

Working From Home Policy

Date Reviewed:	March 2024
Next Review:	
Review Cycle:	Two years
Reviewing committee:	Senior Leadership Team
Lead Governor Responsible:	
Reviewers:	C Grant
Linked Policies:	Flexible working policy Remote learning policy Staff wellbeing policy Child protection policy ICT acceptable use policy Data protection policy and privacy notices Staff code of conduct/behaviour policy Health and safety policy/use of display equipment policy
Policy is based upon:	Model policy from The Key
Ratification Date:	
Signed by Headteacher:	
Signed by Chair of Governors:	

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Set out expectations for staff working off site – for example, from home
- Outline how the school will support staff to work off-site when they need to

This policy applies to all staff, with the exception of volunteers.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of:

- [Flexible Working Regulations 2014](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

- [Employment Rights Act 1996](#)

It also reflects best-practice guidance set out in:

- [The Department for Education's \(DfE\) guidance for flexible working in schools](#)
- [The Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's \(ACAS\) code of practice on handling requests to work flexibly in a reasonable manner](#)

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this working from home policy is applied consistently across the school.

The governing board

The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The governing body has delegated the approval of this policy to the senior leadership team.

The line manager

The line manager is responsible for considering all valid requests for working off-site arrangements equally, fairly, and according to the needs of the school and pupils.

Other staff

Staff will ensure they follow the expectations in this policy.

Circumstances when staff may work off-site

Prior agreement must be sought from the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher) for staff to work from home and is subject to the operational needs of the school. Staff may work from home if they are:

- Doing flexible working (see section 4.1)
- Their role lends itself to being able to do so
- Following clinical and/or public health advice
- Following recommendations from the DfE
- Agreed by or requested to do so by the Headteacher
- Able to do so within the remit of their role

Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work off-site, they must speak to the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.

Our staff absence policy and procedure applies to staff working in school and at home. If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working from home, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the school's normal absence procedure, as set out in the staff absence policy.

Flexible Working

Our policy on flexible working in line with Hampshire manual of personnel practice continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours from home.

Requests to work off-site will be considered according to the procedures set out in our flexible working policy.

Requests to work off-site

The arrangements set out in sections 5 to 7 inclusive only apply to staff members who are working off-site in a flexible or hybrid working arrangement. They do not apply to staff members who are following public health advice to work from home.

In this section we set out the right for staff to apply for off-site working arrangements. While our school welcomes applications and will consider all requests openly and fairly, we are not obliged to grant working off-site requests in all cases (see section 6.3 to see when we may reject an application).

In all cases, we encourage staff to discuss flexible working arrangements with their line manager on an informal basis **before** making a request, covering:

- The potential impact on the school and pupils
- Details of how the employee wants to work flexibly, and for how long
- Different options for flexible working arrangements
- A trial period to test out a proposed arrangement

Non-statutory requests

A non-statutory request can be used to apply for any off-site working arrangement, including but not limited to one-off or temporary off-site working arrangements.

Staff should send their application to the headteacher.

Statutory requests

Staff should use a statutory request for flexible working in order to request to off-site working arrangements **if** their proposal requires a permanent change to their contractual terms and conditions. Staff members are only eligible to make a statutory request if they:

- Have been continuously employed by our school for 26 weeks or more at the time the request is made
- Are an employee, and
- Have not made a statutory request for a flexible working arrangement in the past 12 months

Staff must make a statutory request to work off-site in writing. They should submit their application at least 3 months before the proposed change. All requests must include:

- The date of the application
- A statement to confirm that this is a statutory request
- The proposed changes to working hours or pattern, and when the staff member wishes to start the new arrangement
- What effect the staff member thinks the proposed changes would have on the school, department, pupils and/or the quality of work, and how these would be dealt with
- Whether they've previously applied to the employer for flexible working arrangements and if so, when that was

It should also state whether they're making their request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example, as a reasonable adjustment for a disabled employee.

Staff should send their application to the headteacher.

If at any point a staff member wishes to withdraw their flexible working request, they must notify their employer in writing.

How we will consider applications

Timescale

Our school/trust will usually respond to an off-site working request within 3 months from receiving an application. This includes the conclusion of any appeal process.

The school/trust may extend the response period if both parties agree to it, for example in the case of an agreed trial period. Any extension to the timescale will be confirmed in writing.

Meeting to discuss an application

The school/trust will consider all valid applications to work off-site reasonably and fairly.

The headteacher or line manager may arrange a meeting with the staff member to (amend in line with your school's or trust's practice):

- Clarify the staff member's proposed working arrangements
- Discuss any foreseen challenges regarding the proposed arrangements and how they can be overcome
- Consider alternative arrangements or compromises

The meeting will take place no later than 28 calendar days after the school/trust receives the application. A member of the school's/trust's HR team may also attend the meeting.

The staff member may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative if they wish. Any companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with the staff member, but may not answer questions on their behalf.

The employer can treat an application as withdrawn if an employee misses 2 meetings to discuss the application without providing good reason for their absence.

Response

The headteacher/line manager will provide a response, in writing, as soon as possible after the application, and by no more than 14 calendar days following any meeting.

If the request is accepted, or an alternative arrangement is agreed, the headteacher/line manager will write to the staff member no later than 28 days after the approval, laying out:

- Details of the new working arrangements
- Details of any trial period
- Any changes to the staff member's employment contract
- When the new off-site working arrangements will start

The staff member will need to sign and return a copy of the document, which will be placed in their personal file to confirm the variation to their terms and conditions of employment.

