ACT MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

(Trust-wide policy aligned to the People & Employment Framework and Scheme of Delegation)

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Field	Detail
Name of document	Disciplinary Procedure
Status	Trust-wide statutory employment policy
Approved by	Trust Board
Policy owner	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Interim HR Lead)
Review cycle	Annual
Next review date	July 2027
Applies to	All employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust
Version	v1.0
Date approved	15/07/2026
Date issued	October 2026
Scheme of Delegation reference	Operates in accordance with the ACT Multi Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation
Related policies	Capability Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, People and Employment Framework
Publication	Available to all staff via Trust systems

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	May 2026	CEO	Full rewrite of the ACT Multi Academy Trust Flexible Working Policy, replacing the previous school-based model with a fully integrated, Trust-wide framework aligned to the People & Employment Framework and Scheme of Delegation. **Governance and Employer Clarity:** Establishes ACT Multi Academy Trust as the legal employer; removes ambiguity regarding local governing body authority; embeds the Scheme of Delegation throughout; clarifies that all decisions are made on behalf of the Trust.

			Alignment with Employment Legislation: Updated in line with current flexible working legislation (post-2024 reforms), including day-one right to request, requirement to consider requests reasonably, and completion of the full process (including appeal) within statutory timeframes. **Structured and Controlled Process:** Introduces a clearly defined, end-to-end formal process including submission, initial consideration, meeting, decision, appeal and extension stages. Ensures consistency with other HR policies (Pay, Capability, Disciplinary, Grievance). **Enhanced Procedural Detail:** Significantly strengthens operational clarity by detailing how each stage is conducted, including written communication requirements, documentation expectations, trial arrangements, and implementation of contractual changes. **Decision-Making Framework:** Introduces explicit decision-making standards, including requirement for decisions to be evidence-based, reasonable and proportionate, and made on the balance of probabilities with a clear recorded rationale. **Formalisation of Appeals Process:** Replaces local governor-led appeal process with a formally constituted independent panel acting on behalf of the Trust; introduces role of governance professional/clerk in administering appeals; strengthens procedural fairness and independence. **Consistency and Trust Oversight:** Embeds Trust-wide oversight, including the role of the CEO in monitoring consistency of outcomes, identifying patterns and ensuring equitable application across academies. **Monitoring, Assurance and Reporting:** Introduces a formal monitoring and assurance framework, including record-keeping requirements, equality analysis, and reporting to Trustees to ensure compliance with statutory and governance expectations. **Policy Review and Control:** Establishes formal review, consultation and approval arrangements, ensuring alignment with changes in legislation, operational practice and Trust strategy. **Appendices Retained and Strengthened:** Retains existing Appendix A (business reasons) and Appendix B (application form) in full, while strengthening their integration into the policy and ensuring alignment with statutory requirements and Trust practice. **Overall Impact:** Transforms the policy from a locally interpreted, school-level process into a fully governed MAT-wide system, ensuring legal compliance, consistency of decision-making, improved transparency and a robust, auditable and defensible framework for flexible working across the Trust.

1. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the framework by which ACT Multi Academy Trust considers and determines requests for flexible working from employees.

This policy ensures that:

- employees have a clear and consistent route to request changes to working arrangements
- all requests are considered in a fair, transparent and timely manner
- decisions are taken on behalf of the Trust as the legal employer
- decisions comply with statutory requirements and employment law
- decisions are consistent across all academies within the Trust

The Trust recognises that flexible working:

- supports employee wellbeing and work-life balance
- enables inclusive and equitable working arrangements
- supports recruitment, retention and workforce sustainability
- contributes to effective organisational performance

The Trust will ensure that:

- all requests are considered objectively and without bias
- no assumptions are made regarding the suitability of roles for flexible working
- decisions are evidence-based and capable of justification
- outcomes balance individual needs with organisational requirements

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1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- all employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust

This includes:

- teaching staff (subject to STPCD and Burgundy Book conditions)
- support staff (subject to Green Book and local arrangements)
- central Trust employees

This policy applies to:

- statutory flexible working requests
- non-statutory (informal) flexible working requests

1.3 The Trust as Employer

ACT Multi Academy Trust is the employer of all staff.

