

Staffordshire County Council Part-Time Timetable Protocol

August 2024

Introduction

Staffordshire County Council is committed to ensure every child receives a full-time suitable education and makes clear that part-time timetables can only be used in very exceptional circumstances.

The Department for Education (DfE) has included information on part-time timetables in their statutory guidance – Working together to improve school attendance, [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118111/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_(applies_from_19_August_2024).pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

This guidance states:

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 part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent/carer 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/carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that considers the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.

The County Council has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any pupil who is missing education. Any child on a part-time timetable is deemed to be at risk of missing education and therefore needs to be identified and their provision tracked.

Section 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities and schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Schools must have regard and consideration for any inherent safeguarding issues and the impact this may have on a child when considering a part time timetable.

This protocol -

- Applies to children of compulsory school age
- Applies to all Staffordshire maintained schools, academies and alternative provision settings (referred to as 'schools')
- Acknowledges the need for a range of people and services to be involved in the planning and implementation of a part-time timetable.

This document is in place to ensure all stakeholders are committed to:

- Promoting good practice in the appropriate use of part-time timetables which will protect both the child and school.
- Assisting schools in ensuring that no pupil is left with appropriate education
- Securing a more consistent approach across Staffordshire
- Ensuring the duration of a part-time timetable is only as long as necessary

To support these goals, the County Council has asked schools to have:

- An assessment of need in place which demonstrates this action is in the best interests of the child and family
- A risk assessment covering the entire period of the part-time timetable
- A signed consent from the parent/carer or social worker if appropriate
- A part-time timetable plan, with review and proposed end date.
- A supporting Individual Healthcare Plan for children with medical needs
- Contacted the virtual school for all children in the care of the council
- Contacted the social worker for all children on a child protection or child in need plan
- Contacted the Staffordshire SEND team regarding any child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who they are considering putting on a part-time timetable.

When can a part-time timetable be used?

There is a clear expectation that a part time timetable should only be implemented as a last resort where the school has exhausted every other avenue. This includes the expectation that a school will use its budget to enable the pupil to access appropriate support to ensure they receive the full-time education to which they are entitled.

For each child it must be clear how their circumstances meet the criterion of 'very exceptional circumstances'.

It is for the headteacher to make this decision. Therefore, the headteacher will need to justify why the pupil is currently, temporarily, not able to receive full-time education and that a part time timetable is in the child's best interests. Where the

child has ongoing health needs, the headteacher's decision should be supported by clear medical evidence stating that a part time timetable is in the best interests of the child

With some medical circumstances it may be very apparent and not require much evidence to substantiate the necessity for the part-time timetable. However, in other circumstances the school may want to explore further the veracity of the child's health needs and if they warrant the use of a part-time timetable.

A part-time timetable cannot be used to manage behaviour.

Children with an EHCP should be discussed with the council SEND team before a part-time timetable is instigated.

Children in the care of the council should only be on a part-time timetable following a formal review of the Personal Education Plan which involved both the Virtual School and the child's social worker.

Children on a child protection or child in need plan are vulnerable and may well be placed at greater risk if placed on a part-time timetable. Therefore, a part-time timetable must only be implemented after the social worker has been consulted and their agreement secured.

The parent or carer must be consulted and give consent for the child to be on a part-time timetable.

What must be included in the part-time timetable plan?

The plan must:

- Set out what the 'very exceptional circumstances' are
- Provide detailed information on when the child is required to attend
- Provide detailed information on where the child will be when they are not in school and in whose care.
- Give a review date and proposed end date
- Have a plan to reintegrate the child to school full-time.
- State the Risk assessment has been completed

See appendix 1 for a template.

Ensuring a risk assessment is in place.

Any agreed part time timetable must comply with the statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. Schools have a safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their roll and therefore must be aware that, even with parental agreement to any part time arrangement they make, they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils off-site during school hours. From a safeguarding perspective, there needs to be a clear, shared understanding that a child who is not in school full-time could have increased levels of vulnerability.

Schools will therefore need to assure themselves that any potential for additional risk has been identified and is appropriately managed through a robust risk assessment. This includes being satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to meet the pupil's care needs when not at school.

How long should a part-time timetable be for?

A part-time timetable should only be in place for the shortest time necessary and must not be seen as a long-term solution.

In most instances half a term would be seen as a reasonable period for such an intervention, but this could be extended to a term at the review. However, during this extension period you would normally expect to see a gradual return to full-time provision.

The council will be monitoring the duration of part-time timetables both through data analysis and targeted support meetings. Any part-time timetable longer than 12 school weeks will be reviewed by the council local Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to ensure the continuation is in the child's best interests.

What if the parent will not consent

There may be circumstances where, for example, lack of parental consent to initiating a temporary part time timetable goes against clear medical evidence and has the potential to hinder a child's health recovery. Where parents' rationale for not consenting to a part time timetable raises potential safeguarding concerns, schools should carefully consider whether a safeguarding referral is required.

How is the register marked?

The school should use code C2 for the leave of absence due to the part-time timetable. For the session the child is due to attend, the school should continue to use the normal attendance codes. (e.g. for am C2 and pm \ if they attend)

What information do I need to share with the Council

The council will now be monitoring and identifying children on a part-time timetable via the registration information schools now must share with the council.

If your school is unable to share data with the council, we will make alternative arrangements for the collection of the data.

During the schools targeted support meeting the EWO will ask about the number of part-time timetables to ensure our data is accurate and will seek assurance that the school is following the guidance in this protocol.

Every half term the council will contact schools who have children with part-time timetable and ask them to confirm if the provision is still in place or when it was concluded.

If a child is on a part-time timetable for more than 12 school weeks the EWO may be asked to contact the school to discuss the individual circumstances to ensure it is still in the child's best interests to be on the provision.

Karl Hobson

Head of Attendance and Inclusion

15 August 2024

Review – August 2025

Appendix 1 –

Part-Time Timetable (PTTT) template

Name of child -

Very Exceptional Reason for PTTT –

Does the child have:

EHCP – Have you consulted with the Council SEND team	Yes / No / NA
Social Worker – have you consulted with them	Yes / No / NA
Virtual school Involvement – Have you consulted with them	Yes / No / NA
Any other agency working them who should be consulted	Yes / No / NA

Details of the proposed PTTT – (school may attach a copy of an amended timetable here)

Week 1-

Week 2-

Week 3-

Week 4-

Week 5-

Week 6-

Start date of the PTTT -

Other plans already in place –

Purpose of this plan –

Is the risk assessment complete.

Yes / No

Has the risk assessment been shared with the parent/carer.

Yes / No

Review date -

Proposed date when child will be returned to full time education -

**Signed agreement to the PTTT plan created on _____ to support
_____ to participate in the plan that will start on _____**

Parent/Carer signed _____ Date _____

Parent/Carer signed _____ Date _____

School signed _____ Date _____

Social Worker _____ Date _____

Virtual School _____ Date _____

_____ _____ Date _____