



Flexible Working Policy

Agreed by Governors on; 20/03/2017

Signed by Chair of Governors: Sally Birkbeck

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally Birkbeck".

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Introduction

The school believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

From 30 June 2014, all employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously by school. Employees who make a request to work flexibly before 30 June 2014 must do so under the school's policy that is applicable at that time.

Requests for flexible working

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home.

All requests must be made in writing by filling in the requisite application form, which is available from school. Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application;
- the changes that the employee is seeking to his/her terms and conditions;
- the date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect;
- what effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation;
- how, in his/her opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.

Where the request is being made by a disabled person as part of a request for a reasonable adjustment to his/her working arrangements, the employee should state this in the written application.

School should not reject out of hand a request that does not contain the required information. The employee's line manager should explain to the employee what additional or amended information he/she needs to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

Once the Headteacher receives the request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but no later than the deadline set out below. The Headteacher will usually arrange a meeting to deal with the request. Where a request can be approved without further discussion in line with the terms stated in the employee's written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

An employee should be given the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at any flexible working meeting. The meeting should take place in a private meeting room so that the discussion is kept away from other employees. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and school.

Outcome of a flexible working request

After the meeting, the Headteacher will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the school against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis: agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to his/her working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the organisation may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

Reasons for turning down a flexible working request

The Headteacher/Governors will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

The Headteacher/Governors must not reject a request for any other reason.

Flexible working requests that are granted

If the request is upheld, the employee and the Headteacher will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions will be put in writing and sent to the employee as an amendment to his/her contract of employment/written statement of terms and conditions of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Timescales

All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal. The Headteacher should hold the meeting within [28 days] of receiving the request and notify the decision to the employee within [14 days] of the meeting, so that there is enough time for any appeal to be concluded. Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request are allowed to lodge an appeal within [14 days] of the notification, with the appeal to be heard within [14 days]. The employee will be informed of the outcome of his/her appeal within [14 days] of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended where both the employee and school are in agreement. For example, the Headteacher and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

Problems with a flexible working request

If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, he/she should seek clarification from the Headteacher. If an employee is dissatisfied with the way in which his/her request has been handled, he/she can raise a grievance under the school's grievance procedure.

Headteachers who receive a request will have regard to the school's equal opportunities policy when considering the request.

If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, his/her application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

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