

Wye Forest Federation

Redbrook Church of England Primary School

St Briavels Parochial Church of England Primary School



Redbrook Flexi-School Policy

This policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body on: (and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)	26.9.2024
Implemented:	September 2024
Revised:	
Review date:	1.9.2025

Policy statement

At Redbrook C of E Primary School, we recognise and will support, when practical and acceptable, the right of parents to choose a suitable and personalised education for their child according to the child's dispositions and needs, coupled with the family's beliefs and values.

We welcome all children irrespective of need, background or belief to our school, and we firmly believe that our flexi-schooling provision can be an arrangement that is beneficial to all.

Our flexi-schooling provision is predominately aimed at families who wish to partially home educate their child/children or children who have in the past been fully Elective Home Educated (EHE). We will, however, also consider requests from parents whose children are finding formal education in their current setting a challenge that is likely to lead them to school refuse.

Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis in all circumstances, even within the same family.

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 well for the child.

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. For this reason, all children are required to attend school on the 'core days' of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Flexi-schooling does not give an alternative means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable. The school would expect to engage actively in attempting to resolve these difficulties. The school has an inclusive approach to education and strives hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents.

Prospective parents need to be fully aware that we will not consider any requests for a flexi-schooling place from them if their child has been permanently excluded. However, this would not prevent you from applying for a regular place.

Prospective parents must be aware that schools are not required by law to provide or offer flexi-schooling. When granted, such offers are made at the sole discretion of our Headteacher – there are no rights of appeal to Governors, LA, DfE or through the legal system if this provision is declined, varied by the school, or revoked. See Section 10.7 on p34 of EHE Guidance for LA's – April 2019.

If a situation occurs where the Flexi-schooling arrangement is varied or revoked, then those children subject to the signed Flexi-school Partnership Agreement would be required to attend for additional days if requested or, in some cases, full-time. If a parent disagrees with this, they are free to take their child or children to another school or to de-register and return to Elective Home Education. If a parent elects to de-register, then we are legally required to inform the relevant Local Authority of the de-registration and pass records on to that authority so that they can effectively liaise with the family.

Key Points to Note

Parents must note the following statement provided by the Department for Education (DfE);

'Where parents choose not to have their child educated by full-time attendance at school, then they are responsible for the whole of their child's education.' DfE 2018

It is also worth noting that in any instance, the Education Act clearly states that parents are responsible for their children's education. This applies to all parents in all circumstances and applies to the delivery of an appropriate education by the parent or through the state or independent sectors, including individuals.

- Flexi-schooling is a legal option provided that our Headteacher agrees to the arrangement; this arrangement can be amended or withdrawn without challenge at any time thereafter.
- For children living within Gloucestershire: where a child has an Educational and Healthcare Plan (EHCP); the decision must be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority. Where flexi-schooling is agreed for a child with an EHCP this should be recorded on the plan and progress monitored through the usual annual review process. It is not necessary to wait for the EHCP amendments to be made before the agreed flexi-school arrangement can commence.
For children living within Monmouthshire: where a child has an additional learning need (ALN) and is in receipt of an individual development plan (IDP) the decision must also be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority. Where flexi-schooling is agreed for a child with an IDP this should be recorded on the plan and progress monitored through the usual review process.

- Parents should be aware that Flexi-schooling is not to be taken as a means to avoid education, particular subjects taught in school or to avoid expulsion. We will not accept any children on Flexi-schooling arrangements who have been permanently excluded. If a parent misleads the school in this matter and a past exclusion is uncovered, the Flexi-school Partnership Agreement will be automatically revoked, and the child in question will be required to attend on a full-time formal basis. In such circumstances, the parents and the child in question will be subject to current statutory expectations relating to attendance.

When entering into a flexi-school arrangement we ensure that the child is at the centre of our decision making. The initial request must emanate from the parent/carer. The school will not suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling.

In order for our school to enter into and continue a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents and carers must accept and maintain the rigorous framework of expectations set out within this policy.

What is Flexi-schooling?

