



# **WORKING FROM HOME POLICY**

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1 Homeworking can be really beneficial for individuals and organisations. The Trust will try to accommodate it wherever possible.
- 1.2 This policy explains how to apply for homeworking, and the things the Trust take into account when considering your request. It also covers the safeguards that need to be put in place and the practical arrangements that make homeworking a success.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of your employment contract and the Trust may update it at any time in consultation with Trade Unions.

## **2. What is homeworking?**

- 2.1 Homeworking means working from home on an occasional, a temporary or a permanent basis. It could be a one-off day. It could be a new pattern of working partly from home. It could be working entirely from home for a fixed period or indefinitely. There are lots of options.
- 2.2 Homeworking does not entitle you to choose when and how you work. It simply means you do your job from home.
- 2.3 Your contractual obligations, including your core working hours, continue to apply.
- 2.4 Any changes would need to be agreed between the Trust and the employee.

### **Occasional homeworking**

- 2.5 There are various reasons why you might want or need to work from home on a particular day or for a short period. These could include:
  - Logistical difficulties in getting to work, for example on a snow day;
  - Needing to concentrate on a work document in a quiet environment.
- 2.6 This policy does not focus on occasional homeworking, although we do touch on it. It is aimed more at homeworking arrangements that change your contractual 'place of work'.

### **Homeworking that changes your 'place of work'**

- 2.7 This is when you have agreed a new working arrangement with us. It is where your home becomes your working base for at least some of the week/month, temporarily or permanently.
- 2.8 You can either follow the procedure set out in this policy, or the procedure set out in our Flexible Working Policy.

## **3. Is your role suitable for homeworking?**

- 3.1 The Trust will consider your homeworking request under this policy if you are an employee and have successfully completed your probationary period and all necessary training], or where homeworking is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 The Trust will need to be satisfied that your role is one that is suited to homeworking (not all are).
- 3.3 You will also need to have the personal attributes and skills that mean you should be able to do your job effectively from home.

**For example:**

- The ability to work independently;
  - Self-motivation;
  - Self-discipline;
  - Good time management;
  - The ability, through remote technology, to access materials you will need and speak with people you'll need to speak with;
  - Being able to separate work life and home life.
- 3.4 Your personnel record, including your recent conduct and performance levels and any unexpired warnings, will be taken into account when making any decisions.
  - 3.5 Your home environment must be suitable for homeworking. This includes having a suitable working area, and an acceptable internet connection.

#### **4. How do I apply for homeworking?**

- 4.1 Occasional homeworking usually needs to be arranged at short notice. That might be because your child is suddenly unwell (in which case you should also consider your right to take time off to care for a dependant), or where poor weather makes it advisable for you to stay at home. In those types of situations, you should contact your direct line manager as soon as you think you will need to work from home.
- 4.2 They will decide whether or not to authorise homeworking on that occasion [but you can assume it will be allowed unless you are told otherwise].
- 4.3 If you would like to make homeworking a normal part of your contract, you should discuss this with your direct line manager as a first step. If you then decide to make a formal request for homeworking under this policy, send an application letter or email to your Headteacher or your direct line manager.
- 4.4 It is important that the Trust has enough time to consider your request properly, so please send any request to your direct line manager within 8 weeks of your proposed working arrangement commencing.
- 4.5 If you are applying for homeworking as part of a flexible working request (which has a special formal process set by employment law) you must be clear about that and follow the Trust's Flexible Working Policy.

#### **5. What should I include in my application?**

- 5.1 Tell us in as much detail as you can about the homeworking arrangement you are proposing. In particular:
- What your working week/month would look like.
  - Whether homeworking would be a temporary or a permanent arrangement.
  - When you would like the homeworking to begin and/or end if requesting a temporary change.
  - How you think homeworking would work for you, for your role and for us.
  - Why you think you and your role are suited to homeworking.
  - How you would do your job just as effectively from home.
  - How you would maintain proper contact and relationships with pupils, parents/guardians and carers, colleagues, clients, and your manager.
  - How you would protect confidential information belonging to us and to our pupils, parents/guardians and carers, colleagues, clients and suppliers.
- 5.2. If you believe that homeworking would be a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010, you should tell us that and explain why. The Trust may require medical evidence from you to confirm your condition.

