



The Federation of Boskenwyn & Germoe Schools

Flexi Schooling Policy and Procedures – September 2019



Introduction

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where, following a formal request from parents and with the approval of the school, a child spends some part of the week attending school and the rest of it being educated at home. Combining schooling and non-schooling education in any ratio is perfectly legal, provided that the outcome is the provision of suitable full-time education for the child, and the Local Authority must satisfy itself that this is so. However, the headteacher must agree to the arrangement. Any school, maintained or independent, may accommodate flexi-schooling if it wishes to but no school is under an obligation to do so. In deciding whether to agree to a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, a headteacher may consider such issues as:

- a) Continuity of teaching and learning between home and school
- b) The effect on school organisation and funding
- c) The effect on school resources
- d) The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children
- e) Peer relationships/support
- f) Safeguarding

This flexi-schooling policy will assist schools in their response where parents request an arrangement for their child to attend school part-time and receive the remainder of their education at home or elsewhere, organised by the parent.

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education rests with the parents. In England, education is compulsory but schooling is not. Where a parent elects to educate a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling. Where a parent favours this form of educational approach s/he may request flexi-schooling on a short-term or long-term basis.

Flexi-schooling should not be confused with a part-time timetable. In the case of the former, the child must be in full-time education throughout the school year.

What might a flexi-schooling arrangement include?

It is strongly recommended that any flexi-schooling arrangement is time-limited (e.g. for a term at a time) and is reviewed at the end of that time. Schools reserve the right to either agree to an extension of the arrangement or to terminate it. It is recommended that a formal, written agreement between parents and the school is the best way of making flexi-schooling work. (See flexi school agreement)

Who does flexi-schooling apply to?

Flexi-schooling can apply to any pupil – there are no specific criteria.

Examples of where requests might be made include:

- for talented young sportspersons so they can benefit from elite coaching and training; or
- for children who are gifted in other areas so that they can benefit from expert tuition; or
- where parents feel that there are areas of their child's education (which may also be in relation to the child's faith and culture) which they wish to provide.

Flexi-schooling should not be seen as applying only to gifted and talented children and every request should be judged on its merits.

National Curriculum and Assessment

There is no statutory curriculum for the home education part of a flexi-schooling arrangement. On days the pupil is attending school as a registered pupil, he or she must follow the curriculum used in the school and cannot be disapplied from statutory curriculum or assessment arrangements except in the following circumstances:

- As part of a formal Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan.
- For a temporary period, in response to short term exceptional circumstances (i.e. following a lengthy absence from school for health reasons or because of a family crisis).
- For an agreed period and with the permission of the Secretary of State, to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place

Marking the attendance register

Schools should not mark a pupil as attending school using the attendance Code B for off-site education activity, unless the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education, and can ensure the safety and the welfare of the pupil.

Pupils should be marked absent (authorised) from school during periods when they are receiving home education (code C).

On the days for which it has been agreed the pupil will attend school the Pupil Registration Regulations appropriate codes for attendance will apply.

Funding

For the child attending part-time under current arrangements, the school receives full funding. Flexi-schooled children are included in count returns as for other children. As such a flexi-school child takes up the place of a full-time pupil and counts as one student for pupil number on roll purposes.

Children on flexi-schooling arrangements should be reported to the Local Authority as part of the termly 'out of school provision' return.

What is the legal situation with regard to flexi-schooling?

Parents are fully entitled to ask schools about possible arrangements for flexi-schooling. There is, however, no parental entitlement to flexi-schooling and the decision rests entirely with the headteacher. If a school decides not to agree such an arrangement, there is no appeal process.

Flexi-schooling should not be agreed where it becomes evident that the arrangements being sought can be made outside of normal school hours or are more to do with accommodating the needs of the parents (e.g. where they might have unusual working patterns) rather than those of the child.

Admissions

Children who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement are subject to the same school admission processes as other children. They count towards numbers for admissions purposes and they must be entered on the admissions register.

Insurance

There are no additional or exceptional insurance implications for the school for children who are on a school roll but who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan

Contact should be made with the Special educational Needs Assessment and Provision Team about any potential flexi-schooling arrangement for children with Statements of Special Educational needs or education health and care plan. A review should be undertaken so that clear information on needs proposed adjustments to provision and the anticipated benefits of flexi-schooling arrangements can be set out and considered by the Local Authority. When flexi-schooling is agreed the statement or plan will be amended. The duty to review a child's statement or Special Educational Needs or education, health and care plan on an annual basis, or sooner if appropriate, still applies.

Children educated outside their normal age group

It is usual practice for children to be educated in school year groups as determined by their date of birth, however there is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group but may make a request for this to happen. School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on whether or not a child will be admitted outside their normal age group. However, where a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan, the decision rests with the local authority and must be confirmed in the Statement/Plan. Admission authorities are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of the case. Cornwall Local Authority recommends that the decision is made in consultation with the headteacher of the school concerned, the parents, all professionals involved with the child and the Local Authority. Guidance documents on placement outside the normal age group and delayed entry to school can be found at www.cornwall.gov.uk/admissions.

If it appears that the home education is not suitable

Neither the school nor the Local Authority has statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis. However, if it appears to the school that parents are not providing a suitable education it may ask parents for further information about the education they are providing. If a parent declines to do so the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangements and notify the Local Authority of its concerns. Where this is the case, this action would not be considered a precursor to any formal procedures; however, the following may occur:

a) the pupil would be required to attend school on a full-time basis; or b) the parent may remove the child from the school roll.

In the event of the child being removed from the school roll the Local Authority may consider further action under section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

Role of the governing body

The governing body may wish to agree a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling but this does not exempt the headteacher from the need to consider each request individually and on its own merits (see Appendix A). The whole governing body should not become involved in individual cases, as some governors may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint is issued. It is good practice to report any confirmed flexi-schooling arrangements to governors on a regular basis.

Reporting

Schools must report any flexi-schooling arrangements to the Local Authority in the termly 'out of school provision' return.

Education Transport

Where a pupil meets the criteria for education transport to be provided between home and school under the Local Authority's Home to School Transport Policy, the transport will not be affected by the flexi-schooling arrangement. However, transport will only be provided on those days the child attends school under the flexi-schooling arrangement.

The school will advise the Local Authority of the arrangement, the days on which transport is required and duration of the agreement if known.

Appeal

The headteacher's decision is final; there is no right of appeal.

PROCEDURES

- 1) Parents may request flexi-schooling using the **Parental request form**.
- 2) Once the request has been received, head/SLT will contact the parent/carers to invite them to a meeting to discuss the request in further detail. A record of this meeting should be recorded using the **flexi request meeting record**.

- 3) Once a decision has been made, the parent/carer will be contacted by writing. If approved, the **flexi school agreement** and the **flexi school period of agreement** will be sent to parents to be signed and returned. These will also be signed by the headteacher and a copy given to parents/carers and the original placed in the child's personal file. If declined, a letter stating the reasons will be sent to parent/carers.
- 4) Flexi-school period of agreements will be revised termly and parent invited in to discuss new contract and successes/concerns of previous one (meetings to be minuted and filed in child's personal file).

A copy of all the above documents can be found on the staff server under Flexi Schooling or in the office filing cabinet.

Policy approved by governing body: September 2020, review September 2021

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P Blackburn, Executive Headteacher

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R Monhemius, Chair of Governors