

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00, Tuesday, 10 December 2019

Supporting Inclusion – Flexible Timetables

**Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments**

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 note the results of the survey into the implementation of the flexible timetables procedure and recording process
 - 1.1.2 agree the next steps

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Report

Supporting Inclusion – Flexible Timetables

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 All children and young people are entitled to full time education provision. In some circumstances to support a learner's inclusion it may be necessary to implement a package of support that could be achieved using a flexible or alternative timetable to benefit a learner. Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCHR) states that a child or young person's education should help their mind, body and talents be the best they can.
- 2.2 The City of Edinburgh procedure for flexible and alternative timetables was launched across all City of Edinburgh Council schools in April 2019. This was one of several procedures related to Inclusion and the Scottish Government Guidance Included, Engaged, and Involved-2(2017).
<https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/30747/procedure>
- 2.3 A survey of the implementation of the flexible timetables procedure demonstrates that flexible timetables are used sparingly, when appropriate, and the voice of children and young people is sought and heard in the planning process. There is also solid evidence of appropriate inter-agency involvement in both planning meetings and individual support plans for learners.

3. Background

- 3.1 All children and young people have a statutory right to full time education. The City of Edinburgh Council procedure recognises that in some circumstances it may be necessary to implement a package of support that could be achieved using a flexible or alternative timetable. Learners who might benefit from a flexible or alternative timetable may include:
- young carers
 - pupils reintegrating into school following illness or exclusion
 - pupils with complex health needs
 - pupils attending a part time college placement or extended work experience
 - pupils accessing an alternative timetable
 - Emotionally Based School Refusers
- 3.2 A flexible or alternative timetable can be agreed as part of the GIRFEC child's planning process following a clear shared assessment that it is in a child's best

interests and likely to be beneficial in meeting the individual child's identified needs. Parents, partners working with the pupil and when possible the pupil themselves should all be involved in this process.

3.3 The decision to implement a flexible timetable should;

- take account of the best interests of the child
- ensure decisions based on informed assessment
- consider the views of the parent and child
- have the approval of parent/s based on a clear understanding of the partnership arrangement with the school clearly documented within a Child's Plan or letter which is shared and agreed accurate with the parent/s.
- take account of parents' rights and responsibilities and the rights of the child
- inform pupils and parents what support they can expect from school and where to go for advice
- comply with the statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils

4. Main report

4.1 As part of the ongoing work to ensure the new procedures were fully embedded a survey was sent to all schools requesting feedback on their flexible timetables and reminding them these had to be appropriately logged and monitored on SEEMIS and at the level of school and child planning.

4.2 The summary of data in this report is based on returns from 63 (72%) primary schools, 19 (83%) secondary schools and 5 (50%) special schools.

4.3 Flexible timetables are short-term measures and the data in this report represents a snapshot at 25 October 2019.

4.4 Pupils attending City of Edinburgh Council Schools are normally required to attend classes for:

- 22.5 hours per week from P1 to P3
- 25 hours per week from P4 to P7
- 27.5 hours per week from S1 to S5

4.5 As of 25 October 2019 the data (see appendix one) from 63 (72%) of primary schools showed that there were 43 pupils recorded as having flexible timetables. Scaling this up to all 88 primary schools would suggest a figure of 60 children across all primary schools. There are approximately 31,200 pupils enrolled in city primary schools. The rate of 60 children from 31,200 represents 0.002% or 2 per thousand pupils.

4.6 Of the 43 primary children recorded as having flexible timetables 8 were recorded as having timetables of 21 hours or more. This is a very minor reduction in hours and should be seen as a reasonable temporary adjustment. If these 8 learners are

removed from the data and the numbers scaled up across the city this would give a rate of 0.0015% or 1.5 per thousand pupils.

