



## Flexible Working Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

QEGSMAT (The Trust) believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024, all employees have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously by the Trust. Employees can make up to two flexible working requests per year.

We will deal with flexible working requests in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time frame.

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to flexible working including how requests should be made, what happens once a request is made and the appeals process.

## **1. Requests for flexible working**

- 1.1. Requests for flexible working include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home.
- 1.2. All requests must be made in writing by filling in the requisite application form, which can be found in Appendix 1 and is also available from the school office.
- 1.3. All requests must be submitted to the Headteacher.
- 1.4. Any request made under this policy must include:
  - The date of the application.
  - The changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions.
  - The date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect.
  - What effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation.
  - How, in their opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.
  - A statement that this is a statutory request.
  - Whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working; and if the employee has made a previous request, when the application was made.
- 1.5. Where the request is being made by a member of staff with a disability as part of a request for a reasonable adjustment to their working arrangements, the staff member should state this in the written application.
- 1.6. The school will not reject out-of-hand a request that does not contain the required information. The Trust's HR department will explain to the member of staff what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask them to resubmit the request.

## **2. Meeting to discuss a flexible working request**

- 2.1. Once the Headteacher receives the request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but no later than the deadline set out below.
- 2.2. The Headteacher will usually arrange a meeting at a convenient time and place to deal with the request.
- 2.3. Where a request can be approved without further discussion in line with the terms stated in the staff member's written application, a meeting will not be necessary and the employee will be informed in writing of the decision.

- 2.4. Staff members can be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at any flexible working meeting.
- 2.5. The meeting will take place in a private meeting room so that the discussion is kept away from other employees.
- 2.6. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the school.

### **3. Outcome of a flexible working request**

- 3.1. After the meeting, the Headteacher will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the school against any adverse impact of implementing the changes.
- 3.2. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.
- 3.3. The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below.
- 3.4. The request may be granted in full or in part. For example, the school may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.
- 3.5. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if their request is not upheld or is upheld in part.
- 3.6. Unless otherwise agreed, the changes to the employee's terms and conditions will be permanent.

### **4. Reasons for turning down a flexible working request**

- 4.1. The Headteacher will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reason, which are as follows:
  - The burden of additional costs.
  - An inability to reorganise work among existing staff.
  - An inability to recruit additional staff.
  - A detrimental impact on quality.
  - A detrimental impact on performance.

- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- Insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work.
- A planned structural change to the business.

4.2. If a request has been rejected, the employee will be informed which of those reasons applies in writing, and of the appeal procedure.

## **5. Flexible working requests that are granted**

- 5.1. If the request is upheld in full or in part, the employee and the Headteacher will discuss how and when the changes will take effect.
- 5.2. Any changes to terms and conditions, and the date on which they will commence, will be put in writing and sent to the employee as an amendment to their contract of employment/written statement of terms and conditions of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **6. Timescales**

- 6.1. All requests will be dealt with within a period of two months from first receipt to notification of the decision on any appeal.
- 6.2. The Headteacher will hold the meeting (or phone call, if appropriate) within 28 days of receiving the request and notify the decision to the employee within 14 days of the meeting, so that there is enough time for any appeal to be concluded.
- 6.3. Time limits detailed in this policy may be extended where the employee and school are in agreement. For example, the Headteacher and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

## **7. Appeals**

- 7.1. Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request are allowed to lodge an appeal in writing within 14 days of the notification, with the appeal to be heard within 14 days.
- 7.2. Any appeal must be dated and must set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made.
- 7.3. A meeting will be held to discuss the appeal and an employee will be able to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

- 7.4. The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of their appeal, and the reasons for the decision, within 14 days of the appeal meeting. There is no further right of appeal.

## **8. Problems with a flexible working request**

- 8.1. If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should seek clarification from the Headteacher.
- 8.2. The Headteacher will have regard to the Trust's Equality Policy when considering flexible working requests.
- 8.3. If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

## Appendix 1 – Flexible working request: employee proforma

<b>Personal Details</b>	
Name:	
Payroll Number:	
Line Manager:	

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern. I confirm I meet the below eligibility criteria:

- I have not made more than two requests to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

**Date of any previous request to work flexibly under this right:**

**Day/Month/Year** \_\_\_\_\_

Request	Detail
Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked)	
Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked)	
I would like this working pattern to commence from?	
Impact of the new working pattern – I think this change in my working pattern will affect my employer and colleagues as follows:	
Accommodating the new work pattern – I think the effect on my employer and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:	

<b>Print Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

Please return marked 'private and confidential' to the Headteacher