



Policy: Flexi Schooling Policy

Policy reference no: 061

Date: September 2024

Person responsible for policy: Stephen Dean, Chief Executive Officer

Authorised by: Board of Trustees

Review date: December 2026

This Policy applies to all schools within the Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust. Primary QuEST is a Church of England Trust which seeks to ensure all pupils flourish, together in a supportive and caring environment.

Flourishing Together Through LIFE

Introduction

Primary Quest Multi Academy Trust recognises that valuable learning occurs both within and outside the school environment. One way in which this might occur is through a flexi- schooling arrangement where statutory education can be delivered part-time at home. Benefits from a flexi-school arrangement might include:

- allowing learning to take place in many environments;
- helping children to adjust to the school environment when starting school;
- supporting children who have previously home schooled back into a school environment;
- recognising the individual needs of SEND children;
- ability to pursue current topic and learning in greater depth or with the lead of the child;
- checking understanding gained at school;
- deepening understanding of how children learn;
- forming a cooperative relationship with the school for the education of a child.

In order for a Primary Quest MAT 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.

This policy should also be read in accordance with the Gloucestershire Local Authority Services for Children with Additional Needs: Education Inclusion Service Information for parents, carers, head teachers and governors regarding flexible attendance at school (flexi-schooling) revised June 2019

Background

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent or carer. Where a parent or carer educates a child partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling.

Flexi-schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents or carers have a legal right to choose to home educate their child, but parents or carers do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi-schooling arrangement being agreed by the school.

Whilst a parent or carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled it is entirely at the discretion of the head teacher of the school, acting with the authority of the Local Advisory Board, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement.

If a parent or carer is interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the head teacher so that the proposal may be considered. Requests can be made by parents or carers of current and prospective pupils. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

What should parents or 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 well for the child.

The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision. The child will be covering either the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (Year R) or the National Curriculum (Y1 to Y6) work set by the teacher on their flexi-school days, so that they keep pace with the work covered by their class.

Parents or carers should be mindful of the possible fragmentation of the child's learning and social experience.

Flexi-schooling is unlikely to succeed if the reasons for choosing it are negative and the choice is motivated by a desire to 'cherry pick' certain activities only or aimed at avoiding difficulties around certain subjects, teachers, peers, aspects of school discipline or attendance itself. 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. The school expects parents of flexi-schooled children to uphold the school and MAT's ethos, values, policies and practice. Strong and reciprocal partnership between home and school is key to a successful and sustainable flexi-schooling arrangement.

Considerations following flexi-school requests

Considerations that the head teacher will make when deciding whether to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement:

- All applications will be judged on their own merit.
- The grounds for agreeing a flexi-schooling place will always be at the discretion of the head teacher.
- Safeguarding and welfare of the child is of paramount importance and so any decisions should be taken with any known and existing safeguarding concerns in mind. It is the parents responsibility to ensure the adequacy of safeguarding arrangements if a child attends another setting on a flexi-school day. However, the head teacher should take action in response to any concerns that arise.
- No agreement will be reached or maintained where the head teacher has concerns that it would put the child at risk of harm while not attending at our school. Therefore, when agreeing to flexi-schooling arrangement the school is agreeing that the education is supervised and all reasonable and appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.
- On application for an initial admission, the head teacher reserves the right to decline a request for a flexi-schooling place.
- Grounds for declining a place could be that adding to the number of children attending on a flexi-basis would create an imbalance and be detrimental to teaching, learning and the outcomes of other children already within the class in question. In such circumstances a full time place will be offered on proviso that a place is available within the class.
- 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 will be carefully considered.
- The appropriateness of the environment proposed and maintained by the parents or carers away from the school will be discussed.
- Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full time education provision.

- The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school.
- The effect on the school organisation and funding.
- The effect on school resources.
- The impact on overall school attainment, progress and attendance figures.
- This is to be a short-term need within a longer term plan to return to full-time in school education.

The role and responsibility of the Local Advisory Board (LAB) in relation to flexi- schooling

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

LAB members 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 schools attendance statutory guidance when reaching a decision.

LAB members will also monitor progress of flexi-schooled children to ensure that good progress is being made. This will be reviewed regularly through Local Advisory Board meetings.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the decision of the head teacher not to agree to a flexi- schooling request or if our head teacher decides to cease an individual child's Flexi-schooling arrangement. If parents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the process and cannot resolve this with the head teacher, they should follow the school's complaints procedure.

Our agreement with parents

A written and signed agreement is formulated between the individual school and parent or carer, in order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement is formalised in line with Primary Quest's flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The expected pattern of attendance at school and the reasons for this pattern. Normally, this should not equate to more than one day per week being educated at home.
- The flexi school arrangement will be reviewed after one term, and regularly each term to confirm that both parties are happy with the agreement; both parties reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement at any time.
- Flexibility regarding attendance for special events which fall outside of the normal arrangement such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.
- Flexi-schooled children may attend school on days usually reserved for flexi-schooling with 24 hours notice.
- Registration. How the register will be marked (please see Primary QuEST Attendance policy).
- That the parents or carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session during which they would normally be flexi-schooled (e.g. if they are unwell). This enables the school to correctly code the absence for that session.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence as it would for other children.
- On days when he or she does not attend school, parents or carers will ensure that they follow curriculum objectives and outcomes shared by the class teacher in order to ensure that the child continues to access the school's broad and balanced curriculum and key learning objectives. Parents or carers are expected to help their child work towards these outcomes on flexi-school days.
- Parents are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress in the off-site element of the agreement. Learning progress should be recorded and shared with school on a regular basis through the home/school book. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording of a pupils work and outcomes is not set by the MAT, but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports and annotated photographs. This can be written or online evidence. In addition, the school may provide

the parents or carers with a copy of the school's feedback policy for reference. Parents or carers will ensure that learning completed at home during the flexi-schooling day is shared with the class teacher on a weekly basis to support feedback to the child and facilitate discussions regarding next steps for learning.

- The school may provide a home/school book to record termly and weekly learning as above, including next steps.
- The school will monitor the progress of all flexi-schooled children at an individual level and reserve the right to withdraw the arrangement if the child's progress is adversely affected by the flexi schooling arrangement.
- Parents or carers choosing to employ at their own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents or carer will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child by requesting confirmation of their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision will be clearly discussed and supported by the school. For children who have special educational needs, the regular review of each flexi-schooling agreement will include consideration of whether flexi-schooling will continue to meet the child's individual education needs.
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parent or 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.
- How any disputes will be resolved.

Assessment

It is the expectation of the school that flexi-schooled children will be assessed at key points along with their peers. For example, end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage Two statutory assessments.

Procedures when a child is flexi-schooled

For children new to the school:

When attending our schools on school based days the EYFS framework or National Curriculum will be followed as if the child were attending full-time.

The requirement to follow the EYFS framework or the National Curriculum will apply to all children except:

- Temporarily, due to exceptional circumstances such as prolonged absence from school on health grounds or family crisis.
- As a part of an Education Health and Care Plan which stipulate alternative provision.
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period.

Children should be recorded as absent when not in school. The C code (authorised absence) should be used. Some schools have expressed concern that such absence may have a detrimental effect for the purpose of Ofsted inspection, but this is not the case (para10.8, DfE Guidance for LAs on Elective Home Education).

In line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education issued in April 2019, on the days the child is being educated by the parent outside of school, the school should not use the B code as this would mean that the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education and will ensure the safety and welfare of the child when off site; C code would be the most appropriate code to use.

Flexi-schooling children may receive home visits to review provision and supplement risk assessment.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

There is no distinction between children who are to be flexi-schooled and those who are not. The duty to review a child's Education, Health and Care Plan 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)

Primary Quest MAT 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.

Children educated outside their chronological age-group

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

When the education being provided at home is not suitable

If it appears that parents or 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 or carer; the school may ask the parent or carer to take remedial action. If the parent or 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 one of our schools. If a child fails to return to full-time attendance, the school will record the absence as unauthorised and refer the case to the Education Inclusion Specialist support service (EISSS) in line with school and Local Authority procedures.

Policy updates

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 physical environment of the school.

The flexi-school policy will be reviewed every two years.

Primary Quest will manage implementation of this policy.



Primary Quest Flexi School Agreement with Parents

A written and signed agreement is formulated between the school and parent or carer, to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement is formalised in line with the Primary Quest flexi-schooling policy. Please read, date and sign.

Name of child:

Statements	Tick				
<p>The expected pattern of attendance at school and the reasons for this pattern. - not equate to more than one day per week being educated at home. The pattern is: School attendance days - Flexi school day -</p>					
<p>The flexi school arrangement will be reviewed after one term, and regularly each term to confirm that both parties are happy with the agreement; both parties reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement at any time.</p>					
<p>Flexi-schooled children may attend school on days usually reserved for flexi-schooling with 24 hours' notice.</p>					
<p>The register will be marked with a code C on flexi days unless a child is ill</p>					
<p>Parents should contact the school office if their child is ill on flexi days</p>					
<p>Parents or carers will ensure that they follow curriculum objectives and outcomes shared by the class teacher to ensure that the child continues to access the school's broad and balanced curriculum and key learning objectives. Parents or carers are expected to help their child work towards these outcomes on flexi-school days.</p>					
<p>Parents are expected to keep records of learning coverage and their child's progress in the off-site element of the agreement. Learning progress should be recorded and shared with school on a regular basis. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording of a pupils works and outcomes is not set by the school but could take the form of journal keeping including children's writing, parental observations, reports, and annotated photographs. This can be written or online evidence.</p>					
<p>The school will provide a two-way communication (e.g. Class Dojo, Tapestry)</p>					
<p>The school will provide the parents or carers with a copy of the school's feedback policy for reference.</p>					
<p>Parents or carers will ensure that learning completed at home during the flexi-schooling day is shared with the class teacher by the agreed procedure.</p>					
<p>The school will monitor the progress of all flexi-schooled children at an individual level and reserve the right to withdraw the arrangement if the child's progress is adversely affected by the flexi-schooling arrangement.</p>					
<p>Parents or carers choosing to employ at their/ his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home and that the parents or carers will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to the child by requesting confirmation of their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.</p>					
<p>Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision will be clearly discussed and supported by the school. For children who have special educational needs, the regular review of each flexi-schooling agreement will include consideration of whether flexi-schooling will continue to meet the child's needs.</p>					
<p>There will be regular feedback between parent or carer and school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to promote good home-school relationships.</p>					
<p>The flexi schooling agreement will be reviewed termly – autumn, spring and summer and can be ended by either party with ½ terms notice. It will also be reviewed at the end of an academic year as teaching styles and content vary greatly between key stages and year groups.</p>					
<p>Any disputes will first be dealt with at an informal level between class teacher and parents – if this cannot be resolved, the head teacher will be involved and finally the Local Advisory Board, following the complaints procedure protocol. We aim to keep things friendly and encourage regular communication.</p>					
<p>We agree to the terms of the flexi schooling agreement:</p>					
Date	Parent / Carer	Parent / Carer	Head teacher	Class Teacher	Chair of LAB