Flexi-schooling or flexible school attendance is a hybrid arrangement drawn up between the parent and the school, where the child is registered at our school and attends for at least 3 consecutive 'Core Days'; the rest of the time, the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). This arrangement is an open-ended offer and regarded by Ofsted and DfE as 'Full-time education and not part-time. However, the terms of this arrangement can be varied over and above the core days or withdrawn if our Headteacher decides to do so. Decisions in this regard are not open to any form of legal challenge at any level within or beyond the school and are in line with current DfE documentation.

Flexi-schooling is only a legal option if our Headteacher agrees to the arrangement; each agreement is bespoke even within the same family – the school's terms take precedent. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum while at school but not while they are being educated at home.

There is no statutory curriculum requirement for the home education element of our or any flexi-schooling arrangement. Nonetheless, we promote without pressure the opportunities the partnership

flexi-schooling brings - and from that, we hope that this partnership will develop in a mutually beneficial manner for all parties.

All teaching and learning offered on the core days reflects our curriculum policy as provided to children who attend formally. This policy, along with our other school policies, does not seek to prescribe how children should be taught at home for the home education element of the flexi-schooling arrangement.

We would encourage parents to review our Curriculum, Safeguarding and Child Protection and attendance policies and use them as a guide to support their own approaches to ensure we are working together.

Our Principles of Flexi-schooling

We see Flexi-schooling as;

- a shared approach to learning, where we welcome, encourage and will support the involvement of parents in the education of their children

Within which;

- we treat all children fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in in-class activities
- we treat all children with kindness and respect
- we praise all children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards our school and learning in general
- our teachers will apply our policies concerning discipline and classroom management to all pupils, irrespective of them being either full-time or flexi-schooled
- teaching staff make clear the code of conduct
- all children are expected to comply with the rules that are in place to promote the best learning atmosphere for all
- we insist on good order and behaviour at all times
- children who misbehave will be managed fairly within the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Behaviour Policy, and we will not tolerate any form of bullying
- We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

Aims

Being a small rural school affords us the ability to offer some opportunities not readily offered elsewhere – flexi-schooling is one of these opportunities that work well in our unique small school rural environment.

We believe that people learn in many different ways. We will endeavour to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

We believe all children are important, and from that, we tailor our teaching and learning to the needs of each child to ensure they develop at their own pace, with access to any level of education irrespective of their age.

We offer to all pupils;

- a more flexible approach to education that encompasses and supports all children
- access to a happy, stimulating, secure and safe environment in school that offers all children an equal opportunity to develop their abilities and personalities, helping to unlock their potential
- access to the bank of knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, and values of our broad and balanced curriculum. This fosters a lifelong love of learning in a shared environment where pupils, parents and teachers can effectively work together, enhancing the education provision for all.
- the opportunity for our children to share a healthy respect for personal choice and a clear understanding and acceptance of others and their ideals
- the opportunity to develop a responsible and independent attitude towards learning

Attendance

All pupils are expected to attend school every day that they are able. We appreciate that children are sometimes unwell and unable to attend however we aim for all pupils to have attendance of 96%+. Where pupils are flexi-schooled, this attendance is calculated based on the Agreed Attendance Schedule for that child. Attendance is monitored weekly and where attendance falls below 96% the school will follow the steps outlined in the Attendance Policy and where expected attendance falls below 90% the Flexi-school Partnership Agreement may be revoked.

In order that a child achieves the best attendance possible, we strongly encourage parents to arrange non-urgent dental and medical appointments out of school hours, on flexi-days or during school holidays.

Where unauthorised absence is accrued, for example due to persistent lateness or unauthorised holiday, the Flexi-school Partnership Agreement may be revoked.

Where a child is not yet of school age and has a Flexi-school Partnership Agreement in place, then we will use the attendance code X, which states: *non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school*

In all cases where a child is of school age and flexi-schooling at Redbrook, we will only use the attendance code C, which states: *leave of absence for exceptional circumstances*.

We accept that code C will impact the whole school attendance. However, it will not affect the child or parents as it is regarded as an authorised absence. DfE/Ofsted have indicated that schools offering flexi-schooling would need to demonstrate that the offer was beneficial to the child concerned. In such cases, the school concerned would not be penalised due to lower than expected attendance figures. To support this justification, each child with a Flexi-school Partnership Agreement will be the subject of an individual case study.

