



FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	AUTUMN 2017
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	AUTUMN 2020
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	DIRECTOR OF HR

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Anglian Learning is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. We recognise that, in addition to helping balance work and personal lives, flexible working can raise staff morale, reduce absenteeism and improve our use and retention of staff.
- 1.2 This Flexible Working Policy gives eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern and all employees an opportunity to do so informally.
- 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.
- 1.5 The Flexible Working Regulations (2014) makes reference to customers. In the case of schools, this translates into parents and students.

2. Eligibility for the formal right to request procedure

- 2.1 To be eligible to make a request under the formal procedure set out in paragraph 6 and 8 you must:
 - a) be an employee;
 - b) have at least 26 weeks' continuous service at the date your request is made;
 - c) not have made a formal request to work flexibly during the last 12 months (each 12 month period runs from the date when the most recent application was made)..
- 2.2 Employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the formal procedure or employees who do meet the eligibility criteria but wish to raise a request informally in the first instance, may make an informal request under the procedure set out in paragraph 10 to the Principal. The Principal may appoint a senior manager to investigate and consider the request. The senior manager will consider the request for a permanent or temporary change to their working arrangements whilst considering the Trust's and individual school's educational, business and operational needs.

2.3 Employees whose requests for flexible working are accepted under the formal procedure will have permanent changes made to their contracts of employment to reflect their new working arrangements. If they do not want changes to be permanent, they can follow the informal procedure instead.

2.4 Any employee interested in flexible working may request an informal meeting with the senior manager to discuss their eligibility, the different options and the effect of their proposed work pattern on colleagues/students and curriculum/service delivery before submitting a formal or informal request.

3. Personnel Responsible for Implementing the 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 to the CEO and the individual schools' Principals, and ensuring its maintenance and review to the HR Committee.

3.2 All members of staff 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. Those involved in management or recruitment may request training and address any questions about the content or application of this policy to the Director of HR.

4. Forms of Flexible Working

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

- a) reduction or variation of working hours;
- b) reduction of the number of days worked each week; and/or
- c) working from a different location (for example, from home).

5. Making a Formal Flexible Working Request

5.1 You will need to submit a written application if you would like your flexible working request to be considered under the formal procedure.

5.2 Your written and dated application should be submitted to the Principal, who will appoint a senior manager to investigate and handle the process. In order to meet the requirements of the formal procedure and to help the senior manager consider your request, you should:

- a) state the reason for your request,
- b) provide as much information as you can about your current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which you want your desired working pattern to start;
- c) address the effect the changes to your working pattern may have on the work that you do, any potential impact on colleagues and on subject/service delivery. If you have any suggestions about changes that could facilitate your request, please include these in your written application;
- d) provide information to confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 5 of this policy;
- e) state whether this is a statutory formal request and whether you have made a previous formal or informal request for flexible working and, if so, when; and
- f) state if you are making your request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example as a reasonable adjustment for a disability;
- g) ideally be submitted at least two months before you wish the changes you are requesting to take effect.

5.3 The senior manager might be able to agree your proposal without the need for a meeting (which is the next stage of the formal procedure). If that is the case, the senior manager will write to you, confirming the decision and explaining the permanent changes that will be made to your contract of employment.

5.4 If your proposal cannot be accommodated, discussion between you and the senior manager may result in an alternative working pattern that can assist you.

6. Formal Procedure: Meeting

6.1 Where necessary the senior manager will arrange to meet with you within 28 days of your application being submitted. The meeting may also be attended by a representative from HR if appropriate. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting as a companion if you wish. Your companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with you, but may not answer questions on your behalf.

6.2 In most cases, the meeting will be held at your usual place of work. However, we will ensure that the meeting is held at a time and place that is convenient to you.

6.3 The meeting will be used to consider the working arrangements you have requested. You will also be able to discuss what impact your proposed working

arrangements will have on your work and that of your colleagues and of your department. If the arrangements you have requested cannot be accommodated, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.

- 6.4 The senior manager may suggest starting new working arrangements under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet your needs and those of the school and your department.

