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**Southampton City Council**

**Inclusion Services**

**Reduced Timetable guidance for schools and school leaders 2023/24**

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**Southampton**



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| **Reduced Timetable guidance for schools and school leaders 2023/24** |
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***Children are invariably trying to solve problems rather than be one.***

***Their solutions to problems are often misguided because their concept of the problem is faulty or because their skills leave much to be desired.***

***Profesor Martin Herbert (1985)***

### PURPOSE

It is widely recognised that school is a protective factor for many vulnerable children. If children are in school and engaged in education they are not exposed to other risk factors and unless they attend school regularly they cannot benefit from their education.

It is therefore important that the use of reduced timetables is kept to a minimum and that they are only used as an exceptional measure, when appropriate, when all other measures to support the pupil have failed and that they are kept under regular review. We should have a consistent, inclusive approach to their use, focusing instead on preventative early intervention. The purpose of this guidance document is to:

* Identify a good practice approach for all schools in the appropriate use of reduced timetables which will protect both pupil and school.
* Secure a more consistent approach because the use of a reduced timetable for an extended period of time, or in cases where issues have not been addressed, can have a serious impact upon the success of attempts to increase access to education.

### SCOPE

Southampton City Council has an overarching responsibility for the educational attainment and safety of all children of school-age in the city and schools have a duty of care towards their pupils. This guidance therefore:

* Applies to pupils of compulsory school age so does not apply to the ‘staggered’ introduction of reception-aged pupils.
* Does not apply to pupils who are dually registered with Southampton Children’s Hospital School or another educational establishment, or a specialist provider of an 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 has a full-time offer of education**.
* Provides a focus on pupils subject to CP or CIN Planning.

It also provides:

* Guidance on the appropriate use of reduced timetables.
* Appropriate templates to support schools.

“Schools” means all maintained Southampton schools, academies and alternative provision settings.

### Definition

A timetable is considered reduced when the total hours provided are less those provided to the majority of the peers of the pupil in that setting and the arrangement has been put in place by the school.

Education should be suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special educational needs. 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

Source: *Out of school … out of Mind? Local Government Ombudsman, September 2011.*

Pupils who have a personalised curriculum are not considered to be on a reduced timetable, provided that:

* The personalised curriculum provides the pupil with full-time education provision.
* Any provision not delivered on the school site has been approved by the school, is of an educational nature and is supervised by a person authorised by the school.
* The school has a mechanism in place for ensuring that the pupil is attending the alternative provision and should accurately record attendance.
* The school has visited the provision to ensure that there are no safeguarding risks.

### GUIDANCE COMMITMENTS

* To assist schools in ensuring that no pupil is excluded illegally through the imposition of a reduced timetable.
* To help schools to guard against off-rolling by following good practice.
* To protect every child’s right to an education.
* To ensure that reduced timetables are recorded on individual pupil records held on the local authority education database and can therefore be reported to Ofsted.

There may be times in a child or young person’s life when they cannot access 25 hours of education per week; a reduced timetable or other alternative arrangement may be appropriate in those circumstances. It is the responsibility of everyone working with children and young people, or schools, to check that any such arrangements are planned in accordance with an assessment of the child’s educational, social, emotional and health needs and regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the child or young person, which may change over time.

Southampton City Council remains committed to every child’s right to a full-time education offer and makes clear the requirement that **a reduced timetable cannot be implemented** without**:**

* An assessment of need having taken place to ensure that it will benefit the pupil.
* Written agreement from a parent\carer.
* An interim or early annual review having been called, inviting the Southampton City Council SEND team, for pupils with an EHCP.
* The presence of the Virtual School at any meeting where the intervention will be discussed for a child looked after to Southampton City Council and their full agreement.
* A supporting Individual Healthcare Plan for pupils with medical needs.
* Schools being able to still evidence educational progress for the pupil.

### LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

### UN convention on the rights of the child

Covers the rights of a child to education and the goals of education provision.

