

# Michaelchurch Escley Primary and Pre School



## Flexi-schooling Policy

Governing Body Approval:	15.02.22
Policy to be reviewed by:	Curriculum Committee and FGB
Policy to be reviewed by:	Feb 2024

Michaelchurch Escley Primary School recognises that valuable learning can also occur 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:

- helping children to adjust to the school environment when starting school;
- supporting children who have previously home schooled back into a school environment;
- recognising the individual needs of children;
- 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 school's 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 the 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 risk assessment must be undertaken in advance of any agreement made.
- No agreement will be reached or maintained where the Head teacher has concerns that would put the child at risk of harm while not attending at 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 flexi-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 evaluated and risk 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.
- The effect on school resources.
- The impact on overall school attainment and progress figures.

### **Flexi-school Admissions Criteria**

In order to avoid creating an imbalance which would be detrimental to the teaching of the non-flexi school children in the class, flexi school places will be limited to no more than 50% of the year group.

Flexi-school days are: Mon and Fri for two days a week. Friday only for one day a week.

The criteria for allocating flexi-school places are as follows:

1. Exceptional circumstances e.g. Children with exceptional medical, social or compassionate grounds (at the discretion of the Headteacher and governors)
2. Siblings of children already flexi-schooling.
3. Children's names will be taken out of a hat to ensure fairness.

### **Procedure for new Year R children applying for a Flexi-school place**

- An admission application for a school place must be completed in the normal way and submitted to Herefordshire Council by the deadline date.
- Once a school place is confirmed, the school will write to parents confirming their place and offering them an opportunity to apply for a flexi-school place.
- If a flexi-school place is requested, parents/carers should return their application by the date indicated on the letter and places will be allocated according to the above criteria by 31<sup>st</sup> May.

### **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 the Head teacher not to agree to a Flexi-schooling request or if the 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. This will be signed annually before the start of the new academic year.

### **Flexi-school Handbook**

A handbook instructing flexi-school families on expectations of flexi-schooling will be updated annually and shared with families.

### **Monitoring Progress**

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.

### **Maintaining the same standards at home and in school**

The school expects parents/carers to ensure that children complete work to the same standard equal to that which they would complete at school.

We will ensure this by:

- holding a compulsory parent/carer meeting every September, for all flexi-school families. This meeting makes clear the expectations for flexi-schooling.
- Providing opportunities at parent's evenings to show parents the standards achieved in school.

### **Procedure for unacceptable work completion**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to understand and maintain at home the same standards of learning that would take place in school.

If the teacher is not satisfied with any aspect of the work completed during flexi-schooling, they will make a note on a school register. If there are three occasions of missing or unsatisfactory work, the head will be notified to contact the family. If this doesn't resolve the issue, a meeting will be requested in school with the head and chair of Curriculum.

1. The class teacher will make a note of the issue on a general school register.
2. If there are 3 issues in a half term, the class teacher will refer the issues to the HT.
3. HT contacts the family and explains the issues/situation.
4. If a further issue occurs within 6 school weeks, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the issue with the Headteacher and Chair of Curriculum to discuss the school's concerns and any future action that is required.

The 'threshold' for teachers reporting an 'issue' would be to compare the outcomes for that pupil in school against what they produced at home. Is this what they would have produced/achieved in school?

### **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.

### **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. However, if a child is found to need an EHCP, the Flexi-schooling arrangement will end and the named child will be required to attend school on a full-time basis.

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.

### **Funding/Registration**

There is no distinction between children who are Flexi-schooled and those who are not. The child will be recorded by the school as attending full-time. Therefore, the school will receive full-time funding. Please see registration of attendance document for further information about the how the register will be marked.

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.

### **Policy updates**

The flexi-school policy will be reviewed every two years.

## **Appendix 1 - Flexi-Schooling Form**

\* Required

Flexi-Schooling: Attendance

Part 1 – Agreed Attendance

1.Name of child \*

2.Date of birth \*

Format: M/d/yyyy

3.In order to avoid creating an imbalance which would be detrimental to the teaching of the non-flexi school children in the class, flexi school places will be limited to no more than 50% of the year group.

Flexi-school days are: Mon and Fri for two days a week. Friday only for one day a week.

We can only offer Flexi-Schooling if the following points are adhered to:

- A minimum of 3 consecutive days attendance per week
- Key Stage Two children in Year 6 are required to attend for 1 full week for Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) held in May.
- The school's curriculum is strictly followed on the days when the child is learning at home.

This approach allows our staff to plan lessons effectively and provide the correct level of available resources to match numbers and allows our school to justify flexischooling to the DfE.

When attending school it is important that your child;

1. arrives by no later than 8.45am for registration
2. If you cannot attend on an agreed day or days, it is extremely important that you contact the school and advise – this contact can be email, telephone or in person • You are more than welcome to attend for more days - please give at least 48 hours notice

For some special events which fall on flexi-school days, such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school, flexi-school children will be requested to be in school.

The school reserves the right to withdraw flexi-schooling at certain times e.g. the start of a school year/term.

Additional benefits include greater integration and acceptance with their peers, which translates into your child being an active participant in school life.



Please indicate below which days you would like your child to attend flexi-school: \*

Monday and Friday

Friday only

4. The above named child's education will be split between home and school as set out in the above timetable. This timetable may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the Head teacher and Parent(s) / Carer(s). All elements of this document are subject to Ofsted / DfE guidance and Statutory Duty, along with all future UK and European Law.

