



# Flexible Working Procedure

## Version 3

<p><b>Important:</b> This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Trust website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.</p>	
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<p><b>Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:</b></p>	<p>Resources and Finance Committee</p>
<p><b>Implementation Date:</b></p>	<p>Summer Term 2024</p>
<p><b>Review Date:</b></p>	<p>Summer Term 2027</p>
<p><b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p>All employees, with the exception of casual workers</p>
<p><b>Related Documents:</b>  All Trust policies and procedures referred to are located on the trust website, <a href="http://www.theeducationalliance.org.uk">www.theeducationalliance.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>If English is not your first language, and you require assistance/translation, please contact the HR Department.</p> <p>This policy has been equality impact assessed.</p>	<p>Women at Work Guidance  Ethical leadership Framework  Special Leave Policy  Health and Wellbeing Policy</p>

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## POLICY STATEMENT

We are here to make great schools and happier, stronger communities so that people have better lives. We do this by:

- Always doing what is right
- Trusting in each other and standing shoulder to shoulder
- Doing what we know makes the difference

Doing what is right means always acting with integrity, in the interests of others and being honest, open and transparent.

We recognise that providing staff with opportunities to request a change to their working pattern, or terms and conditions (e.g. reducing hours) can help employees achieve good levels of health and wellbeing as they navigate through changes in their lives, whilst enabling the trust to retain valuable, talented and highly committed employees. This procedure ensures employees can easily make flexible working requests, which are considered fairly, reasonably and transparently.

The culture of the trust and our schools is critical in ensuring we have an enjoyable, rewarding working environment in which all colleagues believe the demands of their job are reasonable and manageable. We have a culture based on professional trust and the belief that everyone seeks to do a good job.

### 1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff employed by the trust, with the exception of casual workers.

### 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Resources and Finance Committee** is responsible for approving this procedure, ensuring there is a consistent approach to requesting and approving changes to terms and conditions and working patterns across the Trust.

**Headteachers and senior leaders** are responsible for ensuring that staff and managers are aware of this procedure, encouraging staff and managers to consider how flexible working might help the trust and its school recruit and retain staff, helping them to achieve a good work-life balance.

The **HR Department** is responsible for ensuring that employees have access to this procedure and that managers and employees apply it fairly and consistently.

**Managers** and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they implement this policy fairly and equitably, seeking guidance, clarification and support as and when required.

**Employees** are encouraged to read this procedure, adhere to the processes detailed and seek clarity from either their manager or the HR Department if they have any queries.

### 3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Education Alliance is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged

This procedure encourages employees and managers to consider how flexible arrangements might enable employees to continue to work, balancing their whole lives and ensuring work supports employee health and wellbeing. This policy aligns well with the principles of TEAL's 'Women at Work Guidance'.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

We are committed to ensuring that staff are supported in working flexibly, and this may differ across different roles and functions of the trust. For example, teachers are able to undertake their PPA at home, and as long as they are onsite where their timetable and duties require them to be, they are not required to remain onsite for the duration of the working day. Some associate staff may be able to undertake aspects of their work remotely, or they may be able to have differing start and finish times, depending on the role. The trust aims to be an employer of choice, treating people as professionals at work. In providing staff with greater flexibility, the trust anticipates higher levels of recruitment, retention, engagement and health and wellbeing. Employees can apply for flexible working even before they start their employment with TEAL, and we encourage candidates to explore flexible working options with us (this is stated in our adverts and application form templates). There is a range of possible flexible working options an employee may request, such as:

- Changes to their working pattern
- Reducing working hours
- Job-sharing
- Compressed hours
- Staggered hours
- Changing duties/responsibilities (e.g. where employees wish to relinquish a leadership role)
- Blended onsite, offsite working arrangements
- Phased retirement

It can be useful to agree a trial period, to enable all parties to assess whether or not the flexible working arrangement requested/agreed works and that it has the anticipated benefit for the employee.

#### 5. REQUESTING FLEXIBLE WORKING

Employees wishing to request a change in their working pattern, working arrangements or terms and conditions are encouraged to explore potential options with their trade union, their line manager and the HR Department, as they may be able to provide advice and guidance prior to the employee submitting a request. Any employee wishing to apply for a change in their working pattern, working arrangements or terms and conditions should complete the flexible working request form (appendix 1), which employees should discuss with their line manager in the first instance to enable them to consider the operational feasibility of the request. Employees must consider and detail on their request form what they are requesting and for how long (e.g. temporary or permanent change). Line managers may want to contact the HR Department before completing their section, for advice and guidance. Employees seeking flexible working are encouraged to consider any financial implications prior to submitting a request, alongside pension information. Employees can access financial information via the HR Department, the Payroll Department and the Employee Assistance Programme; however, the trust cannot provide financial advice.

Employees should be mindful that where a request to change contracted hours (for example a reduction from 0.8 full-time equivalent to 0.4 full-time equivalent) is approved, whilst every effort will be made to also agree the working days preferred, it might not always be operationally feasible. Employees should provide as much detail as they can on their flexible working request form (e.g.

preferred hours and days) to allow for all requirements to be explored in full, thus reducing the risk of a request being misunderstood.

## **6. CONSIDERING A REQUEST**

Any request for flexible working will be thoroughly considered before a decision is reached, and where possible, requests will be approved. This may be on a temporary trial basis initially, to test the feasibility and the potential impact before agreeing a more permanent arrangement. The decision sits with a member of the senior leadership team, and they may wish to meet with the employee and/or the line manager to explore the request prior to making a decision, particularly where they require additional information. Requests must not be refused without consultation with the employee, and requests must be considered and a decision made within two months of receiving the request.

## **7. WITHDRAWING A REQUEST**

If an employee wishes to withdraw their request, they should write to their line manager and the HR Department to withdraw their request.

## **8. APPEALS**

If an employee believes they have been unfairly treated, they may wish to appeal against the decision regarding their flexible working request. The employee must submit their appeal to the HR Department within 10 working days of receipt of the decision, clearly stating the grounds for their appeal.

The Headteacher, or Executive Principal, will review the original documentation and decision alongside any additional information submitted. If the Headteacher or Executive Principal were involved in the original decision, another senior leader (e.g. a Headteacher from another school) will receive and consider the appeal. Depending on the circumstances, they may wish to meet with the employee, or they may feel they are able to make a decision based on the information they have. Either way, the employee will receive written confirmation of the decision. The outcome of the appeal is final.

## **9. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY**

Effectiveness of and compliance with this procedure will be monitored on an annual basis by the HR Department.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed within three years of the date of implementation with trade unions via the JCNC.

**Appendix 1**

**FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST FORM**

**Section A (Employee to complete)**

**Surname:**.....

**First name:**.....

**Department:**.....

**Job Title:**.....

**Contracted Hours:**.....

**Working Pattern:**.....

**Permanent/Temporary Request (if temporary, detail the anticipated duration required):**

.....

I wish to submit a flexible working request as follows *(please provide full details of the change you would like to make and the rationale for this as this will assist with the decision)*:

My current hours and working pattern are:

The working pattern/hours I would like to work in the future are:

The reason for this is:

I would like this working pattern to commence from:

**Part B – Manager’s Response**

(Please consider within your response whether the request is operationally feasible and also whether any difficulties/challenges/risks could be mitigated/managed effectively. The information you provide will assist with the decision.)

**Part C – Decision**

Approved	
Not approved	
Comments:	

Employee Signature:..... Date:.....

Line Manager Signature:..... Date:.....

Decision-Maker Signature:..... Date:.....