



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Flexi-Schooling

Guidance for Schools

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01865 323513 Schools line Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

Flexi-schooling: advice and guidance to schools:

1 What is flexi-schooling?

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where, following a formal request from parents or carers and with the approval of the school, a child spends some part of the week attending school and the rest of it being educated at home or at an off-school site. In such arrangements, however, the child will always continue to remain on the school roll and is therefore their responsibility.

2 What might a flexi-schooling arrangement include?

It is recommended that a formal, written agreement between parents and the school is the best way of making flexi-schooling work. This could, for example, set out:

- the days/times when the child will attend school and the times when flexi-schooling will apply
- agreed times when the parent is responsible for the child's safety to ensure clear safeguarding duties are met, for example, explicit travel arrangements should be agreed. A risk assessment will be useful.
- contact and liaison arrangements between the school and the home
- entrance for public examinations by agreement
- the provision that parents will put in place during flexi-schooling and the arrangements for the school to monitor them
- access by parents to school resources
- access to records
- conditions for ending the arrangements by either side.

It is strongly recommended that any flexi-schooling arrangement is time-limited (eg for a term at a time) and is reviewed at the end of that time.

Schools should reserve the right to either agree to an extension of the arrangement or to terminate. If a flexi-schooling arrangement is agreed, the periods when the pupil is not in school should be recorded as C (authorised absence), which counts as an absence.

3 What is the legal situation with regard to flexi-schooling?

Parents and carers are fully entitled to ask schools about possible arrangements for flexi-schooling. There is, however, no parental entitlement to flexi-schooling and the decision rests entirely with the headteacher. If a school decides not to agree such an arrangement, there is no appeal process.

- 4 Flexi-schooling should not be agreed where it becomes evident that the arrangements being sought can be made outside of normal school hours or are more to do with accommodating the needs of the parents (eg where they might have unusual working patterns) rather than those of the child.

5 **Who does flexi-schooling apply to?**

Flexi-schooling can apply to any pupil – there are no specific criteria. Often requests for flexi-schooling are made on behalf of talented young sportspeople, so that they can benefit from elite coaching and training and that they can benefit from expert tuition.

Some parents may feel that there are areas of their children's education (which may also be in relation to the child's faith and culture) which they wish to provide. Flexi-schooling should not be seen as applying only to talented and gifted children and every request should be judged on its merits.

County Attendance Team can advise about supporting Traveller families who may request a flexi schooling arrangement

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6 **What should schools be taking into account when considering a request for flexi-schooling?**

- If a flexi-schooling arrangement is agreed, the child will take up a school place/remain on the school roll. As such a flexi-school child takes up a pupil number on roll (PAN) and in doing so could deny a full-time place for another prospective pupil. Schools are reminded that a flexi-school child is funded on the same basis as a full-time pupil on roll.
- As the child is on roll the school must satisfy the requirements of the National Curriculum or the appropriate broad and balanced curriculum for Academies.
- The school needs to consider what impact a flexi-schooling arrangement might have on both classroom and whole-school management. For example, additional demands and workloads on teaching and administrative staff.
- The school must consider whether the activity for which flexi-schooling is being requested is likely to be directly beneficial to the child's educational development.
- If the child has an EHCP the school should contact the Special Educational Needs Officer.
- If the child is on a Child Protection, Child in Need or Team around the Family (TAF) plan, the Social Worker or TAF Lead Professional should be contacted.
- If the child is on a Court Order, the Youth Justice worker should be contacted.
- Before headteachers enter into any written agreement with parents they are advised to contact County Attendance Team. Details above.