



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Flexible Schooling Policy

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Introduction

Sparken Hill Academy has the needs of the children at the heart of every decision made. Here at Sparken Hill, we promote full time education within a school environment as a valuable way for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain to their full potential. We recognise that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request for the school to agree a flexi-schooling arrangement. This request must emanate from the parent, it is not for a Principal, a member of school staff or an officer of the Local Authority to suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling

Background

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

Where a parent/carer educates a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling. DFE 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 Principal 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.'

Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education. Parents/carers who request flexi-attendance 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. The child will be on the roll of a school.

Flexi-schooling is also different from temporary part-time attendance arrangements which the school/parent/carer may seek to make. Such arrangements must be monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child be returned to full time attendance as soon as possible. Flexi-schooling is full time, although the provision may be split.

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 any school.

Whilst a parent/carers may request that their child is flexi-schooled, it is entirely at the Principal's discretion, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement. The Principal will consult with external partners when making this decision, this may include social care, SEN caseworker, Health.

If a parent/carers is interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Principal of the school so that the proposal may be considered.

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 will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience.

Flexi-schooling is unlikely to succeed 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. Parents should contact the locality EHE team to discuss what other options might be available to them and their child.

If the child moves to a different school, there can be no guarantee that flexi-schooling would be able to continue. A fresh request for a flexi-schooling arrangement must be made to the new school Principal. It would then be a decision for the Principal at the new school to make.

What does the Principal consider?

All requests must be considered by the Principal on their own merits, this will include previous attendance records, safeguarding and the child's wellbeing. They will do this in partnership with external agencies. The Principal will take into account how a flexi-schooling arrangement will best meet the interests of the child and their educational progress and achievement; together with the likely impact on the discipline, morale and attendance and organisation of the school.

Additionally, the Principal must consider:

- Current and anticipated level of educational attainment, achievement and progress of the individual pupil and the arrangements for monitoring the learning and progress of the individual pupil.

- Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full time education provision.
- The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school.
- The effect on the school organisation, school resources and funding.
- The impact on overall school attainment and progress figures.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body should be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's approach to flexi-schooling requests but they should not become involved in individual cases, as some governors may have a more formal role if a dispute arises and/or a complaint is made.

The governing body will monitor the attendance and progress of flexi-schooled children.

Governors should satisfy themselves that the Principal has fully considered the points highlighted above and are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the decision of a Principal not to agree to a flexi- schooling request or if a Principal decides to cease an individual child's flexi- schooling arrangement.

Written Agreements with Parents/Carers

A written and signed agreement (see appendix) must be formulated between the school and parents/carers in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement will be formalised by the school's flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The normal expected pattern of attendance at school - this will be monitored by the school in line with the whole school attendance policy
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed: typically this may be one term.
- What flexibility there will be regarding 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.
- How the register will be marked (see section Marking the Attendance Register)
The parents/carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activity.
- How the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other pupils.
- What the arrangement will be at times of child's assessment.
- If a parent/carer chooses to employ at his or her expense another person to educate the child at home, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that person

is suitable to have access to the children and the Principal needs to include the points outlined previously in the section 'What does the Principal consider?' Parents/carers remain responsible for the welfare and education of their child/young person. It is recommended that parents/carers check the tutor's identity and qualifications, take up appropriate references and ensure that the tutor has a recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure certificate that they are satisfied with.

We advise parents/carers to monitor the teaching and learning and the progress their child makes.

- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision.
- Arrangements for regular planning and review meetings between parent/carer, school, EHE team and any other relevant professionals (eg Social Worker, SEN caseworker, Health) to ensure the child achieves his/her potential and to promote good home/school relationships. Each review will also collect the voice of the child/young person.
- Safeguarding & wellbeing of the child will be reviewed throughout the arrangement.
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement.

Procedure for when a child is flexi-schooled

The child will already be registered at the school. On days when the child attends school, the National Curriculum must be followed as if the child were attending full-time.

The requirement to follow the National Curriculum will apply to all children except:

- Those who are temporarily unable to do so due to exceptional circumstances such as prolonged absence from school on health grounds or family crisis.
- As a part of an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period.

On days when the child does not attend school, the child need not follow the National Curriculum.

Marking the Attendance Register

The most recent clarification received from the DfE (2024) states that pupils should be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education, as part of a flexi-school agreement. Schools should use the attendance code 'C'.

When an absence occurs on days when the child is due to attend, school will follow up the absence in the usual way in line with the school policy.

Further clarification on this is in the DfE Guidance for 'Elective Home Education' for parents.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and welfare of a child will be considered by all internal and external partners prior to the flexi-schooling agreement being made.

For the time the pupil who is flexi-schooled are receiving home education, the school has no supervisory role in the pupil's education at such times and has no responsibility for the welfare of the child whilst the child is at home.

Where there are safeguarding and welfare concerns the Principal has the right to terminate the flexi- schooling agreement with immediate effect.

SEND and Children / Young People with an Education, Health and Care Plans

Prior to the agreement being made the Principal will consult with all external professionals involved in the EHCP including the SEN Caseworker.

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not.

The duty to review a child's Education, Health and Care Plan on an annual basis or sooner if appropriate, still applies.

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 returns, as other children, and will be expected to attend school on Census days.

Parents/carers assume full financial responsibility for the child's educational provision which is not at school, including the cost of any external assistance used such as tutors, parent groups or part-time alternative provision.

Expected patterns of attendance

There will be some flexibility over the pattern of attendance for each child attending on a flexi-schooling basis and this will be at the discretion of the Principal. Children must spend a minimum of 2 consecutive school days per week in EYFS/KS1, and a minimum of 3 consecutive school days per week in KS2.

Prior to the agreement being made the child's current attendance will be taken into account. Attendance will be closely monitored by the school leaders in line with the whole school attendance policy.

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) There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, the child will not be an exception to ICSL (sometimes called Class Size 30 legislation) solely by being flexi-schooled.

Insurance

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not.

Children Educated outside their Chronological Age-Group

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not.

When the flexi schooling arrangement is not working

Any safeguarding or welfare concerns will mean the flexi-schooling agreement is terminated with immediate effect.

Where the child's attendance on expected flexi-school days is poor the Principal must review the flexi-school agreement.

If it appears to the school that the flexi schooling arrangement is not working, the school will liaise with parents/carers to try to address this.

This may be due to any of the items listed under 'What does the Principal consider?' If the Principal does not feel the suitability threshold for the education overall has been met and the situation cannot be rectified, this will result in the Principal ceasing the Flexi-Schooling arrangement. This is at the Principal's discretion and there is no right to appeal this decision. The notice period for this will be 4 weeks. The child would then be required to attend school on a full-time basis.

If parents/carers wish to cease the flexi-schooling arrangement and revert to full-time schooling then the notice period for this will be 1 week.

Any non-attendance would be recorded following the school's usual absence procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually.



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Appendix

Name of School: Sparken Hill Academy Flexi-Schooling Agreement

Dear

Further to our discussions about your request for [NAME OF CHILD] to attend school on a flexi-schooling basis, please find below the written flexi-schooling agreement. Please read this carefully, complete and sign where requested, then return one of the copies to school to confirm your agreement.

Reasons for requesting flexi-schooling

As discussed with the school, your reasons for requesting a flexi-schooling arrangement for [NAME OF CHILD], including how this will benefit them, are:

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The views of the child:

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Attendance pattern

The normal expected pattern of attendance for [NAME OF CHILD] will be as follows:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning					
Afternoon					

Special Educational Needs/ Medical/ Social care

We have discussed your child's needs and associated provision; these are detailed below:

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Home-schooling plans

(Parent / Carer to complete) Education provided at home and that provided at school **must** together constitute a **full-time education provision**. It would be helpful if you could share an overview of your week, to include any clubs, classes etc.

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Please provide details below of any additional information to support your request.

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By entering into this flexi-schooling arrangement, you are also confirming your agreement with the following points:

- Should special events fall outside of your child's arranged school days, there will be flexibility and your child can attend these events. Events such as, but not limited to: assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.
- When your child is not at school due to this flexi-school arrangement the code C will be entered into the register.
- Parents/carers must contact the school if your child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school; school will apply usual absence procedures.
- At times of national assessment and school assessment periods your child will be in the school for all tests and assessments. This helps teachers to identify next steps for children.
- Parents/carers will be expected to attend the termly parent/carer teacher consultation meetings. In addition, parents must attend half termly flexi-school review meetings in line with the agreement.
- Parents/carers will be expected to share an overview of home learning activities with the school using the online facility or agreed alternative method (at least once per week). This should be communicated with your child's class teacher.
- School will follow procedures for supporting a child with Special Educational Needs in the same way as if the child was attending full time. Parents/carers will work with school to support this, attend meetings and agree a consistent approach.
- Parents/carers take responsibility for any additional adults working with their child when not in school (e.g. tutors).
- As a school we are supportive of flexi-schooling when it is in the best interests of the child and will work with parents/carers to address any concerns or difficulties arising. However, in the event of school feeling that the arrangement is not working then it will be at the **Principal's discretion to end the arrangement**. There is no right to appeal this decision. The notice period for this will be 4 weeks. The child would then be required to attend school on a full-time basis.
- If parents/carers wish to cease the arrangement and revert to full-time schooling then the notice period for this will be 1 week.
- This arrangement will be reviewed termly.

Parents/Carers:

Signed.....Dated.....

Signed.....Dated.....

School: Signed.....Dated.....

Appendix 2



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Review of Flexi- School Agreement for:

Dates of review:

October	December	February	April	May	July
Phone call		Phone call		Phone call	

The purpose of this review is to consider the impact on the child's access to the National Curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience. Additionally to consider the impact of flexi-schooling on the child's wellbeing and how this flexi-schooling arrangement best meets the needs of the child.

	Aut 1	Aut 2	Spr 1	Spr 2	Sum1	Sum2
Attendance						
Authorised						
Unauthorised						

Contextual Issues around attendance:

Pupil views – including wishes to continue with current agreement Collected termly before the end of term review.

Autumn
Spring
Summer

Parent view
Collected every half term

Autumn Term 1

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Autumn Term 2

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Spring Term 1

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Spring Term 2

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Summer Term 1

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Summer Term 2

What is going well?

Are there any concerns?

Are there any safeguarding concerns or thoughts that you would like to raise or discuss?

Subjects not taught in school due to flexi-schooling:

Aut 1	Aut 2	Spr 1	Spr 2	Sum 1	Sum 2

School View

Collected termly before the end of term review

Autumn Term	
Spring Term	
Summer Term	

Current attainment: (ARE) age related expectations

Below ARE WT - Working towards ARE S = Working at ARE S+ = Working above ARE

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Phonics			
Reading			
Writing			
Maths			
Science			
RE			

Recommendations for next term (including attendance pattern and record of expected attendance)

Autumn

Spring

Summer

Consent has been sought and initials show agreement of discussion taken place.

	Aut 1	Aut 2	Spr 1	Spr 2	Sum 1	Sum 2
Pupil						
Parents						
Class Teacher						
Principal						