

St Levan Primary School
where all children SHINE-for life
Flexi-Schooling Policy



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At St Levan School we recognise that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in very effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request that our school considers entering into a Flexi-schooling arrangement. We firmly believe that our Flexi-schooling provision can be an arrangement that is beneficial to all.

What is Flexi-schooling

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.

In November 2007 the DCSF 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 head teacher 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.

Therefore there is no statutory curriculum for the home education element of our flexi-schooling arrangement, however we agree and share individual plans for learning on a termly basis to promote opportunities for continuity of learning. Individual learning plans form the key to a successful relationship between the school, pupils and parents. It is important that the class teacher reviews these termly with clear goals agreed by the parents.

Why does St Levan offer Flexi-schooling?

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

Flexi-schooling can expand what we offer to our regular pupils and enhance the opportunities available to continue learning beyond the classroom that is compatible with individual learning needs, views, values and beliefs.

At St Levan we work to unlock each child’s potential by offering equal opportunities to develop their own individual abilities, interest and personalities.

Pupils, parents and teachers can effectively work together, enhancing the education provision for all by providing access to a bank of knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and values of our broad and balanced curriculum. This in turn fosters a lifelong love of learning in a shared, happy, stimulating, secure and safe environment.

Flexi-schooling gives the opportunity for our children to share the positive benefits of different approaches to education delivery and to ensure a healthy respect for personal choice and a clear understanding and acceptance of others and their ideals.

It enables children to develop a responsible and independent attitude towards learning.

St Levan School endeavours to provide access to the tools, new ideas and styles that will ensure children have all the means possible to achieve their potential in terms of academic achievement.

How does Flexi-schooling work at St Levan

- Flexi-schooling is an option for any child in Years 1-4.
- It is typically an arrangement where the child is taught at home regularly, one day a week, usually Friday.
- Each request will be considered on its own merit and the grounds for agreeing a Flexi-schooling place will always be at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
- Each arrangement will last for the duration of the academic year, or shorter, provided that the terms of the agreement are upheld.
- The initial meeting to formalise the flexi-schooling agreement is held at the child's home. This is because the school is required to undertake a risk assessment by Cornwall Council for any child being educated off-site.
- Termly goals and learning targets will be agreed for the flexi-schooling duration with the parent and class teacher.
- The follow-up, termly meetings will be held in school with the class teacher.
- Parents are expected to keep and submit records of learning coverage and for this to be shared with school on a regular basis.

Background

Cornwall Council firmly believes that full time education within a school environment is the best option for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain to their full potential.

Cornwall Council assists our school in the awareness of the legal/statutory regulations needed to be considered and instituted when discussing with parents/carers their request for 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 reflected within this policy.

The initial request must emanate from the parent/carer. The school will not suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling.

How should an application for flexi-schooling at St Levan School be made?

If a parent/carer is interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Head teacher of the school so that the proposal may be considered. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

Parents/carers do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi-schooling arrangement being agreed by our school, it is entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher, acting with the authority of the governing body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement.

Parents agree through signing our Memorandum of Understanding that once a flexi-school application is accepted, our Headteacher will make a home visit to satisfy the basic safeguarding and health and safety requirements set by our Governing body and Cornwall Council.

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 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.

The school has an inclusive approach to education and strives hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents. The school expects parents of Flexi-children to uphold the school's ethos, values, policies and practice. Strong and reciprocal partnership between home and school is key to a successful and sustainable Flexi-schooling arrangement.

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.

What will the Head teacher consider?

Each request will be considered on its own merit.

Each arrangement will last for the duration of the academic year, or shorter provided that the terms of the agreement are upheld.

The Head teacher will take into account the best interests of the child; their potential and ongoing educational progress and achievement; their safety, safeguarding and welfare. Ultimately St Levan School is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off site and an appropriate, quality assured risk assessment at the child's home must be undertaken in advance of any agreement made.

No agreement will be reached or maintained where our Headteacher has concerns that it would put the children at risk of harm while not attending school. Therefore, when agreeing to a flexi-schooling arrangement our school is certifying that the education is supervised and all reasonable and appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

The grounds for agreeing a flexi-schooling place will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher. On application for an initial admission the Headteacher reserves the right to decline a request for a Flexi-schooling place.

The Head teacher will also consider the likely impact on the discipline, morale and organisation of the school and the teaching, learning and outcomes of other children already within the class in question.

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 wishing to be Flexi-schooled.

The appropriateness of the education proposed and maintained by the parents/carers away from school and the continuity of teaching and learning between home and school.

A child on his/her Flexi-school day will be marked using code B on the register. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

The Role of the Governing Body of a School

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

Our Governors must satisfy themselves that the Head teacher has fully considered the conditions for agreeing a Flexi-schooling agreement and that they are fully conversant with the school attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the Head teacher's decision not to agree to a flexi-schooling request or deciding to cease an individual child's flexi-schooling arrangement.

Our agreements with Parents

A written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent/carer in line with the school's flexi-schooling policy in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. It will include:

- The expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed will typically be one term initially thereafter extending to the end of the academic year.
- Flexibility regarding attendance for special events which fall outside of the normal arrangement such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions, sports events, visitors to the school.
- Registration and how the register will be marked.
- Circumstances in which the parents must contact school if the pupil is absent from a Flexi-schooling session.
- The school will require parents to provide the school with an overview of expected learning provision.
- Parents are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress and for this to be shared with school on a regular basis. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that parents keep. The format for the recording is not set by the school but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports and photographs.
- Parents/carer choosing to employ at their own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents/carer will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child.
- The Head teacher will initiate regular planning meetings between parent/carer and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home-school relationships.
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement.
- Confirmation that the school will notify the Local Authority of the Flexi-schooling arrangement and that if it appears that the home educated part of the arrangement is not suitable then both these parties might be involved in resolving any concerns about the child's education.
- Confirmation that the Local Authority will be informed if it appears that the child is not receiving suitable full-time education.
- How any disputes will be resolved.

Procedures for when a child is flexi-schooled

The Admissions department at County Hall will be informed that a parent has approached the school to consider a Flexi-schooling agreement.

If agreed a monthly 'out of school provision' return will be completed and sent to County.

When attending our school on school based days the National Curriculum will be followed.

Marking the Attendance Register

Schools are ultimately responsible for the attainment of every child registered on their roll. Whilst being educated at home, parents are responsible for pupils, not schools.

The DfE (March and August 2013) states that pupils should be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education.

St Levan School will mark a pupil as attending school, using the attendance **Code B** for off-site education activity where the school is satisfied that the following criteria are met:

- That the safety, safeguarding and welfare of the pupil off-site is proficient and in partnership with parents the school has undertaken a risk assessment of the child's home or location[s] for the provision of off-site education
- That the Flexi-schooling activity is taking place during the session for which the mark is recorded and that any absence is being notified to the school and coded accordingly
- If the school is not satisfied that the criteria for using Code B are met an appropriate absence code will be used

These sessions will be included in the number of possible sessions and the absence and attendance figures in the Attainment and Achievement tables.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Contact will be made with the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Provision Team about a potential Flexi-schooling arrangement for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs. A review would be undertaken so that clear information as to the anticipated benefits of Flexi-schooling can be set out and considered by the Local Authority.

The duty to review a child's statement of special educational needs 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 count returns as for other children.

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)

Our school makes no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not. Whatever the degree of attendance, a child will not be an exception to ICSL (sometimes called Key Stage One legislation) solely by being flexi-schooled.

Insurance

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

Liability

For activities beyond the sole care and charge of school staff, the parents/carers of flexi-schooled pupils are responsible for their own children when they are educated at home (or offsite venue), even when completing assigned schoolwork.

Children Educated outside their Chronological Age Group

There is no distinction in the Flexi-school agreement between children who are outside their Chronological Age Group and those who are not.

When the education being provided at home is not suitable

If it appears to our school that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education or not working with the school to uphold its values, policies and practices as agreed between the school and the parent/carer; the school may ask the parent/carer to take remedial action.

If the parent/carer declines to do so or the school is still concerned about the provision of the education at home or adherence to the Flexi-schooling agreement, the school may withdraw its agreement. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis.

A school attendance order would not need to be initiated as the child is on the roll of our school.

If a child fails to return to full-time attendance our school will record the absence unauthorised and refer the case to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) in line with school and County procedures.

Monitor and review

We are aware of the need to review our flexi-schooling policy regularly so that it can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.

Implementation of this procedure/policy

Our school will manage implementation of this procedure/policy with the support and guidance of the Local Authority.

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.

Signed:

Designation: Chair of Governors

Date:

Signed:

Designation: Headteacher

Date:

This procedure/policy to be reviewed by Governors during September 2019

Updated from the Flexi-schooling Policy 2016