### Education Act 2002 and 2010 Academies Act

Requires schools to deliver the national curriculum or, for academies, a broad and balanced curriculum.

### Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022

* All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.
* **In very exceptional circumstances** there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil’s individual needs. A reduced timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time and be agreed with the pupil’s parents/carers.

### Working together to safeguard children 2018

Clarifies an overarching responsibility placed on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

### Education inspection framework - schools

This framework sets out Ofsted's inspection principles and the main judgements that inspectors make. The following extracts are relevant to this guidance document:

* Inspectors will always report on whether or not arrangements for safeguarding children and learners are effective.
* Leadership and management: Inspectors will always take into account how well leaners are helped and protected so they are safe and make a written judgement under ‘leadership and management’.
* The Equality Act 2010 is intended to be a force for improvement for all learners. The framework and remit-specific criteria are clear that the expectation is that all learners will receive a high-quality, ambitious education. Inspectors will assess the extent to which the provider complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 including, where relevant, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Human Rights Act 1998.
* Quality of education: Leaders take on or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
* Quality of education: Learners study the full curriculum.
* Leadership and management: Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all.
* Leadership and management: leaders aim to ensure that all learners complete their programmes of study.

### Statutory guidance: Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Requires schools to formally record all exclusions. Therefore, sending a pupil home to ‘cool off’, or refusing to allow a pupil who has not been formally excluded access to the school site, is unlawful regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents.

### Keeping children safe in education 2021

* Requires schools to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
* States that any approach (to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children) should be centred on taking action to ensure all children have the best outcomes.

### Ofsted Report: Pupils missing out on education

* Established the expectation that all schools should notify the Local Authority of any part-time education arrangements.
* Recommended that each local authority should establish a central record of all children not accessing full-time education in the usual way.

### ILACS (framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children’s services)

The inspection framework requests at the start of the inspection:

*2.05 A report on children, for whom the local authority is responsible, who are of school age and who are not in receipt of full-time school education at the time of inspection. This report should include for each child:*

* *child unique ID or UPN and the date of birth*
* *type of educational provision that they are receiving, including home tuition*
* *number of hours provision per week (in particular, whether they are receiving more or less than 25 hours per week)*
* *type of exclusion (if the child has been excluded)*
* *date when alternative provision commenced.*

### Educational neglect: Southampton City Council Practitioner Guidance (reviewed May 2021)

Schools should be familiar with this guidance document which states that, in Southampton, we recognise that educational neglect can be:

*Where educational provision that is alternative to full-time education is not provided/is not in line with needs and is not monitored effectively or changed/adapted to reduce the serious impairment of a child’s educational development, taking into account an individual child’s needs and wishes.*

### Education Act 1996

States that it is the duty of parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

### Public sector equality duty

Local authorities are covered by the public sector equality duty and must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people.

### EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOLS

Where a pupil is dual registered at more than one provision it is the provision where the child is expected to attend that should submit the reduced timetable return to the local authority. This is because the other provision would be entering a “D” code in the register for these sessions.

