



# Hollinsclough CE Academy

## Flexi-Schooling Policy: 2018

### Mission Statement

*'To encourage the enthusiasm and joy of learning through a creative curriculum and a holistic approach to education that reflects Christian values and supports our community. We guarantee accessibility and availability to all.'*

### *Developing potential*

#### **Pre-amble**

Here at Hollinsclough, we recognise the right of parents to choose a suitable and personalised education for their child according to the child's dispositions and needs coupled with the families' beliefs and values.

We welcome all children irrespective of need, background or belief to our school, and we firmly believe that our Flexi-schooling provision can be an arrangement which is beneficial to all.

Our Flexi-schooling provision is predominately aimed at children who are or have been **Elective Home Educated** (EHE). We will, however, also consider requests from parents whose children are finding formal education in their current setting a challenge that is likely to lead them to school refuse.

In all circumstances, each application is considered on a case by case basis, even within the same family.

Prospective parents need to be fully aware that we will not consider any requests for a Flexi-schooling place from them if their child has been excluded or expelled. However, this would not prevent you applying for a normal place.

It is important that prospective parents are aware that schools/academies are not required by law to provide or offer Flexi-schooling. When such offers are made each place at Hollinsclough CE Academy is granted at the sole discretion of our Principal – there are no rights of appeal to Governors, Trustees, LA, DfE or through the legal system if this provision is declined, varied by the school, or revoked.

If a situation occurs where the Flexi-schooling arrangement is varied or revoked, then those children subject to the signed Flexi-school Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), would be required to attend for additional days if requested or in some cases full-time. If a parent disagrees with this, they are free to take their child or children to another school or to de-register and return the EHE. If a parent elects to de-register, then we are legally required to inform the relevant Local Authority of the de-registration and pass records on to that authority so that they can effectively liaise with the family.

#### **Key Points to Note**

It is important for parents to note the following statement provided by the Department for Education (DfE);

***'Where parents choose not to have their child educated by full-time attendance at school, then they are responsible for the whole of their child's education.'***

*DfE 2018*

It is also worth noting that in any instance the Education Act clearly states that parents are responsible for the education of their children – this applies to all parents in all circumstances and applies to the delivery of an appropriate education be that by the parent or through the state or independent sectors including individuals

- ***Flexi-schooling is a legal option provided that our Principal agrees to the arrangement, this arrangement can be amended or withdrawn without challenge.***
- ***We are more than willing to accept children with an EHCP, on the understanding that they required to attend on a full-time basis. Thereby ensuring that we can meet any Statutory Duties the EHCP places on our academy, regarding its commitment to the child, extending to the appointment of key staff dedicated to the child and to ensure that 'Best Value' is achieved.***
- ***We will not automatically offer Flexi-Schooling to children with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan - Former Statement of Educational Need) that comes with prescribed hours and funding attached unless clear guidance is issued in writing by the commissioning Authority giving clear permission for such an arrangement.***
- ***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 as a means to avoid education or to avoid expulsion, and we will not accept any children on Flexi-schooling arrangements who have been expelled. If a parent misleads our Principal 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 on a full-time formal basis. In such circumstances, the parents and the child in question will be subject to current statutory expectations relating to Attendance etc.***

## **What is Flexi-schooling?**

Flexi-schooling or flexible school attendance is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends our school for at least '3 consecutive Core Days'; the rest of the time the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). This arrangement is an open ended offer. However, the terms of this arrangement can be varied over and above the core days, or withdrawn if our Principal decides to do so, and decisions in this regard are not open to challenge.

Flexi-schooling is a legal option provided that our Principal agrees to the arrangement. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum whilst at school but not whilst they are being educated at home'.

There is no statutory curriculum for the home education element of our flexi-schooling arrangement. None the less we promote without pressure the opportunities the partnership flexi-schooling brings - and from that, we hope that this partnership will develop in a manner that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

All teaching and learning offered on the core days reflects our curriculum policies as offered to children who attend on a formal basis. This policy and our other school policies do not seek to prescribe how children should be taught at home for the home education element of the Flexi-schooling arrangement.

We would encourage parents to review our Curriculum, Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, along with our Risk Management, Health, Safety & Welfare policies and use them as a guide to support their own approaches to ensure we are working together. A list of

## **Our Principles of Flexi-schooling**

We see Flexi-schooling as;

- a process of co-operative teamwork, within which we welcome and encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children

Within which;

- we treat all children fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities
- we treat all children with kindness and respect
- we praise all children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards our academy and learning in general
- our teachers apply our policies with regard to discipline and classroom management
- teaching staff make clear the class code of conduct
- all children are expected to comply with the rules that are in place to promote the best learning atmosphere for all
- we insist on good order and behaviour at all times
- children who misbehave will be managed fairly within the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Behaviour Policy
- We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

## **Aims**

Being a small rural academy affords our school the ability to offer some opportunities not readily offered elsewhere – Flexi-Schooling is one of these opportunities that work well in our unique small school rural environment.

