

Modified timetables – guidance

Links to other guidance and statutory guidance

1. Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025.
2. Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, 2015.
3. Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges, 2021.
4. Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools, 2023.
5. Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, 2023.

Expectations

- [***Working together to improve school attendance – August 2024***](#) provides the statutory guidance for schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities with regards to their roles and responsibilities for attendance. This document identifies the context in which modified timetables can be used and parameters for their use. *It is clearly understood that all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.* There is no legal definition of what constitutes full-time education. However, the government has made it clear through their non-statutory guidance for schools in England that there is a minimum expectation of 32.5 hours.¹
“All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special education needs they may have” Paragraph 65, Working together to improve school attendance -August 2024.
- A modified timetable means a child is attending school for fewer hours than the majority of their peers. With this context modified timetables should be *rare, time* limited and always in the *best interests of the child*.

“In very exceptional circumstances, **where it is in a pupil's best interests**, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary modified timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. **A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.**”

Paragraph 66, Working together to improve school attendance -August 2024.

When might a modified timetable be considered

- A modified timetable should only be used in exceptional circumstances. It should **never** be used to manage behaviour. Doing so could be classified as an *illegal suspension*.
- Each case for a modified timetable should be reviewed on an individual basis.

¹ [Length of the school week - non-statutory guidance](#)

- If the basis of the arrangement links to medical need then schools must give due consideration to the following guidance [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#). This includes statutory guidance from the DfE and LA guidance from the admissions team which needs to be considered.
- There is guidance available which provides information about to support pupils with mental health concerns when this is impacting on pupils' attendance. [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)² This includes examples and case studies which schools may find helpful.

Notification of part-time timetable usage

- Any modified timetables should only be used in exceptional circumstances. It must also be temporary, ambitious and the necessity for pupils to return to full-time education needs to be evident.
- All schools and education settings **must** inform the SEND statutory service of any use of part-time timetables for pupils with an EHCP or under assessment. Or the virtual school for children looked after (CLA). This includes pupils in Reception. It is important that this information is shared with the local authority as the child is at risk of missing education. Schools are welcome to contact their link advisor when using modified timetables for pupils not outlined above.
- This should be done as soon as a need for a modified timetable is identified so that the Local Authority is informed and relevant personnel can be informed.
- Upon receipt of the notification relevant professionals will be contacted where appropriate. If a child is known to social care, then relevant social workers must be informed by the school. If a child is looked after, then virtual school colleagues must be updated as relevant. Statutory guidance is clear that schools must keep social workers involved, if the pupil has one.

Expectations of a part-time timetable

Modified timetables can be an appropriate tool to ensure the best interests of children are being met, in *very exceptional circumstances*. This may include, for example, when there is a medical context and re-integration from a period of absence. Please refer to expectations outlined in the section above "**When might a modified timetable be considered**".

- For pupils who are under *compulsory school age*, guidance can be found in the **Early Years Transition Toolkit** which outlines expectations for pupils in the EYFS beyond the first 6 week settling in period. Notification should be made to Early Years and inclusion advisor.
- If a part-time timetable is being considered, then the expectations outlined in the government guidance need to be followed.
- Careful thought to be given to the broad and balanced **curriculum** and learning that children will be missing. How is work provided for the child to complete when not in school? Does this cover all areas of the curriculum? What provision is in place for the safeguarding curriculum and other elements of school life? Where relevant careful consideration needs to be given to how children will access their exams. School will need clear routines in place to be able to ensure

² [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

that feedback is provided on work submitted. Expectations about the quality and quantity of work remain.

- Clear expectations and protocols need to be agreed with the child's parents / carers to ensure that they are safe at all times. There needs to be clarity about where children will be when not in school and how they will travel to and from school.
- Routines for review need to be well-established and adhered to. The modified timetable should be time limited, ambitious and ensure the necessity to increase the time in school is made explicitly clear.
- Parents and carers need to freely consent to the part-time timetable that is in place. Leaders must ensure that parents fully understand the rationale for the timetable.
- Review processes need to be well-established to ensure that all aspects of provision for the child are reviewed and formally evaluated, *at least every three weeks*. There should be regular and clear communication with the parents more routinely.
- Parents must give consent for the modified timetable to take place. It is important that there is an agreed understanding for the rationale, purpose and that the ambition remains to return to full time attendance.
- Taken from the statutory guidance, a part time timetable must:
 - Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
 - Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
 - Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
 - Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a parttime timetable for a prolonged period.³