## **6. When the Trust receives your request**

- 6.1 Your line manager will meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your proposed homeworking.
- 6.2 Your line manager may want to visit your home (possibly more than once) to assess its suitability, which may include carrying out a health and safety risk assessment. Your line manager may require you to arrange and pay for any necessary modifications and may refuse/cease your homeworking request if those modifications are not made within a reasonable timeframe, or if they do not rectify any health and safety risk(s) identified.
- 6.3 Your line manager may also want to carry out a data protection risk assessment before deciding whether or not to agree to the homeworking.
- 6.4 Your line manager will write to you to let you know whether they agree to the homeworking. Each request is considered on its own merits. Even if the Trust has approved a similar request in the past, the Trust are not obliged to doing the same in the future.
- 6.5 If your request is approved, the Trust will want you to complete a trial period. This is usually 3 months or one term, and may be extended where necessary. If that trial period is unsuccessful, you may need to return to the previous contractual position, unless some other arrangement can be agreed.
- 6.6 If you are unhappy with a refusal of your request under this policy, you should write to the Director of Human Resources, Reach South Academy Trust, within 7 calendar days of our decision, explaining your reasons.

## **7. Setting up the homeworking**

### **Property and equipment**

- 7.1 The Trust might loan you some of the things you will need to be able to do your job properly and safely from home. These may include a laptop, desktop screen, secure filing cabinet, mobile phone. The Trust may ask you to

contribute to the cost of any necessary installations such as a broadband connection.

- 7.2. You must take good care of anything loaned to you and return it to us when requested in satisfactory condition.
- 7.3 You may not use the equipment or other property provided for personal/family use.
- 7.4 If you intend using any personal equipment such as a computer for homeworking you must check with your line manager first. Your line manager will need to make sure that it is suitable and that GDPR provisions will be complied with. Any personal equipment that your line manager agrees to you using remains your responsibility, so you would need to cover the cost of things like repairs.

### **Household bills**

- 7.5 You will be expected to cover the cost of utilities including heating and electricity necessary for your homeworking.

### **Mortgage, lease and insurance**

- 7.6 You are responsible for making sure that your mortgage or lease and home insurance do not restrict or prevent your home being used for work.
- 7.7 You should discuss with your home insurer any changes that may need to be made to your policy to ensure that you are fully protected while working from home. Any additional cost will be incurred by the employee.
- 7.8 There may be tax implications to homeworking. You should get specific advice on this from the Reach South Academy Trust, Payroll Department.

## **8. Managing the homeworking**

- 8.1 Employees who work from home are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities continue and workplace policies continue to apply.
- 8.2 The Trust wants you to remain as involved as possible in our schools and our Trust activities while you are working from home. This includes having access to School and Trust news, events and benefits, as well as opportunities for professional development, training and promotion.
- 8.3 Your line manager will keep in regular contact with you during your homeworking via phone, email, and business Skype conferencing and face-to-face meetings.
- 8.4 If you at any point feel isolated, left out, or lacking guidance or support you should discuss this with your manager or your Human Resources Business Partner.
- 8.5 Where an IT or other problem prevents you from working effectively from home, you should contact the IT Department straightaway. The Trust may need you to come into work until the issue has been resolved.

- 8.6 If you cannot work on a homeworking day because of illness or injury, you must follow the procedure set out in our Trust Absence Management Policy.

## **9. Expenses**

- 9.1 The Trust Expenses Policy will apply.
- 9.2 The Trust will reimburse you for your reasonable postage, photocopying and printing costs and any reasonable travelling costs in respect of meetings with us and with pupils, colleague's clients/customers/suppliers. For the purpose of calculating mileage in accordance of HMRC regulations, your school will be considered your place of work. For those who work across more than one school or who work across the Trust, the nearest school to your home location will be considered your base. For those that are not within a 20 mile area of one of the Trust's schools then your base will be home and mileage will be reduced by 20 miles each way.
- 9.3 You should email your expenses claim form to your line manager at the end of each month for approval. The Trust reserves the right to refuse any expense not claimed within a three month period and is not in line with the Trusts expense policy.