- 4.7 As of 25 October 2019 the data from 19 (83%) of secondary schools showed that there were 141 young people recorded as having flexible timetables. Scaling this up to all 23 secondary schools would suggest a figure of 170 young people across all secondary schools. There are approximately 19,800 young people enrolled in city secondary schools. The rate of 170 young people from 19,800 represents 0.009% or 9 per thousand young people.
- 4.8 Of the 141 secondary school learners recorded as having flexible timetables 40 were recorded as having timetables of 21 hours or more. This is a very minor reduction in hours and should be seen as a reasonable temporary adjustment. If these 40 learners are removed from the data and the numbers scaled up across the city this would give a rate of 0.006% or 6 per thousand learners.
- 4.9 The local authority procedure in relation to flexible timetables states that appropriate pupil planning should take place and that the child or young person's views should be sought and taken into account. The review showed that:
- 90.4% of the flexible timetables were agreed collaboratively through GIRFEC child planning meetings.
 - In 86.2% of the cases this included the view of the child or young person
 - In 80.3% of these cases the school felt that the views of the child or young person had an impact on the planning process
- 4.10 In situations where the school reported the child or young person was not actively involved there were several themes noted:
- The child was very young (P1 or P2), most were in primary
 - The child had additional support needs that made this challenging e.g. they were non-verbal.
 - The child or young person was not willing to give their views at this point in time
- 4.11 Data on children and young people receiving 10 hours or less (see appendix 1) was examined in more detail. Of the 8 children in primary, seven had active child planning meetings involving relevant professionals and parents/carers and in the eighth situation the child planning meeting had been arranged to take place. The reasons for the limited hours of attendance included:
- serious health issues,
 - recent trauma
 - a phased start to P1
 - high levels of distress in school
 - social emotional and behavioural needs.
- 4.12 Across secondary schools there were 49 pupils who attended less than 10 hours a week. The largest proportion (30) of these young people were described as having significant challenges with anxiety, mental health or non-attendance (young peoples' views said they did not want to be in school). All of these young people

were categorised as Emotionally Based School Refusers. Seven young people were struggling with health issues and had health involvement, seven had social emotional and behavioural needs. Two of the situations on further analysis should have been considered alternative timetables (one attended college 4 days a week and the other had taken up a vocational opportunity).

- 4.13 In 44 of the 49 situations GIRFEC young person's planning meetings had taken place. The young person's views had been sought and taken into account. All young people had a team of professionals involved in planning. These included combinations of Educational Psychology, Additional Support for Learning Service, Education Welfare Service, Health services, CAMHS, Social Work amongst others.
- 4.14 There were 5 young people in secondary schools who had 10 hours or less who did not yet have a GIRFEC plan. On further examination of these learners one was taking up a vocational opportunity so was not a flexible (reduced) timetable: one was in S6 and had agreed an appropriate reduced timetable, one was related to medical issues, one was related to emotional and anxiety difficulties which affected their ability to attend school. In the latter example CAMHS and counselling support was provided for the young person.
- 4.15 In secondary there were 11 pupils recorded as 0 hours in school. Five of these pupils were in S4, three were in S5, two were in S3 and one was in S2. Most (nine) of these young people were anxious non-attenders who had an off school-site package of support including outreach teaching from the ASL service. There were examples of good alternative and suitable teaching and support in place including:
- Support from the school-based Pupil Support Officer who is part of the Wellbeing Academy.
 - CAMHS involvement and teaching on CAMHS premises
- 4.16 The data and further examination of individual situations demonstrated that:
- Schools are actively embedding the flexible timetable procedure and recording process
 - There is a limited but appropriate use of flexible timetables
 - There is good child and young person planning in place and the views of children and young people are actively sought and taken into account in planning
 - There is good inter-agency planning and support in place for learners accessing flexible timetables
 - There remains some confusion as to when an arrangement is a reasonable adjustment, alternative timetable or a flexible timetable. Work is ongoing to support this understanding.
 - When school survey returns were cross referenced with SEEMIS recording of the 32 primary schools who were confirmed to have flexible timetables in place 60% were recording them on SEEMIS
 - When school survey returns were cross referenced with SEEMIS recording 21 (91%) of the 23 secondary schools were recording their flexible timetables on SEEMIS

- 4.17 For children and young people who require flexible timetables, it is important that the local authority is able to engage young people in a variety of alternative educational and vocational activities on an off school site. There are currently some very good alternative educational, skills based and vocational activities in place. We have increased the use of forest schools, we are engaged with third sector providers such as Spartans to provide sports training, and bespoke packages around sailing and boxing have been designed for individual young people. These packages look to build on the strengths of the young people and create a flexible education programme tailored to their needs. They can also be a key part of a planned return to full time education. The Virtual Learning Environment has also been used to augment learning linked to National Qualifications in Maths, English and Biology, (Nat4, Nat5 and Highers).
- 4.18 Further work is being undertaken to increase the range and availability of alternative flexible education pathways with a number of third sector providers, such as Barnardo's and Children First. ASL staff are also working closely with Community Learning and development workers and the Council's Outdoor learning service to increase flexible learning opportunities.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Educational psychologists are continuing to examine all the cases involving learners with flexible timetables. In particular the educational psychologists will speak directly with the 27 learners with flexible timetables who were identified as being care experienced to further hear the views of these children and young people.
- 5.2 Data in relation to individual schools has been shared with QIOs and will be used in discussion with schools.
- 5.3 The Edinburgh Together project is a commissioned service from the third sector that supports learners with additional support needs to remain in school. Edinburgh Together are piloting offering additional support to learners with flexible timetables.
- 5.4 Ongoing advice and support will be given to schools to ensure that the flexible timetable procedure and recording process is fully embedded.
- 5.5 The use of flexible timetables will be continued to be reported and surveyed.
- 5.6 Further expansion of flexible educational pathways will be developed in conjunction with the third sector, CLD and outdoor Learning service.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 It is expected that this work will be carried out within existing roles and remits, and therefore there is no additional financial impact.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Consultation and engagement took place with schools and stakeholders during the development of the procedure.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The City of Edinburgh procedure for flexible and alternative timetables
<https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/30747/procedure>

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Data on flexible timetables

Appendix 1

School Stage of Pupils on Flexible Timetables

Primary

	Number of pupils	% of primary total
P1	11	25.6%
P2	4	9.3%
P3	2	4.7%
P4	8	18.6%
P5	6	14.0%
P6	4	9.3%
P7	8	18.6%
	43	100%

Secondary

	Number of pupils	% of secondary pupils
S1	9	6.4%
S2	30	21.3%
S3	29	20.6%
S4	53	37.6%
S5	17	12.1%
S6	3	2.1%
	141	100%

Specialist

	Number of pupils
P1	1
P4	1
P7	1
S5	1
S6	1
	5

Hours of Education

Number of hours in school	Number of primary school pupils	% of primary total	Number of secondary school pupils	% of secondary total	Number of pupils in specialist provisions	% of specialist total
0	0	0	11	7.8%	0	0
0 to 5	3	7.0%	17	12.1%	0	0
6 to 10	5	11.6%	32	22.7%	1	20%
11 to 15	12	27.9%	15	10.6%	0	0
16 to 20	14	32.6%	22	15.6%	1	20%
21 plus	8	18.6%	40	28.4%	3	60%
unclear	1	2.3%	4	2.8%	0	0
	43	100%	141	100%	4	100%

Pupils Receiving 10 hours or Less

Primary

	Number of pupils	% of primary total
P1	2	25%
P2	0	0%
P3	0	0%
P4	3	38%
P5	2	25%
P6	1	13%
P7	0	0%
	8	100%

Secondary

	Number of pupils	% of primary total
S1	1	1.7%
S2	12	20.0%
S3	10	16.7%
S4	25	41.7%
S5	10	16.7%
S6	2	3.3%
	60	100%