





*To inspire, enrich and nurture so each individual reaches their full potential*

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The HCFS is a company limited by Guarantee Registration number 07648654

# Flexi-Schooling Policy

September 2025

To be reviewed annually in the Autumn Term

Next Review: September 2026

## History of Document

Issue No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved By	Comments
Issue 1	September 2024	Victoria Hobson	Trust Board	Policy created through combination of model policies and HCC guidance
Issue 2	September 2025	Victoria Hobson	Trust Board	- Addition to section 9 relating to daily attendance data being shared with the DfE

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## **1. Introduction**

Hatfield Community Free School (HCFS) understands that, under some circumstances, parents may wish for their child to receive some of their education in school, and some of their education at home.

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement for providing a full-time education to a child whereby the child attends school part of the time and is educated elsewhere, usually by the parent, for the rest of the time. It is an individual arrangement made between the school and the parent. It is recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) as a valid full-time education. There is no pre-determined model for the amounts of time given to either of the settings and individual arrangements vary widely.

Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education (where the parent takes full responsibility for the education of the child and legally registers the child as Electively Home Educated). Parents who request flexi-schooling are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve both attendance at school, as well as times when the child will receive educational provision at home.

While there is no automatic right for a pupil to receive flexi-schooling, the school aims to work with parents where this may be necessary, in order to reach an arrangement that is mindful of the pupil's best interests, and allows the pupil to receive part of their education within school, and the other part of their education at home.

When a pupil is flexi-schooled, there is always a risk that the child may not receive the broad and balanced education that they should and are entitled to receive. The school adheres to the measures outlined within this policy, and expects parents of flexi-schooled pupils to do so as well, in order to ensure that every pupil, whether flexi-schooled or not, receives a broad and balanced education.

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended);
- The Education Act 1996;
- DfE (2019) 'Elective home education';
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance';
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy;
- Child Protection Policy;
- Complaints Policy and Procedures;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy;
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy.

### **3. Definition**

Flexi-schooling is providing a full-time education by means of a mixture of provision.

This means that parents may make a request for their child to receive part of their education at school and part of their education at home or in other settings. Pupils receiving part of their education at school through a flexi-schooling arrangement must still receive full-time education overall, and it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that this duty is met.

While parents are free to request flexi-schooling arrangements, there is no legal entitlement for requests for flexi-schooling to be accepted.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **4.1 Trust Board**

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has robust procedures in place for monitoring pupil attendance, attainment and progress;
- Working with the Principal to establish efficient flexi-schooling procedures, ensuring agreements are approved before flexi-schooling begins;
- Approving this policy on an annual basis, ensuring that it remains adequate and appropriate for the needs of the school;
- Putting arrangements in place for when the provider of the alternative activity as part of flexi-schooling notifies the school of any absences of individual pupils.

#### **4.2 Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Working with the Trust Board to establish efficient flexi-schooling procedures, ensuring agreements have been approved before flexi-schooling begins;
- Granting requests for flexi-schooling where they are satisfied the parents are committed to providing adequate support for their child while they are being educated off-site;
- Creating and agreeing a home-school agreement before flexi-schooling begins;
- Ensuring the pupil's progress, attendance, behaviour and the effectiveness of any intervention programmes are monitored;
- Ensuring parents receive timely updates on their child's attendance and progress, e.g. through progress reports or consultation meetings;
- Collating evidence from parents to inform pupil assessments;
- Providing parents with copies of planning overviews to ensure they can plan flexi-day activities for pupils;
- Withdrawing a flexi-schooling agreement if it is felt that any of the required conditions are not being met at home;
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis, ensuring it remains adequate and appropriate for the needs of the school.

#### **4.3 Parents**

The responsibility to ensure that a child receives full-time education whilst he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent.

