



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Flexi-Schooling Policy

Reviewed three yearly

Non-Statutory

Contents

Date: January 2025

Review Due: January 2028

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Executive Summary

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to ensuring the right of every child to a full-time education is realised. For the vast majority of children and young people, the Trust believes that full-time education within a school setting offers the best option for them to achieve and fulfil their potential.

However, the Trust recognises the right of all parents to choose alternative methods for their child to engage in effective, full-time and suitable education – including requesting the agreement of flexi-schooling arrangements with school.

Flexi-schooling is where parents choose to make arrangements for their child to receive part of their total educational provision at school and part at home. Any request for flexi-schooling arrangements must come from parents and should not be suggested or encouraged by a Headteacher / Head of School, member of school staff, or local authority officer.

The responsibility for decisions relating to flexi-schooling rests with school leaders within the Trust (Headteachers / Head of Schools and Governors) and the schools will follow this policy.

Context

This guidance is underpinned by national legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- School Admissions Code (March 2022)
- Education Act 2002
- Elective Home Education, Department for Education Guidance (April 2019)
- Elective Home Education, Department for Education Guidance for Parents (April 2019)
- Relevant policies/procedures developed by school / Trust

1. Introduction

Flexi-schooling is where parents choose to make arrangements for their child to receive part of their total educational provision at school and part at home. All parents have the right to request the agreement of flexi-schooling arrangements with school, however all requests must come from parents and should not be suggested or encouraged by a Headteacher / Head of School, member of school staff, or local authority officer.

This policy aims to:

- Clearly set out the statutory requirement for full-time education.
- Outline statutory requirements which should be considered when discussing a request for flexi-schooling with parents.
- Assist in responses to parents who request flexi-schooling arrangements.
- Assist parents who are considering whether to request flexi-schooling arrangements for their compulsory school age child.
- To provide parents and guardians with the opportunity to actively participate in their child's education while still benefiting from a structured school environment.
- To promote personalized learning experiences that cater to each student's unique needs, interests, and learning styles.
- To enhance collaboration and communication between parents, guardians, and school staff to ensure seamless integration of home-based education and school-based learning.
- To foster a positive and supportive educational environment that values and respects the choices made by parents and guardians regarding their child's education.

2. The Law and Relevant Guidance

All children have the right of fair access to an effective full-time education which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Overall legal responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents, however there is no legal requirement for a child to attend a formal educational setting.

Some parents may therefore choose to request flexi-schooling arrangements, meaning that, if agreed, the child would receive part of their total educational provision at school and part at home. Flexi-schooling is usually chosen by parents as a means of their child receiving education in specific subjects at school more easily than is possible at home.

Flexi-schooling should not be confused with elective home education (EHE). Parents have a legal right to choose to educate their child at home, however they do not have a legal right to insist on flexi-schooling arrangements being agreed by any school. There is no legal obligation for schools to agree to flexi-schooling arrangements. The final decision on whether to agree flexi-schooling arrangements rests with the headteacher / head of school, acting with the authority of the Governing Body.

Where flexi-schooling arrangements are agreed, parents must still ensure that the child receives a suitable full-time education, however the element of education received in school must be taken into account when considering whether the parents' duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 has been met. It is important to note that the school has no

supervisory role in the home element of educational provision and also has no responsibility for the pupil's welfare during the times where they are being educated at home.

Flexi-schooling arrangements can apply to any pupil and there are no specific criteria. A common example of when parents will request flexi-schooling arrangements is when their child has a particular sporting talent and flexi-schooling would enable them to benefit from elite coaching during what, for many pupils, would be school time. However, requests for flexi schooling are not solely limited to gifted and talented children and every request should be judged on its merits.

3. Flexi-schooling Applications

Where parents are interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement:

- Contact should be made directly with the headteacher / head of school of the child's current or prospective school so that the proposal can be fully considered using the application form attached to this policy.
- The application should be submitted at least one term in advance to allow sufficient time for assessment and planning.
- The school authorities will review each application on an individual basis and may request additional information or a meeting with the parents or guardians to discuss the proposed arrangement.

4. Considerations for Parents

The implications of sharing educational provision between home and school are significant, both in terms of expertise and resources and in the commitment to making shared provision work.

The education provided at home and school should together constitute full-time provision. There is no statutory requirement for home education to follow the National Curriculum – this is the same for the home element of flexi-schooling. However, parents will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum through school and the possible fragmentation of their learning experience.

Flexi-schooling does not offer an alternative means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable. It is unlikely to succeed if the reasons for choosing it are negative and/or the choice is motivated by the desire to avoid difficulties in respect of certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of school discipline or attendance.

Parents should consider that their child may find limited attendance at school makes it difficult to maintain strong relationships with peers and they may experience a degree of social exclusion/isolation as a result.

