



FLEXI-SCHOOLING POLICY

Adopted: Spring 25

Review: Spring 28

Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy is due to be reviewed at the time stated, unless circumstances determine that this policy needs to be reviewed at an earlier time.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Mr J. Orchard

Headteacher

Mr K. Stroud

FLEXI-SCHOOLING POLICY

Introduction

Maes yr Haul Primary School recognises that valuable learning can also occur outside of the school environment and that parents have a legal right to choose if they wish to home educate their child(ren). However, flexi-schooling is distinct from home-education and should not be confused with elective home education.

Welsh Government define flexi-schooling as:

“an arrangement between parents of a child and the school where the learner is registered in the normal way, but only attends the school part time. The rest of the time the learner is educated at home but will continue to remain on the school roll.”

Welsh Government Elective Home Education Guidance (289/2023)

In some circumstances, flexi-schooling may be an appropriate and valid way to offer educational support that best meets the interests of the child. Whilst parents / carers have a legal right to choose to home educate their child, they may request a flexi-schooling arrangement, but do not have a legal right to insist upon this being agreed by the school. The school will not initiate a flexi-schooling request, this can only be requested by parents / carers.

What should parents/ carers consider?

The implications of making partial educational provision at home can be significant in terms of the commitment to make a flexi-schooling arrangement work well for the child(ren).

The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision. Parents/ carers should be mindful of the potential fragmentation of the child’s learning and social experience compared to that of their full-time peers.

Flexi-schooling 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 school behaviour or attendance itself. Flexi-schooling does not give an alternative means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable.

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.

Making a flexi-schooling request

Parents / carers will be asked to complete a flexi-schooling request, setting out the background and the rationale for their request. This information will help to provide important information to support a discussion with parents / carers and assist the headteacher to reach a conclusion as to whether to agree to the request.

Parents/carers and the school should have the opportunity to discuss their request - each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

Considerations following flexi-school requests

Considerations that the headteacher will make when deciding whether to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement:

- All applications will be judged on their own merit.
- The decision to approve a flexi-schooling request is entirely at the discretion of the head teacher. There is no right of appeal.
- No agreement will be reached or maintained where the headteacher has concerns that it would put the child at risk of harm while not attending school.
- The headteacher may choose to discuss an individual case with other relevant colleagues, for example, class teachers, attendance officers, social services to provide a more complete picture of the pupil's progress in school.
- In reaching a decision, the headteacher may take account of;
 - current and expected levels of educational development, achievement, progress and wellbeing of the individual pupil,
 - arrangements for monitoring of their learning and progress,
 - the appropriateness of the environment proposed and maintained by the parents/carers whilst away from the school.
 - the appropriateness and balance of the learning provision being proposed whilst the pupil is at home.
- The headteacher may also take account of these additional factors;
 - any factors that may be detrimental to teaching, learning and the outcomes of other children already within the class in question,
 - the potential effect on school behaviour, morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school,
 - the effect on school resources,
 - the effect on the school as a learning organisation,
 - the impact on school attainment, given that attendance data will be affected, as whilst flexi-schooling will be currently marked as an 'authorised' absence ('C' on the school register), it will nevertheless be an absence from school and noted in WG data.

Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full-time education provision. Therefore, the home educated element of the flexi-schooling arrangement must at least equal or exceed the time that is being missed in school.

The decision-making process

In order for a flexi-schooling arrangement to be agreed, the contents of this policy should be understood by both parties and an agreement signed and dated. The agreement should then be reviewed after one term, to discuss whether the arrangement is working well for the child (e.g. academic progress, wellbeing, social integration). The review will conclude if both parties are happy to continue with the current arrangement or whether any changes are appropriate. Both parties reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement by providing notification in writing.

There is no preferred model for a flexi-schooling arrangement in terms of which days of the week / mornings or afternoons, as the factors that impact upon the success of such an arrangement is likely to vary from case-to-case.

The decision to approve a flexi-schooling request is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the decision of the headteacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request or if our headteacher decides to cease a child's flexi-schooling arrangements.

Children with Additional Learning Needs

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not in terms of ALN provision.

Any implications for how the school and parents / carers will meet the needs of pupils with additional educational needs will need to be clearly discussed and agreed. For children who have additional educational needs, the review of a flexi-schooling agreement will include consideration of whether the arrangement is currently, and is expected to continue to meet the child's individual education needs.

The duty to review a child's ALN plan at appropriate intervals still applies.

Parents are reminded of the potential fragmentation of the child's learning and social experience compared to that of their full-time peers and how that might impact upon the progress of their Individual Development Plan (IDPs)

Attendance

In accordance with current Welsh Government rules, flexi-schooling days will be noted with a "C" code, which counts as an authorised absence. As such, whilst authorised, this could have a wider impact, e.g. in considerations over any further requests for absence.

The school will code each flexi-schooling day on the assumption that they are well and receiving schooling as agreed. Parents do not need to contact the school to confirm this when normal arrangements are in place.

Should they wish their child to attend school for any specific events, which fall outside of normal arrangements, such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, sports events, visitors. This will always be permitted, but parents are expected to notify the school in advance of their intention.

Parents/ carers should inform the school in the usual way (e.g. telephone, message etc) if their child is absent from a session during which they would normally be flexi-schooled (e.g. if they are unwell). This enables the school to correctly code the absence for that session. *(Note – one day is two sessions, am & pm)*

The school will continue with attendance activities as it would for other children, including following up any unexpected or unexplained absences, considering term-time holiday requests, referrals to the Education Welfare Service etc.

The role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will be involved in setting and reviewing the school's approach to flexi-schooling requests but 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 considering a complaint, governors should satisfy themselves that the headteacher 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.

As part of governors overall responsibilities, they may request that the headteacher provides updates on the wellbeing, progress and development of skills of flexi-schooled children to ensure that good progress is being made. This information may be used to inform any review of, or alteration to the schools' flexi-schooling policy.

Our agreement with parents

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

- The expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The date for a review of the flexi school arrangement.
- That both parties reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement by written notification.
- Registration. In accordance with current Welsh Government rules, flexi-schooling days will be noted with a "C" code, an authorised absence.
- On flexi-schooling days, parents / carers will select appropriate activities from any of the 6 Areas of Learning in the Curriculum for Wales. In doing so, they are encouraged to refer to termly planning provided by class teachers via the pupil's 'Google Classroom' or any other information shared with all parents by the class teacher. Please see link below with information for parents on curriculum for Wales:- <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-a-guide-for-parents>.
- School staff will not be asked to provide work or support for the period of flexi-schooling. Similarly, on returning to school, staff are not expected to give 1:1 or additional support to enable the child to "catch up" on missed experiences in school.
- School staff will not be asked / expected to provide support or feedback to a home-tutor, including but not limited to, providing guidance on school approaches, resources, schemes of work etc.

- Parents/ carers choosing to employ, at their own expense, another person to educate the child at home are responsible for ensuring that person is suitably experienced for the provision being expected, and that they are suitable to have access to their child.

Assessment

The school will continue to monitor the progress of all flexi-schooled children at an individual level in the same way as other full-time pupils. This includes but is not limited to, any assessments related to the pupil wellbeing, Curriculum for Wales, any diagnostic tests and the mandatory personalised assessments for pupils of Years 2 - 6.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw the arrangement if they conclude that the child's progress is adversely affected by the flexi schooling arrangement.

A policy of no detriment

There is an expectation that a request for flexi-schooling must not be at the detriment to any child, staff member or parent.

Child: As outlined elsewhere in this policy, the expectations are clear that flexi-schooling is the continuation of learning whilst at home. It is not a day off from education. Parents / carers must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to ensure children's safety (e.g. appropriate supervision, access to internet).

Parent: Parents/carers should be aware of the implications on them prior to the agreement of flexi-schooling.

Staff: School staff will not be asked to provide work or support for the period of flexi-schooling. Similarly, on returning to school, staff should not be expected to give 1:1 support to enable the child to "catch up" on missed experiences in school.

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 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 headteacher may withdraw its agreement without prior notice. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis.

If a child fails to return to full-time attendance, the school will record the absence as unauthorised and may refer the case to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in line with school and Local Authority procedures.