Safeguarding & Child Protection.

Use of the C code transfers all legal concerns surrounding safeguarding and child protection issues to the parent/carer when the child or children are away from school in the care of the parents/carer on the designated flexi-schooling days. However, the school continues to maintain a responsibility for all pupils regardless.

In order to fully safeguard our flexi-school pupils to the best of our ability, we require our flexi-schooling families to share evidence of learning/ activities they undertake with their children with the

school via Seesaw or another agreed method regularly and at least once a month and maintain good attendance as set out in this policy and within the Agreed Attendance Schedule.

Where concerns arise, parents/ carers are expected to accept home or third party environment visits from a nominated member of staff. The focus of such visits could be on aspects of the home or third party environment, covering all areas of the educational provision available, through to safeguarding and child protection including any concerns raised.

In all cases, the school will report a concern or disclosures if these became known to school staff following usual practice (See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Where there is found to be safeguarding concerns within a flexi-school family, then the Flexi-school Partnership Agreement may be revoked if agencies involved deem this appropriate.

Attendance Options

We offer three schooling options at Redbrook;

- Formal Option – Full-time regular education within statutory guidelines.
- Flexi-School Option 1 (3 days in school, 2 days home educated)– Flexi-schooled education, where the child attends only on our ‘Core Days’- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, wears our school uniform and joins in with the timetabled opportunities for that day – (X or C code is used dependant of child’s age)
- Flexi-School Option 2 (4 days in school, 1 day home educated) – Flexi-schooled education, where the child attends on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, wears our school uniform and joins in with the timetabled opportunities for that day – (X or C code is used dependant of child’s age)

The DfE deems parents/children who choose to Flexi-school to be responsible for their children’s education. There is no requirement for children to follow the direction of the school when at home, and parents are free to develop their own approach to how education should be delivered.

Introduction, Integration and General Attendance

Initial meeting

We arrange an initial meeting to ensure that the new child/children and parent(s) understand the clear need for a partnership between parents, children, and school.

We recommend to parents that their child or children should attend the school on a trial basis in the first instance before registering. This approach will allow parents, our Headteacher and the class teacher to determine if a Flexi-schooling approach will benefit the child or children concerned. The trial will be for one session on each of the core days, starting with an early morning on day one, a late morning after the midmorning break on day two and an afternoon session from 1pm on day three. Additional time may be considered if deemed necessary. For each session, the parent would need to provide contact details and return to school immediately if so required.

The integration of Flexi-schooled pupils within the school community

If a child is accepted on roll to attend on a flexi-school basis, parents need to be aware that they are fully responsible for the safeguarding and child protection elements relating to their child when away from the school and being Home Educated. This extends to education provided by any 3rd party arranged by the parent/carers/responsible adult. These responsibilities pass to the school when the

child attends regular lessons or attends educational visits organised by the school with our staff present. However, we require our flexi-schooling families to provide assurance of learning/ activities they undertake with their children via Seesaw or another agreed method regularly (at least monthly) as a method of assurance.

Our timetable is organised so that Flexi-schooled children can continue follow-up work after attending what we term the **three 'Core Days' of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**.

All children have access to the full curriculum. In addition, work can be provided for parents to use at home should they so wish through curriculum plans and individualised programmes.

Our Academic day begins with Registration at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm. Within this timeframe, we have the following breaks;

- Morning break – 10.30am to 10.45am
- Dinner - 12.00pm (EYFS & KS1) 12:10pm (KS2) to 1.00pm
- Afternoon break – flexible timing: this 15-minute time slot may vary depending on the lesson.

We are not able to vary start times, as this disrupts lessons already in progress. However, all children are expected to arrive promptly for the start of the morning/afternoon sessions, subject to one-off extenuating situations, i.e. medical appointments, accidents etc. All sickness events require that the parents notify the school.

