

Reduced Hours Provision

Isle of Wight Council

Guidance for Schools

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The Isle of Wight Council is committed to building a world-class education system for children and young people on the Island, from birth to age 25. Our vision is that by 2030 all children on the Isle of Wight will be equipped with the skills and aspirations to access opportunities of their choice.
- 1.2 This guidance supports those aims by setting clear expectations for the use of Reduced Hours Provision (RHP), sometimes called a part-time timetable.
- 1.3 It is informed by key legislation and statutory guidance, including:
 - Education Act 1996
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
 - SEND Code of Practice
 - Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units guidance
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - DfE guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- 1.4 All children and young people are entitled to access full-time education as soon as they become eligible. This includes early years entitlements and, once they reach statutory school age, education that is appropriate to their age, ability, and aptitude, with consideration for any special educational needs or disabilities.
- 1.5 This guidance explains how and when schools may use RHP. It ensures practice is lawful, time-limited, in the child's best interests, and aimed at rapid return to full-time education. It applies to all maintained schools, academies and free schools on the Isle of Wight, including special schools and alternative provision.

2. Principles for Reduced Hours Provision

- 2.1 Schools must comply with equality legislation and ensure decisions about RHP do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities, making reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act to prevent disadvantage.
- 2.2 RHP should be exceptional and temporary, used only in rare circumstances for the shortest time necessary, with clear, time-bound goals to return to full-time education.
- 2.3 Decisions must prioritise the child's best interests and be based on a comprehensive assessment of need.

- 2.4 Safeguarding must come first, with a written risk assessment completed before any RHP starts and reviewed regularly.
- 2.5 RHP must never be used as an informal exclusion or to manage behaviour.
- 2.6 Schools should evidence all reasonable adjustments considered or made under the Equality Act before implementing RHP.
- 2.7 Multi-agency involvement may be required.
- 2.8 Attendance coding and data sharing must be accurate, using the correct register codes and meeting electronic register requirements.

3. When RHP May Be Appropriate

- Medical/Health Needs – Following serious illness, treatment or surgery where medical advice supports a gradual return.
- Mental Health Needs – When clinically significant mental health conditions temporarily limit attendance, with a clear therapeutic plan and milestones.
- Reintegration After Suspension/Exclusion – Used as part of a formal reintegration plan after suspension or following alternative provision transition.
- Complex SEND – When intensive adjustments and support are being implemented and a short, stepped increase of time is required; must align with Education Health Care Plan/Individual Education Plan.

4. When RHP Is Not Appropriate

- Behaviour Management – To manage behaviour or as a sanction.
- Open-Ended Arrangements – Open-ended or without a plan.
- Reasonable Adjustments Available – Where reasonable adjustments being made would enable full-time attendance.
- Safeguarding Risks – Where safeguarding risks cannot be mitigated.
- Unofficial Exclusion – As a sanction for behaviour.

5. Required Process for Schools

5.1 Key Steps

- Seek support and advice from professionals and services beyond the school to explore all options of support prior to considering a reduced timetable.
- Undertake a safeguarding risk assessment and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure concerns are identified.

- Offer the family an Early Help Assessment to establish whether there are wider needs and identify support required from other agencies.
- School leaders should regularly evaluate SEND provision and consider how expertise and resources can be used to strengthen whole-school SEND provision. Transition arrangements for children with SEND should be detailed in the plan.
- Obtain parental agreement before a child attends on a reduced timetable.
- Involve parents in regular reviews of any arrangement and seek agreement at each stage.
- Devise a plan jointly with parents/carers, ensuring objectives and timescales are clearly defined.
- Record the actual hours a child is in attendance on school systems using appropriate attendance codes.
- Report the arrangement to Isle of Wight Council as soon as it is agreed via Microsoft Forms, and update the Local Authority each time the arrangement is reviewed.

5.2 Additional Expectations

- Schools must set clear review dates at the start of the arrangement and communicate these to parents and the Local Authority.
- Reviews should include feedback from all agencies involved.
- If progress is limited, schools should escalate to multi-agency planning and consider alternative provision or statutory assessment.
- Any extension beyond 6 weeks must be treated as a new arrangement, requiring a revised plan and renewed parental consent.
- The Local Authority will monitor review outcomes and challenge any prolonged use of RHP without a clear pathway back to full-time education.

6. Time Limits and Reviews

6.1 A single RHP period should not exceed 6 weeks. Reviews must take place at least every 6 weeks and should include:

- Evaluation of the child's progress against reintegration plan milestones.
- Assessment of whether the reasons for reduced hours still apply.
- Consideration of additional support or adjustments needed to enable full-time attendance.

- Involvement of parents/carers and relevant professionals in the review process.
- Clear documentation of decisions, next steps, and updated timelines.

7. Wider Support for Families

- 7.1 The needs of the whole family should be considered and if appropriate Early Help should be offered.
- 7.2 Parent carers of disabled children who find their child unable to attend full-time should be offered:
- Short Breaks services where appropriate.
 - SEND advice and support.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Schools

- Ensure compliance with this guidance and statutory duties.
- Complete all required assessments, risk checks, and agreements before implementing RHP.
- Consider wider family support options and signpost to Early Help or Short Breaks where appropriate.
- Maintain accurate attendance records and share data with the Local Authority.

8.2 Local Authority

- Monitor and review all RHP notifications.
- Provide advice and challenge where RHP is not compliant.

8.3 Parents/Carers

- Engage with the school and contribute to planning and review processes.
- Support reintegration plans and ensure the child attends agreed sessions.

9. Children Below Statutory School Age

- 9.1 Children who have not yet reached statutory school age (for example, those in Reception) are entitled to access their early years education in line with national guidance. Schools should:
- Offer full-time places from the start of the academic year wherever possible.

- Consider phased or part-time attendance only where this is in the child's best interests and agreed with parents.
- Avoid prolonged part-time arrangements without a clear plan for full-time attendance.
- Ensure safeguarding and welfare arrangements are in place for any time the child is not in school.
- Signpost families to Early Help, Short Breaks, and SEND support where attendance is impacted by disability or health needs.

10. Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 The Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy using measurable indicators.
- 10.2 Reviews of the policy will include stakeholder consultation and analysis of complaints and disputes to inform updates. Lessons learned will be incorporated into training for schools and staff.

11. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

- 11.1 The Council is committed to resolving concerns collaboratively. If informal resolution is not possible, complaints regarding the implementation of this policy can be made through the Isle of Wight Council's complaints procedure. Families may also seek independent advice or mediation services.