

Suffolk Protocol on the Use of Part-Time Timetables Including the Requirement of a Risk Assessment

1. Introduction

Suffolk County Council regards the use of reduced timetables as a last resort and the least desirable method of managing any issues relating to a pupil. Such action should be chosen, if at all, only after other strategies to address any concerns have been implemented and exhausted. DfE Guidance states that part-time timetables should not be used as a solution to behavioural problems and/or as a sanction. When part-time timetables are put in place, Suffolk County Council expects that schools will follow best practice, as set out in this Protocol, to ensure that the pupil concerned:

- is safe,
- is receiving the support they require
- is able to return to full time education as quickly as possible.

In most cases in Suffolk part-time timetables are used for one of two reasons:

- as part of a reintegration approach for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time due to illness, disability, mental health issues, family circumstances.
- as a short-term method of managing a pupil's return to school following a lengthy exclusion.

2. The Law

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure a full-time education, appropriate to their needs, for all pupils deemed fit for school.

3. Use of Part Time Timetables

Schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils. It therefore follows that schools could be challenged legally if it puts in place a “part-time” timetable for any reason. However, it is accepted that in exceptional circumstances there may be occasions where it is in the best interests of the pupil for a temporary or part-time timetable to be put in place to meet their individual needs, as outlined above. In these circumstances, a part-time timetable should only be put in place when a school has explored all other options for providing support to enable a pupil to attend on a full-time basis.

In all cases, part-time timetables require the consent of parents and carers and settings must ensure they are able to evidence this consent. In the case of a pupil with an EHCP this must include a discussion with the **family services coordinator** linked to your setting. Consideration of the use of part-time timetables for children in care should be discussed with the **Virtual School Head teacher** and where a child has an allocated social worker as a part of a child in need plan of child protection plan, the child’s **social worker** must be involved in discussions prior to the part-time timetable being put in place.

The DSL will be reminded via Suffolk Headlines at the beginning of each half term to complete the following Microsoft form for any child on roll who is on a part-time timetable: [Notification of Part-time Provision](#). They will be expected to return to this form to add any pupils moving on to a part-time timetable during the half term.

4. A Written Plan must be put in place that sets out:

- what support will be put in place to enable the pupil to attend school on a full-time basis as soon as possible
- how work will be provided to the pupil whilst they are not on the school site
- how progress will be monitored and reported
- how the pupil's safety will be assured when they are not on the school site
- a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, with appropriate targets to gradually increase attendance at school during the period agreed. This must not exceed 6 school weeks at the maximum.

If it becomes apparent, during the period the arrangements are in place, that progress is not being made a review meeting should be convened to determine what further support needs to be provided or action taken, and the plan updated to reflect the outcome.

5. Risk Assessment

Schools have a duty of care for all pupils who are on their school roll (s157 & s175 The Education Act 2002). Schools must ensure that when a pupil is not expected to attend, there is a signed written agreement with parents/carers or alternative education providers about who is carrying out the duty of safeguarding for each session. To this end, a risk assessment should be carried out, prior to implementation of the arrangement, which must address:

- an assessment of the safety and wellbeing of the child
- any Child in Need/Child Protection concerns
- the risk of the pupil engaging in criminal activity (Youth Offending Team should be consulted in the case of known offenders)
- the risk of substance misuse, child sexual exploitation or other such issue, while not in receipt of education during the school day.
- where a pupil moves school and has at any point been on a part time timetable all information relating to this should be sent to the receiving school

6. Record Keeping, Review and Monitoring

If a part-time timetable is considered appropriate, then the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and must record this as authorised absence using the 'C' code. This must not be recorded by using any other code.

Plans should be reviewed by a member of senior staff. The designated member of staff should be identified and known to parents, pupils, and other agencies.

A designated member of staff should be responsible for reviewing the programme at least fortnightly, checking progress against incremental increases in attendance and recording outcomes and amendments.