



HILLINGDON
LONDON

FLEXI-SCHOOLING

London Borough of Hillingdon Policy
April 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where a child is registered at a school but attends part-time, with the remainder of their education provided at home.

1.2 The purpose of flexi-schooling is to provide a flexible approach to education, allowing children to benefit from both school and home learning environments and aims to cater to the unique needs of each child.

1.3 The London Borough of Hillingdon is committed to ensuring that flexi-schooling is a viable and effective option for families seeking a more tailored approach to education.

1.4 This policy outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and guidelines for implementing flexi-schooling within Hillingdon Local Authority and seeks to promote effective information sharing between parents, schools and the local authority to ensure all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

2. What is Flexi-Schooling?

2.1 Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education nor the temporary reduced timetable arrangements a school may put in place in exceptional cases to support a child's reintegration back into school.

2.2 Parents or carers who request flexi-attendance are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve both attendance at school and times when the child will receive educational provision at home. Flexi-schooling is full-time, although the provision may be split.

2.3 Flexi-schooling is also different from a part-time timetable arrangement. Such arrangements are monitored and reviewed with the intention the child be returned to full-time attendance as soon as possible.

2.4 Arrangements for flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. This is not an arrangement that can be initiated by the school.

2.5 Headteachers can refuse to agree to flexi-schooling requests and there is no right of appeal against the decision.

2.6 Reasons for Choosing Flexi-Schooling:

- **Managing Health Conditions:** For children with chronic illnesses or health conditions that make full-time school attendance challenging, flexi-schooling can provide a more manageable educational approach.
- **Combining Specialised Education:** Some families choose flexi-schooling to benefit from specialised subjects or resources available at school while supplementing with tailored home education in other areas.
- **Addressing School Anxiety:** Flexi-schooling can serve as a gentle approach for children experiencing school phobia or refusal, allowing for a gradual reintegration into the school environment.
- **Nurturing Talents and Interests:** This model can provide additional time for children to develop special talents or engage in extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, or arts, which may require intensive training or practice.
- **Facilitating Transitions:** Flexi-schooling can be an effective way to ease children back into formal education following an extended absence, such as due to illness or family circumstances.
- **Cultural or Religious Considerations:** Some families may choose flexi-schooling to incorporate cultural or religious education that may not be fully addressed in a traditional school setting.

Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it serves to highlight some of the reasons parents may consider flexi-schooling is a good option for their child's education. More detailed examples can be found in Appendix A.

3. The law relating to Flexi-Schooling

3.1 Flexi-schooling is a legal option but not a legal right. Parents must come to an agreement with the headteacher of their child's school, and the decision is at the discretion of the headteacher.

3.2 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the guidance for flexi-schooling, stating that the education provided should be suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

3.3 The Department for Education guidance states: *Although children being home-educated are not normally registered at any school, parents sometimes choose to make arrangements for a child to receive part of the total provision at a school - the purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Such arrangements are sometimes known as 'flexi-schooling'. Schools are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are happy to do so. When a child is flexi-schooled, the parents must still ensure that the child receives a suitable full-time education but the element received at school must be taken into account in considering whether that duty is met.*

3.4 Important information which underpins this policy:

National

- [Education Act 1996 \(section 7\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002 \(section 175\)](#)
- [Elective Home Education statutory guidance 2019](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)
- [Children Missing From Education statutory guidance 2024](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.](#)

Hillingdon Council

- Hillingdon's Elective Home Education Policy 2026
- Hillingdon's Children Missing Education Policy 2026
- Hillingdon's Part-time Timetable guidance 2025 - 26
- Hillingdon's Attendance Support guidance 2025 - 26
- Hillingdon guidance on School Attendance Coding 2025 - 26

4. Considerations for Flexi-Schooling

4.1 The decision to undertake flexi-schooling should only be considered if there are positive reasons for doing it. All parties must agree that such an arrangement is in the best interests of the child.

4.2 Flexi-schooling is unlikely to be successful if the reasons for choosing it are negative, and the choice is motivated by the desire to avoid:

- difficulties around certain subjects
- teachers
- peers
- aspects of school discipline or attendance itself

4.3 Parents or carers must be confident they can meet the child's educational needs. Schools must be mindful that, if arrangements are agreed, the school will retain the responsibility for the child's progress and any absences incurred because of the decision to participate in a flexi-schooling arrangement.

4.4 Aside from the impact a flexi-schooling arrangement will have on a school's overall absence levels, the implications of agreeing on partial educational provision at home are significant both in terms of expertise and resources and in the commitment to make a shared provision work.