The Education Act 1996 states; "that the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Within a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents are responsible for:

- Keeping clear records or diaries of the activities and learning experiences that happen on flexi-schooling days/sessions;
- Providing copies of records or diaries, pupil's work, evidence and activities to the Principal and bringing these to parent consultations and/or review meetings;
- Attending meetings with other parents and school staff regarding flexi-schooling to share good practice.

### **5. What Should Parents Consider?**

A flexi-schooling arrangement can work well for children with illnesses, or with school phobias, where parents wish to have more input into the child's education, or where the family would prefer the child not to attend full-time until they are older. Whatever the reason parents are expected, by law, to ensure that their child receives a full-time education.

The decision to undertake flexi-schooling should only be considered if there are positive reasons for doing so and where all parties agree that such an arrangement is in the best interests of the child. Parents must be confident that they can meet the educational needs of the child fully and a school mindful of the fact that, if arrangements are agreed, the school will retain the responsibility for the child's progress and any absences incurred because of the decision to participate in a flexi-schooling arrangement.

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. However, it has been shown that such an arrangement can be made to work well and the perceived benefits of flexi-schooling can include the child being able to work and socialise with a wider peer group whilst at school, having access to specialist educators and resources they might not have at home and being able to join in with activities such as school trips alongside individual tuition at home where their learning can be more self-directed and where they may experience a wider range of activities in different environments than ordinarily available in school.

The education provided at home and at school should together constitute full-time.

Whilst there is no statutory curriculum to be followed at home, parents will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the school curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience. With this in mind, parents may wish to discuss with the school the topics being covered and those being missed during flexi-schooling periods. This enables parents to complement the schoolwork at home and cover missed topics in their own way should they feel this is appropriate.

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 and is unlikely to be successful 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.

Concerns are sometimes raised about friendships being affected when children are flexi-schooled, so parents and schools will wish to work together to consider these concerns and how these might be overcome. Flexi-schooling children attending school for half days, rather than being out of school for a full day, provides the opportunity to spend lunchtime at school, allowing them to have playtime with their friends and access the social aspects of the lunch period. Play dates after school and at weekends can also be a way to develop and nurture friendships with other children, including those who attend the school.

If the child moves to a different school, there will be no guarantee that flexi schooling will be able to continue. This will be a decision for the Headteacher/Principal at the new school.

## **6. What Should the Principal Consider?**

All requests must be considered by the Principal on their own merits. The Principal will consider the best interests of the child; their educational progress and achievement; their safety, safeguarding and welfare; together with the likely impact on the discipline, morale and organisation of the school.

The safeguarding of any child should always be of paramount importance, so any decisions should be taken with the knowledge of any existing safeguarding concerns. Where a child attends another setting on those days when not in school it is incumbent on the parent to ensure the adequacy of the safeguarding arrangements in operation at this setting. The Principal should, however, still act in response to any concerns that may arise.

When the curriculum is delivered through cross-curricular activities, arrangements made with the parent would need to protect the cohesion of the child's experience. There may be resource implications; effective co-ordination will require time and, although there is no obligation to do so, the school may well decide that it will need to provide materials so that learning can keep pace with that of other children.

There is no opt-out for schools with regards to the National Curriculum based on a flexi-schooling proposal. Although the child is not attending all school sessions, the school will still need to ensure that the child has appropriate access to the National Curriculum. The child cannot be disapplied from statutory curriculum or assessment arrangements simply because flexible attendance has been agreed.

Children should be recorded as absent when not in school. The C code (authorised absence) should be used. Some schools have expressed concern that such absence may have a detrimental effect for the purpose of Ofsted inspection, but this is not the case (para10.8, DfE Guidance for LAs on Elective Home Education).

In line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education issued in April 2019, on the days the child is being educated by the parent outside of school, the school must not use the B code as this would mean that the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education and will ensure the safety and welfare of the child when off site; C code would be the most appropriate code to use.

If the child is unable to attend a home-based session because of illness the parent/carer should inform the school and this should be reflected in the school's register.

