



Tudor Grange Academies Trust

Home Working Policy

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Contents

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 2 |
| 2 | Scope | 2 |
| 3 | Benefits of Home Working | 2 |
| 4 | Types of Home Working | 3 |
| 5 | Suitability of Home Working..... | 4 |
| 6 | Requests to Work from Home..... | 5 |
| 7 | Home Working Agreement..... | 6 |
| 8 | Management of Home Working Employees | 6 |
| | Appendix 1 Working from Home Health and Safety and Wellbeing Self-Assessment Checklist..... | 7 |

1 Introduction

- 1.1 TGAT is committed to supporting flexible working in order to facilitate effective working and support work life balance initiatives where practicable.
- 1.2 The policy is intended to assist both managers and employees in implementing working from home by highlighting areas for consideration and providing practical advice and information. It is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to work from home effectively and safely.
- 1.3 The policy recognises that for the majority of employees, working from home will be on an occasional basis and with prior agreement from the manager. Where this is on a permanent basis, an application under the flexible working policy must be made.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all employees of Tudor Grange Academies Trust

3 Benefits of Home Working

- 3.1 There are many benefits to home working. For the Trust these may include:
 - Reduced accommodation costs and better use of existing premises and resources;
 - Contributing towards the reduction of the Trust’s CO2 emissions by reducing unnecessary employee commuting;
 - The retention of valued and skilled employees for whom the ability to work at home is the preferred option;

- Well-motivated staff who feel that they work for an organisation that is prepared to be flexible and which trusts them;
- Potentially increased output and quality of work due to fewer distractions than working in an office environment;
- Accommodation of the requirements of disabled employees or employees with temporary health conditions;
- Promotion of a positive image as a good employer; potential to reduced costs in terms of travelling allowances.

3.2 For the employee these include:

- Increased discretion in the management of their work and personal time; increased motivation;
- A saving of travel time and costs; the ability to work without distraction;
- Improvements in work-life balance issues.

3.3 While there are many advantages of home working, a detailed assessment needs to be made, by both the employee and the Trust, as to whether the individual will be a suitable home worker and whether the role to be performed is appropriate/can be fulfilled whilst working from home.

4 Types of Home Working

4.1 There are various ways that home working may operate, ranging from rare occasions that arise and do not form a routine, to formal arrangements that are identified as such in the contract of employment

4.2 Occasional Home Working

Taking work home occasionally, on an ad hoc basis, to concentrate on a particular project or task may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- Where a specific task needs dedicated and focussed input and/or could be dealt with more efficiently at home e.g. saved travelling time and lack of interruptions;
- Where it is difficult for staff to get in to work e.g. adverse weather or a short but unavoidable commitment at home.

4.3 Regular/Hybrid Home Working

Working from home for a percentage of the time on a regular basis, the individual would come into the office for the balance of time. This may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- Where the function of the post requires little face to face contact with colleagues and/or clients;
- To facilitate a more flexible work pattern, perhaps to accommodate other demands;
- Where an individual plans his/her work arrangements to enable the achievement of defined outputs each week/month from home.

4.4 Permanent Home Working

Working from home 100% of the time, or spending a large percentage of time working from home and making workplace visits for the balance of time. This may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- Where the job can be done just as effectively and efficiently from home;

- Where ICT systems exist, or can be created, to support the job at home;
- Where communications systems exist, or can be created, to support the job, and the employee effectively
- The job involved frequent/regular outside visits.

5 Suitability of Home Working

5.1 Posts

5.2 Some jobs may be considered for home working. Generally speaking, any job that does not require time spent in a specific location or high visibility or face to face service delivery, may be adapted for home working. Consideration should also be given to the impact on and inter-relationship with other jobs, colleagues, access to required information, technology, costs and savings etc. The following job characteristics may lend themselves to home working:

- Defined output tasks;
- Discrete projects or functions;
- Relatively autonomous jobs;
- Jobs requiring frequent travelling;
- Jobs requiring high periods of concentration.

5.3 Employee Characteristics

5.4 Having established the suitability of the job for home working, the suitability of the employee needs to be considered. Home working does not suit everyone. Office dynamics and informal information flows may have a significant impact on the employee's performance. Some employees may develop better in a traditional office environment, and those without very much experience in their role are likely to need closer supervision which would not be possible if they were working from home. Individuals may also have a distorted view of home working – often with little recognition or understanding of the potential drawbacks, and it is important that both the advantages and the disadvantages are considered. A trial period may be appropriate in order to gauge suitability before any longer-term arrangements are put in place. Helpful personal qualities are likely to include:

- Self-motivated;
- Self-disciplined;
- Enjoy the challenge of working on their own;
- A flexible approach;
- Able to organise working time effectively; Able to work without direct supervision;
- Confident to work away from the office environment;
- Able to work on their own without day-to-day social interaction with colleagues;
- Able to travel to meetings and site visits;
- Able to “switch off” from work and maintain a proper balance between working and nonworking hours.