## **10. Health and safety**

- 10.1 The Trust may carry out periodic health and safety risk assessments of your homeworking, as well as maintenance checks and electrical testing.
- 10.2 You have a responsibility to take reasonable care. If you have any health and safety concerns, or if an accident or incident takes place, you must immediately report this to line manager in line with our Health and Safety Policy.
- 10.3 It will not be appropriate to hold school/work-related meetings in your home, or to give out personal details like your address. If you are unsure about any aspect of this, contact your line manager or Human Resources Business Partner.

## **11. Security, confidentiality and data protection**

- 11.1 Our high standards regarding data security and integrity must be adhered to at all times. You should familiarise yourself with our Data Protection Policy in particular.
- 11.2 Data protection risk assessments will be carried out periodically.
- 11.3 Only equipment that the Trust have authorised may be used for homeworking.
- 11.4 Whenever you are prompted to install a legitimate update to your computer or other equipment, you must do so straightaway.

- 11.5 You must report any actual or potential breach of security, confidentiality or data protection to the Trusts Data Protection Officer.
- 11.6 If you are unsure about any aspect of security, confidentiality or data protection, you must speak with your direct line manager, the Trusts ICT Manager or your Human Resources Department.

## **12. Accessing your home**

- 12.1 Your line manager may need to access your home to set up the homeworking and to carry out risk assessments, checks, and repairs to our equipment.
- 12.2 Your line manager may also need access in order to retrieve our property, whether during the homeworking, at the end of the homeworking arrangement, or when your employment ends.
- 12.3 Your line manager may need to visit your home and where this may be the case, the Trust will give you as much notice as possible.

## **13. What if you move house?**

- 13.1 Your line manager will reassess the homeworking arrangement.
- 13.2 If the Trust considers that the house move would make, or has made, homeworking unsuitable, it will be discussed with you and the Trust may decide to bring the homeworking to an end. If that happens, you will usually be able to return to your previous contractual place of work, although that cannot be guaranteed.

## **14. Ending and reviewing the homeworking arrangement**

- 14.1 If you want to bring your homeworking to an end, you should speak with your direct manager.
- 14.2 The Trust may decide to end your homeworking arrangement or set a review period in order to review the success of the home working arrangement if it is not working as it should, or it has become or will soon become unsuitable.
- 14.3 If homeworking has become unsuitable because of your conduct or performance, the Trust may terminate the homeworking arrangement immediately and require you to return to the normal location for your role.
- 14.4 When your homeworking arrangement has ended, the Trust will usually be able to return into the workplace, but that cannot be guaranteed (and may not be appropriate if action is taken under 14.3 above).

## **15. Working from home during a crisis**

- 15.1 Normally, working from home means doing your job from home. However, it is accepted that during any crisis that it is not always possible to do the full duties of your role from home, especially if you work in a school setting. Therefore, staff working from home will be expected to do their substantive role, wherever possible, and any reasonable task given to you by your line manager. This may include lesson planning, delivering Google classroom sessions that may or may

not be for your normal class year or group or even your school. All staff must remember that all staff work for a Multi Academy Trust and it is our professional responsibility to ensure all our schools are supported and remain open.

- 15.2 It is vital during any time of uncertainty that all staff work to support both our colleagues and our pupils in doing our best to continue to deliver good quality education.
- 15.4 In the event that schools are closed all staff need to try their best as a team to continue to deliver good quality education.
- 15.5 Any home working arrangements put in place during this time will be temporary and will cease once normal business resumes.

