

Flexible Working Policy

Everyone Matters Schools Trust



Policy Owner	CEO and Trustees
Scope of the Policy	This policy applies to all of the school community
Last reviewed by trustees	September 2025
Next review due	September 2028
Summary of key changes	Separated Special Leave
Committee Responsible	Trustees

1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 The Everyone Matters School's Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and recognise our duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff. Our School's recognise that developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance can bring many benefits for us and the individual, including:

1.1.1 minimising the risk of absenteeism and stress-related illness;

1.1.2 raising staff morale and helping us to retain experienced employees;

1.1.3 helping us to recruit from a broader pool of employees;

1.1.4 promoting staff wellbeing and improving their work-life balance; and

1.1.5 ensuring that working in education suits employees at different life stages, including accommodating childcare or caring responsibilities or phased retirement.

1.2 This Flexible Working Policy gives eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern in accordance with the statutory procedure for doing so and all employees an opportunity to do so informally. The Senior Leadership Team's are encouraged to facilitate requests unless they cannot be accommodated for business or operational reasons.

1.3 No-one who makes a request for flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career development opportunities as a result.

1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY

2.1 This policy covers all employees at all levels and grades including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed term employees (referred to as **employees** in this policy).

2.2 It does not apply to agency staff and self-employed contractors.

3 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

3.1 The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Principal/Head Teacher of each school.

3.2 Those working within the Senior Leadership Team and all of those with any management responsibilities have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote our aims and objectives with regard to flexible working.

3.3 All employees are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with it and act in accordance with its aims and objectives.

4 FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

4.1 Flexible working can incorporate a number of changes to working arrangements:

4.1.1 reduction or variation of working hours;

4.1.2 reduction of the number of days worked each week; and/or

4.1.3 working from a different location (for example, from home).

4.2 Such changes may involve starting a job share; working a set number of hours a year, rather than a week (annualised hours); working from home (whether for all or part of the week); working only during term-time (part-year working); working compressed hours and/or working flexi-time.

5 **ELIGIBILITY FOR THE FORMAL RIGHT TO REQUEST PROCEDURE**

5.1 To be eligible to make a request under the formal procedure set out in paragraph 6 an individual must:

5.1.1 be an employee;

5.1.2 not have made more than one formal request to work flexibly during the last 12 months;

5.1.3 not make a formal request to work flexibly if a request you made previously has not been concluded.

5.2 Flexible working arrangements can be requested by any member of **school** staff, including those in leadership positions and non-classroom-based roles. Requests for flexible working are not limited to those returning from maternity leave.

5.3 If an employee is not eligible to make a formal request, they may make an informal request under paragraph 11.

6 **MAKING A FORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST**

6.1 An employee must submit a written application if they would like their flexible working request to be considered under the formal procedure. Ideally, the request should be made as far in advance as possible, taking note that timetable planning for future academic years starts in February of each year.

6.2 An employee's written and dated application (form provided by school) should be submitted to the Business Manager / Office Manager in good time and ideally at least two months before they would like the changes to take effect. It should:

6.2.1 State that it is a flexible working request;

6.2.2 Explain the reasons for the request, especially if the employee thinks the School's Equal Opportunities Policy may be relevant, for example, if their request concerns childcare or other family commitments, religious or cultural requirements, or adjustments because of a disability;

6.2.3 Provide as much information as the employee can about their current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which they want their desired working pattern to start. It is helpful if the employee can give an indication of whether there are any flexibilities in their request, for example whether days that are requested as non-working days / to work from home can vary; and

- 6.2.4 Provide information to confirm that the employee meets the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 5 of this policy including the dates of any previous formal requests for flexible working.

Employees making a formal application for flexible working must comply with the Acas Code of Practice on requests for flexible working (available on their website: www.acas.org.uk).

- 6.3 In most cases a meeting will be arranged to discuss the employee's request before a decision is taken. However, in some cases it may be possible to approve the request in full without a formal meeting, although it will usually be helpful for the employee to meet with their Line Manager to discuss the request and to ensure it is the best solution.

7 FORMAL REQUEST: MEETING

- 7.1 Where necessary, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member will arrange to meet with them after their application has been submitted. The employee making the request will be notified in advance of the meeting and given a reasonable amount of time to prepare. The employee may bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting as a companion if they wish. The companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with the employee, but may not answer questions on the employee's behalf.
- 7.2 In most cases, the meeting will be held at the employee's usual place of work, although video-conferencing or a telephone meeting may be used where a face-to-face meeting is impractical.
- 7.3 The meeting will be used to consider the working arrangements the employee has requested. The employee will be able to explain how the arrangements will accommodate their needs. We will consider the potential benefits of accepting the flexible working request, to the employee and the School. We will also be able to discuss what impact the proposed working arrangements will have on their work and that of their colleagues and of their department and how those impacts can be minimised. If the request can be accommodated, we will consider any practical considerations involved in implementing the requested flexible working. If the arrangements the employee has requested cannot be accommodated, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.
- 7.4 The employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member may suggest starting new working arrangements under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet the employee's needs and those of their department.

8 FORMAL REQUEST: DECISION

- 8.1 Following the meeting, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member will notify them of the decision in writing as soon as possible and in any event within four working weeks of the meeting. The whole flexible working process, including any appeal, should be concluded within two months of receipt of the initial formal flexible working request from the employee (save where any trial period is agreed).
- 8.2 If the employee's request is accepted, or where The School propose an alternative to the arrangements requested, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member will write to them with details of the new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to their contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. The employee will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on the employee's personnel file to confirm the variation to their terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work. The employee will also be offered an opportunity for a discussion to clarify any further information

that may be helpful in implementing the agreed flexible working arrangement (e.g., to agree a review date to make sure the arrangements are working well in practice).