* That every child has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled.
* It is important that other intervention strategies are explored, or put in place, before problems become entrenched. These interventions could be delivered in-house, commissioned or external. Collaboration with support services directly connected with schools (such as EWO and Link EP) may be helpful in identifying ways to promote positive change and extend timetables in a timely manner.  Further targeted support may be accessed/commissioned through a variety of sources as appropriate.
* A reduced timetable should not be implemented without parental permission because it could be construed and challenged as an unofficial exclusion, which is unlawful. The school could also be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum. In these circumstances the school must consider alternative interventions.
* A reduced timetable should not ordinarily be agreed for no longer than 6 school weeks.
* Sufficient hours and provision should be offered to enable the pupil to make academic progress.
* Schools should exercise additional care and caution when considering reducing the timetable of vulnerable pupils. The following examples of vulnerable pupils are not exhaustive:
* CLA (only with the agreement of the SCC Virtual School).
* Pupils with EHCPs (in partnership with the SEND Team).
* Regular missing persons.
* Young Offenders.
* PA pupils.
* Where there are safeguarding concerns such as a risk of CSE, Families Matter involvement, or subject to a multi-agency strategy.
* Pupils should be provided with differentiated work to complete at home during the 6 school week period of their reduced timetable. Schools should ensure that it is marked in line with the school marking and feedback policy, to reduce the impact of the temporary provision and reduced access to teachers.
* A risk assessment should be carried out before implementation of a reduced timetable using the template included as **Appendix 2.**
* All professionals working with the pupil should be consulted when a reduced timetable is being considered.
* Schools retain responsibility for the academic progress of pupils on reduced timetables therefore the lack of access to a taught curriculum will necessitate intervention to support the pupil to catch up on work missed. A reduced timetable in itself, without a supporting action plan, will not address the root causes of the problem.
* Reduced timetables should be a response to an assessment of need so there should be an audit trail to support the proposal, which schools should be able as evidence if required e.g. an Early Help Assessment, a Personal Education Plan, an Individual Behaviour Plan, Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Education Plan or Individual Healthcare Plan. The plan should include objectives for the reduced timetable that are clearly defined and understood by all parties.
* In cases where parents have given their agreement to the reduced timetable and the session is marked in the register as an authorised absence, responsibility for the child rests with parents during these hours. They should be made aware of this at the outset.
* Schools should ensure that there is a named member of staff responsible for monitoring each reduced timetable.
* **Sending a pupil home is not “directing them off-site for education”**. Even if work is sent home, there is no quality assurance of the education being provided.
* Attendance Officers should provide the school EWO\consultation EWO and any SCC caseholders with a copy of the signed Reduced Timetable Proforma (**Appendix 1**) as soon as agreement is reached. This means that oversight can be maintained during attendance audits.
* To maintain signed copies of the proforma and risk assessment which may be useful for audit purposes, or, as evidence should exclusions or behaviour sanctions become necessary in the future.
* Schools should allow Education Welfare Officers, consultation Education Welfare Officers, or other SCC caseholders access to school supporting plans upon which the reduced timetable was agreed, upon request.
* Established absence procedures should be followed for pupils on reduced timetables, who do not attend as per their agreed timetable, in the same way as for all other pupils.
* The appropriate use of reduced timetables should be referred to in the school Behaviour Policy and usage reported to governors on a termly basis.
* Attendance Officers should keep a central record of all pupils on reduced timetables.

### Transition between schools and phases of education

At the point of transfer or transition, it is the responsibility of the leaving school to inform the receiving school of any pupil subject to a reduced timetable, or who has been subject to a reduced time-timetable during the previous year, providing copies of the parentally signed Reduced Timetable Proforma and Risk Assessment.

### Off-rolling

Ofsted define off-rolling as the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without using a permanent exclusion, when the removal is primarily in the best interests of the school, rather than the best interests of the pupil. While it may not always be unlawful, Ofsted believes off-rolling is never acceptable.

The 2019 You.gov survey *Exploring the issue of off-rolling* was commissioned by Ofsted and it found that vulnerable students, with SEN or other needs, are more likely to be affected by this issue.

For the purpose of this guidance, schools could be vulnerable to accusations of off-rolling when:

* A reduced timetable has been implemented without parental consultation and\or permission.
* A reduced timetable has been implemented but no reviews have taken place or, they have ceased to take place.
* The pupil has SEN or other needs that have not been identified or met.
* A reduced timetable has been in place for a significant period of time with no attempts or willingness by the school to increase the hours.
* Other avenues to support the pupil have not been explored or put in place.

If the above circumstances led to a parent feeling under pressure to remove their child from the school roll, as their only option to try and secure greater access to education for their child at another school, this could be viewed as off-rolling.

### GUIDANCE STATEMENTS

### The school day – sessions

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 2011 state that, for schools maintained by a local authority, every day on which a school meets shall be divided into two sessions which shall be separated by a break in the middle of the day unless exceptional circumstances make this undesirable.

The start and finish times schools set for each session are **set for all pupils**.

The Education Act 2002, Section 32, confirms that it is the responsibility of the Governing Body of all maintained schools for setting the times at which school sessions should begin and end each day.

**It is not appropriate** for schools to agree a reduced timetable that straddles both sessions in a school day, for less than 3 hours, recording a present mark for both the morning and afternoon session.

### When might a reduced timetable be used?

This is not an exhaustive list, but a reduced timetable may be considered a reasonable, proportionate and necessary, time-limited, response to the following scenarios:

* As part of a planned reintegration approach for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time due to illness, disability, mental health issues, family circumstances, post-exclusion etc.
* As part of an in-school support package. School, parent/carer and other professionals agree that a short-term (ordinarily, **no longer than six weeks**) reduced timetable would support a pupil who has become disaffected, to regain success. This should be a closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behavioural, emotional or social needs.

* For medical reasons when apupil has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. Arrangements should be part of an Individual Healthcare Plan agreed between the school and health professionals.

Southampton City Council does not consider a reduced timetable as an appropriate method of managing poor behaviour, or pupils at risk of exclusion, in the longer term. This intervention should only be considered after other strategies have been exhausted and they should be for the benefit of the pupil.

**If a parent refuses to agree to a reduced timetable for their child a full-time timetable should remain in place, other options considered and any professionals or agencies involved with the child consulted.**

### When should a reduced timetable not be used?

* When a child or young person is subject to Child Protection Planning.
* When a child or young person has an **Education Health & Care Plan** and a reduced timetable would mean that the provision set out in the plan cannot be delivered.
* When a pupil is subject to an **Education Supervision Order**, without the prior agreement of the Supervising LA Officer who will be an Education Welfare Officer.

### Child Protection Planning

When children are made subject to Child Protection Planning a multi-disciplinary meeting has deemed that there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. **It is not, therefore, considered to be an appropriate safeguarding response for such children to be placed on reduced timetables.**

If exceptional circumstances exist, they should be raised at conference, or core group meetings, and a time-limited reduced timetable should only be implemented if agreement is reached that this strategy is in the best interests of the child. It should then be reflected in the Child Protection Plan and discussed at core group meetings, which focus on achieving the outcomes of the plan.

### Children in Need (CIN)

Under S17 of the Children Act 1989, a child is considered to be in need if:

* They are unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without provision of services from the local authority.
* Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the local authority.
* They have a disability.

Children who are CIN should not be placed on a reduced timetable without prior consultation with the Social Worker.

### Children looked after

SCC has a statutory duty to provide full-time education for CLA in line with statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

If a school is considering a reduced timetable for a CLA pupil **the Virtual School Headteacher, or a representative, must be consulted and invited to the initial meeting and subsequent review meetings.** The Virtual School Headteacher, or a representative, will countersign the Reduced Timetable Proforma if arrangements are agreed and should be provided with a copy of the document along with the signed and completed Risk Assessment.

The Virtual School may consider arrangements for the reimbursement of a proportion of pupil premium plus funding that has been paid to the school, to enable top-up provision to be put in place.

The Virtual School may consider arrangements for the reimbursement of a proportion of additional funding that has been paid to the school, to enable top-up provision to be put in place.

### Pupils with an SEND

SCC has a statutory duty to provide full-time education for children with EHCPs. If a school is considering a reduced timetable for a pupil with an EHCP **the relevant SEN Officer must be consulted and invited to an early annual review** at the earliest opportunity**.** Any decision to implement a reduced timetable must be in consultation and agreement with the child/young persons’ parents and should demonstrate a clear benefit to the child/young person, with a carefully planned transition to a full time timetable.

Schools must supply a copy of the parentally agreed Reduced Timetable Proforma and LA model Risk Assessment to their SEN Officer as soon as it has been agreed for pupils with an EHCP

Schools should ensure that they are compliant with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, the Equality Act 2010.

The Polygon School has a specific curriculum for a small group of pupils who require intensive education delivered on an individual basis, known as “The Stretch Programme”. Each programme of study is designed to address the individual needs of the child, using learning resources available in the community.