Signature of parent/carer of student named above (Inserting your name below will act as a digital signature): \*

## Flexi-Schooling: Whilst in School

### Part 2 – the School's Responsibilities

Our school is part of the current state maintained system of education. Parents / carers need to be aware that whilst we endeavour to be accommodating, we are required to follow the National Curriculum.

5. Michaelchurch Escley Primary School is responsible for the education of the above named child on the days set out in the attached 'Agreed Attendance Schedule'.

The educational provision will be suitable to the above named child's age; aptitude and ability as set out in Section 7 of the Educational Act 1996.

As the below named responsible adult(s) - I / we accept that whilst the above named child is in the care of the school that the school is acting in 'loco parentis', giving the school primary responsibility for their safety and welfare during this time.

Whilst away from school and in the care of the parent, or parent's nominated carer, the parent is responsible for all matters that relate to Health, Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The school and parent / carer will have the opportunity to meet at least once every term to review your child's progress and review the attendance agreement if required.

### Statements of Educational Need

If the school determines that a child registered for Flexi-schooling requires a Statement of Educational Need or EHCP, this will be brought to the attention of the Parent(s) / Carer(s) with a view to making the best provision possible.

In the event of determining that a Statement of Educational Need or EHCP is required, this Flexi-schooling arrangement will cease, and the named child will be required to attend school on a full time basis so that we (the school) can fulfil our Statutory Duty.

The school can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing, appropriate to the circumstances, but no greater than one school term.

Signature of parent/carer of student named above (Inserting your name below will act as a digital signature): \*

### Flexi-Schooling: Out of School Arrangements

#### Part 3 – Parental Responsibilities

6.As the named responsible adult(s) - I / we;

- are willing to accept a visit in the first instance and whenever necessary thereafter by our Headteacher or nominated person, to satisfy the basic Safeguarding, Health and Safety requirements required by our school Governors
- are responsible for the education of the above named child when they are not attending school on the days and times set out in Part 1 'Agreed Attendance'.
- will, if our child is unable to attend on the agreed dates / days, call or e-mail the school to confirm a reason for the absence
- accept that, I / we are entirely responsible for the educational provision offered and delivered to our child when they are not in school and this has to be to a standard to match learning taking place in school in line with the expectations set out in the flexi-school handbook
- accept that, I / we will read and follow all the expectations set out in the Michaelchurch Escley Primary and Pre School Flexi-school Handbook

- accept that whilst away from the care and guidance of school staff, I / we will have the primary and sole responsibility for the above named child's, safety and welfare
- understand that if the child named on this document is found to need an EHCP, that this Flexi-schooling arrangement will end and the named child will be required to attend school on a full time basis.
- I / we agree to commit to the set flexi-school days before the start of a new term for duration of that term.
- I / we accept if I / we choose to employ at our own expense another person to educate our child at home, I / we will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to our child.
- I / we understand that notice to withdraw from this agreement must be given in writing (De-registration letter).
- I / we understand that if there is any concern regarding our child/ren's flexi schooling arrangement we will in the first instance be contacted by the headteacher to discuss the

issue. If after two weeks I/we have not resolved the issue to the school's satisfaction, a meeting with the Headteacher and Chair of Curriculum will be held to discuss the school's concerns and any future action that is required.

Signature of parent/carer of student named above (Inserting your name below will act as a digital signature): \*

## Flexi-Schooling: Safeguarding and Child Protection

### Part 4 – Core Requirement

#### 7.Home Visits

As part of the Flexi-Schooling arrangement, it is necessary for our school to satisfy the Safeguarding and Child Protection requirements of OFSTED, DfE and the LA. Therefore parents / carers will be required to accept visits from a nominated member of the school staff. This member of staff would normally be our Headteacher, who carries the ultimate responsibility for agreeing to the Flexi-Schooling provision, this could however be delegated if required.

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.

The visit will focus on all aspects of the home or third party environment, covering all areas of the educational provision available, through to safeguarding and child protection including concerns if raised. Our home visits will be carried out initially before the flexi-school arrangement begins and then at any point thereafter deemed necessary.

#### Unexplained Absence

In the event that the above named child does not, or cannot, attend school within the time-frame of TEN school days (two weeks), the school in the first instance (or officers from our Local Authority if school is not able to do so) will make arrangements with you to meet either at your home address, or in school with the above named child present.

In the event that we are unable to contact with you as parents, or you refuse contact / attendance when requested, the Flexi-schooling agreement will cease\*, the named child will be removed from the school roll and the Local Authority will be notified of our actions and / or concern(s).

(\*this could be immediate, but will be no greater than one month)

Signature of parent/carer of student named above (Inserting your name below will act as a digital signature): \*

#### 8.Please Note

To satisfy Safeguarding and Child Protection guidance, if your child does not need to attend lessons or a visit to the school within the minimum time-frame, this will be noted and entered on our Safeguarding Attendance records.

Nominated persons who can acknowledge and record your visit are;

- Mrs Louise Crocker (Headteacher) or
  - The designated person for Safeguarding & Child Protection (Mrs Louise Crocker/Miss Rebecca Cook)
  - The designated class teacher
  - The Designated Governor for Safeguarding & Child Protection is Mrs Rhiannon Taylor
  - Another member of staff delegated by the headteacher

**Appendix 2 – Flexi-school Handbook (see separate copy)**