

Temporary Short-Term Homeworking Policy in response to Coronavirus [Covid-19]

Date: 13th March 2020

This policy has been adopted as an urgent response to Government advice relating to the containment and delay of the spread of Covid-19.

It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and is a short-term measure.

Homeworking

The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust (TSSMAT) supports flexible working for staff and, where appropriate, may ask or will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home, provided that such an arrangement is suitable for both parties and is likely to facilitate effective and efficient working.

In some circumstances we may request that an employee works from home, for example, if the school is ordered to close.

A specific request for homeworking (from either the employer or the employee) will be dependent on an objective assessment of feasibility and whether the employee's work can be done safely from home. As every role is different and every employee is different, TSSMAT will work with employee to identify and agree the work activities that can be undertaken at home.

Homeworking principles

- Homeworking requires the agreement of both you and your manager and should be under regular review.
- An agreement to short-term homeworking does not form part of your contract of employment and the agreement may cease at any time.
- Short-term homeworking is in response to a specific need and is not intended to be for an extended period of time.
- If the agreement to work from home is withdrawn and the employee does not attend for work, TSSMAT's policies which deal with sickness absence or other time off will apply.
- Health and safety risk assessment should be carried out to ensure that homeworking can be undertaken safely.
- Data Protection Risk Assessment should be carried to ensure that information is processed securely.

Issues to consider

- The reason for homeworking; for example, due to self-isolation, caring for others, or school closure.
- Identification of the work activities that can be undertaken appropriately from home.
- Working time and arrangements for contact with line manager for supervision and guidance.

- Contact with other colleagues including those who may also be working from home.
- Equipment, devices and access to data in accordance with Data Protection arrangements.
- Workspace, seating, use of display screen equipment.
- Confidentiality and processing of sensitive personal data.
- Whether the employee can attend meetings at locations other than school if homeworking is due to school closure.
- Arrangements to update the employee on work related matters.
- Sickness absence reporting procedures.

Responsibilities

Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all issues relating to homeworking are given appropriate consideration and that health and safety/data protection measures are applied.

All managers have a responsibility to manage the wellbeing of their staff and to fulfil their duty of care for their employees, notwithstanding homeworking.

The following are our measures that can be implemented in order to support and promote the wellbeing of all employees, but this list is not exhaustive, and an individualistic approach should be considered to meet the needs of the employee:

- **Stay connected by talking, listening and engaging with your employees.** Enable all employees to continue to receive school communications, whilst maintaining availability to discuss the implications of these communications. Create a balance between the platforms utilised to communicate, to ensure that a reliance is not placed upon emails.
- **Support good team working.** Feeling part of a team is important and individuals need to feel supported through new ways of communicating, providing employees with an opportunity for human interaction, alleviating potential feelings of loneliness and stress.
- **Agree boundaries, set expectations for homeworking and be flexible.** In order to manage stress and wellbeing, it is essential to allocate resources, agree which employees are available and when and how the work will be delivered. The work needs to be achievable for a homeworking environment and focused on the goals and outcomes, rather than the activity or time spent on the activities.

- **Providing additional support.** It is vital to listen to employees' anxieties and concerns and provide appropriate access to resources, information and support, internally and/or externally, will enable employees to manage their health and wellbeing.
- **Adopt and promote positive work-life balance.** It is important for wellbeing to maintain a positive work-life balance and this should be encouraged for all employees. Ensuring that usual breaks are maintained and determining what the finish time will be for the working day, to enable a distinction between working and home life. Employees should be encouraged to follow the government guidance on daily exercise and keep in touch with colleagues enhancing wellbeing and maintaining structure to the working day.

Employees

Employees who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with TSSMAT secure at all times in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and associated procedures.

Employees who work from home have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by TSSMAT in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures.

Policies and Procedures

All employment policies and procedures apply during any period of homeworking. If you should become unwell during any period of homeworking, you should report your sickness absence to your manager or another designated person in the normal way. The organisation's policy for managing sickness absence will apply.

If your circumstances change whilst homeworking and you become responsible for caring for someone who is ill or is medically advised to self-isolate, you should notify your manager. The organisation will determine which time off provisions will apply in these circumstances.