If the headteacher/line manager needs more time to make a decision, for example time to investigate how to accommodate a request or to consult several members of staff, they will discuss this with the staff member as soon as possible.

If the request is rejected, the headteacher/line manager may arrange a meeting with the staff member to inform them, including the reason for the rejection. (Note: while you're not legally obliged to hold a meeting in this case, ACAS guidance says it can be helpful to hold a meeting if you're going to reject an application for any type of flexible working, including off-site working). The decision will also be confirmed in writing, and the staff member will also be advised of their right of appeal (see section 8).

Our school will only reject an application for off-site working arrangements on the following grounds:

- The burden of additional cost to our school
- A detrimental effect on the quality of work (for example, if pupils as a result risk not receiving high-quality teaching)
- A detrimental effect on performance (for example, if the staff member risks failing to meet important deadlines)
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet demand (for example, where an administrative assistant would not be present at busy periods with high workloads)
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit new staff
- Insufficient work during the proposed working period
- Planned changes to staffing structure

Contractual changes

Once an off-site working arrangement has been agreed (and following a successful trial period – see section 7), the school will make appropriate changes to the staff member’s contract of employment. This may be done through the issuing of a new contract or a letter of variation.

Unless otherwise agreed, these changes are permanent and cannot be changed unilaterally. There is no right for a staff member to revert to their original working arrangements, or for the school to force a staff member to revert to their original working arrangements, without agreement from both parties.

A staff member may not make another statutory request until 12 months after the date of their most recent statutory request.

Trial period

Where a staff member’s application is successful, they will be subject to a trial period of an appropriate time period. This period will form the basis of a final decision about whether the off-site working arrangement will work.

When informing the staff member that their application is initially successful, the headteacher will set out in writing the details of the trial period.

This will be considered an agreed extension to the statutory 3-month time scale for the school to respond to flexible working applications.

At the end of the trial period, the staff member and headteacher will meet to discuss:

- Whether the trial period was successful
- What (if any) adjustments need to be made to the arrangement
- Whether to continue with the arrangement on a permanent basis
- Whether to extend the trial period, for example to observe any adjustments to the arrangement or due to absence

In the case of disagreement, all decisions about the outcome of the arrangement rest with the headteacher.

Appeals

Staff members can appeal any unsuccessful flexible working application, including applications for off-site working.

Staff members must make their appeal in writing, state the reason for appealing the decision, and submit their appeal to the headteacher within 14 days of receiving a written rejection.

The outcome of the appeal is final, and there is no further right to appeal.

Working hours

When working off-site, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours.

Outside of these hours, staff (who are not senior leaders) are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents or pupils – unless it is an emergency, or they're working flexible hours.

Working hours during flexible working

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours off-site.

Absence when working off-site

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working off-site, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report their absence to their line manager or a senior leader.

Duties

Wherever possible, staff working from home will carry out their normal duties in line with their job description/contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow school practice or otherwise be agreed with the individual's line manager and the deputy headteacher or headteacher.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties off-site, their line manager, in agreement with the deputy headteacher or headteacher will discuss and agree alternative arrangements with the individual concerned.

Where staff are unsure about what work they should be carrying out while working off-site, they will speak to their line manager a senior leader.

Wellbeing support

To support the wellbeing of staff who are working off-site, the school will provide:

- Support via phone call, Microsoft Teams or email from their line manager and / or senior leader.
- Access to the Hampshire resilience website and toolkit for staff.

Staff should communicate with their line manager or a senior leader if their wellbeing is being affected while working from home.

Safeguarding

Where staff are interacting online with pupils while working off-site, they will continue to follow our existing Staff code of conduct, IT acceptable use policy, Safeguarding policy, Child protection policy, Data protection policy, Remote Learning policy and remote learning strategy.

Staff can refer to the Department for Education's guidance on [safeguarding during remote learning](#) for additional support.

Technical support

Equipment

Where staff are provided with technical equipment for school use, this equipment can be used for working from home.

Staff will be able to request technical equipment in cases where they do not have access to a laptop/tablet that they can use at home during working hours.

All requests will be subject to approval based on a hierarchy of need and availability of equipment at the time. Requests are to be made via the School Business Manager and the relevant documents completed to remove and use the equipment from school, for use at home.

If staff are loaning equipment, they must agree and sign our IT equipment loan agreement before they receive the equipment.

IT Support

If staff are having issues with technical equipment while working off-site, they should contact:

- Chris Grant (School Business Manager) via email at c.grant@hook-jun.hants.sch.uk, or phone 01256 762 468
- SchoolCare (IT Support service) by emailing support@schoolcare.co.uk or phone 03332 402 622

Workstation safety

We and the local authority, recommend that staff set up an appropriate space for working at home so they do not cause physical injury to themselves. Where possible, we recommend that staff aim to:

- Sit upright at a table/desk, on a chair
- Raise their laptop/tablet so the screen is at eye level
- Use a separate keyboard and mouse
- Have appropriate lighting near to the workstation

Staff are to complete and refer to Hampshire County Council's online DSE training.

Data protection

Staff are to adhere to the school's Data Protection policy and seek support from Chris Grant (School Business Manager) to maintain the integrity of school data and personal data.

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always installing the latest updates

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the senior leadership team.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- HCC Flexible working procedure
- Remote learning policy
- Staff wellbeing policy
- Child protection policy
- ICT acceptable use policy
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy/use of display equipment policy