Attendance coding

- Schools must ensure that they are using the correct attendance codes for pupils on part-time timetables. The correct code is **C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable**. This will record the absence as an agreed absence.
- If you have any questions regarding the coding, please contact schoolattendance@westminster.gov.uk

Ofsted

- The inspection handbook (2024) made specific and clear reference to part-time timetables and how these will be reviewed through the inspection process. There is a clear expectation that they should only be used in exceptional circumstances in the pupils' best interests. There may be occasions when there is a need for temporary part-time timetable to meet the individual needs of pupils.

³ [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) (Paragraph 67).

- Failure to follow the agreed statutory procedures for part time timetables can result in an impact on the leadership and management grade for an inspection. Paragraphs 425 and 426 in the inspection handbook (2024) outlined the context and expectations around modified timetables.
- The Ofsted Academy has published the inspector training which references part-time timetables. There are two relevant sections available. These are both available on the Ofsted Academy website and schools are encouraged to watch these brief training videos. *‘In the best interests of children and young people’* and *‘Inspecting attendance well’*. The training can be found by following this link and it is free for everyone to access. [Ofsted publishes inspector training materials - GOV.UK](#)
- The operating guidance makes clear and specific reference to part-time timetables. There is a clear outline that this will be explored carefully with leaders, through an inclusion, behaviour & attendance, leadership and governance, and safeguarding lens. They are specifically referenced in the behaviour and attendance section of the toolkit. Placing a pupil on a part-time timetable for behavioural reasons is explicitly identified as evidence of off-rolling.
- There is a specific section in the operating guidance linking to the use of part-time timetables.
- Key areas for leaders to reflect on are identified in this section:
- *“Ask leaders why a pupil has a part-time timetable and check that there have been plans from the beginning for the pupil to return to a full-time timetable. In each case, evaluate leaders’ decisions and whether the use of a part-time timetable is in the pupil’s best interests. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution or used to manage behaviour.*
- *If a part-time timetable is justified, but the school has no clear plans for the pupil to return to full-time education, you should take this into account when deciding on your grading for the leadership and governance evaluation area.*
- *Check that the school has informed the local authority of any pupils on a part-time timetable who are looked after and/or have an EHC plan.*
- *If the school is using part-time timetables inappropriately, this may be an unlawful suspension of a pupil (see next paragraph).*
- *An unlawful suspension is when a school sends a pupil home or tells them not to come into school, often because of their behaviour, but does not use a formal suspension. If the school has suspended a pupil unlawfully, consider a grade of ‘urgent improvement’ for the attendance and behaviour evaluation area.”* (Operating Guidance, Ofsted, October 2025)

“Leaders and staff make sure that (when they are needed) part-time timetables are short term and have defined end points, and plans for supporting pupils’ return to full-time education are clear and appropriate” Pg 39 – Ofsted Toolkit, schools.

With thanks to The Collegiate Trust (TCT) for contributing to the development of this guidance.

Appendix 1

School *must* make contact to notify of the intention to use a modified timetable if a child has an EHCP, is in the process of assessment or is looked after.

SEND

SEN@rbkc.gov.uk

If there is a working relationship with the named case officer, contact should be made directly to them.

Children looked after

virtual.school@rbkc.gov.uk

virtualschool@westminster.gov.uk

Schools are welcome to contact their link advisor when using modified timetables for pupils who are not in either of these groups.

SEND team or Virtual school send the attached document and school completes the first page.

- Other relevant agencies notified e.g. school standards link adviser, social care and attendance team.
- Key agencies now aware.

Regular TAC meetings to be arranged to monitor the use of the modified timetables.

- All relevant agencies to be involved in the TAC meetings and review processes.

Appendix 2

TAC protocol (formal review meeting).

