

# Michaelchurch Escley Primary School



## Flexi-schooling Policy

Governing Body Approval:	March 2017
Policy to be reviewed by:	March 2018

Michaelchurch Escley Primary School recognises that valuable learning occurs outside the school environment. One way in which this might occur is through a Flexi-schooling arrangement where statutory education can be delivered part-time at home.

Benefits from a Flexi-school arrangement might include:

- allowing learning to take place in many environments;
- helping children to adjust to the school environment when starting school;
- supporting children who have previously home schooled back into a school environment;
- respecting families' beliefs and values;
- recognising the individual needs of children;
- ability to pursue current topic and learning in greater depth or with the lead of the child;
- checking understanding gained at school;
- deepening understanding of how children learn;
- forming a cooperative relationship with the school for the education of a child.

In order for our school to enter into and continue a Flexi-schooling arrangement parents and carers must accept and maintain the rigorous framework of expectations set out within this policy.

### **Background**

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent or guardian/carer. Where a parent/carer educates a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called Flexi-schooling.

Flexi-schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents/carers have a legal right to choose to home educate their child but parents/carers do not have a legal right to insist on a Flexi-schooling arrangement being agreed by the school.

Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is Flexi-schooled it is entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a Flexi-schooling arrangement.

If a parent/carer is interested in making a request for a Flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Head teacher so that the proposal may be considered. Requests can be made by parents/carers of current and prospective pupils. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

### **What should parents/carers consider?**

The implications of making partial educational provision at home are significant, both in terms of expertise and resources, and in the commitment to make a shared provision work well for the child.

The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision. The child will be covering the National Curriculum work set by the teacher on their flexi-school days, so that they keep pace with the work covered by their class. However, parents/carers should be mindful of the possible fragmentation of the child's learning and social experience.

Flexi-schooling is unlikely to succeed if the reasons for choosing it are negative and the choice is motivated by a desire to 'cherry pick' certain activities only or aimed at avoiding difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of school discipline or attendance itself. Flexi-schooling does not give an alternative means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable. The school would expect to engage actively in attempting to resolve these difficulties.

The school has an inclusive approach to education and strives hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents. The school expects parents of Flexi-schooled children to uphold the school's ethos, values, policies and practice. Strong and reciprocal partnership between home and school is key to a successful and sustainable Flexi-schooling arrangement.

### **Considerations following Flexi-school requests**

Considerations that our Head teacher will make when deciding whether to agree to a Flexi-schooling arrangement:

- All applications will be judged on their own merit.
- The grounds for agreeing a Flexi-schooling place will always be at the discretion of the head teacher.
- Safeguarding and welfare of the child is of paramount importance. Ultimately our school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site and an appropriate, quality assured risk assessment must be undertaken in advance of any agreement made.
- No agreement will be reached or maintained where our Head teacher has concerns that it would put the child at risk of harm while not attending at our school. Therefore, when agreeing to Flexi-schooling arrangement our school is certifying that the education is supervised and all reasonable and appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.
- On application for an initial admission the head teacher reserves the right to decline a request for a flex-schooling place.

- Grounds for declining a place could be that adding to the number of children attending on a flexi-basis would create an imbalance and be detrimental to teaching, learning and the outcomes of other children already within the class in question. In such circumstances a full time place will be offered on proviso that a place is available within the class.
- Current and anticipated level of educational attainment, achievement and progress of the individual pupil and the arrangements for monitoring the learning and progress of the individual pupil will be carefully considered.
- The appropriateness of the environment proposed and maintained by the parents/carers away from the school will be assessed.
- Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full time education provision.
- The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school.
- The effect on the school organisation and funding.
- The effect on school resources.
- The impact on overall school attainment and progress figures.

### **The Role of the Governing Body of a School**

The governing body may be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's approach to Flexi-schooling requests but they will not become involved in individual cases. Governors may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint regarding Flexi-schooling provision is made.

Governors must satisfy themselves that the Head teacher has fully considered the conditions for agreeing a Flexi-schooling agreement and that they are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

Governors will also monitor progress of flexi-schooled children to ensure that good progress is being made. This will be reviewed regularly through the curriculum committee.

### **Appeals**

There is no appeal against the decision of our Head teacher not to agree to a Flexi-schooling request or if our head teacher decides to cease an individual child's Flexi-schooling arrangement. If parents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the process and cannot resolve this with the head teacher, they can approach the Chair of Governors for further discussion.

### **Our agreement with parents**

A written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent/carer, in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement is formalised in line with the schools Flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The expected pattern of attendance at school. Currently a child can be flexi-schooled on a Monday and/or a Friday only.

