



# SIR THOMAS RICH'S

## Flexible Working Policy

**Date reviewed:** April 2025 (next review date April 2028)  
**Status:** Non Statutory (best practice)  
**Responsibility:** The School's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) draws up and implements the Flexible Working Policy for Staff. It is the responsibility of the Trustees' Personnel committee to review the policy regularly and monitor its implementation.

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## 1. Introduction

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing working practices and policies that support work-life balance. The purpose of this Flexible Working Policy is to give eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern in accordance with the statutory procedure for such requests. The needs of the pupils and students within the School are paramount and their interests will always be considered in relation to requests for flexible working.

We will deal with flexible working requests in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time. In any event, the time between making a request and notifying you of a final decision (including the outcome of any appeal) will be less than two months unless we have agreed a longer period with you.

No one who makes a request for flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career development opportunities as a result. However, the School recognises that the provisions in this policy may be inappropriate for some roles.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

## **2. Entitlement**

This policy applies to eligible employees only. It does not apply to contract/agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors or volunteers.

## **3. Forms of flexible working**

Flexible working can incorporate several possible changes to working arrangements, such as:

- 3.1 reduction or variation of working hours;
- 3.2 reduction or variation of the days or times worked; and/or
- 3.3 working from a different location (for example, from home).

Formal requests for possible changes to working arrangements may also involve:

- 3.4 starting a job share;
- 3.5 phasing in retirement;
- 3.6 working a set number of hours a year, rather than a week (annualised hours);
- 3.7 working from home (whether for all or part of the week);
- 3.8 working only during term-time (part-year working);
- 3.9 working compressed hours; and/or
- 3.10 working flexi-time.

The School recognises that these provisions are in the statutes and clearly some may be inappropriate to some staff employed in schools.

Flexible working may have an impact on pension benefits and therefore employees are strongly advised to contact Teachers' Pensions or Local Government Pension Scheme office for further advice.

## **4. Eligibility for the formal right to request**

To be eligible to make a request under the formal (statutory) procedure set out in paragraph 5 to paragraph 8 you must:

- 4.1 be an employee;
- 4.2 not have made two formal requests to work flexibly during the last 12 months; and
- 4.3 not make a formal request to work flexibly if a request you made previously has not been concluded.

Staff should use a formal (statutory) request for flexible working if their proposal requires a permanent change to their contractual terms and conditions.

If you are not eligible to make a formal request, you may make an informal request under paragraph 10.

## **5. Making a formal flexible working request - Procedure**

Any employee interested in flexible working is advised to speak informally with their line manager to discuss their eligibility and the different options for flexible working, before submitting a formal or informal request.

The employee will need to submit a written application to The Headteacher if they would like their flexible working request to be considered under the formal procedure, after first considering:

- In their specific circumstances, which working pattern would help them best.
- Any potential financial implications on themselves.
- Any potential effects on the functioning of the School and how these might be met.
- Any potential impact on the pupils, and how this might be met.

An application should be submitted in good time and ideally at least two months before the employee wishes them to take effect. It should:

- 5.1 state that it is a flexible working request;
- 5.2 explain the reasons for the request, especially if in relation to equal opportunities, for example, if the request concerns childcare or other family commitments, religious or cultural requirements, or adjustments because of a disability;
- 5.3 provide as much information as possible about the current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which the changes are to take effect;
- 5.4 provide information to confirm that the employee meets the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 4 of this policy including the dates of any previous formal requests for flexible working;

In most cases the Headteacher will meet with the employee before making a decision. In some cases, the Headteacher may be able to approve a request without a formal meeting, although it will usually be helpful to discuss the request in person to ensure it is the best solution.

## **6. Formal request: meeting**

Where necessary, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the employee after their application has been submitted. The meeting may also be attended by the Line Manager and/or HR Manager.

The employee may be accompanied by a union representative or by another employee from the School.

In most cases, the meeting will be held at the School, at a time and place that is convenient to everyone.

The meeting will be used to discuss the working arrangements the employee has requested. They will be able to explain how the arrangements will accommodate their needs. They will also be able to discuss what impact their proposed working arrangements will have on their work and that of their colleagues. If the School cannot accommodate the arrangements requested, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.

