

# REDUCED TIMETABLES

Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to a full-time education. Parents also have a legal responsibility under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child is receiving full-time education. However, in exceptional circumstances, a reduced timetable may be considered as a short-term solution when a child is struggling to engage with their education or setting.



## WHEN MIGHT A REDUCED TIMETABLE BE APPROPRIATE?

A reduced timetable may only be used in limited situations, such as:

- When a medical condition prevents full-time attendance (with supporting evidence from a medical professional).
- A child is experiencing high levels of anxiety or mental health challenges.
- A child is facing significant social or behavioural difficulties.

It is important to note that a reduced timetable must not be used:

- As a way to manage a child's special educational needs or disability. Schools have a duty to provide the appropriate support in school.
- As a disciplinary measure. Informal exclusions, such as asking a child to leave early or sending them home to "cool down," are unlawful, even if parents agree.



## KEY PRINCIPLES OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

**Reduced timetables must follow clear guidelines to ensure they are used appropriately:**

- **Joint Decision:** They should only be implemented with the written agreement of the parent/carer, and usually after a formal pupil planning meeting involving the school and the Local Authority (LA).
- **Time-Limited:** Reduced timetables are not a long-term solution and must include a clear end date. They should rarely, if ever, be used again for the same child.
- **Personalised Learning Plan (PLP):** All arrangements must be recorded in a PLP, with clear objectives and regular reviews (typically every 1–2 weeks). Copies of the plan must be shared with the LA.
- **Attendance Coding:** When not in school, the child's absence must be coded as CODE C (authorised absence).
- **Notification to the LA:** Schools must inform the LA of any reduced timetable arrangements.

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## FOR PUPILS WITH (EHCPs)

Reduced timetables for children with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) should only be considered in rare and exceptional circumstances, and not as a result of their disability. This would be discriminatory under the Disability Discrimination Act 2001.

### **Before a reduced timetable is implemented for a child with an EHCP:**

- The plan must be reviewed, and all relevant parties (parents/carers, the school, and the LA SEN office) must agree.
- The arrangement must focus on the child's needs and ensure that support provisions outlined in the EHCP are met during this period.

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**Reduced timetables are intended as a temporary measure to support children who are struggling, not as a substitute for appropriate SEN provision. If you have concerns about a reduced timetable for your child, please contact Shropshire SENDIASS for advice and support.**

