



FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

CONTENTS

Section	Description	Page No.
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement	3
3.	Purpose and scope of policy	3
4.	Types of Flexible Working	4
5.	Personnel responsible for implementing the policy	4
6.	Eligibility and entitlement	5
7.	Process Considerations	5
8.	Appeals	6
9.	Review of the policy	6
	Policy History	7
Appendices		
Appendix 1	Flexible Working Process - Flow Chart	8
Appendix 2	Flexible Working Application Form	9

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Trust recognises that attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining skilled and experienced employees is central to the achievement of its goals and objectives, and the provision of a high-quality service. The Trust is committed to considering flexible and supportive family friendly practices and arrangements which enable staff to balance their work and careers with the demands of a family or other commitments and responsibilities more effectively, leading to greater individual and business performance, increased levels of engagement and commitment from workers at all levels.
- 1.2 The term flexible working relates to an organisation's working arrangements in terms of working time, working location and the pattern of working. It is designed to address the changing profile of the workforce. It enables the use of advances in technology, provides a valuable recruitment and retention tool and aims to meet the increased demand for an effective work-life balance.
- 1.3 In addition to policy objectives, the Trust has a legal duty to consider applications for flexible working from all staff and as part of their duty in making reasonable adjustments for staff and job applicants with a disability or long-term health condition in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement

- 1.1 At Reach South Academy Trust, we are committed to creating a vibrant and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all. This commitment extends to every aspect of our work, from the education we deliver to the staff we employ. We believe in fairness, equity, and promoting social mobility for all.
- 1.2 We actively promote inclusivity through our People policies and practices. We value and respect every individual, regardless of background, and strive to build a diverse staff and student body that reflects the richness of the communities we serve.
- 1.3 We dismantle barriers to opportunity by ensuring equal access to resources and development opportunities for all staff members. Our People policies are designed to be fair and unbiased, promoting a level playing field for career progression regardless of social or economic background.
- 1.4 Serving Our Local Communities: We actively engage with local communities to understand their needs and perspectives. Our recruitment practices prioritise attracting talent from diverse backgrounds within our local area, further strengthening the connection between the Trust and the communities it serves.
- 1.5 Our People policies are developed and implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This ensures an environment characterised by dignity and respect, free from harassment, bullying, and victimisation.

3. Purpose and scope of policy

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to explain flexible working, what it means for employees and the Trust, and its impact on pay and benefits. It outlines the alternative options available thus providing a framework for flexing individual working time arrangements. It also explains the process for requesting flexible working.

- 3.2 This policy applies to all employees who meet the statutory eligibility to request flexible working. It does not apply to agency workers, external consultants or self-employed contractors.
- 3.3 All posts will be considered eligible for flexible working. The suitability of a post for flexible working will be determined by management following a review of the request and taking into account the statutory grounds for refusal. Given the nature of the services provided by the Trust, quality of service delivery is paramount and should always be considered as a priority.
- 3.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and maybe amended from time to time.

4. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

- 4.1 The Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Day-to-day responsibility for its operation is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Director of People.
- 4.2 Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks also lies with the CEO and the Director of People.
- 4.3 All managers are responsible for being 'open' in response to flexible working requests and to accommodate requests where possible. Consideration should be given to the impact of a request on both colleagues and service delivery, however, working trials should be seriously considered in balance with responsibility for maintaining operational effectiveness and service provision. Any refusal to the request must be clearly set out and within the parameters of the statutory 'permitted business reasons' for which a request can be refused.

5. Eligibility and entitlement

- 5.1 The Flexible Working Requests Policy applies to employees who work for Reach South Academy Trust or who have been appointed to a role within the Trust.
- 5.2 It is important to note that the Flexible Working Requests legislation provides an employee, who meets the qualifying criteria, with the right to 'request' flexible working arrangements. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a flexible working request, there is no automatic entitlement to have a flexible working request agreed; every request will be considered in conjunction with the needs of the School and wider organisation.
- 5.3 If employees wish to apply for any of these options, they should discuss it in the first instance with their line manager. Employees are responsible for being objective in their assessment of how the change might affect the service, the team or performance.
- 5.4 It is recommended that the employee seeks advice from their pension provider prior to requesting a variation to the contract of employment. The employee's Trade Unions / Professional Association may also be able to provide information. Teachers can contact Teachers' Pensions at www.teacherspensions.co.uk. Support staff belonging to the Local Government Pension Scheme can make contact at www.lgps.org.uk

- 5.5 Some flexible working requests may involve a change to employee's salary and benefits, as these are calculated on a pro-rata basis. It is therefore recommended employee's seek advice from the People Team or payroll on how a change in their working pattern may affect their pay and contractual benefits.
- 5.6 An employee can make two flexible working applications within a 12 month period. This would be a rolling 12 month period and would commence from the date of their first application.