EHCP children on the Stretch Programme must still be reported to the local authority as part of the termly census return, however, the proforma and LA model risk assessment contained in this document do not need to be completed provided that:

* In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, the school will ensure that they have written confirmation from any alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.
* A risk assessment has been carried out.
* There is a specific education focus for each element of the programme.
* Attendance at each element of the programme is monitored so that attendance may be accurately recorded in the attendance register.
* The school satisfies themselves that every venue the young person attends is appropriate for their age and understanding and to meet their individual needs.
* There is appropriate documentation held in the school on the programme.
* Parental agreement has been secured.
* The school will ensure daily contact with the pupil.
* The Stretch Management Committee will ensure that the programme reflects the maximum numbers of hour’s possible, taking into account the pupil’s individual needs.

### Pupils with medical conditions

Reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate pupils who would otherwise struggle to attend school due to illness or a medical condition.

Pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons are covered by the DfE statutory guidance Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

We would expect schools to request written medical evidence in all cases when pupils are reported to be unable to access regular education provision and an Individual Healthcare Plan to have been agreed and implemented, in accordance with the above statutory guidance.

The Inclusion Officer (for Pupils with Medical Needs) will work closely with schools and health colleagues to develop a robust multi-agency process and policy that supports pupils, through effective identification and review and also to support the development and co-ordination of the education provision for pupils with medical needs.

### Process

A flow chart is included as **Appendix 3**.

In circumstances where the school considers that it may be necessary to agree and implement a time-limited reduced timetable for a pupil, the following process should be observed:

* In line with the Southampton [Continuum of Need](http://southamptonlscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Continuum-of-need-combined-4.pdf), where appropriate, a multi-agency Team Around the Child/Family planning meeting should have been held.
* If not present at the Team Around the Child/Family, a meeting should be arranged with the pupil and parents to discuss the proposals and effective communication with parents should continue throughout the intervention.
* All professionals involved should be satisfied that there is a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention, aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil by means of an Early Help Assessment, Personal Education Plan, Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Healthcare Plan, Behaviour Support Plan or Individual Education Plan.
* The pupil should have an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the intervention.
* The written agreement of parents/carers should have been obtained.
* The intervention should be for a time limited period of **no more than six weeks** and reviewed on a regular enough basis so that the school can evidence professional oversight and an evaluation of the success of the strategy and any impact upon the pupil.
* There should be a clear plan for increasing the hours to full-time which should have clear and measurable objectives.
* A Risk Assessment should be completed and considered.

### Risk assessments

The risk assessment template included in this guidance document as Appendix 2 was designed in conjunction with our EP service, with a focus on ensuring that robust risk assessments were in place for all pupils placed on a reduced timetable.

It is hoped that a comprehensive risk assessment would indicate a reduction in the level of risk to a pupil. A risk assessment that indicated an escalation should contain detailed information to support why continuing with a reduced timetable is considered a suitable strategy.

It is not compulsory to use this template, it has been provided to help and support schools. If schools have a template which they prefer to use this is not an issue, **provided that it is fit for this** **particular purpose** and enables schools to demonstrate a rigorous evaluation and review process.

The review deadlines on the risk assessment may be set on a case by case basis but a school must be able to evidence under external scrutiny of regular reviews of the use of a reduced timetable as a strategy and whether it continues to support the needs of the pupil.

### Termly local authority data collection

Although the statutory DfE termly census returns cover pupils on reduced timetables, they advise that this only applies to pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The LA data collection is therefore the only method of collecting this data and **all schools are expected to comply**. Schools with no pupils on reduced timetables must make a nil response to Inclusion Services by e‑mail.

Inclusion Services send all schools a spreadsheet to complete on a termly basis, to coincide with census, requesting the information that the LA is required to provide to Ofsted of all pupils on a reduced timetable.

Once received this information is used to update individual pupil records on the LA database which, in turn, enables the LA to provide the required Ofsted report.

