

Flexi-Schooling Arrangements

Guidelines for Schools and Parents

These guidelines apply to:

All primary and secondary maintained schools within Stockport (with the exception of special schools)

And

Parents and carers who request their child is educated partly in school and partly at home under Elective Home Education arrangements.

These guidelines serve to provide information and guidance to schools and parents/carers regarding the process and procedures for flexi-schooling as part of Elective Home Education arrangements.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 These guidelines have been developed in conjunction with headteachers and home educating families in order to provide information and guidance to schools and parents regarding the process and procedures for flexi-schooling as part of Elective Home Education (EHE) arrangements. It will assist schools in their response where parents request an arrangement for their child to attend school part time and receive the remainder of their education at home or elsewhere, organised by the parent. See Background below.
- 1.2 Combining schooling and non-school education in any ratio is perfectly legal, provided that the outcome is the provision of suitable full-time education for the child, and the local authority satisfies itself that this is so. However, the headteacher must agree to the arrangement. Any school, maintained or independent, may accommodate flexible-schooling if it wishes to, but no school is under an obligation to do so. In deciding whether to agree to a request for flexi-schooling arrangement, a headteacher may consider such issues as:
- Continuity of teaching and learning between home and school
 - The effect on school organisation and resources
 - The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children
 - Peer relationships / support
 - Safeguarding
- 1.3 If a headteacher agrees to a flexi-schooling arrangement, s/he should notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity and provide details of the agreed arrangements. This information should be sent to the Elective Home Education Coordinator, Education Access Service, email: eas@stockport.gov.uk

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The responsibility for a child receiving full time education rests with parents. In England, education is compulsory, but schooling is not. Elective Home Education (EHE) is a term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe parents' decisions to remove their child from the school roll in order to provide education at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to the home tuition provided for children and young people unable to attend school through illness, exclusion or otherwise, sometimes called 'education otherwise than at school', such as that provided by a local authority in a hospital setting or Pupil Referral Unit.
- 2.2 Where a parent elects to educate a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere, as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling. Flexi-schooled children are educated at home some of the time but are also registered at school and attend school for part of the week. The purpose of this may be either to ensure the provision in specific subjects is satisfactory, or it may be to help in other ways such as socialisation. If a child is of compulsory school-age he or she must, overall, be receiving full-time education even if components of it are part-time.
- 2.3 Where a parent favours this form of educational approach, they may request flexi-schooling on a short-term or long-term basis.

3. Reaching agreement for flexi-schooling

- 3.1 While a Governing Board may be involved in agreeing and reviewing a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling, it is for the headteacher to consider each request on its own merits.
- 3.2 There are limited circumstances in which an application for a school place can be refused if there is room within the Published Admission Number in the relevant year group. Admission authorities must comply with parental preference for applications outside of the normal admissions round unless one of the statutory reasons for refusing admission applies.

Applications for a child to join a school under the flexi-schooling arrangement will be considered under the local authority's Fair Access Protocol if applicable.
- 3.3 A request for flexi-schooling may also be made by parent of a child who is already on roll at the school, where they are considering elective home education.
- 3.4 A headteacher can refuse a request for flexi-schooling if the proposed arrangements cannot reasonably be met by the school. However, no request should be refused without first considering the proposal, and any refusal should include a reasonable explanation.
- 3.5 Following agreement by the headteacher for a child to receive education under the flexi schooling arrangement, the child will be registered at the school. Where flexi-schooling has been agreed by the headteacher for pupils already on roll at the school, the local authority should be advised of the flexi-schooling agreement.
- 3.6 On the days when it is agreed the child will attend, the National Curriculum will apply and must be followed as if the child were attending full time.
- 3.7 On days when a pupil does not attend school under the flexi-schooling agreement, there is no requirement for the parent to follow the National Curriculum.

4. Attendance Register

- 4.1 If a headteacher agrees a request for flexi-schooling, the time spent by children being educated at home should be authorised as absence and marked in attendance registers accordingly. It is not appropriate to mark this time as 'approved off-site activity' (Code B) as the school has no supervisory role in the child's education at such times and has no responsibility for the welfare of the child while he or she is at home.
- 4.2 There is not an attendance code specific to flexi-schooling; the local authority advises that **pupils should be marked absent from school, using Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school, during periods where the child is receiving home education as part of the flexi-schooling arrangement.**
- 4.3 On the days which it has been agreed the pupil will attend school, the Pupil Registration Regulations, including all appropriate codes for attendance and absence, will apply.
- 4.4 The DfE recognise that some schools have expressed concern that authorised absence relating to flexi-schooling may have a detrimental effect for the purpose of Ofsted inspection. They state however that this is not the case: *'some schools with significant flexi-schooling numbers have had good outcomes from Ofsted inspections. Schools which have flexi schooled pupils should be ready to discuss with Ofsted inspectors the arrangements they have in place to deal with the requirements caused by such pupils. Schools are held to account through inspection for the performance of pupils, and that will include any who attend the school as part of a programme of flexi-schooling.'*

