



## FLEXI-SCHOOLING POLICY

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-</b>	<b>Stoke Holy Cross Primary School</b>
<b>On:-</b>	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:-</b>	<b>Steve Hurrell</b>
<b>Last updated:-</b>	<b>N/A – new policy</b>

Stoke Holy Cross Primary School is a Norfolk Local Authority community school. It works in line with Norfolk Local Authority Policy.

*Norfolk Local Authority firmly believes that full time education within a school environment is the best option for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain to their full potential.*

Stoke Holy Cross Primary School believes that:-

- Our inclusive ethos can accommodate most learners.
- That children within its community benefit from attending school full time so that they can make the most of its broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum designed to meet the needs of its learners.
- That it can meet the needs of all learners in terms of exploring their potential.
- That it offers support to parents/carers in terms of supporting their child both academically and socially (a holistic approach).
- That it gives children great opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and allows children to apply these skills in a variety of ways, preparing them for life.
- That all staff at Stoke Holy Cross Primary School work very hard for all children and that the creation of extra work for staff should only be done under 'exceptional' circumstances, to the benefit of the child.
- That it works hard to raise standards and levels of achievement and this is best done within its school community
- That the school continues to work hard to improve its levels of attendance.
- That we teach skills for life – attendance, punctuality, resilience. tolerance, friendship and community living

Stoke Holy Cross Primary School recognises that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child to engage in very effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request that our school considers entering into a flexi-schooling arrangement.

In order for our school to enter into and continue a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents and carers must accept and maintain the rigorous framework of expectations reflected within this policy.

The initial request must emanate from the parent/carer. The school will not suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling.

Norfolk Local Authority guidance forms the basis of our school policy intended to:

- clearly establish the statutory arrangements for full-time education,
- assist a parent/carer considering whether to request that the education of their statutory-age child is partly at this school and the remainder elsewhere,
- assist our school in our responses to parents/carers who request to have an arrangement for a child to attend part-time at our school and receive the remainder of their education at home or elsewhere, organised by the parent/carer;
- awareness of the legal/statutory regulations needed to be considered and instituted when discussing with parents/carers their request for flexi schooling.

## **Background**

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent, guardian or carer.

Where a parent/carer educates a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling.

In November 2007 the DCSF issued "Elective Home Education: Guidelines for Local Authorities" which contained the following paragraph (5.6)

*"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 of the time; the rest of the time the child is home educated. 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 head teacher 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. Local Authorities should make sure that head teachers are made familiar with flexi-schooling and how it may work in practice.*

A parent/carer may request flexi-schooling on a short, fixed-term basis where he or she favours this form of education. Or, they may request flexi-schooling for a short period, when, for example, the child is unable to attend school every day due to illness or injury.

### **How should an application for flexi-schooling be made?**

Flexi schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents/carers have a **legal right to choose to home educate their child** but parents/carers **do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi-schooling arrangement** being agreed by our school.

Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled, it is entirely at the discretion of our Head teacher, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement.

If a parent/carer is interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Head teacher of our school so that the proposal may be considered. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

### **What should parents/carers consider?**

The implications of making partial educational provision at home are significant, both in terms of expertise and resources and in the commitment to make a shared provision work.

The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision. While there is no statutory curriculum for the home education part of a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents/carers must be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the child's learning experience.

### **Number of days per week school based attendance:**

It is a requirement of Stoke Holy Cross Primary that flexi-schooling children attend on a minimum of **FOUR full days per week**.

Flexi-schooling at this school is unlikely to succeed if the reasons for choosing it are negative and the choice is motivated by a desire to 'cherry pick' certain activities only or aimed at avoiding difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of schools discipline or attendance itself.

Stoke Holy Cross Primary has an inclusive approach to education and strives hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents. The school expects parents of flexi-schooled children to uphold the school's ethos, values, policies and practice. Strong and reciprocal partnership between home and school is key to a successful and sustainable Flexi-schooling arrangement.

Our Head teacher will consider:

- written proposals for **\*Foundation pupils** only
- short, fixed term requests – a term by term review to a maximum of 2 terms
- proposals for a minimum of 4 days in school
- all requests on their own merits
- the best interests of the child; their potential and ongoing educational progress and achievement; their safety, safeguarding and welfare
- any perceived special educational needs and associated provision
- the likely impact on the discipline, morale and organisation of the school.
- the appropriateness of the education proposed and maintained by the parents/carers away from school. The Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full time education provision.
- the effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school.
- the effect on school organisation and funding.
- the impact on overall school attainment and progress figures.

\*Flexi-schooling will be considered for children in other year groups for exceptional circumstances such as medical rehabilitation.

### **The Role of the Governing Body of a School**

- The governing body will be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's policy for flexi-schooling requests but they will not become involved in individual cases. Governors may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint regarding Flexi-schooling provision is made.
- In that event our Governors must satisfy themselves that the Head teacher has fully considered the conditions for agreeing a Flexi-schooling agreement and that they are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

### **Appeals**

- There is no appeal against the decision of our Head teacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request or if our Head teacher decides to cease an individual child's flexi-schooling arrangement.

