Need	Yes/No	**Early Help/Families Plus**	Yes/No

Parents/Carers (including those who have day to day care) & Professionals involved with the child:			
Name:	**Role & Organisation:**	**Attended? (Y/N)**	**Have they been informed of the reduced timetable? If not, please state why.**

Start date of timetable:		**End date of timetable: Pupil should return full-time provision within 6 weeks of start**	

REASONS FOR THE PLAN: (please tick all that apply)			
Physical Health (supported by a medical professional)		**Reintegration**	

Mental Health (supported by a medical professional)		**Behaviour**	
Other (please describe below):			

Objectives (what change do we want to see?)	**Success Criteria (what will the change look like?)**
Parent(s)/Carer(s): Child: School: Other (professional or family member):	Parent(s)/Carer(s): Child: School: Other (professional or family member):

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?				
Actions to be taken:	**By When:**	**Person responsible:**	**How will we know it is working?**	**Fortnightly review comments**
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Re-integration Timetable											
Week beginning:	**Monday**		**Tuesday**		**Wednesday**		**Thursday**		**Friday**		**Time in Education**
	am	**pm**	**am**	**pm**	**am**	**pm**	**am**	**pm**	**am**	**pm**	

Other key issues discussed: **(Please ensure you record any other issues/key points not captured above)**	
Review Meeting Dates: (within 2 weeks of the start date)	
Review Meeting Dates: (within 4 weeks of the start date)	
Review Meeting Dates: (within 6 weeks of the start date)	

The undersigned confirm that this is an accurate record of the discussions and outcomes agreed within the meeting. By signing this form, the school is confirming that the use of a part-time timetable for a limited period has been judged appropriate, review arrangements have been agreed and a risk assessment has been completed and any safeguarding issues have been fully taken into consideration.

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 the child to do whilst at home and mark all work complete**

School Representative:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
[INSERT NAMES OF OTHER PROFESSIONALS]:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	

Parents/carers

A reduced timetable can only proceed with parents'/carers' signed consent to the plan and cannot be enforced by a school or insisted upon. Please delete as applicable:

1. I agree with the content of these minutes and the reintegration plan.
2. I do not agree with the reintegration for the following reasons:

Name of parent:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	

Parents/Carers

A reduced timetable can only proceed with parents'/carers' signed consent to the plan and cannot be enforced by a school or insisted upon. Please delete as applicable:

1. I agree with the content of these minutes and the reintegration plan.
2. I do not agree with the reintegration for the following reasons:

Name of parent:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	

Child – this section is voluntary for the child to complete. Please delete as applicable: 1. I am happy with this plan. 2. I am not happy with this plan because:					
Name of child:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	

The Local Governing Committee should be notified of the reduced timetable as soon as a plan has been agreed. Please keep a signed copy of the reintegration plan and reduced timetable on CPOMS and use the tag/category ‘reduced timetable.’ It is important you retain the original signed copy for your records.