Where a flexi-schooling pupil moves to a different school, there is no guarantee that the flexi schooling arrangements can continue. A new request for flexi-schooling arrangements would need to be made to the headteacher of the new school – which they would be under no obligation to agree to.

5. Considerations for Headteachers / Head of Schools

When considering requests for flexi-schooling arrangements, Headteacher / Head of Schools should take into account the best interests of the child.

Rivermead Inclusive Trust expects the Headteacher / Head of Schools to consider the following when making their decision as to whether flexi-schooling arrangements should be agreed and to complete the 'Consideration Form' attached to this policy:

- Safeguarding and welfare of the child are of paramount importance, therefore a thorough risk assessment should be undertaken before any agreement is reached about flexi-

schooling arrangements. Where there are concerns that the child may be at risk of harm while not in school, flexi-schooling arrangements should not be agreed.

- Where the child falls within a vulnerable category, consideration should be given to consulting the relevant team at Rivermead Inclusive Trust.
- The child's current and anticipated levels of educational attainment.
- Arrangements for monitoring the child's progress.
- How the home and school elements of proposed education will interlink to constitute a full-time education.
- The additional demands and workload of teaching and administrative staff.
- The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other pupils.
- A flexi-schooled child remains on the school roll, therefore this could deny a full-time place to another prospective pupil.
- How any possible impacts on attendance recording and overall school attainment/progress figures will be managed.

6. Additional Considerations for Vulnerable Pupils

Rivermead Inclusive Trust will give due consideration to pupils who fall within particular vulnerable categories before agreeing to flexi-schooling arrangements, such as Children in Care, children subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Where this applies, the school will consult with Children's Social Care, the Virtual School, Attendance Services, or SEND Team, as appropriate, before agreeing to any flexi-schooling arrangements.

Where a child has an EHCP and flexi-schooling is agreed, the duty to review the child's EHCP on an annual basis, or sooner if appropriate, still applies.

7. Role of the Governing Body

Delegated responsibility for Flexi schooling is given from the Governing Body to the Headteacher / Head of School.

Governors should satisfy themselves that the Headteacher / Head of School has fully considered the points highlighted above when reaching decisions around flexi-schooling.

8. Written Agreements

Where flexi-schooling arrangements are agreed, there will be a written agreement with parents to ensure that expectations are clear for all concerned. This will be signed and a copy kept by the school and the parent /carers.

The agreement should set out:

- The days/times when the child will attend school.
- Agreed times when parents will be responsible for the child's safety and welfare, to ensure clarity around safeguarding duties and responsibilities.
- The requirement for parents to contact the school if the child is absent from a school session that they would normally attend.
- Any flexibilities regarding special events which fall outside of the normal flexi-schooling arrangement (e.g. assemblies, school trips, school productions/performances, sporting events and visitors to the school).

- The provision that parents will implement during the home education element of flexi schooling.
- The arrangements for pupil assessment and entrance to public examinations.
- The frequency of planning meetings between parents and school to ensure the child fulfils their potential.
- The review date for the flexi-schooling arrangements
- The circumstances under which either party can withdraw from the arrangement, including the notice period required.

9. Appeals

There is no right of appeal against a Headteacher / Head of School's decision to decline a flexi-schooling request. Equally, there is no right of appeal against a Headteacher / Head of School's decision to cease a child's existing flexi-schooling arrangement.

10. National Curriculum

Where a child is registered at a school, on days where they attend school the National Curriculum must be followed as if the child were attending school full-time. The requirement to follow the National Curriculum will apply to all children, except:

- Temporarily, due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. prolonged absence from school due to health reasons or family crisis);
- As part of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period. On days when the child receives education at home, there is no legal requirement for that element to follow the National Curriculum.

11. Attendance Recording

There is no attendance code specific to flexi-schooling and the Department for Education does not propose to institute one. Where flexi-schooling arrangements are agreed by a school, the time a pupil spends being educated at home should be recorded as authorised absence and marked in attendance registers using the 'C' code.

It is not appropriate to mark the home education element as 'approved off-site activity' (using the 'B' code) unless the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education and can ensure the safety and welfare of the pupil while off-site. The school has no supervisory role in the child's education during the times where they are being educated at home – and also has no responsibility for the welfare of the child during the home education element of their provision.

When absence occurs on days when the child is due to attend school, schools should follow up the absence in the usual way, in line with school policy.

12. Admissions

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

The same applies to Infant Class Size Legislation (ICSL), which is sometimes referred to as Key Stage One legislation. Therefore, any child being flexi-schooled will not constitute an exception to ICSL.

13. Insurance

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

14. Children Educated Outside their Chronological Age Group

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

15. When Home Education is Unsuitable

If it appears to the school that parents are not providing a suitable education during the home element of provision, the school may ask parents to take remedial action. Where parents refuse to do so, or concerns about the suitability of home education continue, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement. Where this occurs, the child would then be required to attend school on a full-time basis. A School Attendance Order would not need to be initiated in these circumstances as the child would already be on roll at a school.

If a child fails to return to full-time attendance, school should mark the absence as unauthorised and refer the case to the Attendance Advisory Service, in line with the school's policy.

Medway Guidance

Flexi-schooling

The Trust acknowledges that some parents who elect to home educate may wish to fulfil a fulltime education statutory duty by splitting the education provision between home and school through a planned arrangement. This is not Elective Home Education. This would have the intended benefit of delivering a high-quality curriculum offer across the range of subjects in the national curriculum, and as such would come under normal Ofsted inspection for effectiveness. This proposal, from the parent to the school, can only be entered into by signed agreement with the headteacher and governors of the school where the pupil is already on roll. Schools are not obliged to accept proposals by parents to split flexi-schooling arrangements between home and school.

Schools should record the agreement as 'flexi-schooling' in line with their attendance policy. Schools will record the attendance of the child, when they are in the 'home' part of the education provision, as absent from school because the school has no supervisory role in the child's education at such times. Consequently, it is not appropriate to mark this time as 'approved off-site activity'. Unlike pupils who are registered on a temporary reduced timetable, schools have no responsibility for the welfare of the child while he or she is at home, for the 'home part of the planned provision'.

Rivermead Inclusive Trust

Flexi-schooling Application Form

To be completed by the parent:

Child's name:	
Date of Birth:	
Name of parent(s), carer(s):	
Admissions form completed or already on roll	Yes / No Already on roll at school
What attracted you to flexi schooling?	
What are your expectations of the school-based part of the Education?	
What are your expectations of the home-based part of the Education?	
Do you intend to follow the National Curriculum at Home?	
Name(s) of person(s) providing education when not in school	
Form of Education to date	F/T School P/T School Home Education N/A

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Flexi-schooling School Form Application Consideration

To be completed by the school:

Child's name	
Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Application form for flexi schooling received	Yes / No
Levels of attainment achieved	
Date of last achievement assessment by school (assessment in English and maths)	
Attendance rate for this year and previous year	
Safeguarding concerns / Risk assessment completed	
Educational Assessment/Review Acceptable	Yes / No
Application agreed	Yes / No
Meeting arranged to discuss with parents / carers	Yes / No Date of meeting:

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Flexi-schooling School Form Parental / Carer Meeting

To be completed by the school after application considered:

Child's name	
Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Meeting date	
Notes of meeting	
Review meeting booked	Yes / No

Rivermead Inclusive Trust
Flexi-schooling:
Contract for Provision of Education – Part 1 School

Child's name	
Year Group:	
Name of parent(s), carer(s):	

XXXX School is responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times set out in the attached Attendance Agreement and timetable.
The educational provision will be suitable to x's age, aptitude and ability as set out in s7 of *the Education Act 1996* and will include:

(inc here SEN provision, access to school trips etc, Assessments and areas of curriculum taught etc)

Whilst x is on school premises or the School is acting in loco parentis the school will maintain primary responsibility for x's safety and welfare

The school and parent/carers will meet everyfor a review meeting to discuss x's progress and review the attendance agreement.

The school can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing. The parent will need to give two weeks notice before ending the arrangements.

Headteacher signature:	
Parent / Carer signature:	
Date:	

Rivermead Inclusive Trust
Flexi-schooling:
Contract for Provision of Education – Part 2 Home

Child's name	
Year Group:	
Name of parent(s), carer(s):	

I/we are responsible for the education of the above-named child on the days and times set out in the attached Attendance Agreement and timetable.

The educational provision will be suitable to x's age, aptitude and ability as set out in *s7 of the Education Act 1996* and will include:

XXXXXXXXXXXX

I / We agreed to ensure that the child has adequate opportunity for health care

I / we agree to be fully responsible for our child's safety, health and welfare when not on school premises

I / we agreed to bring the child to school on agreed days and to inform school of any absences

I / we accept that under section 7 Education Act 1996 that the education provided should be suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have and that

I / we accept that the sessions where my child is not attending school will be recorded as an absence in line with DFE guidance 2024.

I / we accept that we are responsible for any costs of our child's education whilst they are out of school.

I/we understand I can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing (two weeks)

During school hours timetabled for home-based education I/we will maintain primary responsibility for x's safety and welfare

Parent / Carer signature:	
Headteacher signature:	
Date:	

Rivermead Inclusive Trust Flexi-schooling: Attendance Agreement

Child's name	
Year Group:	
Name of parent(s), carer(s):	

	MORNING	AFTERNOON
Monday	<i>home</i>	<i>home</i>
Tuesday	<i>school</i>	<i>school</i>
Wednesday	<i>home</i>	<i>home</i>
Thursday	<i>home</i>	<i>home</i>
Friday	<i>school</i>	<i>school</i>

X's education will be split between home and school as set out in the above timetable

Parent / Carer signature:	
Headteacher signature:	
Date:	