

Homeworking Policy

Policy Owner: The Mercian Trust
People & Culture Committee

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Increasing Opportunities
Improving Outcomes

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Scope and purpose	3
3	Eligibility	3
4	Applying for homeworking	4
5	Equipment	5
6	Health and safety	6
7	Data Protection and Confidentiality	6
8	Review of policy	7

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise that there may be times when the ability to work from home may be of benefit to you and the Trust, for example when despite being fit to work, travelling to the office may be difficult (for example, due to recovery from an injury such as a broken leg), or when a quiet, uninterrupted work environment will assist in dealing with a backlog of administrative tasks or in writing reports to a deadline. We therefore support homeworking where possible and in appropriate circumstances. This may be:
 - 1.1.1 occasionally, for example to respond to specific circumstances or to complete particular tasks; or
 - 1.1.2 on a regular basis.
- 1.2 Occasional or permanent homeworking can, in certain circumstances, be a means of making reasonable adjustments for an employee with a disability.
- 1.3 It may also be requested as a means of flexible working, under our Flexible Working Policy.
- 1.4 Any employee who is suspected to have abused the provisions set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.5 This policy has been implemented following consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions. It has been adopted by the governing body as per the details on the cover sheet.
- 1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out how we will deal with requests for homeworking, and conditions on which homeworking will be allowed.
- 2.2 Homeworking could either be a one-off or an occasional arrangement or could be a more regular way of working. This policy focuses on dealing with request by employees to work at home on a regular basis.
- 2.3 This policy applies to employees who have successfully completed their probationary period. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.
- 2.4 Requests for working from home will be considered taking in to account the role that the employee carries out. For example, requests from staff working in pupil facing roles will be unable to be granted on the days and times that they are required to be working directly with pupils. This will also be the case for requests from staff in roles required to be on school site, such as those dealing with members of the public or parents. Whether or not requests are granted and the reasons for doing so, will therefore differ between teaching and support staff and from one employee to another depending on the role they do.

3 Eligibility

- 3.1 Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for homeworking.

- 3.2 A request for homeworking is unlikely to be approved, on either an occasional or permanent basis if:
- 3.2.1 you need to be present in the Trust to perform your job (for example, because it is pupil facing, involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues, parents, the public or third parties that requires you to be in the Trust or involves equipment that is only available on site);
 - 3.2.2 any aspect of your performance has been identified as unsatisfactory or requiring supervision, for example by your line manager or through the appraisal or capability procedure;
 - 3.2.3 you have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance.
 - 3.2.4 you need supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work.
- 3.3 You will also need to be able to show that you:
- 3.3.1 can work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
 - 3.3.2 can manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
 - 3.3.3 can identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home;
 - 3.3.4 can adapt to new working practices including maintaining contact with your line manager and colleagues at work;
 - 3.3.5 have a suitable area and environment in which to work from home; and
 - 3.3.6 have work that can be undertaken at home.

4 Applying for homeworking

- 4.1 Homeworking can either be a one-off or occasional arrangement for example to complete a specific task, or it can be requested as a more long-term formal arrangement. However, all homeworking must be approved by a line manager.
- 4.2 After successful completion of your probationary period, you can make an application for homeworking on a more long-term formal basis by submitting a written application to the Head Teacher. Your application must state:
- 4.2.1 why you consider your job to be suitable for homeworking and how you meet the criteria for homeworking set out in paragraph 3;
 - 4.2.2 whether you wish to work from home on a permanent basis, for a fixed period or occasionally. In all cases you should state the date from which you wish the arrangements to start and, if you wish to work from home for a fixed period, the date on which you want the arrangements to finish. You should try to give us as much notice as possible before your proposed start date so that your request can be considered;
 - 4.2.3 whether you wish to work from home for all or part of your working week and, if only part, which days you propose to work from home;