7. Formal Procedure: Decision

- 7.1 Following the meeting, the senior manager will notify you of the decision in writing within 7 days.

- 7.2 If your request is accepted, or where we propose an alternative to the arrangements you requested, the senior manager will write to you with details of the new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work that the senior manager will discuss with you.

- 7.3 You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and that you will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original application.

- 7.4 If the senior manager needs more time to make a decision, they will ask for your agreement to delay the decision for up to a further 28 days. A request for an extension is likely to benefit you. For example, the senior manager may need more time to investigate how your request can be accommodated or to consult several members of staff.

- 7.5 There will be circumstances where, due to educational, business and operational requirements, we are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, the senior manager will write to you:

- a) giving the business reason(s) for turning down your application;
- b) explaining why the business reasons apply in your case; and
- c) setting out the appeal procedure.

- 7.6 The eight business reasons for which we may reject your request are:
- a) the burden of additional costs;
 - b) detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
 - c) inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
 - d) inability to recruit additional staff;
 - e) detrimental impact on quality;
 - f) detrimental impact on performance;
 - g) insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work; and
 - h) planned changes.

Appendix A gives a brief overview of the way in which the school will interpret and apply these business reasons.

8. Formal Procedure: Appeal

- 8.1 If your request is rejected, you have the right to appeal.
- 8.2 Your appeal must:
- a) be in writing and dated;
 - b) set out the grounds on which you are appealing; and
 - c) be sent to the PA to the Principal for school staff or the PA to the CEO for Trust wide staff, within 7 days of the date on which you received the written rejection of your request.
- 8.3 The PA to the Principal or CEO will arrange for a meeting to take place within 14 days of receipt of your appeal. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending and you may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- 8.4 You will be informed in writing of the PA to the Principals or CEO's decision within 7 days of the date of the appeal meeting.
- 8.5 If your appeal is upheld, you will be advised of your new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work, that the senior manager will discuss with you.

8.6 You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and you will not be able to make another formal request until at least 12 months after the date of your original application

8.7 If your appeal is rejected, the written decision will give the business reason(s) for the decision and explain why the reason(s) apply in your case. You will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original application.

9. Breaches of the Formal Procedure

9.1 There will be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete the consideration process (including any appeal) within 3 months of first receiving the request. Where an extension of time is agreed with you, the senior manager will write to you confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.

9.2 If you withdraw a formal request for flexible working, you will not be eligible to make another formal request for 12 months from the date of your original request. In certain circumstances, a request made under the formal procedure will be treated as withdrawn. This will occur if:

- a) you fail to attend two meetings under the formal procedure without reasonable cause; or
- b) you unreasonably refuse to provide information we require to consider your request.

9.3 In such circumstances, the senior manager will write to you confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

10. Making an Informal Flexible Working Request

10.1 Employees who wish to make an informal request for flexible working may make a request in writing to the Principal, who may appoint a senior manager to consider it according to school educational, business and operational requirements.

10.2 It will help the senior manager to consider your request if you:

- a) make your request in writing and confirm whether you wish any change to your current working pattern to be temporary or permanent;
- b) provide as much information as you can about your current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which you want your desired working pattern to start;

- c) consider the effect the changes to your working pattern may have on the work that you do and the potential impact on your colleagues, as well as on our subject/service delivery and that of your department. If you have any suggestions about changes that could facilitate your request please include these in your written application. The senior manager will consider whether they are workable.

10.3 The senior manager will advise you what steps will be taken to consider your request, which may include inviting you to attend a meeting, before advising you of the outcome of your request.

11. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

11.1 The CEO and Principals are responsible for monitoring the implementation, use and effectiveness of this policy/procedure and will report on these matters annually or more frequently if necessary.

11.2 This policy/procedure will be reviewed by the HR Committee as necessary.

Appendix A Interpretation of “Business Reasons”

All decisions will be made on a case by case basis and those making the decision will consider how the individual request and/or alternatives to this request, can be accommodated alongside the needs of the school and the Trust.

If a request to work flexibly is rejected then the Trust will provide a specific “business reason”, which must be one of the eight stated in the legislation

1. Burden of additional costs
2. Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
3. Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
4. Inability to recruit additional staff
5. Detrimental impact on quality
6. Detrimental impact on performance
7. Insufficiency of work during the period the employee proposes to work
8. Planned structural changes

The Trust’s interpretation of the “business reasons” are set out below in order to provide a clearer understanding of the specific circumstances in school.

1 Burden of additional costs

Excessively fragmented working patterns can become too costly due to the additional costs associated with employing part time staff. The Trust would attempt to support part-time working requests where possible.

2 Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand

The Trust’s customers are their students and parents. It is important that the quality of teaching and learning is not adversely affected by agreeing to flexible working. In considering the request the Principal and the CEO may consider the impact on the need to spread the teaching of individual classes over more than one teacher (split classes), pressure on the timetable to fix particular lessons on a reduced number of days in the week.

3 Inability to re-organise work among existing staff

The Trust may consider a job-share, a reduction in the allocated responsibilities or a minimum contract if it is felt that the member of staff needs to be available to staff or students in order to work effectively.

4 Inability to recruit additional staff

Excellent staff and quality teaching is paramount for raising school standards. It is not always possible to recruit excellent staff but the Trust will make attempts to do so as appropriate. In relation to 3 above or where there is an internal vacancy and a job share is required to fulfil the job description, this may only be possible if there is a colleague who is able and willing to undertake part of the role. Where necessary and appropriate, the Trust will seek to recruit quality additional staff.

5 Detrimental impact on quality

See section 2 above in relation to the possible impact on the quality of learning and teaching and in the service provision of support functions.

6 Detrimental impact on performance

Staff applying for flexible working will be required to detail how they will fulfil the requirements of the part time job should the request be agreed, and this will be considered before a decision is reached.

7 Insufficient work during the period the employee proposes to work

If more than one member of part time staff requires the same working period, it may be difficult to accommodate all part time staff requests. Whilst individual preferences for working days and times can be considered, the needs of students and effective service delivery are paramount and each case will be considered at the time that it is made.

Volume of work may depend on the time of the day and the Trust will consider whether there is sufficient work available during the proposed working pattern to achieve efficiency.

8 Planned structural changes

The Trust will need to consider the impact on its ability to accommodate flexible working on the basis of planned curriculum changes, reduced or increased student numbers or changes to the staffing structure.

9 Such other ground as the Secretary of State may specify by the regulations

No such grounds are specified currently.

Appendix B Form to Request Flexible Working

Note to the employee

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly under the right provided in law. Before completing this form, you should first read the Flexible Working Policy and Appendix A carefully and check that you are eligible to make a request.

You should note that it may take several weeks to consider your request and allow for discussion and meetings between us and further time for implementation where a flexible working pattern change is agreed to. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application to the Principal well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help us to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid. When completing sections 3 & 4, think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to the Principal (you might want to keep a copy for your own records). We will then have 28 days after the day your application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted, this will normally be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

1. Personal Details

Name:

Job Title

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided under The Children and Families Act 2014. I confirm I meet each of the eligibility criteria as follows:

Either Please tick those which apply If you are unable to tick all of the relevant boxes then you do not qualify to make a request to work flexibly under the statutory procedure. This does not mean that your request may not be considered, but you should explore this separately under paragraph 11 of the policy.

I have worked continuously as an employee of the school for the last 26 weeks.

I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months. or

Date of any previous request to work flexibly under this right:

2a. Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

2b. Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):

2c. I would like this working pattern to commence from:

3. Impact and accommodation of the new working pattern

I have attached a statement explaining how I think this change in my working pattern may impact on [students] [your work] and colleagues and suggestions as to how to accommodate

Signed:

Date:

✂-----

Return slip

Confirmation of Receipt (to be completed and returned to employee)

Dear:

I confirm that I received your request to change your work pattern on:

date received

I shall be arranging a meeting to discuss your application within 28 days following this date. In the meantime, you might want to consider whether you would like a work place colleague or trade union representative to accompany you to the meeting.

Signed:

Date: