



From mountain to sea

# Pupils not in Full-Time Education: Use of Part Timetables Guidance

August 2017



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## Introduction

There is a statutory obligation on education authorities to provide full-time education for all children/young people. This document refers to the Scottish Government guidance ([Included, engaged and involved part 2](#)) on the use of part time hours, and should be consulted when a school is considering placing a pupil on a part/reduced timetable.

Part time timetables may be used to support a pupil's return to school but should be clearly justified, time limited, accurately recorded and well documented.

## Legislation

The following legislation supports a child/young person's entitlement to education:

[Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 amended 2009](#) – stipulates 'adequate and efficient school education to enable every child to reach their maximum potential'

[Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000](#) – clarifies the right of a child to provision of a school education

[Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) – requires a shared approach from agencies working together and responding to the needs of learners early and effectively

[Equality Act 2010](#) – ensure that those with Protected Characteristics (including disabilities and additional support needs) should not receive 'less favourable' treatment.

## Aims and Best Practice

The aim of this guidance is:

- To support whole school communities, learning establishments and their partners to keep all learners fully included, engaged and involved in their education, wherever this takes place.

A Best Practice model states:

- Learning and teaching is most effective in environments where the ethos is one of mutual respect and where positive relationships are encouraged
  - Where a pupil finds it difficult to access a traditional curriculum, differentiating the content or providing an alternative curriculum which meets the needs of the pupil, can help re-engage them in education.
  - Pupils, parents & staff all have a share in the responsibility to promote and maintain acceptable levels of attendance and access to education.
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## Definition

A part-time or reduced timetable is one in which there is a session during the school day when a child/young person is not required to attend any provision arranged by the education authority. Part timetables may be applicable when **all** of the following circumstances apply together:

- A child/young person is unable to sustain full-time attendance in school due to health / medical needs or school phobia.
- There is full agreement with parents/carers and the child/young person that part-time attendance is appropriate for a limited duration
- There is a clear plan with time limits and support for re-integration of the child/young person to full-time education

On occasion a school may take the decision to limit a child/young person's attendance due to the perception that the pupil cannot cope with a full school day as evidenced by the child's record of challenging behaviour. Effectively, a part timetable which restricts the pupil's attendance represents a form of exclusion and can compromise the education authority's legal duty to provide 'adequate and efficient' school education to all pupils for whom it is responsible.

Schools reducing a pupil's attendance due to challenging behaviour are likely to have excluded the child/young person on previous occasions and the part timetable may reduce the occurrence of further exclusions. The school is also likely to have employed a variety of strategies and worked through the staged intervention and multi-agency action planning process before reaching this point.

Part-timetables may create additional issues for the child, their family, and the education authority:

- If a child is regularly missing part of their school entitlement then they may become disconnected from their school environment, fail to reach their educational potential and lose contact with peers increasing feelings of isolation and anxiety
- Parents/carers bear additional stress to supervise the child which may add to an already fragile family situation. In the case of Looked After Children, this may jeopardise the foster placement. A child may be left unattended and engage in risk-taking and anti-social behaviour within the community.
- Referrals to the Children's Panel or 'placing requests' to the Education Authority are more likely to result in children being placed in a residential school. This removes the child from the support of their family and local community, reduces post school options and diverts valuable resources from the education authority to external education providers.

## Guidance for alternative provision

Through the multi-agency action planning process, any child who is in danger of becoming disassociated from full-time education should have been assessed and supported through the stages of intervention. Following the provision of support at

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stage 1 (school), stage 2 (cluster) and stage 3 (multi-agency) the child/young person may be referred for a [Learning Pathway Plus+](#). Guidance for applications is available on the Aberdeenshire Council website. Learning Pathways Plus+ provides access to funding for a school to employ an external provider to increase the variety/flexibility of a child's curriculum.

When a child/young person is attending alternative curriculum provision in addition to some school provision and the total time allocation is full-time, then the statutory obligations for education are being met.

## Pupils not in full-time education

Part timetables may only be suggested/implemented following consultation and agreement from the school's Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) who is responsible for monitoring the placement and reintegration to full-time education.

Due regard must be given to the following:

