



LEIXLIP

Educate Together National School

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity around the use of reduced school days in schools, to ensure that this practice is limited to only those circumstances where it is absolutely necessary and, that where such usage occurs, Leixlip ETNS will follow best practice with the interests of the student to the fore.

This policy also sets out the process for schools to notify the use of reduced school days to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS).

This policy was formulated in September 2021, following the publication of guidelines by the Department of Education and will be subject to review following any further guidelines from the Department of Education and Tusla Education Support Service.

Rationale

All students who are enrolled in a school should attend for the full day, except in exceptional circumstances.

For the purposes of these guidelines, reduced school days are defined as:

- a reduced day in school where, by arrangement with the school authorities, a student arrives to school after the usual starting time or leaves before the end of the school day, and/or
- a reduced week where, by arrangement with the school authorities, a student may not attend the full five days each week.

Reduced days are only put in place in exceptional circumstances, such as where the school has not been allocated sufficient resources (Additional Needs Assistants) to support a pupil for the full school day and where full attendance may place a pupil, other pupils and/or staff at risk of harm.

Leixlip ETNS already approaches the issue of reduced days in the best interests of the student and in consultation with parents / guardians. When parents / guardians request reduced days for their child the same consistent approach will be taken.

This policy is designed to ensure a consistency of approach.

Aims and Objectives

All students who are enrolled in Leixlip ETNS should attend for the full day, except in exceptional circumstances.

For the purposes of this policy, reduced school days are defined as:

- a reduced day in school where, by arrangement with the school authorities, a student arrives to school after the usual starting time or leaves before the end of the school day, and/or
- a reduced week where, by arrangement with the school authorities, a student may not attend the full five days each week.

Where the school applies a reduced school day, such arrangements should only be put in place in exceptional circumstances. Leixlip ETNS works in partnership with the parents/ guardians in this regard. Following consultation with, and consent of the parents / guardians and where it is the agreed position that it is in the best interests of the student to have a shorter school day for a time-limited period the agreed arrangements would be implemented. The views of the pupil will also be sought and given due consideration.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy is in keeping with the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

Reduced school days will not be used as a sanction, offered as an alternative to a sanction, or used as a behavioural management tool.

Reduced school days should only ever be considered in very limited and time-bound circumstances such as, for example, supporting a student to return to school after a period of absence, or due to a medical or mental health-related condition or due to other exceptional circumstances.

It is acknowledged that a reduced school day may be helpful in exceptional circumstances as part of a transition or reintegration intervention, based on the needs of individual students.

Any such arrangement should be short term and transitional, and designed to assist the student to attend for the full school day along with his/her peers. In making any such arrangements school authorities will always be mindful of the best interests of the student and of the student's right to a full day in school.

Implementation

Where in exceptional circumstances Leixlip ETNS is placing a student on a reduced school day, or where parents request that their child be placed on a reduced day the school authorities:

- a) will, prior to consideration of a reduced school day, have previously engaged with the relevant support services and professionals, including the special educational needs organiser (SENO) where appropriate, and have developed and implemented a student support plan for an appropriate period of time.
- b) will have gathered clear evidence-based reasons for considering a reduced school day as a relevant and appropriate intervention with the best interests of the student at the core of the decision.
- c) will have obtained the written consent of the parents/guardians of the student, and must also document if parental consent is subsequently withdrawn.
- d) will notify Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) of the decision to place a student on a reduced school day no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day.
- e) will notify the NCSE (Local SENO) of the decision to place the student on a reduced school day where the student has special educational needs (SEN).
- f) will formulate and agree a plan for the reduced school day intervention which will specify the following: start, review and end dates; any educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day; the actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day. The plan with respect to the reduced school day intervention and return to school will have regard to any relevant medical reports or other relevant information held in the student's support file. The intervention and return to school plan must be discussed and agreed in collaboration with the parent/guardian (or in the case of a student over 18, the student). Ideally, the period for which the student is on a reduced school day, should not exceed six school weeks. A reduced school day cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next.
- g) will include in the plan of action outlined in (f), the name of a contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate with, and, where appropriate, any work plan for the time during which the student will not be in attendance at the school.
- h) will provide the parents/guardians, with a copy of the agreed plan, signed by parents/guardians, and the school principal, and retain a copy which must be given to the Educational Welfare Officer or a member of the DE Inspectorate if requested. A copy should also be retained on the student support file.
- i) will consider a graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally towards full attendance.
- j) will arrange for a review with the student and their parents/guardians (or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student), if a student is still on a reduced school day as the time limit of the plan approaches.
- k) will consider an extension only in exceptional circumstances and only with the further written consent of parents/guardians (or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student).

APPENDIX 1

Checklist of Requirements for the use of Reduced Day

		Details
	Engagement with relevant support services eg NEPS, SENO	
	Student Support Plan in Place	
	Evidence-based reasons for using Reduced Days as an appropriate intervention	
	Written consent of parents obtained	
	Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) notified no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day	
	NCSE (Local SENO) of the decision to place the student on a reduced school day where the student has special educational needs (SEN).	
	Plan Formulated (see below)	
	Plan signed by parents/guardians and Principal	
	Plan uploaded to Student Support File	
	Copy of plan on file for EWO and/or Inspector	
	TESS notified of Extension (if any)	
	A record has been kept of all instances of students being placed on a reduced school day and access to this list should be made available to TESS educational welfare officers and the Department of Education Inspectorate if requested.	
	Parents / guardians advised that they may also seek advice and assistance from the TESS educational welfare officer if required	
	Parents advised that they may withdraw their consent at any time.	
	Parents have been given a copy of the Department of Education guidelines	

Appedendix 2
Reduced Day Intervention Plan

Student Name: _____ Class: _____

Class Teacher: _____ SET: _____

Others involved in implementing this plan: _____

Start Date:	Review Date:	End Date:
<i>Ideally, the period for which the student is on a reduced school day, should not exceed six school weeks</i>		
Educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day		
Actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day		
Medical reports or other relevant information held in the student's support file taken into consideration:		

Contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate:

Work plan for the time during which the student will not be in attendance at the school

Time-bound plan for return to full school day

(a graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally towards full attendance should be considered)

Review

(Arrange review with the student and their parents/guardians, if a student is still on a reduced school day as the time limit of the plan approaches)

Extension (if any)

(only in exceptional circumstances and only with the further written consent of parents/guardians)

TESS to be notified on first day of any such extension

Signed by:

Consent of Parents / Guardians

_____ (parents/guardians have the right to withdraw consent at any time)

Parents / guardians may also seek advice and assistance from the TESS educational welfare officer if required.

Principal

_____ A copy of this plan must be given to the Educational Welfare Officer or a member of the DE Inspectorate if requested.

A copy will also be retained on the student support file.