6. Types of Flexible Working

- 6.1 Flexible working options may include:
- Flexi-time – working time is split between core hours and time when employees can choose when to work.
 - Part-time working – allows employees to work a proportion of the hours which would normally be regarded as full-time for that employment.
 - Temporary reduction in working hours.
 - Job share – normally involves two or more people sharing a full-time post.
 - Shift working – provides employers with the opportunity to open their business for longer.
 - Annualised hours – where working time is organised over the number of hours to be worked in a year rather than a week.
 - Term-time working – employees are only required to work during the school term time.
 - Home working or a different location - individuals have the opportunity to work from home on either a full or part time basis.
 - Compressed hours – where individuals complete their hours over a shorter period of time.
 - Staggered hours – allows employees to start and finish their day at different times
 - Further details regarding the different flexible working options can be found in the Flexible Working Toolkit.

7. Other Considerations

- 7.1 As part of the application process, employees should be open to discussing the practical implications of their request with their line manager as some posts may be harder to work flexibly in than others; therefore, there may be a need to consider and include other alternative options in order for a request to be fully considered by the Trust. See Appendix 1 for flow chart of the process.
- 7.2 All applications for any type of flexible working must be put in writing, using the Flexible Working Request Form (Appendix 2), and submitted to their line manager in accordance with their responsibilities.
- 7.3 Employees must demonstrate a willingness to be flexible and to fully explore alternative options proposed by their line manager/manager reviewing the request if they are unable to accommodate the employee's initial, proposed change in hours/working patten.
- 7.4 Managers may need to hold more than one meeting with an employee, depending on the nature of their request. New working arrangements must only be introduced by mutual agreement.
- 7.5 If the employee fails to engage with the process, the request for flexible working will be considered as withdrawn.

- 7.6 If the employee withdraws a formal application, they will only be permitted to make one further request within the 12-month rolling period. In such circumstances, the withdrawal will be confirmed to the employee in writing. There may be circumstances that require further consideration, and this will need to be discussed with the People Team.
- 7.7 Employees have the right to be accompanied at any meetings, including an appeal meeting to discuss their request by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.
- 7.8 Managers are required to consider all written requests for flexible working. It is important that they look at the benefits of the requested change for both the employee and the School and the Trust by weighing up any adverse business impact of implementing the changes.
- 7.9 Once a change has been implemented there is no automatic right for the employee to resume their previous working pattern and the employee is only permitted to make one further flexible working request in a 12-month period.
- 7.10 Possible reasons a flexible working request may be refused can be one or more of the following reasons:
- Permitted business reasons for refusal
- The burden of additional costs;
 - Detrimental effect on ability to meet the needs of the students;
 - Inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff;
 - Inability to recruit additional staff;
 - Detrimental impact on quality;
 - Detrimental impact on performance;
 - Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
 - Planned structural changes.
- 7.11 A manager and/or employee may also suggest starting the new working arrangements under an agreed trial period to ensure that they meet an employee's needs and those of the team/department before reaching a final decision in respect of the application/request.
- 7.12 There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete consideration of the employee's request within the expected time limits, i.e. 2 months. Where an extension of time is agreed with the employee, this will be confirmed in writing.

8. Appeals

- 8.1 Where an employee wishes to appeal a decision, they have the right to do so. Please refer to the Trust's Appeals Policy and Procedures. This document clearly outlines the steps required to lodge an appeal and the procedure.

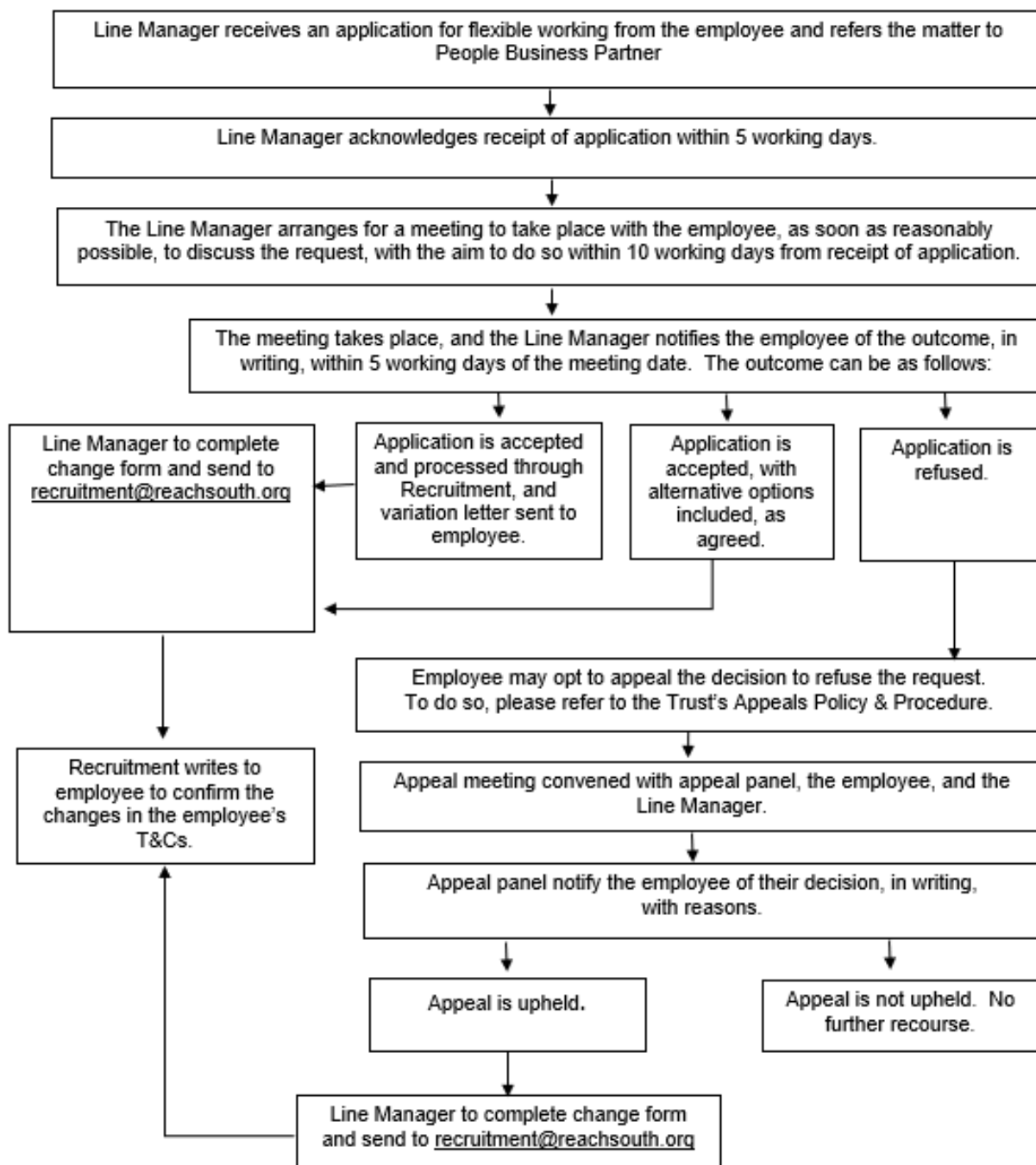
9. Review of the Policy

- 9.1 This policy is reviewed as required by the Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions and in accordance with the timeline of any legislative updates.
- 9.2 The Trust will regularly review and monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
September 2020	Trade Union consultation	All Recognised Trade Unions	N/A	N/A
February 2021	New policy implemented.	People Team	February 2021	September 2023
September 2022	Change to eligibility to day one rights for all staff and removal of limit on number of requests in a 12-month period	People Team	October 2022	June 2025
April 2024	Change number of annual requests from one to two and reduce process timeline to two months. References to HR replaced with People Team.	People Team	May 2024	June 2027

Appendix 1 - Process for flexible working application – Flow Chart



Appendix 2 - Flexible Working Request Form



SECTION 1: EMPLOYEE DETAILS			
SURNAME:		FIRST NAME:	
PAYROLL NO:		JOB TITLE	
SCHOOL/DEPT:			

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided under Section 80F of the Employment Rights Act 1996. I confirm I meet the eligibility criteria as follows:

- I have made no more than 2 applications for flexible working in the previous 12-month period.

If you are not sure whether you meet any of the criteria, further guidance can be found in the Flexible Working Policy.

SECTION 2: WORKING PATTERN	
Describe your current working pattern (weeks/days/hours/times worked)	
Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (weeks/days/hours/times worked)	
The date you would like this new working pattern to commence	

SECTION 3: RATIONALE FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST	
Explain the rationale for making this request i.e. your reasons for requesting this change	
How do you think this change in your working pattern will affect the School, Trust and colleagues?	<i>I think this change in my working pattern will affect my employer and colleagues as follows...</i>
How do you suggest the impact, mentioned above, can be mitigated?	<i>I think the effect on my employer and colleagues could be managed by...</i>

SECTION 4: EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE			
Employee Signature:		Date:	

**Before sending to your Head Teacher/Director, check that you have provided all the information requested in detail. Failure to provide requested information may delay the process.
COMPLETED APPLICATION TO BE SENT TO YOUR HEAD TEACHER/DIRECTOR**