1. Due to a pupil's right to be provided with a school education; and in accordance with parents' wishes part timetable arrangements can only be considered if agreed by the child/young person and parents/carers. Part timetable arrangements cannot be imposed without that consent.
  2. Scottish Government guidance, ([Included, Engaged and Involved, 2011](#)), states that,  
*"As part of an initial support package on return to school it may be appropriate, particularly where a crisis situation has developed, for the learner to return to school on a part time basis for a short period of phased re-admission."*  
The guidance also states that,  
*"These arrangements should be considered as an interim step to expedite a prompt return to full time education and should have a clear timescale attached. The length of this arrangement should be kept to an absolute minimum."*
  3. There must be a clear agreement with parents/carers regarding responsibility for safeguarding of the pupil during a session when the child is not attending school.
  4. The part timetable must be recorded within the Multi-agency Action Plan minute and Child's Plan including the intended purpose of the agreement, time span and next steps to increase education to full time attendance. Details must be included for provision of education of the pupil beyond their attendance at school.
  5. Under [GIRFEC](#), the focus of the plan must be on the child's needs and best interests, and not on what the school believes it can accommodate.
  6. It is recognised that in certain circumstances it may be in the best interests of the child for them to attend school on a part timetable, but this should be phased up to full-time education as quickly as possible. Part timetables should not last beyond 6 weeks as the pupil may be deemed to be denied their entitlement to education.
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7. Pupils do not have to earn the right to return to full-time education – they have a statutory entitlement enshrined in law. Therefore, it is not acceptable for a child to be required to improve their behaviour in order to increase their time in school. However, it is necessary for a school to consider the antecedents to the behaviour demonstrated by the child in order to write appropriate risk assessments and plan to avoid the triggers leading to the issues. It is also appropriate for the school to have control measures in place to respond to an episode of extreme behaviour to safeguard the welfare of the child, peer group and staff.
8. Any pupil on a part timetable should be monitored closely by the school senior management team and the situation reviewed at multi-agency meetings. The information should be shared with the school's Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) and if appropriate the Quality Improvement Manager (ASN),
9. In primary schools, a flexible curriculum and some additional provision from sources such as outdoor learning providers must be clearly linked to IEP targets to meet the assessed needs of the child. Strategies should focus on re-integration and opportunities for flexibility may arise around transition to secondary school including enhanced transition arrangements.
10. In the later stages of secondary education alternative options exist for education provision outwith the school premises, such as college courses, work experience, Duke of Edinburgh awards, Caledonia awards and activity agreements. These should be clearly linked to IEP targets referring to the assessed needs of the child and transition arrangements to post-school options.

## **GIRFEC**

In line with principles of [GIRFEC](#), a holistic view of the young person's situation should be obtained by seeking advice from other agencies. Support will be crucial to a successful full-time return to education and may be required by family and/or child/young person and provided by Health, Social Work or a Third Sector Provider when commissioned by the education authority.

A Named Person and Lead professional should be involved in discussions in the case of all Looked After Children.

## **Parent / Carer responsibilities**

When a child is placed on a part timetable with agreement of parents/carers it is important that a routine is established for any sessions normally held in school that are now being safeguarded at home.

School may offer and provide work for the child to complete at home. Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to spend time exploring emotions with their child and assisting them to develop strategies for self-regulation. Advice may be available from the Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist (if referred through Child

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and Adolescent Mental Health Services) or a Social Worker for a programme of engagement appropriate to the needs of the child.

It is important that these out of school sessions should be directed by the parent/carer to avoid the child from choosing to 'opt out'. This could occur if the child learns that their behaviour provides the mechanism for removal from school and reduction in timetabled attendance; and they can avoid demands for effort and concentration necessary for academic achievement.

Children generally enjoy being a part of their school community and interacting with friends and this is an important part of growing up and becoming independent. School staff, parents and carers should be vigilant for signs indicating that a child is not happy in their school environment, so that changes can be made to address the child's needs and enable full participation in school life.



## **SEEMiS recording**

Pupils on a part timetable should have their attendance recorded using the appropriate codes to distinguish them from children/young people who have unauthorised absences.

The Quality Improvement Officers (QIO) for each school and Quality Improvement Manager (ASN) will have access to the attendance records and review pupils on part timetables. Identification and tracking of vulnerable pupils will ensure that head teachers/ senior management team and their line managers can engage in robust discussions to ensure that the best interests of pupils are at the core of decision making.

## **Conclusion**

Schools are encouraged to make use of all of the staged intervention processes and supports available to assist them to meet needs. Aberdeenshire's staged intervention process provides access to additional resources under Learning Pathways Plus+ to support pupils who are unable to manage full-time attendance at their school.

In some instances, pupil behaviour is so extreme that exclusion and a part timetable may be considered to give the child/young person time to calm down and reflect.

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Needs of pupils must be considered on an individual basis. Reintroduction to full time attendance from a part timetable should be phased over no more than 6 weeks.

Part timetables may be appropriate as a time limited option for children with health/medical needs or school phobia in agreement with parents/carers and the child/young person provided a clear reintegration plan is in place.

All efforts should be made to avoid exclusion/part timetable for a Looked After Child as this compromises the Council's role as a corporate parent. Any consideration of exclusion/part timetable for a LAC should be discussed with the Named Person and Lead professional to ensure that all avenues of support have been engaged.

Children with additional support needs and other Protected Characteristics should have a similar robust process applied before decisions are taken, and consideration given to the nature and root cause of the extreme behaviour. If the behaviour witnessed may be attributed as a direct result of disability it may be considered to be 'less favourable treatment' for the child to be excluded/put onto a part timetable. The Head Teacher should discuss the situation with the QIO and if required with the QIM ASN to ensure all alternative supports have been implemented. However, it is important that all children are encouraged and supported to become responsible citizens and efforts must be made to ensure that children develop strategies for self-regulation.





## References

**Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014:** Scottish Government (2014)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

**Education (Additional Support for Learning Act) (Scotland) 2009:** Scottish Government (2009)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/7>

**Equality Act 2010:** UK Government (2010)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

**Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC):** Scottish Government (2012)  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

**Guidance on Pupils not in Full Time Education:** Highland Council (2015)  
[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/17934/guidance\\_on\\_pupils\\_not\\_in\\_full\\_time\\_education](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/17934/guidance_on_pupils_not_in_full_time_education)

**Included, engaged and involved part 2: a positive approach to managing school exclusions:** Scottish Government (2011)  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/03/17095258/0>

**Learning Pathways Plus+:** Aberdeenshire Council (2017)  
<http://asn-aberdeenshire.org/category/part-5/>

**Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000:** Scottish Government (2000)  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/05/14630/3866>

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