Flexible Working Policy

Create Learning Trust

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of Review
Trust Board	July 2025	1 year	July 2026

FLEXIBLE WORKING SCHEME

Introduction

Create Learning Trust is committed to flexible working and helping employees to maintain an effective balance between their work and home life. However, there is no automatic right to work flexibly and there may be occasions when it is not possible to meet the needs of an individual and the organisation. All requests will be considered seriously and on an individual basis.

All employees are able to make a request to their Headteacher to work flexibly. However, this scheme is only applicable to employees who meet the eligibility requirements set out below.

Eligibility

In order to make a request to work flexibly you must, at the date of application:

Have at least six months continuous employment with the School / Council
Not have made another application to work flexibly under the right during the last twelve months

Scope

You are able to request:

a change in the hours you work, (e.g. part-time, job-share)
a change to the times you are required to work, (e.g. change to start/finish times)
a change to your work location, (e.g. work from home).

Your Headteacher will be able to give you further advice about flexible working options you may wish to consider.

The Procedure

Stage One:

You should complete a flexible working request application form and give this to your Headteacher. You can also submit your request in writing via email.

The form should also contain the following information:

- hours/working pattern/location you are requesting to work
- any possible alternatives you would be happy to consider
- a proposed start date for the arrangements to begin
- the impact you think the change would have on your section/department
- any ideas for how the changes you propose could be accommodated

Stage Two:

Within 28 days of receiving your letter your Headteacher will arrange to meet with you to discuss your request and explore how it could be accommodated. There will also be an opportunity to discuss alternatives should there be any problem in agreeing to the working pattern proposed. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Within 14 days of the meeting your Headteacher will write to you to either confirm the new work pattern and start date or to provide you with a clear reason why the application cannot be accepted.

Stage Three:

If you are not happy with the decision of your Headteacher you may appeal to your Headteacher. Your appeal must be in writing and be submitted within 14 days of receiving the letter of notification from your Headteacher. Your letter must set out the grounds of your appeal and be signed and dated.

A further meeting will be held with your Headteacher to discuss your request and the reason why your Headteacher took the decision they did. You may be accompanied to this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The Headteacher will reconsider your request. This meeting will be held within 14 days of your appeal letter being submitted.

Within 14 days of the meeting, your Headteacher will write to you to either confirm the new work pattern and start date or to provide you with a clear reason why the application cannot be accepted.

If you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may invoke the school's grievance procedure. You must indicate your wish to do so in writing to the Chair of the Local Academy Board within 14 days of receipt of the letter from the Headteacher. Your letter must set out the grounds of your grievance and be signed and dated.

All of the above time scales above may be extended by agreement with the Headteacher/Manager and the employee.

Roles & Responsibilities

Headteacher must:

- Give all requests serious consideration
- Weigh operational needs against personal circumstances of employee
- Consider the impact on the rest of the team and the provision of the service
- Explain and communicate decisions and confirm in writing

Employees must:

- Submit their request in writing
- Consider the impact on the rest of the team and the provision of the service
- Be willing to consider alternative flexible working proposals

Grounds for Refusal

Whilst every effort should be made to agree a working pattern which is acceptable to employees and their Headteacher, there will be instances where this is not possible. In considering a request to work flexibly Headteachers will consider the following factors:

- burden of additional costs
- ability to meet customer demand
- ability to organise work with available staffing
- impact on quality and/or performance
- ability to find extra staff
- insufficiency of work during the period that employee propose to work
- planned structured change

Changes to Terms & Conditions of Employment

An accepted application will normally result in a **permanent** change to your terms and conditions of employment and therefore you need to be certain that you understand and are happy with all of the possible implications, e.g. drop in salary, financial implications. A change in your hours of work will affect your pension. You can get further advice about the possible implications from **Teachers' Pensions or the Pensions Section, in the case of support staff**.

It may be possible to agree to a temporary change to your working arrangements and if this is your preference you should state the time period for which you are requesting flexible working.

Trial Periods

It is possible to change working arrangements for a trial period during which the Headteacher and the employee can assess the impact of the flexible working. In order to do this, the employer and the employee must agree to extend the 14 day time period during which the Headteacher would normally reach a decision about the flexible working request. In these circumstances the Headteacher should write to the employee stating:

- that their agreement to the employee's request for flexible working is subject to the outcome of the trial period
- the length of the trial period, (i.e. the start and end dates)
- that the change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment during the trial period is for a temporary period
- the nature of the change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment
- the date that the employee will revert back to their previous terms and conditions of employment if the Headteacher refuses their request for flexible working.

The working arrangements should be reviewed regularly during the trial period to assess the success of the change to the working pattern and/or address any problems that may have arisen.

Contact details

Chief Executive Officer	Sarah Woodward ceo@createlearning.co.uk 01270 360030
Chair of the Trust	Faye Russell frussell@createlearning.co.uk 01270 360030
Chief Finance Officer	Jenni Goodwin cfo@createlearning.co.uk 01270 360030
Director of Operations	Kier Glover operations@createlearning.co.uk 01270 360030
Trust Solicitor	Cook Lawyers www.cooklawyers.co.uk / 01625 725 000
Clerk to governance	Julie White (Second2None)
Chair of Sandiway LGC	Emma Zouhbi ezouhbi@sandiway.cheshire.sch.uk Sandiway Primary School, 84 Weaverham Road, Sandiway CW8 2ND
Headteacher at Sandiway Primary School	Deborah Bertram head@sandiway.cheshire.sch.uk
Chair of Cuddington LGC	John Swindley jswindley@cuddington.cheshire.sch.uk Cuddington Primary School, Ash Road, Cuddington CW8 2NY
Executive Headteacher at Cuddington Primary School	Beth Hacking head@cuddington.cheshire.sch.uk
Chair of Little Leigh LGC	Ryan Tomlinson rtomlinson@littleleighprimary.cheshire.sch.uk Little Leigh Primary School, Shutley Lane, Little Leigh, Northwich CW8 4RN
Head of School at Little Leigh Primary School	Rebecca Challinor head@littleleighprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Chair of Hartford LGC	Katherine Ottewell kottewell@createlearning.co.uk Hartford Primary School, Riddings Lane, Hartford CW8 1NA
Acting Headteacher at Hartford Primary School	Lindsay Cade head@hartfordprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Create Learning Trust Offices	Cuddington Primary School, Ash Road, Cuddington CW8 2NY