

Frequently Asked Questions

Modified Timetable



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been developed to support schools to consistently implement the *Modified Timetable Procedure for MACS Schools*. This document will be updated periodically as further questions arise from schools and other stakeholders.

Q. What is a modified timetable?

A modified timetable is a temporary, time-limited (maximum of 10 consecutive school weeks), flexible arrangement developed in partnerships between the student and their parents/carers, with consultation from the student's Program Support Group (PSG) members. It allows for adjustments to the student's daily schedule to support their learning, wellbeing, or transition needs.

Q. When would a modified timetable be used?

A modified timetable should only be implemented when it's in the **best interests of the student** and after exploring all other educational supports, wellbeing strategies, and reasonable adjustments. It must be part of a broader plan to help the student re-engage with full-time attendance. Modified timetables would be considered when a student is unable to engage in fulltime attendance due to:

- significant medical or health conditions
- disability-related needs
- mental health or wellbeing concerns
- complex personal or family circumstances.

Q. When would a modified timetable not be used?

Modified timetables must never be used:

- As disciplinary measure or punitive response to student behaviour
- Due to lack of resources or staffing
- As a "circuit breaker" strategy
- As a default response to school refusal.

Q. Can you use a modified timetable to address student behaviour?

No. Modified timetables must not be used as a punitive or disciplinary response to behavioural concerns. Instead, such concerns should be managed through established behaviour support processes. Schools are required to follow the MACS Student Behaviour Support Policy and its associated procedures.

If a student's behaviour leads to a situation where exclusion from school is being considered, this must be managed strictly in line with the MACS Suspensions, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion of Students Procedures.

Q. Can you use a modified timetable as a reasonable adjustment for a student with disability?

A modified timetable may be implemented as a time-limited reasonable adjustment for a student with disability when the student's parent/carer, together with their treating practitioner/s and/or



allied health professionals, determine that this support is necessary to meet the student's learning, wellbeing and engagement needs.

Before considering a modified timetable for a student with disability, the school must first ensure that all reasonable adjustments have been implemented, thoroughly explored, implemented, monitored and adjusted as needed to support the student's progress toward full participation in their enrolled full-time equivalent (FTE) load.

Q. What are the key requirements of a modified timetable?

- Students must continue to have access to meaningful and consistent learning opportunities throughout the duration of the modified timetable.
- Alongside the modified timetable, a MACS Attendance Support Plan (or equivalent) must be developed to outline a clear and structured pathway back to full-time attendance.
- Regular review periods must be scheduled to monitor the student's progress, assess the effectiveness of supports, and make necessary adjustments to the plan. The frequency of reviews should align with the length of the arrangement.

Q. How long can a modified timetable last?

Modified timetables must be strictly time-limited, with a maximum duration of 10 consecutive school weeks. Shorter durations (e.g. 2 weeks) may be used if appropriate. The modified timetable arrangement will expire upon completion of its designated period.

Q. What if the student requires longer than 10 weeks?

In exceptional cases, a student may require a modified timetable arrangement that extends beyond the standard 10-week limit, typically due to long-term or ongoing medical or health conditions, such as a terminal or degenerative illness.

If the PSG determines that the student is not yet ready to return to full-time attendance, the principal must re-engage with the Student Engagement Unit (SEU) and consult with the designated Senior Manager School Leadership (SMSL) regarding next steps. The SMSL will review the school's rationale and may indicate that an extension appears appropriate; however, the modified timetable cannot recommence at this stage. The SMSL must then consult with the MACS General Manager (Region), who will consider the case, verify that all procedural requirements have been met, and determine whether an extension should be approved. A modified timetable cannot restart until the RGM has formally provided this approval. Once the RGM approves the extension, the school must restart the process by convening a new PSG meeting, updating planning, and obtaining renewed parent/carer consent.

A modified timetable exceeding the maximum 10 weeks must not proceed without formal approval from both the SMSL and the MACS General Manager (Region).

Q. How does a modified timetable arrangement work?

The principal (or delegate) will arrange a PSG meeting to discuss the student's needs. This meeting would typically include the principal, parents/carers, the teacher/s nominated as having key responsibility for the student, the student (where appropriate), the case worker (e.g. DFFH case worker) (if relevant) and other key staff supporting the student. During this meeting a modified timetable arrangement can be developed as well as a MACS Attendance Support Plan (or equivalent).

A modified timetable may include having the student attend school for specific subjects, times of the day, or days of the week. The aim will be to increase their school attendance to full-time. The agreement should focus on addressing a specific need and be regularly monitored and reviewed. Incremental increases and adjustments in the modified timetable may occur throughout the maximum 10-week period if agreed upon during reviews.

Q. What supporting documents are required to inform a modified timetable?

Each student's circumstances are different. Supporting documentation may include:

- Reports from medical or allied health professionals
- Attendance and engagement data
- [Personalised learning plan \(PLP\)](#)
- [Student health support plan](#)
- [Student Behaviour support plan](#)
- [Student safety plan](#)
- Cultural plan
- For students with medical or health conditions, a Medical Management Plan and Student Health Support Plan must be used to guide necessary adjustments when the student is on the school site.

Q. Is parent/carers consent required?

Yes, parents/carers informed consent is required before a modified timetable can start. The school **cannot** implement a modified timetable without parent/carers informed consent.

Q. What if parents/carers cannot agree about elements of the modified timetable?

The school should work proactively with parents/carers to reach agreement, collaborating as much as possible to develop a modified timetable that supports the student's needs. Schools should involve relevant stakeholders – such as the designated SMSL and key SEU staff – to build a shared understanding and ensure coordinated support in situations where views differ.

