



# Colby School

## Flexi-schooling Policy

Norfolk Local Authority 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.

Colby School recognises that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child 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. 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.

Norfolk Local Authority guidance forms the basis of our school policy intended to:

clearly establish the statutory arrangements for full-time education,

assist a parent/carer considering whether to request that the education of their statutory age child is partly at this school and the remainder elsewhere,

assist our school in our responses to parents/carers who request a flexi-school place for their child

promote awareness of the legal/statutory regulations needed to be considered and instituted when discussing with parents/carers their request for flexi-schooling

## **Background**

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent/carer. 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 Headteacher 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. Local Authorities should make sure that Headteachers are made familiar with flexi-schooling and how it may work in practice. A parent/carer may request flexi-schooling on a long-term basis where he or she favours this form of education.

## **How should an application for flexi-schooling be made?**

Flexi schooling must not be confused with elective home education. Parents/carers have a legal right to choose to home educate their child but parents/carers do not have a legal right to insist on a flexi-schooling arrangement being agreed by our school. Whilst a parent/carer may request that their child is flexi-schooled it is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting with the authority of the Governing Body, as to whether or not the school is prepared to agree to a flexi-schooling arrangement. If a parent/carer is interested in making a request for a flexi-schooling arrangement, contact must be made directly with the Headteacher so that the proposal may be considered. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and within its individual context.

### **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.

### **Number of days per week school based attendance**

It is a requirement of Colby School that flexi-schooling children attend for a minimum of three full days per week. Colby School has an inclusive approach to education and strives hard to work with the wishes and choices of all parents. We expect parents of flexi-schooled 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. The Headteacher will consider all requests on their own merits, taking into account the best interests of the child; their potential and ongoing educational progress and achievement; their safety, safeguarding and welfare.

### **Safeguarding and welfare**

Ultimately Colby School is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off site and an appropriate, quality assured risk assessment must be undertaken in advance of any agreement made. No agreement will be reached or maintained where the Headteacher has concerns that it would put the child at risk of harm while not attending school. Therefore, when agreeing to flexi-schooling arrangements our school is certifying that the education is supervised and all reasonable and appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

### **Decisions regarding flexi-schooling**

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. Grounds for declining a place could be that adding to the amount of children attending on a flexi-basis would create an imbalance in the class in question and be detrimental to teaching and learning and/or the outcomes of other children already in school. In such circumstances a full time place will be offered in line with the Local Authority admissions policy.

### **Attendance Codes**

When pupils are being flexi-schooled at home, we are obliged to record attendance as code C (authorised other) when they are working off-site. This has an impact on our attendance data for the school as a whole and also for each individual child.

On occasion, we can code flexi-schooling as code B (off-site educational activity) but this can only be used when children are attending a recognised educational activity elsewhere. This will not impact on the child's attendance data. We require parents to inform us on each flexi-day as to whether their child is working or ill so that we can amend the codes in our registers as necessary. When an absence occurs on days when the child is due to attend school, we will follow up the absence in line with the school Attendance Policy.

## **The Role of the Governing Board**

The Governing Board 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 Headteacher 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 decision of the Headteacher to decline a flexi-schooling request or indeed if they decide to cease an individual child's flexi-schooling arrangement.

Other points to consider:

- 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.
- Registration. How the register will be marked.
- That the parents/carers must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activity.
- 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, the child need not follow the National Curriculum. However, the school will require parents to provide the school with an overview of expected learning provision.
- Children's time at home should not be used to pursue activities which other children might be expected to take up outside of school e.g. swimming lessons, unless agreed with school.
- Parents/Carers 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.
- Parents/carers choosing to employ at their/ his or her 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.
- Any variation in the child's normal days in school must be confirmed with the Headteacher.

Christine Mead

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