

## Goathland Primary School



# Flexi-Schooling Policy

**“Believe you can: Together we will”**

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| <b>Name of Document</b>                          | Flexi-Schooling Policy                                      |
| <b>Date</b>                                      | October 2020  |
| <b>Author/Responsibility</b>                     | Mrs Lisa Armstrong /Head teacher                            |
| <b>Date of Adoption by Governing Body</b>        | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020                               |
| <b>Signed by Chair of Governors (Jason Wood)</b> | Date:   |
| <b>Method of communication</b>                   | Paper copy in Policy file<br>Electronic copy in admin files |
| <b>Date of next review</b>                       | September 2024 (or as circumstances change)                 |

## **Introduction**

Goathland Primary School has the needs of the children at the heart of every decision made; a flexible, personalised approach to learning means that we are in a unique position to support flexi-schooling options.

Within the school we promote full time education within a school environment as a valuable way for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain to their full potential. We recognise that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request for the school to agree a flexi-schooling arrangement. This request must emanate from the parent, it is not for a Headteacher, a member of school staff or an officer of the Local Authority to suggest or encourage a family to undertake 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/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. DfE 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.*

Flexi-Schooling is different to Elective Home Education. Please also refer to the April 2019 DfE Guidance for 'Elective Home Education' [for schools](#) and [for parents](#).

A parent/carer may request flexi-schooling on a long-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 should 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 any school.

Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled, it is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion, 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 should be made directly with the Headteacher of the school so that the proposal may be considered.

### **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 should together constitute a full-time provision.

While there is no statutory curriculum for the home education part of a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents/carers will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience.

Flexi-schooling is unlikely to succeed if the reasons for choosing it are negative and 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 moves to a different school, there can be no guarantee that flexi-schooling would be able to continue. A fresh request for a flexi-schooling arrangement must be made to the new school Headteacher. It would then be a decision for the Headteacher at the new school to make.

### **What does the Headteacher consider?**

All requests must be considered by the Headteacher on their own merits. The Headteacher will take into account how a flexi-schooling arrangement will best meet the interests of the child; their educational progress and achievement; together with the likely impact on the discipline, morale and attendance and organisation of the school.

### **It is the advice of the Local Authority to a school when deciding whether to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement, that a Headteacher must consider:**

- current and anticipated level of educational attainment, achievement and progress of the individual pupil and the arrangements for monitoring the learning and progress of the individual pupil,
- 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 the school organisation, school resources and funding,
- the impact on overall school attainment and progress figures/

**The Role of the Governing Body** The governing body may be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's approach to flexi-schooling requests but they should not become involved in individual cases, as some governors may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint is made.

Governors should satisfy themselves that the Headteacher has fully considered the points highlighted above and are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

## **Appeals**

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

## **Written Agreements with Parents/Carers**

A written and signed agreement (see appendix 1) must be formulated between the school and parents/carers in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement will be formalised by the school's flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The normal expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed: typically this may be one term.
- What flexibility there will be regarding 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.
- How the register will be marked (see section Marking the Attendance Register)  
The parents/carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activity.
- How the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other children.
- What the arrangement will be at times of children's assessment.
- If a parent/carer chooses to employ at his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to children and the Headteacher needs to include the points outlined previously in the section "What does the Headteacher consider?"
- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision.
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parents/carers and school (this may be a Class Teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team) 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.

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

He or she will already be registered at the school. On days when he or she attends school, the National Curriculum must be followed as if the child were attending full-time.

### **The requirement to follow the National Curriculum will apply to all children except:**

- Those who are temporarily unable to do so due to exceptional circumstances such as prolonged absence from school on health grounds or family crisis.
- As a part of a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period.

On days when he or she does not attend school, the child need not follow the National Curriculum.

## **Marking the Attendance Register**

The most recent clarification received from the DfE (March and August 2013) state that pupils should be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. Flexi-schooling will therefore have an impact on school attendance figures and the child's individual attendance record.

Schools should not mark a pupil as attending school, using the attendance code B for off-site education activity, unless the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education, and can ensure the safety, safeguarding and the welfare of the pupil off-site. Therefore, the code 'C' will be used which is an authorised absence.

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

Further clarification on this is in the DfE Guidance for 'Elective Home Education' for parents.

## **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 statement of special educational needs on an annual basis or sooner if appropriate, 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 returns as for other children and will be expected to attend school on Census days.

## **Expected patterns of attendance**

There will be some flexibility over the pattern of attendance for each child attending on a flexi-schooling basis, however, this would usually be based on a suggested minimum of 2 school days per week in EYFS/KS1, and a suggested minimum of 3 school days in per week KS2. For all children, spending two consecutive days in school each week will be recommended. Variations to this will be at the Headteacher's discretion.

## **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.

**Infant Class Size Legislation (ICSL)** There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, the child will not be an exception to ICSL (sometimes called Class Size 30 legislation) solely by being flexi-schooled.

### **Insurance**

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

### **Children Educated outside their Chronological Age-Group**

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

### **When the flexi schooling arrangement is not working**

If it appears to the school that the flexi schooling arrangement is not working, the school will liaise with parents/carers to try to address this.

This may be due to any of the items listed under 'What does the Headteacher consider?' If the situation cannot be rectified, then the flexi schooling offer may be withdrawn. This is at the Headteacher's discretion and there is no right to appeal this decision. The notice period for this will be 4 weeks. The child would then be required to attend school on a full-time basis.

If parents/carers wish to cease the flexi-schooling arrangement and revert to full-time schooling then the notice period for this will be 1 week.

Any non-attendance would be recorded following the school's usual absence procedures.

## Appendix 1

Goathland Primary School

Dear [NAME OF PARENTS/CARERS]

I enclose the written flexi-schooling agreement. Please sign and return one of the copies to school to show your agreement.

The normal expected pattern of attendance for [NAME OF CHILD] will be as follows:

|           | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| In School |        |         |           |          |        |
| Home      |        |         |           |          |        |

Should special events fall outside of your child's arranged school days, there will be flexibility and your child can attend these events. Events such as, but not limited to: assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.

When your child is not at school due to this flexi-school arrangement the code C will be entered into the register.

Parents/carers must contact the school if your child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school; school will apply usual absence procedures.

At times of national assessment and school assessment periods your child will be in school for all tests and assessments. This helps teachers to identify next steps for children. Parents/carers will be expected to attend the termly parent/carer teacher consultation meetings. In addition, we encourage regular dialogue between parent/carers and the class teacher to help support learning.

Parents/carers will be expected to share an overview of home learning activities with the school using the online facility or agreed alternative method (at least once per week).

School will follow procedures for supporting a child with Special Educational Needs in the same way as if the child was attending full time. Parents/carers will work with school to support this, attend meetings and agree a consistent approach.

Parents/carers take responsibility for any additional adults working with their child when not in school (e.g. tutors).

As a school we are supportive of flexi-schooling and will work with parents/carers to address any concerns or difficulties arising. However, in the event of school feeling that the arrangement is not working then it will be at the **Headteacher's discretion to end the arrangement**. There is no right to appeal this decision. The notice period for this will be 4 weeks. The child would then be required to attend school on a full-time basis.

If parents/carers wish to cease the arrangement and revert to full-time schooling then the notice period for this will be 1 week.

This arrangement will be reviewed termly. The next review meeting will be [INSERT DATE OF NEXT MEETING]

**Parents/Carers**

Signed.....Dated.....

Signed.....Dated.....

**School**

Signed.....Dated.....



**Monitoring and review**

This policy will be approved by the Governing Body and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

The governing body formally adopted this policy at the full governing body meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Signed (Chair of Governors) .....

Date .....

The policy will be reviewed in line with the policy review schedule contained in the governing body's three year strategic plan or, if necessary earlier than this.