## **Our agreements with Parents**

A written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent/carer, in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement is formalised in line with the schools flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed. Typically this will be one term initially and one term, thereafter.
- Flexibility regarding attendance for special events which fall outside of the normal arrangement such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.
- Registration. How the register will be marked (see section Marking the Attendance Register)
- That the parents/carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other children.
- On days when he or she does not attend school, the child need not follow the National Curriculum. However, the school will require parents to provide the school with an overview of expected learning provision
- Pupil Progress. Parents are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress in the Off-site element of the agreement. Learning progress should be recorded and shared with school on a regular basis. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording is not set by the school but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports and annotated photographs
- Assessment. What the arrangements will be for the child's key assessments. It is the expectation of the school that flexi-schooled children will be assessed at key points. For example end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Parents/carer choosing to employ at their/his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents/carer will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parent/carer and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home school relationships
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement
- How any disputes will be resolved.

## **Procedures for when a child is flexi-schooled**

The Admissions department at County Hall will be informed that a parent has approached the school to consider a flexi-schooling agreement.

## **Marking the Attendance Register**

The DfE (March and August 2013) states that pupils should be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education.

- If flexi-schooling provision is coded on the school register as a "B" the activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded. Any absence or non-provision must be notified to the school and coded accordingly. (when using code B on the register is used for educational activity off-site, then the requirements prescribed in regulation 6 (4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 must be fully met, as should the code B and school attendance requirements in the statutory guidance and departmental advice. DfE August 2013.)
- If the school is not satisfied that the criteria for using Code B are met an appropriate absence code will be used.
- Code X can be used for a Foundation child who has not reached statutory school age.
- When an absence occurs on days when the child is due to attend, the school will follow up the absence in the usual way in line with the school Attendance Policy.

These sessions will be included in the number of possible sessions and the absence and attendance figures in the Attainment and Achievement tables.

### **Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs**

There is no distinction between children who are to be Flexi-schooled and those who are not. The duty to review a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) on an annual basis still applies.

### **Funding**

The child will be recorded by the school as attending full-time with sessions not in school being recorded as per agreement. Therefore the school will receive full-time funding.

Flexi-schooled children are included in census count returns as for other children.

### **Admissions**

There is no distinction between children who are flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, the child will count towards admissions numbers on roll as full-time.

### **Insurance**

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not.

### **When the education being provided at home is not suitable.**

If it appears to our school that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education or not working with the school to uphold its values, policies and practices as agreed between the school and the parent/carer; the school 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 the education at home or adherence to the flexi-schooling agreement, the school may withdraw its agreement. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis.

A school attendance order would not need to be initiated as the child is on the roll of our school.

If a child fails to return to full-time attendance our school will record the absence unauthorised and refer the case to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIC)) in line with School and County procedures.

# Flexi-Schooling: Request Application

This document should be read in conjunction with our Flexi-Schooling Policy and School Prospectus. It is required to be completed in full.

Flexi-schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents / carers have a **legal right to choose to home educate** their child, but parents / carers **do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi-schooling** arrangement being agreed by our school.

Whilst a parent / carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled it is entirely at the sole discretion of our Headteacher, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement, there is no right of appeal to Governors or higher authority if the proposal is declined on application, or rescinded at a later date.

Each request to Flexi-school will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
Name of Parent(s) / Carer(s)	
Reason for Flexi-Schooling Education	(e.g. Lifestyle, Philosophical, Bullying, Cultural, Religious Belief, Additional Needs)
Parents / Carers Expectations of School	
Child's achievements, skills, hobbies, interests, activities	
Does the child have any special needs? If so, please specify	
Forms in which work from home is shared with school Circle or highlight the best description	Written Verbal Graphic Electronic
Other Information Parents / Carers wish to share: (expand this area if required)	
I / We understand that parents / carers retain responsibility for their child's healthcare	Print Name(s)  Signed (parent / care(s)):  Dated:
I / We understand that parents / carers retain full responsibility for child's safety when not on school premises and whilst under parental care	
I / We agree to bring the child to at least 4 days every week	
I / We will, if our child is unable to attend on the agreed days, call or e-mail the school to confirm the reason for absence	



I / We understand that a portfolio of work completed at home will be kept by the parent / carer / child which will be shared with school.	
Signed (Headteacher): Print Name:	Date:
This arrangement can be reviewed at any time should either party express concerns that the flexi-schooling option is not benefiting the development of the child named. All elements of this document are subject to Ofsted / DfE guidance and Statutory Duty, along with all future UK / European Law	

**Flexi-Schooling: Attendance: Agreed Attendance Schedule.**

We can only offer flexi-schooling if the following points are adhered to:

- A minimum of 4 consecutive days attendance per week
- For a fixed term of 1 term, with a review. A maximum of 2 terms in the Foundation year is acceptable.

This approach allows our staff to plan lessons effectively and provide the correct level of available resources to match numbers and allows our school to justify flexi-schooling to the DfE.

When attending school it is important that your child;

- attends for 4 days per week
- arrives no later than 8.45am or slightly earlier for registration
- If you cannot attend on an agreed day or days, it is extremely important that you contact the school and advise by telephone or in person

Your child's place at school is offered on the basis that they can attend for a full week, please indicate below the day your child will not be attending (circle accordingly).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------

Your indication above is needed so that the Attendance Register can be marked correctly and if required information could be made available to support your own approach in the home.

The above named child's education will be split between home and school as set out in the above timetable.

This timetable may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the Headteacher and Parent(s) / Carer(s).

All elements of this document are subject to Ofsted / DfE guidance and Statutory Duty, along with all future UK and European Law.

Signed Parents / Carers:

Headteacher:

Date: