



Wessex
Learning Trust
We Learn Together!

Flexible Working Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the process of applications for flexible working by employees of the Wessex Learning Trust. The Trust recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress. Therefore the organisation wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests. The Trust is committed to agreeing any flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met.

It is the Wessex Learning Trust's policy to encourage open discussion with employees. An employee that thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to contact their Headteacher to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options. In the case of a Headteacher or member of staff employed centrally this should be the Chief Executive Officer.

2. What is Flexible Working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request, but the organisation recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options, which are suitable to both the organisation and the employee:

- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Home-working
- Job-sharing
- Part-time working
- Term-time working

3. Types of Flexible Working

- Annualised hours where an employee's contractual working hours are calculated as the total number of hours to be worked over the year, allowing flexible working patterns to be worked throughout the year.

Usually the hours will be divided into rostered hours, which are set, and unallocated hours, when an employee can be called into work as demand dictates (and to cover unplanned work and employee absence). Payment will be in 12 equal instalments (although arrangements may be permitted where the pay for the work actually done is in the period to which the payment relates)

- Compressed hours is where an employee works their usual full time hours in fewer days by working longer blocks meaning that there is no reduction in their pay. For example, a five-day week is compressed into four days, or a 10-day fortnight into nine days

- Flexitime allows an employee to choose, within certain limits, when to begin and end work. An employee is required to work during a core time and must work an agreed number of hours during the accounting period of four weeks.
- Home-working is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises.
- Job-sharing is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible, and meet the needs of the organisation. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each works. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where two individuals wish to work part-time. The suitability of posts for job-sharing will be stated in any internal or external advertisements
- Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who only works Monday to Wednesday.
- Term-time working is where an all year round employee reduces their hours or takes time off during any school holidays.

4. The Needs of the Organisation

The Wessex Learning Trust is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However, employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed the academy/trust will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department/school
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

5. Eligibility

Any employee with at least 26 weeks of employment service has a statutory right to request flexible working.

6. Submitting a Flexible Working Request

An eligible employee is entitled to submit one flexible working request in a twelve month period (an employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement e.g. the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments).

All requests must be made to the Headteacher/CEO by filling in an application form that is available from your Academy. Any request made must include:

- the date of the application
- the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions
- the date from when the employee would like the proposed change to come into effect
- what effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation
- how, in their view, any such effect could be dealt with
- whether this is a statutory or non-statutory request
- whether a previous application for flexible working has been made
- the dates of any previous applications

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

If an application does not contain all of the required information the Headteacher/CEO will explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

7. Meetings Regarding Flexible Working

Upon receiving a written request for flexible working the Headteacher/CEO will usually seek to arrange a meeting with the employee to:

- discuss the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation

If a meeting is arranged it will be held within 28 working days of the organisation receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Headteacher/CEO.

The employee will be given advance notice of the time, date and place of the meeting. If the initial date is problematic then one further date will be proposed. If a face-to-face meeting is difficult to arrange then, if agreed by the employee and Headteacher/CEO, the meeting may be held over the telephone.

At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a Trade Union representative.

If the employee fails to attend a meeting and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved as stated in the employee's written application a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. The employee will be informed of the organisation's agreement to the request by a confirmation letter as outlined in the section 'Responding to a flexible working request' within 28 working days of the Academy/Trust receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and Headteacher/CEO.

8. Responding to a Flexible Working Request

The Headteacher/CEO will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits, and adverse effects, to the employee and to the Academy/Trust in implementing the proposed 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 their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the organisation's decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 28 working days after the meeting.

The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The Academy/Trust 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. If the request is agreed then the employee will be sent a confirmation letter which will include details of the new arrangements. The employee should contact their Headteacher/CEO within fourteen days if they wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns.

9. Right to Appeal Decision

The employee has the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.

The employee may lodge an appeal within 14 working days of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing to the Clerk to the Local Governing Body/Trust Secretary and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. The appeal will be heard within 14 working days. The employee will then be informed of the outcome to their appeal within 14 working days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Clerk to the Local Governing Body/Trust Secretary.

10. Trialling New Working Arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the organisation a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the organisation will allow sufficient time for an employee and their Headteacher/CEO to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

11. Varying an Employee's Contract

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation will need to be made to the employee's contract of employment. A new contract of employment will be sent to the employee within 28 working days of the change to the employee's working pattern being agreed.

If the employee has any questions or concerns about the new contract of employment they should contact their Headteacher/CEO to discuss the matter further.

Where a trial period has been arranged the Academy/Trust will provide the employee with a document that details their new working pattern and makes clear that it is only a temporary variation to the terms of the employee's contract. The employee will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period. The organisation will reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Wessex Learning Trust Board every three years or earlier if there are any changes to legislation.

Approved by the Wessex Learning Trust Board: 6/2/17

Review date: February 2018



Flexible Working Request Form

Please ensure that you submit your request in good time and as early as possible before the date you wish the request to start. Requests will be dealt with in accordance with the Wessex Learning Trust Flexible working Policy.

Please complete all questions below and provide as much information as possible about your application and your desired working pattern to help us to consider your request fully.

Name:	
Name of Headteacher/CEO:	
Academy:	

I wish to submit a statutory request for flexible working as detailed below. I confirm I meet each of the following criteria to be eligible to make a formal request:

- I have been employed continuously by the Wessex Learning Trust for 26 weeks' at the date of this request
- I have not made a formal request to work flexibly during the last 12 months

Start date of employment		
Have you submitted a previous request for flexible working?	Yes	No
If you have answered yes above, please state the date of this request		
Are you making this request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example as a reasonable adjustment for a disability?	Yes	No

Please describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

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Please set out the pattern of working that you are requesting. For example, if you wish to change your hours of work, please state what your current hours are and what you would like your new hours to be or, if you wish to work at home at certain times, please state which hours you would like to work at home.

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I would like the above change(s) to my working pattern to take effect on:

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Please describe the effects that you think the changes you are requesting will have on the Academy's ability to run its business and on your department, your colleagues etc.

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Please state how you think any such effect might be dealt with.

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Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Please submit your completed form to your Headteacher or in the case of a Headteacher the CEO of the Wessex Learning Trust who will deal with your application.