- The flexi school arrangement will be reviewed after one term, to confirm that both parties are happy with the agreement; both parties reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement at this time.
- Flexibility regarding attendance for special events which fall outside of the normal arrangement such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.
- Flexi-schooled children may attend school on days usually reserved for flexi-schooling with 24 hours notice.
- Registration. How the register will be marked (please see Registration of attendance document).
- That the parents/carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session during which they would normally be flexi-schooled (e.g. if they are unwell). This enables the school to correctly code the absence for that session.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other children.
- On days when he or she does not attend school, the child will be set work and learning outcomes by their class teacher which are in line with the activities and content which will be covered in class on those days. Parents are expected to help their child work towards these outcomes on Flexi-school days.
- Parents are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress in the Off-site element of the agreement. Learning progress should be recorded and shared with school on a regular basis through the Home/school book. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording of a pupils work and outcomes is not set by the school, but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports and annotated photographs. This can be written or online evidence. In addition, a proforma for providing feedback on activities carried out and the level of support provided to child will be provided. The proforma needs to be completed and handed back to the school on a weekly basis by the parent/carer.
- The school will provide a Home/school book to record termly and weekly learning as above, including next steps. This must be returned on Tuesday morning at the latest, with the feedback proforma, for feedback to be made by the class teacher.
- The school will monitor the progress of all Flexi-schooled children at an individual level and reserve the right to withdraw the arrangement if the child's progress is adversely affected by the flexi schooling arrangement.
- Assessment. It is the expectation of the school that Flexi-schooled children will be assessed at key points along with their peers. For example end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages One and Two.
- Parents/carer choosing to employ at their/ his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents/carer will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child

- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision will be clearly discussed and supported by the school. For children who have special educational needs, the regular review of each Flexi-schooling agreement will include consideration of whether Flexi-schooling will continue to meet the child's individual education needs.
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parent/carer and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home-school relationships.
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement.
- How any disputes will be resolved.

### **Procedures when a child is Flexi-schooled**

For children new to the school:

When attending our school on school based days the National Curriculum will be followed as if the child were attending full-time.

The requirement to follow the National Curriculum will apply to all children except:

- Temporarily, due to exceptional circumstances such as prolonged absence from school on health grounds or family crisis.
- As a part of an Education Health and Care Plan which stipulate alternative provision.
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period.

Children will be set work and learning outcomes by the class teacher and which will be handed in for marking on the next school day (usually a Tuesday).

All flexi-schooling children will receive home visits to review provision and supplement risk assessment. For new applications to Flexi-school this is required prior to agreeing (though this is at the discretion of the head teacher).

### **Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs**

There is no distinction between children who are to be Flexi-schooled and those who are not.

The duty to review a child's Education, Health and Care Plan on an annual basis or sooner if appropriate, still applies.

### **Funding**

The child will be recorded by the school as attending full-time with sessions not in school being recorded as per agreement. Therefore the school will receive full-time funding.

Flexi-schooled children are included in census count returns as for other children.

### **Admissions**

There is no distinction between children who are Flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, the child will count towards admissions numbers on roll as full-time.

### **Infant Class Size Legislation (ICSL)**

Our school makes no distinction between children who are to be Flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, a child will not be an exception to ICSL (sometimes called Key Stage One legislation) solely by being Flexi-schooled.

### **Insurance**

There is no distinction between children who are to be Flexi-schooled and those who are not.

### **Children Educated outside their Chronological Age-Group**

There is no distinction between children who are to be Flexi-schooled and those who are not.

### **When the education being provided at home is not suitable**

If it appears to our school that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education or not working with the school to uphold its values, policies and practices as agreed between the school and the parent/carer; the school may ask the parent/carer to take remedial action.

If the parent/carer declines to do so or the school is still concerned about the provision of the education at home or adherence to the Flexi-schooling agreement, the school may withdraw its agreement. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis.

A school attendance order would not need to be initiated as the child is on the roll of our school.

If a child fails to return to full-time attendance our school will record the absence unauthorised and refer the case to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) in line with school and County procedures.

### **Policy updates**

We are aware of the need to review our Flexi-schooling policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. The flexi-school policy will be reviewed annually. Our school will manage implementation of this procedure/policy with the support and guidance of the Local Authority. This procedure/policy and its guidance will always

reflect the present and future needs of all stakeholders and to support this we are always open to suggestions for changes and alterations of and to any specific individual provision/requirement to ensure full access to all.