- 8.3 Unless otherwise agreed (and subject to any trial period) changes to the employee's terms of employment will be permanent. The employee should note that their right to make formal flexible working requests is limited to two in any 12-month period.
- 8.4 If the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member needs more time to make a decision, they will discuss this with them. For example, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member may need more time to investigate how the request can be accommodated or to consult several members of staff.
- 8.5 There will be circumstances where, due to the requirements of the School a request cannot be agreed. In these circumstances, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member will write to the employee:
 - 8.5.1 explaining the reasons for turning down the application; and
 - 8.5.2 setting out the appeal procedure.
- 8.6 The reasons for which the School may reject the employee's request are:
 - 8.6.1 the burden of additional costs;
 - 8.6.2 detrimental effect on ability to meet customer/pupil needs;
 - 8.6.3 inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
 - 8.6.4 inability to recruit additional staff;
 - 8.6.5 detrimental impact on quality;
 - 8.6.6 detrimental impact on performance;
 - 8.6.7 insufficiency of work during the periods that the employee proposes to work; and
 - 8.6.8 planned changes.

9 **FORMAL REQUEST: APPEAL**

- 9.1 If the employee's request is rejected, they have the right to appeal.
- 9.2 The appeal must:
 - 9.2.1 be in writing and dated;
 - 9.2.2 set out the grounds on which the employee is appealing; and
 - 9.2.3 be sent to the Principal/Head Teacher within five days of the date on which the employee received the written rejection of their request.
- 9.3 The Principal/Head Teacher will arrange for a meeting to take place following receipt of the employee's appeal. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending and, as at the meeting that considered the employee's request, they may be accompanied by a colleague of their choice.

- 9.4 Where possible an appeal meeting will be conducted by a more senior member of the Senior Leadership Team or Governing Body who has not been previously involved in considering the request.
- 9.5 The employee will be informed in writing of the Appeal Officer's decision after the appeal meeting.
- 9.6 If the employee's appeal is upheld, they will be advised of their new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to their contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. The employee will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on the employee's personnel file to confirm the variation to their terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work that their Line Manager / Nominated staff member will need to discuss with the employee.
- 9.7 The employee should be aware that changes to their terms of employment will be permanent.
- 9.8 If the employee's appeal is rejected, the written decision will give the reason(s) for the decision and explain why the reason(s) apply in their case.

10 **CHANGES TO THE FORMAL PROCEDURE**

- 10.1 There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete consideration of the employee's request within the expected time limits. Where an extension of time is agreed with the employee, their Line Manager / Nominated staff member will write to them confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.
- 10.2 If the employee withdraws a formal request for flexible working, that request will still be taken into account when determining if the employee has made two formal requests in a 12-month period. In certain circumstances, a formal request will be treated as withdrawn. This will occur if the employee fails to attend two meetings without good cause. In such circumstances, the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member will write to them confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

11 **MAKING AN INFORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST**

- 11.1 Employees who wish to make an informal request for flexible working may make a request to their Line Manager / Nominated staff member who will consider it according to the School's business and operational requirements.
- 11.2 This is often the best route to request one-off or temporary flexible working arrangements, or arrangements which do not involve altering an employee's contract.
- 11.3 It will help the employee's Line Manager / Nominated staff member to consider the request if:
- 11.3.1 the request is made in writing and confirms whether the employee wishes any change to their current working pattern to be temporary or permanent;
 - 11.3.2 provide as much information as the employee can about their current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which they want the desired working pattern to start; and
 - 11.3.3 think about what effect the changes to the employee's working pattern will have on the work that they do and on their colleagues, as well as on the School's delivery of education and that of their department. If the employee has any suggestions about

dealing with any potentially negative effects, these should be included with the written application.

- 11.4 The employee's Line Manager will advise them what steps will be taken to consider the informal request, which may include inviting the employee to attend a meeting, before advising them of the outcome of the request.



APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

SECTION 1 – PERSONAL DETAILS

Employee Name:				
Employee Number:				
Date of Application:				
Current working pattern (Please Tick)	Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part Time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current Working Pattern (Days/Hours/Times Worked)				
Requested Working Pattern (Days/Hours/Times)				
Requested Start Date:				
This request is (please tick)	Permanent:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Temporary, how long for:				

SECTION 2 – INFORMATION TO SUPPORT YOUR REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

I have the responsibility for the upbringing of:

A child under 6:	Y	N
A disabled child under 18:	Y	N
I am (please state):		
The mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent of the child:	Y	N
Married to the partner or civil partner of the child's mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian or foster parent:	Y	N
Do you have other caring responsibilities and if yes, who for	Y	N

Please state any other reason for requesting flexible working:

Other relevant information to support your request for flexible working:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

SECTION 3 – HEADTEACHER’S RECOMMENDATION

You are required to meet the employee and discuss the application within 28 days. The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

I have met with the employee on _____ and discussed the details of flexible working with the employee concerned.

I DO / DO NOT support the application.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DECISION

This request has / has not been agreed.

If agreed, date these arrangements to be implemented _____ from:

These arrangements are temporary/permanent: _____

If temporary, how long for: _____

Is this to be reviewed: _____

Where the Trustees have delegated the decision to a Sub-Committee, the Chair of the Sub-Committee should sign this section. Otherwise, this section should be signed by the Chair of Governors.

Signed:

Date:

Print Name:

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Please note that applications should only be declined on recognised business grounds, ie. operational or technical reasons related to the employee's job. These reasons must be explained in writing to the employee within 10 days of the meeting with the Headteacher taking place.

Date Application Received:	
Adjustments to Pay Made:	
Employee Notified:	
Signed by HR Officer:	
Comments:	