



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## Part-Time Timetables Policy

UNCLASSIFIED

**Document Control Information**

Title: Part-Time Timetables Policy

Date: September 2023

Review date: September 2024

Version: 1.4

Classification: Unclassified

Owner: Carole Vernon, Principal Education Welfare Officer

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
Version 1	March 2018	Policy originally produced in March 2018.
Version 1.1	September 2020	Policy updated throughout and reformatted.
Version 1.2	September 2021	Policy reviewed.
Version 1.3	September 2022	Policy reviewed.
Version 1.4	September 2023	Annual review completed.

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## Executive Summary

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to ensuring that the right of every child to a full-time education is realised.

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a part-time timetable. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Council recognises that the use of a part-time timetable in respect of a child or young person of compulsory school age may be appropriate, for a short period of time – with a plan for reintegration to full-time education.

In all cases, there should be engagement with parents and relevant professionals during the consultation, development and implementation phases of a part-time timetable.

This policy outlines that the reasons why a pupil may be placed on a part-time timetable are that they may be subject to:

- A Pastoral Support/Individual Learning Plan
- An Individual Healthcare/Medical Plan
- A Reintegration Plan

Where a part-time timetable is used it is the Council's expectation that, in all but the most exceptional circumstances (e.g. for serious health/medical reasons), the pupil should be fully reintegrated in full-time education within one school term. This is in recognition that all children should be in receipt of a full-time education.

This policy outlines the procedure for implementing a part-time timetable and schools' responsibilities in relation to monitoring and reviewing those arrangements.

At all times, the safeguarding of the pupil should be a central focus of any part-time timetable. Schools are expected to report the use of part-time timetables to Wokingham Borough Council, to ensure adequate oversight and to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

*Any questions or concerns about the contents of this policy should be raised with the Quality Assurance and Policy Team via email at: [ImpactAndInspectionTeam@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:ImpactAndInspectionTeam@wokingham.gov.uk).*

## Policy Context

This policy is underpinned by national legislation and guidance:

- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years \(updated April 2020\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(updated September 2022\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(updated September 2023\)](#)
- [Inspecting local authority children's services \(updated August 2023\)](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school \(January 2013\)](#)
- [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions \(December 2015\)](#)

It should be read in conjunction with other local procedures, accessible via the WBC [Practice Guidance Library](#), under 'All-Children: Education':

- Part-Time Timetable Plan & Risk Assessment
- Children Missing Education (CME) Policy

***This policy applies to all Wokingham Borough maintained schools, academies, free schools, special schools and pupil referral units. The term 'schools' should be taken to mean the aforementioned educational settings. The term 'parents' should be taken to mean parents, carers, or those with parental responsibility for the child.***

## **1. Introduction**

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to ensuring that the right of every child to a full-time education is realised. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Council recognises that the use of a part-time timetable in respect of a child or young person of compulsory school age may be appropriate, for a short period of time.

The Council defines a part-time timetable as educational provision which consists of something less than that which is provided to the majority of pupils within the respective setting.

This policy aims to:

- Establish the agreed approach for all maintained schools, academies, free schools, special schools and pupil referral units across Wokingham Borough on the appropriate use of part-time timetables for children and young people of compulsory school age.
- Set out the standard procedure which should be followed if a part-time timetable is implemented for a pupil, to ensure the pupil and school are protected.

## **2. The Law**

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a part-time timetable. However, in exceptional circumstances, there may be a need to implement a part-time attendance plan on a temporary basis in order to meet a pupil's individual needs. The implementation of a part-time timetable must not, under any circumstances, be treated as a long-term solution. Any part-time timetable agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to return to full-time education, or be provided with Alternative Provision.

Where a part-time timetable does not have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process and/or parents' consent, implementation may be regarded as an unlawful exclusion.

Education delivered via a part-time timetable must still conform to the requirement that it is efficient and suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

## **3. Local Responsibilities**

It is an expectation of Wokingham Borough Council that, before a part-time timetable is implemented, schools seek input from parents and appropriate professionals and agree a clear plan to support the pupil to reintegrate to full-time education. There should be engagement with parents and relevant professionals during the consultation, development and implementation phases of a part-time timetable and, where appropriate, the pupil should be actively involved in this planning.

In cases where it is agreed that a part-time timetable is appropriate, written agreement must be obtained from the pupil's parents before any part-time timetable is implemented. ***In the absence of parental agreement, a part-time timetable cannot be implemented. Where parents do not agree to the use of a part-time timetable, this does not act as a valid reason to exclude a pupil from school (either on a fixed term or permanent basis).***

All part-time timetable plans must have a set date for review. Should the pupil's needs or circumstances change prior to that date, the plan should be reviewed without delay.

As schools have statutory safeguarding responsibilities for all pupils on their roll, even where parents have consented to a part-time timetable schools remain responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of any pupil off-site during school hours. Schools should confirm, in writing, the named adults who have responsibility for the safety and welfare of the pupil during school hours when they are not attending.

