

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

The Spire Federation – East Wold & North Cockerington CE Primary Schools



Last reviewed:	May 2024
Next review due by:	May 2025

Vision

Our small school community welcomes everyone. We aim to achieve this by providing a challenging and supportive learning environment, where each one of us can flourish. With our foundation of Christian values, we strive for excellence in all that we do. We seek to empower our community to be excited about the future.

Empowering all to flourish and succeed.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

1. Background and context

- 1.1 Lincolnshire County Council has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any pupil missing education, as set out in the statutory guidance **Children Missing Education**¹.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to ensure that Federation schools have a clear understanding of the law and support the right of every child's to have access to a full-time education.
- 1.3 The Federation recognises that there may be occasions when a pupil is unable to attend school full-time due to, for example, illness including mental health illness or recovery from illness, exceptional family circumstances. In such circumstances, the law permits the temporary use of a part-time or a reduced timetable. Although the Federation will ensure that pupils on a reduced timetable receive an appropriate education, it recognises that pupils in these situations are at potential risk of missing education.
- 1.4 Reports have highlighted concerns that children not accessing full-time education tend to have lower aspirations, limited levels of achievement and, most seriously, face potential safeguarding risks, such as child exploitation.
- 1.5 All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. The Federation understands that in **very exceptional circumstances** there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that no pupil at a Federation School is excluded illegally through the imposition of a reduced timetable.
- 1.6 A reduced timetable cannot be implemented without the written agreement of a parent, or carer and with the school.
- 1.7 Not all children who have a medical condition will need a reduced timetable; Federation schools should first consider if they can meet the full time needs of the child in school and what is in the best interest of the child, before implementing any reduction in time at school.

¹ DfE Children Missing Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

1.8 All Federation schools are required to maintain any data necessary for the school to carry out its role on pupils on roll.

2. Reduced timetable due to medical reasons

2.1 A Federation school can introduce a reduced timetable for a pupil who has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. This may take the form of:

- a) **A Short term arrangements** – where a child has been ill and returns to school unable to fully access the curriculum, the school may have an arrangement with parents/carers to implement short term adjustments. For example, a child may return to school but may still be weak as a result of their illness. These arrangements should not be longer than **3 weeks**.
- b) **Medical Emergency Plan** – where a medical need is unexpected but relatively short term, the school will need to plan how they will meet the needs of the child over the period required. It is expected that this plan will cover a period of **more than 3 weeks** but not long term.

2.2 For cases that are likely to be more longer term the following may be in place or need to be put in place:

- a) **Independent Healthcare Plan (IHP)** – all children with significant on-going medical needs should have an IHP or equivalent plan.
- b) **Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)** – all children who are to receive a reduced timetable should have a PSP if no other plan outlines their needs and approach to full integration.
- c) **Special Educational Needs (SEND)** – if it is likely that the child also has special educational needs as well as a medical condition, then the school should include this in the school SEND process for a graduated approach to meeting need.

*Only **one** plan is required as long as the specific needs of the child are identified and relevant actions are put in place.*

2.3 The DfE guidance, **Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions**² provides further support.

3. Children who cannot attend school due to medical needs

3.1 It is the responsibility of the local authority to arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory age who, because of illness would not receive suitable education without such provision.

3.2 If a pupil is likely to be ill for **more than 15 school days**, a request for **Education Support on Medical grounds**³ may need to be considered. A request to the Local Authority will be assessed and consideration will be given to seek support from Lincolnshire Pilgrim (hospital) School.

3.3 A school should consider a referral to Pilgrim when:

- the designated referral form has been submitted by Federation school and is fully completed, signed and dated and parental consent has been given.
- the school can demonstrate that it has taken steps to address or respond to the situation in the first instance but without success (school based interventions may vary depending on the nature of the medical condition).
- the young person has been absent from education due to ill health for 15 school days or more.
- Supporting documentation, including robust medical evidence is attached to the referral.

² DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical needs

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

³ Request for Education Support (medical grounds) <http://www.pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk/HowToRefer>

4. Safeguarding considerations

- 4.1 Schools must have regard and consideration for the safeguarding issues and the impact this might have on a pupil when considering a reduced timetable.
- 4.2 Schools have safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on roll and therefore must be aware that even with parent/carer agreeing to any reduced timetable arrangements, school are still responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils on roll who are off-site during school hours. If evidence suggests that the pupil will be exposed to significant risk if not in school, then a reduced timetable should not be a considered option.
- 4.3 Schools **must** seek information on the whereabouts of a child during the time when they are not at school as part of the arrangements of the reduced timetable.
- 4.4 Schools may choose to undertake home visits in order to reassure themselves that arrangements are working effectively

5 Good practice: essentials

- 5.1 Appendix 1 gives an example of the information that is needed to ensure the successful implementation of a reduced timetable. Appendix 2 provides a checklist for the Executive Headteacher as overall supervisor of the reduced timetable arrangements.

5.2 The following are **essential** when considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable:

- A. The school must have a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an appropriate intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil and have considered all reasonable adjustments. Lincolnshire County Council considers it good practice for a detailed Early Help Assessment to be in place to establish if there are wider needs and identify what support is required from external agencies. Alternatively, another plan may be used i.e. IHCP, EHCP, etc. if appropriate.
- B. The school must not pursue a reduced timetable without parental permission as this could be construed as unofficial exclusion and the school could be regarded as preventing the pupil from accessing the curriculum.
- C. The school must have signed parental consent, evidenced on the pupil file prior to the starting the period of reduced timetable. If the parent does not agree, the reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances, the school will have to consider alternative interventions.
- D. The school must ensure that if the pupil is a looked after child (LAC) or a child with special educational needs, a reduced timetable is only considered when all other interventions have been tried. For a looked after child, it must never be implemented without the written agreement of the relevant Virtual School.
- E. If it is likely that the child also has special educational needs as well as a medical condition, then the school should include in the school SEND process for a graduated approach to meeting need. The reduced timetable must not interfere with additional support given to the pupil due to their educational needs.
- F. The school must ensure that a multi-agency review meeting is held before a reduced timetable is implemented for a pupil in Early Help or open to Social Care. If the pupil is on a Child Protection Plan, the pupil's social worker must have given written agreement.

- G. The school must provide sufficient and appropriately adapted work for any time the pupil is not attending school. Provided the pupil is medically fit, the combination of work completed at home and in school must constitute full time education. The school should consider how work will be provided when the pupil is not in school. They should consider how it will be sent home, marked and how constructive feedback will be given. Also consideration should be given as to how the pupil will be kept in mind and feel included in school life, e.g. how they will continue to have contact with the rest of their class and key staff.
- H. The school must undertake a risk assessment to ensure that a reduced timetable is not having a significantly negative impact upon on travelling and transport arrangements or on the pupil's access to Free School Meals.
- I. The school must complete a detailed action plan (Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Learning Plan, Personal Education Plan etc.), agreed with the parents and pupil demonstrating a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of 6 weeks. There may be special circumstances where a part-time timetable would need to be re-introduced after this time; this would only be done with the full agreement of all parties and on specialist medical advice. The school must ensure the pupil has active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention.

The plan for the reduced timetable should detail:

- the proposed timetable to get back to full-time (within 6 weeks)
 - how the assessed risk and safeguarding measures will be managed.
 - details of the review schedule
 - the supportive interventions that will accompany this reduction in time at school.
 - how the pupil will be able to participate in the universal offer during the re-integration.
 - outcome and exit strategies; how will all parties know that it is successful
 - the named person responsible for the plan within the school
 - whether personalised learning should be considered to meet need
- J. The school can put in place a reduced timetable plan of **no more than 6 weeks**. If the pupil is still on a reduced timetable as the time limit approaches, a multi-professional review must be held to organise full time education. A maximum of one further period of 6 weeks should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and with parental agreement, and the plan revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate.
 - K. The school must undertake a thorough risk assessment before implementation and give consideration to safeguarding measures for the duration. There must be written agreement about who is responsible for keeping the pupil safe for the time they would normally be in school.
 - L. The school must consider how parents/carers will be supported during the time when their child is not in school considering the pressures this may place on home life.
 - M. The school must inform other services who are involved with the pupil/family e.g. Early Help, Social Care, SEND, etc.
 - N. The school must record the time when a child is not in school as an authorised absence from school (Code C) unless an alternative code applies e.g. Code I. Code B **should not** be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.

The plan and the teaching hours must be agreed by the parent. The school should retain a copy of the agreement signed by the parent. Without parental agreement a reduced timetable strategy cannot be implemented.

6 Reporting, monitoring and review

- 6.1 The school must comply with the local authority reporting requirements of a child that is on a reduced timetable.
- 6.2 All children on the reduced timetable survey **are removed** at the end of the academic year. Schools must review the requirements of a reduced timetable with all necessary parties, at the start of the new academic year.

Appendix 1: Suggested Reduced Timetable Agreement

REDUCED/PART-TIME TIMETABLE AGREEMENT

In order for your child to be placed on a reduced timetable certain conditions need to be agreed.

The School need to be satisfied that your child is continuing to receive a standard of education appropriate to their needs and being supervised by someone approved to do so by the school. If you agree to the following conditions the school will consider you to be the 'approved person' for the duration of this agreement.

The work will be set by your child's teacher's and will be of a suitable level that your child will only need minimal guidance in order for them to complete it. Completed work should be returned to the school for marking and monitoring. Further work will then be provided for your child to continue their learning.

In order to ensure your child's safety and well-being whilst studying they must be supervised at all times by an appropriate responsible adult.

It is recommended that thought be given to the workspace that your child will need, for example; the area must have sufficient lighting and heating, seating must provide comfort and support, and the area needs to be free from distractions which may include younger siblings. Regular short breaks from study will be expected just as your child would have if they were in school. You will be expected to provide equipment such as pens, pencils, paper, calculator etc. as you would if your child was attending school.

As part of the agreement, provided your child feels well enough, it is expected that they will be completing the work during school hours. They should not therefore be seen out in public. If circumstances arise where your child does need to go out, such as to visit the Public Library, GP Surgery, it will be expected that, before the outing occurs the supervising adult contact the School Attendance Officer/Student Support for this to be authorised.

If you accept these terms you are accepting responsibility for your child's safety, well-being, learning and behaviour during the times they would normally be at school.

This agreement may be cancelled before the review date if it is believed that the above conditions are not being met. Your child would then be expected to attend school as normal.

DAY	HOURS
MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	

This agreement will be reviewed on _____ (not longer than 4 weeks)

Name: _____ (Parent) Signed _____ Date: __/__/__

(Signing this form will mean you consent to this information being shared with Lincolnshire County Council)

Name: _____ (Student) Signed _____ Date: __/__/__

Name: _____ (School) Signed _____ Date: __/__/__

Appendix 2: Checklist for Reducing Educational Provision

It is expected practice for the Executive Headteacher to oversee the completion of this checklist to show evidence that the necessary decisions have been made to ensure the pupil is safe.

Name of pupil			
Date of Birth		Year Group	
School			

Decision/Action	Completed
The arrangement is in the best interests of the pupil and attracts the understanding, approval and written agreement of parents/carers and in the case of a Looked After Child or child subject to a CIN or CP Plan, the allocated social worker.	
A risk assessment has been completed and any risks are managed.	
The arrangements comply with the health and safety needs of the pupil, i.e. the school is satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to meet the pupil's care needs when not at school.	
The reduced educational provision is time limited with reviews set.	
If pupil has an EHCP, the SEND caseworker has been informed.	
If the pupil has health and or medical needs appropriate health practitioners have been informed to ensure medical needs are being met.	
Signature of Executive Headteacher	Date