

Flexible Working Policy

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 Policy Owner: Alex Butt

Table of Changes Made Since Last Version

Paragraph	Summary of Change/s
Definition Removal	Flexible working definition removed
4.13	Wording change

Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this Policy

Abbreviation/Acronym	Meaning

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1. Aims

- 1.1 To promote awareness and set out guidelines on how to request a flexible working arrangement
- 1.2 To support employees in achieving a better work/life balance whilst ensuring that our trust and schools needs are met
- 1.3 Ensure that the application process is fair, transparent, prompt and guided by school/trust needs and priorities.

2. Flexible Working

- 2.1 This policy is not contractual but indicates how we aim to manage flexible working requests.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees; there is no minimum service requirement to make a request.

3. Flexible Working Requests

- 3.1 We will consider any flexible working request with a view to accommodating the request if we are able to do so. Agreement will be dependent on being able to continue to meet the needs of the students, school and Trust. Where we do not feel it is possible to accommodate the request we will explore other alternatives if we refuse any request, we will provide specific business reasons for this.
- 3.2 Each request will be treated individually and, on a case-by-case basis on its merits. Consideration will be given to the effect on the students, school and trust and the possible impact of refusing a request. Where one or more employees within a team have already been granted a flexible working request, this will be taken into consideration when receiving further requests but does not automatically mean the request will be accommodated.
- 3.3 We will ensure when considering requests, that there is no discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation).

4. Procedure for Making a Request

The procedure for making a request is as follows:

- 4.1 Applications should be made in writing and sent to the HR department. They must be dated and specify that the application is a flexible working application.
- 4.2 The request should specify the working pattern the employee wishes to adopt.
- 4.3 If the request is in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (for example, as a reasonable adjustment for a disability) this should be stated.

- 4.4 The employee should specify the start date that they would like the proposed change to come into effect, giving reasonable time for us to consider the proposal and implement it.
- 4.5 The employee must not have made more than one other application to work flexibly under this right during the previous 12 months. The request must state whether a previous application has been made and if so the date on which it was made.
- 4.6 We will arrange a meeting to discuss the request, with the aim of completing the whole process within two months of receipt of the request, unless a longer period has been jointly agreed.
- 4.7 This meeting may not be required if we agree to the request and notify the employee accordingly.
- 4.8 The employee may be accompanied at any meeting by a work colleague if they wish.
- 4.9 We will notify the employee of our decision as soon as possible after the meeting. This notification will either:
- 4.9.1 accept the request and establish a start date and any other action or confirm a compromise agreed at the meeting or
 - 4.9.2 refuse the request and set out clear business reasons for this, together with notification of the appeals process.
- 4.10 Appeals should be made in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal, and be dated. The employee will be invited to a further meeting to discuss the request and may choose to be accompanied by a work colleague at this meeting.
- 4.11 The decision will be notified in writing, this will either:
- 4.11.1 uphold the appeal, specify the agreed variation and start date or
 - 4.11.2 dismiss the appeal, stating the grounds for the decision and setting out sufficient explanation for the refusal.
- 4.12 If an employee fails to attend any meeting to discuss the request or the appeal hearing without a good reason, we will consider the request withdrawn.
- 4.13 If we refuse a request, we will provide specific business reasons for this. These could be one or more of the following:
- 4.13.1 the burden of additional cost to the business
 - 4.13.2 an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
 - 4.13.3 an inability to recruit additional staff
 - 4.13.4 a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
 - 4.13.5 a detrimental impact on quality
 - 4.13.6 a detrimental impact on performance

4.13.7 insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work

4.13.8 a planned structural change to the business.

4.14 Employees should be aware that if we approve a flexible working request, the variation in contractual terms is normally a permanent one and that there is no automatic right to change back to the previous pattern of work, unless the variation is agreed for a specified period only. Employees are permitted to make two flexible working request in each twelve-month period.

4.15 If we are unsure as to whether the requested arrangement is sustainable, or about the possible impact on other employees' requests for flexible working over the longer term, a trial period may be agreed. Trial periods will be regularly reviewed and could result in the termination of a flexible arrangement for business, economic or other reasons. Reasonable notice will be given by either party in the event of a necessary change or termination of arrangements. This could result in the employee reverting to the original working arrangement.

4.16 All arrangements must comply with the Working Time Regulations and any other in-house health and safety considerations. Risk assessments will be carried out where appropriate.

5. Impact on Pay and Benefits

5.1 Employees should carefully consider that any change to working hours which involves a reduction in hours will lead to a pro rata reduction in pay and benefits and so may impact the following:

- annual salary
- holiday entitlement
- maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or pay
- pension contributions
- sick pay

5.2 A change in work pattern, but with the same hours, will not normally alter other terms and conditions.

5.3 It is therefore recommended that the employee discusses any reduction in hours in more detail with their manager. Exact agreements will be discussed according to the individual situation and circumstances and any agreed changes confirmed in writing. Each agreed arrangement is specific to the individual and does not set a precedent for any future requests from other employees.

6. Conflicting Requests

- 6.1 Where more than one person within a team requests flexible working, all requests will be given fair consideration. Care will be taken not to inadvertently discriminate against any employee because of a protected characteristic, and we note that flexible working may well be a "reasonable adjustment" for a disabled employee.
- 6.2 Where one or more employees within a team have already been granted a flexible working request, the school/trust context in which a further request is made will be different, and this will be taken into account when considering further requests. If we are unable to agree to a request because other employees are already working flexibly and any further flexible working arrangements will impact adversely upon the business, we may discuss the situation with other employees in case they are willing to change their arrangements, thereby enabling us to grant new requests to work flexibly.
- 6.3 However, the degree of flexibility awarded may not be the same in each case as each request will be judged on its merits and according to individual circumstances.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years but can be revised as needed.