

Pott Shrigley Church School

Church of England Aided Primary

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FLEXI SCHOOLING POLICY

Introduction

At Pott Shrigley Church School we recognise the right of parents to choose a suitable education for their child according to the child's dispositions and needs and the family's beliefs and values. We welcome all children irrespective of background or belief to our school and believe that our flexi-schooling provision in the early years can be an arrangement which is beneficial to all.

Our flexi-schooling provision is **only available to children in the reception class, aged four to five years old, and is offered at the discretion of the head teacher** – there are no rights of appeal if this provision is declined, varied by the school or revoked. If a circumstance occurs where the flexi-school arrangement is varied or revoked, then those children subject to this would be required to attend additional days or full time.

We will not offer flexi-schooling to children with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) that comes with hours and funding attached, unless clear guidance is issued in writing by the commissioning authority giving clear permission for such an arrangement. We are more than willing to accept children with an EHCP, on the understanding that they attend on a full time basis. This ensures that we can meet any Statutory Duties an EHCP places on our school, in terms of commitment to the child, the appointment of key staff dedicated to the child and to ensure that 'Best Value' is achieved. This approach will also apply to children who currently attend on a flexi-schooling basis and are found to need the support of an EHCP.

Parents should be aware that flexi-schooling is not to be taken 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. If a parent misleads the head teacher in this matter and a past exclusion is uncovered, the flexi-school arrangement will be automatically revoked and the child in question will be required to attend full time; in such circumstances we will be guided by current statutory expectations relating to attendance etc.

What is Flexi-schooling?

In April 2019 the DfE issued Elective home education – *Departmental Guidelines for Local Authorities* which contained the following wording at paragraphs:

Flexi-schooling, and college attendance

10.7 Although most children educated at home have all the provision made at home, or alternatively partly at home and partly in other ways such as attendance at privately-run part-time tuition settings, it is not essential that this be so. Some children who are educated at home most of the time are also registered at school and attend school for part of the week – perhaps one day a week. The purpose of this is usually to ensure the provision in specific subjects is satisfactory, although it can also 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.

10.8 Schools are not obliged to accept such arrangements if requested by parents. If they do, then time spent by children being educated at home should be authorised as absence in the usual way and marked in attendance registers accordingly. 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 also has no responsibility for the welfare of the child while he or she is at home. The department does not propose to institute a new attendance code specific to flexi-schooling. Some schools have expressed concern that such absence may have a detrimental effect for the purpose of Ofsted inspection, but this is not the case; some schools with significant flexi-schooling numbers have had good outcomes from Ofsted inspections. Schools which have flexischooled 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. There is no statutory curriculum for the home education element of our flexi-schooling arrangement. Nonetheless (it's one word), we invite parents to refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to support and enhance the children's learning both at school and at home.

The school follows the National Curriculum from year 1 to 6 and all pupils in those years must attend school full-time. Flexi-schooling in these year groups will only be permitted, at the discretion of

the head teacher, under exceptional circumstances and with a view to flexi schooling being a short term, temporary measure. The aim will always be to have children attending school full time as soon as possible in line with their particular needs.

We offer flexi schooling to reception aged children with these aims in mind:

- A flexible approach to education that encompasses and supports children at a very young age.
 - The opportunity for children to have access to education within the school environment that extends into the home environment where desired and that it is compatible with their individual learning needs, views, values and beliefs.
- Access to a bank of knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and values of our broad and balanced curriculum, that 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.

Timetable

Our timetable is organised so that children who are Flexi-schooled attend on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and all children have access to the full curriculum on these days. Parents can request advice from teaching staff on learning which can take place at home to support school topics/themes. Parents can also arrange for their children to increase their days of attendance at school at any point during the school year by speaking to the head teacher. As a school, we encourage children to build up their attendance in reception in preparation for attending full time once they go into year 1. We liaise effectively with the parents of our children who have chosen flexi-schooling through the use of the online *Tapestry* assessment and recording system and regular conversations between staff and parents.

Our school day begins with Registration at 8.55am and ends at 3.30pm. All children are expected to arrive promptly for the start of the morning; subject to one-off extenuating situations, i.e. medical appointments, accidents etc. All sickness events require that the parents notify the school. Lateness is recorded in the same fashion as attendance, parents need to be aware that persistent lateness could lead to the revocation of the flexi-school arrangement and a requirement to then attend full time. No return to flexi-schooling will be permitted.

Initial meeting

We arrange an initial meeting for parents of reception children to ensure new children and parent/s understand the clear need for a partnership between parents, children and school. The parents are required to sign our **Flexi-School Contract, thereby making the arrangement lawful**, indicating the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in educating their children, especially to the school's responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection (Please read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). The Contract also indicates the core attendance requirement of three days, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. These days are not negotiable.

It is extremely important for the parents to be able to share samples of work carried out at home and the contract reflects this (please see note regarding *Tapestry*). Parents should attend the school's Parent Consultation Evenings and can request additional meetings to discuss progress. All flexi-school children should wear school uniform on days that they attend school and have a school PE kit available for PE lessons and other activities.

Health & Safety

Health & Safety is the responsibility of all who work in our school. We ensure that all tasks and activities the children are involved in are Risk Assessed. When we plan to take children off site, we inform parents and carry out risk assessment procedures (see our Health and Safety Policy).

Liability

For activities beyond the sole care and charge of school staff, the parents/carers of flexi-schooled pupils are fully responsible for their own children when they are educated at home (or at their chosen offsite venue), even when completing assigned class work. Activities/visits arranged by parents / carers in the same vein are also covered by the same parental responsibility.

Safeguarding & Child Protection

As with all children we have a statutory duty to inform our local Child Protection and Safeguarding officers if any child presents with unusual injuries, or discloses any information that requires their involvement; and then to co-operate fully with any investigations, or follow up actions they deem necessary.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review our flexi-schooling policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. The monitoring of this policy will fall to the Standards Committee, which reports termly to the full governing body.

Implementation of this procedure / policy

We aim to manage implementation of this policy with the support and guidance of any relevant body and will be subject to review if legislation dictates.