



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

# GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

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# GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

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## Purpose

This guidance is intended to support all maintained Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) schools, Pupil Referral Units/EOTAS and specialist provision settings, hereafter referred to as 'schools', in the appropriate use of reduced timetables (sometimes referred to as 'partial' or 'part-time' timetables), within the current legal and safeguarding framework for pupils deemed medically fit to attend school.

This guidance does not refer to the 'staggered' introduction of reception-aged pupil.

## Summary

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances schools may need to implement a reduced timetable in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time for a short, agreed period.

To ensure that the application of a reduced timetable is **time-limited** and that re-integration to full-time education occurs swiftly and is appropriate to the pupil's personal needs, abilities and circumstances, MTCBC is sharing this guidance with schools in respect of all pupils of statutory school age.

Schools and education settings have a statutory responsibility to ensure that all pupils on their roll receive a full educational entitlement and achieve good outcomes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where the needs of a pupil require it, (for reasons outlined below), it may be reasonable for schools to consider placing a pupil on a reduced timetable for a short agreed period. As the pupil's ability to cope improves, unmet needs are addressed and the offer is adapted, the pupil would be re-integrated back into full-time education.

For the purposes of this guidance, a reduced timetable that the number of hours spent in education is reduced for a time-limited period and is established by agreement with the local authority, parent/carer, school and, and must be reviewed after 4 weeks. Schools should consult with all appropriate agencies involved with a pupil prior to putting in place a reduced timetable.

Schools should take account and act upon the following guidance in order to continue to improve standards of educational attainment, safeguard the well-being of all children and young people and reduce the likelihood to the school of charges being made in respect of a failure to educate.

## What constitutes a full-time education?

All pupils should receive full-time education consistent with their Key Stage.

The WG recommendations are that the school offer for the taught curriculum on a weekly basis should be:

- 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

## When should a reduced timetable operate?

A reduced timetable should only be used in exceptional circumstances, where every other avenue to ensure a pupil receives their full-time education has been exhausted. The exceptional circumstances are likely to be:

1. As part of a planned re-integration into school following an extended period out of school following exclusion, non-attendance, school refusal<sup>1</sup> or to facilitate a managed transfer between schools (although this should not be the norm for managed moves).
2. Following an extended absence due to ill health or other medical reasons.
3. As a temporary fixed-term, closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behaviour or emotional or social needs, whilst alternative arrangements are being made to meet the individual needs or to coordinate with therapeutic intervention or other services.

<sup>1</sup> Currently reintegration for pupils due to non-attendance or school refusal is co-ordinated by the school themselves or the Education Inclusion Officer for those schools that are part of the EWS-SLA. This approach should aim to reintegrate a pupil quickly and awaiting a date for a formal PSP meeting should not delay a pupil's return to school date.

## Recommended good practice

In circumstances where the school considers that it may be necessary to establish a reduced timetable for a pupil, the school should:

- be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil.
- ensure a reduced timetable is only pursued in full consultation with parents and a member of the Education Welfare Service (Senior Education Welfare Officer and/or Inclusion Manager). Reduced timetables developed by the school as a single agency without LA involvement and parental agreement can be construed as an unofficial exclusion. This 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.
- establish a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for the pupil, which takes account of the minimum standards and good practice below. The PSP should record the arrangements for a reduced timetable.
- ensure that the monitoring of a reduced timetable is led by the school and the Education Inclusion Officer for those schools that are part of the EWS-SLA. Schools will co-ordinate and chair the meeting in respect of writing the PSP.
- convene a review meeting for a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to discuss proposals for a reduced timetable and seek agreement from both the parents or carers and local authority SEN team/Inclusion Manager.

In addition, the school should:

- have carried out assessments to establish if there are wider needs and work with local multi-agency services to support the pupil.
- seek the approval and written permission of the parents or carers of the pupil and the local authority in respect of a child in care or where a pupil has a Statement of SEN.
- be satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding and care of the pupil during the period when they would otherwise have been expected to be in school and secure a written agreement from the parents or carers about who is responsible for the welfare of the student for the sessions in question.

- take action to ensure that the impact of a reduced timetable on travelling and transport arrangements does not discriminate against the pupil or impede their access to education.
- ensure that arrangements for a reduced timetable do not discriminate against a pupil's access to free school meals.
- take account of the number of hours of support that may have been named in a statement of special educational needs, in order that they continue to meet their statutory obligations.
- ensure that arrangements for education set out in the plan are inclusive and that the pupil is able to participate in the universal offer during the re-integration.
- agree with the pupil and parents or carers a route back to a full educational entitlement by clearly defining objectives, milestones and support for the duration of the plan.
- set a specific target for resuming full educational entitlement within a period of no longer than six weeks.

## **Monitoring and reviewing a reduced timetable**

The school will:

- record the pupil's attendance, using the appropriate registration code, in order that both the school and MTCBC can monitor when the pupil began and ended their reduced timetable.
- establish robust arrangements for monitoring and regular review of the plan by a named member of senior staff.
- keep a record of the attendance of all pupils on reduced timetables by establishing a defined user group within the school attendance system (e.g. SIMs) and monitor the overall use of reduced timetables to ensure their application does not discriminate against particular groups of pupils.
- ensure effective communication with parents or carers and key professionals with regard to progress towards the pupil's full re-integration to school.

MTCBC will:

- ensure that pupils on reduced timetables are appropriately recorded and monitored via the pupil attendance register and maintain a central record of all pupils not accessing a full time education in the usual way. Please see **Appendix 1** for completion.

## Unlawful Exclusions

If a Head teacher is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that a learner has committed a disciplinary offence and needs to be removed from the school site, formal exclusion is the only legal method of removal.

Unlawful exclusions, more commonly referred to as informal or unofficial exclusions, are unlawful regardless of whether they are done with the agreement of parents or carers.

Unlawful, unofficial or informal exclusion refers to:

- sending learners home for disciplinary reasons, but not following the procedures required for formal exclusion and not planning a fixed term partial timetable as described above
- learners being sent home for either short periods of time, or for longer indefinite periods which can sometimes result in the learner not returning to school at all. For example, where a learner is sent home for disciplinary reasons for part of a school day, the school may view this as a 'cooling off' period and not take action to exclude the learner formally. There is no basis in law for this and the relevant regulations do not state a minimum length of exclusion, so if a learner is sent home, even for short periods of time, this must be formally recorded as an exclusion.

## Recording attendance

It is important that schools act to ensure that the WG regulations in respect of attendance are correctly observed for pupils on a reduced timetable.

**‘C’ code**- to be used when a pupil has been placed on an agreed part time timetable, that includes sessions which have been mutually agreed not to involve attendance at any other institution or supervised activity.

### Registration codes

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
/ \	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (present at another school or PRU)	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based learning)	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised absence
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend



**Appendix 1**

	<b>School</b>	<b>Name of child</b>	<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Date that reduced timetable commenced</b>	<b>Date that reduced timetable ceased</b>