



Management of Flexi-schooling Requests Advice Note

All children are entitled to a suitable, full-time education and for the majority of children this will be achieved within a school environment. However, we recognise, that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request for a school to agree a flexi-schooling arrangement.

The decision on whether to approve a request for flexi-schooling must be made by the Headteacher of the school who has received the request. This advice has been produced by the Attendance Team to support schools to respond to requests from parents who are considering flexi-schooling as an option for their child. This document clarifies what is meant by the term flexi-schooling and aims to support conversations between parents and schools about this approach to education.

It is recommended that school staff read this advice alongside the following guidance: [Elective home education: guidance for local authorities](#), DfE (April 2019). Schools may also wish to signpost parents to: [Elective home education: guidance for parents](#) if they become aware that they are considering flexi-school or elective home education for their child.

What is flexi-schooling?

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

The [Department for Education Guidance](#) states:

“Although children being home-educated are not normally registered at any school, parents sometimes choose to make arrangements for a child to receive part of the total provision at a school - the purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Such arrangements are sometimes known as ‘flexi-schooling’. Schools are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are happy to do so. When a child is flexi-schooled, the parents must still ensure that the child receives a suitable full-time education but the element received at school must be taken into account in considering whether that duty is met.”

Flexi-schooling arrangements are *not* the same as elective home education nor the temporary reduced time-table arrangements a school may put in place in exceptional cases to support a child’s reintegration back into school.



How should an application for flexi-schooling be made?

Flexi schooling should 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 any school.

Arrangements for flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. This request must emanate from the parent/carer; it is not for a Headteacher, a member of school staff or an officer of the Local Authority to suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling. Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled it is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether 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 should be made directly with the Headteacher of the child's current or prospective school so that the proposal may be considered. The responsibility for the flexi-school arrangement lies between the school and the parent, not the Local Authority. The school will need to work with parents to plan how the arrangement will work and address any issues which arise.

What factors should be considered?

Schools are not obliged to accept flexi-school arrangements if requested by a parent, however, all requests must be considered by the Headteacher on their own merits. The Headteacher should take into account the best interests of the child, their educational progress and achievement, safety and well-being, together with the likely impact on the wider school community.

When deciding whether to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement, it will be helpful for a Headteacher to consider the following:

- safeguarding and welfare of the child is of paramount importance. No agreement should be reached where a Headteacher has concerns that a flexi-school arrangement might put the child at risk of harm while not attending school.
- flexi-schooling is unlikely to succeed 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's discipline or attendance itself.
- the wishes and feelings of the child.
- the potential impact on the child's ability to maintain strong relationships with peers and staff due to their reduced attendance at school.
- 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.



- whether the arrangements being sought can be made outside of normal school hours.
- the appropriateness of the education proposed by the parent away from the school, the impact on the child's access to the school curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience.
- whether the flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school together constitutes a full-time education provision as required.
- if arrangements are agreed, the school will retain the responsibility for the child's progress and any absences incurred because of the decision to participate in a flexi-schooling arrangement.
- the effect on the wider school community.

What is the role of the Academy Trust or Governing Board in flexi-schooling?

The Trust or Governing Board may be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's approach to flexi-schooling requests, but it is not recommended that they become involved in individual cases, as they may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint is made.

The Trust/Governors should satisfy themselves that the Headteacher has fully considered the points highlighted above and are fully conversant with the school attendance guidance when reaching a decision.

Is there a right of appeal against a decision?

There is no parental right of appeal against the decision of a Headteacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request or if a Headteacher decides to cease flexi-schooling arrangement.

Should a written agreement be in place?

In all cases where a flexi-schooling arrangement is agreed, it is strongly recommended that a written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent/carer, in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. Each agreement should be bespoke to the individual child and the arrangement requested but should include:

- the normal, expected pattern of attendance at school;
- arrangements for regular planning and review meetings between parent/carer and school to ensure the child achieves his/her potential and to promote good home/school relationships;
- the rationale for why the flexi-schooling arrangement is in the best interests of the pupil concerned;
- procedures for flexibility around special events which fall outside the normal arrangement;
- how the register will be marked;



- the responsibility of parents/carers regarding attendance at those sessions the child is expected to be in school;
- how the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence in the same way as it does for other children;
- arrangements at times of assessment;
- agreement that if the parent/carer chooses to employ other people to educate their child at home, they will be responsible for making sure that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children and will be responsible for meeting all costs related to this decision;
- details of any special educational needs and associated provision;
- clarity about the circumstances under which and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement;
- the arrangements for the resolution of any disputes (usual processes are for disputes to be resolved at the most informal level possible, but ultimately any complaints will need to be considered in accordance with the school's complaints procedure).

Parents should also be made aware that if the child moves to a different school, there can be no guarantee that flexi-schooling would be able to continue. A fresh request for a flexi-schooling arrangement must be made to the new school Headteacher. It would then be a decision for the Headteacher at the new school to make.