

Part-Time Timetables

Information for parent carers about the use of part-time timetables.

What is a part-time timetable?

A part-time timetable means your child goes to school for fewer hours than usual. Careful use of a part-time timetable can help if your child has special educational needs, health issues, or other challenges that prevent them from attending full-time.

When can a part-time timetable be used?



Exceptional Circumstances

Part-time timetables should only be used in exceptional circumstances, where there are no reasonable alternatives, and in the best interests of your child.



Health Issues

If your child is ill and is unable to go to school full-time.



Special Educational Needs

If your child has special educational needs or a disability that would be supported by a part-time timetable (including children with an EHCP).



Emotional Issues

If your child feels very anxious or avoids school and a reduction in hours may support them to attend regularly or build up their time in school.

Important points to consider



Agreement

A part-time timetable can only be put in place with your agreement.



Short-term

It should be short-term and must be reviewed regularly (e.g. every two weeks).



Safety

The school must ensure your child will be safe when not in school and should not put a part-time timetable in place if doing so places them at risk or harm.



Learning

The school should provide suitable, differentiated work for your child to do at home for times your child is not taking part in supervised learning.

What schools must do



Explore alternatives

As part of a graduated response, schools should work with your child and with you to identify other measures that prevent the need to reduce their hours.



Consultation

Talk to you, get your consent to start a part-time timetable and keep you updated with progress.



Support

Provide the necessary help and recourses to support your child's learning.



Safeguard

Make sure your child is safe when not in school and check in with you regularly.



Review

The school should regularly review part-time timetables to make sure they're working for your child. Reviews should include you and your child.



Keep Accurate Records

The school must keep accurate records of your child's attendance and progress.

What schools must not do



Push or force parent carers to agree to a part-time timetable

Schools can recommend a short-term part-time timetable in exceptional circumstances, and where they believe it would benefit your child. However:

- a school cannot impose a part-time timetable, and
- it is illegal to use a part-time timetable except where it is genuinely in the child's best interests and agreed with parents

You should never feel pressured or forced into agreeing to a part-time timetable, and can refuse if you believe it does not meet your child's needs



Refuse a child to enter the school if they are not formally suspended or excluded

Schools have a legal duty to provide full-time education to every child on their admissions register.

Schools must not refuse entry to a child unless a lawful, formal suspension or permanent exclusion is in place, or there are specific, evidenced safeguarding, safety or legal grounds for such action.



What schools must not do



Send a child home to “cool off”

Sending a child home without recording it as a formal suspension is known as an informal or unofficial exclusion, and it is unlawful.

Schools may only send a child home if:

- the child is unwell, parents have been contacted and consent, or
- the child has been formally suspended or excluded by the headteacher following as part of the school’s formal suspension or exclusion process.

Marking part-time timetables on your child’s register

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When your child is present on the school premises during morning and afternoon registration periods. *

B

When your child is taking part in supervised learning activities, e.g. alternative provision. This does not include parental supervision. The B code counts as a present mark.

C

When your child is learning at home with parental supervision.

C2

When your child is not expected to be in school or learning. All C codes are authorised absences.

X

When your child is not expected in school and is not yet compulsory school age. X codes are not counted as present or absent marks.

K

When your child is taking part in educational activities that have been arranged by the Local Authority. The K code counts as a present mark.

* If your child is absent from learning, the appropriate absence mark must be used.

Who needs to know?



The Local Authority

Schools are required to share attendance data with their local authority. Somerset Council processes all school attendance data to identify children on part-time timetables.



Your child’s social worker

If your child has a social worker, they must agree to the timetable and should be part of the ongoing review process.

Who needs to know?



The Virtual School

If your child is in care, the Statutory Virtual School must agree to a part-time timetable and be part of the ongoing review process.



The SEND Reviewing Team

If your child has an EHCP and changes to it are required, the school should ensure the SEND Reviewing Team should be notified.

What should you do?



Advocate for your child

Part-time timetables can only be put in place with your permission. You are under no obligation to agree. If you do not agree that reducing your child's hours in school is the right thing to do, say no and work with the school to explore other options.



Speak up

If you feel you are being pushed into accepting a part-time timetable, you should follow the school's complaints procedure. If you cannot resolve the matter in this way, you can reach out to Somerset Council by calling 0300 123 2224 to seek advice on next steps.



Stay involved

Work with the school and other services to support your child to make sure the timetable is helping your child, is meeting their needs and is reviewed regularly.



Ask for help

If you are unsure how to work with the school to meet your child's needs, support is available. [Somerset SENDIAS](#) is an independent team that supports parent carers with children with special educational needs. Somerset Council may also be able to offer advice and support. You can reach out by calling 0300 123 2224.

This guidance is designed to ensure part-time timetables are used when it is lawful and appropriate to support your child's education.

If you have any questions, contact your child's school for more information.