

# ST BARNABAS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

## Flexible Schooling Guidance

### Introduction

This document is intended to help schools discuss and agree with parents how to implement flexi-schooling.

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where, following a formal request from parents 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.

Combining schooling and non-schooling education in any ratio is perfectly legal, provided that the outcome is the provision of suitable full-time education for the child, and the Trust & LA must satisfy itself that this is so.

The Trust believes that full-time education within a school environment is usually the best option for all children and young people to achieve and attain to their full potential – this is also the option most parents choose. The Trust recognises, however, that parents may choose other ways for their child to engage in effective, full-time and suitable education. One way could be for them to request for a school to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement. This request must emanate from the parent, it is not for a Headteacher, a member of school or Trust staff to suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling.

Examples of where requests might be made include:

- for talented young sportspersons so they can benefit from elite coaching and training.
- for children who are gifted in other areas so that they can benefit from expert tuition.
- where parents feel that there are areas of their child'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 confused with access to a reduced timetable or elective home education (EHE). In the case of a reduced timetable the school remains responsible for the educational provision and may propose a reduced timetable for a limited period of time, with the agreement of the parent. Guidance on reduced (part-time) timetable arrangements is available via School Messenger ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/reducedtimetables](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/reducedtimetables)). Reduced

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timetables are school-led rather than parent-led. In the case of EHE, parents have a legal right to choose to home educate their child and the school removes the child from the school roll.

## **Children in Care**

Our expectation is that all Children in Care have access to their full educational entitlement, and therefore there should not be an occasion for a corporate parental request for flexi-schooling for a Child in Care unless this is based on the advice of health professionals involved with the child. This would then be regarded as a reduced timetable. If a child is on a reduced timetable, we expect this would be a short-term intervention to enable support to be put in place to enable a return to full time education.

Head Teachers will always seek advice/ guidance from the Virtual school prior to any implementation of a reduced or flexible timetable.

## **Children with a SEND or EHC Plan**

Contact should be made with the Statutory Special Educational Needs Team about any potential flexi-schooling arrangement for children with an EHC plan or a statement of SEN. A review of the EHC plan must be undertaken so that clear information on needs, proposed adjustments to provision and the anticipated benefits of flexi-schooling arrangements can be set out and considered by the Trust and Local Authority. When Flexi-schooling is agreed the statement or plan will be amended. The duty to review a child's statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care plan on an annual basis, or sooner if appropriate, still applies.

## **Things to consider when assessing a request for flexi-schooling;**

- Any existing safeguarding concerns you have.
- That you remain responsible for the attendance, progress and attainment of the pupil.
- The reasons for the request and how long the arrangement is for.
- Whether the arrangement is appropriate for the education of the pupil - taking into account current and anticipated levels of attainment.
- What parts of the school curriculum the pupil will miss out on, and how you'll address this. Bear in mind that:
- The pupil will need to follow the school curriculum when in school but not when they're educated at home

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- You cannot disapply the pupil from statutory assessments

## **Attendance**

The Trust attendance policy will be applied as normal to those sessions when the agreement has outlined when the pupil will be required to attend school. When in school the pupil will receive structured teaching/ learning sessions as outlined within the class, this school-based timetable will form a part of this agreement. The class teacher will be responsible for relaying progress over time via the school-based home/ school communication process.

The pupil will be marked present for any pre-arranged session attended (morning/afternoon)

The pupil will be marked absent for any pre-arranged session during which they were scheduled to attend school but do not do so; parents will be expected to report any absence in accordance to the trust attendance policy, providing the reason for the absence. When the pupil is not attending school under the flexi-schooling arrangements, they must be marked as 'Authorised Absent' (Code C)

## **Safeguarding**

The Trust's Safeguarding Policy applies fully to this arrangement. If a concern regarding the child's safety arises, the Head of School reserves the right to rescind the Flexi-School agreement. Standard safeguarding procedures, including home visits and referrals to Social Care, continue to apply regardless of whether it is an agreed day of attendance.

## **Assessment**

The pupil will be entered for and sit all; statutory assessments and school/class based assessments and tests.

## **Role of the Governing Body**

It is good practice to report any confirmed flexi-schooling arrangements to governors on a regular basis.

Governors should satisfy themselves that the headteacher has fully considered the points in this guidance and are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

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## **Right of appeal**

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

## **Insurance**

There are no additional or exceptional insurance implications for the school for children who are on a school roll but who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement.

