



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

# GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

2021-2025

# 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, Learner 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 learners deemed medically fit to attend school.

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

## 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 to support a learner who cannot attend school full-time for a short, agreed period.

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

Schools and education settings have a statutory responsibility to ensure that all learners on their roll receive a full educational entitlement (see below) and achieve good outcomes.

In very exceptional circumstances, if it is judged the needs of a learner require it, (see below), schools may consider placing a learner on a reduced timetable for a short, agreed period. As the learner's ability to cope improves it is expected that the learner would be re-integrated back into full-time education.

For the purposes of this guidance, a reduced timetable is one where 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. Any agreement must be reviewed after 4 weeks. Schools should consult with all appropriate agencies involved with a learner prior to putting in place a reduced timetable.

Schools should take account and act upon the following guidance 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 learners should receive full-time education consistent with their Key Stage.

The **teaching time** recommendations on a weekly basis are:

- 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 could a reduced timetable operate?

A reduced timetable must only be used in exceptional circumstances, where every other avenue to ensure a learner receives their full-time education has been exhausted. The exceptional circumstances may 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.

Currently reintegration for learners 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 learner quickly and awaiting a date for a formal PSP meeting should not delay a learner's return to school date.

## Recommended good practice

In circumstances where the school considers that it necessary to establish a reduced timetable for a learner, the school must:

- be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the learner. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the learner.
- 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 learner from accessing the curriculum.
- establish a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for the learner, which takes account of the minimum standards and good practice as identified in this guidance. 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. Schools will co-ordinate and chair the meeting in respect of writing the PSP.
- convene a review meeting for a learner with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to ensure that the learner's needs are met and to discuss proposals for a reduced timetable and seek agreement from both the parents or carers and local authority ALN Manager /Inclusion Manager.

In addition, the school must:

- carry out assessments to establish if there are wider needs and work with local multi-agency services to support the learner.
- seek the approval and written permission of the parents or carers of the learner and the local authority in respect of a child in care or where a learner has a Statement of SEN.
- 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.
- be satisfied 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 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 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 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 four weeks.

## Monitoring and reviewing a reduced timetable

The school will:

- record the learner's attendance, using the appropriate registration code, in order that both the school and MTCBC can monitor when the learner 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 learners 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 learners.
- ensure effective communication with parents or carers and key professionals regarding progress towards the learner's full re-integration to school.
- provide the LA with information on a termly basis on those learners on a reduced timetable including a copy of their PSP. **Appendix 1**

MTCBC will:

- ensure that learners on reduced timetables are appropriately recorded and monitored via the learner attendance register and maintain a central record of all learners not accessing a full-time education in the usual way. Please see **Appendix 1** for completion.
- LA will attend review meetings for those pupils on a reduced timetable.

## **Unlawful Exclusions/Removing learners from school**

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 learners on a reduced timetable.

**‘C’ code**- to be used when a learner 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 learners	Not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Learner not on roll yet	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all learners	Not required to attend



**Appendix 1**

<b>School</b>	<b>Name of child</b>	<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Learner in LRB Yes/No</b>	<b>Is a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) in place?</b>	<b>Reason for reduced timetable</b>	<b>Date that reduced timetable commenced</b>	<b>Date that reduced timetable ceased</b>

## Appendix 2- Reintegration Plan

Schools should complete this plan in the following circumstances when a learner has been;

- placed on a reduced timetable.
- excluded for a period of time.
- receipt of special tuition or any other form of EOTAS.

Please scan a signed copy of the plan and send to Mia Bounds [Mia.Bounds@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:Mia.Bounds@merthyr.gov.uk) for those on reduced timetables and/or excluded and to James Michalski [James.Michalski@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:James.Michalski@merthyr.gov.uk) for those in receipt of special tuition. Please do not send in original copies. It is important you retain the original signed copy for your records.

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>		<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Name of learner:</b>		<b>Name of School:</b>	
<b>DOB:</b>		<b>Year Group:</b>	
<b>UPN:</b>		<b>Ethnicity:</b>	
<b>ALNCO status:</b>			
<b>Looked After Child</b>	Yes/No	<b>Child Protection</b>	Yes/No
<b>Child in Need</b>	Yes/No	<b>Early Help/FSP</b>	Yes/No

### Parents & Professionals involved with the child

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Role &amp; Organisation:</b>	<b>Attended? (Y/N)</b>	<b>Have they been informed of the re-integration plan? If not, please state why.</b>

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Role &amp; Organisation:</b>	<b>Attended? (Y/N)</b>	<b>Have they been informed of the re-integration plan? If not, please state why.</b>
<b>Start date of timetable:</b>		<b>End date of timetable: Learner should return full-time provision within 6 weeks of start</b>	

<b>REASONS FOR THE PLAN: (please tick all that apply)</b>			
<b>Physical Health (supported by a medical professional)</b>		<b>Reintegration</b>	
<b>Mental Health (supported by a medical professional)</b>		<b>Behaviour</b>	
<b>Other (please describe below):</b>			

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

**WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?**

<b>Actions to be taken:</b>	<b>By When:</b>	<b>Person responsible:</b>	<b>How will we know it is working?</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

**Reintegration Timetable**

Week beginning:	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Total Time Spent in School
	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)**

<b>Review Meeting Date: (within 2 weeks of the start date)</b>	
<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Venue:</b>	

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 re-integration timetable for a limited period has been judged appropriate, review arrangements have been agreed and any safeguarding issues have been fully taken into consideration.

During the period of the re-integration timetable the special tuition panel and school will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the re-integration timetable
- Hold a review on the agreed date

<b>School Representative:</b>		<b>Date:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>[INSERT NAMES OF OTHER PROFESSIONALS]:</b>		<b>Date:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	

<p><b>Parents</b></p> <p><b>Please delete as applicable:</b></p> <p>1. I agree with the content of these minutes and the reintegration plan.</p> <p>2. I do not agree with the reintegration for the following reasons:</p>
<b>Parent Name:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>
<p><b>Parents</b></p> <p><b>Please delete as applicable:</b></p> <p>3. I agree with the content of these minutes and the reintegration plan.</p> <p>4. I do not agree with the reintegration for the following reasons:</p>
<b>Parent Name:</b>
<b>Date:</b>

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