- 4.2.4 how you would organise your work from home including how you would ensure the security of documents and information, where appropriate;
 - 4.2.5 the extent to which you could be available to come to work on days you are proposing to work from home if needed, for example to cover if colleagues are off sick, to cope with high or unexpected levels of work or to attend meetings or training days;
 - 4.2.6 how you envisage maintaining contact with your line manager, how your work will be set and progress monitored.
- 4.3 It may assist your application for homeworking if you first discuss your proposal with your line manager informally. This may identify potential problems with your application, such as a need to be in the Trust on occasions you had not considered, which your application can then address.
- 4.4 In considering your application, the Head Teacher may invite you to a meeting to discuss your proposals.
- 4.5 If your application is accepted the agreed arrangements will be recorded in writing and may be subject to a trial period.
- 4.6 Any terms on which it is agreed that you may work from home will include the following:
- 4.6.1 We reserve the right to terminate the homeworking arrangements, for example if your role changes such that homeworking is no longer suitable, subject to reasonable notice.
 - 4.6.2 You will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if you worked on Trust premises.
 - 4.6.3 If any concerns are raised through the appraisal process or by your line manager in relation to your performance, or you are subject to any warning in relation to your conduct, your homeworking arrangements may be terminated immediately and you will be required to return to work at the Trust premises.
 - 4.6.4 Your line manager will remain responsible for supervising you, will regularly review your homeworking arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will also ensure you are kept up to date with circulars and information relevant to your work.
 - 4.6.5 You agree to attend the Trust premises for meetings, training or other events which you are required to attend.
 - 4.6.6 Working at or from home may affect your home and contents insurance policy. You must make any necessary arrangements with your insurers before commencing homeworking, ensure that you have appropriate public liability cover and provide us with a copy of your current insurance policy.

5 Equipment

- 5.1 We will provide any equipment that we consider you reasonably require to work from home which will remain our property. This may include current computer equipment that is supplied to you, or laptops already provided to staff. We will make all necessary arrangements for and bear the cost of installing and removing equipment from your home. Where equipment is provided you must:

- 5.1.1 use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it;
 - 5.1.2 take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures; and
 - 5.1.3 make it available for collection by us or on our behalf when requested to do so.
- 5.2 It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from home. We are not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by you when working for the Trust.
- 5.3 We are not responsible for associated costs of you working from home including the costs of heating, lighting, electricity or telephone calls.
- 5.4 All equipment and information must be kept secure. In particular, private and confidential material must be kept secure at all times. Your line manager must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with our requirements.
- 5.5 Any computer or communications equipment (e.g. laptop, mobile phone etc) provided by the Trust must be used for work related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

6 Health and safety

- 6.1 When working at home you have the same health and safety duties as other staff. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions and omissions. You must attend all courses required, comply with the Health and Safety Policy 2022, and agree to use equipment safely.
- 6.2 We retain the right to check home working areas for health and safety purposes. The need for such inspections will depend on the circumstances including the nature of the work undertaken.
- 6.3 You must not have meetings in your home with parents, pupils or other individuals associated with the school and must not give your home address or telephone number.
- 6.4 You must ensure that your working patterns and levels of work both over time and during shorter periods are not detrimental to your health and wellbeing.
- 6.5 You must use your knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to your line manager or the Health and Safety Officer.
- 6.6 When you are working at or from home you are covered by our accident insurance policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy 2022.
- 6.7 If you are ill during a period of homeworking you must report your absence in the normal way using the sickness absence reporting procedure.

7 Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 7.1 You must comply with your duties and obligations with regard to confidentiality and data protection under the requirements of Data Protection Legislation being the UK General Data

Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, and the Trust's Data Protection policy.

7.2 In accordance with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation and the Trust's Data Protection Policy, when working at or from home you are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of any Trust-related resources/equipment or information to which you have access. In particular:

7.2.1 You must restrict the access of family and friends to work equipment, materials, documents and other data in order to avoid damage or loss, and maintain confidentiality;

7.2.2 You must ensure that all confidential material that requires disposal is shredded or, in the case of electronic material, securely destroyed, as soon as any need for its retention has passed; and

7.2.3 You must use best endeavours to ensure the care of work-related information and Trust property when travelling to or from home.

8 Review of policy

This policy is reviewed every 2 years by the Trust. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.