5.5 It is acknowledged that not all jobs are suitable for working from home, and for those which are suitable, employees may not want to work at home. If suitable ICT equipment is not available or, where key health and safety requirements cannot be met, requests may not be approved.

6 Requests to Work from Home

6.1 Occasional home working requests should be directed to the senior line manager who will assess the potential need and advantages of allowing a brief episode of home working. This informal arrangement must be agreed by the senior line manager and due consideration given to all relevant factors. Working from home, by its very nature, is often individual to the job and the employee concerned. Accordingly, appropriate arrangements should be decided between the employee and manager and a timescale for implementation agreed.

6.2 **Regular/hybrid or permanent** requests to work from home should first be discussed with a line manager and then made via the flexible working policy and will be considered in line with the below.

6.3 The senior manager will consider the application in a fair and consistent manner, taking account of the Trust's policies relating to equality. This is a two-step process.

6.4 Step 1 - Suitability

6.5 One of the most important factors to consider is the individual employee's role in providing a service to the Trust community. A focus on specific job tasks should identify those tasks that can be performed away from the school. The following issues should be taken into consideration:

- Service provided and impact upon the individual's work load and the work of the team;
- Does the job require long periods of uninterrupted mental concentration?
- Does the job require a lot of ad hoc communication between the groups of staff?
- Can the work be measured in terms of output?
- What will be the effect on services?
- Can the work readily be undertaken at home?
- How can the work be monitored?
- How should contact be made?
- What equipment would be required?
- What costs would be incurred?
- Is the employee likely to be suited to home working?

6.6 It is the Trust's policy to view requests for home working in a positive light and each case will be viewed individually. If the request is accepted in principle, a health and safety assessment of the home working environment must be carried out.

6.7 If the Senior manager is not able to accept the application at this step, s/he should provide the employee with a written response to their request including details of the reasons for rejecting the application.

6.8 Step 2 - Assessing the Home Environment

6.9 An employee who works from home is afforded the same protection under health and safety legislation as an employee who is office based. It is therefore vital to ensure the home working environment is suitable before any home working agreement is reached.

6.10 The employee needs to take personal responsibility for the health and safety aspect of home working. An employee needs an environment at home which offers the following:

- Suitable "office" space, ideally a separate room but at least a dedicated space;
- Freedom from interruptions and distractions; security and confidentiality;

- Ability to meet health and safety requirements.

6.11 It is not considered appropriate to combine home based working with dependent care.

Employees may be required to demonstrate that they do not have dependent care responsibilities within their contracted working hours. In addition to this, employees need to be aware that the Trust reserves the right to ask them to attend Trust premises at short notice.

6.12 In order to ensure that s/he has all the relevant information, the senior manager may wish to meet with the employee, their line manager and the HR Director to discuss the application prior to reaching a decision. If an application for home working has been accepted in principle by the relevant Senior Manager, the employee concerned should complete a Health and Safety Home Worker Self-Assessment risk assessment Checklist (see Appendix 2) and submit this to the senior manager. If this assessment identifies any particular risks, it will be the responsibility of the senior manager, Line Manager and employee to discuss ways in which the risks may be minimised or eliminated. The home environment must be deemed to be safe to work in before a home working agreement can be agreed.

7 Home Working Agreement

7.1 Providing that a request to work from home has successfully passed the two-step assessment process outlined above, a home working agreement should be issued to the employee (see Appendix 3). This will be issued along with any amendment to the employee contract that may be required. The employee will be asked to sign and return a copy of the home working agreement and this will be retained on their personal file.

8 Management of Home Working Employees

8.1 Clear communication systems with home workers are vital. The use of email and TEAMS should be utilised to ensure effective communication. To make the scheme work effectively, there needs to be trust between the employee and the manager and there should (where possible) be some regular face to face meetings to ensure wellbeing, optimal team work and efficiency is monitored.

