



REMOTE AND HYBRID WORKING POLICY

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Reach South Academy Trust ("the Trust") recognises that remote and hybrid working can provide flexibility, support wellbeing, and improve efficiency.
- 1.2 This policy outlines how remote/hybrid working arrangements operate and are managed.
- 1.3 Requests must be made through the Flexible Working Policy.
- 1.4 The policy applies to all Trust employees. It does not form part of contractual terms and may be updated following consultation with Trade Unions.

2. Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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. Definitions

3.1 Remote / Home Working

Carrying out work from a home address rather than a Trust or school site. This may be occasional, temporary, regular or permanent.

3.2 Hybrid Working

A working pattern combining attendance at a Trust or a school site with working from home on agreed days.

3.3 Occasional homeworking

There are various reasons why you might want or need to work from home on a particular day or for a short period. These could include:

- Logistical difficulties in getting to work, for example on a snow day;
- Needing to concentrate on a work document in a quiet environment.

3.4 Where an employee wishes to request remote or hybrid working as a contractual change, the request must be made under the Flexible Working Policy. This policy does not govern the request process.

4. Principles

4.1 Remote working arrangements must:

- Maintain or enhance service delivery
- Protect safeguarding, confidentiality, and data security
- Support employee wellbeing
- Ensure equality of opportunity
 - Maintain appropriate supervision, communication and accountability
 - Comply with Health and Safety requirements

The Trust retains the right to decline a request where remote working is not suitable for the role or operational needs.

5. Eligibility

5.1 Eligibility for remote or hybrid working is determined by the suitability of the role, operational needs, safeguarding considerations, and the homeworking environment. Contractual changes must be applied for via the Flexible Working Policy.

5.2 The Trust will consider suitability based on:

- The nature of the role (including safeguarding considerations)
- Operational impacts on the school/Trust
- The employee's ability to work independently and manage time effectively
- The suitability and safety of the home environment
- Data protection and confidentiality requirements
- Any reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010

5.3 Applications for remote or hybrid working that constitute a contractual change must be submitted via the Trust's Flexible Working Policy and associated form.

5.4 Employees seeking remote working as a reasonable adjustment should submit supporting medical evidence. Occupational Health advice may be sought.

6. Types of Remote or Hybrid Working

6.1 Regular / Contractual Remote or Hybrid Working

Regular or contractual remote or hybrid working involves a formal change to an employee's contractual place of work or working pattern.

6.2 Occasional Home Working

- Typically, short-term and requested at short notice (e.g., severe weather, transport issues, domestic emergencies).
- Line managers may approve occasional home working where duties can reasonably be performed at home.

6.3 Crisis or Emergency Home Working

Where the Trust implements temporary remote working due to events such as pandemics, building closures, or national emergencies, expectations will be communicated separately (see Section 15).

7. Requests for Remote or Hybrid Working

- 7.1 Employees wishing to request remote/hybrid working as a contractual change must apply through the Flexible Working Policy. Occasional homeworking may be agreed informally by line managers where duties allow.

8. Setting Up Remote or Hybrid Working

8.1 Equipment

The Trust may loan essential equipment such as:

- Laptop, monitor, keyboard and mouse
- Secure storage (e.g., lockable cabinet)
- Work phone
- Assistive technology (where required)

Employees must use equipment for work purposes only and return it on request.

Approval is required to use any personal devices for Trust work. Devices must meet Trust security standards.

8.2 Broadband and Utilities

- Employees are responsible for providing a reliable, secure internet connection (WPA2/WPA3).
- The Trust does not reimburse home utilities.
- Employees seeking tax relief should refer directly to HMRC guidance.

8.3 Insurance and Mortgage/Lease Requirements

Employees must ensure that:

- Home insurance covers home working
- Mortgage/lease terms permit home working

Any costs arising from this remain the employee's responsibility.

Employees will be expected to cover the cost of utilities including heating and electricity necessary for your homeworking. Employees should consult HMRC directly for tax advice.

- 8.4 The Trust access to homes will be rare, require consent, and be limited to equipment retrieval or essential safety checks.

Should a representative of the Trust need access to your home then this will normally be either your line manager or another colleague to assist with setting up homeworking, carrying out risk assessments, checks, mandatory safety tests and repairs to our equipment.

9. Health and Safety

- 9.1 Employees must complete a remote working Health and Safety and DSE assessment before commencing remote work and when circumstances change (e.g., after a house move).
- 9.2 Remote workers must ensure:
- A safe, ergonomically suitable workspace
 - No trailing cables, overloaded sockets or fire hazards
 - Good ventilation, lighting, and temperature
- 9.3 It will not be appropriate to hold school/work-related meetings in your home, or to give out personal details like your address. If you are unsure about any aspect of this, contact your line manager or People Business Partner.
- 9.4 Any accident, injury or concern must be reported immediately through normal Health and Safety procedures.
- 9.5 The Trust may request photographic evidence or a virtual assessment. Home visits will be rare and only with employee consent except when retrieving Trust property.
- 9.6 DSE users are entitled to eye tests and assistance with prescribed corrective eyewear in line with Trust policy.