If a pupil has been placed on a reduced timetable that rotates between patterns during different weeks, please enter all patterns on your spreadsheet return e.g.

*Child name* Week A (then detail the hours)

*Child name* Week B (then detail the hours)

In these circumstances we will enter onto the pupil’s records the pattern they were subject to on the relevant census date.

### Statutory obligations placed upon parents

The Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age:

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

1. *to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
2. *to any special educational needs he may have,*

*either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

Once a parent has agreed a reduced timetable for a period of 6 school weeks, if the intervention at the end of this time has not delivered improvement in the child’s access to education, other strategies should be considered. If a parent were to agree to a further 6 school week reduced timetable they could be in breach of their duty under the Education Act to ensure their child was in receipt of full-time education.

### EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE LEGAL INTERVENTIONS

The work of the Education Welfare Service is governed by Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007/ 1068 and amendments 2012/1046 and 2013/757 and should be read in conjunction with the guidance to schools produced by Southampton Education Welfare Service.  Education Welfare Officers employed by the LA can:

* Investigate potential offences of non-school attendance under Education Act 1996.
* Caution parents/carers under Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.
* Prosecute parents/carers for failing in their duty under Section 7 Education Act 1996 to secure education of children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
* Applications for Education Supervision Orders under Section 36 Children Act 1989
* Issue Penalty Notice fines, as an alternative to prosecution, for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they are registered, or, at a place where alternative provision is provided.  This specifically relates to unauthorised absence or unauthorised leave of absence.

There is a direct conflict for the service in progressing cases to court where a pupil does not have an offer of full-time education.  It is, therefore, unlikely that legal intervention will be pursued against a parent/carer in such cases.

Education Welfare Officers\consultation Education Welfare Officers will always discuss pupils on reduced timetables during attendance audits or through consultation and signed copies of the proforma and risk assessment should be provided to EWOs on request.

### FAMILIES MATTER

Families Matter is an approach which identifies families with multiple and complex needs who require support to prevent these issues escalating. Families Matter will work with families, schools and the Education Welfare Service to maximise attendance and improve educational outcomes for children.

The Government measures effectiveness by looking at the achievement of positive progress against a number of key strands and school attendance is one of these strands.

Services that apply the families matter approach will consider referrals for families with children who have a reduced timetable but the referred family will need to meet 3 other Family Matters Strands to be able to receive support. Offers of support may be contingent upon the school agreeing to provide a ‘fuller’ offer to achieve the objective.

### Southampton Inclusion Partnership Outreach for SEND (previously Southampton Advisory Outreach Service)

The function of the outreach service is to build the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and is commissioned by SCC. Outreach staff work within school settings, modelling and sharing good practice focused on improving pupil outcomes.

As part of their support, Outreach Advisory Teachers support schools in setting targets for pupils. These are reviewed at the end of the intervention and are used to measure impact and progress. The service also collates data in order to demonstrate the impact of support on attendance, exclusions and reduced timetables.

In relation to the use of reduced timetables, the Outreach Service provides advice in line with SCC protocols and good practice guidance. As directed by the LA, Outreach Advisory Teachers may ask to see written documentation outlining arrangements for individual pupils on reduced timetables. The service will provide advice to support the school in meeting the pupil’s needs and increasing the pupil’s time in school. With regard to funded support, the service has a duty to inform the SCC SEND Team of schools requiring particular support in relation to the implementation of reduced timetables.

### EXPECTATIONS OF GOVERNORS

Governing bodies of maintained schools have a duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, requiringthem to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This document will therefore be circulated to Chairs of Governors.

The DfE Governance Handbook, October 2020, states that:

* One of the three core functions of governance is holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils.
* Effective governance is based on six key features, one of which is accountability that drives up educational standards.

Governors should, therefore, be made aware of pupils who are not being offered their entitlement to full-time education and hold the school to account for their educational performance.