Arrangements for flexi-schooling may make both the identification of SEN and the ability to meet those needs more difficult to secure. Effective assessment would need to take place across both the school and home-schooling elements of the child's education and so could present logistical challenges. In order to ensure that flexi-schooled children are able to have the same access as other children to the school based early identification of any special educational needs, the same principles of close collaboration between parents, the school and any other professionals involved with the child should apply.

Where a child has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the decision must be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority. Where flexi-schooling is agreed for a child with an EHCP, this should be recorded on the Plan and progress monitored through the usual annual review process. It is not necessary to wait for the EHCP amendments to be made before the agreed flexi school arrangement to commence.

Since the child remains on the school roll, the school retains the responsibility for the child's progress and for tracking that progress.

The school receives full funding for flexi-schooled children, and they must be included in all census returns.

The responsibility for the arrangement lies with the school and not the Local Authority and schools will need to work with parents to address any issues which arise.

## **6.1 Ofsted Implications**

Schools may be concerned that use of the 'C' code as authorised absence will have a detrimental effect for the purposes of Ofsted inspections. Use of the 'C' code would require schools to provide a clear narrative behind weaker attendance data. Schools who have flexi-schooled pupils should be ready to discuss with Ofsted inspectors the arrangements they have in place to deal with the requirements of these pupils. Schools are held to account through inspection for the performance of pupils and that will include any who attend the school as part of a programme of flexi-schooling.

## **7. Requesting Flexi-Schooling Arrangements**

If a parent is interested in making such a request, the Principal school should be contacted so that the proposal may be considered. The parent will need to prove to the Principal that flexi-schooling is in the best interests of the child, for example by writing a proposal explaining the benefits for the child and practical examples of how the arrangement will work between the school and parent (template in Appendix One).

The school will review the parents request and it will be the decision of the Principal as to whether they are willing to enter into an agreement with the parent (template in Appendix Two).

Children who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement will be subject to the same admissions processes as other children and are counted in the same way as a child who attends full-time for the purposes of infant class size regulations.

The Trust Board may be involved in agreeing and reviewing a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling, but this does not exempt the Principal from the need to consider each request individually. The whole Trust Board should not become involved in individual cases and cannot overturn a Principal's decision. However, the Trust Board will have a clearly defined role if a complaint is made.

## **8. Making a Flexi-School Agreement**

In all cases where flexi-schooling is agreed, in collaboration the school and parent will create a written agreement so that expectations and arrangements are clear for both parties. Such agreement may include:

- The normal expected pattern of attendance at school;
- The rationale for why the flexi-schooling arrangement is in the best interests of the pupil concerned;
- Procedures for flexibility around special events which fall outside the normal arrangement;
- How the register will be marked;
- That the school will follow up an unexpected or unexplained absence in the same way as it does for other children;
- Arrangements at times of assessment;
- Details of any perceived special educational needs and associated provision including how any high needs funding, if a child has an EHCP, will be deployed;
- Agreement that if the parent chooses to employ other people to educate their child at home, they will be responsible for making sure that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children and will be responsible for meeting all costs related to this decision;
- Agreement on who will meet the cost of exam entries. These are the responsibility of the parent, but the school may choose to support with some or all of the costs;
- Details of any special educational needs and associated provision;
- Arrangements for sharing of overview planning and review meetings to ensure the child achieves their potential and to promote good home/school relationships;
- Clarity about the circumstances under which and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement.

The template in Appendix Three will be used to support with this.

## **9. Attendance and Educational Performance**

The school will monitor progress, attendance, behaviour and the effectiveness of any intervention programmes, in line with the existing procedures for full-time equivalent pupils.

Attendance at school will be mandatory for pupils receiving flexi-schooling for all sessions where it has been agreed the pupil will be present. Where pupils are receiving the off-site parts of their education, they will be officially entered onto the school's admissions and attendance registers. Periods where the pupil is receiving education other than at the school will be marked on attendance registers as authorised absences in line with the Attendance Policy.