10. Managing Remote or Hybrid Working

- 10.1 All Trust policies, standards and expectations apply regardless of work location.
- 10.2 Employees must remain fully contactable and engaged during agreed working hours.
- 10.3 Managers will ensure remote workers are included in:
- Meetings to include in person, virtual (online MS Teams/Google Meet etc)
 - Training and CPD
 - Team communications
 - Wellbeing check-ins
- 10.4 Employees must raise any feelings of isolation, wellbeing issues or workload concerns promptly.
- 10.5 Where an IT or other problem prevents you from working effectively from home, you should contact a member of the IT Department immediately. The Trust may need you to come into work until the issue has been resolved.
- 10.6 If you cannot work on a homeworking day because of illness or injury, you must follow the procedure set out in our Trust Management Attendance Policy.

11. Data Protection, Confidentiality and Cybersecurity

11.1 Employees must:

- Comply with the Trust's Data Protection Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy and all GDPR requirements
- Use MFA, strong passwords and Trust-approved platforms
- Store information securely (no printing confidential pupil data unless a lockable space is available)
- Ensure confidential conversations cannot be overheard
- Keep smart speakers disabled during work calls to protect confidentiality
- Report any potential or actual data breach immediately

11.2 Only Trust-approved equipment and software may be used for Trust business.

12. Travel and Expenses

12.1 The Trust's Expenses Policy applies.

12.2 Mileage must follow HMRC rules. The definition of a "permanent workplace" will be applied in accordance with HMRC guidance.

12.3 The Trust will reimburse reasonable expenses such as postage, printing, and travel to meetings where required.

12.4 You should email your expenses claim form to your line manager at the end of each month for approval. The Trust reserves the right to refuse any expense not claimed within a three month period and is not in line with the Trusts expense policy.

13. Moving House

13.1 Employees must inform their line manager of a planned or recent house move.

13.2 A new Health and Safety and DSE assessment will be required.

13.3 The Trust may reassess the suitability of remote working. Where unsuitable, alternative arrangements or a return to a Trust workplace may be required with appropriate notice.

14. Review and Ending of Remote or Hybrid Working Arrangements

14.1 Employees may request to end a remote or hybrid working arrangement by discussing this with their line manager and confirming this in writing.

14.2 The Trust may end or alter remote or hybrid working where:

- Operational requirements change
- Performance, conduct or safeguarding concerns arise
- The home workspace becomes unsuitable
- Technology or security issues prevent effective working

14.3 If remote or hybrid working ends, the employee will normally return to their contractual workplace unless a new arrangement is agreed.

15. Remote or Hybrid Working During a Crisis

- 15.1 During crises (e.g., pandemic, emergency closure), temporary remote working arrangements may be implemented.
- 15.2 Staff will be expected to undertake reasonable duties within their competence, which may include as exemplified:

For teaching staff:

- Remote lesson delivery
- Planning and assessment
- Supporting pupils in other classes or schools within the Trust

For support staff:

- Administrative tasks
 - Remote communication with families
 - Finance, HR, ICT, safeguarding or curriculum support tasks
 - Project work and training
- 15.4 In the event that schools are closed all staff are expected to try their best and work collaboratively as a valued team member to continue to deliver good quality education.
- 15.5 These arrangements will cease once normal operations resume.

16. Policy Review

- 16.1 This policy is reviewed and amended as required by Reach South Academy Trust.
- 16.2 We will monitor the application and outcomes of this Policy to ensure it is working effectively.
- 16.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the Trust. An earlier review may be required in response to exceptional circumstances, organisational change or relevant changes in legislation or guidance.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Status	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
April 2020	Consultation with Trade Unions	HR	XX	XX
May 2020	Implementation of new policy	HR	May 2020	September 2025
January 2026	Review and update in relation to legislative changes and flexible working changes	People Team	January 2026	April 2028

APPENDIX 1

REMOTE OR HYBRID WORKING SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 8 – 10 MINUTES

SECTION 1 – WORKSTATION SET UP

Screen at eye level	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Screen free from glare	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Chair height supports neutral position and is adjustable	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Keyboard and mouse positioned correctly	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Adequate desk space	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Suitable lighting	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Suitable temperature	Yes / No / Needs Improvement

[OPTIONAL – ATTACH PHOTO OF WORKSTATION WITH THIS SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST]

SECTION 2 – ENVIRONMENT

Workplace is free from trip hazards	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
No overloaded plug sockets	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Adequate ventilation	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Noise levels acceptable for work	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Adequate space to change posture	Yes / No / Needs Improvement

SECTION 3 – DSE REQUIREMENTS

Taking regular breaks	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Wrist/arm support if needed	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
Need ergonomic equipment?	Yes / No / Needs Improvement
If answered yes to question 3 above please specify/add details	

SECTION 4 – ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Equipment PAT tested (Trust issued devices only)	Yes / No
No damaged cables	Yes / No
All cables secured	Yes / No
Smoke alarms fitted in the home	Yes / No
No damaged cables	Yes / No
If answered No to any question above please specify/add details	

SECTION 5 – WELLBEING & WORKING PRACTICES

You can take breaks during the day	Yes / No
You have regular contact with your line manager	Yes / No
You feel confident and supported working from home	Yes / No
You can take breaks during the day	Yes / No
If answered No to any question above please specify/add details	

SECTION 6 – SAFEGUARDING & CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential calls cannot be overheard	Yes / No
Screen not visible to others	Yes / No
Smart speakers (Alexa/Siri/Google) disabled during work	Yes / No
Lockable storage available	Yes / No
If answered No to any question above please specify/add details	

SECTION 7 – EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

I confirm that the information provided in this assessment is accurate. By submitting this form, I acknowledge my responsibility to work with Reach South Academy Trust to ensure my home working environment remains safe and compliant with all relevant legislation.

Employee signature: INSERT E-SIGNATURE HERE	Date: INSERT
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SECTION 8 - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT USE – THINGS TO CONSIDER

Note: Laptops and other portables devices are not ideally suited to prolonged use. If you are a DSE user and must use a laptop, you should set it up on a suitable work surface wherever possible and avoid prolonged use in other non-working situations. It can be helpful to connect a separate mouse and keyboard and place the laptop on screen risers, at an appropriate height above the work surface.

You should carefully check the arrangement of your home workstation using this checklist to ensure it meets the minimum requirements. Using an unsuitable workstation or working with poor posture can lead to injury. Bring any concerns to the attention of your line manager as soon as possible.

Display Screen

Are the characters on the screen clear and readable from the appropriate working position?
Are the screen characters of adequate size with adequate spacing between the characters and the lines?
Is the screen image stable? (i.e. no flickering, jittering or drifting)
Does the display screen have easily adjustable controls for brightness and contrast?
Does the screen swivel and tilt easily?
Is the screen at a comfortable height for you?
Is the screen free from reflections and glare?
Are adjustable window coverings provided, (e.g. blinds, curtains) and in good condition?
Is the software suitable for the task? Software should help the user to carry out tasks, minimise stress and be user-friendly.

Things to consider:

Make sure the screen is clean, Check the text and background colours work well together
Software settings may need adjusting to change text size
Report any problems to the IT helpdesk
Separate adjustments are not essential as long as the user can read the screen at all times
Screen risers can be provided if required
Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare
Check that blinds work. Vertical blinds may be more suitable than horizontal ones
Check if there are any training requirements for the software.

Keyboard/Trackball

Is the keyboard separate from the screen?
Can the tilt of the keyboard be adjusted?
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?
Is there sufficient space in front of the keyboard to provide support of the hands and wrists, and a comfortable keying position?
Are the keyboards characters clear from an appropriate work position?
Does the user have good keyboard technique?
Is the mouse suitable and positioned close to the user?
Is there support for the mouse user's wrist and forearm?
Does the mouse work smoothly at a suitable speed?
Can you adjust the software settings for speed and accuracy of the pointer?

Things to consider:

Laptop computers do not meet this requirement unless a separate keyboard and mouse are used
Tilt need not be built in
Try pushing the screen back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists
Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard
Keyboards should be kept clean
Try to avoid / prevent: • hands bent up at wrist, • hitting the keys too hard and • overstretching
Most devices are best placed as close as possible e.g. right beside the keyboard
Support can be gained from the desk surface, or the arm of the chair. A separate supporting device can also help (e.g. mouse mat with wrist rest).
Check that the mouse is clean and the work surface suitable.
Call the IT helpdesk if you need advice

Work desk/furniture

Is there sufficient space to allow flexible and comfortable arrangement of all work equipment?
Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?
Is there adequate space to adopt correct and comfortable posture?

Things to consider:

Create as much room on the desktop as you can by removing items you don't require on a regular basis
Rearrange equipment, paper etc. to bring frequently used items within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements. Document holders can save space on your workstation
Consider mats / blotters to reduce reflection and glare.
Move any obstructions from under the desk

Chair

Is the chair suitable and stable?
Does the chair have a working seat back height and tilt adjustment
Does the chair have a working seat height adjustment?
Does the chair have a working swivel mechanism?
Does the chair have working castors or glides?
Is the chair adjusted correctly?
Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?
Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the screen?
Can the feet be placed flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?