### Questions Governors should ask of their schools:

* How many pupils does the school currently have on reduced timetables?
* Are any of these children subject to CP or CIN Planning?
* How long has each pupil been on a reduced timetable?
* What are the reasons for this intervention being implemented?
* Does the school have parental agreement to every reduced timetable?
* Does the school have a parentally signed risk assessment in place for each case?
* Do the school believe it is an effective strategy and if so why?
* Does the school have a clear understanding of the individual needs and challenges of each pupil and have they tried to meet them?
* Can the school evidence educational progress for pupils on reduced timetables?
* Do any of the cases involve pupils with EHCPs and have the LA SEND Team been involved and an interim annual review called?
* Does the school provide termly census returns to the LA of pupils on reduced timetables?
* What impact do reduced timetables have on whole school attendance figures?
* Is the reduced timetable cohort over-represented in any area and has this been explored further e.g. SEND, exclusions, particular year groups?
* Does the school have an effective behaviour policy and is it consistently applied?
* Are Individual Health Plans in place for **every** child on a reduced timetable for medical reasons?

### POWER OF SCHOOLS TO DIRECT A PUPIL OFF-SITE FOR EDUCATION TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR

The September 2017 statutory DfE guidance, Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England states that:

***‘Informal’ or ‘unofficial’ exclusions, such as sending pupils home ‘to cool off’, are not allowed, even if they are with the agreement of parents. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must follow the formal process including being formally recorded.’***

The DfE document *Alternative Provision. Statutory guidance for local authorities. January 2013* states that:

*Governing bodies of maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education to improve his or her behaviour. The Secretary of State has made regulations, as is required by the related primary legislation, concerning schools’ use of this power. Under revised off-site regulations the governing body must:*

* Ensure that parents (**and the LA where the pupil has a statement of special educational** **needs**) are given clear information about the placement: why, when, where, and how it will be reviewed;
* Keep the placement under review and involve parents in the review. The regulations specify regular reviews but do not specify how often reviews must take place (that should be decided on a case-by-case basis). Reviews should be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefitting from it; and
* Have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State on the use of this power.

This legislation does not apply to academies who can arrange off-site provision for similar purposes under their general powers, set out in the Academy Trust’s Articles of Association. Although the regulations and guidance do not apply, they can still provide academies with an example of good practice.

### CODING OF ABSENCE

A legal duty is placed upon schools to ensure that registers are accurately completed.  They form part of the witness statement presented to the court in the case of a prosecution or application to a family proceedings court for an Education Supervision Order.

Schools must record the child's attendance accurately in the attendance register and as reduced timetables should be recorded as an authorised absence, they will have an impact on the overall attendance rate for the school.

Non-attendance at timetabled sessions in school, or at any off-site provision, should be coded in the same manner as for all other pupils, including non-attendance related to COVID.

There are safeguarding implications for inaccurate registration coding and implications should the pupil change provision if attendance is coded inconsistently in different schools.

In the absence of any update guidance regarding registration the January 2009 government guidance “Absence and Attendance Codes.  Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities” stated:

*DCSF advises schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the register was taken. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session.*

We would recommend that this advice is still followed.

### B code

* ONLY to be used if the pupil is present at an off-site provision educational activity which has been **approved** by the school and a visit has taken place to ensure that there are **no safeguarding concerns**.
* This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity.
* Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the school is regularly updated on the pupil’s attendance.

### C code

In agreeing to a reduced timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day so must record those sessions as authorised absence.

* To be used for the sessions that have been mutually agreed not to involve attendance at school or an alternative provision.
* The school must 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.

### D code

* ONLY to be used by the **home school** when a pupil is registered at two schools, or dually with a pupil referral unit.
* The dual registered school must be coding the pupil's attendance in the usual way and ensuring the home school is kept informed.