We believe that people learn in many different ways and we endeavour to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. This is demonstrated by both our ongoing Ofsted and Parental feedback, along with the progress and attainment our pupils have shown over time.

We believe all children are important and from that we tailor our teaching and learning suited to the needs of each child, to ensure they develop at their own pace, with access to any level of education irrespective of their age.

Flexi-schooled pupils also indirectly expand what we can offer to our regular pupils, encouraging them to focus on the benefits of learning after normal hours at home and thereby enhance their opportunities also.

**Summarised** - these points are what we offer all pupils;

- a more flexible approach to education that encompasses and supports all children
- access to a happy, stimulating, secure and safe environment both in school and at home that offers all children an equal opportunity to develop their abilities and personalities, helping to unlock their potential
- access to the bank of knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, and values of our broad and balanced curriculum. This 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.
- the opportunity for our children to share a healthy respect for personal choice and a clear understanding and acceptance of others and their ideals
- the opportunity to develop a responsible and independent attitude towards learning

# Attendance Options

We offer three schooling options at Hollinsclough;

- **Formal Option** – Full-time regular education within statutory guidelines (*normal registration codes*)
- **Flexi-School Option\*** – Flexi-schooled education, where the child comes on agreed days, wears school uniform and joins in with the timetabled opportunities for that day (*B code if following school guidance / National Curriculum or C Code if taught otherwise*)
- **Support Option\*\*** – This approach can only be made following a recommendation from education/healthcare professionals on behalf of children/parents and is only available in exceptional circumstances - and will only be considered if a written request for support is made from the professional concerned. This will be followed up with a number of discussions and visits before a final judgment is made. This kind of provision is bespoke and not transferable to other children. This option is not age specific and could, therefore, allow for children from older age groups to attend if this was deemed appropriate.

## Guidance on the Registration of Attendance and our interpretation and use of current coding structure

*Parents and Professionals should note that the marking of an attendance register is a statutory requirement; however, the marking system used to define the type of attendance is non-statutory. To that end, we have interpreted the registration codes using the following approach; please note that this stance is not one favoured by the DfE and may be open to challenge. We are seeking a review of the coding structure.*

### Flexi-School Option

The attendance **Code B** will be used for children who attend our school and choose to follow a course of study recommended, supported, and monitored by our school when at home.

If Parents/children follow their own education format or divert from the recommendation of staff when schooled at home then attendance **Code C**, which states: *special circumstances not covered elsewhere*, will be used.

### Support Option

Those children, who attend in this manner, will have their Home Education element marked using the attendance **Code C**.

Children using this approach will be linked to our school on the recommendation of outside agencies, i.e. CAHMS / Families First, and have personal circumstances that require an individually tailored involvement with our academy – these arrangements are bespoke and may in exceptional circumstances require the relaxation of the three core day rule.

In all cases, we will require the written approval of the relevant funding body, i.e. Local Authority that outlines all aspects of the child's needs and the funding attached. This written permission must also clearly state that they approve of and will accept that the judgement of the academy is final in all aspects relating to teaching methods employed.

Part of the individually tailored involvement could extend to, and eventually become, a 'Flexi-school' option over time.

In all cases, children who attend school in person on any given day/session will receive the normal attendance mark and teaching that is specific to their needs and reflects the expectations of the National Curriculum as a minimum.

## Introduction, Integration and General Attendance

### Initial meeting

We arrange an initial meeting to ensure that the new child/children and parent(s) understand the clear need for a partnership between parents, children, and school.

### The integration of Flexi-schooled pupils within the school community

Our timetable is organised so that children who are Flexi-schooled can continue follow-up work after attending what we term the three 'Core Days' of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

All children have access to the full curriculum. Work can be provided for parents to use at home should they so wish through use of 'WorkaBooks' and other individualised programmes.

We recommend to parents that their child or children should attend the academy on a trial basis in the first instance, before registering; this approach will allow our Principal in conjunction with staff to determine if a Flexi-schooling approach will benefit the child or children concerned. The trial will be for one week (three core days) unless a longer time is deemed necessary.