Things to consider:

The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.
The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.
The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.
Adjust the chair height to get the users arms in the right position, and then adjust the screen height, if necessary.
Consider a footrest if required.

Work Environment

Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?
Is the lighting suitable, e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?
Are levels of noise comfortable?
Are levels of heat comfortable?
Does the air feel comfortable, (not too dry or humid)?
Is all portable electrical equipment used for work free from obvious damage and defects? Has it been PAT tested in the last year? Note: homeworkers should regularly check electrical equipment for obvious signs of damage.
Are electric sockets supplying an appropriate number of appliances, (i.e. not overloaded)?
Are electrical cables are correctly routed to avoid a tripping hazard?
Is the work area kept tidy?
Is there a clear and unobstructed escape route for you and other occupiers in case of fire?
Are suitably located working smoke detector/s installed in the home?
Are floors and floor coverings in the work area in good condition and free from tripping hazards?
Are floors and traffic routes in the work area kept clear of work equipment, papers etc.?
Are work items, papers, files etc. are stored so that they will not fall, and can be safely retrieved?
Do remote working activities involve significant manual handling, (if 'yes' describe)?
If significant manual handling is involved, has a manual handling assessment been carried out?
Is suitable and sufficient heating, lighting and ventilation provided?
Is a first aid kit available?

Is remote working permitted in the terms of your buildings and contents insurance, (where applicable)? (Evidence may be required)
Is remote working permitted in the terms of your tenancy agreement, (where applicable)? (Evidence may be required)

Things to consider:

Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget.
Shading, repositioning light source or providing local lighting can be considered.
Consider moving source of noise, soundproofing?
Temperature should ideally be between 19°C and 25°C
Humidity levels should be kept between 40% and 60%.

The Operator

Have you been given instructions in the use of your workstation?
Do you know the correct procedure to follow if any health and safety problems arise?
Are there adequate opportunities for regular breaks or changes in activity away from the display screen equipment?
Do you suffer from any back, neck or limb pain or any other symptoms which you think may be caused or made worse by DSE?

Things to consider:

DSE user training must be completed. Online and taught training courses are available.
In the first instance, you should consult your DSE assessor or line manager. Further advice and assistance is available from the Health and Safety adviser and occupational health.
A change in activity can be classed as a break as long as the user has a small rest from PC work. Short, more frequent breaks are likely to be more beneficial than longer, less frequent breaks.
If, Yes please give details below and contact your line manager if additional equipment is required :

Eyesight

Have you been advised of your entitlement to receive eye and eyesight tests?

All DSE users are entitled to the provision of eye examinations on request. The Trust will fund the cost of basic corrective eyewear in line with Trust policy, where required for DSE use.

This checklist must be reviewed when any significant changes are made to your work or the working environment. Please send the completed checklist to your Line Manager

APPENDIX 2

Digital Data Protection Checklist for Remote Workers

SECTION 1 – DEVICE SECURITY

Trust device used for all work tasks	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Multi Factor Authentication enabled	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Device auto-locks after inactivity	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Device is stored in a secure location when not in use	Yes/ No / Further Review required

SECTION 2 – DATA HANDLING

I do not download personal or sensitive data onto personal devices	Yes/ No / Further Review required
I only print confidential materials when lockable storage is available	Yes/ No / Further Review required
I dispose of documents securely (e.g., shredding)	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Screens are positioned so others cannot view them	Yes/ No / Further Review required

SECTION 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

I use only Trust-approved communication platforms	Yes/ No / Further Review required
I ensure confidential calls cannot be overheard	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Video calls are conducted in a neutral, private space	Yes/ No / Further Review required

SECTION 4 – HOME ENVIRONMENT CONTROLS

Smart speakers / voice assistants disabled during confidential work	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Secure Wi-Fi (WPA2/WPA3) confirmed	Yes/ No / Further Review required
Strong password used for router	Yes/ No / Further Review required

SECTION 5 – INCIDENT REPORTING

I understand I must report any actual or suspected data breach immediately	Yes/ No / Further Review required
I know how to contact the Trust's Data Protection Officer	Yes/ No / Further Review required

SECTION 6 – EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

I confirm that the information provided in this assessment is accurate. By submitting this form, I acknowledge my responsibility to work with Reach South Academy Trust to ensure my home working environment remains safe and compliant with all relevant legislation.

Employee signature: INSERT E-SIGNATURE HERE	Date: INSERT
Approved by Line Manager:	Date: INSERT
Line Managers Signature: INSERT E-SIGNATURE HERE	Date: INSERT