The Headteacher may suggest starting new working arrangements under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet the needs of the employee and those of their team and department.

## **7. Formal request: decision**

The Headteacher will notify the employee of the decision in writing as soon as possible.

If the request is accepted, or where the School propose an alternative to the arrangements requested, the Headteacher will write to the employee with details of the new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to their contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. The employee will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on the individual's personnel file to confirm the variation to their terms of employment.

Unless otherwise agreed (and subject to any agreed trial period) changes to the employee's terms of employment will be permanent. It should be noted that the employee's right to make formal flexible working requests is limited to two in any 12-month period.

If the Headteacher needs more time to make a decision, for example, where they need more time to investigate how the employee's request can be accommodated or to consult several members of staff, they will discuss this with the employee. (See Section 9.)

There will be circumstances where, due to operational requirements, the School are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, the Headteacher will write to the employee explaining the School's reason(s) for turning down the application and setting out the appeals procedure. The grounds for refusal are as follows;

- The burden of additional cost to the School
- A detrimental effect on the quality of work (for example, if, as a result, pupils risk not receiving high-quality teaching)
- A detrimental effect on performance (for example, if the staff member risks failing to meet important deadlines)
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet demand (for example, where an administrative assistant would not be present at busy periods with high workloads)
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet the needs of the School
- A detrimental impact on management responsibilities
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit new staff
- Insufficient work during the proposed working period
- Planned changes to staffing structure

## **8. Formal request: appeal**

If a request is rejected, the employee has the right to appeal and shall give notice to the Headteacher, dated and in writing within 14 days of receiving the refusal notice. The notice of appeal shall set out the grounds for appeal.

The appeal meeting will be held within 14 days of receipt of the appeal notice and conducted by a Trustee or Headteacher who has not been previously involved in considering the employee's request. The employee may be accompanied by a colleague of their choice or a union representative. In most cases, the meeting will be held at the School, at a time and place that is convenient to everyone.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as possible after the appeal meeting.

If the appeal is upheld, the employee will be advised of their new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to their contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. They will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on their personnel file to confirm the variation to their terms of employment.

As in paragraph 7 above, the employee should be aware that changes to their terms of employment will be permanent and that their right to make formal flexible working requests is limited to two in any 12-month period.

Should the appeal be rejected, the written decision will give the business reason(s) for the decision and explain why the reason(s) applies/apply in this case.

### **9. Extending time under the formal procedure/withdrawing a request**

There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete consideration of a request within the expected time limits. Where an extension of time is agreed with the employee, the Headteacher will write to them confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.

Should the employee withdraw a formal request for flexible working, that request will be counted against a maximum of two formal requests in a 12-month period. In certain circumstances, the Headteacher will treat a formal request as withdrawn. This will occur if the employee should fail to attend a meeting and a re-arranged meeting, or an appeal meeting and a re-arranged appeal meeting, without good cause. In such circumstances, the Headteacher will write to you confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

### **10. Making an informal (non-statutory) flexible working request**

Employees who are ineligible to make a formal request for flexible working may make an informal request to the Line Manager/Headteacher, who will consider it according to the School's business and operational requirements.

An informal (non-statutory) request can be used to apply for any flexible working request, including but not limited to:

- One-off or temporary flexible working arrangements.
- Arrangements that do not involve altering the staff member's contract

It will help the Line Manager/Headteacher to consider a request if the employee:

- 10.1 make their request in writing and confirm whether they wish any change to their current working pattern to be temporary or permanent;
- 10.2 provide as much information as they can about their current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which they want their desired working pattern to start; and

- 10.3 think about what effect the changes to their working pattern will have on the work that they do and on their colleagues, as well as on their service delivery and that of their team and department. If they have any suggestions about dealing with any potentially negative effects, these should be included within their written application. The Headteacher can consider whether they are workable in liaison with the relevant line manager.
- 10.4 The Line Manager will advise them what steps will be taken to consider their request, which may include inviting them to attend a meeting with the Headteacher, before advising them of the outcome of their request.