All flexible working decisions:

- are made on behalf of the Trust, not individual academies
- must be exercised strictly in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation
- must be made by an appropriately delegated decision-maker

No individual academy, Headteacher, or manager:

- operates as an independent employer
- may take decisions outside delegated authority

All decisions must:

- be capable of audit and external scrutiny
- be consistent with Trust-wide practice
- be properly recorded and justified

1.4 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy operates within:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023/2024
- Equality Act 2010
- ACAS Code of Practice
- Academy Trust Handbook (ATH)

The Trust will ensure that:

- all decisions are lawful
- statutory timeframes are met
- legal obligations regarding equality and reasonable adjustments are fulfilled

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1.5 Core Principles

The Trust will ensure that:

- flexible working is not unreasonably refused
- decisions are consistent across all staff and academies
- employees are not subjected to detriment for making requests
- requests are considered on their individual merits
- decision-making is transparent, rational and evidence-based

Flexible working will:

- not be treated as an exception process
- not be restricted without clear justification

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2. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

2.1 Principles of Authority

All decisions under this policy:

- must be made in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation
- must be taken by individuals with appropriate authority
- must be reasonable, proportionate and evidence-based
- must be clearly documented

Any decision made outside delegated authority:

- may be deemed invalid
- may be subject to review by the Trust

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

- retains ultimate accountability for the policy
- ensures compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements

Chief Executive Officer

- ensures consistency across the Trust
- monitors patterns and outcomes
- provides assurance to Trustees

Headteachers / Managers

- consider and determine requests on behalf of the Trust
- ensure consistency within their setting
- ensure decisions are evidence-based and justified

HR

- provides professional advice
- ensures compliance with employment law
- supports consistency and audit

2.3 Decision-Making Standards

All decisions must:

- be based on the balance of probabilities
- be supported by sufficient, relevant and reliable evidence
- be reasonable and proportionate
- be consistent with comparable cases across the Trust
- include a clearly documented rationale

Failure to meet these standards may:

- result in decisions being challenged or overturned

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3. STATUTORY RIGHT TO REQUEST

3.1 Eligibility

Employees:

- have the statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of employment
- may make up to two requests in any 12-month period

3.2 Employer Requirements

The Trust must:

- consider all requests in a reasonable manner
- complete the full process (including appeals) within **two months**

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4. TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

Flexible working may include:

- reduction in working hours
- reduction in number of working days
- compressed hours
- changes to start and finish times
- job sharing
- remote or hybrid working
- term-time only arrangements

Requests may be:

- permanent
- temporary
- subject to a trial period

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5. FORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCEDURE

5.1 Submission of Request

A request must:

- be submitted in writing
- be dated
- clearly state that it is a flexible working request

The request must include:

- current working pattern
- proposed working pattern
- proposed start date
- confirmation of eligibility
- details of previous requests
- whether the request relates to Equality Act provisions
- expected impact and proposed mitigation

5.2 Initial Consideration

On receipt of a request, the Trust will:

- acknowledge receipt
- identify the appropriate decision-maker
- determine whether a meeting is required

5.3 Meeting

Where required:

- a meeting must be held within **28 calendar days**

The meeting will:

- be conducted by an appropriate manager acting on behalf of the Trust
- consider the request in full
- assess impact on:
    - pupils
    - staff
    - curriculum
    - service delivery
- explore alternative arrangements

5.4 Decision

A decision must normally be issued within:
14 calendar days
The decision will:

- confirm the outcome
- include detailed reasoning
- set out next steps

5.5 Decision Outcomes

The Trust may:

- approve the request
- approve a modified arrangement
- reject the request

5.6 Refusal of Requests

Requests may only be refused where justified by statutory business reasons:

- cost
- operational impact
- service delivery
- staffing constraints
- performance or quality
- structural change

Decision-makers must:

- clearly explain the reason
- demonstrate how it applies
- provide evidence

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6. MAKING A FORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