## POLICY HISTORY

<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Implementati on Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
April 2020	Consultation with Trade Unions	HR	XX	XX
May 2020	Implementation of new policy	HR	May 2020	September 2023

## APPENDIX 1



### WORKING FROM HOME AGREEMENT

Name:	
Job Title:	
School/Department:	
Home Office Address:	
Home Office Email:	
Home/Work Mobile Number:	
Contact Arrangements:	
Number of Days/Hrs at Home Base:	
Number of Days/Hrs at School/Trust Base:	
<b>Specific reason for home based work:</b> Outline agreed deliverables/outcomes to be achieved when WFH	

I have read and understood the conditions set out in the Working from Home agreement procedure and indicate my acceptance of the terms of this agreement by signing below.

Employee signature:	Date:
Approved by Line Manager:	Yes/No Comments:
Line Managers Signature:	Date:

## APPENDIX 2



### HOMWORKING SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

#### 1) INDICATE THE TYPE OF HOMEWORKING

Contractual Homeworking?	Ad-hoc homeworking
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#### 2) DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT USE

Note: Laptops and other portables devices are not ideally suited to prolonged use. If you are a DSE user and must use a laptop, you should set it up on a suitable work surface wherever possible and avoid prolonged use in other non working situations. It can be helpful to connect a separate mouse and keyboard and place the laptop on screen risers, at an appropriate height above the work surface.

You should carefully check the arrangement of your home workstation using this checklist to ensure it meets the minimum requirements. Using an unsuitable workstation or working with poor posture can lead to injury. Bring any concerns to the attention of your line manager as soon as possible.

How many hours are spent at the DSE in a normal working day?	
How long is a normal continual spell spent at the DSE?	

A: - Display screen			Y	N	THINGS TO CONSIDER
1	Are the characters on the screen clear and readable from the appropriate working position?				Make sure the screen is clean, Check the text and background colours work well together
2	Are the screen characters of adequate size with adequate spacing between the characters and the lines?				Software settings may need adjusting to change text size
3	Is the screen image stable? (i.e. no flickering, jittering or drifting)				Report any problems to the IT helpdesk
4	Does the display screen have easily adjustable controls for brightness and contrast?				Separate adjustments are not essential as long as the user can read the screen at all times
5	Does the screen swivel and tilt easily?				
6	Is the screen at a comfortable height for you?				Screen risers can be provided if required
7	Is the screen free from reflections and glare?				Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare
8	Are adjustable window coverings provided, (e.g. blinds, curtains) and in good condition?				Check that blinds work. Vertical blinds may be more suitable than horizontal ones

<b>9</b>	Is the software suitable for the task? Software should help the user to carry out tasks, minimise stress and be user-friendly.			Check if there are any training requirements for the software.
<b>B: - Keyboard/mouse trackball etc.</b>				
		<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>
<b>1</b>	Is the keyboard separate from the screen?			Laptop computers do not meet this requirement unless a separate keyboard and mouse are used
<b>2</b>	Can the tilt of the keyboard be adjusted?			Tilt need not be built in
<b>3</b>	Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?			Try pushing the screen back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists
<b>4</b>	Is there sufficient space in front of the keyboard to provide support of the hands and wrists, and a comfortable keying position?			Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard
<b>5</b>	Are the keyboards characters clear from an appropriate work position?			Keyboards should be kept clean
<b>6</b>	Does the user have good keyboard technique?			Try to avoid / prevent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hands bent up at wrist,</li> <li>• hitting the keys too hard and</li> <li>• overstretching</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	Is the mouse suitable and positioned close to the user?			Most devices are best placed as close as possible e.g. right beside the keyboard
<b>8</b>	Is there support for the mouse user's wrist and forearm?			Support can be gained from the desk surface, or the arm of the chair. A separate supporting device can also help (e.g. mouse mat with wrist rest).
<b>9</b>	Does the mouse work smoothly at a suitable speed?			Check that the mouse is clean and the work surface suitable.
<b>10</b>	Can you adjust the software settings for speed and accuracy of the pointer?			Call the IT helpdesk if you need advice

<b>C: - Work desk/furniture</b>				
		<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>
<b>1</b>	Is there sufficient space to allow flexible and comfortable arrangement of all work equipment?			Create as much room on the desktop as you can by removing items you don't require on a regular basis
<b>2</b>	Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?			Rearrange equipment, paper etc. to bring frequently used items within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements. Document holders can save space on your workstation
<b>3</b>	Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?			Consider mats / blotters to reduce reflection and glare.

4	Is there adequate space to adopt correct and comfortable posture?		
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Move any obstructions from under the desk

<b>D: - Chair</b>			
		Y	N
1	Is the chair suitable and stable?		
2	Does the chair have a working seat back height and tilt adjustment		
3	Does the chair have a working seat height adjustment?		
4	Does the chair have a working swivel mechanism?		
5	Does the chair have working castors or glides?		
6	Is the chair adjusted correctly?		
7	Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?		
8	Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the screen?		
9	Can the feet be placed flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?		

<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>	
The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.	
The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.	
The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Adjust the chair height to get the users arms in the right position, and then adjust the screen height, if necessary.	
Consider a footrest if required.	

<b>E: - Work Environment</b>			
		Y	N
1	Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?		
2	Is the lighting suitable, e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?		
3	Are levels of noise comfortable?		
4	Are levels of heat comfortable?		
5	Does the air feel comfortable, (not too dry or humid)?		

<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>	
Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget.	
Shading, repositioning light source or providing local lighting can be considered.	
Consider moving source of noise, soundproofing?	
Temperature should ideally be between 19°C and 25°C	
Humidity levels should be kept between 40% and 60%.	

<b>F: - The Operator</b>			
		Y	N

<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>	

1	Have you been given instructions in the use of your workstation?			DSE user training must be completed. Online and taught training courses are available.
2	Do you know the correct procedure to follow if any health and safety problems arise?			In the first instance, you should consult your DSE assessor or line manager. Further advice and assistance is available from the Health and Safety adviser and occupational health.
3	Are there adequate opportunities for regular breaks or changes in activity away from the display screen equipment?			A change in activity can be classed as a break as long as the user has a small rest from PC work. Short, more frequent breaks are likely to be more beneficial than longer, less frequent breaks.
4	Do you suffer from any back, neck or limb pain or any other symptoms which you think may be caused or made worse by DSE?			If, Yes please give details below and contact your line manager if additional equipment is required :
<b>G: - Eyesight</b> - Extensive research has found no evidence that DSE work can cause disease or permanent damage to the eyes.				
		<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>THINGS TO CONSIDER</b>
5	Have you been advised of your entitlement to receive eye and eyesight tests?			All DSE users are entitled to the provision of eye examinations on request. The Trust will fund the cost of basic corrective eyewear in line with Trust policy, where required for DSE use.

### 3) THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Question	Y	N	Comments
Is all portable electrical equipment used for work free from obvious damage and defects? Has it been PAT tested in the last year? Note: homeworkers should regularly check electrical equipment for obvious signs of damage.			
Are electric sockets supplying an appropriate number of appliances, (i.e. not overloaded)?			
Are electrical cables are correctly routed to avoid a tripping hazard?			
Is the work area kept tidy?			

Is there a clear and unobstructed escape route for you and other occupiers in case of fire?		
Are suitably located working smoke detector/s installed in the home?		
Are floors and floor coverings in the work area in good condition and free from tripping hazards?		
Are floors and traffic routes in the work area kept clear of work equipment, papers etc.?		
Are work items, papers, files etc. are stored so that they will not fall, and can be safely retrieved?		
Do homeworking activities involve significant manual handling, (if 'yes' describe)?		
If significant manual handling is involved, has a manual handling assessment been carried out?		
Is suitable and sufficient heating, lighting and ventilation provided?		
Is a first aid kit available?		
Is homeworking permitted in the terms of your buildings and contents insurance, (where applicable)? (Evidence may be required)		
Is homeworking permitted in the terms of your tenancy agreement, (where applicable)? (Evidence may be required)		

**Employee Signature:**

**Date:**

**Line Manager Signature:**

**Date:**

**This checklist must be reviewed when any significant changes are made to your work or the working environment. Please send the completed checklist to your Line Manager**