The school shares daily attendance data with the DfE via the Wonde platform, in line with national requirements. Flexi-schooled pupils are included in this data, and their attendance is monitored accordingly.

The pupil's parent will be responsible for informing the school where their child will be absent from on-site provision and where they will not be attending schooling off-site – the school will mark the attendance register in line with the Attendance Policy for absences from either provision.

The school will update parents on their child's attendance and progress at school at least termly through:

- Progress reports;
- Consultation meetings;
- Informal communications.

The school will expect the parents to act on advice provided and work in partnership with the school to ensure that pupils make appropriate academic progress.

The school retains the right to withdraw an agreement at any time, e.g. if the school feels that any of the required conditions that underpin the agreement are not being met at home.

## **10. The School's Role in Flexi-Schooling**

For all flexi-schooling arrangements entered into by the school, the school will:

- Monitor the attendance levels of pupils at school;
- Track and evaluate the attainment and progress of pupils at school;
- Use any evidence parents collate at home to inform their assessments of pupils – attainment and progress evidence will be shared between parents and the school;
- Provide parents with copies of planning overviews to ensure parents can plan flexi-day activities to support their child's learning.

The school will not conduct any health and safety risk assessments of the pupil's home; however, if there is evidence that a child is not safe at home, or a concern is raised either by a member of staff or the child themselves, the DSL will be informed immediately, and the school will follow the processes outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy.

## **11. Termination of a Flexi-Schooling Agreement**

The school will set a formal review for flexi-schooling arrangements where:

- Pupils' attendance at school falls below 96% percent (the expected standard as outlined in our Attendance Policy);
- Pupils' attainment, performance or progress is falling below the accepted standard in areas of the pupil's education for which the school has responsibility.

Where the school believes that any of the required conditions that underpin the agreement are not being met, e.g. the pupil is not making the expected progress, the school will withdraw the flexi-schooling agreement.

Neither the Local Authority nor the school have a statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education on a routine basis, however if it appears to the school that parents are not providing a suitable education as agreed between the school and the parent, the school may ask the parent to take remedial action. If the parent declines to do so or the school is still concerned about the provision of education at home, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement. The child would then be required to return to school on a full-time basis. If a child fails to return to full-time attendance the school leaves the absence unauthorised then they should discuss with the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Two weeks' notice will be given to parents following a decision to terminate the agreement.

If parents do not agree with the school's decision, they will be asked to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the reasons behind the decision.

If they still disagree following the meeting, parents will be offered the opportunity to make a complaint regarding the school's decision. All complaints will be handled in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy and Procedures.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Senior Leadership Team with approval being sought from the Trust Board.

**Appendix One**

**Flexi-schooling: Parent Request Template**

**To be completed by the parent**

Child's Name							
Child's Date of Birth							
Child's Current School Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Name of Parent(s)							

What has been your child's form of education to date?	Full Time School	Part Time School
	Electively Home Education	None

What attracted you to flexi-schooling?

Flexi-schooling is being requested for the following times: <i>Please indicate the times home-based education is being requested for</i>		<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>
	Monday		
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday		
	Friday		

What are your expectations for the school-based part of your child's education?

What are your expectations for the home-based part of your child's education?

<p><b>Do you intend to follow the National Curriculum at home?</b> <i>If so, do you feel you will require any help with this? (e.g. access to curriculum overviews, attainment targets)</i></p>	
<p><b>Does your child have any special educational or additional needs?</b> <i>If so, please detail</i></p>	
<p><b>Any other information about your child or yourself which we may find useful?</b></p>	

## Appendix Two

### Flexi-schooling: School Review Template

To be completed by the school

Child's Name							
Child's Date of Birth							
Child's Current School Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Name of Staff Member Completing Review							

<p><b>What is the child's most recent attendance data?</b> <i>If applicable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school's expected attendance percentage is 96%</li> <li>Consideration will be granted for those pupils with special educational and additional needs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What is the child's most recent attainment data?</b> <i>If applicable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school expects pupils to be at least working towards the expected age related standard</li> <li>Consideration will be granted for those pupils with special educational and additional needs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Are there any current safeguarding concerns for the child?</b> <i>If so, please detail</i></p>	
<p><b>Are there any current special educational or additional needs that need to be considered?</b> <i>If so, please detail</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the child has an EHCP, advice needs to be sought from the Local Authority and their approval also needs to be gained</li> </ul>	

<p><b>What is the child's current in-school timetable?</b>  <i>Indicate possible impact in relation to parents flexi-schooling request schedule</i></p>		
<p><b>Based on the information provided by parents and collated by the school, it is in the child's best interests to proceed with the creation of a flexi-schooling agreement between home and school</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>

<p><b>Signed</b></p>	
<p><b>Date</b></p>	

**Appendix Three**

**Flexi-schooling: Home-School Agreement Template**

To be completed in collaboration by the parent and the school

Child's Name							
Child's Date of Birth							
Child's Current School Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6

<p>Flexi-schooling has been agreed for the following reasons:</p>	
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<p>Flexi-schooling has been agreed for the following times:</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Morning</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Afternoon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Friday</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Morning	Afternoon	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday		
	Morning	Afternoon																	
Monday																			
Tuesday																			
Wednesday																			
Thursday																			
Friday																			

<p>The arrangements for support with learning materials from HCFS is:</p>	
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<p>The attendance arrangements are:  <i>Indicate how:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>home-based education times will be recorded in the register</i></li> <li>• <i>how absence during home-based education times will be communicated to the school and recorded in the register</i></li> </ul>	
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<p><b>The arrangements for assessments and testing are:</b>  <i>Indicate what the:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>attendance requirements at school are for assessments/tests</i></li> <li>• <i>responsibility of cost for assessments/tests are</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>The arrangements for special events falling outside of the normal arrangement are:</b></p>	
<p><b>The arrangements for supporting the child's special educational or additional needs within the flexi-schooling agreement:</b>  <i>If applicable, indicate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>how requirements in the child's EHCP will be met</i></li> <li>• <i>how any high needs funding received by the school will be spent</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>The arrangements for reviewing the flexi-schooling agreement:</b>  <i>Indicate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the frequency of the review meetings</i></li> <li>• <i>the evidence required at meetings from home and school based learning</i></li> </ul>	

School Agreement	Home Agreement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCFS is responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times set out in the above Home-School Agreement.</li> <li>• The educational provision provided at school will be suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability as set out in S7 of the Education Act 1996.</li> <li>• Whilst on HCFS' school premises or the school is acting in loco parentis, HCFS will maintain primary responsibility for the child's safety and welfare.</li> <li>• HCFS agree to meet with the parent on at least as termly basis for a review meeting to discuss the child's progress and review the agreement.</li> <li>• HCFS can withdraw from this agreed, at any time, by giving 2 weeks' notice in writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I/we are responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times set out in the above Home-School Agreement.</li> <li>• The educational provision provided at home will be suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability as set out in S7 of the Education Act 1996.</li> <li>• During school hours timetabled for home-based education, I/we will maintain primary responsibility for the child's safety and welfare.</li> <li>• I/we agree to meet with HCFS on at least as termly basis for a review meeting to discuss the child's progress and review the agreement.</li> <li>• I/we understand I/we will be responsible for making sure that those whom engage with my child during home-based education are suitable to have access to children and will be responsible for meeting all costs related to this;</li> <li>• I/we understand the reasons outlined in HCFS' policy as to why they may choose to withdraw the agreement and a 2 week notice period will be given in writing should this occur;</li> <li>• I/we understand I/we can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving 2 weeks' notice in writing.</li> </ul>	
Name:	Parent One	Name:
Signed:		Signed:
Date:	Parent Two	Name:
		Signed:
		Date: