Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School

Learning for the Head, Heart and Hand

Flexi-schooling Policy

We want to ensure your needs are met. If you would like this document in any other format, please contact us: office@ladyj.kent.sch.uk

Review date	**May 2025**
Date of next review	**May 2027**
Reviewer	**Rachael Foster, Headteacher**
Co-chairs of Governors	**Ellie Brown and James Coumbe**

(This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures).

Article 3 – 'Adults must do what is best for me'
Article 28 – 'I have the right to reach the highest level of education I am capable of.'

Flexi-schooling rationale

Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary school 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.

However, we also recognise 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.

Background

The responsibility for a child receiving full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent or guardian/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 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. Local Authorities should make sure that head teachers 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 at our school 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 our 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 Lady Joanna that Flexi-schooling children attend for a minimum of two and a half days per week. Flexi-schooling within Lady Joanna 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's discipline or attendance itself.

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 and is part of our strong home-school relationship that supports our inclusive culture.

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 Headteacher will consider 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. The Headteacher will also consider the likely impact on the discipline, morale and organisation of the school.

The safeguarding and welfare of every child is of paramount importance. Ultimately our school are 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 our 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.

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 number 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 for when pupils are being flexi-schooled at home

On our registers, we are obliged to code flexi-schooled children 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. We expect the attendance of non-flexi schooled children to be at least 96% of all sessions. Therefore, we expect the attendance of flexi-schooled children to run at 96% of the agreed sessions we expect them to attend.

On occasion we can code flexi-schooling as **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 up and 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.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Each year there are two census days on which the funding we are allocated for free infant school meals is decided. We therefore expect that all flexi-children in YR-2 will be in school for these days so that they are counted in our funding for the year. The dates will be published as soon as they are available to us and parents may swap their flexi-days in these weeks in arrangement with the class teacher.

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 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 our Headteacher to decline a flexi-schooling request or indeed if they decide 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 order to make expectations clear for all concerned. The agreement is formalised in line with the school' flexi-schooling policy and will include:

- The expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before being reviewed - typically this will be one term initially and each season in the first year of the agreement. This will be reviewed with the Headteacher and the Inclusion Leader.
- 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 through email or other mechanisms e.g., tapestry. It is likely that Ofsted would assess the evidence that the parents keep. The format for the recording is not set by the school but could include overviews of the child's learning, photographs of activities and written work produced.
- 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.

Retraction of a flexi-school place

Our Headteacher reserves the right to cease a flexi-school contract at any time should they have significant concerns about a child's academic progress, emotional wellbeing or safeguarding. Parents will be informed of the Headteacher's decision at a review meeting and then in writing. The child will continue to be offered a full-time place within the school.

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.

Children Educated outside their Chronological Age-Group

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

Flexi-schooling application form

School name: Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School	
Child's name:	
Name of parent(s), carer(s)	
Admissions form completed	Yes / No
What attracted you to flexi schooling?	(continue overleaf if necessary)
What are your expectations of the school-based part of the Education?	(continue overleaf if necessary)
What are your expectations of the home-based part of the Education?	(continue overleaf if necessary)
Do you intend to follow the National Curriculum at Home?	
Form of Education to date	F/T School P/T School Home Education N/A
Levels of attainment achieved (if applicable)	
Additional Needs (if applicable)	
Please tell us anything else you feel we may find useful about yourself or your child	

Further relevant information