Staploe Education Trust

Working from Home Policy

Version:	1.1
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Approved by:	Infrastructure Committee
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Contents

1. Aims and definitions

This policy aims to:

- Set out expectations for staff working from home
- Outline how the Trust will support staff to work from home when they need to

This policy applies to all staff, with the exception of volunteers. This policy will provide line managers and employees with guidance on working from home to ensure that this is undertaken fairly and consistently across Staploe Education Trust and in accordance with equality and diversity principles.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Working from Home policy is applied consistently across the Trust

'Working from Home' is defined as 'employees of Staploe Education Trust who undertake Trust/School work in their own home.[1]

2. Circumstances when staff might work from home

Staff may work at home

- Where this is agreed as suitable working practice for a role either as a regular arrangement or as an occasional event
- When an individual is following specific clinical/and or public health advice which precludes work in the normal workplace

An employee can suggest an occasional right to work from home to meet a specific obligation more effectively, or might request a regular change to their working pattern to include days worked from home where work can regularly be carried out effectively at home.

Any employee wishing to work from home should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance.

The line manager will consider such requests. The line manager will evaluate the potential benefits to the employee of working from home and the impact of that upon the business needs of the Trust.

The outcome of that discussion should be summarised and agreed by both parties with a recommendation. If no agreement is reached that should be noted.

The matter should then be referred to the Operations Director for decision.

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

- Giving the business reason(s) for turning down your request
- Explaining why the business reasons apply to your case, and
- Setting out the appeal procedure

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[1] For the purpose of this policy, the Trust recognises that home working may take place at another address other than the worker's personal address, such as where a vulnerable member of the worker's family lives for whom they are now caring, or at the home of the worker's partner. It is the responsibility of individual workers to ensure that their line manager and HR has up-to-date contact details whilst they are working from home, particularly if this is not at their normal personal address. Line managers will treat this information confidentially and in line with the Trust Data Protection policy which can be found on the Trust website.

The business reasons for which a request could be turned down are:

    a) Operational difficulties in covering absence
    b) Loss of entitlement/continuity of educational provision for pupils/students
    c) The request is outside the policy framework
    d) Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
    e) Detrimental impact on quality of work
    f) Detrimental impact on performance

If the request is not granted, the matter can be raised with the Executive Headteacher for review. The Executive Headteacher's decision is final.

Workers should check there are no issues with them working from home, with their home insurer, mortgage provider or landlord. Any issues should be promptly reported to their manager for advice.

3. Working hours

When working from home, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours.

Outside of these hours, staff are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents or pupils – unless in an emergency,

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours from home.

4. Duties

Workers are subject to the same rules, policies, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as when they were working in their normal workplace.

Wherever possible, staff working from home will carry out their normal duties in line with their job description/contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow school practice or otherwise be agreed with their line manager.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties from home, their line manager will discuss alternative arrangements.

If a member of staff is working from home because they are unable to work in their normal workplace, there may need to be an adjustment to those normal duties.

If a member of staff is working from home on a regular or occasional basis, they will need to attend their normal workplace in order to fulfil their normal duties.

Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do the Trust's workplace policies. Any change is subject to the Trust's Flexible Working policy.

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working from home, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the school's normal absence procedure.

If a disagreement arises concerning the appropriateness or effectiveness of working from home, staff are directed to appropriate policies (disciplinary, grievance, management of performance, code of conduct etc.).

5. Sickness absence

Homeworkers must comply with the Trust's Sickness Absence Management policy and ensure they report

their sickness to their school and line manager when they are sick and unable to work.

6. Working time and contact

It is expected that whilst working from home, employees should be contactable during normal working hours by email and/or telephone. If appropriate staff members may want to forward their work telephone number to a personal phone number during work hours.

In all circumstances the employee must ensure that adequate child care provision is in place to enable working from home.

7. Safeguarding

Where staff are working from home, they will continue to follow and be subject to all our existing policies and standards.

8. Technical support

- Staff whose normal workplace is on site are generally expected to provide their own equipment to enable working from home.

- Access to systems is through remote desktop, shared drives or Microsoft Teams.

- Anti-virus and regular patching of personal computers is essential, for example Microsoft Windows Security Essentials.

