

Introduction

At Newcastle CE Primary School, we recognise the right of parents/carers to choose a suitable education for their child according to the child's dispositions and needs and the families' beliefs and values. At Newcastle CE Primary School, we welcome all children irrespective of background or belief to our school, and firmly believe that our flexi-schooling provision can be an arrangement which is beneficial to all.

In order for our school to enter into and continue a flexi- schooling arrangement, parents and carers must accept and maintain the framework of expectations reflected within this policy. This policy is intended for the parents of pupils who are currently electively home educated and who are looking to finding a suitable part time placement in a school setting. This policy is intended to assist parents who may be considering whether to request that the education of their statutory-age child is received partly at school and partly through Elective Home 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 (on authorised absence from school). 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.

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

Government Guidance

There is no legislation or case law that either forbids or authorises flexi-schooling. Parents are under a legal duty to ensure that any child of compulsory school age receives full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs that they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

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 to by the Executive Headteacher.

Flexi-schooling is also different from a temporary part- time timetable. Part- time timetables are put in place on an exceptional basis for a time-limited period for circumstances such as medical intervention or to meet a pupil's individual needs.

There is no statutory curriculum for the home education element of our flexi-schooling arrangement

The responsibility for setting up and monitoring the suitability of the flexi-schooling agreement lies with the school and not the Local Authority. The decision to undertake flexi-schooling should only be considered if there are positive reasons for doing so and where all parties agree that such an arrangement is in the best interests of the child.

Flexi-Schooling Procedure

Parents need to be aware that schools do not have to provide flexi-schooling by law but at Newcastle CE Primary school, we feel strongly that every child should have the opportunity access to some or all of their education within a school context should they wish. If this means they do not access school full- time, the school will engage with parents to find ways to support through flexible schooling.

However, flexi-schooling is offered at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher - there are no rights of appeal if this provision is declined, varied by the school or revoked. Parents should be aware that flexi-schooling is not to be taken as a means to avoid education, or to avoid being excluded, and we will not accept any children on flexi-schooling arrangements who have been excluded.

How a Request for Flexi-Schooling Should Be Made

Arrangements for flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. If a parent/carer is interested in making a flexi-schooling request, the Executive Head Teacher of the school should be contacted so that the proposal may be considered.

Parents do not have a legal right to have a flexi-schooling arrangement.

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement between the school and the parent of a registered pupil and is entered into at the complete discretion of the Executive Head Teacher. The Governing Body may be involved in agreeing and reviewing a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling, but this does not exempt the Executive Head Teacher from the need to consider each request individually.

The whole Governing Body will not become involved in individual cases and cannot overturn the Executive Head Teacher's decision. There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Executive Head Teacher not to agree to a flexischooling request.

Flexi-Schooling Agreement

In all cases where flexi-schooling is agreed upon, parents will be required to adhere to a written agreement with the school so that expectations and arrangements are clear for both parties. (Please see appendix A). If a parent refuses to sign the flexi-schooling agreement, then it must be made clear to the parent that the school will not enter into flexi-schooling arrangements. Similarly, if the parent fails to follow the terms of the agreement, the school must inform the parent that the flexi-schooling arrangement will be discontinued. The child is then required to attend school on a full-time basis. The school should inform Shropshire Council the date the Flexi-schooling arrangement commenced and confirmation a Flexi-schooling agreement is in place.

National Curriculum/SATs

The National Curriculum applies to the school-based part of the child's education but not necessarily the nonschool based part. In law, the National Curriculum does not apply to the non-school based part of the education of a flexi-schooled child unless this is part of the arrangement/agreement between the school and the parent. All teaching and learning offered on the core days reflects our curriculum policies as offered to children who attend on a formal basis. This policy and our other school policies do not seek to prescribe how children should be taught at home for the home education element of the Flexi-schooling arrangement. However, SATs are a statutory requirement for schools, so the normal rules apply, and the child will be expected to sit them all.

Children with an Education Health Care Plan, (EHCP)

Where a child has an Education Health Care Plan, (EHCP), the decision to flexi-school will be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority. Where flexi-schooling is agreed for a child with an EHCP, this should be recorded on the plan and progress monitored through the usual annual review process. It is not necessary to wait for the EHCP amendments to be made before the agreed flexi-school arrangement can commence. There will be a clear agreement of how the Special Educational Needs provision will be provided for a child who is not attending on-site for all school sessions. Those children with a flexi-schooling arrangement have their EHCPs reviewed on a more regular basis than for those attending school full-time. This will ensure they are making full and effective progress towards their objectives or outcomes.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding of any child should always be of paramount importance. Therefore, any decisions should be taken with any known and existing safeguarding concerns in mind. Where a child attends another setting or engages in other activities on those days when not in school, it is incumbent on the parent to ensure the adequacy of the safeguarding arrangements in operation at this setting. The Executive Headteacher should, however, still act in response to any concerns that arise and follow the schools normal safeguarding procedures.

Recording Flexi-schooling on Attendance Registers

The school will mark the register code C, (authorised absence), where pupils are home educated during school hours. It is not appropriate to mark this time as 'approved off-site activity' 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.

Funding/Admissions

Children who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement are funded in the same way as pupils attending school full-time.

Children who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement are subject to the same school admission processes as other children and are counted in the same way as a child who attends full-time. Flexi-schooled children are included in census count returns as for other children.

Newcastle CE Primary School's policy is that children spend a minimum of 3 days in school as part of their flexi-school agreement (core days). The 3 designated core days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; requests to change set days will only be made in exceptional circumstances. If a school or residential trip for which falls on home school day for example. children may attend these events as extra days at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher.

At Newcastle CE Primary School, we believe that people learn in many different ways and we endeavour to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Flexi-Schooling at the Newcastle CE Primary School

At Newcastle CE Primary School, we believe that as a small school we are able to afford the children opportunities that are not readily available elsewhere-flexi schooling is one such opportunity. We want all children to have access to a wide range of educational opportunities. We offer an part time school based education that:

- is more flexible in its approach and encompasses and supports all children
- allows access to a happy, stimulating, secure and safe environment
- offers all children an equal opportunity to develop their abilities and personalities, helping to unlock their potential
- allows access to the bank of knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, and values of our broad and balanced curriculum
- fosters a lifelong love of learning, in a shared environment where pupils, parents and teachers can effectively work together, enhancing the education provision for all
- allows the opportunity for our children to share a healthy respect for personal choice and a clear understanding and acceptance of others and their ideals
- allows the opportunity to develop a responsible and independent attitude towards learning
- ensures welfare checks to ensure all safeguarding needs are being met

If you wish your child to join our school on a Flexi-School basis, then we ask that, after a discussion with the agreement of the with the Executive Head teacher you formally agree to the terms and this policy and the attached Home School Agreement.

Visits to our school are warmly welcomed.

