

## **Protocol for Pupils on a Part-Time Timetable**

### **School Attendance**

It is acknowledged that part-time timetables, when they are used sparingly and to support educational needs, can play a role in education settings for some children. However, their use is inappropriate without parental/carer consent, for indeterminate periods of time and without multi-agency input. This raises safeguarding issues for all children, particularly those already known to social care. It also means that children do not receive their entitlement to a full time education. Everyone must take greater responsibility for knowing where these pupils are.

In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or receive alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as an authorised absence.

### **Unofficial exclusions**

A 2017 report from the Institute for Public Policy Research, *Making the Difference*, argued that alongside the growing number of official exclusions, there are also significant issues with how unofficial exclusions are being used by schools. It also highlighted that excluded children are often the most vulnerable: *"twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and 10 times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems."*

*DfE statutory guidance stipulates:*

Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be formally recorded.

### **The Law**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils. Hull City Council has a statutory duty to ensure that full-time provision is made available, appropriate to their needs, for all pupils deemed fit for school unless the parent/carer educates their child otherwise.

All pupils registered at school 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 /4 (Year 10)
- 25 hours at Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

## **DfE and Ofsted Guidance**

The DfE acknowledges the educational need for reduced timetables for limited periods but is clear that they should not be treated as a long term plan. The DfE also expects a reduced timetable to be managed through a robust multi-agency plan. This must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or to receive alternative provision.

Ofsted takes the view that there is an obligation for all schools to notify the local authority of any part-time education arrangements. This includes schools maintained by the local authority, academies and free schools.

Ofsted will, as part of its 'Integrated Looked After Children and Safeguarding' (ILACS) inspections of local authorities, ask for a report on children for whom the local authority are responsible who are of school age and are not in receipt of full time school education at the time of the inspection. This report is expected to include for each pupil:

- key identification data
- type of educational provision being received, including home tuition
- number of hours' provision each week
- if the child has been excluded
- the date when alternative provision began.

Any failure by a local authority to comply with their statutory duties will be regarded, by Ofsted, as a matter likely to affect the overall judgement on safeguarding.

## **Recommended Practice**

Best practice with part-time timetables is to initially identify the needs using a multi-agency approach. It is important that parents and pupils are involved in the process from the very outset. A part-time table must have the consent of the parents/carers.

The rationale, arrangements, targets, strategies and planned end date should be set out in an appropriate multi-agency plan. Plans should be designed for a limited period of time and must be reviewed regularly during that period. All part-time timetables must take account of safeguarding issues for all children and in particular, safeguarding risks identified through a Child Protection Plan or via Children in Need procedures.

It is recommended best practice that settings undertake a risk assessment in order to assess the pupils needs in accordance with a part time timetable, it is essential that the pupils welfare during time not accessing the setting is considered. The risk assessment should take into account the health and safety of the child and potential safeguarding implications of not accessing education during the school day.

*The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could It?* (Ofsted 2014) states: 'The dangers that children and young people are exposed to when they are missing from education, home, or care cannot be underestimated. For school and local authority staff, planning, careful reviewing, and robust monitoring of children on part-time timetables are critical.'

## **Safeguarding**

Sections 157 & 175 of the Education Act 2001, place a duty on local authorities and schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. Schools must have regard and consideration for safeguarding issues and the impact these might have on a child when considering a reduced timetable. Hull City Council places a key focus on ensuring that a setting has appropriate safeguarding monitoring systems in place for pupils accessing a part time timetable and will as standard contact settings and undertake audit arrangements for these.

There is evidence from a range of sources that those who do not attend schools or similar provision full-time are at significant risk of underachieving, becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Similarly there are well-documented links between children missing education and significant safeguarding risks, including the risk of exploitation. Even being absent from school for a short time, such as being missing for part of the school day, can increase the risk of both sexual and criminal exploitation.

- Counting Lives – Responding to children who are criminally exploited 2019 (The Childrens Society)
- Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery: an addendum 2018 (Ofsted)
- Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016 (DfE)
- The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could It? 2014 (Ofsted)

## **Children in Care**

As Corporate Parents, Hull City Council requires that all children in care receive a full-time education. However, it is understood that a child in care may require a temporary part-time table approach for a short period of time. This plan must have the joint agreements of the child's social worker and Virtual School Head (or a named representative) and be recorded within the pupils Personal Education Plan.

## **Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

For pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) a reduced timetable should only be used in very limited circumstances. A pupil should not be put on a reduced timetable because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination. In some cases a special educational need may also be a disability and therefore constitute a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. For children with an EHCP the SEND Casework Officer must be consulted and agree to the arrangements.

## **Guidance for Recording and Reporting**

All schools will need to complete the electronic part-time timetable form for each pupil who meets the part-time criteria and upload the form to the service's secure data transfer area - the 'EDT' platform (Data & Analysis). If a part-time timetable ends then please complete the closure form and upload this to the secure platform so that records can be updated.

Representatives from the service may periodically contact schools which have not recorded pupils on a part-time timetable to confirm that this is correct. The local authority will also contact you if there are any queries or clarification needed to information submitted and also to review the length of time a pupil is on a part-time timetable.

## **Contacts**

Prior to commencing any pupil on a part time timetable we are requesting that all settings contact Phillip Painter (Education Officer - Safeguarding)

Email: [phillip.painter@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:phillip.painter@hullcc.gov.uk) Tel: 01482 614552 Mob: 07725481118.

For questions regarding the recording and reporting of part-time timetables, please contact Ann Harrop (Information Officer - Performance and Information Team)

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