- Adequate broadband internet access is the responsibility of the employee.

- Telephone or email support is provided during the ICT helpdesk. This support is limited to Trust systems and software. Problems with personal computer equipment or broadband connectivity are the responsibility of the employee.

- Employees should check for scheduled maintenance that may disrupt Trust services and systems prior to arranging to work from home:

All employees who work from home are expected to take reasonable care of any Trust equipment provided.

The Trust will accept no liability for loss or damage to any equipment arising as a result of home working by employees, other than that which is owned by the Trust. If applicable, employees who work from home are responsible for notifying their landlord/mortgage provider and their insurance company of the use of parts of their home for business use.

9. Health and Safety

The Trust retains responsibility for the health and safety of its employees who work away from site. The health and safety hazards associated with working from home are no different from those on school grounds. If an employee works at home on behalf of the Trust, both their own and the Trust's duty of care for health/safety/welfare extends to cover the employee whilst they are working at home.

The employee and their line manager should be satisfied that health and safety conditions whilst working from home are of the same or higher standards than working on site. Employees should not be expected to work from home due to inadequate health and safety conditions on site, although there may be health,

safety, welfare and environmental benefits from working from home. However, some risks of injury or occupational ill-health could be slightly increased when working from home by unergonomic working conditions, social isolation or lack of employer supervision.

Please see the Trust's Health and Safety Policy for further guidance, as well as our Lone Working Policy.

Employees who work from home should take appropriate rest breaks, as defined by the Working Time Regulations.

The Trust recommends that staff set up an appropriate space for working at home so they do not cause physical injury to themselves. Where possible, it recommends that staff aim to:

- Sit upright at a table/desk, on a chair

- Raise their laptop/tablet (e.g. using books or a stand)

- Use a separate keyboard and mouse

- Have appropriate lighting near to the workstation

The Trust will seek to implement reasonable adjustments for disabled workers;

10. Data protection

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)

- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device

- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time

- Not sharing the device among family or friends

- Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software

- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates

- The employee and line manager must consider specifically how they will comply with confidentiality issues, the Data Protection Act 1998, regular data back-up procedures and Trust policy.

- Workers must report any actual or potential breach of security, confidentiality or data protection to their line manager and DPO Officer immediately.

- Employees should not store or leave copies of sensitive information on the computer. If work must be done on a local copy, the file should be moved (not copied) back to Trust networks at the end of your session.

- For further advice, please contact the ICT Helpdesk in the first instance.

- Please ensure you have made yourself aware of the Trust's Data Protection policy and risk assessment.

- Workers who are unsure about any aspect of security, confidentiality or data protection, should seek advice from the relevant policy and their line manager. Only equipment that a worker's line manager has authorised may be used for homeworking.

11. Wellbeing support

Staff should communicate with their line manager if they are not able to attend the normal workplace and their wellbeing is being affected while working from home.

Wellbeing support is available to all staff regardless of whether they work from home or in the workplace, and can be sought from their line manager or the HR department.

12. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection policy
- ICT acceptable use policy
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Staff code of conduct
- Health and Safety policy

13. Equality of opportunity

The Trust is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and it is the responsibility of all Trust employees to promote "equality and diversity" in the application of this policy ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability, race/ethnic origin, sex/gender, age, religion, marital/family status, dependency, sexual orientation, political opinion, and economic or social status.

14. Policy review

This policy will normally be reviewed on a 3-year cycle. This review may be brought forward as required by the Trust to reflect changes in supporting advice/guidance.

Appendix 1: Request to Work from Home

Name	
Job Title	

Please complete the relevant section depending on your intended work from home pattern

I would like to work at home regularly on these days of the week	
I would like to work at home occasionally on these days	
I would like to work at home on these specified dates	

Reason for Request:

Impact evaluation on the Trust/School

Would you have appropriate equipment and access to resources if you worked from home?	YES / NO
Are you able to use data safely at home?	YES / NO
Have you undertaken an initial DSE assessment for home working?	YES / NO
Are there any health and safety concerns should you work from home?	YES / NO

Anything further to note?

Official Trust Working from Home Decision

Your request to work from home as stated above is	APPROVED / NOT APPROVED
If this has not been approved this is due to the following reason(s):	
Name	
Job Title	Date