

Flexible Working Policy

The school is committed to the promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity for all employees. Applying a flexible approach to the way that work is delivered, whilst supporting employees to balance their work and home life, can have a positive impact on employee engagement, wellbeing and organisational effectiveness.

This policy provides a way for employees to apply for a contractual change to their working arrangements. These changes may include change in hours or times of work, term time working, compressed hours, job share or working from home. It should be noted that agreement to one employee's request will not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted the same or a similar change to their working pattern.

Where the headteacher is the employee concerned, any reference to the headteacher in this policy should be replaced with the chair of governors.

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1 Informal requests

Informal flexible working arrangements can be agreed locally between an employee and their Headteacher. An informal approach may be appropriate where the change is relatively minor, ad hoc and for a temporary period. Informal arrangements should be reviewed regularly.

Even where a formal request is required, i.e. to introduce a contractual change, employees are encouraged to discuss the request with their Headteacher at the earliest opportunity, for example, during 1-2-1 meetings. Early discussions, in advance of an application allows both parties to informally consider the most appropriate flexible working arrangement.

2 Formal requests

We aim to positively support all employees, whether they are working parents, carers or simply seeking an alternative working pattern to suit their own work life balance.

All employees with a least 26 weeks continuous service with their employer have a statutory right to request a flexible working arrangement. In addition, the employee must not have made another request within the previous 12 months.

The school has a statutory duty to consider a request in a reasonable manner but can refuse a request where there is a clear business reason for doing so.

2.1 Making a request

The employee should complete the Flexible Working Application Form, available on the extranet, and send it to their Headteacher for consideration.

The form will ask the employee to provide as much detail as possible about the change that they wish to make, when they would like it to come into effect and any impact they believe it would have on the school.

Timescales for each stage of the process are detailed below but as a minimum, the employee should receive a decision within 3 months of submitting their application.

2.2 Considering the request

The Headteacher will consider, assess and evaluate the potential business implications of implementing flexible working arrangements, for example, the potential impact on costs, supervision, staff, services and the ability to meet objectives.

2.2.1 Meeting the employee

If the Headteacher has concerns about being able to implement the changes requested by the employee, they should arrange to meet with them to discuss the issues within 14 school days of receiving the Flexible Working Application Form. The employee can be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative.

The meeting should provide an opportunity to discuss the perceived barriers, discuss ways these barriers or concerns could be overcome and to consider alternative options that may be able to be accommodated. Following the meeting, the Headteacher should inform the employee of their decision within 14 school days.

2.2.2 Agreeing the request

If the Headteacher agrees to the proposed changes or has reached agreement with the employee for an alternative proposal, they should notify the employee as soon as possible. This should be confirmed in writing by completing the relevant section of the Flexible Working Application Form and sending a copy to the employee within 14 school days of receiving the Form (if no meeting took place) or within 14 school days of the meeting.

The Headteacher should notify Payroll & Employee Services through SAIL to ensure the changes are made to the employee's contract and/or pay where appropriate. A copy of the completed Flexible Working Application Form should be attached to the SAIL request.

Once agreed, any change will become a permanent change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment and they will not be entitled to revert back to their previous work pattern, unless the request has been explicitly agreed as an informal, short term temporary arrangement.

2.2.3 Rejecting the request

It is important that a positive effort is made to come to a workable solution when any request for a flexible working change is submitted. There may be some circumstances where it is not possible to reach agreement and in these cases the rejection must be linked to one or more of the following reasons:

- The burden of additional costs;
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- Inability to reorganise the work amongst existing team
- Inability to recruit additional staff;
- Detrimental impact on quality or performance;
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- Planned structural changes.

The Headteacher must inform the employee of their decision as soon as possible and should confirm the decision in writing, by completing the relevant section of the Flexible Working Application Form, within 14 school days of the meeting. The timescales can be extended by prior agreement if it is not possible to complete consideration of the request within the stipulated timescales.

Headteachers are encouraged to seek advice from the HR Advice and Support team throughout the process.

2.3 Appeal

Employees have the right of appeal against a decision to reject their flexible working request. An employee wishing to lodge an appeal should do so by following the [Appeals Policy](#), which is available on the extranet.

This brings an end to the formal procedure.



This policy has been developed by the HR Advice and Support team, based on current legislation and best practice. If you would like any advice on the application of this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the team:

Telephone	03000 266688
Email	hradvice@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting (subject to SLA buy in):

Payroll and Employee Services	pesschools@durham.gov.uk
Occupational Health	occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk
Health and Safety	hsteam@durham.gov.uk
Employee Assistance Programme	www.healthassuredeap.com Username: durham Password: council 0800 716017

Author	Version	Last review	Next review
MM	v 1.2	September 2021	April 2022

The school complies with all relevant statutory obligations. The school privacy notice provides more specific information on data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed from the school. For more information please contact the school directly.

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the school Data Protection Officer (details available from the school office), or the Information Commissioner's Office.