### E code

* Use of the E code is provision specific so only the provision that has excluded the pupil may use the E code.
* If an excluded pupil is on a reduced timetable, the E code may only be used for sessions that the pupil is barred from the school site i.e. those during which parents must ensure their child is not in a public place. This is particularly important as the SCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct allows for the issue of a Penalty Notice for “Failure by a parent to ensure the child is not in a public place whilst being excluded from school on more than one occasion**.”**
* The C code must continue to be used for an excluded pupil to cover sessions when the pupil is not required to attend school, as a result of their reduced timetable and the school is providing work to be completed at home.
* If a pupil is dual registered at more than one provision, only the provision that issued the exclusion can use the E code.

**Example 1:**

A pupil who is dually registered with the PRU is excluded by the home school during the Monday morning session and not allowed to return until the following Monday. The pupil attends their home school Mondays and Thursdays and the PRU Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Friday.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Home school register | PRU register |
| Monday | / | E | D | D |
| Tuesday | D | D | / | \ |
| Wednesday | D | D | / | \ |
| Thursday | E | E | D | D |
| Friday | D | D | / | \ |

**Example 2:**

A single registration pupil is excluded during the Monday morning session and not allowed to return until the following Monday, but is subject to a reduced timetable and attends mornings only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Attendance register |
| Monday | / | C |
| Tuesday | E | C |
| Wednesday | E | C |
| Thursday | E | C |
| Friday | E | C |

### O code and other absence codes

* O must be used for any sessions when it has been agreed that the pupil should attend school, or an alternative provision, but does not.
* Other absences codes e.g. ‘m’ should be used in the same manner as for all other pupils for any session that the pupil is expected to attend school, or an alternative provision.

### SIMS

It is recommended that Attendance Officers set up a user defined group within SIMs.net for the purpose of being able to keep track of reduced timetables. This will also assist schools in completing the LA termly data request. Schools can contact the SIMS help desk on 023 8083 4555 should they require assistance in setting up the user defined group.

The benefits of this approach are that, once the user defined group is set up, you will be able to run any of your existing attendance report and assessment mark sheets with a specific focus on this group of pupils, once you add this aspect to your report.

Schools will then easily be able to have oversight of the whole cohort.

### REVIEW AND MONITORING

* The Education Welfare Service will discuss pupils on reduced timetables during attendance audits.
* After each census a summary of reduced timetable activity in the city will be provided to the Service Lead for Education and School Improvement Officers The information will be fed into the Schools Monitoring Group, as part of the inclusion agenda and this may be a limiting factor in relation to outcomes from this group.
* School Improvement Officers will discuss and report upon the use of reduced timetables, or schools that do not respond to the LA request, during monitoring visits.
* The SEND Team will hold schools to account via the SEND Code of Practice.

The following actions may be taken by the LA as part of the strategic oversight of pupils placed on reduced timetables:

* Raise concerns directly with a Head Teacher or Governing Body\Trust.
* Visit the school to further understand individual cases.
* Raise concerns through School Improvement Officer monitoring visits, as a safeguarding or standards issue.
* Instigate a thematic safeguarding review where there are serious concerns.
* Non-compliance with the termly data collection will be reported to the Director of Children’s Services as a potential safeguarding issue.

Schools should be aware that if the requirement to deliver the national curriculum is not being met and efforts to hold schools to account for improving access to education to an appropriate level are unsuccessful, the local authority will consider action through the statutory inspection process and the Scheme for Financing Schools.

### CONTACTS

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| --- | --- | --- |
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### GOVERNANCE

This policy will be implemented by the Southampton City Council Inclusion Services Team, schools, Children’s Services colleagues and parents.

It will be monitored by the Inclusion Services Team and updated on an annual basis at the end of the summer term.

### SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

* Removed a Children Not In School section, which made schools aware that pupils on reduced timetables will form part of the Children Not in School Register.
* Updated references to Southampton Advisory Outreach Service, to reflect recent name change. This is now referred to as Southampton Inclusion Partnership Outreach Service for SEND.

### A screenshot of a questionnaire  Description automatically generatedAPPENDIX 1: REDUCED TIMETABLE PROFORMA

**APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT**

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### APPENDIX 2: PUPIL RISK ASSESSMENT

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### APPENDIX 3: RTT PROCESS

