EDITH STEIN
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

APPROVED BY DIRECTORS	**September 2026**
DATE LAST REVIEWED	**September 2026**
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	**Chief Executive Officer**
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	**Non**

Policy Amendments

Version Date	Section / Page	Amendments
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1.0 Statement of Intent

1.1 This policy applies to all staff, with the exception of volunteers. This policy aims to:

- Set out expectations for staff asking for flexible working
- Outline how the school will support staff to work flexibly when a request is granted

1.2 Where this document refers to Headteacher, this may also be taken to mean other relevant senior leader in the school.

2.0 Guidance

2.1 This policy meets the requirements of:

- Set out expectations for staff working off-site – e.g. from home.
- Flexible Working Regulations 2014
- Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996

It also reflects best-practice guidance set out in:

- The Department for Education's (DfE) guidance for flexible working in schools
- The Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's (ACAS) Code of Practice on requests for flexible working

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that this site policy is applied consistently across all Trust employees, this in turn is delegated to LGBs. LGBs are responsible for considering all valid requests for working off-site arrangements equally, fairly, and according to the needs of the Trust. They may wis to delegate this responsibility to Headteachers.

3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied consistently across the school. The Headteacher is responsible for considering all valid requests for flexible working arrangements equally, fairly, and according to the needs of the school and pupils.

3.3 The governing board will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.4 Other staff will make sure they follow the expectations in this policy.

4.0 What is Flexible Working?

4.1 Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

4.2 The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request but the Trust recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both the Trust and the employee:

- Job-sharing
- Part-time working
- Term-time working
- Home-working (See Appendix 2)
- Reduction in hours

4.3 Types of Flexible Working

4.3.1 Job-sharing is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible, and meet the needs of the school/Trust. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each works, subject to terms and conditions. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where two individuals wish to work part-time. The suitability of posts for job-sharing will be stated in any internal or external advertisements.

4.3.2 Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who only works Monday to Wednesday.The suitability of posts for parttime working will be stated in any internal or external advertisements.

4.3.3 Term-time working is where an employee reduces their hours or takes time off during any school holidays. Any weeks above their annual leave entitlement will be unpaid. Salary can be paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.

4.3.4 Home-working is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the Trust's premises. The School/Trust can consider home-working being an occasional agreed day, a mix of home and office based work each week (blended working) or a full time arrangement.

4.3.5 Voluntary reduced working time is a working pattern where it is agreed that an employee will work reduced hours for a certain period of time, with a return to full time hours at the end of this period. Salary, pension and holiday will be pro rated during this time.

5. The Needs of the School/Trust

5.1 The Trust, as employer, is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However employees need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

4.2 Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed, the School/Trust will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on pupils
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

6. Submitting a Flexible Working Request

6.1 An eligible employee is entitled to submit two statutory flexible working requests in a 12 month period (an employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement, for example the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments).

6.2 All requests must be made in writing by filling in an application form that is available in Appendix 1 of this document. Any request made must include:

- the date of the request
- the change the employee is requesting to the terms and conditions of their employment in relation to their hours, times or place of work
- the date the employee would like the change to come into effect
- if and when the employee has made a previous request for flexible working to the employer

6.3 If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

6.4 If an application does not contain all of the required information, the line manager will explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

6.5 An employee may have only one live request for flexible working with the Trust/Academy at any one time. Once a request has been made, it remains live until any of the following occur:

- a decision about the request is made by the employer
- the request is withdrawn
- an outcome is mutually agreed
- the statutory two-month period for deciding requests ends

7. Meetings Regarding Flexible Working

7.1 Upon receiving a written request for flexible working, the line manager will usually seek to arrange a meeting with the employee to:

- discuss the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and School/Trust

7.2 A request continues to be live during any appeal or any extension to the statutory two month decision period that the Trust/Academy and employee may have agreed.

7.3 If a meeting is arranged, it will be held within 28 days of the School/Trust receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager.

7.4 The employee will be given advance notice of the time, date and place of the meeting. If the initial date is problematic then one further date will be proposed. If a face to face meeting is difficult to arrange then, if agreed by the employee and line manager, the meeting may be held over the telephone or virtually via Teams.

7.5 At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a willing workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

7.6 If the employee fails to attend a meeting and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

7.7 Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved as stated in the employee's written application, a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. The employee will be informed of the Academy/Trust's agreement to the request by a confirmation letter as outlined in the section 'Responding to a flexible working request' within 28 days of the School/Trust receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager.

8. Responding to a Flexible Working Request

8.1 The line manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the School/Trust in implementing the proposed changes.

8.2 Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

8.3 The request will be submitted by the line manager/Headteacher, for consideration and decision, once all pertinent information has been gathered by the line manager/Headteacher and after discussion with the employee. In the case of the employee holding a leadership post, the request must be submitted to the LGB or Trust Board as appropriate.

8.4 The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 days after the meeting to discuss the request.

8.5 The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The School/Trust may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. If the request is agreed then the employee will be sent a confirmation letter which will include details of the new arrangements. The employee should contact the line manager within 14 days if they wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns.

8.6 Any refusal of the flexible working request, must meet one of the eight measures in Appendix 2.

9. Right to Appeal Decision

9.1 The employee has the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.

9.2 The employee may lodge an appeal within 14 days of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. The appeal will be heard within 14 days. The employee will then be informed of the outcome to their appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager.