If parents/carers remain dissatisfied or cannot reach agreement, they may escalate their concerns in accordance with the MACS Complaints Policy.

Q. What about the ongoing learning for the student?

The principal will appoint a staff member to oversee the coordination of home-based learning tasks. This includes maintaining regular communication with the student and their parents/carers. The nominated staff member will be responsible for determining how learning tasks are delivered, assessed, and how feedback is provided during periods of offsite learning. They will also ensure the student remains connected to school life through ongoing engagement with peers and relevant staff.

Parents/Carers and relevant staff should be informed about the expectations of assessments and reporting. Information about reporting can be found on [CEVN](#).

Q. Is a modified timetable an 'absence'?

No. A modified timetable is a formally approved arrangement, and students participating in offsite learning under this plan are **not classified as absent**, as they are still actively engaged in their education. However, if a student is scheduled to attend onsite and does not attend, that is recorded as an absence. Schools should seek to ensure their attendance monitoring system accurately records the times a student is expected onsite.

Q. Is a PLP required before a student is placed on a modified timetable?

No. However, if one exists, it's recommended to reference the modified timetable within it. It would be expected that in most cases a PLP would exist as other educational supports, wellbeing strategies, and reasonable adjustments should have been implemented, where possible, before a modified timetable is in place.

Q. Is an active ROSAE referral required for a student to be placed on a modified timetable?

A ROSAE referral is recommended when considering a modified timetable for a student, but it is not always required. Schools should use their professional judgement to determine whether a ROSAE consultation is necessary and submit a request when appropriate.

In some instances – such as short-term arrangements to support a student recovering from injury (e.g. broken bone, concussion) or experiencing significant emotional distress, like acute grief following the death of a close family member – a formal ROSAE referral may not be needed. However, schools may still engage with the MACS SEU to ensure appropriate support is in place.

For further guidance, please contact: studentengagementinquiries@macs.vic.edu.au

Q. Do students need to attend specific subjects (e.g. literacy/numeracy) onsite to be on a modified timetable?

No. There are no mandatory subjects that a student must attend onsite while participating in a Modified Timetable arrangement. Each plan includes a 'learning program' section that outlines the agreed learning areas (e.g. subjects), tasks, and intended outcomes for the student to work toward during the arrangement – whether onsite, offsite, or a combination of both.

Q. How can a student meet VCE attendance and learning requirements if they are not at school?

A modified timetable may reduce a student's onsite attendance, but it **does not remove** the requirement for the student to engage in sufficient time and learning to demonstrate the outcomes for each VCE unit or the learning goals for each VPC unit. 'Class time' **does not** need to occur **physically in the classroom** – it refers to scheduled instructional time or supervised learning, which schools may deliver in a range of ways including remote, flexible or blended arrangements.

Structured, supervised learning **does not** mean schools must deliver separate one-on-one lessons for students on modified timetables. The VCAA requires teachers to sight set work, monitor progress and authenticate that submitted work is the student's own, but this can be achieved through practical strategies such as:

- brief check-ins (e.g. 5–10 mins a week)
- review of drafts or progress checkpoints
- short verification tasks (e.g. the student orally explaining their work)
- supervised onsite attendance for key assessments (e.g. assessment tasks; SACs).

These approaches provide the required level of supervision, evidence of learning, and authentication without creating a duplicate instructional program. They are consistent with VCAA's authentication rules, which require teachers to regularly sight work and verify that it is the student's own.

Q. Do schools with students on a modified timetable still need to meet the 50 hours of scheduled instruction required for each VCE or VPC unit?

Yes. Each VCE or VPC unit must include at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction provided by the school. A modified timetable can change when or how this instruction occurs, but it cannot reduce the amount of instructional time a student needs to learn the required content and demonstrate the outcomes for VCE studies or learning goals for VPC studies.

Schools set their own attendance expectations to support these hours; the VCAA does **not** mandate a specific attendance percentage. What matters is that the school can authenticate the student's work and confirm they have engaged in adequate supervised learning.

Schools with students on modified timetables can still meet the requirement for at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction per unit through a combination of supervised onsite classes, remote check-ins, progress checkpoints and other structured teacher-directed activities, as long as teachers can monitor progress and authenticate the work.

Q. Does being on a modified timetable mean a student automatically receives Special Provision?

No. A modified timetable and Special Provision are separate supports. A modified timetable helps a student manage attendance, engagement or wellbeing, but it does not change learning and assessment requirements for VCE or VPC studies. Individual students may need Special Provision in their learning program to achieve the outcomes for VCE studies or learning goals for VPC studies, and in assessment to demonstrate their learning and achievement. However, students who have been granted Special Provision are not exempt from meeting the requirements for satisfactory completion of the VCE, the VCE VM or the VPC, or from being assessed against the outcomes for a VCE study or learning goals for a VPC study. Students are still required to demonstrate their achievement fairly in meeting the outcomes of the VCE study design or learning goals of the VPC curriculum design, as well as completing school-based assessments and VCE external assessments if relevant.

Students on a modified timetable may be eligible for Special Provision if they are adversely affected in a significant way by:

- an acute or chronic illness (physical or psychological)
- factors relating to personal circumstance
- an impairment or disability, including learning disorders.

The granting of Special Provision is not automatic; application processes must be followed, documented, and evidence-based. For classroom learning and school-based assessments, the school is responsible for determining eligibility and the nature of the provisions granted, in accordance with the VCAA Special Provision Policy and guidelines. The VCAA is responsible for provisions for VCE external assessments (including the General Achievement Test (GAT)).