4.5 The education provided at home and school should, together, constitute a full-time, suitable education. Whilst there is no statutory curriculum for the home education part of a flexi-schooling arrangement, parents or carers will need to be mindful of the impact on the child's access to the school (or Academy) curriculum and the possible fragmentation of the learning experience.

4.6 Flexi-schooling should not be seen as a means of opting out of an element of the curriculum with which a child, for whatever reason, is uncomfortable. The child cannot be dis-applied from the statutory curriculum or assessment arrangements simply because flexible attendance has been agreed upon.

4.7 When the curriculum is delivered through cross-curricular activities, arrangements made with the parent or carer would need to protect the cohesion of the child's experience. There may be resource implications as effective co-ordination will require time and the school may need to provide materials so that learning can keep pace with that of other children, but they are under no obligation to do so.

4.8 Hillingdon Council advises headteachers to consider the following when making their decision as to whether flexi-schooling arrangements should be agreed:

- Safeguarding and welfare of the child are of paramount importance; therefore, a thorough risk assessment should be undertaken before any agreement is reached about flexi-schooling arrangements. Where there are concerns the child may be at risk of harm while not in school, flexi-schooling arrangements should not be agreed.
- Where the child falls within a vulnerable category, consideration should be given to consulting the relevant teams and services.
- The child's current and anticipated levels of educational attainment.
- Arrangements for monitoring the child's progress.

- How the home and school elements of proposed education will interlink to constitute a full-time education.
- The additional demands and workload to teaching and administrative staff.
- The effect on school discipline and the morale and motivation of other pupils.
- How any possible impacts on attendance recording and overall school attainment/progress figures will be managed.

4.9 Hillingdon Council requests that schools give due consideration to pupils who fall within particular vulnerable categories before agreeing to flexi-schooling arrangements. This includes, but is not exclusive, to:

- Cared for Children
- Children subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

4.10 Where a request for flexi-schooling has been made for a child who falls into any of the categories set out above, the school must consult with Hillingdon's Children's Social Care, Hillingdon Virtual School or Hillingdon's EHC team, as appropriate. Contact should be made directly with the child's allocated social worker (if known to Social Care), the child's allocated Virtual School Officer (if they are a Cared for Child) or the child's allocated EHC Coordinator if they have an EHCP.

4.11 It is important to note that 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 continue to receive full-time funding. Flexi-schooled children are included in count returns as for other children. Schools are not obliged to pass on funding to parents; however, they may contribute to the cost of any education provision taking place within the home.

5. Requesting Flexi-Schooling

5.1 If a parent or carer is interested in making a flexi-schooling request, the headteacher of the child's actual or prospective school should be contacted. They will consider the proposal and decide on whether to approve the request.

5.2 The governing body may be involved in agreeing and reviewing a general approach to requests for flexi-schooling, but this does not exempt the headteacher from the need to consider each request individually. The whole governing body should not become involved in individual cases and cannot overturn a headteacher's decision.

5.3 Children who attend part-time under a flexi-schooling arrangement will be subject to the same admissions processes as other children and are counted in the same way as a child who attends full-time for the purposes of infant class size regulations.

5.4 In all cases where flexi-schooling is agreed, it is recommended the school has a written agreement with the parents/carers so that expectations and arrangements are clear for both parties.

5.5 Such an agreement is likely to include:

- the normal expected pattern of attendance at school
- the rationale for why the flexi-schooling arrangement is in the best interests of the pupil concerned
- procedures for flexibility around special events which fall outside the normal arrangement
- how the register will be marked
- that the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained absence in the same way as it does for other children
- arrangements at times of assessment
- agreement that if the parent/carers chooses to employ other people to educate their child at home, they will be responsible for making sure that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children and will be responsible for meeting all costs related to this decision
- agreement on who will meet the cost of exam entries. These are the responsibility of the parent, but the school may choose to support with some or all the costs
- details of any special educational needs and associated provision
- arrangements for regular planning and review meetings between parent/carers and school to ensure the child achieves his/her potential and to promote good home/school relationships
- clarity about the circumstances under which and with what notice either party can withdraw from the arrangement
- the arrangements for the resolution of any disputes.

5.6 An example of a home-school contract for a flexi-schooling arrangement can be found in Appendix B.

5.7 Once an agreement for flexi-schooling has been reached, a copy of the agreement should be shared with the school's allocated Attendance Support Officer and the Elective Home

Education team from Hillingdon Council. This is for notification purposes only and does not represent a referral of any kind.

5.8 Following receipt of the notification, the school may be contacted by the allocated Attendance Support Officer around the proposed end date the flexi-schooling arrangement to confirm whether the child has returned to full time education. The school can also provide an update to the Attendance Support team at any point during the course of the flexi-schooling arrangement to advise of any changes/extensions to the arrangement.

6. Responsibilities regarding Flexi-Schooling

Parents/Carers

6.1 Parents/carers play a crucial role in the success of a flexi-schooling arrangement. Their responsibilities include:

- **Educational Provision:** Ensure that the home education provided is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.
- **Health and Safety:** Take full responsibility for the child's safety, health, and welfare when they are not on school premises.
- **Attendance:** Ensure the child attends school on the agreed days and inform the school of any absences.
- **Communication:** Maintain open and regular communication with the school, including attending review meetings and providing updates on the child's progress.
- **Costs:** Bear any costs associated with the child's education while they are being home-schooled.
- **Compliance:** Adhere to the terms of the flexi-schooling agreement, including any requirements for assessments and reviews.

Schools

6.2 Schools also have a significant role in ensuring the success of a flexi-schooling arrangement. Their responsibilities include:

- **Agreement and Documentation:** Ensure that a formal agreement is in place, detailing the flexi-schooling arrangement, including the pattern of attendance, educational provision, and review schedules.
- **Monitoring and Assessment:** Regularly monitor the child's progress, maintain records of attendance and attainment, and conduct assessments as needed.
- **Safeguarding:** Conduct thorough risk assessments and ensure that safeguarding measures are in place to protect the child's welfare.
- **Communication:** Maintain regular communication with parents/carers, including scheduling review meetings to discuss the child's progress and any necessary adjustments to the arrangement.
- **Support and Resources:** Provide support and resources to parents/carers to facilitate the home education component, including guidance on curriculum and educational materials.
- **Attendance Recording:** Accurately record the child's attendance, marking days not attended as 'C' (authorised absence) and ensuring compliance with attendance regulations.
- **Review and Termination:** Conduct regular reviews of the flexi-schooling arrangement and provide notice if the arrangement needs to be terminated due to non-compliance or concerns about the child's education.

7. Recording and monitoring Flexi-Schooling

7.1 It is not appropriate for schools to mark the register as “approved off-site activity” for the time the pupil is being flexi-schooled as the school has no supervisory role in the child's education at such times and has no responsibility for the welfare of the child while he or she is at home.

7.2 Any sessions where the pupil is receiving education at home will be recorded as 'authorised absences' within the school's register. This will have a negative impact on the overall absence levels of the school in question.

7.3 The code schools are required to enter into their register for any such sessions is the 'C' code which reflects that the pupil is absent due to 'other authorised circumstances'. In other words, the flexi-schooling arrangement has permitted the pupil to be absent from school.

7.4 Schools may be concerned that the use of the 'C' code as an 'authorised absence' will have a detrimental effect on Ofsted inspections. Schools will be required to provide a clear narrative behind weaker attendance data when using the 'C' code.

7.5 Schools that have flexi-schooled pupils should be ready to discuss with Ofsted inspectors the arrangements they have in place to deal with the requirements of these pupils. Schools are held to account through inspection for the performance of pupils and that will include any who attend the school as part of a programme of flexi-schooling.

7.6 It is important to note that neither the LA nor the school has a statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education provided as part of a flexi-schooling arrangement on a routine basis.

7.7 If it appears to the school that parents or carers are not providing a suitable education as agreed, 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 education at home, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement. The child would then be required to return to school full-time. The school should also seek the advice of their Attendance Support Officer when concerns arise, as well as the Elective Home Education Officer, allocated social worker, Virtual School Officer or Education, Health and Care Officer, as appropriate.

8. Reviewing policies and procedures

8.1 Hillingdon Council will regularly review its guidance on flexi-schooling so we can reflect current law and local circumstances, as well as ensuring compatibility with the published Department of Education's guidance.

8.2 Review, version control and evaluation of this policy will be undertaken by senior management. A full review will be held every two years or more frequently considering future legislative changes.

Date of last review: April 2026

Version control review: N/A

Date of next full review: April 2028

9. Appendix A: Flexi-Schooling examples

Example 1: Supporting a Child with Special Talents

Background: A child with exceptional talent in music required time during the school week to attend specialised music lessons and practice sessions. The parents requested a flexi-schooling arrangement to balance formal education with the child's musical development.