8.2 Where appropriate, the Trust may provide, install and maintain equipment to assist with home working. Factors taken into consideration in determining appropriateness may include the frequency of home working and whether the need for home working has been generated by the trust or the employee. The following items of equipment may be appropriate:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Occasional home working | Remote access to the Trust IT servers |
| Regular/hybrid home working | As above plus a PC/laptop and mobile communications |
| Permanent home working | Computer and mobile communications plus other items as required |

8.3 In relation to maintaining the equipment it may be necessary for the employee to bring the equipment in to the Trust's offices or to allow someone to visit them at home in order to carry out the relevant maintenance. Any Trust equipment installed at the home worker's home remains the property of the Trust and can be recalled at any time. IT helpdesk support during standard working hours is available

8.4 The Trust will also take responsibility for the repair/replacement of lost, damaged or stolen equipment, provided the employee has taken appropriate precautions to safeguard the equipment. Upon the termination of the home working agreement, employees must return all Trust equipment.

Appendix 1 Working from Home Health and Safety and Wellbeing Self-Assessment Checklist

Please complete this checklist prior to commencing a working from home arrangement (and review at least once a year at the appraisal meeting) or if there are any changes eg. Moving house; changes to the equipment/furniture or any health/wellbeing issues arise. The completed form should be given to your line manager and will help the Trust to ensure that your working conditions at home are safe and healthy.

| | | | |
|---|------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Name (print) | | Date of assessment | |
| Job Role | | | |
| School/ Academy | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Details of work to be completed at home | | | |
| Details of the home space to be used for working | | | |
| Will your job involve any of the following whilst working from home? (please tick):- | | | |
| Computer working | | | |
| Manual handling | | | |
| Use of electrical equipment | | | |
| Details of equipment required | | | |
| Work Station/ Home Office | Yes | No | Comment |

| | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|--|
| Is the room/area separate from other living areas in the home? | | | |
| Is the room/area used easily accessible? | | | |
| Is there enough space to safely accommodate all necessary furniture and equipment? | | | |
| Are walkways clear of tripping hazards, such as trailing cables? | | | |
| Is there a source of heating to maintain a comfortable temperature? | | | |
| Does the room have an opening window for ventilation? | | | |
| When seated at a desk can legs and upper body move together without twisting? | | | |
| Is there adequate light to comfortably see documents and your computer screen? | | | |
| Can you reach storage shelves without having to stretch over the desk? | | | |
| Do you generally find your workstation comfortable to use? | | | |
| Do you know how your workstation should be arranged to achieve the most comfortable posture? | | | |
| Have you completed and applied the Workstation Safety Plus E Learning module? | | | |
| Do you have somewhere secure to store confidential Trust documents in order to maintain Data Protection Act? | | | |
| Safe use of computers | Yes | No | Comment |
| Do you use a computer/laptop at home for work purposes? | | | |
| Do you have to use a computer/laptop intensively on a | | | Carry our DSE assessment annually |

| | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|--|
| regular basis when working from home? | | | |
| If yes to the above, have you completed and applied the Workstation Safety Plus E Learning module? | | | |
| Will the work involve using a mobile phone? | | | |
| Electrical Equipment | Yes | No | Comment |
| Does your electrical equipment have any signs of damage or overheating? | | | |
| If you have any Trust electrical items of equipment at home, are they marked to show they have received a portable appliance test? | | | |
| When was this equipment last checked? | | | |
| Do you know how to safely use the equipment you use to work from home? | | | |
| Fire | Yes | No | Comments |
| Is the work area tidy and exit routes clear? | | | |
| Do you have an escape plan in case of fire? | | | |
| Do you have a smoke alarm fitted? | | | |
| Do you know what to do in the event of having an accident at home? | | | |
| Manual handling | Yes | No | Comment |
| Do you carry out any manual handling activities? | | | Complete separate assessment if yes |
| COSHH | Yes | NO | Comment |
| Does the work involve the use of hazardous substances? | Yes | No | Complete separate COSHH assessment if yes |
| Wellbeing | Yes | No | Comment |
| Are you familiar with the accident reporting procedure? | | | |
| Do you have adequate first aid facilities whilst working at home? | | | |
| Are you aware of the requirement of the Trust's Attendance Procedure that requires you to report any sickness, whether | | | |

| | | | |
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| working from home or at any other work base | | | |
| Do your working hours at home comply with the current Working Time Regulations? | | | |
| Do you have the opportunity to contact and meet with other team members as appropriate? (permanent home worker only) | | | |
| Do you have regular supervision with your line manager? | | | |
| Does your line manager have your mobile number and do you have the contact details of colleagues? | | | |
| Do you have any other comments about your working conditions or any other health and safety concerns? | | | |
| Employee signature | | Date | |
| Employee Name (print) | | | |
| | | | |
| Line manager's signature | | Date | |
| Line manager's Name (print) | | | |

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|--|
| Please detail the action that is to be taken, if any, to address any issues highlighted in the assessment. |
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