10. Trialling new working arrangements

10.1 Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the School/Trust a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the School/Trust will allow sufficient time for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

11. Varying an employee's contract

11.1 Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation will need to be made to the employee's contract of employment. A variation letter or new contract of employment (depending on the changes agreed) will be sent to the employee within 28 days of the change to the employee's working pattern being agreed.

11.2 If the employee has any questions or concerns about the variation letter or new contract of employment, they should contact the line manager to discuss the matter further.

11.3 Where a trial period has been arranged the School/Trustwill provide the employee with a document that details their new working pattern and makes clear that it is only a temporary variation to the

terms of the employee's contract. The employee will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period (although the School/Trustmay reduce or lengthen the trial period where necessary with the agreement of the employee). The School/Trustwill reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement.

12. Flexible retirement

12.1 Under this policy, eligible employees may request flexible retirement. Flexible retirement is the opportunity for eligible employees to continue in their employment with the Trust, earning a reduced salary as a result of a reduction in working hours and/or grade while also receiving pension benefits which have been accrued at that point.

12.2 The Trust will considering any application for flexible retirement. An employee considering flexible retirement should have an early and informal conversation with their line manager and the Trust HR Officer who will be able to provide further advice. Employees will need to contact their own pension provider to receive a pension estimate

12.3 Once the estimate of benefits has been received, an employee should decide whether or not to proceed with an application for flexible retirement.

13.0 Short notice request for flexible working

13.1 There may be occasions where staff request ad hoc (occasional, short-notice) requests to for flexible working where the change is for a very limited period. Such requests are required to be handled consistently, fairly, and in a way that supports both operational effectiveness and staff wellbeing.

13.2 Short notice requests may be permitted where it:

- Does not adversely impact service delivery, students pupils or others in schools or the Trust
- Is appropriate to the nature of the employee's role
- Can be supported with appropriate resources and IT access
- Is compatible with the employees position
- Maintains safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection requirements
- Does not impact on school or Trust Health and safety requirements

Approval for short notice requests is discretionary and not an entitlement.

13.3 Trust employees wishing to request a short notice flexible working must:

- Make a request to the Headteacher early as possible
- Provide a clear reason for the request
- Outline the work is going to be undertaken whilst the provision is in place

In urgent circumstances, requests may be made on the same day, but approval is not guaranteed.

13.4 Line managers will consider requests on a case-by-case basis. Managers should ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making and may refuse requests where operational needs cannot be met. Where requests are met the conditions related to working hours in section 9 should be followed.

13.5 Flexible working requests will generally not be granted if a member of staff is requesting to work from home to care for a dependant. The Trust is of the view that it would want to support caring

duties rather than these being compromised by work duties. Employees should refer to the discretionary absence policy when caring for relatives.

14. Complaints and further information

14.1 The Trust is strongly opposed to any form of victimisation of individuals who work, or request to work under flexible working arrangements.

14.2 If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the flexible process, they should raise their concerns informally with the line manager.

14.3 If informal discussions do not resolve the matter to an employee's satisfaction, they should raise a grievance under the Trust's grievance procedure.

15 Monitoring and review of this policy

15.1 The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

Appendix1

Flexible working application form for statutory and non-statutory requests

Employee name:

Job title:

Date employment commenced:

Line manager:

Statutory / Non-Statutory* Request

CURRENT WORKING PATTERN	
Days/hours	
Location	

PROPOSED NEW WORKING PATTERN	
Days/hours	
Location	
Any additional technology or resources required	
Proposed start date	

I ANTICIPATE THAT THIS CHANGE WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL AND MY COLLEAGUES	
Benefits	
Challenges	

I ANTICIPATE THAT THESE CHALLENGES CAN BE MANAGED AS FOLLOWS

IS THIS REQUEST IN RELATION TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?
If yes, please provide details and other supporting evidence

DECLARATION OF ANY PREVIOUS STATUTORY REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

I confirm that:

- This is a statutory / Non-statutory* request for flexible working
- I have not made a statutory flexible working request in the last 12 months

* Delete as appropriate

Signed:

Date:

Appendix2

Flexible working – Home working

Circumstances when staff may request flexibility to work off-site

Where flexible working has been agreed and as a result an employee can work from home they must follow the Trust home working guidance and the specifics included in this appendix.

Staff may work off-site – e.g. from home:

- Where flexible working has been approved.
- Following clinical and/or public health advice.
- Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work off-site, they must speak to the Headteacher or a Senior Leader.

Arrangements for working off-site in a flexible or hybrid working do not apply to staff members who are following public heath advice to work from home. In this section we set out the right for staff to apply for off-site working arrangements. While our school/Trust welcomes applications and will consider all requests openly and fairly, ESCAT and it's schools are not obliged to grant working off site requests in all cases. In line with the policy we encourage staff to discuss flexible working arrangements, including working off site with their line manager on an informal basis before making a request.

Working hours

When working off-site, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours. Outside of these hours, staff are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents/carers or pupils or contractors unless it is an emergency, or they're working flexible hours and this is required, or they have prior written agreement from the school/trust.

Working hours during flexible working

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours off-site.

Absence when working off-site

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working off-site, e.g. due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the school's normal absence procedure.

Health and Safety

If flexible working is agreed and the employee can work from home the Trust still has a responsibility to ensure that the employee is working safely.