



FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

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HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

December 2011

1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees based in schools.

2. Policy Statement

The school's Flexible Working Policy outlines the school's commitment to consider flexible working arrangements for eligible employees who have caring responsibilities.

The school recognises the contribution of all its employees and also understands that at some time in their working lives, employees may find it difficult to fulfil domestic, family and working commitments due to having caring responsibilities. Where this occurs, the school will always consider practical help through this flexible working policy.

No employee will be treated less favourably, suffer detriment, or be dismissed because they request, or take, flexible working.

Flexible working is about considering the way work is organised to see whether it is possible to have different working arrangements: the result must always be, however, that the school achieves its core activities as efficiently and effectively as is possible.

Employees should also be aware that if they request and are given agreed flexible working conditions this is a variation of their terms and conditions of employment and is a permanent change. If an employee's circumstances change in relation to the need for flexible working there is no statutory right for a return to the terms and conditions that applied to them prior to flexible working being granted.

3. Principles

- The initial onus of making an application for flexible working lies with the employee
- The school will consider requests for flexible working by eligible employees who put in a written request
- The school will follow the correct procedure as outlined in this document
- The school can decline an application where it is considered that granting flexible working would be detrimental to the needs of the school

4. Eligibility

All employees can request a change to their pattern of work. However, the law provides some employees with a statutory right to request flexible working

arrangements. This right is to ask for flexible working - not the right to have it. When considering applications for flexible working, priority must be given to those employees who have a statutory right to request flexible working. An employee will have the statutory right to request flexible working if they meet the following eligibility criteria:-

- has worked continuously for the school for a minimum of 26 weeks at the date of the application for flexible working
- responsible for a child under the age of 18 as a biological parent/guardian/special guardian/foster parent/private foster carer; or is the spouse, partner or civil partner of such a person. The employee must also have responsibility for the upbringing of the child and be making an application to enable him/her to care for the child.
- have not made an application for flexible working during the previous 12 months from the date of the current application.

Other carers: the right to apply for flexible working also applies to employees who are, or expect to be caring for an adult who:

- is married to, the partner or civil partner of the employee
- is a near relative of the employee, ie a parent, parent-in-law, child over 18, adopted child over 18, sibling, brother or sister-in-law, uncle, aunt or grandparent
- falls under none of the above categories but lives at the same address as the employee.

5. Procedure

Step 1: Requesting Flexible Working Arrangements

To apply for flexible working the employee must:

- complete the [Request for Flexible Working Form](#)
- explain the reason for the request
- specify the flexible working pattern applied for and the date on which it is proposed the change should come into effect
- explain what effect, if any, the employee thinks the proposed change would have on the employer and how, in his or her opinion, any such effect might be dealt with
- explain how the employee satisfies the requirements relating to the relationship with the person to be cared for

Step 2: Meeting to discuss the request for flexible working

Following a request for flexible working from the employee, the headteacher or the designated line manager will invite the employee to a meeting within 14 working days of the application to discuss the request. The school is under an obligation to give the request for flexible working serious consideration. If, however, the employee's requested working pattern cannot be granted, the employee will be given reasons for the refusal, in writing, within 10 working days after the meeting. These reasons might include:

- Burden of additional costs to the school
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Detrimental impact upon quality
- Detrimental impact upon performance
- Insufficient work when the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Any other justifiable reason

Step 3: Appeal

Where a request for flexible working is refused, the employee will be granted the right of appeal. If an employee wishes to appeal he/she must submit the appeal in writing within 7 working days of written notification of the decision and state grounds for appeal.

The Headteacher/designated manager will arrange for an appeal meeting to be held as soon as possible following receipt of the written appeal. The employee will be given 10 working days notice of the appeal meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a trade union representative, work colleague or friend.

The panel hearing the appeal will be made up of three governors of the school who were not involved in the original decision to refuse the request.