

The Highland Council

Flexi Schooling Guidance

September 2026

Contents

Section	Content	Page Number
Section 1	Introduction	3
Section 2	What is Flexi-Schooling?	4
Section 3	Roles and Responsibilities	4
Section 4	Eligibility and Application Process	5
Section 5	Curriculum and Learning Responsibilities	6
Section 6	Decision-Making	6
Section 7	Risk Assessment and Safeguarding	6
Section 8	Attendance, Recording and Monitoring	7
Section 9	Review Arrangements	7
Section 10	Ending a Flexi-Schooling Arrangement	7
Section 11	Appeals and Dispute Resolution	7
APPENDIX A	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents and Carers	8
APPENDIX B	Flexi-Schooling Request Form	15



THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
FLEXI-SCHOOLING POLICY
Education & Learning Service

1. Introduction

Highland Council recognises the fundamental right of every child and young person to receive an education and acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that education is provided, either by regular attendance at school or by other means. The Highland Council's Home Education guidance already recognises that flexi-schooling may be considered where supported by the school and local authority, and that education remains fundamentally a parental responsibility.

The Highland Council may occasionally receive a request to withdraw a child part time from school, e.g. for the child to attend school only on certain days, or for certain subjects. The feasibility of each request should be considered on its own merit, while taking into consideration that under Section 28 of the Education (Scotland) Act (1980), so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents'. Ultimately however, it is a decision for the Highland Council and each school as to whether they can support such an arrangement. This policy establishes a consistent framework for considering, approving, monitoring and reviewing flexi-schooling arrangements across Highland schools. This policy should be read alongside Highland Council Home Education Guidance. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity for parents, carers and schools.
- Ensure consistency of decision-making across Highland.
- Support children's rights and wellbeing.
- Ensure compliance with Scottish legislation and guidance.
- Promote partnership working between schools and families.
- Establish transparent governance and review processes.



Definition of Parent

Throughout this policy, the term parent should be interpreted in accordance with section 135 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and includes guardians and any person who has parental responsibilities or parental rights in respect of a child, or who has care of a child or young person.

2. What is Flexi-Schooling?

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement whereby:

- A child remains enrolled on a school roll.
- Attends school for part of the week.
- Receives education from parents/carers during agreed periods away from school.

Flexi-schooling differs from Home Education where the child is removed from the school roll. The child still receives a full-time education, partly in school and partly at home. It is not a reduced or Part-Time Timetable where temporary educational arrangements are in place in response to specific circumstances.

All decisions will be guided by child-centred practice where the child's needs remain paramount.

Children have the right to express their views on matters affecting them. The Scottish Government Home Education Guidance highlights the importance of hearing and considering children's views.

Positive home-school relationships are essential.

All requests will be considered fairly and consistently, and safe-guarding and protection of children remains a core responsibility.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to make the request to the school in the first instance.

Using the Flexi Schooling request form (Appendix B) parents should include:

- details of proposed educational arrangements.
- How they intend to deliver education during agreed home-learning periods.



The Child or Young Person Has the right to be informed, express their views and participate in decision-making.

The Head Teacher should give initial consideration and discussion with parent/carer about the Flexi Schooling request which should include –

- Gathering any evidence and consulting with key staff.
- Making recommendations and approving the parental request
- Coordinating flexi-schooling processes.
- Informing Home Education team of decision by sending the completed Flexi-Schooling Request form to – home.education@highland.gov.uk

4. Eligibility and Application Process

The request must originate from the parent/carer and would initially involve discussions with the school. The list below is not limited to, but may include requests to:

- Support high level sporting commitments.
- Support arts or performance opportunities.
- Deliver specialist learning opportunities.
- Provide enhanced outdoor learning.
- Develop alternative educational experiences.
- Deliver family-led educational approaches.

Parent/Carer should submit a Flexi-Schooling Request Form (APPENDIX B) which outlines the educational rationale and education plan and learning activities.

Schools should acknowledge request, arrange to meet with parents and gather child's views. Where Additional Support Needs are identified, existing support plans must be reviewed and the Child's Plan considered. Multi-agency input sought where appropriate.

The Flexi-Schooling Request Form to be completed with any additional consultation as required. Head Teacher to confirm decision with Home Education lead using generic mailbox home.education@highland.gov.uk



The decision will be confirmed by in writing and records updated.

The Highland Council Education & Learning Service will:

- Maintain a central register.
- Monitor consistency.
- Undertake annual review of decisions.

5. Curriculum and Learning Responsibilities

Whilst flexi-schooled the school will continue to provide education during school attendance periods and include the child in class activities where present. The school will continue to maintain normal communication processes.