6.1 Submission of Request

An employee who wishes to have a flexible working request considered under the formal procedure must submit a written application.
The request must be submitted to:

- the employee's line manager or the Headteacher, acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust

Upon receipt of the request:

- it will be formally logged
- the Trust will begin the formal consideration process in accordance with this policy

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6.2 Content of the Request

The written and dated request must include sufficient information to enable full and proper consideration. The request should:

a) state the reason for the request (recognising that this is not mandatory but supports meaningful consideration);

b) provide full details of the employee's current and proposed working arrangements, including:

- days of work
- hours of work
- start and finish times
- the proposed commencement date

c) provide confirmation that the employee meets the eligibility criteria under the statutory procedure;

d) state whether the request is a statutory request and provide details of any previous flexible working requests (formal or informal), including dates;

e) confirm whether the request relates to the Equality Act 2010 (for example, as a reasonable adjustment arising from a disability);

f) ideally be submitted at least two working months before the proposed implementation date.

6.3 Initial Consideration

Following submission:

- the line manager or Headteacher (acting on behalf of the Trust) will review the request
- advice may be sought from HR where appropriate

Where the request can be accommodated without further discussion:

- the request may be approved without the need for a formal meeting

In such circumstances:

- the line manager or Headteacher will write to the employee confirming:
  - the agreed working arrangements
  - details of any trial period (if applicable)
  - any changes to contractual terms
  - the date from which the changes will take effect

The employee will be required to:

- sign and return a copy of the letter

The Trust will:

- retain the signed confirmation on the employee's personnel file as a record of the contractual variation

Where required, the line manager or Headteacher may also:

- discuss practical arrangements with the employee
- agree handover arrangements
- ensure continuity of work and service delivery

6.4 Consideration of Alternatives

Where the proposed working arrangement cannot be fully accommodated:

- discussion between the employee and the line manager or Headteacher may identify alternative options

This may include:

- modified working patterns
- adjusted working hours
- temporary or trial arrangements

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7. FORMAL PROCEDURE: MEETING

7.1 Arranging the Meeting

Unless agreement is reached without a meeting:

- the line manager or Headteacher will arrange a meeting within **28 calendar days** of receipt of the request

The meeting:

- will be arranged by the line manager or Headteacher
- may be supported by HR
- will include a note taker to ensure an accurate record

The meeting may also be attended by:

- other managers or relevant individuals whose input is required

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7.2 Employee Representation

The employee:

- has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative

The companion:

- may address the meeting
- may confer privately with the employee
- may not answer questions on the employee's behalf

7.3 Conduct of the Meeting

The meeting will:

- consider the employee's request in full
- review the proposed working arrangements
- explore the potential impact on:
    - pupils
    - curriculum delivery
    - staffing arrangements
    - workload distribution
    - operational and organisational requirements

Where the request cannot be accommodated:

- the meeting will provide an opportunity to explore alternative arrangements

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7.4 Trial Arrangements

Where appropriate:

- the line manager or Headteacher may propose a trial period

Any trial period will:

- be clearly defined
- include review arrangements
- assess whether the proposed working arrangement is viable

7.5 Equality Considerations

Where a request is linked to the Equality Act 2010:

- the line manager or Headteacher must:
    - consider the duty to make reasonable adjustments
    - seek occupational health or other professional advice where appropriate
    - ensure the Trust's legal obligations are met

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8. FORMAL PROCEDURE: DECISION

8.1 Notification of Decision

Following the meeting:

- the line manager or Headteacher will notify the employee of the decision in writing within **14 calendar days**

8.2 Approved Requests

Where a request is approved, or an alternative arrangement is agreed:

- the line manager or Headteacher will write to the employee setting out:
    - the agreed working arrangements
    - details of any trial period
    - any changes to contractual terms
    - the date on which the changes will commence

The employee will:

- be required to sign and return a copy of the letter

The Trust will:

- place this on the employee's personnel file as a formal record

The line manager or Headteacher will also:

- discuss any practical arrangements required, including:
    - redistribution of duties
    - handover arrangements
    - adjustments to working practices

8.3 Permanency of Change

Employees should be aware that:

