

Flexi-school guidance

2025/26

This document provides guidelines for schools implementing flexi-school arrangements in accordance with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) policies and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance. It aims to provide clarity and consistency in the implementation of flexi-schooling across our local schools.

Introduction

- Flexi-schooling is an arrangement for providing a full time education where a child is registered at a school, but attends part-time, with the remainder of their education provided by the parents or guardians at home.
- Flexi-schooling must be regularly monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child be returned to full time attendance in school as soon as possible.
- There is no legislation, case law or national guidance that either authorises or forbids flexi-schooling.
- The DfE recognises flexi-schooling as a valid full time education, but there is no pre-determined model for timetabling and individual arrangement varies widely.
- There is no parental right to flexi-schooling.
- Any decisions regarding flexi-schooling should be made with school and parents working together in the best interest of the child.
- The responsibility for flexi-school arrangements lies with the school and not the local authority and schools will need to work with parents to address any issues which arise.

Legal considerations

Flexi-schooling is a legal option within the UK education system. It requires written agreement between the school, and the parents and carers. It is essential to document the agreement to ensure all legal requirements are met.

Parental responsibilities

[The Education Act 1996](#) states, ‘the parent or carer of every child of compulsory school age will cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise’.

Rather than seeking to enrol their child at a school, some parents and carers have a right to decide to provide a suitable education by educating their child at home. This is elective home education (EHE) with the parent or carer taking full responsibility for the education of the child. Parents have a right to electively home educate.

There is not a similar right to flexi-schooling, but the [Elective home education, DfE guidance for local authorities](#) is helpful.

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 they 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 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 flexischooling.

There is no right to request flexi-schooling, it is at the discretion of the headteacher and their explicit permission is required before any flexi-schooling arrangements start. There is no right of appeal against the decision of a headteacher not to agree to a flexi schooling request.

Parents and carers should be aware that while there is no statutory curriculum at home, flexi-schooling can impact a child's access to the school curriculum and may result in a fragmented learning experience. It is recommended that parents, carers and the school discuss the topics being covered and missed during flexi-schooling periods to ensure that the education provided at home and at school constitutes full-time education. This will enable parents and carers to support their child's learning at home and cover any missed topics in their own way.

Flexi-schooling is less successful when it is requested as a way of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable, or the choice is motivated by the desire to avoid difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of school discipline or attendance itself.

If the child is unable to attend a home-based session because of illness, the parent or carer should inform the school and this should be reflected in the school's register.

If the child moves to a different school, there will be no guarantee that flexi-schooling will be able to continue. This will be a decision for the headteacher at the new school.

Parents and carers wishing to pursue flexi-schooling must submit a formal application to the school. The application should include:

- proposed attendance schedule
- details of the home education provision
- reasons for requesting flexi schooling

School's role

Schools are responsible for:

- reviewing and approving or declining applications
- maintaining accurate attendance records
- providing curriculum guidance and resources
- monitoring the child's progress

The school may wish to involve the governing body in decision making about flexi-schooling. The decision should only be taken if there are positive reasons for doing so and all stakeholders agree that such an agreement is in the best interest of the child.

The school continues to receive full funding for any child on its roll who is flexi-schooled and remains responsible for that child's educational outcomes, safeguarding, and attendance. The child should be included on census returns as usual.

A parent's or carer's request is the only way to make flexi-schooling arrangements; schools and other professionals should not initiate these arrangements. There is no right to appeal should parental requests for flexi-schooling be denied.

If parents submit a flexi-schooling request and the child has an education health and care plan, the special educational needs case coordinator must be involved in agreement or denial.

Similarly if the child or family is open to a child protection plan or child in need then the associated social worker must be informed and involved in any agreement sought or denied.

Should a flexi-school arrangement be agreed between parents, carers and school then the school must complete a [flexi-school submissions form](#) to the local authority Education Welfare Service.

Attendance requirements

A clear attendance schedule must be agreed upon and documented. The schedule should specify:

- days and times the child will attend school
- responsibilities of the parent or carer during home education

Consistent with the [2019 DfE guidance on 'elective home education'](#) and the [2024 DfE Working together to improve school attendance](#), on the days the child is being educated by the parent outside of school, the school should use the 'C' code (authorised absence) to record attendance. If the 'B' code is used, the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education and ensuring the safety and welfare of the child when off site.

Schools may be concerned that use of the 'C' code as authorised absence will have a detrimental effect in an Ofsted inspection. Use of the 'C' code would require schools to provide a clear narrative behind the child's attendance data. Schools that have flexi-schooled children, should be prepared to discuss the arrangements they have in place to deal with the requirements of these children with their allocated education welfare officer and Ofsted inspectors.

Curriculum and assessment

Schools should:

- provide an overview of the curriculum and outcomes
- offer resources and materials to support home education
- implement assessment strategies to monitor progress
- ensure the child has access to school activities and events

Monitoring and review

Regular reviews should be conducted to:

- assess the child's progress
- ensure the flexi-schooling arrangement is working effectively
- make adjustments as needed

Safeguarding

Schools must ensure that safeguarding policies are adhered to at all times. This includes:

- ensuring the child's safety and well-being during school hours
- being aware of potential safeguarding concerns during home education
- maintaining communication with parents and guardians

The headteacher or designated school lead must respond to any concerns that may arise, even when a child attends another setting on the days they are not in school. While it is the parent's responsibility to ensure adequate safeguarding at these alternate settings, this does not absolve the headteacher of their duty to act on any concerns.

Flexi-schooling agreements

To ensure clarity and mutual understanding, a written agreement between the school and the parent or carer is recommended when flexi-schooling is agreed upon. This agreement may include:

- expected pattern of attendance at school
- rationale for flexi-schooling being in the child's best interests
- participation in special events outside normal arrangements
- how attendance will be recorded
- school's responsibility to follow up on any unexpected or unexplained absence
- arrangements at times of assessment
- details of any special educational needs and associated provision, including how high needs funding will be deployed (if applicable)
- agreement that parent or carer is responsible for ensuring suitability of any other educators they employ and will cover all associated costs
- agreement on who will meet the cost of exam entries (parent is responsible, but school may offer support)
- arrangements for regular planning and review meetings between the parent, carer and school to ensure the child's attainment and progress
- clarity on the circumstances and notice period for either party to withdraw from the arrangement
- the process for resolving any disputes, typically in line with the school's complaints procedure or policy

Communication

Open and regular communication between the school and parents/guardians is essential. This includes:

- sharing information about school activities and events
- providing updates on the child's progress
- addressing any concerns or issues promptly

Conclusion

This guidance aims to support schools in effectively managing flexi-schooling arrangements. By following these guidelines, schools can ensure that children receive a high-quality education while accommodating the needs and preferences of families.