If a child is accepted on roll to attend on the flexi-school basis, parents need to be aware that they are fully responsible for the Safeguarding and Child Protection elements relating to their child when away from the academy and being Home Educated. This extends to Education provided by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party arranged by the

parent/carer/responsible adult. These responsibilities pass to the academy only when the child attends normal lessons or attends academic visits arranged by the academy with our staff present.

**Our Academic day** begins with Registration at **8.45am** and ends at **3.15pm**.

Within this timeframe we have the following breaks;

- **Morning break** – 10.25am to 10.40am
- **Dinner** - 12.00pm to 1.00pm
- **Afternoon break** – 2.00pm to 2.15pm (KS1 / EYFS only - this 15 minute time slot may vary depending on the lesson)

We are not able to vary start times, as this disrupts lessons already in progress. All children are expected to arrive promptly for the start of the morning/afternoon sessions; 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 with formal attendance patterns; 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.

## **Timetable**

Each class teacher is aware of the children who are going to attend on a given day and lessons are planned to accommodate all children.

In all cases, lessons are differentiated so that they can be accessed at different levels, with children encouraged to preview or review the topic at home.

Homework tasks are set in the form of WorkaBooks for Numeracy and Literacy, spellings, phonics practice, table practice and mental maths; completion of homework is optional but highly recommended.

We make use of eLearning products and WorkaBooks to complement class teaching, this approach is open to all pupils and offers an additional source of learning materials and opportunities.

## **Strategies for Teaching and Learning**

Our Strategies for Teaching and Learning are organised on a subject by subject basis, within a 'Creative Curriculum' framework.

## **Liability**

For activities beyond the sole care and charge of academy staff, the parents/carers of flexi-schooled pupils are fully responsible for their child or 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 (*please see our Flexi-school Memorandum of Understanding*).

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, we need to see children at least once every ten days to fulfil our Child Protection and Safeguarding obligations these are agreed by a parent/carer signing our MoU (*see also our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*).

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.

## **Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Flexi-schooling (MoU)**

Parents choosing to Flexi-school their child or children are required to sign our **Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Flexi-schooling (MoU)**. This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in educating their children. It also focuses on the school's responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection (Please read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

**Parents need to be aware that by choosing to Flexi-school their child or children, that they are therefore accepting that they alone are responsible for any future legal redress their child or children may seek.**

The MoU also indicates the **core attendance** requirement of three (3) days, **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday**. These days/attendance patterns are not negotiable\* (*\*see comment on exceptional circumstances*).

A Flexi-school place is offered in the same manner as those for Full-time children, so both Monday and Friday are available in addition to the core days if parents and their children wish.

It is extremely important for the parents to be able to share samples of work carried out at home and the Memorandum of Understanding reflects this.

Based on these discussions an initial personal learning plan is drawn up covering academic or social/emotional learning goals. Parents can request review meetings to discuss progress.

To ensure that effective integration takes place we require all Flexi-schooled children to wear the academy uniform as worn by all of the other children

If parents have philosophical or other objections to any form of assessment, a way forward will need to be discussed with the Principal that allows the academy to meet its statutory obligations.

For those parents who do not object to assessment, regular feedback will be provided regarding their child.

### **Our eLearning products can allow children to;**

- View or read lesson materials
- Be offered additional tasks
- Play interactive games that give the school feedback on their progress across a range of subjects, including.
  - Mathematics
  - Literacy
  - Coding

### **Parents can have access to;**

- Long and medium term plans
- access work at a suitable level for their child
- contribute to their child's assessment through uploading work
- access records and assessments on their child
- possible access to a variety of additional tools and materials that may be too expensive or unavailable to them when outside the normal mainstream education system

In addition to the above, we will also offer Education Workshops to share experience and develop new ideas.

### **Recommended Reading**

We strongly recommend that parents considering Flexi-schooling review and develop an understanding of how our school operates and delivers our offer to them on behalf of their child or children.

The following documents describe how we approach a range of topics, (these are not listed in their level of importance).

- All Curriculum Policies
- Assessment & Marking Policies
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Holidays in Term-time Policy
- Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Flexi-schooling
- Data Protection Policy (including all facets of the GDPR2018)

### **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.

### **Implementation of this procedure/policy**

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

#### **General**

This procedure/policy and its guidance will always reflect the present and future needs of all stakeholders and to support this we are always open to suggestions for changes and alterations of and to any specific individual provision/requirement to ensure full access to all.

**Signed...**

**Designation:** Chair of Governors

**Date...** June 2018

**Signed...**

**Designation:** Principal

**Date...** June 2018

This procedure/policy is open to review at any time with the next formal review no later than September 2020