- changes to working arrangements will normally be permanent

Employees may:

- make one further formal request within a 12-month period

8.4 Extension of Time

Where additional time is required to reach a decision:

- the line manager or Headteacher will seek agreement from the employee

Any extension:

- must not normally exceed the statutory 2-month period
- must be confirmed in writing

8.5 Refusal of Request

Where a request is refused:

- the line manager or Headteacher will write to the employee:
  a) setting out the statutory business reason(s);
  b) explaining how those reasons apply;
  c) outlining the right of appeal;

The employee will:

- be provided with evidence supporting the decision where appropriate

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8.6 Statutory Business Reasons

Decision-Making Standard and Record of Decision All decisions made under this procedure must:

- be based on the balance of probabilities
- be reasonable and proportionate
- be supported by sufficient, relevant and reliable evidence
- take account of the information provided by the employee
- consider operational, educational and organisational requirements
- be consistent with decisions made in comparable cases across the Trust

All decisions must be formally documented and must include:

- the request made by the employee
- the evidence considered
- the factors taken into account in reaching the decision
- the rationale for the decision

• any alternative arrangements considered
• confirmation of the outcome

The written outcome must clearly demonstrate that the request has been considered in a fair and objective manner. Failure to document the decision appropriately may:

• undermine the validity of the decision
• result in the decision being subject to review or challenge

All decisions are made on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust as the employer and must comply with the Scheme of Delegation.

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9. FORMAL PROCEDURE: APPEAL

9.1 Submission of Appeal

Where a request is rejected:

- the employee has the right to appeal

The appeal must:

- be submitted in writing
- set out the grounds of appeal
- be dated
- be submitted within **14 calendar days**

The appeal must be sent to:

the governance professional or clerk to the Trust Board

9.2 Role of the Governance Professional

The governance professional will:

- acknowledge receipt of the appeal
- arrange the appeal meeting
- ensure the panel is properly constituted in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation
- coordinate circulation of documentation
- ensure that a record of proceedings is maintained

9.3 Appeal Hearing

The appeal will:

- be heard within **14 calendar days** where reasonably practicable
- be conducted by an independent panel acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust

The panel:

- will have had no prior involvement
- will operate in accordance with delegated authority

The employee:

- has the right to be accompanied

9.4 Appeal Outcome

Following the hearing:

- the governance professional will ensure the outcome is communicated in writing within **14 calendar days**

Where the appeal is upheld:

- the employee will receive confirmation of the agreed arrangements

Where the appeal is rejected:

- the letter will clearly set out:
    - the business reasons for refusal
    - how those reasons apply

9.5 Finality

The appeal decision:

- is final
- represents the Trust's final position as employer

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10. EXTENDING TIME UNDER THE FORMAL PROCEDURE

10.1 General Principle

The Trust will seek to ensure that all flexible working requests, including any appeal, are completed within the statutory timeframe of **two months** from the date the request is received.
However, there may be exceptional circumstances where it is not reasonably practicable to complete the process within this timeframe.

10.2 Extension of Time

Where additional time is required:

- the line manager or Headteacher, acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust, will seek the agreement of the employee to extend the timeframe

Any extension must:

- be for a clear and specified period
- be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances
- not be used to delay the process unnecessarily

The line manager or Headteacher will:

- write to the employee confirming:
    - that an extension is required
    - the reason for the extension
    - the revised timescale
    - the date by which a final decision will be made

The Trust will ensure that:

- the total process (including appeal) is completed as promptly as possible
- any extension remains compliant with statutory requirements unless otherwise agreed by the employee

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10.3 Circumstances Where Extension May Be Required

An extension may be required where:

- additional information or evidence is needed
- further consultation is required
- operational or organisational complexities need to be considered
- a key participant is unavailable for a reasonable period
- further advice is required (e.g. HR, occupational health, or legal advice)

All extensions must:

- be justified
- be recorded
- demonstrate that the Trust has acted reasonably

10.4 Withdrawal of Request

An employee may withdraw a formal flexible working request at any stage of the process.
Where a request is withdrawn:

- the line manager or Headteacher will confirm the withdrawal in writing
- the withdrawal will be recorded on the employee's personnel file

The employee may:

- make a further formal request within 12 months, subject to statutory limits

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10.5 Deemed Withdrawal of Request

In certain circumstances, a request may be treated as withdrawn by the Trust.