5. When Flexi-schooling arrangements are inappropriate

- 5.1 Flexi-schooling should only be considered following a request from the parent/carer of a child or young person, and only as part of Elective Home Education arrangements. It should not be used to manage behavioural and disciplinary issues or as a solution to poor attendance.
- 5.2 The DfE statutory exclusions guidance gives an unequivocal message that unofficial exclusions are illegal. This includes pupils being sent home for either short periods of time or for longer, indefinite periods, and/or parents being encouraged to home educate even though they may not be aware of the responsibilities involved. These pupils may be marked as an authorised absence, or in some cases marked as attending, and eventually taken off the school roll incorrectly without having another school or education provision. This practice is known as 'off-rolling', defined as: *'the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil'*.

6. When Elective Home Education is considered unsuitable

- 6.1 The school does not have a statutory duty in relation to monitoring the quality of home education; this is a role for the local authority. However, if it appears to the school that parents are not providing a suitable education it may ask parents for further information about the education they are providing. If a parent declines to do so, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangements and notify the local authority of the concerns. Where this is the case, this action would not be considered a precursor to any formal procedures, however the following may occur:
- a) The pupil would be required to attend at school on a full-time basis, or;
 - b) The parent may remove the child from the school roll for full-time elective home education.

In the event of the child being removed from the school roll the local authority may consider further action under 437 of The Education Act 1996.

7. Funding

Schools receive full funding for children attending under flexi-school arrangements; such children are included in the Census return as for other children.

8. Admissions

There is no distinction between children who attend school as part of a flexi-school arrangement, and those who do not. Whatever the degree of part-time attendance, the pupil will count towards admission numbers on roll as if they were full-time. Flexi-schooled children are not permitted exceptions to infant class size legislation.

9. Insurance

There is no distinction between children who attend school as part of a flexi-school arrangement, and those who do not.

10. Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

Where the parent of a child with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) requests flexi-schooling, it is recommended that the school organises a review meeting involving parents, the school's SENDCO and the local authority's EHCP Team to discuss the request, before the headteacher makes a decision about whether or not to agree to the request.

11. Children educated outside their Chronological Age-Group

There is no distinction between children who attend school as part of a flexi-school arrangement, and those who do not.

12. Flexi-Schooling Agreement

It is strongly recommended that a written agreement is devised between the school and the parent in order to clarify the expectations for all concerned. This should include:

- Expectations of the school,
- Expectations of parents,
- The agreed pattern of attendance at school,
- The length of time the agreement is to run and the periods by which the arrangement will be reviewed. It is recommended that this be termly,
- How the register will be marked,
- The flexibilities within the agreement to ensure the child is able to take part in activities and special events that fall outside normal arrangements such as, assemblies, school trips and journeys, extended school activities, productions or performances, sports events, visitors to school etc,
- First day contact by the parent if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activities,
- Arrangements for the school to follow up any unexpected or unexplained absences as it would for any other child,
- Arrangements during any period of formal testing or other assessment,
- Parents' responsibilities to ensure that anyone employed at the parent's expense to provide education at home, is suitable to have access to children,
- Provisions for any Special Educational Needs and disabilities the child may have,
- Monitoring and reporting arrangements between the school and home to ensure the child achieves his/her potential and to promote good school-home relationships,
- Procedures in the event the school has concerns that parents are not providing a suitable education,
- Circumstances under which the school or parent can withdraw from the agreement, including any notice period,
- How any disputes will be resolved.

Please see Appendices for model flexi-schooling agreements.

13. Appeals against the decision of a headteacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request

There is no appeal against the headteacher's decision

14. Education Transport

Where a pupil meets the criteria for education transport to be provided between home and school, the transport will not be affected by the flexi-schooling arrangement. However, transport will only be provided on those days the child attends school under the flexi-schooling arrangement.

The school will advise the education transport team of the arrangement, the days on which transport is required, and the duration of the agreement, if known.

Where ad-hoc arrangements apply, for example: a pupil attending extra-curricular activities or a school trip on a home educating day, education transport will not be provided and it will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange for the child's transport to and from the school.

The exception to this is when the arranged transport is solely for the pupil (no other pupils are transported as part of a collective 'pick-up'). On this basis transport may be arranged for a pupil where s/he attends after school activities on an agreed school day.

15. Free School Travel

Where pupils attending school under a flexi-schooling arrangement meet the relevant criteria, they would be entitled to apply for free school travel.

16. Further Advice

These guidelines relate to all primary and secondary maintained schools within Stockport (with the exception of special schools). Governing boards and staff in all schools are requested to support the right of parents to request flexi-schooling by enabling parents/carers to approach a school of their choice to discuss whether it may be appropriate for their child. Schools may assist by signposting parents to the Elective Home Education Coordinator where further information can be provided.

Any queries regarding the operation of the Guidelines can be referred to the Elective Home Education Coordinator, Education Access Service, email: eas@stockport.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Model Flexi-schooling Agreement - Secondary¹

School:

Pupil:

Curriculum and Timetable

- At school:..... will study the following subjects: (for example) GCSEs in History
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 -
 -
 -
- At home:..... will study the following subjects; (for example) GCSE English, Maths, Science, under the direction of, who will use, (for example): 'Oxford Home Learning' Service, to work towards AQA, GCSE specifications in these subjects.
- Where they occur immediately before or after school lesson may incorporate study support lessons into the school-based part of the flexi-schooling arrangement. In these lessons s/he would work privately on (for example) History or any other National Curriculum subject.
- will meet (for example) once per fortnight with the relevant member of school staff to discuss the ongoing home-study curriculum and progress. Parents / carers may attend these meetings as required.
- The school-based timetable will form part of this agreement.

Attendance

- If attends school for all of a morning, afternoon or full day sessions, the register will be used to record such.
- Where attends school for only part sessions, arrangements will be put in place for him/her to sign in and sign out whenever s/he attends school. This will also form the school-based attendance record, although in-class records may also be kept.
- When attending school for curriculum lessons, study support lessons or meetings with staff, s/he must attend the class/lesson as identified - no alternative arrangements will normally be made at these times.
- When curriculum lessons, study support lessons or meetings with staff occur immediately before or after a break or lunch period, s/he may spend this informal time in school, under the same conditions as other pupils in the year group.
- will be marked present for any session during which s/he attends school.
- The standard absence codes will apply to any absence during a session s/he was scheduled to attend school; parents/carers will provide a reason for the absence.
- will be marked present for any session during which s/he attends a pre-arranged additional activity in school.
- When is not attending school under the flexi-school arrangements, s/he will be marked absent, authorised by the school.

¹ Please note: this is a model policy and designed as a reference tool only.

Assessment and Examinations

- will be entered by the school for (for example History GCSEs) provided his/her attendance at lessons has been considered sufficient to enable him/her to sit the exams with some success.
- may be entered for public examinations as a private candidate in relation to subjects studied at home via the school examination office.
- Arrangements for sitting the examinations will be discussed and agreed prior to each series of exams.

Access to other Activities

- will be invited to join (for example) any History related activities open to pupils in his/her History class.
- If the flexi-school arrangement is still in place, will be eligible to attend events such as the school leavers events at the end of Year 11.
- may be invited to take part in other school activities at the headteacher's discretion.

Responsibilities

School:

- The school will retain its normal responsibilities for during the periods when s/he is attending school under the flexi-school schedule, and any other activities agreed by the school: (for example) sporting activity or other extra-curricular activity.
- The school will not be held responsible for any aspects of 's curriculum, teaching and learning, supervision or health and safety when s/he is not attending school according to the flexi-schooling schedule.
- No insurance liability will fall to the school when is not attending school according to the flexi-schooling schedule.
- The local authority retains its duty to act if it appears that a child or young person is not receiving a suitable and efficient, full-time education.

Parents/carers:

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer:

- to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- to ensure that any person engaged to teach within or, away from the home setting, is suitable to have access to children.
- to ensure that is punctual and maintains a high level of school attendance according to the flexi-school arrangement.
- to ensure arrives at school appropriately dressed in the correct uniform and in compliance with the school rules relating to other matters, for example jewellery and hair styles.

Pupil:

It is 's responsibility:

- to arrive on time to all lessons and activities agreed as part of the flexi-school arrangement.
- to comply with all the relevant rules, as any other pupil whilst present on school premises or taking part in any agreed activity.

- to adhere to the arrangements agreed as part of the flexi-schooling arrangement.

Monitoring and Review

- The school will notify the local authority of the flexi-school arrangements.
- The arrangements will be formally reviewed at the end of each full term unless earlier review is necessary.
- Following the formal review, the agreement can be extended (with agreed amendments).
- The school reserves the right, in consultation with the local authority, to withdraw its approval for the flexi-school arrangement if concerns indicate that the home-study part of the arrangement is not appropriate or sufficient to constitute full-time education.
- The school will notify the local authority if it appears that the home-study part of the flexi school arrangement is not suitable in which case the school and the local authority will act in partnership to resolve these concerns.
- Parents/carers reserve the right at any time to request termination of the flexi-school arrangements and a return to full-time school-based education for
- Parents reserve the right to terminate the flexi-school arrangements and educate their child at home under Elective Home Education arrangements.

Appendix 2 -

Model Flexi-schooling Agreement - Primary²

School:

Pupil:

Curriculum and Timetable

- At school:..... the following areas curriculum will be delivered:
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- At home:.....'s education will include the following:
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 -
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under the direction of, who will use, (for example): 'Oxford Home Learning' Service or provide suitable education themselves.
- will meet (for example) once per fortnight with the relevant member of school staff to discuss the ongoing home-study and progress. Parents / carers may attend these meetings as required.
- The school-based timetable will form part of this agreement.

Attendance

- If attends school for all of the morning, afternoon or full day sessions, the register will be used to record such.
- Where attends school for only part sessions, arrangements will be put in place for the school to record such. This will also form the school-based attendance record, although in-class records may also be kept.
- When attending school, s/he must attend the class/lesson as identified - no alternative arrangements will normally be made at these times.
- If is in school for part sessions and meetings with school staff occur immediately before or after a break or lunch period, s/he may spend this informal time in school, under the same conditions as other pupils in the school.
- will be marked present for any session during which s/he attends at school.
- The standard absence codes will apply to any absence during a session s/he was scheduled to attend school; parents/carers will provide a reason for the absence.
- will be marked present for any session during which s/he attends a pre-arranged activity in school.
- When is not attending school under the flexi-school arrangements, s/he will be marked absent, authorised by the school.

² Please note: this is a model policy and designed as a reference tool only.

Assessment

..... will be entered for Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Access to other Activities

- will be invited to join (for example) any curriculum related activities open to pupils in his/her class.
- may be invited to take part in other school activities at the headteacher's discretion.

Responsibilities

School:

- The school will retain its normal responsibilities for during the periods when s/he is attending school under the flexi-school schedule, and any other activities agreed by the school (for example) sporting activity or other extra-curricular activity.
- The school will not be held responsible for any aspects of 's curriculum, teaching and learning, supervision or health and safety when s/he is not attending school according to the flexi-schooling schedule.
- No insurance liability will fall to the school when is not attending school according to the flexi-schooling schedule.
- The local authority retains its duty to act if it appears that a child or young person is not receiving a suitable and efficient, full-time education.

Parents/carers:

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer:

- to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- to ensure that any person engaged to teach within or, away from the home setting, is suitable to have access to children.
- to ensure that is punctual and maintains a high level of school attendance according to the flexi-school arrangement.
- to ensure arrives at school appropriately dressed in the correct uniform and in compliance with the school rules relating to other matters, for example jewellery and hair styles.

Pupil:

It is 's responsibility:

- to comply with all the relevant rules, as any other pupil whilst present on school premises or, taking part in any agreed activity.
- to adhere to the arrangements agreed as part of the flexi-schooling arrangement.

Monitoring and Review

- The school will notify the local authority of the flexi-school arrangements.
- The arrangements will be formally reviewed at the end of each full term unless earlier review is necessary.
- Following the formal review, the agreement can be extended (with agreed amendments).
- The school reserves the right, in consultation with the local authority, to withdraw its approval for the flexi-school arrangement if concerns indicate that the home-study part of the arrangement is not appropriate or sufficient to constitute full-time education.
- The school will notify the local authority, if it appears that the home-study part of the flexi school arrangement is not suitable, in which case the school and the local authority will act in partnership to resolve these concerns.
- Parents/carers reserve the right at any time to request termination of the flexi-school arrangements and a return to full-time school-based education for
- Parents reserve the right to terminate the flexi-school arrangements and educate their child at home under Elective Home Education arrangements.

Appendix 3 -

Period of Agreement

This agreement will commence:

Date:

And will run (term-time only) from: **to**

The date of the first formal review will be:

Signed:

Headteacher:

Parent/Carer:

Pupil / Student:

Date: