



Rackenfords Primary School

Flexi Schooling Policy

Status	Statutory
Job title	Head of School
Nominated prime author:	Emily Budden
Policy to be implemented by:	All Staff and flexi parents
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Signature of Chair of Governors:	

Rackenfurd Primary School belongs to the Federation of Tiverton Schools, which has an inclusive approach to education. We strive hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents and carers. We believe that full-time education within a school environment is the best option for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain their full potential. We recognised, however, that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child to engage in very effective, full-time and suitable education. One of these is flexi-schooling, where a parent/carer prefers to educate a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere. Rackenfurd Primary does enter into flexi-school agreements (this does not apply to other schools in the Federation). The initial request for one must come from the parent/carer, and in order to reach such an arrangement and continue it successfully, a rigorous framework of expectations must be accepted and maintained.

This policy, based on Local Authority guidance, is intended to:

- clearly establish the statutory arrangements for full-time education,
- help a parent/carer considering whether to request flexi-schooling for their statutory-age child at our school
- help our school in responding to such requests
- help in taking into account the legal/statutory regulations which need to be kept in mind when discussing a request for flexi-schooling.

Background

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while they are of statutory school age lies with the parent or guardian/carer.

In November 2007 the DCSF 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. A parent/carer may request flexi-schooling on a long-term basis where he or she favours this form of education.

How should an application for flexi-schooling be made?

Flexi schooling must 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 the school. Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled it is entirely at the discretion of our Headteacher, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement. As leaders of the school, we have to take into consideration the existing number of children who already access flexi school, the needs of our school cohort and the staffing at the time.

Any parent/carer interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, should make contact directly with the Head of School. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

The Headteacher will consider all requests on their own merits, taking into account the best interests of the child; their potential and ongoing educational progress and achievement; their safety, safeguarding and welfare. The safeguarding and welfare of every child is of paramount importance. Ultimately our schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off site and an appropriate, quality assured risk assessment must be undertaken in advance of any agreement made.

No agreement will be reached or maintained where our Headteacher has concerns that it would put the child at risk of harm while not attending school. When agreeing to flexi-schooling arrangements our school is certifying that the education is supervised, and all reasonable and appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

The grounds for agreeing a flexi-schooling place will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher. Grounds for declining a place could be that adding to the number of children attending on a flexi-basis would create an imbalance in the class in question and be detrimental to teaching and learning and/or the outcomes of other children already in school. In such circumstances a full-time place will be offered in line with the Local Authority admissions policy.

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

School-based attendance

It is a requirement of Rackenfords Primary School that flexi-schooling children attend for a minimum of three full days per week (Monday to Wednesday).

Children in Year 6 are required to be in school full-time from January onwards in preparation for KS2 SATs and to ensure smooth transition to secondary/high school.

The school expects parents of flexi-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.

Attendance codes for when pupils are being flexi-schooled at home

On our registers, we are obliged to code flexi-schooled children as code B – Off-site educational activity when they are working off-site. If children are being home-educated or not attending an educational setting such as a forest school we code this as C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We expect the attendance of non-flexi schooled children to be at least 96% of all

sessions. Therefore, we expect the attendance of flexi-schooled children to run at 96% of the agreed sessions we expect them to attend.

We require parents to inform us on each flexi-day if their child is ill so that we can amend the codes in our registers as necessary. When an absence occurs on days when the child is due to attend school, we will follow up the absence in line with the school Attendance Policy.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Each year there are three census days on which the funding we are allocated for free infant school meals is decided. We therefore need all flexi-children in YR-2 in school for these days so that they are counted in our funding for the year. The dates will be published as soon as they are available to us.

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 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.

Our Governors must satisfy themselves that the Head of School 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.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the decision of our Headteacher to decline a flexi-schooling request or indeed if they decide to end an individual child's flexi-schooling arrangement.

Our agreements with parents/carers

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

- The expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed - typically this will be one term initially and one year thereafter
- Flexibility regarding attendance for 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.
- Registration. How the register will be marked.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other children
- Children's time at home should not be used to pursue activities which other children might be expected to take up outside of school e.g. swimming lessons, unless agreed with school.

- Parents/carers are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress in the Off-site element of the agreement. Learning progress should be recorded and shared with school on a regular basis through Class Dojo or in another agreed format. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording is not set by the school but could include overviews of the child's learning, photographs of activities and written work produced.
- Parents/carers choosing to employ at their/ his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents/carer will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child.

Retraction of a flexi-school place

Our Headteacher reserves the right to end a flexi-school contract at any time should they have significant concerns about a child's academic progress, emotional wellbeing or safeguarding. Parents will be informed of the decision at a review meeting and then in writing. The child will continue to be offered a full-time place within the school.

Funding

The child will be recorded by the school as attending full-time with sessions not in school being recorded as per agreement. 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.

Infant Class Size Legislation (ICSL)

Our school makes no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, a child will not be an exception to ICSL (sometimes called Key Stage One legislation) solely by being flexi-schooled.