Arrangement:

- **School Attendance:** The child attended school three days a week, focusing on core subjects such as English, Maths, and Science.
- **Home Education:** On the remaining two days, the child received music lessons and practised at home. The parents ensured that the child also covered other subjects to maintain a balanced education.
- **Monitoring:** The school and parents held regular meetings to review the child's progress in both school and music. The child's achievements in music were celebrated alongside academic progress.

Example 2: Reintegration After Illness

Background: A child recovering from a long-term illness needed a gradual reintegration into school to avoid overwhelming them. The parents and school agreed on a flexi-schooling arrangement to support the child's health and education.

Arrangement:

- **School Attendance:** The child started by attending school for half-days, gradually increasing to full days over several months.
- **Home Education:** During the afternoons, the child received home education tailored to their pace and health needs. The parents coordinated with the school to ensure continuity in learning.
- **Monitoring:** The school nurse and teachers closely monitored the child's health and academic progress. Regular meetings were held to adjust the timetable as needed.

Example 3: Addressing School Phobia

Background: A child experiencing school phobia benefited from a flexi-schooling arrangement to reduce anxiety and build confidence in the school environment.

Arrangement:

- **School Attendance:** The child attended school for specific subjects and activities they enjoyed, such as art and physical education, which helped build positive associations with school.
- **Home Education:** The parents provided home education for other subjects, gradually increasing the child's time at school as their confidence grew.

- **Monitoring:** The school counsellor and teachers worked with the parents to support the child's emotional well-being and academic progress. The arrangement was reviewed regularly to ensure it met the child's needs.

Example 4: Balancing Education and Elite Sports Training

Background: A child with a promising career in sports required time for elite coaching and competitions. The parents requested a flexi-schooling arrangement to balance education and sports training.

Arrangement:

- **School Attendance:** The child attended school for three days a week, focusing on core academic subjects.
- **Home Education:** On the remaining days, the child received sports training and home education. The parents ensured that the child kept up with schoolwork and maintained academic standards.
- **Monitoring:** The school and parents held regular meetings to review the child's academic and sports progress. The school provided flexibility for the child to attend important competitions.

10. Appendix B: Exemplar home-school agreement for Flexi-Schooling

Part A of this document should be completed by the parent(s)/carer(s). The document will form part of the discussion around flexi-school. Once the flexi-school arrangements have been discussed, the school will consider the application and inform you of their decision. If the school agrees to the arrangements, then the contract will need to be signed by all parties and details of the flexi-school arrangement will be sent to the local authority.

Part A: To be completed by parent/carers

Child's full name:	
Child's date of birth:	
Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):	
Reason for flexi-school education and why this would benefit your child:	
Outline of education/curriculum areas and resources for home-learning component:	
Name(s) of person(s) providing education when not in school:	
Proposed days when child will not attend school:	
Period of flexi-school arrangement	Start date:
	End date:
Child's achievements, skills, hobbies, interests, activities:	

Any other information:	

Part B: To be completed by school

Current attendance %:	
Attendance target for pupil on days they are in school:	
Main contact in school:	Name:
	Number:
	Email:
Current level of attainment achieved in all subjects studied (working at age expectation, below or at greater depth):	
Additional Education/Personal Needs:	Yes / No
Does the child have an EHCP?	Yes / No
Is the child LAC/CiN/CP?	Yes / No
Form and frequency in which work from home will be shared with school:	

Date of Meeting to Review Arrangements: _____

Arrangements for ending the Flexi-School agreement:

Parent(s) / carer(s) will give two weeks' notice of the ending of the arrangement.

School will call a review meeting within two weeks if they feel the flexi-school arrangements have broken down. Where it is not possible to correct this, the arrangement will cease with a letter from the school.

Where a parent fails to abide by this decision, the case will be referred to the Attendance Support team.

Date Local Authority Notified of Arrangements: _____

Other agencies/professionals involved with the family (including dates they were notified):

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Parent/Carer Agreement

I/We agree to ensure our child has adequate opportunity for health care.

I/We agree to be fully responsible for our child's safety, health, and welfare when not on school premises.

I/We agree to bring the child to school on agreed days and to inform the school of any absences.

I/We accept that under Section 7 Education Act 1996, the education provided at home should be suitable for the child's age, ability, and aptitude and any special educational needs our child may have.

I/We accept the sessions where my child is not attending school will be recorded as an absence.

I/We accept that we are responsible for any costs of our child's education whilst they are out of school.

Signatures

Headteacher	Signed:
	Date:
Parent(s)/Carer(s)	Signed:
	Date:

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