

Nottinghamshire County Council Reduced Timetable Guidance

Purpose

All children of statutory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. The following guidance is intended to support all maintained Nottinghamshire Schools, Academies, Studio Schools and alternative provision settings, hereafter referred to as 'schools', in the appropriate use and recording of reduced timetables (also referred to as part time timetables). Nottinghamshire County Council recommend that all schools follow this guidance in order to ensure that legal and safeguarding responsibilities are met in relation to students who they place on a reduced timetable, by ensuring that schools do not inadvertently unofficially exclude students and that the likelihood of complaints being brought against the school in relation to the provision of education is reduced.

Key points

There is no statutory basis on which to implement a reduced timetable. A reduced timetable may need to be considered in exceptional circumstances only, taking into account the advice of relevant support services, and with the agreement of the student and parent/ carer. A reduced timetable implemented without the agreement of a parent/ carer could constitute an illegal exclusion.

In cases where the implementation of a reduced timetable is deemed to be an appropriate step to take this should be for a short and agreed period, with clear objectives and a plan for review to facilitate swift re-integration to full time provision.

A full and accurate record should be kept of all decisions in relation to a reduced timetable, and should include signed parental agreement.

When implementing a reduced timetable schools should have high aspirations with regard to what a student can achieve and respond quickly and effectively to any signs of disengagement with provision.

Where a reduced timetable has not been effective in meeting the objectives set and can therefore be judged to have been an ineffective strategy, the reduced timetable should not be continued and alternative interventions explored in conjunction with relevant support services. In cases where there is no clear plan for reintegration to full time education advice should be sought from the Fair Access Team.

Schools should be mindful of and act upon Best Practise guidance as laid out below in order to safeguard the wellbeing of students, continue to raise levels of educational attainment, and act lawfully in cases where a reduced timetable is being considered.

When should a reduced timetable be considered?

A reduced timetable should only be implemented in exceptional circumstances, and where all other interventions to try and ensure that a student can access full time education have been exhausted.

These exceptional circumstances are likely to be:

- As part of a student's planned re-integration to school following an extended period out of school due to exclusion, non-attendance (including anxiety related non-attendance), or as part of a planned transfer or managed move, if deemed appropriate.
- Following an extended absence due to ill health or other medical reasons.
- As a temporary fixed term intervention when a student is at risk of exclusion, to allow alternative education arrangements to be made to meet the needs of the student, or to allow interventions to be put in place enabling the student to return to full time education within the school setting.

Best Practise Guidance

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

- Be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. Schools should seek advice from appropriate education support services (Education Psychology Service (EPS), Schools and Families Specialist Services (SFSS), Health Related Education Team (HRET), Primary Social Emotional Development Team (PSED), Virtual School) regarding the appropriateness of the use of a reduced timetable, and should also be mindful of any advice given by other support services (Social Care, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Family Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) regarding potential wider implications and risks to a student of implementing a reduced timetable. This should ideally be done through a multi-agency meeting, involving the student and their parent/ carer.
- Consult with the appropriate Local Authority Officer or Social Worker prior to implementing a reduced timetable for students in specific circumstances (with an EHCP/ statement of SEN, LAC, on a Child Protection Plan). Where pupils have an EHCP or Statement of SEN, the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS) must be involved to ensure that statement is reviewed and amended where appropriate.
- Agree with the student, parent/ carer and support services the objectives of the reduced timetable as a planned intervention and a clear plan for re-integration to full time education, including the support that will be provided to facilitate this.
- Carry out an assessment of need using an EHAF if an established assessment is not already in place and make any referrals for support identified, for example through Springboard meeting, Family Service referral (including school attendance), AFN/ HLN/ Partnership funding bid, EHCP referral, HRET referral, CAMHS referral.

When implementing a reduced timetable the school should:

- Document the decision making process in relation to the reduced timetable being implemented, complete a detailed action plan demonstrating a clear path to re-integration, ideally over a maximum of one half term, and obtain signed parental consent. Form A can be used to record discussions and planning if a suitable recording tool is not already in use. The school should try to ensure the pupil has an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention.

- Undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on a pupil. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered, and school are satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding and care of the student during the time they would usually have been expected in school. Signed agreement from the parent/carer confirming that they will be responsible for the safety and welfare of the student for sessions they should usually be in school must be sought. This can be done using Form A if a suitable recording tool is not already in use. Students should be provided with suitable work to complete during the time they are not in school and arrangements should be made to ensure the work is assessed and feedback given to the student.
- Identify a named senior member of staff to be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the timetable.
- Maintain effective communication with the student, their parent/ carer and support services with regard to progress towards re-integration to full time provision and any issues that arise during the period covered by the reduced timetable.

When reviewing the reduced timetable and planning next steps the school should:

- At the end of each half term period convene a review meeting to assess the impact of the reduced timetable and plan to organise a return to full time education, if this is appropriate for the student. Decisions made at this review should be recorded and Form B can be used to record this review if a suitable recording tool is not already in use. Use of a reduced timetable for a further half term period should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances with parental agreement and where progress towards the objectives set can be evidenced. The plan should be revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate and the original action plan updated and added to. It is not appropriate to simply continue the reduced timetable if the duration of the reduced timetable has not been used to plan other interventions.
- Consider whether referral for any additional support is required, for example through Springboard meeting, Family Service referral (including school attendance), AFN/ HLN/ Partnership funding bid, EHCP referral, HRET referral, CAMHS referral.
- In cases where there is no clear plan for reintegration to full time education advice should be sought from the Fair Access Team on the team number below- for primary students this should be done directly through the PSED team member for the area.

When recording a reduced timetable the school should:

- Keep a record of all students on a reduced timetable, keeping all documentation in relation to decisions regarding reduced time tables implemented. This can be done using Forms A and B if a suitable recording tool is not already in place. This documentation should be available if requested.
- Complete the termly data request from Nottinghamshire County Council in relation to students with a reduced timetable.

Marking the register for student on a reduced timetable

Schools should refer to DFE guidance 'School attendance- Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' October 2014.

- Code C is to be used for sessions when it has been agreed that attendance is not required as part of a collaboratively planned reduced timetable.
- Code B should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. 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 pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.

Key Contacts

Fair Access Team 01159773225

Health Related Education Team 01623799157 (Maureen Sully for Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Hucknall, Jill Priddle for North Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw and King's Mill Hospitals)

Integrated Children's Disability Service 01158041275

Early Help Unit 0115 804 1248

MASH 03005008090

Virtual School 01158040644

CAMHS Single Point of Access 01158542299/ 01158440501

Related guidance

Children missing education- statutory guidance for local authorities, DFE, January 2015.

Pupils missing out on education, OFSTED, November 2013.

School attendance- Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DFE, September 2018.