The school will not normally:

- Replicate teaching for home-learning days.
- Produce duplicate schemes of work.
- Provide additional staffing.
- Deliver catch-up programmes.
- Parents assume responsibility for all learning delivered during agreed home-learning periods.

6. Decision-Making

Approval decisions by schools should consider:

- Educational suitability and rationale, learning opportunities and any impact on progress and the child or young person's wishes and views must also be considered.
- Operational impact for the school which may include class organisation, staffing implications and curriculum delivery. Consideration should also be given to social inclusion and any potential safeguarding concerns.

No single factor automatically determines the outcome. Ultimately however, it is a decision for the Highland Council and each school as to whether they can support such an arrangement for flexi schooling.

7. Risk Assessment and Safeguarding

Additional scrutiny should occur where:

- Child Protection Plans exist.
 - Child Protection investigations are ongoing.
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- The child is Looked After or Care Experienced.
- Significant welfare concerns exist.
- Social isolation concerns are present.
- Educational neglect concerns are identified.

These factors require enhanced assessment but will not automatically result in refusal.

8. Attendance, Recording and Monitoring

Approved periods away from school should be recorded using appropriate SEEMiS attendance codes.

Children remain:

- Registered pupils.
- Included in school census returns.
- Included within school planning and reporting processes.

9. Review Arrangements

Schools should continue to link with families who are flexi educating and review this with them on an annual basis, unless contact is made in the interim.

Reviews with school and families should consider:

- Educational benefit.
- Wellbeing.
- Child's views.
- Attendance.
- Continuing suitability

10. Ending a Flexi-Schooling Arrangement

The arrangement may cease at parent request, and the child returns to full-time attendance. If parents wish to amend the days that a child or young person attends school, this should be discussed with the Head Teacher and recorded if agreed.

The Highland Council may seek to end a flexi schooling arrangement if Circumstances significantly change, where safeguarding concerns arise or if the arrangement is no longer appropriate.



11. Appeals and Dispute Resolution

It is a decision for the Highland Council and each school as to whether they can support such an arrangement for flexi schooling. However, parents may request a review of a decision by writing to home.education@highland.gov.uk

Requests for review should:

- Be submitted in writing.
- Include reasons for review.
- Be considered independently where possible.



APPENDIX A

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents and Carers

Key Messages

- ✓ Flexi-schooling is a partnership between family and school.
- ✓ Each request is considered individually.
- ✓ The child's views are important.
- ✓ Wellbeing and educational outcomes remain central.
- ✓ Children remain on the school roll.
- ✓ Parents are responsible for education during agreed home-learning periods.
- ✓ Arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.

1. What is flexi-schooling?

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where a child or young person remains enrolled at a Highland Council school but attends school for only part of the week. During agreed periods away from school, parents or carers take responsibility for providing education. Highland Council recognises that flexi-schooling may be considered where supported by both the school and the local authority.

2. Is flexi-schooling the same as home education?

No. With home education, a child is removed from the school roll, and parents take full responsibility for their education.

With flexi-schooling, a child remains enrolled at school and education is shared between school and home

3. Do I have a legal right to flexi-school my child?

No. Scottish Government guidance recognises that local authorities may receive requests for flexi-schooling arrangements. Each request must be considered on its individual merits. Whether a flexi-schooling arrangement can be supported is a decision for the local authority and the school.



4. Who can apply for flexi-schooling?

A parent or person with parental responsibilities may request a flexi-schooling arrangement for their child.

Applications will be considered individually, taking account of the child's educational needs, wellbeing, circumstances and views.

5. Why do families choose flexi-schooling?

Families may request flexi-schooling for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to:

- Supporting a particular talent, skill or interest;
 - Sporting, artistic or performance commitments;
 - Outdoor learning opportunities;
 - Religious or cultural reasons;
 - Family educational approaches;
 - A belief that a blend of school and home learning is in the child's best interests.
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6. How do I apply?

You should complete the Highland Council Flexi-Schooling Request Form (APPENDIX B) and submit this to your child's Head Teacher who will arrange to meet with you to discuss your request.

You will be asked to provide:

- The reasons for your request;
 - The proposed attendance pattern;
 - Details of learning that will take place at home;
 - The expected benefits for your child;
 - The anticipated duration of the arrangement.
-



7. Will my child's views be considered?

Yes. The Highland Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people have opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them.

The school will seek your child's views in a manner appropriate to their age, stage and communication needs. The Scottish Government Home Education Guidance highlights the importance of listening to and considering children's views regarding their education.

8. How long will a decision take?

The aim is that requests will normally be considered within 6 weeks of all relevant information being received.