- *If a modified timetable is in place this means a multi-agency approach is crucial to ensure that the needs of the child are being met.*
- *This involves routine meetings between the school, parents/ carers, and relevant agencies (e.g. SEND and social care).*
- *A TAC should be called as needed, taking different contexts into consideration e.g. age of the child. But should be, as a minimum should be every 3 weeks as part of the review.*
- *The TAC should be chaired by the school, forming the review meeting, and relevant involved agencies invited.*

Appendix 3

Name of pupil:

School:

Year Group:

Resident borough:

SEND: EHCP / EHCNA/SEND support

CLA: Y / N

SC: EH / CIN / CP /Previously known to SC

Public Health: Y/N

Current attendance:

Number of suspensions:

Date and who LA informed of the timetable:

Member of staff responsible for monitoring the modified timetable:

Reason/s for the modified timetable: *If the school has medical evidence (CAMHS referral/ letter from doctor etc) please reference below. **Include the steps that were taken before the modified timetable.***

Objectives of the modified timetable:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Additional support that is being put in place for the pupil while they are in school:

This should include support from outside services/agencies, where applicable.

How time outside of school will be managed and monitored:

How work is to be sent home, agreed routines for feedback, how work will be set e.g. paper or electronic.

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Detail of the modified timetable:

Day	Time that the pupil will be in school	Total number of hours in school	Time completed
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Day	Time that the pupil will be in school	Total number of hours in school	Time completed
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Day	Time that the pupil will be in school	Total number of hours in school	Time completed
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Date modified timetable started:

Review date:

*A weekly check in from the school to the parent/carer is advised. This is to review the hours and provision for the child. There **must** be a formal review with parents/carers and the school after **three weeks**, or sooner if the anticipated end date is earlier.*

Anticipated date for pupil to return to school full time:

Note- if the school feels at the point of review that a modified timetable is still applicable/ appropriate after 6 weeks then school leaders need to ensure all agencies are aware of this.

Information for parents/ carers:

I alongside the school have recognised that my child is struggling to attend school full time. I have worked with the school to agree to a modified timetable that will best support my child’s needs. I understand that this is for a limited period of time and the ambition is for my child to attend full time. During the period of the modified timetable, I recognise that both the school and I have different responsibilities. I agree that I will:

- Take responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school.
- Ensure there is supervision of schoolwork during those hours.
- Ensure there is a flow of work between school and home for marking and guidance.
- Take responsibility for the health and safety on my child when they are not in school.

Information for the school:

We alongside the child’s parents / carers have recognised that their child is struggling to attend school full time. We have worked with the parent to agree to a modified timetable that will best support the child’s needs for a limited period of time. During the period of the modified timetable, we recognise that both the parents/ carers and the school have different responsibilities. We agree that we will:

During the period of the modified timetable the school will:

- Ensure a risk assessment is completed with regards to potential safeguarding, and welfare concerns.
- Ensure that the absence is authorised on the attendance record when the pupil is not in school, and C2 code is used.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the modified timetable.
- Hold a review on the agreed date. Show an ambition for full-time education by having an anticipated agreed end point identified.
- Provide appropriate work for the student to do whilst at home and give meaningful feedback that supports their development in line with the school’s policy on work completed. Provide appropriate support when the child is in school to best facilitate the child’s learning.

Signature from school colleagues:

Signature from parent/ carer:

Date: Headteacher:

Date: Parent / carer:

Date: DSL / SENCO / CLA Lead:

Appendix: Risk assessment for modified timetable

	Yes	No
Is the rationale for a modified timetable in the pupil's best interest with clear objectives? Have these been clearly shared, and understood by parents / carers?		
Has the pupil been on a modified timetable previously?		
Is there a start date and an end date of no more than 6 weeks?		
Have parents/carers given their consent and completed the paperwork?		
If pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or under assessment has the SENCO given written agreement? Has the school discussed the modified timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.		
If pupil is a Looked After Child, has a Virtual School representative and the Schools Designated Teacher for Looked After Children given written agreement?		
If there are safeguarding concerns, has the DSL been consulted to ensure that it is appropriate for the pupil to be at home? Detail any risks below.		
If the pupil has a social worker, has the school kept them informed of the process?		
Has sufficient and appropriate work been set for those hours the pupil is not in school? Does this include learning across the breadth of curriculum subjects.		
Is there an agreed review date after 3 weeks?		

Are there any potential risks involved in the use of a modified timetable? If yes, please list below		
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Risks involved	How does the school mitigate the risk

Signature of school leader:

Date: