



New Forest Small School

FLEXI-SCHOOLING POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	Alison Alp
Regularity of Review	Every two years
This Version Dated	May 2018
Next Review Due	May 2020

“Flexi-schooling” or “flexible school attendance” is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the rest of the time, the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). Flexi-schooling is not the same as temporary part-time absence where full reintegration is expected.

NFSS allows flexi-schooling in the Primary years, either on a long-term basis or as a short-term measure for a particular reason, if it is agreed in advance by the Head Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Application for flexi-schooling

Parents or carers with parental responsibility wishing to apply to NFSS on a flexi-schooling basis should indicate this in their initial application, while parents/carers of children attending on a full-time basis who wish to switch to flexi-schooling should apply in writing to the Head Teacher.

Full-time attendance is a requirement by Secondary age, although on rare occasions where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, flexi-schooling may be more appropriate for a specified period of time.

A flexi-schooling application for a Primary pupil will normally be approved if the Head Teacher and DSL agree, after interviewing the child’s parent or carer with parental responsibility, that this would be in the best interests of the child. In this interview, the Head Teacher and DSL will:

- Ensure the parent/carer understands the implications of making partial educational provision at home, both in terms of expertise and resources and in the commitment to make a shared provision work.
- Ensure the parent/carer understands the school’s Curriculum Policy and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education (SMSC) Policy, and the Government guidelines on protecting children from radicalisation, and is willing to work in partnership with the school in actively promoting the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance.
- Advise the parent/carer that the education provided at home and at school should together constitute full-time education.

- Check that the reasons for requesting flexi-schooling are entirely positive and that the application does not have any negative motivation (e.g. the desire to avoid difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of school discipline or attendance itself, or to opt out of an aspect of the curriculum with which the child is uncomfortable).
- Introduce the parent/carer to the Tapestry platform for home-school communication, and explain how to use the platform to upload a short weekly report (with photographs) on the learning outcomes that the child has met during their home provision days.

In deciding whether or not to approve a flexi-schooling request, the Head Teacher and DSL will give paramount importance to safeguarding.

Flexi-Schooling Agreement

When a flexi-schooling request is approved, the Head Teacher will sign a written agreement with the parents/carers so that expectations and arrangements are clear for both parties. The agreement will include:

- The normal expected pattern of attendance at school.
- Procedures for flexibility around special events, which fall outside the normal arrangement.
- How the register will be marked.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence in the same way as it does for other children.
- That if the child is unable to attend home-based sessions for two consecutive days or more because of illness, the parent will inform the school.
- Arrangements at times of assessment.
- Use of Tapestry for home-school communication and monitoring learning outcomes.
- Agreement that if a 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.
- Details of any perceived special educational needs or disabilities, and associated provision.
- 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.
- 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, with reference to the school's Complaints Policy.

The school reserves the right to refuse a parent's application to flexi-school where it is felt that full-time attendance is needed, or to revoke this privilege temporarily or permanently at any time even if the initial request is granted.

Staff responsibilities in the case of flexi-schooled children

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the Home-School Agreement is signed by both parties and kept in a safe place. The Headteacher also has overall responsibility for reviewing parental reports submitted via the Tapestry platform, monitoring the learning outcomes of flexi-schooled children, and ensuring that the overall education received by each child is equivalent to a full-time school education.

Staff members are responsible for monitoring attendance of flexi-schooled children in the same way as other children, and completing the register in accordance with the agreed plan, using the 'authorised absence' code on days when the student is expected to be educated at home. Any concerns about unauthorised or unexpected absence should be raised with the DSL, along with any observations that may indicate a safeguarding concern.

If the child has special educational needs, the SEN Coordinator is responsible for monitoring their progress closely and advising the Headteacher if they feel that the flexi-schooling arrangement is detrimental to the child's progress.

The DSL will be vigilant in the case of flexi-schooled children to ensure that there are no unusual or unexplained patterns of absence that could indicate safeguarding concerns (see below). They are also responsible for monitoring whether a flexi-schooled child is socially excluded and whether there are any undesirable effects on others, e.g. a misapprehension that the school 'approves' of the apparently high absence levels of a particular child could have a negative impact on the motivation or attendance of their peers.

Action to be taken when the home education component is unsuitable

Where we suspect that there may be a cultural clash between the home environment and our school, or that a student is being taught something at home which runs counter to the ethos of the school, staff will engage in dialogue with parents / carers at the earliest opportunity to resolve the issue before it affects the student's education. The DSL will be particularly vigilant for any signs that suggest that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

If it appears to the Head Teacher that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education as agreed, especially in the light of SEND or safeguarding issues, they 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 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.

In the event of such a decision, the Head Teacher will write to the parent, fully explaining the reasons for the decision. Reference will be made to the original Flexi-Schooling Agreement and/or any evidence that suggests that the child is not receiving a suitable education as agreed.

There is no right of parental appeal against a decision by a Head Teacher to withdraw a flexi-schooling arrangement.

Flexi Schooling Agreement between New Forest Small School and
(insert name of home educators)

.....

We/I request that our/my child/children (insert name(s))

.....

Attends school on (insert which days)

.....

- We/I request that the child(ren) will be invited to any trips/events which occur on days they do not normally attend, although we/I may be asked to stay with them on these days.
- We/I understand that on the days the child(ren) do(es) not attend school they will be recorded in the registers as “authorised absence” and that non-attendance on expected days will be followed up. We/I also understand that if the child(ren) cannot be home educated for more than 2 consecutive days due to illness, we/I must inform the school.
- We/I agree to use the Tapestry platform to upload a short report on the child(ren)’s progress and the learning goals that they have met or are working towards, with photographs, at least once per week. We/I understand that this reporting is an essential part of the flexi-schooling process and if it is missed for (a) more than two consecutive weeks or (b) more than three weeks in a term, without prior arrangement, the flexi-schooling arrangement may be withdrawn.
- We/I have read the school’s Curriculum Policy and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC) Policy, and agree to ensure that the education provided at home does not undermine the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance of others. We agree to uphold the Equality Act 2010 by promoting awareness of, and

respect for, protected characteristics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief or the lack of it, pregnancy/maternity, and marital or civil partnership status).

- We/I have read the Government guidance relating to protecting children from radicalisation, and will take all necessary steps to prevent my/or child(ren) from being drawn into terrorism.

- We/I agree to work closely with the school to monitor the child(ren)'s progress in relation to the attached 'NFSS Learning for Life Framework' and/or any other assessment framework(s) that may be adopted by the Head Teachers. We/I understand that we/I may need to bring the child(ren) in for any school-based assessments or tests that are deemed necessary to monitor their progress, whether or not these are scheduled on the days listed above.

- We/I understand and agree that if we/I choose to employ other people to educate the child(ren) at home, we/I will be responsible for making sure that those whom we/I engage are suitable to have access to children.

- We/I understand and agree that if the child(ren) has/have special educational needs, the home provision will be tailored to meet these needs and the overall educational provision will be regularly reviewed with the SEN Coordinator to ensure that the child(ren)'s needs are met.

- We/I understand and agree to adhere to arrangements for regular planning and review meetings between parent/carer and school to ensure the child(ren) achieve(s) their potential and to promote good home-school relationships. This will involve bringing work done at home into school.

- We/I understand and agree that either party can withdraw from the arrangement (1 Term's Notice required).

- We/I understand and agree to adhere to the arrangements for the resolution of any disputes, with reference to the school's Complaints Policy.

The school reserves the right to refuse a parent's application to flexi-school where it is felt that full-time attendance is needed, or to revoke this privilege temporarily or permanently at any time even if the initial request is granted.

There is no right of parental appeal against a decision by a Head Teacher to withdraw a flexi-schooling arrangement.

To be signed by Parent(s) who deliver the flexi-schooling

Signature Date
.....

New Forest Small School Head Teacher

Signature Date
.....