

PARENT GUIDANCE FOR PART-TIME TIMETABLES

This information leaflet has been created to provide parent/carers information on part time timetables. This guidance should only be used to support their child's school attendance, at a time when they are experiencing difficulties attending school full time due to mental health difficulties.

Stockport ambition:

'Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.' (SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years, 2015: 11).

Legalities:

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

Under equalities legislation schools must consider whether they need to make any reasonable adjustments to provide suitable access for a child whose condition amounts to a disability.

DFE documentation:

[Working together to improve school attendance – May 2022](#)

[Arranging Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs – Dec 2023](#)

[Summary of responsibilities where mental health is affecting attendance – Feb 2023](#)

Responsibilities:

All schools have a legal duty to ensure that they offer an inclusive education and use their '**best endeavours**' (section 66 of the Children and Families Act 2014) to secure special educational provision for all children for whom they are responsible. This means doing everything that could reasonably be expected of it to meet the Special Educational Needs of its pupils. This duty applies to mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, academies, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units. Arrangements for part time timetables should only be used as a vehicle to return to full time, and must be time bound and regularly reviewed. The school must notify the local authority of these arrangements.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q1: My child is anxious about attending school full time. What should I do?

- Speak to the school and discuss what support can be offered for your child.
- The local authority invests in training staff in Stockport School's Anxiety Based School Avoidance - ABSA framework. Ask for further information about this support from your child's school. Information for parents about ABSA can be found on the link [CLICK HERE](#).

Q2: What is a part time timetable?

- It should only be used if it's in the best interest of your child, has full and informed consent of the parents, is short term and regularly reviewed with a view to increasing attendance to full time.
- It is when a child is not attending school full time, it may also be referred to a reduced timetable
- The timetable can form part of a pastoral support programme to support improving school attendance.
- There should be formal arrangements in place and regular reviews with the pupil and parent.
- Parents have the right to say no to a part time timetable and should not feel pressured into agreeing to it.
- If you are made to feel pressured into agreeing to a part time timetable speak to a more senior member of school staff in the first instance.
- If you feel you are not being listened to speak to the local authority Education Welfare Service. eas@stockport.gov.uk

Q3: Can a school or other agency worker suggest a part time timetable?

- Schools cannot suggest a part time timetable to prevent a suspension or exclusion.
- Schools can use a temporary part time timetable in exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interest. For example, a part time timetable may need to consider a short-term part-time timetable to improve anxiety-based school avoidance (ABSA), or to support a child who is returning to school after a period of ABSA.
- It is also not appropriate for another team working with your child to recommend a part time timetable. In doing this they could potentially place the school at risk of acting in breach of their duties within the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act (2010).

Q4: What happens to my child's attendance record if they are on a part-time timetable?

- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat the absence as authorised.
- It should be noted, that even with parent agreement, the school remains responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils off-site during school hours.

Q5: What should happen before a part-time timetable is considered?

- A staff member will have been identified to be your child's key worker and undertake regular oversight of any progress made.
- A programme of support should have been put in place with specific strategies planned to improve attendance. These will include strategies for removing the in-school barriers. Strategies can be taken from Stockport's Anxiety Based School Avoidance guidance document. Other reasonable adjustments such as for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school, sensory adjustments and lunchtime arrangements can form part of the support plan.
- Working jointly with other services including the Family Help Team, Inclusion Service and health services.

Q6: As part of the programme of support what would 'additional in school support' look like?

- Learning to focus on subjects your child is successful in or core subjects.
- Additional home learning either online or workbook based linked to their currently subject/topic learning plans, if it is in the child's best interest.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) /anxiety-based intervention work.
- A multi-disciplinary approach should be taken to support the school and family. All agencies should seek to find out what other services may be required to help the child return to school, and consider at what point an Early Help Assessment, Team Around the Child/Family meeting, and/or Support Plan might be helpful.

Q7: How long should a part-time timetable last for?

- A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.
- As stated in Stockport's ABSA documents, the return for many children will need to '...be gradual and graded and needs recognition by all that a 'quick fix' is not always possible.... There should be a gradual re-exposure to the school setting'

Q8: How often should the part-time timetable be reviewed?

- It should be agreed at the beginning of the plan the frequency of meetings, expectations for school and home and a range of strategies/support to be offered.
- Best practice is to have weekly discussions with the school. However more formal review meetings should be planned three weekly and no longer than every six weeks.
- It is important that even if positive steps are being made, not to rush the process unnecessarily. Doing this is not always helpful in making long term sustainable change.

