



the  
beckmead  
trust

# Working From Home Policy

- nurture
- sustain
- grow

## Contents

<b>Aims</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>3</b>
1 Headteacher	3
2 Executives	3
3 The Trustee Board	3
3.4 Other staff	3
<b>4. Circumstances when staff may work from home</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. Requests to work from home</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. How we will consider applications</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8. Appeals</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>9. Working hours</b>	<b>9</b>
9.1 Working hours during flexible working	9
9.2 Absence when working home	9
<b>10. Duties</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>11. Wellbeing support</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12. Safeguarding</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>13. Technical support</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>14. Data protection</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Legislation and guidance</b>	<b>12</b>

## **Aims**

This guidance aims to:

- Set out expectations for staff working from home
- Outline how the school will support staff to work at home when they need to

This guidance applies to all staff in the beckmead trust

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **1 Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this working home guidance is applied consistently across the school.

### **2 Executives**

The appropriate executive is responsible for considering all valid requests for working home arrangements equally, fairly, and according to the needs of the school and pupils.

### **3 The Trustee Board**

The board will approve this guidance and hold leaders to account for its implementation.

The board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **3.4 Other staff**

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

## **4. Circumstances when staff may work from home**

Staff may work from home:

- Where flexible working has been approved
- Where the Headteacher or Executive has given explicit written permission to do so due to unforeseen circumstances

Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work from home, they must speak to their line manager or raise an HR ticket

## 5. Requests to work from home

In this section we set out the right for staff to apply for home working arrangements. While our Trust welcomes applications and will consider all requests openly and fairly, we are not obliged to grant working from home 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 school and its pupils
- Details of how the employee wants to work from home, and for how long
- Different options for working arrangements
- A trial period to test out a proposed arrangement

Staff members are only eligible to make a statutory request if they:

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

Staff must make a request to work from home 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 Trust, 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 headteacher and [hr@beckmeadtrust.org](mailto:hr@beckmeadtrust.org)

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**

- **Timescale**

Our Trust will usually respond to an home working request within 10 working days from receiving an application. This includes the conclusion of any appeal process.

The Trust 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.

- **Meeting to discuss an application**

The Trust will consider all valid applications to work home reasonably and fairly.

The headteacher or member of the HR team may arrange a meeting with the staff member to (amend in line with your school's or trust's practice):

- 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 Trust receives the application. A member of the trust'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.

- **Response**

The headteacher or HR department will provide a response, in writing, as soon as possible after the application, and by no more than 10 working days following any meeting.

If the request is accepted, or an alternative arrangement is agreed, the headteacher/line manager will write to the staff member no later than 28 days after the approval, laying out:

- Details of the new working arrangements
- Details of the review date, at which point this arrangement may be terminated
- Any changes to the staff member's employment contract
- When the agreed home working arrangements will start and its duration

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 the headteacher or HR department 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 headteacher or HR department may arrange a meeting with the staff member to inform them, including the reason for the rejection. The decision will also be confirmed in writing, and the staff member will also be advised of their right of appeal (see section 8).

Our Trust will reject any application for home working arrangements on the following grounds:

- The burden of additional cost to our Trust
- 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 re-organise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit new staff
- Insufficient work during the proposed working period
- Planned changes to staffing structure

- **Contractual changes**

Once an home working arrangement has been agreed (and following a successful trial period – see section 7), the Trust 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 Trust 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.

- **Trial period**

Where a staff member's application is successful, they will be subject to a trial period of 12 weeks. This period will form the basis of a final decision about whether the home working arrangement will work.

When informing the staff member that their application is initially successful, the headteacher or HR department will set out in writing the details of the trial period.

At the end of the trial period, the staff member and headteacher/line manager 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 headteacher/line manager.

## **8. Appeals**

Staff members can appeal any unsuccessful working from home decision within 5 working days of receiving the outcome letter. The letter, stating reasons for the appeal, should be sent to the Headteacher and [hr@beckmeadtrust.org](mailto:hr@beckmeadtrust.org)

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

## **9. Working hours**

When working at home, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours.

### **9.1 Working hours during flexible working**

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours home.

### **9.2 Absence when working home**

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working home, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the school's normal absence procedure, as set out in our policy.

## **10. Duties**

Wherever possible, staff working home will carry out their normal duties in line with their job description and contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow school practice or otherwise be agreed with line-managers.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties home, 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 home, they will speak to their line manager

## **11. Wellbeing support**

Staff should communicate with their line manager or the HR department if their wellbeing is being affected while working home and the Trust will work with the staff member to support them.

## **12. Safeguarding**

Where staff are interacting online with pupils while working home, they will continue to follow our existing safeguarding procedures, including:

- Acceptable use of technology
- Staff Code of Conduct - including staff/pupil relationships, communication and the use of social media
- Remote teaching practices – See the Department for Education's guidance on [safeguarding during remote learning](#).

## **13. Technical support**

### **1 Equipment**

Staff will be able to request technical equipment - this will be considered by the headteacher and Trust 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.

## **2 IT support**

If staff are having issues with technical equipment while working home, they should follow the usual process.

## **3 Workstation safety**

The Trust 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 and the Trust 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

### **Legislation and guidance**

This guidance 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](#)