



INCLUSIVE LEARNING FEDERATION

**Bradwell Village School
Priory Common School
Romans Field School**

Working off-site Policy

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Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Circumstances when staff may work off-site.....	3
5. Requests to work off-site	4
6. How we will consider applications	5
7. Trial period	6
8. Appeals.....	6
9. Working hours	7
10. Duties.....	7
11. Wellbeing support	7
12. Safeguarding	7
13. Technical support.....	8
14. Data protection	8
15. Monitoring arrangements.....	8
16. Links to other policies	9

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- › Set out expectations for staff working off site – for example, from home
- › Outline how the school will support staff to work off-site when they need to

This policy applies to all staff, with the exception of volunteers.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of:

- › [Flexible Working Regulations 2014](#)
- › [Equality Act 2010](#)
- › [Employment Rights Act 1996](#)

It also reflects best-practice guidance set out in:

- › [The Department for Education's \(DfE\) guidance for flexible working in schools](#)
- › [The Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's \(ACAS\) code of practice on handling requests to work flexibly in a reasonable manner](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that this working off-site policy is applied consistently across the school.

3.2 The Governing Board

The Governing Board will approve this policy and hold the Head of School to account for its implementation.

3.3 Other staff

Staff will make sure they follow the expectations in this policy.

4. Circumstances when staff may work off-site

Staff may work off-site – for example from home:

- › Where flexible working has been approved
- › Following clinical and/or public health advice
- › Where a member of staff is not required to be in school
- › In the event of extraordinary circumstances, e.g., strike or industrial actions where staff cannot obtain childcare

Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work off-site, they must speak to the Head of School.

5. Requests to work off-site

The arrangements set out in sections 5 to 7 inclusive only apply to staff members who are working off-site in a flexible or hybrid working arrangement. They do not apply to staff members who are following public health advice to work from home.

In this section we set out the right for staff to apply for off-site working arrangements. While our Federation welcomes applications and will consider all requests openly and fairly, we are not obliged to grant working off-site requests in all cases (see section 6.3 to see when we may reject an application).

In all cases, we encourage staff to discuss flexible working arrangements with their line manager on an informal basis **before** making a request, covering:

- › The potential impact on the Federation, school, and pupils
- › Details of how the employee wants to work flexibly, and for how long
- › Different options for flexible working arrangements
- › A trial period to test out a proposed arrangement

5.1 Non-statutory requests

A non-statutory request can be used to apply for any off-site working arrangement, including but not limited to one-off or temporary off-site working arrangements.

This process is the same as for statutory requests, Section 5.2. The DfE's flexible working guidance says that as far as possible, the staff member should identify ways of mitigating the impact of their request on the school and their colleagues.

Staff should send their application to Head of School.

5.2 Statutory requests

Staff should use a statutory request for flexible working in order to request to off-site working arrangements **if** their proposal requires a permanent change to their contractual terms and conditions. Staff members are only eligible to make a statutory request if they:

- › Have been continuously employed by our Federation for 26 weeks or more at the time the request is made
- › Are an employee, and
- › Have not made a statutory request for a flexible working arrangement in the past 12 months

Staff must make a statutory request to work off-site in writing. They should submit their application at least 3 months before the proposed change. All requests must include:

- › The date of the application
- › A statement to confirm that this is a statutory request
- › The proposed changes to working hours or pattern, and when the staff member wishes to start the new arrangement
- › What effect the staff member thinks the proposed changes would have on the Federation, department, pupils and/or the quality of work, and how these would be dealt with
- › Whether they've previously applied to the employer for flexible working arrangements and if so, when that was

It should also state whether they're making their request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example, as a reasonable adjustment for a disabled employee.

Staff should send their application to the Head of School.

If at any point a staff member wishes to withdraw their flexible working request, they must notify their employer in writing.

6. How we will consider applications

6.1 Timescale

Our Head of School will usually respond to an off-site working request within 3 months from receiving an application. This includes the conclusion of any appeal process.

The Head of School may extend the response period if both parties agree to it, for example in the case of an agreed trial period. Any extension to the timescale will be confirmed in writing.

6.2 Meeting to discuss an application

The Head of School will consider all valid applications to work off-site reasonably and fairly.

The Head of School may arrange a meeting with the staff member to clarify the staff member's proposed working arrangements

- › Discuss any foreseen challenges regarding the proposed arrangements and how they can be overcome
- › Consider alternative arrangements or compromises

The meeting will take place no later than 28 calendar days, after the Head of School receives the application. A member of the School's HR team may also attend the meeting.

The staff member may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative if they wish. Any companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with the staff member but may not answer questions on their behalf.

The employer can treat an application as withdrawn if an employee misses 2 meetings to discuss the application without providing good reason for their absence.

6.3 Response

The Head of School will provide a response, in writing, as soon as possible after the application, and by no more than 14 calendar days, following any meeting.

If the request is accepted, or an alternative arrangement is agreed, the Head of School will write to the staff member no later than 28 days after the approval, laying out:

- › Details of the new working arrangements
- › Details of any trial period
- › Any changes to the staff member's employment contract
- › When the new off-site working arrangements will start

The staff member will need to sign and return a copy of the document, which will be placed in their personal file to confirm the variation to their terms and conditions of employment.

If Head of School needs more time to make a decision, for example time to investigate how to accommodate a request or to consult several members of staff, they will discuss this with the staff member as soon as possible.

If the request is rejected, the Head of School may arrange a meeting with the staff member to inform them, including the reason for the rejection. The Head of School is not legally obliged to hold a meeting in this case, The decision will also be confirmed in writing, and the staff member will also be advised of their right of appeal (see section 8).

The Head of School will only reject an application for off-site working arrangements on the following grounds:

- › The burden of additional cost to our School/ Federation

- A detrimental effect on the quality of work (for example, if pupils as a result 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)
- Inability to supervise pupils adequately or appropriately
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit new staff
- Insufficient work during the proposed working period
- Planned changes to staffing structure

6.4 Contractual changes

Once an off-site working arrangement has been agreed (and following a successful trial period – see section 7), the School will make appropriate changes to the staff member's contract of employment. This may be done through the issuing of a new contract or a letter of variation.

Unless otherwise agreed, these changes are permanent and cannot be changed unilaterally. There is no right for a staff member to revert to their original working arrangements, or for the School to force a staff member to revert to their original working arrangements, without agreement from both parties.

A staff member may not make another statutory request until 12 months after the date of their most recent statutory request.

7. Trial period

Where a staff member's application is successful, they will be subject to a trial period of 3 months. This period will form the basis of a final decision about whether the off-site working arrangement will work.

When informing the staff member that their application is initially successful, the Head of School will set out in writing the details of the trial period.

This will be considered an agreed extension to the statutory 3-month time scale for the School/ Federation to respond to flexible working applications.

At the end of the trial period, the staff member and Head of School will meet to discuss:

- Whether the trial period was successful
- What (if any) adjustments need to be made to the arrangement
- Whether to continue with the arrangement on a permanent basis
- Whether to extend the trial period, for example to observe any adjustments to the arrangement or due to absence

In the case of disagreement, all decisions about the outcome of the arrangement rest with the Head of School...

8. Appeals

Staff members can appeal any unsuccessful flexible working application, including applications for off-site working.

Staff members must make their appeal in writing, state the reason for appealing the decision, and submit their appeal to the Executive Headteacher within 14 days of receiving a written rejection.

The Executive Headteacher will hear the appeal and decide on the outcome

The process of considering the appeal, may include meeting with the member of staff

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing.

The outcome of the appeal is final, and there is no further right to appeal.

9. Working hours

When working off-site, 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 it is an emergency, or they're working flexible hours (see 9.1) and this is required, or they have prior written agreement from the Head of School.

9.1 Working hours during flexible working

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours off-site.

9.2 Absence when working off-site

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

10. Duties

Wherever possible, staff working off-site 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 the Head of School.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties off-site, their line manager will discuss and agree alternative arrangements with the individual concerned.

Where staff are unsure about what work they should be carrying out while working off-site, they must speak to their line manager.

Staff working off-site must provide evidence of completed work to their line manager.

11. Wellbeing support

To support the wellbeing of staff who are working off-site, the school will perform check-ins via telephone or email.

Staff are expected to complete training on Safe Home Working Practice available from the School Business Manager.

Staff should confirm that they have completed the training to the School Business Manager.

They should ensure that they have an appropriate working area at home and follow guidance presented in the training.

Staff should communicate with their line manager if their wellbeing is being affected while working off-site.

12. Safeguarding

Where staff are interacting online with pupils while working off-site, they will continue to follow our existing Staff Code Of Conduct, Online & Acceptable Use Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. See Section 16 for other relevant policies.

The School's expectations of staff when working off-site is that they must safeguard pupils through:

- Acceptable use of technology
- Staff/pupil relationships and communication, including the use of social media (Social Media Policy)

- Safe Remote teaching practices – for example, if staff are pre-recording videos to share, live-streaming lessons, making video calls or phoning pupils. See the Department for Education's guidance on [safeguarding during remote learning](#) and article on [safeguarding pupils and staff during remote learning](#),

13. Technical support

13.1 Equipment

Staff will be able to request technical equipment in cases where they do not have access to a laptop/tablet that they can use off-site during working hours.

All requests will be subject to approval based on a hierarchy of need and availability of equipment at the time.

If staff are borrowing equipment, they must agree and sign our IT equipment loan agreement before they receive the equipment.

13.2 IT support

If staff are having issues with technical equipment while working off-site, they should contact:

support@savvyit.co.uk

13.3 Workstation safety

The School 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, and use the mouse with a straight wrist
- › Have appropriate lighting near to the workstation

14. 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, including always installing the latest updates
- › Not sharing school information to unauthorised persons

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Executive Headteacher or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

16. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Online & Acceptable Use Policy
- GDPR & Information Sharing
- Staff Code Of Conduct
- Disciplinary Rules for All Staff
- Health And Safety Policy
- Remote Virtual Meeting Policy
- Social Media Policy