Maes yr Haul Primary School Flexi-Schooling Application

Name of Child: _____ **Date:** _____

Name of Parent(s) / Carer(s): _____

Flexi schooling is an arrangement whereby our child attends at school for a set amount of the week and is educated at home for the other part of the week, in line with Welsh Government statutory guidance. Only the headteacher can authorise flexi-schooling and can also withdraw that permission without prior notice.

Please outline below the reasons why you have chosen to apply for a flexi-schooling, providing any relevant philosophical / educational views you have and how you believe it will benefit the overall development of your child as a whole, if this application were to be agreed.

Days / times of flexi-schooling requested.	
Please outline your reasons for making this request.	
Please outline any specific / additional provision or support that you intend to provide during this period.	



Maes yr Haul Primary School Flexi-Schooling Agreement

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Name of Parent(s) / Carer(s): _____

Agreed flexi-schooling days / times: _____

Before signing this agreement, parents / carers should have had the opportunity to discuss the proposed arrangements and any concerns. Parents carers should ensure that they have read through the flexi-schooling policy and are familiar with the Curriculum for Wales.

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-a-guide-for-parents>.

This section relates to ALL activities away from the school arranged by the parent(s) / carers, while the named child is in their care, or where the parent / carer has arranged their own additional provision with a third party and beyond the care of our employed staff. For example, privately arranged peripatetic tutors, sports coaching, swimming lessons, all types of high-risk pursuits or other similar arrangements – even if we, the school, have funded the lesson – e.g. swimming)

As the above named responsible adult(s) - I/we;

- *understand that by choosing not to have our child educated by full attendance at school, then I/we acknowledge that I/we are responsible for the whole of our child's education whilst being flexi-schooled at home.*
- *understand that flexi-schooling days will be coded as "C" (authorised absences) and that the school will continue to follow its usual attendance procedures.*
- *understand that flexi-schooling can only be sustained if full and timely attendance on 'school days' is maintained (illness and unavoidable circumstances excepted).*
- *will, if our child is unable to attend on the agreed dates/days, call or e-mail the school office to confirm a reason for the absence and its likely duration.*
- *understand and accept FULL responsibility for any future criticism or potential legal redress from the pupil (or another representative of the pupil) named above in relation to requesting a flexi-schooling arrangement, and absolve the school and the state system of any future responsibility relating to academic outcomes as a result of that choice.*
- *accept that while away from the care and guidance of school staff, I/we will have the primary and sole responsibility for the above-named child's, Health, Safety and Welfare along with all issues and circumstances relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding and understand that the attendance register will be marked to reflect this.*
- *will ensure that anyone employed to support our child during flexi-schooling is suitably experienced / qualified for the provision and that they are suitable to have access to the above-named child.*

- *will not expect school staff to provide work or support for the period of flexi-schooling, (including to any peripatetic tutors), nor to give 1:1 or additional support to enable the child to “catch up” on missed experiences in school.*
- *accept that I / we are entirely responsible for ensuring the quality of educational provision offered to the above-named child when they are not attending the school at least equal to the amount of time that would be provided in school.*
- *will promote learning in the basic skills in Literacy, Language & Communication and Mathematics & Numeracy.*
- *will ensure that we have available full access to a suitable computer, printer (preferably colour) and a broadband connection to enable our child to access all of the available academic services offered by the school in the home (e.g. Hwb).*
- *understand and accept our responsibility to monitor the use of and access to the content offered via the internet while our child is away from the school, and that we will have in place measures to ensure online safety and data security.*
- *understand that our notice to withdraw from this agreement must be given in writing indicating that my child will either return to regular full-time formal attendance or that they will be de-registered to begin Elective Home Education*
- *understand that this agreement can also be terminated in writing by the headteacher, without prior notice if there are concerns that the flexi-schooling option is not benefiting the child's development.*

Should you wish your child to attend on a day that is usually a flexi-school day we would ask for advance notice

Signatures

Parent(s) / Carer(s): _____

Date: _____

Headteacher: _____

Date: _____

All elements of this document are subject to local evolution without referral and Estyn / Welsh Government guidance and Statutory Duty, along with all future UK Law