

CATCOTT PRIMARY



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# FLEXI SCHOOLING POLICY

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'...where learning takes you to greater heights...'

Approved by:

LGB

Date:

April 2026

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April 2026

Next review due by:

April 2027

## **Introduction**

Every child is different and schools use a wide range of strategies and resources to meet their needs. Some parents may feel that a flexi-schooling arrangement will help to meet their child's needs effectively.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Make clear the various rules and guidelines that would need to be followed and considered under a flexi-schooling arrangement.
- Provide information for schools to support parents/carers in considering whether this would be beneficial to their child.
- Provide information for schools in making decisions about their approach to flexi-schooling and around particular requests.

## **2 Flexi-schooling definition**

The responsibility to ensure that a child receives full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent/carer with parental responsibility. The 1996 Education Act states that the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Some parents/carers may decide to provide a suitable education by educating their child/young person at home, rather than seeking to enrol their child at a school. This is known as Elective Home Education and is where the parent/carer takes full responsibility for the education of the child/young person.

Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education. Parents/carers who request flexible attendance are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve both attendance at school as well as times when the child/young person will receive educational provision at home.

Flexi-schooling is also different from temporary part-time attendance arrangements which the school/parent/carer may seek to make. Such part-time arrangements are monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child/young person be returned to full-time attendance as soon as possible. Although provision may be split between school and home (and should be systematically reviewed), flexi-schooling arrangements do not have to be introduced with a fixed purpose of returning a child/young person to full-time education.

Arrangements for Flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. This is not an arrangement which can be initiated by a school.

## **Summary**

**Flexi-schooling:** Provision of education through an agreed pattern of attendance at school and education at home

**Temporary part-time schooling:** Provision of education through an agreed part-time attendance at school, with the aim of returning the child to full time education.

**Elective home education:** Provision of education at home, with the parent/carer taking full responsibility

## **3 Legality of flexi-schooling**

While parents/carers have an absolute right both to school placement and to Elective Home Education, they have no legal right to a flexi-schooling arrangement; Head teachers can refuse to agree to such requests. There is no specific right to appeal against the decision of a Head teacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request.

## **4 Attendance recording**

School would need to mark the register with code C (authorised absence) where pupils are home educated during school hours, e.g. as part of a flexi-schooling arrangement. The GOV.UK web page containing the Home Education Guidelines says "Pupils who are being flexi-schooled should be marked as absent from school during the periods when they are receiving home education," (p35, Section 10.8).

This will affect the school's overall absence and attendance figures so the school will need to consider this in monitoring these figures. If the child is unable to attend a session, home or school-based (e.g. because of illness, medical appointment etc), the parent/carer must inform the school and then this will be reflected in the school's register using the usual absence codes. The school should consider maintaining a separate sign in/out register for each child/young person with a Flexi-Schooling Arrangement in place and use this to inform the school's attendance records.

## **5 Parent/carer considerations**

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. The education provided at home and at school should together constitute a full-time placement. While there is no statutory curriculum for the home education part of a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents/carers will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience.

Flexi-schooling is unlikely to be successful if the reasons for choosing it are negative and the choice is motivated by the desire to avoid 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.

Parents/carers need to be aware that limited attendance in school could make it difficult for a child to maintain strong relationships with peers and this could result in an element of social exclusion.

Parents/carers need to understand that, under a flexi-schooling arrangement, a school carries significant statutory responsibilities for a child's safeguarding, attendance and education. Robust and transparent communication systems will need to be agreed to enable the school to safely and confidently enter into, and maintain, an arrangement.

Parents/carers also need to understand that schools are places that work to set structures and timetables but these are always subject to change. Whilst a school will always do its best to keep to agreed set patterns, or communicate clearly where changes to these patterns have to be made, parents/carers need to understand that this is not always possible.

If a child on a flexi-schooling arrangement moves to a different school, there is no guarantee that flexi-schooling will be able to continue. This would be a decision for the headteacher in that new school.

## **6 School considerations**

Safeguarding the child/young person is of paramount importance.

All pupils on roll, whether flexi-schooled or not, have equal status. Schools need to be mindful of their statutory responsibilities regarding equality of opportunity for all.

There is no opt-out for schools with regards to the National Curriculum based on a flexi-schooling proposal. Although a child/young person may not be attending all school sessions, the school will still need to ensure that they have appropriate access to the National Curriculum. The child/young person cannot be disapplied from statutory curriculum or assessment arrangements simply because flexible attendance has been agreed.

Schools receive full funding for flexi-schooled pupils and they must be included in all census returns.

The school should consider the child's previous educational experience when agreeing a flexi-school arrangement. Transition arrangements may be appropriate where a child/young person has previously been entirely home educated or has attended a provision significantly different from a mainstream setting.

Since the child remains on the school roll in a flexi-schooling arrangement, the school retains the responsibility for their progress in school and for tracking that progress.

In some home education situations, children/young people may work with professionals from a third-party organisation (e.g. an educational charity). Whilst a child is at home, the responsibility for the suitability (safeguarding and quality of provision) of this adult lies with the parent (although significant concerns regarding safeguarding can prevent any home education situation from continuing). However, when they are in school, this responsibility would lie with the headteacher.

The responsibility for a flexi-schooling arrangement lies with the school, not the Local Authority. Schools would need to work with parents to address any issues which arise. The only exception to this is where an Education, Health and Care Plan is in place as the responsibility for the delivery of the plan ultimately lies with the Local Authority who would need to be informed and included in discussions if any concerns arise.

## **7 Agreeing a flexi-schooling arrangement**

If a parent/carer is interested in making a flexi-schooling request, the headteacher should be contacted so that the proposal may be considered. The request should be made in writing, clearly marked as a request for flexi-schooling. The request should demonstrate consideration of the points laid out in Section 5 (above) and should also include:

- Intended benefits to the child (of flexi-schooling provision as opposed to a full-time school placement)

- Proposed split of time to be spent at home and at school
- Intended aspects of the curriculum to be covered within school
- Proposals about home/school communication systems which will enable the school to carry out its statutory duties

The request could also include information about what educational provision will be undertaken at home (this may support a school in agreeing to a flexi-schooling request). However, parents/carers do not have to provide this information and schools are not responsible for educational coverage conducted at home.

Pupils who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement are subject to the same school admission processes as other pupils and are counted in the same way as a child who attends full-time for the purposes of the infant class size regulations. A child cannot be offered a flexi-schooling place if they do not already have a place at the school (unless they have an EHCP).

Ultimately, it is the decision of the headteacher as to whether the school will enter into a flexi-schooling agreement with the parent/carer. However, schools may wish to have a process in place that involves other key members of staff and/or leaders, e.g. class teacher, SENDCo.

Governors have a role in agreeing and reviewing a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling and a particular link governor could be in place to check that appropriate processes are being followed. However, it is not the role of governors to make decisions about individual cases.

In the event that a headteacher does not agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement and the parent/carer believes the process has not been followed correctly, this should be dealt with using the school's Complaints Policy.

In the event that the headteacher does agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement, the school will draft an agreement document which needs to:

- be agreed by the school and parents/carers before implementation
- define clear communication systems and regular review points

## **8 Dealing with concerns**

It is very important to a successful Flexi-Schooling arrangement that school and home work in partnership. The aim of both needs to be to maintain a positive relationship with open discourse. However, both parties need to be able to raise concerns if they arise, so that these can be dealt with appropriately.

The primary method for discussing concerns would be at review meetings, planned to take place at a frequency described in the arrangement agreed by both parties (suggested at least termly). Either the school or the parent/carer could request to bring the next review meeting forward should they have a significant concern which needs to be discussed as a matter of urgency.

A school or parent/carer can withdraw their agreement to a flexi-schooling arrangement at any time. The child/young person would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis or parents/carers can choose to seek a place at an alternative school or educate at home on a full-time basis (elective home education).

Our aim is always to ensure that every decision supports the student's wellbeing and learning. For this reason, flexible schooling can only be approved when there is clear evidence showing that it is strongly in the student's best interests.

Other policies it might link to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home-School Agreement

## Checklist

Name of Child	
Name of parent/carer	
Date when request first made by parents/ carers:	
Have the parents fully explained the exact details of the flexi-schooling arrangements they have in mind & the reasons behind their request. Are these reasons appropriate?	
Has the request been confirmed by the parents in writing & request stored on the child's file?	
Is the school able to accommodate any concerns expressed by the parents within the parameters of full-time schooling?	
Does it appear likely that the request, if approved, would impose an additional workload on members of staff? What is the nature of this additional workload?	
Is the programme/ activity proposed by the parents educational and appropriate?	
Have the parents been made fully aware of their child's current and anticipated level of educational attainment and the potential impact which their request for flexi-schooling might have on this?	
Have the parents been made fully aware of any critical aspects of the curriculum/ assessment/ teaching in school which their child will miss if their child is flexi-schooled?	

Should the school agree to the parents' request, have arrangements for monitoring and review been discussed and agreed? What timescales have been set? Has an initial review date been agreed?	
Have the parents been made aware that the school has the right to withdraw any agreement it might make to flexi-schooling arrangements if it considers that the original intentions and expectations are not being met?	
Should the school be unable to agree to the parents' request, have the reasons for this been fully explained and confirmed in writing and saved on the pupils' file?	
Have the parents been informed that their child will accrue absences (authorised for the periods of time they are flexi-schooled?)	
Decision	
Reason:	
Signed	
Date	