



CALDEW SCHOOL

Flexible Working Policy

Reviewed under Finance and Resources Committee

On school website

Reviewed biennially

Adopted: July 2025

Next review: April 2027

INTRODUCTION

Caldew School recognises that people work more effectively when they are able to strike a healthy balance between their work responsibilities and other aspects of their lives. It is therefore recognised that the school should take time to review all requests made by employees for flexible working, ensuring that the needs and priorities of the school can be met before agreeing to any new arrangements. Employees should be mindful that the nature of the work at schools means there may be limited flexibility in some roles.

Flexible working can have the following benefits:

- retaining experienced staff
- recruiting from a broader pool of teachers
- promoting wellbeing
- improving work-life balance

DEFINING FLEXIBLE WORKING

Flexible working can be defined as 'arrangements which allow employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work'

Some forms of flexible working may be more suitable for particular roles in schools than others. Employees making a request should consider which forms of flexible working are best suited to their role, as individual circumstances vary. It is possible for employees to have more than one type of flexible working arrangement in place. Arrangements may be altered as an individual's circumstances change.

Types of flexible working

Flexible working can incorporate a number of possible changes to working arrangements

Part Time Working

Part time working means working lesser hours than the full-time contractual hours. Some teachers or support staff may be appointed to only on part time basis depending on the subject and timetable requirements.

Job sharing is when a full-time job is split between two people, with each sharer splitting the hours worked to equate to full time contractual hours and undertaking a proportion of the duties and receiving proportionate pay and benefits. Job sharing requires a high level of co-operation and communication between the sharers.

Phased retirement is when an employee gradually reduces their working hours and / or responsibilities to transition from full time work to full time retirement over an agreed set duration.

Varied Hours

Compressed hours is when where an employee works their normal contractual hours over fewer days than the standard work pattern.

Annualised hours are when the employee is contracted to work a certain number of hours over the year which may include some non term time days, or where hours vary across the year to suit the school and employee.

Staggered Hours is when employees have different start, finish and break times.

In Year Flexibility

Time off - Employees have the right to time off as set out in the Time Off for School Based staff policy

Lieu time is paid time off work for having worked additional hours.

Home Working - Some roles at schools may allow employees to work from home at certain times

THE PROCESS FOR REQUESTING FLEXIBLE WORKING

Flexible working can be requested through either statutory or non-statutory routes. For both types of request, staff should have an informal discussion with:

- Deputy Headteacher (Students and Staff) – teaching staff
 - Lisa Hollywood (Business Manager) – support staff
- or
- The Headteacher

This informal discussion should include:

- the potential impact on the school

- options for a flexible working arrangement – employers can encourage staff to show flexibility when making a flexible working request, as it may not be possible for requests to be met in every case
- a trial period to test out flexible working arrangements before any permanent changes are made

Trial periods should precede any contractual changes.

We will work with staff to try and establish an arrangement which works for both the employee's need and the school's, in particular to ensure consistently high-quality provision for pupils.

Statutory requests for flexible working

The Employment Rights Act 1996 gives employees the formal right to request flexible working following 26 weeks of continuous employment. Employees are only eligible to make a statutory request for flexible working if they have not made a request to work flexibly within the past 12 months (each year runs from the date when the last application was made). Statutory requests lead to a change to the employee's contract. Any request that is made and accepted will be a permanent change to the employee's contractual terms and conditions, unless agreed otherwise.

The school will ask staff annually in January if they have any requests for changes to contracted hours for the following academic year. This allows forward planning and means requests are more likely to be met. Staff will be informed if their request can be met as soon as possible and by 31st May at the latest.

For other requests employee should submit a written application to the Headteacher at least 3 months in advance of the proposed change:

- stating their desired working pattern and the intended start date
- setting out ways of mitigating the impact of the request on the school and their colleagues
- including if their request is in relation to the Equality Act, for example as a reasonable adjustment for a disability

The school must provide a response to the statutory flexible working request within three months of the date when the application was made, including the conclusion of any appeal.

If the school refuses the flexible working request, we must write to the employee giving the business reasons for the refusal.

Non-statutory requests for flexible working

This is often the route used to request one-off or temporary flexible working arrangements, or arrangements which do not involve altering an employee's contract.

Staff who have PPA in their timetables are permitted to leave the school site during these times and they should sign in and out at main reception.

To make a non-statutory request, employees should discuss their request in advance with:

- Deputy Headteacher (Students and Staff) – teaching staff
- Lisa Hollywood (Business Manager) – support staff

or

- The Headteacher

As far as possible, the employee should identify ways of mitigating the impact of the request on the school and their colleagues.

When making a non-statutory request, the employer and employee can agree to a permanent change of the employee's contractual terms and conditions, but this is not a requirement of the non-statutory route.

Considerations for employees requesting flexible working

Employees wishing to make a request for flexible working should consider the potential impact of their request on the school and ways in which these could be overcome. This may help the school to accommodate the request.

NEXT STEPS ONCE FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION IS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION

We will always aim to come to a decision as quickly as possible. However, some requests may take longer due to the impact on the school and needing to consider how these will be mitigated.

Within 28 days of receiving the written flexible working application or as soon as reasonably possible, the school will arrange to meet with the employee to discuss the request. The meeting provides an opportunity to consider the employee's request and explore how it may be accommodated. Some flexibility may be required to explore alternatives or a compromise by both the employee and their manager to ensure the needs of the school are not adversely impacted. Employees have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or their trade union representative if they wish.

The school will write to the employee to notify them of their decision within 14 days of the date of the meeting. Where a request is rejected, the reasons will be given, and the employee will be informed of their right of appeal.

REASONS WHEN A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST CAN BE REFUSED

By law, a flexible working request may be rejected for the following reasons:

1. Burden of additional costs i.e., it will cost too much.
2. Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff.
3. Inability to recruit additional staff.

4. The new arrangements will have detrimental impact on quality.
5. The new arrangements will have detrimental impact on performance.
6. Detriment effect on the ability of the school to meet pupil/student needs or stakeholder demand.
7. There is not enough work for the employee to do for the work pattern requested.
8. The school is planning changes to the workforce.