## **Formulating a flexi-schooling agreement**

A written and signed agreement must be formulated between the school and parent, in order to make expectations clear for all concerned (see Appendix A for an example agreement). The agreement should include:

- the length of time the agreement is to run and the periods by which the arrangements will be reviewed.
- the days/times when the child will attend school and the times when flexi-schooling will apply.
- what flexibility there will be regarding special events which fall outside the normal arrangement, e.g. assemblies, trips, productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school, etc.
- how the register will be marked.
- 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.
- circumstances in which the parents must contact the school if the pupil is absent from a school session that they would normally attend or at an approved educational activity.
- confirmation that the school will follow up on any unexpected or unexplained absence in the same way as it does for other pupils.
- contact and liaison arrangements between home and school.
- entrance for statutory assessments by agreement.
- the provision the parent will put in place during flexi-schooling and the arrangements for the school to monitor them.
- if a parent chooses to employ other people to educate their child at home, they will be responsible for making sure that they are suitable to

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have access to children and do not need to be included on the school's Single Central Record.

- access by parents to school resources.
- access to records.
- any perceived special educational needs and associated provision.
- conditions for ending the arrangements on either side, including an exit strategy where appropriate.
- dispute resolution (i.e. normal processes are for disputes to be resolved at the most informal level possible but ultimately any complaints have to be considered by the headteacher first and then the governing body under the school's complaints procedure).

FLEXI-SCHOOLING REQUEST: Checklist and agreement	
Name of Child	
Date of birth	
Academic Year	
Parent/carer name	
Date when request was first made by parents	
Have the parents fully explained the exact details of the flexi-schooling arrangements they have in mind and the reasons behind their request? Are these reasons appropriate?	Record details  Yes/No
Has the request been confirmed by the parents in writing and the request stored on the child's file?	Yes/No
Is the school able to accommodate any concerns expressed by the parents within the parameters of full-time schooling?	Record details  Yes/No

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<p>If the pupil has a Statement or EHC Plan has the parent's request been referred to the Statutory SEN Team?</p>	<p>Yes/No/n/a</p>
<p>Does it appear likely that the request, if approved, would impose an additional workload on members of staff? What is the nature of this additional workload?</p>	<p>Record details Yes/No</p>
<p>Is the programme/activity proposed by the parents educational and appropriate? Have the parents produced any documentary evidence to support this? eg letters from other educational institutions, sporting academies, etc.</p>	<p>Record details Yes/No</p>
<p>Flexi-schooling Guidance for schools 10 September 2017.</p> <p>Have the parents been made fully aware of their child's current and anticipated level of educational attainment and the potential impact which their request for flexi-schooling might have on this?</p>	<p>Record any issues specifically discussed  Yes/No</p>
<p>Have the parents been made fully aware of any critical aspects of the curriculum/assessment /teaching in school which their child will miss if they are flexi-schooled?</p>	
<p>Have the parents been made fully aware of any critical aspects of the curriculum/assessment /teaching in school which their child will miss if they are flexi-schooled?</p>	<p>Record details  Yes/No</p>

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Should the school agree to the parents' request, have arrangements for monitoring and review been discussed and agreed? What timescales have been set? Has an initial review date been agreed?	Record details including date of initial review and proposed days of attendance  Yes/No
Have the parents been made aware that the school has the right to withdraw any agreement it might make to flexi-schooling arrangements if it considers that the original intentions and expectations are not being met?	Yes/No
Should the school be unable to agree to the parent's request, have the reasons for this been fully explained and confirmed in writing and saved on the child's file?	Record details  Yes/No
Have the parents been informed that their child will accrue absences (authorised for the periods of time they are flexi-schooled?)	Yes/No
DECISION	
Approved/Not Approved (delete as appropriate)	
Reason/Comment	
Signed : Headteacher	
Date	
If the arrangement is approved: This attendance pattern will only be changed by agreement with both the parents and the headteacher.	

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The school will allow the child to attend special events which take place on the agreed non –school days/times in consultation with the child’s class teacher or other relevant people.

Parents will have the same access to records, reports and opportunities to meet with teachers as young people who attend school on a full time basis eg: parents’ evenings, school reports.

This arrangement may be terminated by the parent during the academic year. However, the date for this must be agreed with the headteacher in advance.

The headteacher retains the right to inform parents if s/he believes that the arrangement is detrimental to the progress of the child and, if necessary, stop the flexi-schooling arrangement.

## DECLARATION – FLEXI-SCHOOLING AGREEMENT

Name of Child	
Date of birth	
Parent/carer name	
The days chosen for my/our child to attend school are:	
This agreement will commence:	
And will run (term-time only):	From: To:
The date of the first formal review will be:	
<p>I/We fully understand the contract into which I/we have entered into with the school and agree to uphold the criteria which are outlined. I/We wish my/our child named above to attend the school named above in accordance with the flexi-schooling agreement.</p>	
Headteacher signature	

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Date	
Parent/carer signature/s	
Date	