Lateness is recorded in the same fashion as with formal attendance patterns; parents need to be aware that persistent lateness could lead to the revocation of the Flexi-school arrangement and a requirement to then attend full time; no return to Flexi-schooling will be permitted.

Timetable

Each class teacher knows the children who will attend on a given day, and lessons are planned to accommodate all children.

In all cases, lessons are differentiated so that they can be accessed at different levels, with children encouraged to preview or review the topic at home.

Homework tasks are set as and when teachers feel is appropriate but there will always be a 'pick and mix' style homework set which will be on Tapestry/ Seesaw for the children to access.

We use a range of eLearning products to complement class teaching; this approach is open to all pupils and offers an additional source of learning materials and opportunities.

Liability

For activities beyond the sole care and charge of school staff, the parents/carers of flexi-schooled pupils are fully responsible for their child or children when they are educated at home (or at their chosen offsite venue) and are covered by the use of the C Code when marking the Attendance Register. This also applies even when completing assigned class work at home. The same parental responsibility also covers activities/visits arranged by parents/carers in the same vein.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, we need to see children at least once every ten days to fulfil our Child Protection and Safeguarding obligations. These are agreed upon by a parent/carer

signing our Flexi-school Partnership Agreement (see also our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). As with all children, we have a statutory duty to inform our local Child Protection and Safeguarding officers if any child presents with significant/unusual injuries, discloses any information that requires their involvement, and then to co-operate fully with any investigations or follow up actions they deem necessary.

Flexi-school Partnership Agreement

Parents choosing to Flexi-school their child or children must sign our Flexi-school Partnership Agreement. This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in educating their children. It also focuses on the school's responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection (Please read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Parents need to be aware that by choosing to either Elective Home Educate (EHE) or to Flexi-school their child or children, that they are therefore accepting that they alone are responsible for any future legal redress their child or children may seek.

The agreement also indicates the attendance requirement of the three (3) core days, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. These days/attendance patterns are not negotiable.

A Flexi-school place is offered in the same manner as those for Full-time children, so both Monday and Friday are available in addition to the core days if parents and their children wish to attend, however staff must be given at least 24 hours notice to any change in routine.

It is expected that parents/ carers will share their thoughts and samples of work carried out at home with our staff. This information can then be added to our academic data to support progress information. In addition, parents can request review meetings to discuss progress each term if required.

To ensure that effective integration occurs, we require all Flexi-schooled children to wear the school uniform as worn by all of the other children.

If parents have philosophical or other objections to any form of assessment, a way forward will need to be discussed with the Headteacher that allows the school to meet its statutory obligations to supply assessment data to the DfE, not to mention the difficulty staff will face trying to integrate children into their lesson planning. A failure on the part of prospective parents to agree to this will see the flexi-schooling application being rejected

For those parents who do not object to assessments, regular feedback will be provided regarding their child.

Our eLearning products can allow children to;

- View or read lesson materials and activities
- Be offered additional tasks
- Play interactive games that give the school feedback on their progress across a range of subjects, including:

Mathematics

Phonics

Computing

Parents can:

- access curriculum plans sent via Seesaw/ Tapestry and via the school website
- access work at a suitable level for their child through our website, subscription services and Seesaw
- contribute to their child's assessment through uploading work

In addition to the above, we may offer a range of Education Workshops from time to time so that we can share experience and develop new ideas.

Recommended Reading

We strongly recommend that parents considering Flexi-schooling review and develop an understanding of how our school operates and delivers our offer to them on behalf of their child or children.

The following documents describe how we approach various topics (these are not listed in their level of importance).

- Curriculum Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Flexi-school Partnership Agreement
- Data Protection Policy (including all facets of the GDPR 2018)

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review our flexi-schooling policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology, or changes to the school's physical environment. We will review this policy at least every 2 years. The next review will be due no later than September 2026.

Implementation of this procedure/policy

We aim to manage the implementation of this procedure/policy with the support and guidance of any relevant body and will be subject to review if legislation dictates.

General

This procedure/policy and its guidance will always reflect the present and future needs of all stakeholders, and to support this, we are always open to suggestions for changes and alterations of and to any specific individual provision/requirement to ensure full access to all.