



3.7 Reduced Timetables - guidance for schools, academies and other education settings

Local Authority Position Statement on the Use of Reduced Timetables

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all children and young people. This guidance sets out South Gloucestershire Council's position on the use of reduced timetables.

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 a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and must not be treated as a long-term solution.

Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing the arrangement with the pupil and their parents or carers.

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This guidance is intended to support all schools and education settings and other professionals involved with providing support to children.

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 children and young people in that setting.

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. A reduced timetable cannot be implemented without:

- An assessment of need having taken place to ensure that it will **benefit the pupil**.
- A risk assessment and relevant plan being in place.
- Written agreement from the parent/carer.
- Agreement from the Virtual School for a child looked after.
- Agreement from the Social Worker for any child who is on a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan.
- Agreement from the Education, Health and Care Coordination Team, for any child who has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), to ensure that the reduced timetable is in line with the EHCP.
- A supporting Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for pupils with medical needs, which is kept under regular review.

This guidance is not intended to be applied to those pupils who are attending alternative provision. 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, this arrangement would *not* be considered to be a reduced timetable.

Scope

The purpose of this document is to:

1. To identify a good practice approach for all maintained South Gloucestershire schools, academies and alternative provision settings, so that reduced timetables are only used appropriately to best effect. This will protect both pupil and school.
2. To assist schools in ensuring that no pupil is excluded illegally through the imposition of a reduced timetable.
3. To secure a consistent approach that restricts the use of a reduced timetable for an extended period of time, as this can impair a pupil's progress and attainment.
4. To ensure that a child's unmet needs are identified and addressed so that they may access their entitlement to a full-time education.

Definition

This guidance:

- Applies to pupils of compulsory school age (who reach age 5 by 31st August, 31st December and 30th April in an academic year. Pupils in Year 11 must remain on roll until the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they attain the age of 16).
- Therefore, it does not apply to any agreed 'staggered' induction of reception-aged pupils.

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- Does not apply to pupils who are dual registered with Pathways Learning Centre or attend alternative provision, as long as the pupil has a full-time offer of education.
- Does not apply to pupils on a personalised curriculum, as long as the pupil is receiving **full-time education provision** and the school can evidence progress. Where the provision is not delivered on the school site, it has been approved by the school, is of an educational nature and is supervised by a person authorised by the school.

A timetable is considered reduced when the total hours provided are less than those provided to most of the peers of the pupil in that setting.

Education should be suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude, considering any special educational needs they may have.

As a rule, all pupils should receive full time education consistent with their key stage:

21 hours at Key Stage 1

23.5 hours at Key Stage 2

24 hours at Key Stage 3 & Year 10

25 hours at Year 11

Legal Position

All schools have a statutory duty to provide a full-time education for all pupils according to their age, aptitude and ability, taking into account any special educational needs. DfE guidance states that, in very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary reduction in educational provision to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a reduced package is considered as part of a reintegration programme.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, it is illegal for schools to discriminate against children on the basis of their special educational need and/or disability, including those with social emotional and mental health difficulties. **It would be considered unlawful to place a child on a reduced timetable because the school believes that they cannot meet need or because they believe they have insufficient funds.**

A reduced timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. As described in 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' September 2023 (statutory guidance), reduced timetables should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour and must only be in place for the shortest time necessary.

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) identifies schools as part of the wider safeguarding system for children and recognises that all school staff are in a position to identify concerns early, to provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

Clearly, in relation to safeguarding, where a child is not in school, their vulnerability is increased.

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Section 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2007 places a duty on Local Authorities and schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Therefore, when deciding whether a reduced timetable is appropriate, consideration must always be given to the welfare and safety of the pupil. This must be part of the risk assessment process.

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

Particular consideration should be given to the increased risk to the pupil to child exploitation, substance misuse, self-harming, radicalisation and other potential abuse or criminal activity.

If evidence suggests that the child will be exposed to significant risk if not in school, then a reduced timetable should not be considered as an option.

When a child is Looked After or subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, or is involved with the Youth Offending Team, any reduced timetable that is agreed should be reviewed every two weeks with the parent/carers and with the other professional(s) working with the child.

It is therefore important that the use of reduced timetables is kept to a minimum and are only used as an exceptional measure. 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.

What are the exceptional circumstances, in which a reduced timetable might be considered?

Reduced timetables should only be used in very limited, exceptional circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list, but a reduced timetable may be considered a reasonable, proportionate and necessary response in the following circumstances:

- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.
- As part of a planned transition or re-integration (of no longer than six weeks) for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time due to illness, mental health issues or family circumstances.
- As part of a wider support plan, with clearly defined and reviewed outcomes, to support a pupil who has become disaffected to re-engage with their education and regain success. This should be a closely monitored intervention **of no longer than six weeks.**
- For medical reasons when a pupil has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. Arrangements should be part of a medical plan (such as an Individual Health Care Plan) agreed between the school and health professionals. The 2013 statutory guidance [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274242/education_for_children_with_health_needs_who_cannot_attend_school.pdf) details the Local Authority's role in ensuring that children with health needs receive education. The LA guidance on medical

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needs should be adhered to in these circumstances, see Section 9 of [The South Glos Way Inclusion Toolkit | Safeguarding South Gloucestershire Safeguarding](#)

When is a reduced timetable not appropriate?

- Where the reduced timetable is not in the child or young person's best interests.
- Where a parent does not give permission for the reduced timetable – this can be construed as an unofficial exclusion which is unlawful.
- As a method of managing behaviour.
- For children and young people who have an EHCP, where the EHC Coordination Team are not in agreement with the reduced timetable.
- For children and young people on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, where the Social Worker is not in agreement with the reduced timetable.
- For a child Looked After, without agreement from the Virtual School.
- Where the reason for the reduced timetable is that the school believes that they cannot meet need or because they believe they have insufficient funds. In this situation, it would be important to unpick needs and consider the interventions that may best meet those needs, consulting with other professionals as appropriate.

Best Practice Guidance for reduced timetables

A reduced timetable is not viewed by the DfE or OFSTED as an appropriate method of managing poor behaviour, or pupils at risk of exclusion. This intervention should only be considered after other strategies have been exhausted and it should only be used for the **benefit of the pupil**.

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

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 (such as an Early Help Assessment and Plan) be in place to establish if there are wider needs and identify what support is required from external agencies.
2. **Not pursue a reduced timetable without parental permission.** This can be construed as an unofficial exclusion, which is unlawful, as the parent has not requested leave for their child and/or the school could be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum. The school must ensure that they have written parental agreement 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.
3. **Ensure that multi-agency review meetings are held** before reduced timetables are implemented for Children Looked After. A child Looked After must not be placed not be placed on a reduced timetable where there is not agreement from the Virtual School. Where a pupil is on a Child Protection Plan (section 47) or Child in Need Plan (section 17), the school must consult with the pupil's social worker when considering (and before implementing) a reduced timetable and must not put in place a reduced timetable without agreement from the Social Worker.

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4. **Ensure that an interim or early annual review has been called** for any pupil who has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), for whom a reduced timetable is being considered, to ensure that the EHCP is reviewed and amended as appropriate. A reduced timetable must not be put in place without agreement from the EHC Coordination Team. The reduced timetable must not interfere with additional support provided to a pupil due to their 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. **Ensure that where a child is entitled to Free School Meals**, they are not prevented by a reduced timetable from receiving their Free School Meals.
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:

- Step 1: Identify possible hazards
- Step 2: Decide who may be harmed and how
- Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution
- Step 4: Record your findings and implement them
- 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 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.

7. **Complete a detailed action 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 the 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 of 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 that this may place on home life.

8. **Provide sufficient and appropriately differentiated work for the period when the pupil is not attending school, where appropriate.** Providing work for the pupil whilst

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not accessing full-time provision cannot contribute to a pupil's legal entitlement to education. However, the setting of homework in partnership with parents/carers, sets clear expectations and contact between home and school, and may reduce the risk of the pupil falling significantly behind in their learning. 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. Schools should also consider how the pupil will be included in school life, for example how they will continue to have contact with the rest of their class and key staff.

- 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 student or impede their access to education.**
- 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. Where a reduced timetable has been 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.
- 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 Governing Board or Trust should be informed of any reduced timetables and make arrangements for monitoring the use of these.
- 12. Notify the Local Authority of pupils on reduced timetables, when requested by the Attendance, Exclusions and Licensing Team, as part of a submission in September, January and May.**

Monitoring and review

It is important that schools ace to ensure that the DfE regulations in respect of attendance are correctly observed for pupils on a reduced educational provision.

The registration codes applied will depend on the precise arrangements for providing education.

Registration codes

Code C: Leave of absence granted by the school

In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. The C code should be used where the pupil is not expected, due to the reduced timetable, to attend school or any other institution or supervised activity, for that session. 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.

Code B: Off-site educational activity

To be used if the pupil is attending an off-site educational activity, approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The school must also record the nature of the activity.

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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 the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

The B code must not be used for unsupervised educational activity e.g. a pupil at home doing schoolwork.

Code W: Work experience

To be used if a pupil, in the final two years of compulsory education, is attending an approved work experience placement and is otherwise attending sessions at school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the work experience notifies the school of any absence of the pupil, which should be coded using the relevant absence code.

How does the LA monitor the use of reduced timetables?

The Local Authority is required to maintain a central record of all pupils who are not in receipt of a full-time education and schools have a responsibility to record and submit this information to the local authority so that it can be monitored centrally.

The Attendance, Exclusions and Licensing Team will request information from all schools about the pupils who are on reduced timetables, three times each academic year (in October, February and May).

As part of the termly Targetted Attendance Meetings, Education Welfare Officers will discuss pupils on reduced timetables during attendance visits and will provide advice to schools on this matter.

Helpful contacts

Any queries regarding this guidance should be directed, in the first instance, to the Team Leader for Attendance, Exclusions and Licensing

amanda.lowe@southglos.gov.uk

Supporting guidance

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)

[BRIEFING-Falling-through-the-gaps-in-education-CCO.pdf
\(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/BRIEFING-Falling-through-the-gaps-in-education-CCO.pdf)

[School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code) – Section 2.17 – Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school. In relation to children who have not yet reached compulsory school age, this section summarises the child's entitlement to a full-time place in school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Appendix 1: Reintegration Plan

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 South Gloucestershire Council's guidance on the use of reduced timetables before starting this process.

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

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REASONS FOR THE PLAN: (please tick all that apply)			
Physical Health (supported by a medical professional)		Reintegration following illness	
Mental Health (supported by a medical professional)		Reintegration due to pupil disaffection	
Other (please give detail):			
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.				

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3.				
4.				

Re-integration Timetable											
Week beginning:	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Time in Education (hours)
	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)	

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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 reduced 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 reduced timetable the school will:

- **Monitor the effectiveness of the reduced timetable**
- **Hold a review on the agreed date**
- **Provide work the pupil to do whilst at home and mark all work**

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

The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals

Name of child:		Date:		Signature:	
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The Attendance, Exclusions and Licensing Team will request information from all schools about the pupils who are on reduced timetables, three times each academic year (in October, February and May).