This may occur where:
a) the employee fails to attend **two consecutive meetings** arranged under the formal procedure without reasonable cause; or
b) the employee unreasonably refuses to provide information required to enable consideration of the request
Before a request is treated as withdrawn:

- the Trust will make reasonable attempts to:
    - contact the employee
    - rearrange meetings where appropriate
    - understand any mitigating circumstances

Where a request is deemed withdrawn:

- the line manager or Headteacher will write to the employee confirming:
    - that the request has been treated as withdrawn
    - the reason for this decision
    - the date on which the withdrawal takes effect

This will be:

- formally recorded
- retained on the employee's personnel file

10.6 Effect of Withdrawal

Where a request is withdrawn or treated as withdrawn:

- the application will be considered closed
- no further action will be taken in respect of that request

The employee retains the right to:

- submit a further request within the statutory limits

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11. MAKING AN INFORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

11.1 Informal Requests

Employees may request flexible working informally through:

- their line manager or Headteacher acting on behalf of the Trust

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11.2 Supporting Information

Employees are encouraged to:

- set out details of their proposed arrangements
- confirm whether the change is temporary or permanent
- provide sufficient information to enable consideration

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12. MONITORING, ASSURANCE AND OVERSIGHT

12.1 Purpose and Scope

This section sets out how ACT Multi Academy Trust ensures that:

- flexible working requests are applied consistently across the Trust
- decisions comply with statutory and regulatory requirements
- the policy operates effectively in practice
- decision-making demonstrates fairness, transparency and value for money

Monitoring and assurance processes must:

- operate across all academies
- provide clear evidence of compliance
- support continuous improvement

12.2 Trust-Level Accountability

The Trust Board retains ultimate accountability for:

- compliance with employment legislation relating to flexible working
- ensuring that decision-making is fair, consistent and lawful
- ensuring that flexible working arrangements support effective organisational delivery

The Trust Board must receive:

- assurance that this policy is being applied consistently
- reporting that enables effective scrutiny

12.3 Role of the Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is accountable to the Trust Board for:

- ensuring consistent application of this policy across all academies
- identifying patterns and variations in decision-making
- ensuring that any inconsistencies are addressed

The CEO (or delegated officer) may:

- review flexible working decisions across the Trust
- request additional information or evidence
- challenge decisions that are inconsistent or not supported by evidence
- require reconsideration of decisions where appropriate

12.4 School-Level Monitoring

Headteachers and delegated managers must:

- maintain records of all flexible working requests
- ensure consistency of decisions across roles within the academy
- ensure appropriate documentation is retained

They must also:

- identify any emerging issues or patterns
- escalate concerns to the Trust where necessary

12.5 Data Monitoring and Equality Analysis

The Trust will monitor flexible working decisions to ensure compliance with:

- the Equality Act 2010
- equal treatment principles

Monitoring may include analysis of:

- approval and refusal rates
- impact on different staff groups
- patterns by protected characteristic

Where disparities are identified:

- these must be investigated
- appropriate corrective action must be taken

12.6 Audit and Record Keeping

All flexible working requests and decisions must:

- be fully documented
- include the rationale for decisions
- be retained in accordance with data protection requirements

Records must:

- demonstrate compliance with the policy
- be capable of internal and external audit

Failure to maintain adequate records may:

- undermine decision-making
- result in decisions being subject to review

12.7 Reporting to Trustees

The CEO must provide periodic reports to the Trust Board, including:

- number of requests received
- outcomes of requests
- appeals data
- identified risks or patterns
- assurance of compliance

Reports must:

- allow effective governance challenge
- support oversight of fairness and consistency

12.8 Continuous Improvement

The Trust will:

1. review the effectiveness of this policy regularly
2. identify areas for improvement
3. update processes in response to:
    - legislative change
    - operational experience
    - feedback from staff