Where further discussions or multi-agency meetings are required, the timescale may be extended, and you will be kept informed.

9. What factors will be considered?

Schools and Highland Council will consider:

- Your child's views;
 - Educational benefits;
 - Wellbeing;
 - Additional Support Needs;
 - Any safeguarding considerations;
 - The suitability of proposed home-learning arrangements;
 - The impact on your child;
 - The practical implications for the school.
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10. Will my child remain on the school roll?

Yes. A child participating in an approved flexi-schooling arrangement remains enrolled at their school and retains their place on the school roll.



11. Can my child take part in school activities?

Yes. Children who are flexi-schooled remain members of the school community and can participate in school activities during the time they are attending school.

Participation in activities that take place on home-learning days will be considered by the school on a case-by-case basis.

12. Will the school provide work for home-learning days?

No. Parents are responsible for planning and providing education during agreed home-learning periods.

Schools are not required to replicate classroom teaching, provide separate programmes of work, or provide additional support for learning taking place at home.

13. Will the school provide learning materials?

No. Schools are not required to provide learning resources specifically for home-learning periods.

However, schools may share general information about curriculum areas being studied where this supports positive partnership working.

14. What happens if my child has Additional Support Needs?

A parent/carer's right to home education is not changed if their child has additional support needs.

However, it is reasonable for us to ask parents/carers how they plan to cater for their child's needs at home.

We have no obligation to provide financial or other support for children with additional support needs who are home educated.

Children with Additional Support Needs can be considered for flexi-schooling arrangements. The school will consider whether the proposed arrangement can continue to meet the child's needs and may consult with relevant professionals where appropriate.



15. My child has a Child's Plan. Can we still apply?

Yes. Having a Child's Plan does not prevent a family from requesting flexi-schooling.

However, additional discussion may be required to ensure the proposed arrangement continues to meet the child's identified needs and outcomes.

16. What if there are safeguarding concerns?

Highland Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, these will require careful consideration as part of the assessment process.

Each application will be considered individually.

17. How will attendance be recorded?

Your child will remain on the school roll.

Periods agreed as part of an approved flexi-schooling arrangement will be recorded using the appropriate SEEMiS attendance codes in accordance with Highland Council procedures.

18. What if my child misses learning that happens in school?

Flexi-schooling involves a shared responsibility for education.

Parents should be aware that children may not receive all learning experiences delivered during the time they are learning at home. The school is not responsible for providing catch-up teaching for agreed home-learning periods.

19. How often will the arrangement be reviewed?

Approved arrangements will normally be reviewed with the school:

- At least on an annual basis or earlier if circumstances change.

Reviews will consider whether the arrangement continues to meet the child's needs and remains in their best interests.



20. Can the arrangement be changed?

Yes.

Changes may be agreed through discussion between the family and the school.

Significant changes should be formally reviewed and recorded.

21. Can I end the arrangement and return my child to full-time schooling?

Yes.

Parents may request a return to full-time schooling at any time by discussing this with the school.

The school and family will work together to support a smooth transition back to full-time attendance.

22. Can Highland Council end a flexi-schooling arrangement?

In certain circumstances, yes.

An arrangement may be reviewed and potentially withdrawn where:

- Circumstances significantly change;
- Safeguarding concerns arise;
- The arrangement is no longer considered appropriate;
- The agreed arrangements are not being followed.

Any concerns will normally be discussed with families before decisions are made.

23. What if my request is not approved?

If a request is not approved, Highland Council will explain the reasons in writing.

Parents may request a review of the decision through the Education Service's review process.



24. Who can I contact for advice?

Parents and carers can seek advice from:

Home Education team: -

Communication received in the generic mailbox will be the initial point of contact.

Email: home.education@highland.gov.uk

The Home Education Team provides information and advice to families regarding home education and flexi-schooling arrangements.



APPENDIX B

FLEXI-SCHOOLING REQUEST FORM – to be completed by parent/carer and shared with school for discussion.

Child Name

Date of Birth

School

Class/Year Group

Parent/Carer Name

Relationship

Telephone

Email

Home address

Proposed Attendance Pattern

Day	School	Flexi Schooling
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Monday		
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Tuesday		
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Wednesday		
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Thursday		
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Friday		
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Reason for request



Education Plan - *Please also attach the Education Plan to this form*

Child/Young person's views

Contact with Peers

Additional Support Needs -

Expected benefits

Parent Carer Signature:

Date:

For School use only:

Consultation date:

Decision/Outcome:

HT Signature:

Date:

When completed schools are to send this form and the education plan to
home.education@highland.gov.uk