In Wokingham Borough, part-time timetables should only be used for a time-limited period. The maximum time period differs depending on the circumstances under which a part-time timetable is implemented (***see Section 4***).

## **4. Circumstances when a part-time timetable may be used**

### **4.1. Pastoral Support/Individual Learning Plan**

A Pastoral Support/Individual Learning Plan may be used where the school, parents and other professionals agree that a short-term (**no longer than one term**), part-time timetable would support a pupil who has become disaffected and enable them to re-engage with education through the school supporting the setting and achievement of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) targets.

A Pastoral Support Plan/Individual Learning Plan should only be used when a pupil presents with significantly challenging behavioural, emotional or social needs.

### **4.2. Individual Healthcare/Medical Plan**

An Individual Healthcare/Medical Plan may be used where a pupil has a serious physical or mental health condition and recovery is the main priority. Where schools, relevant professionals and parents agree that full-time education would not be in the best interests of the pupil for health reasons, education may be provided on a part-time basis – in accordance with the pupil's needs.

In these circumstances, a part-time timetable would be agreed between the school, relevant health professionals and parents and recorded in the pupil's Individual Healthcare/Medical Plan (***not to be confused with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)***).

Before agreeing a part-time timetable for health reasons, schools should read the Department for Education's statutory guidance: [Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#).

### 4.3. Reintegration Plan

A Reintegration Plan may be used where a pupil has been absent from school for a prolonged period of time (e.g. due to exclusion, non-attendance, or school refusal). A part-time timetable may be agreed between the school, relevant professionals and parents as a means of reintegrating the pupil into full-time education. In these circumstances, any part-time timetable agreed would be for as short a time period as possible – but **no longer than 6 weeks**.

## 5. Part-time Timetable Procedure

Where the school considers that the use of a part-time timetable is appropriate, it should consult with parents and relevant professionals/agencies (e.g. Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service, Integrated Early Help Service, Foundry College, ASSIST (Autism Spectrum Service for Information, Support & Training), CAMHS, Youth Offending Service, Children's Social Care) to ensure that a part-time timetable would be in the pupil's best interests. In particular, consideration should be given, in consultation with parents and relevant professionals, to whether Alternative Provision may better meet the pupil's needs.

A thorough risk assessment should be undertaken before any part-time timetable is implemented, which should be recorded on the **Part-Time Timetable Plan & Risk Assessment** document, accessible via the WBC [Practice Guidance Library](#) under the 'All-Children: Education' section.

Alongside this, consideration must be given to safeguarding measures whilst the pupil is on the part-time timetable. ***Schools should consider their legal obligations with regard to the safety and welfare of the pupil during school hours and seek legal advice as required, on a case-by-case basis.***

Before a part-time timetable is implemented, the school should convene a meeting to discuss it. ***This meeting must include the pupil's parents and all professionals currently working with the pupil/family.*** In addition, if the pupil:

- Is a Child in Care, a representative from the Virtual School must be present and Children's Social Care must be consulted.
- Is a Child in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan, Children's Social Care must be consulted.
- Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the SEND Team must be consulted.
- Is in Year 11 (or equivalent), the NEET Prevention Team must be consulted.



**See Section 8 for additional considerations related to vulnerable pupils.**

At the meeting, those present should agree the part-time timetable plan, which must be agreed by parents and recorded on the **Part-Time Timetable Plan & Risk Assessment**, a copy of which should be kept by the school.<sup>1</sup> The form should include:

- Agreed teaching methods and hours per week.
- Interventions that will support the pupil's planned return to full-time education.
- Review arrangements.
- The anticipated date of return to full-time education.
- The named person within the school who has responsibility for the plan.
- Any comments or representations made by the parents.
- Parents' signatures.

Once the part-time timetable has been agreed, schools must respond to the data request submission for all part-time timetables – which occurs once per half-term.

***Where a school is found to be operating a part-time timetable without having reported it to Wokingham Borough Council, the Education Welfare Service will contact the school and request that the relevant information is provided so that the part-time timetable can be monitored.***

Schools have a responsibility to provide information to Governors about any pupils placed on part-time timetables, so that the Governing Body can fulfil its responsibilities to monitor the school's provision.

See [Appendix A: Part-Time Timetable Procedure Flowchart](#).

## **6. Recording Attendance**

If a part-time timetable is agreed, this means the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day, therefore the school must record the pupil's absence as authorised (register code C).

The usual 'present' codes should be used when the pupil is present in school and the 'C' code should be used when the pupil's part-time timetable includes sessions which do not involve attendance at school or an Alternative Provision.

Where a pupil is attending Alternative Provision as part of their part-time timetable, it may be appropriate to use the 'B' code for that aspect of their timetable. It remains the school's responsibility to monitor attendance whilst the pupil attends Alternative Provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Accessible via the WBC [Practice Guidance Library](#) under the 'All-Children: Education' section.

