



# St Thomas à Becket Primary School

*With faith and nurture we flourish*

## Ethos Statement



**Friendship | Respect | Truth | Forgiveness | Thankfulness | Perseverance**

Mark 4:31-32 *"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."*

At St Thomas à Becket Church of England Primary School we believe that every child has the right to achieve, within a caring, happy environment based on Christian values where every member of our community is shown respect.

## **Flexi-school Policy**

<b>Statutory Policy</b>	Non-statutory
Policy agreed	June 2022
Policy published	June 2022
Next review date (FGB to determine)	June 2023
Approved by	FGB
(can be delegated to committee, individual governor or head teacher)	Headteacher

## **Background**

The Education Act 1996 states that a parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Some parents/carers choose to provide full-time education for their children otherwise than at school. This is Elective Home Education. However, within the law, parents/carers are able to request an arrangement where the child is on roll at school and attending flexibly (part-time) as well as having educational provision at home which is sourced by the parent/carer. Head teachers are required to consider any request for such an arrangement and agree any arrangement at their discretion.

A flexi-schooling arrangement is agreed between schools and parents/carers. It is an arrangement requested by parents/carers and should not be suggested or initiated by schools. The DfE guidance April 2019 for Elective Home Education provides the information in regard to flexi-schooling:

*'Although most children educated at home have all the provision made at home, or alternatively partly at home and partly in other ways such as attendance at privately-run part-time tuition settings, it is not essential that this be so. Some children who are educated at home most of the time are also registered at school and attend school for part of the week. The purpose of this is usually to ensure the provision in specific subjects is satisfactory, although it can also help in other ways such as socialisation. If a child is of compulsory school age he or she must, overall, be receiving full - time education even if components of it are part-time'.*

Flexi-schooling is not Elective Home Education and it is not alternative provision. Flexi-schooling is not used as a term to describe any part-time attendance arrangements put in place to support a child back into full-time education such as periods of Reduced Educational Provision (REP) or Positive Return to Education Plan (PREP) processes.

The DfE guidance April 2019 on Elective Home Education is clear that schools are not obliged to accept a parental request for a flexi-schooling arrangement. Any decision on whether to enter into a flexi-schooling arrangement will be made by the Headteacher and the Headteacher or parents/carers can withdraw the agreement at any time.

## **Consideration for a Flexi-School Agreement**

The education provided at home and school should constitute a full-time suitable education provision. A formal agreement will be in place with regards to the areas of the curriculum that will be covered at home, with support given from school as necessary.

Flexi-schooling is less likely to be successful if the reason for it is related to avoiding difficulties such as behaviour matters, certain subject areas or poor attendance. The school

and families will work together and explore other avenues of support where this may be the case.

School and families will work together in any flexi-schooling arrangement to ensure that the child does not experience any social exclusion as a result of reduced attendance at school and that the child is able to maintain strong relationships with their peer group.

There is no opt-out for schools regarding the National Curriculum delivery where a flexi-schooling arrangement is in place. The child cannot be dis-applied from the statutory curriculum or assessment arrangements because flexible attendance has been agreed. Schools remain accountable for pupil progress and performance.<sup>3</sup>

St Thomas a Becket CE VA Primary School recognise that each family has a unique set of circumstances and that learning outside of the school environment may be beneficial to their children and the family as a whole.

When considering the suitability of a flexi-school agreement, the Headteacher will consider the following:

- 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. Ultimately our school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site and an appropriate risk assessment may be undertaken in advance of any agreement made.
- No agreement will be reached or maintained where the Headteacher has concerns that would put the child at risk of harm while not attending at school.
- On application for an initial admission the Headteacher reserves the right to decline a request for a flexi-schooling place. This may change at a later date.
- 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.
- The appropriateness of the environment proposed and maintained by the parents/carers away from the school.
- Flexi-schooling education provided at home and that provided at school must together constitute a full time education provision.
- The effect on behaviour and the morale and motivation of other children on roll at the school.
- The impact on the school organisation.
- The impact on school resources.
- The impact on overall school attainment and progress figures.
- The impact on staff workload.

### **Flexi-schooling for pupils with EHCP**

Where a pupil has an EHCP the school should discuss the request for a flexi-schooling arrangement with the pupils SEND lead worker. If flexi-schooling is agreed then this will need to be reflected in the EHCP.

### **Recording flexi-schooling in the register**

Pupils who have a flexi-schooling arrangement must be recorded as authorised absence for the sessions that it is agreed they will be receiving their education under arrangements made by parents/carers. The accepted code for this 'C' - absent due to other authorised circumstances.

School will not record that the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity as the school does not have any supervisory responsibility for the child's education whilst at home and neither does the school have accountability for the welfare of the child at these times.

### **Flexi-schooling agreements**

Where school agrees a flexi-schooling arrangement there will be a written agreement in place which clearly defines responsibilities, expectations and education arrangements (Appendix A). Parents/carers will be required to agree and sign this before any arrangement begins.

Regular reviews will be held between the school and families, starting with fortnightly before moving to monthly as a minimum. This is order to assess the effectiveness of the agreement, check on any potential social integration issues and agree the suitability of the agreement before the next review date.

If an agreement is denied by the Headteacher and the parents/carers would like to challenge this, they can do so in writing to the Chair of Governors and a panel will be arranged to hear the challenge.

### **Monitoring flexi-schooling**

There is no statutory duty placed on either the school or the local authority to monitor the quality of home education.

If school is concerned about the home education element of flexi-schooling then they will raise this with the parents/carers at one of the regular review meetings. If school remains concerned about the education provision being made by parents/carer then they can withdraw their agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement and the pupil will be expected to attend school full-time.

## Appendix A- model agreement

### St Thomas a Becket CE VA Primary School Flexi-school Agreement

#### **Overview**

Name: (the child)

School: St Thomas a Becket CE VA Primary School (the school)

This agreement has been created in line with Wiltshire Local Education Authority guidance (November 2021). Each agreement is at the discretion of the Headteacher and there are no grounds to appeal the Headteacher's decision.

The school is responsible for the education of the above named child on the days set out in this agreement. The educational provision will be suitable to the above named child's age; aptitude and ability as set out in Section 7 of the Educational Act 1996.

As the below named responsible adult(s) - I / we accept that whilst the above named child is in the care of the school that the school is acting in 'loco parentis', giving the school primary responsibility for their safety and welfare during this time. Whilst away from school and in the care of the parent, or parent's nominated carer, the parent is responsible for all matters that relate to Health, Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The school and parent / carer will have the opportunity to meet at least once every term to review your child's progress and review the attendance agreement if required.

Statements of Educational Need If the school determines that a child registered for Flexi-schooling requires a Statement of Educational Need or EHCP, this will be brought to the attention of the Parent(s) / Carer(s) with a view to making the best provision possible. In the event of determining that a Statement of Educational Need or EHCP is required, this Flexi-schooling arrangement will cease, and the named child will be required to attend school on a full time basis so that the school can fulfil our Statutory Duty.

The school can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing, appropriate to the circumstances, but no greater than one school term.

#### **Attendance**

The child will attend school on the following days:

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The child will be educated at home on the following "flexi-school" days:

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When attending school it is important that your child:

- Arrives by no later than 8.50am for registration
- You contact the school if b – this contact can be email, telephone or in person if the child cannot attend on either school days or flexi-school days.
- The child is more than welcome to attend for more days - please give at least 48 hours notice to ensure correct resourcing is available.
- On flexi-school days, the register will be marked “C”- authorised absence.

For some special events which fall on flexi-school days, such as, but not limited to, assemblies, school trips, school productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school, flexi-school children will be requested to be in school.

The school reserves the right to withdraw flexi-schooling at certain times e.g. the start of a school year/term. Additional benefits include greater integration and acceptance with their peers, which translates into your child being an active participant in school life.

The child’s education will be split between home and school as set out in the above timetable. This timetable may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the Headteacher and Parent(s) / Carer(s). All elements of this document are subject to Ofsted / DfE guidance and Statutory Duty, along with all future UK and European Law.

## **Curriculum**

At school, the child will follow the planned activities in line with the school curriculum which goes beyond the offer as set out in the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

When the child is at home, the school will work with the parents / carers to provide support where required for the delivery of education at home. The agreed areas the school wish to be covered at home are (education at home is not limited to these):

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There is no statutory obligation on the school or Wiltshire Local Education Authority to monitor the provision of a flexi-schooling agreement. However, the school are committed to working with every family, in their unique circumstances, to provide the best holistic education for the child.

## **Assessments**

There is no option for the child to be dis-applied from statutory tests and will be entered for all Statutory testing. This includes:

- RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment)
- Year 1 Phonics Screen Check
- End of Key Stage 1 Assessments (SATs)
- Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check
- End of Key Stage 2 Assessments (SATs)

**Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the parent / carer:

- To ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives efficient, full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude.
- To ensure anyone used for educational purposes during flexi-school days is suitable to work with children.
- To carry out this agreement in conjunction with the school.
- To engage in review meetings with the school at least once termly and understand that the school reserves the right to cancel the agreement.

**Monitoring**

The school will make arrangements for formal review at the end of each term, however there may be cases where review meetings need to be more frequent- such as poor attendance or at the beginning of a new flexi-school arrangement.

Parents / carers reserve the right at any time to request termination of the flexi-school arrangements and for their child to return to full time education in school.

Signed.....

Printed name.....

Date of next review.....