

DAME CATHERINE HARPUR'S POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR HOME-EDUCATED CHILDREN



Introduction and summary regarding our part-time offer for home-educated children at Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Dame Catherine Harpur's School is an independent school for pupils from ages 3 to 11 which offers 2 days a week provision for children who are home-educated alongside full-time education from compulsory school age (after our pre-school provision.) Our policy and procedures for providing a 'membership' to our school for home-educated children have been developing since home school sessions were introduced in 2017. In certain circumstances we also offer a reduced time-table (3 or 4 days a week) for children who are on our admissions register. (This is commonly known as flexi-schooling.)

What do we mean by home-educated?

The responsibility to ensure that a child receives full-time education while he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent/ carer with parental responsibility. The 1996 Education Act states that the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient fulltime 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 may decide to provide a suitable education by educating their children at home, often joining home-education groups, rather than seeking to enrol their child at a school. This is known as Home schooling, Home-educated or Elective Home Education. In this case the parent/carer takes full responsibility for the education of the child.

How does our offer for home-educated children differ from the provision for children who are on a reduced timetable (flexi-schooling?)

For full details parents are welcome to read our policy on reduced timetable agreements (flexi-schooling.)

Children who attend on a reduced timetable, widely known as flexi-schooling, are placed on the school admissions register and the responsibility for the child's education lies with the school. The school, in these cases, is agreeing, in effect, to a child being absent 1 or 2 days a week to be educated with parents.

Provision for home-educated children at Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Dame Catherine's will consider applications for attendance 2 days per week. Applications for 1 day a week can only be considered in exceptional circumstances. These include where there is an intention for a child to work up to attending 2 days a week. Whilst additional days on a temporary basis might be possible, the school does not consider 3 days or more on this model longer term (for more than 2 terms,) given that in such a case, a child would be educated for a greater amount of time in school than at home. The school would usually expect children attending for 3 days or more to be on our admissions register and apply for a reduced timetable unless there are exceptional circumstances deemed as acceptable to the headteacher. This might for example, be where a child is reaching the

end of their time in primary education and has been home-educated for some time or is due to be home-educated after leaving Dame Catherine's.

What commitment does Dame Catherine's expect from families who apply for a place?

Given that a child who is attending 2 days a week is taking up a school place we ask parents to only apply where there is an intention of the child attending on a long-term basis. To secure an ongoing place, families will need to pay on an ongoing basis for 38 weeks, even where holidays are taken in term-time.

When applying we ask for a payment equivalent to a 10 week block upfront, and thereafter parents are welcome to pay termly in advance or monthly by direct debit.

In replying to our offer of a place as a home-educated child, parents are agreeing to providing half a term's notice (6 weeks) should they wish to withdraw their child.

Our school year is based on 38 weeks and this includes 5 INSET days ie. the school is open to children for a 37 weeks (or 185 days) usually spread across 39 weeks overall. This is to enable us to mirror the 38 weeks of Local Authority funding for Early Years children, which also takes account of INSET days.

Home educated families are expected to contribute pro-rata to INSET days in the same way as families with children on roll. Parents will therefore pay for 38 weeks (76 days) recognising that 2 of these are contributing to INSET days.

When organising the school calendar, we do our best to spread the INSET days across different days of the week, given the number of part-time children we have. We are also aware that there is an extra bank holiday on a Monday in May which sits outside of holiday time. A day to replace this is factored into the school calendar elsewhere so that we still offer 185 days over the year. However, ensuring the exact number of days over the year is impossible, given that every child will attend a different combination of days. In such cases we will offer either a day in lieu or refund the cost of the days, depending on what the parents prefer.

Over the course of the year there are often other events including school visits where we don't charge any contribution to staffing costs.

The school will not be able to accommodate one-off changes in days due to circumstances such as illness, holidays, attending other activities etc. Parents should write to the headteacher with any potential exceptional circumstances at least 2 weeks in advance and these will be considered individually.

Where there is a forced closure (eg. due to a flood or snow,) parents are welcome to agree an alternative day with the school. Should this not be possible, the family can request a refund for that day.

Should parents wish to formally change the day / days a child is attending, the parents can request this, giving as much notice as possible. The school will usually require a minimum of 6 weeks (not including holiday time) to consider changes. Changes cannot be guaranteed, but the school will do its best to accommodate families.

What the family can expect from Dame Catherine's

As with children on the admissions register, the school will provide information in advance as to curriculum content through the challenge question overviews sent to parents. Whilst teachers may be able to give an indication at the beginning of a new challenge theme, any subject which might be taught on specific days, in particular PE or outdoor learning, the school retains the right to adapt this curriculum in order to best meet the needs of the majority of the children and to make best use of staff expertise. As the school teaches certain subjects in an integrated way, it is not always possible to provide a detailed timetable of subjects for each day. There might be a small extra charge for sports provision due to the school buying in specific sporting expertise and equipment. As a general rule, English is taught daily and maths on 4 or 5 days a week.

There will be times when the curriculum for the day is altered eg. due to specific themed days or as a result of certain weather.

Children will be included in the wider life and opportunities of the school such as sports days, performances, family celebrations and events etc. as much as possible. There will be no expectation for parents to pay for attending special event held on an alternative day to a child's usual attendance, if invited. It is often not possible to attend school for the whole day, but where this can be offered, there would be a charge.

Parents are welcome to request additional days where the school has availability, but should they wish the child to attend 3 or more days a week for an extended period, the family will need to discuss flexi-schooling as an alternative option.

Are home-educated children included in school visits?

Children who have a place at the school on the day the visit is to take place

- A child who has a place at the school on the day of the visit will be included in the visit.
- Should a child NOT wish to accompany the visit, parents are welcome to book a session on an alternative day instead.
- Should the child take part in the visit, parents will be expected to cover the full cost of the day (as usual) and the cost of the visit.

Children who would not normally be due to attend school on the day the visit is to take place

- The school will not always be in a position to open up all visits to home- educated children who attend on other days but will do so if there are spaces available. Should this be the case the **one-off charge for the day in total will be outlined at the beginning of the trip**. This will take account of charges to cover adult staffing and supervision, transport and visit costs.
- There might be times when a parent who is home educating might wish to take their child and meet the school group at the venue. This will be at the discretion of the headteacher. In this case, where the school has no responsibility for the child, parents will need to cover the cost of the entrance fees etc. but there will be no additional charge for the day. This will only apply where it is an additional day for a home school child. The parent will be expected to pay the full cost of their place in addition to that of the child.

How does a parent / carer register interest?

Dame Catherine's is fortunate to have children whose families bring a wide diversity of backgrounds. We do not discriminate in terms of race, sex or disability. Please see our SEND policy for further details on children with disabilities or special educational needs.

Parents should initially enquire about the availability of spaces from the school office. We will need to ensure that spaces are available for families looking for a full-time or reduced timetable place (flexi-school place) on roll at the school.

Should there be insufficient space to accommodate requests from families who home educate, we are happy to contact you if a space becomes available.

Should we have a waiting list for a home-educated place and a place becomes available, the criteria listed below would apply:

- The presence of a sibling already in the school or pre-school;
- Attendance in the pre-school provision
- A previous family connection with the school
- The family has shown an ongoing interest in sending their son/daughter to the school as demonstrated by attending an Open Day or visiting in person.

Ultimately it will be the decision of the headteacher as to whether he or she feels the school can offer provision for a child who is being home-educated. The governing body (our Trustees) has agreed a general approach to requests from home-schooled families, but this does not preclude the headteacher from the need to consider each request individually.

New families applying to the school for a place for their child should complete an expression of interest and trial session form and, should a place be available, the relevant application form.

What will the Headteacher consider when offering a place?

- Safeguarding the child is of paramount importance.
- There may be resource implications; effective co-ordination will require time and, whilst there is no obligation to do so, our school wishes to do what it can to support families by sharing any relevant approaches and resources. This will need to be taken into consideration when offering a place to a child.
- The overall impact on the current group of children and the school at the time.
- Where a child has additional needs the school might need to discuss with parents how additional support will be funded. Where the child has an EHCP, the provision might need to be discussed with the local authority.

Withdrawal of a place

Dame Catherine's reserves the right to withdraw a place if the school no longer has the capacity to meet the needs of the child, where providing the place is detrimental to other children attending school or where it feels that what the family is looking for doesn't match the ethos of the school or the provision it can provide. It will also withdraw a place if a parent seeks to undermine the policies and practices of the school or bring the school into disrepute. Where possible the school will provide a half-term's notice, however in some circumstances it might be necessary to withdraw a place with immediate effect.

Monitoring provision for home-educated children

As a school, we do not monitor the content or quality of home education. However, if it appears that there are extensive conflicts in methodology or expectations which are causing barriers to either the child and / or others in the group, the school may ask the parent/carer to discuss these barriers and reserves the right to withdraw its agreement to the place if deemed necessary.

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