



Hollinsclough CE Academy

Flexi-Schooling Policy: 2022

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

At Hollinsclough, we recognise the right of parents to choose a suitable education for their child according to the child's needs coupled with the families' philosophical views and values; we welcome all children irrespective of need, background or belief to our school.

Our Flexi-schooling provision is predominately aimed at children who are or have been **Electively 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 aware that we will not consider any requests for a Flexi-schooling place 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. Flexi-schooling places at Hollinsclough CE Academy are 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, the child 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 to EHE; in this instance we would 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 – this is a legal requirement.

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

- ***Flexi-schooling is a legal option, provided that our Principal agrees to the arrangement. This arrangement can be amended or withdrawn by the Principal without challenge.***
- ***Where we are able to meet a child's needs, we are able to accept children with an EHCP, on the understanding that unless the EHCP specifies the need for a flexi arrangement and funding is allocated accordingly, the child will be required to attend on a full-time basis. This ensures 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 we are able to meet the child's need, and clear guidance is issued in writing by the commissioning Authority giving explicit permission for a flexi attendance arrangement.***
- ***The points above 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 the three consecutive core days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). For the rest of the time, the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). 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. However, if the child does not make at least expected progress or attainment is significantly below expected for the child's age, a review will be held to consider whether Flexi-schooling is best meeting the child's needs and at this point changes may be made to the terms of the agreement by our Principal.

All teaching and learning offered on the core days reflects our curriculum policies as is offered to children who attend on a full-time 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 can use them as a guide to support their own approaches to ensure we are working together.

Our Principles of Flexi-schooling

We see Flexi-schooling as;

- a shared responsibility to educate a child between school and parents/carers

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 behaviour and classroom management
- teaching staff make clear the class rules and have high expectations, expecting all children to follow these rules to promote the best learning environment for all
- we conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all
- we will share information with parents/carers about what is being taught in school in as much detail as is practicable within constraints such as teacher workload

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.

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 a minimum of the three core days, wears school uniform and joins in with the timetabled opportunities for that day
- **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 if we are able to accommodate the child's needs. This option 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.

Registration of Attendance

Flexi-School Option

Attendance **Code C**, which states: *special circumstances not covered elsewhere*, will be used.

Support Option

Those children, who attend in this manner, will also 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, e.g. CAHMS, 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.

In all cases, children who attend school in person on any given day/session will receive the normal attendance mark.

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

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 teaching staff to determine if a Flexi-schooling approach will benefit the child or children concerned. The suitability of flexi education for the child will subsequently be monitored on an ongoing basis and if flexi is not considered to be in the best interests of the child, this will be discussed with parents/carers and the flexi agreement reviewed as necessary to meet the needs of the child. The Principal's decision is final in this matter.

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 3rd 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** – 10.15am to 10.30am
- **Lunch** - 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, traffic 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.

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 work suggested by school.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

As with all children, we have a statutory duty to inform Child Protection and Safeguarding agencies 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. This is co-ordinated by our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

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 days, **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday**. These days/attendance patterns are not negotiable* (***see comment on exceptional circumstances**). Pupils attending on a flexi basis can attend on Mondays and Fridays in addition to the core days if parents/carers wish. It is useful if parents/carers can share samples of work carried out at home.

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.

Curriculum support:

- 'Workabooks' can be provided for maths and English, for use at home
- We subscribe to a number of websites to support children's education; access to these will be provided after entry to the school
- Teaching staff may make recommendations about consolidation/pre-learning work that could be done at home to help support learning

Via our website, parents can access:

- Long and medium term plans and our calculation policy
- Information about attainment goals for each school year group
- Links to other external websites that parents can use to support learning

In addition to the above, we will also offer Parent Workshops when possible, to share information about teaching methods in maths and English.

Recommended Reading

We recommend that parents considering Flexi-schooling review and develop an understanding of how our school operates through reading the policies on the school website.

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.

Signed...

Designation: Chair of Governors

Date... 24th February 2022

Signed...

Designation: Principal

Date... 24th February 2022

This procedure/policy is open to review at any time with the next formal review no later than Spring 2024