**Flexischooling in England - Information for parents**

**What is flexischooling?**

Flexischooling is an arrangement whereby children of compulsory school age receive their education partially at school, and partially elsewhere under the supervision of their parents.

Flexischooling is a perfectly legal option, but there is no guaranteed right for parents to flexischool. Whilst they may request that their child is flexischooled it is entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher. The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision.

**Why do parents choose flexischooling?**

There are many reasons why parents choose flexischooling, such as:

* Parents wish to spend more quality time with their children
* They want an active role in their children's education
* Children can follow their own interests
* Different styles of learning can be respected and accommodated
* Children can benefit from both worlds; being taught at school and being educated at home
* Children who have difficulties attending school full-time, for example because of illness or emotional or behavioural needs, have the opportunity reduce the amount of time spent in school whilst still receiving a full time education.

At school children can work and socialise with their own peer group, they have access to specialist educators and resources they might not have at home, they can join in with activities such as school trips and plays.

At home children can benefit from individual tuition or small (mixed age) groups, their learning can be self-directed, they can experience a wider range of activities in different environments, e.g. outdoor activities, museums visits

**How does flexischooling work?**

**The Flexischooling Agreement**

When a parent is interested in making a request for a flexischooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Head teacher of the school so that the proposal may be considered.

Once the decision to flexischool is made parents and head teacher should meet and discuss how the arrangement will work. Following this discussion a written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement should include:

* The expected pattern of attendance at school.
* What areas of education each party will provide.
* To what extent the National Curriculum will be followed in the non-school based element of flexischooling.
* How school and parents will co-operate to make flexischooling work, e.g. regular planning meetings between parent and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home-school relationships.
* How parents will keep records of their child’s learning and progress in the off-site element of the agreement, e.g. by keeping a journal including children’s writing, parental observations, reports and annotated photographs.
* What arrangements will be made for pupil assessment (see below)
* Which provisions will be made for any perceived special needs.
* What flexibility there will be regarding special events which fall outside the normal attendance pattern.
* How the register will be marked (see section Marking the Attendance Register).
* The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed.
* Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement.

**National Curriculum and Assessments/SAT's**

The National Curriculum applies to the school based part but not necessarily the non-school based part. The national curriculum does not apply to the non-school based part of the education of a flexischooled child unless this was part of the agreement between the school and the parent.

SATs are a statutory requirement for schools so the normal rules apply and the child will be expected to sit them all.

**Marking the register**

We have included this as sometimes confusion over the mark in the register and therefore the attendance statistics for the school puts head teachers off agreeing to requests for flexischooling.

There are currently two options for the sessions during which the child is not physically at the school but being educated elsewhere:

Where the child is part time educated at school and part time electively home educated (i.e., with neither oversight nor approval from the school) then the registration mark used is “C” - authorised absence – for the non-school sessions. Naturally this affects the attendance figures of the school, which can be problematic, but Ofsted takes the stance that so long as the pupils are educated that is what is important.

Where the arrangements meet the criteria for “Off-site educational activity” (see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 6(4)) then a “B” code can be used which does not affect attendance figures. In order to meet these criteria the school must authorise the parent to provide the education, and possibly also approve the education that will be taking place. This authorisation and approval may be granted on a termly or annual basis through a meeting or exchange of reports between the school and the parent.

In summary, if the school have authorised the parents to manage the education taking place in the session, or have approved the education planned to take place then “B” can be used, otherwise a “C” must be used.

**What parents say:**

"I felt that I wasn't ready or able to offer my daughter full-time Home Education. So after researching huge amounts found out about this happy compromise. We have not looked back."

"My son goes to a village school about 16 miles away. The school and the head teacher are very, very supportive and fantastic! Nearly half the school is flexischooled."

"They are competent, independent kids, and for me that is a reward in itself. It allows me to have an interesting job for three days, and for them to do their own thing without me, and then we have a four day weekend when we share our time together and they can follow their own interests."

"We want our children to play, to experiment, to find their passion, to make friends, to be free, to be wild, and to have time. That is probably the most important thing: To have time. Free time. Time to play."

**FAQ**

**What role do the LA play?**

None. But they advise schools (often incorrectly in the case of flexischooling) on the law.

**Can I appeal against the head teacher’s decision?**

There is no appeal against the decision of the Head teacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request.

**I thought the government had stopped allowing flexi-schooling a few years ago?**

There was a month back in 2013 during which the then current Minister attempted to ban flexischooling. This was reversed when it was pointed out that the action was unlawful. Flexischooling is not banned and the rules and regulations which allow it have not changed for a decade if not longer.

**What if my child is under 5?**

Formal flexischooling does not apply until children reach compulsory school age (CSA – the term after a child turns 5).  Up until this point the term used is ‘part time’. Information regarding part time schooling for children under 5 can be found in a separate leaflet.