In circumstances where the pupil is absent for a session that they were expected to attend, the absence should be dealt with and recorded in the usual way, according to the reason for absence.

## **7. Monitoring and Reviewing**

Schools should keep a central record of the arrangements for pupils on their roll who are on part-time timetables and notify Wokingham Borough Council of those pupils by completing and returning the 'notification of a pupil not in full-time education form' (*see Section 5*).

Regular bi-weekly reviews involving attendance and/or input from the pupil's parents should be held whilst the pupil is on a part-time timetable until they have been reintegrated back into full-time education. The first review should take place **within 2 weeks** of the date when the part-time timetable was implemented. Reviews should include reporting on the pupil's actual attendance; the effectiveness of interventions; the achievement of targets; consideration of the need for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment; and checks that the risk assessment is still up to date.

Schools are requested to complete half-termly returns to Wokingham Borough Council's Performance Data Team for all part-time timetables, for monitoring purposes.

Where a pupil has been on a part-time timetable for longer than originally set out in the part-time timetable plan and there is no imminent date for full reintegration, the Education Welfare Service will contact the school to provide support and challenge. In particular, the Education Welfare Service will seek to satisfy itself that all professionals and parents are working towards the pupil resuming full-time education and help to remove any barriers which may be preventing this.

When a pupil returns to full-time education, the school must inform Wokingham Borough Council's Education Welfare Service.

## **8. Additional Considerations for Vulnerable Pupils**

### **8.1. Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

A part-time timetable should only be used for a pupil with an EHCP in very limited circumstances. A pupil should not be placed on a part-time timetable because of their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – this may constitute discrimination and a violation of the Equality Act 2010.

At all times, local authorities and schools have a statutory duty to ensure that the educational provision specified in the pupil's EHCP is delivered in order to meet the pupil's needs. Therefore, the school must consult with Wokingham Borough Council's SEND Team prior to

implementing a part-time timetable and consider whether an interim review of the EHCP is required (e.g. if the pupil's need have changed).

## **8.2. Children in Care**

A part-time timetable should only be implemented for a Child in Care in very limited circumstances – and only after all other interventions have been explored and/or trialled.

Before a part-time timetable can be implemented, the following requirements must be met:

- A formal review of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) must be completed.
- The child's Social Worker and the Virtual School (or representative) must be consulted.
- Written consent must be obtained from those with parental responsibility (*see below*).

Consent issues can be complex for Children in Care, but must always be considered. Where a child is looked after under a voluntary arrangement ([Section 20 of the Children Act 1989](#)), parental responsibility remains with their parents. In these circumstances, consent for the implementation of a part-time timetable must be obtained from the child's parents.

Where a child is looked after under provisions made by a Court-issued Care Order ([Section 31](#) or [Section 38](#) of the Children Act 1989), parental responsibility is shared between the local authority and parents. In these circumstances, consent for the implementation of a part-time timetable can be obtained from Wokingham Borough Council – however the Council will also consult the child's parents, where appropriate, to obtain their views.

## **8.3. Children in Need and Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan**

Children in Need and children subject to a Child Protection Plan are classed as very vulnerable and may be placed at greater risk if placed on a part-time timetable, therefore a part-time timetable should only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances – and only after all other interventions have been explored and/or trialled.

Before a part-time timetable can be implemented, the following requirements must be met:

- The school must formally consult with the child's Social Worker and secure agreement around the part-time timetable plan.
- Any part-time timetable should only be implemented following a Core Group meeting.

## **8.4. Pupils in Year 11 or Equivalent**

Pupils in Year 11 (or equivalent) who are placed on a part-time timetable are considered a vulnerable group as this can put them at increased risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). This can have a significant impact on their future life chances.

Before a part-time timetable can be implemented, schools must consult Wokingham Borough Council's NEET Prevention Team.

## **9. School Transition**

In Wokingham, children ordinarily start school in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, it is acknowledged that parents can choose to defer their child's start to the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some schools also stagger transition for Reception-aged children during the early part of the autumn term to support them in adjusting to school life (e.g. shorter days for an agreed period of time). These processes are not regarded as part-time timetables.

For a very small minority of individual children, an extended transition programme may be appropriate. In these circumstances, the child would be regarded as being in receipt of a part-time timetable and an appropriate plan must be agreed in line with this policy. The plan must focus on ensuring that full-time attendance is achieved no later than the start of the term following the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **10. Information Sharing**

Information provided by schools to Wokingham Borough Council in respect of pupils on part-time timetables will be used to enable the Council to discharge its duty to collect and analyse data relating to children not in full-time education and fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.

The information provided will be used to create reports for use in monitoring and analysing data related to pupils on part-time timetables, with a view to demonstrating transparency and accountability in their use.

**Appendix A: Part-Time Timetable Procedure Flowchart**