All leaders must:

- contribute to the effective operation of this policy
- support consistent practice across the Trust

13. POLICY REVIEW

13.1 Purpose

This section sets out how ACT Multi Academy Trust will:

- review, maintain and update this Flexible Working Policy
- ensure continued compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- ensure that the policy remains effective in practice
- support consistent application across the Trust

The Trust will ensure that this policy remains:

- lawful
- up to date
- operationally effective
- aligned with Trust practice and governance

13.2 Frequency of Review

This policy:

- must be reviewed **annually**
- may be reviewed more frequently where required

A review must be undertaken where:

- there are changes to flexible working legislation or regulations
- there are changes to employment law or case law
- there are changes to ACAS guidance
- monitoring and assurance activities identify issues or risks
- patterns of requests or outcomes suggest inconsistency
- the Trust determines that revision is necessary

13.3 Responsibility for Review

Responsibility for this policy rests with:

- the **Chief Executive Officer (or delegated HR lead)** — for reviewing, updating and implementing the policy
- the **Trust Board** — for approval and oversight

The CEO must ensure that:

- the policy reflects current legal requirements
- the policy aligns with Trust strategy and workforce planning
- all proposed changes are evidence-based
- a clear rationale is provided for any amendments

13.4 Consultation Requirements

Where proposed changes to this policy:

- materially affect employees' terms and conditions; or
- significantly change the operation of flexible working arrangements

the Trust must:

- consult with recognised trade unions
- consult with affected employees
- provide clear and timely information to support consultation

Consultation must be:

- meaningful
- proportionate
- documented

Where changes are minor or technical:

- consultation may not be required
- however, all changes must still be communicated to employees

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13.5 Approval and Adoption

All revisions to this policy:

- must be formally approved by the Trust Board
- must be recorded in Board minutes
- must include a documented summary of changes

No amendments to this policy will take effect unless:

- approved through the Trust's governance framework
- implemented in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation

13.6 Communication of Changes

The Trust will ensure that:

- the current version of the policy is accessible to all employees
- any changes are communicated clearly and promptly
- managers are supported to implement changes consistently

Communication will include:

- publication via Trust systems
- direct communication where changes affect staff
- guidance where required

13.7 Continuous Improvement

The Trust will:

- review how effectively the policy operates in practice

- consider feedback from employees and managers
- identify opportunities to improve fairness, consistency and usability

This will be informed by:

- monitoring data (Section 12)
- outcomes of flexible working requests
- appeal outcomes
- equality impact analysis

13.8 Compliance with Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

The Trust will ensure that this policy remains compliant with:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Flexible Working Regulations (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010
- ACAS Code of Practice
- Academy Trust Handbook

The Trust will ensure that:

- any legislative changes are reflected promptly
- the policy continues to meet regulatory expectations

13.9 Final Accountability

The Trust Board retains ultimate accountability for:

- the integrity and effectiveness of this policy
- ensuring compliance with statutory requirements
- ensuring that flexible working arrangements are appropriate, sustainable and represent value for money

The CEO is accountable to the Trust Board for:

- implementation of the policy
- consistency of application across the Trust
- providing assurance that the policy is operating effectively

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following ACT Multi Academy Trust policies:

- Capability Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Redundancy and Restructuring Procedure
- Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Family Leave Policy (Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave)
- Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy
- Code of Conduct
- People and Employment Framework
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where applicable)

Appendix A: Interpretation of "Business Reasons"

All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and those making the decision will consider how the individual request and/or alternatives to this request, can be accommodated alongside the needs of the school.

If a request to work flexibly is rejected then the school will provide a specific "business reason", which must be one of the eight stated in the legislation:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the period the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

The school's interpretation of the "business reasons" are set out below in order to provide a clearer understanding of the specific circumstances in school.

1. Burden of additional costs

It may, in some circumstances, be more costly to employ part time staff rather than full time staff but this would not normally be a key reason for rejecting an application.

2. Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand

The school's customers are their pupils and parents. It is important that the quality of teaching and learning is not adversely affected by agreeing to flexible working. In particular the Headteacher will consider the impact on the need to spread the teaching of individual classes over more than one teacher (split classes), pressure on the timetable to fix particular lessons on a reduced number of days in the week. This is particularly the case where the employee is the sole specialist in a subject. In the case of support staff there is a need to ensure that service provision is maintained at a satisfactory level.

3. Inability to re-organise work among existing staff

In addition to 2 above, where the employee has leadership or management responsibilities, it is necessary to take into account the ability of the school to distribute these to other employees at times when the part time member of staff is not working. This may require a job-share or a reduction in the allocated responsibilities. The school will also need to consider whether it is appropriate for a leader or manager to be absent for whole days in the week as a result of flexible working.

4. Inability to recruit additional staff

Excellent quality teaching is paramount for raising school standards. It is not always possible to recruit excellent teaching staff, but the school will make attempts to do so as appropriate. In relation to 3 above, where a job share is required to fulfil the job description, this may only be possible if there is a colleague who is able and willing to undertake a part of the leadership responsibility. Where necessary and appropriate, the school will seek to recruit additional staff.

Detrimental impact on quality

See section 2 above in relation to the possible impact on the quality of learning and teaching.

Detrimental impact on performance

Timely marking of pupils' work is essential for their progress. Pupils' work must be marked on a regular basis in accordance with the school marking policy. The school recognises that it is potentially difficult for part time teachers to manage the weekly workload of planning and assessment in the classroom. If this difficulty occurs it is likely to have a negative impact on the quality of learning and on other members of staff.

It is the responsibility of part time staff to manage weekly workloads to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on performance. Staff applying for flexible working will be required to detail how they will fulfil the requirements of the part time job should the request be agreed, and this will be considered before a decision is reached.

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5. Insufficiency of work during the period the employee proposes to work

If more than one member of part time staff requires the same working period, it may be difficult to accommodate all part time staff requests. Whilst individual preferences for working days and times can be considered, the needs of pupils and effective service delivery are paramount. This is particularly an issue where the timetable for teachers requires teams of staff to deliver the curriculum to a pool of pupils. The impact of a part time teacher being absent from school for one day per week may be to pressurise the timetabler to allocate a predominance of non-teaching periods for others in the team on that day. The extent to which the proposed flexible/part time work pattern affects the work-patterns of the team will be considered before a flexible working application is agreed.

6. Planned structural changes

The school will need to consider the impact on its ability to accommodate flexible working on the basis of planned curriculum changes, reduced pupil numbers or changes to the staffing structure.

Such other ground as the Secretary of State may specify by the regulations

No such grounds are specified currently.

Appendix B: Form to Request Flexible Working

Note to the employee

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly under the right provided in law. Before completing this form, you should first read the Flexible Working Policy and Appendix A carefully and check that you are eligible to make a request.

You should note that it may take several weeks to consider your request and allow for discussion and meetings between us and further time for implementation where a flexible working arrangement is agreed to. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application to the Headteacher or appropriate line manager well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help us to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired flexible working request. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to the Headteacher or appropriate line manager (you might want to keep a copy for your own records). We will then have 28 days after the day your application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted, this will normally be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

1. Personal Details

Name:
Job Title:
I would like to apply to work a flexible working arrangement under my right provided under The Children and Families Act 2014. I confirm I meet each of the eligibility criteria as follows:
Please tick the box below if this applies to you.

☐ Including this, my current application, I have not made more than two formal requests to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months*

*If you are unable to tick the box, then you do not qualify to make a formal request to work flexibly under the statutory procedure. This does not mean that your request may not be considered, but you should explore this separately under paragraph 11 of the policy.

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

2. Details of your request (e.g. part-time working, working from home, staggered hours, compressed hours):

3. Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):

4. I would like this working arrangement to commence from:

Signed: **Date:**

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Return slip

Confirmation of Receipt *(to be completed and returned to the employee)*

Dear

I confirm that I received your flexible working request.

I shall be arranging a meeting to discuss your application within 28 working days following this date. In the meantime, you might want to consider whether you would like a workplace colleague or trade union representative to accompany you to the meeting.

Signed: Date: