

Stratford Rural Schools' Federation



FEDERATION

FLEXI SCHOOLING POLICY

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Adopted by the Governing Body	18 th December 2015
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INTRODUCTION

Warwickshire Local Authority firmly believes that every child should attend a good or outstanding school or setting.

At the Stratford Rural Schools Federation we recognise that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in very effective, full-time and suitable education. One way could be for them to request that our school considers entering into a flexi schooling arrangement.

In order for our schools to enter into and continue a flexi schooling arrangement parents and carers must accept and maintain the rigorous framework of expectations reflected within this policy.

This policy is intended to assist parents considering whether to request that the education of their statutory-age child is partly at school and the remainder elsewhere, generally at home. This is generally known as flexi schooling.

The Stratford Rural Schools Federation is happy to discuss requests from parents who wish their child to have a flexible education.

BACKGROUND

The responsibility for a child receiving a full time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent.

Where a parent educates 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 educates a child entirely at home as an expression of parental preference, this is called elective home education.

Flexi-schooling can be defined as:

an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part of the time; the rest of the time the child is home educated. This can be a long-term arrangement or a short-term measure for a particular reason. Flexi-schooling is a legal option provided that the headteacher at the school concerned agrees to the arrangement. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum whilst at school but not whilst he or she is being educated at home. Local Authorities should make sure that headteachers are made familiar with flexi-schooling and how it may work in practice.

(DCSF (Now Department for Education DfE) 2007. Elective Home Education: Guidance for Local Authorities)

Flexi schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents have a legal right to choose to home educate their child but parents do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi schooling arrangement being agreed by our schools.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS TO 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.

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

Flexi schooling within any of our 3 schools 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 is aimed at avoiding difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of schools discipline or attendance itself.

Our schools have an inclusive approach to education and strive hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents. Our schools expect parents of flexi children to uphold the school's ethos, values, policies and practice. A strong and reciprocal partnership between home and school is key to a successful and sustainable flexi schooling arrangement.

Flexi schooling *does not* give an alternative means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child or parent, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable.

THE PROCESS

Prospective parents who wish to flexi-school should visit the school and speak to the Head of School. The decision to admit a child is at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher on the advice of the Head of School. Each case will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

In deciding whether to agree to a flexi schooling arrangement, the school will consider:

- safeguarding the child as of paramount importance
- the appropriateness of the education proposed by the parent away from the school
- the effect on the school organisation and funding
- the effect on school resources, including staffing
- the effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school
- the advice of other relevant involved education, medical and social care professionals

Parents applying for a flexi-school placement will be informed as soon as a decision had been made and arrangements made to complete the Parental Agreement (see Appendix 1). This sets out the school's expectations so that everything is clear for all concerned. It sets out:

- The normal expected pattern of attendance
- The length of time the agreement is to run before review by the school. Typically this may be one term initially, with annual reviews thereafter
- What flexibility there will be regarding special events which fall outside the normal arrangements, such as assemblies, trips, productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school
- How the register will be marked

- That the parents must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activity
- 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 need not follow the National Curriculum. However, the school will require parents to provide the school with an overview of expected learning provision
- Pupil Progress. 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. It is likely that Ofsted would want to assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for recording is not set by the school but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports and annotated photographs
- What the arrangements will be at times of children's assessment, both in house and statutory assessments. As flexi schooled children are officially on roll at the school they must be included in statutory assessments such as the Early Years Profile, the Year 1 Phonics screen and the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 assessments
- That if a parent chooses to employ at his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to children
- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parent and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home-school relationships
- That the school will notify the Administrator for Elective Home Education at the LA of the flexi-schooling arrangement
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement
- How any disputes will be resolved

WORKING TOGETHER

For flexi schooling to work well it's important that schools and parents work together. To this end the schools in our federation are committed to the following principles;

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

- Attendance levels of children will be monitored and should attendance fall below 93% the flexi schooling agreement will be reviewed.
- The attainment and progress of children will be tracked and if the Head of School has concerns about progress or attainment in any area of learning the flexi schooling agreement will be reviewed.
- The schools will use any evidence parents/carers collate at home to inform their assessments of children – attainment and progress evidence will be shared.

ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

- A clear record/diary of activities and learning experiences that have happened on flexi schooling days.
- Parents/carers are expected to provide copies of work/evidence/activity/diaries to the school and bring evidence to each parent's evenings which take place termly when requested.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

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.

Appeals: There is no appeal against a decision by the school not to agree to a flexi-schooling request.

Attendance: Following DfE guidance any child not present in school should be marked as absent on the school register. However, schools may record the sessions when the child is not in school as 'authorised absences' (Code C). Flexi schooled children's attendance is reported to parents, the Governing Body, the Local Authority and the DfE in the same way as other children.

It is the preference of the school that children attend on a minimum of three full days per week.

Communication: Schools will monitor progress, attendance, behaviour and the effectiveness of any intervention programmes in line with the existing procedures for full time equivalent pupils.

The school will update the parents on their child's progress at school at least twice per year through formal parents' meetings, and more frequently by informal communications. Schools expect all parents to act on advice provided and work in partnership with the school to ensure that children make appropriate academic progress.

Curriculum: The National Curriculum must be followed in maintained schools. This applies to all children on roll. Therefore all flexi schooled children will follow the National Curriculum on the days when they attend school. In addition, all registered pupils are legally entitled to provision for Religious Education; however, all parents are entitled to withdraw children from RE and should discuss this with the Head of School.

Funding: Flexi schooled children will be recorded by the school as attending full-time – with sessions not in school being recorded as absent. Therefore the school will receive full-time funding.

Flexi schooled children are included in all census counts required by the DfE.

Insurance: There is no distinction between those who are flexi schooled and those who are not.

The Local Authority: Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of all children who are flexi schooled.

When the Home Education is deemed unsuitable: Neither the LA or school have a statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education on a routine basis. However, if it appears to the school that parents are not providing a suitable education as agreed between the school and the parent, the school may ask the parent to take remedial action. If the parent declines to do so or the school is still concerned about the provision of education at home, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis, or be fully home educated.

Appendix 1 – Stratford Rural Schools Federation

Flexi schooling Home/School Contract

Contract for Provision of Education – Part 1School

Child's Name:

D.O.B.

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):

.....Primary School is responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times set out in the attached Attendance Agreement and timetable.

The educational provision will be suitable to’s age, aptitude and ability as set out in *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996*.

Whilstis on school premises or the School is acting in loco parentis the school will maintain primary responsibility for safety and welfare.

The school and parent/carer will meet every term for a review meeting to discuss’s progress and review the attendance agreement.

The school can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing (one month).

Head Teacher:

Date:

Contract for Provision of Education – Part 2 Home

Child's Name:

D.O.B

Name of parent(s)/carer(s):

I/we are responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times set out in the attached Attendance Agreement and timetable.

The educational provision will be suitable to’s age, aptitude and ability as set out in *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996*.

During school hours timetabled for home-based education I/we will maintain primary responsibility for’s safety and welfare.

I/we understand that I/we can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing (one month).

Parent/carer:

Date:

Appendix 2 – Stratford Rural Schools Federation

Flexi schooling Home/School Contract

Attendance Agreement:

Child's Name:

D.O.B.

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

Parent/carer signature:

Date:

Agreed by Head of School:

Date: