

Introduction

At Anthem Schools Trust (Anthem) we believe that all pupils should be supported to achieve their full potential. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. However, in very exceptional circumstances, at the Headteacher's discretion, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs.

This guidance note sets out our approach to these exceptional circumstances.

A reduced timetable will only be considered by the Headteacher in the following very limited circumstances:

- Where a medical condition (physical or mental health) or family bereavement prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.
- Where there are behavioural difficulties and the school is trying a part-time timetable as an intervention to avoid permanent exclusion. When the reduced timetable is introduced because of behavioural difficulty, it will very rarely be appropriate to repeat the intervention. Different interventions need to be utilised if the reduced timetable failed the first time around.
- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition (physical or mental health) or family bereavement that prevents full time attendance for a time-limited period.
- Where a pupil joining the school has significant needs and a reduced timetable would support his or her entry into the school and school routines.
- In other very exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher.

It is for the Headteacher, with support and guidance from their Education Director, to decide what these exceptional circumstances are. Further advice can be sought from Head of Legal and Head of Inclusion. The Headteacher has to justify:

- Why the pupil isn't able to receive full-time education; and
- That the decision is in the best interests of the child.

A reduced timetable will not be used:

- as a disciplinary measure
- as a form of exclusion – all exclusions will be properly recorded in line with our Exclusions Policy and statutory guidance
- as a long-term solution (there is no legal definition of long-term solution but Anthem suggests the arrangements should ideally be for one term or less and not normally for longer than two terms)

Reduced timetable protocol

- An assessment of need (including wider needs and input from other agencies) will be carried out prior to a reduced timetable being agreed.
- A full risk assessment, including a risk assessment of home and safeguarding, will be undertaken to evaluate the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the pupil.
- Headteachers will discuss all reduced timetable proposals with their Education Director.

- The objectives of any part-time timetable will be explained, and all relevant parties will be kept updated and informed.
- The parent/carer(s) and child (where appropriate) must consent to the proposed reduced timetable by signing an agreed reduced timetable plan together with the Headteacher.
- Pupils will be provided with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is marked, assessed and that constructive feedback is given to the pupil. These arrangements will be set out in the reduced timetable plan.
- Parent/carer(s) must indicate within the reduced timetable plan how they will support the pupil's safety off site and how schoolwork will be supervised.
- The reduced timetable will be for a pre-agreed limited period and reviewed by the school weekly. The school will keep parent/carer(s) regularly updated.

Pupils with SEN and/or a disability

A reduced timetable will only be used for a pupil with SEN and/or a disability in very limited circumstances after careful consideration of all other options and always only in the best interests of the child.

Headteachers will need to ensure the school has done all they can before a reduced timetable is recommended for a pupil with SEN and/or a disability. This is because the school may be at risk of failing to have due regard to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Action suggested before a reduced timetable is recommended for a pupil with SEN and/or a disability:

- Liaise with an educational psychologist, where this is possible within the timeframe
- Make reasonable internal adjustments to lessons, the class learning environment and timetable where appropriate
- Review the child's SEN provision to uncover any unmet needs - especially if the child has got an education, health and care (EHC) plan (and see section below on EHCPs)
- Discuss with your Education Director and Anthem Head of Inclusion

Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

Where a reduced timetable is being considered for a pupil with an EHCP, the school will first **attempt to** convene an early annual review/interim review of the EHCP to consider other options/support, secure the agreement of both parent/carer(s) and the SEND caseworker and to ensure that all elements of the provision can be met through the reduced timetable arrangement.

Pupils with on-going medical conditions

Where a pupil has an on-going medical condition, which necessitates missing more than 15 school days (or more than 30 sessions) as a result of the condition, the school should discuss this with the LA. This decision should be made in accordance with their Individual Health Care Plan under the Administration of Medicines and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Looked After Children

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are some of our most vulnerable pupils and therefore a reduced timetable will only be implemented in very limited circumstances when all other relevant interventions have been tried.

A reduced timetable plan will not be implemented without the written agreement of the relevant Virtual School.

Children subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan

Children in Early Help or open to social care **may be placed at greater risk if placed on a reduced timetable**. Therefore, any part-time arrangement will only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances when all other relevant interventions have been tried. A reduced timetable plan will only be implemented following a multi-agency review meeting.

Reception children

If parent/carer(s) wish, children in reception year can attend school part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age unless exceptional circumstances apply as set out above.

Parent/carer(s) can also defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made, unless exceptional circumstances apply as set out above.

A child reaches compulsory school age on certain 'prescribed days' following their fifth birthday, or on their fifth birthday if it falls on one of these dates. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

Parent/carer(s) wishing to make these arrangements for reception year children should contact the Headteacher to agree a plan.

Marking of reduced timetable on the attendance register

In agreeing to a reduced timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence – Code C.

Flexi-schooling

A reduced timetable is different to flexi-schooling. 'Flexi-schooling' refers to a combination of school attendance and home education.

Parent/carer(s) interested in teaching their children at home, either full-time or part-time should discuss these options with the school. Headteachers must accept requests for full-time home-schooling but can refuse to allow part-time home-schooling (flexi-schooling).

Reviewed September 2021, Head of Legal.