



SHARE
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY & PROCEDURE

Version	3.2
Name of policy writer	Debbie Howard
Review date	April 2022
Approved by Directors	July 2019

Record of Alterations

Version 1.0	Original
1.2	Minor Amendments
2.0	Amendments
3.0	Amendments
	reviewed July 2020 – no amendments
	3.1 – amendment to 5.8 and 5.9
	3.2 – reviewed April 2021 no amendments



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy serves to assist the headteacher/principal and the board of directors in making decisions about requests for flexible working in accordance with legal, contractual and moral obligations.
- 1.2 In accordance with legislation all requests for flexible working will be given serious consideration and will be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to all staff working in Share Multi-Academy Trust who are eligible (as defined below) to submit a request for flexible working in accordance with the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 amendment to the Employment Rights Act 1996.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 All employees with a minimum of 26 weeks continuous service have a statutory right to make an application for flexible working arrangements. If the request is not accepted the employee is not permitted to make further application under this right for the next 12 months.
- 3.2 Eligible employees are able to request the following:
 - a change to the hours they work (staggered, compressed, reduced etc.)
 - a change to the times when they are required to work
 - to work from home.
- 3.3 The facility to apply for flexible working does not provide an automatic entitlement to work flexibly as there may be circumstances when the employer is unable to accommodate the employee's desired work pattern.

4. Timescale


- 4.1 The Legislation requires that the process is completed within three months of the request being received. This time limit includes any appeals. However, if for some reason the request cannot be dealt with within three months the time limit may be extended, provided that the employee agrees to the extension.

5. Process

- 5.1 The initial onus will be on the employee to make a considered application in writing. They will only be able to make one application a year under the right, and if it is accepted it will mean a permanent change to the employee's contract of employment (unless the employer and employee specifically agree otherwise).
- 5.2 The employee has a responsibility to think carefully about their desired working pattern when making an application and the employer is required to ensure that all flexible working requests are afforded serious consideration.



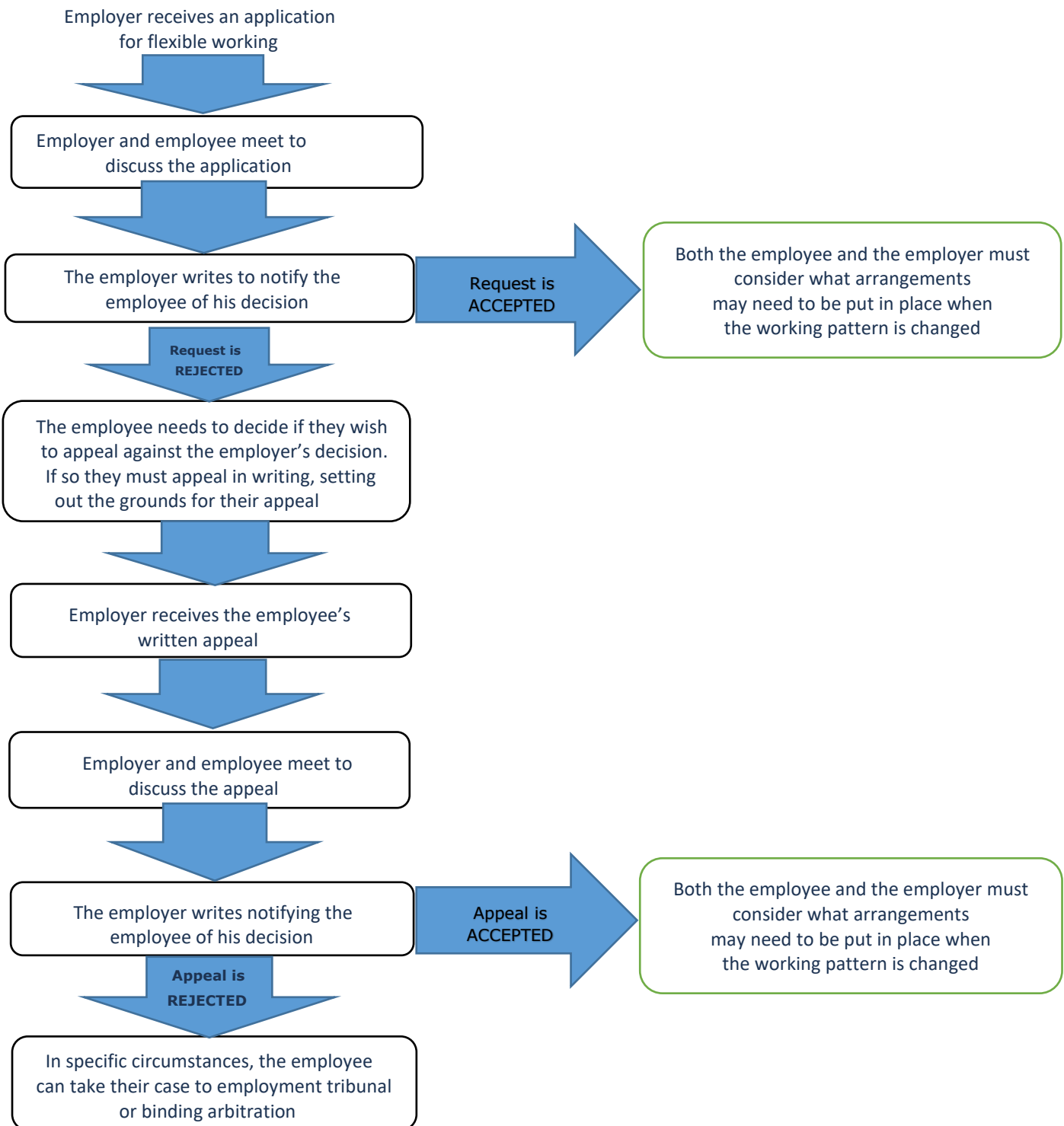
- 5.3 The employee must state what effect the proposed change would be anticipated to have on their employer and how any such effect might constructively be addressed by the employer (see application for flexible working).
- 5.4 On receipt of the written application the school (as the employer), usually represented by the headteacher/principal or line manager, should arrange, without unreasonable delay (and usually within 10 working days), to meet with the employee to discuss the request (unless they feel able to accommodate the request without further consideration). The employee will be entitled, should they so wish, to bring a colleague or Trade Union Representative to this meeting.
- 5.5 The headteacher/principal or line manager, is responsible for ensuring that all flexible working requests are given serious consideration and that each is determined on its own individual merits and in accordance with the case put forward. In every instance, the needs of the individual member of staff should be balanced against the needs of the school
- 5.6 All flexible working requests will be considered in a reasonable manner and will only be refused if there are sound business reasons for doing so. Any such reason(s) must be from the following list:
- the burden of additional costs
 - an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
 - an inability to recruit additional staff
 - a detrimental impact on quality
 - a detrimental impact on performance
 - a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
 - insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
 - a planned structural change to the business.
- 5.7 The school should then write to the employee (within 10 working days of this meeting) to either agree to a new work pattern (and a start date) or to provide a clear explanation of business reasons why the application cannot be accepted. Any business reason(s) cited must be from the list provided in clause 5.6.
- 5.8 Unless clearly specified otherwise, any changes to the terms of employment resulting from acceptance of a flexible working request will be permanent. However, before a final decision is reached there may be agreement to a trial period, the purpose of which is to establish whether a revised arrangement is working to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.
- 5.9 On the conclusion of the agreed trial period **either** the revised working arrangement is made permanent **or** the employee will revert to the previous (substantive) terms of their contract of employment.
- 5.10 There may be some occasions when the school receives from different employees, within a short space of time, more than one request to work flexibly. Such requests should be considered in the order in which they are received.

- 
- 5.11 In the event of having considered and approved an initial request the school (in the person of the headteacher/principal or line manager considering the request) should be mindful that the business context has now changed and that this can be taken into account when assessing a second (or subsequent) request against relevant business considerations.
- 5.12 When the school receives simultaneous requests (from more than one applicant) they are not required by law to make value judgements about the most deserving request. Each case will be considered on its own merits with regard to the business case and the possible impact of complying with any individual request.
- 5.13 The school will exercise caution in order not to discriminate (either directly or indirectly) against any employee (for instance when dealing with requests from employees with childcare responsibilities or employees with protected characteristics e.g. disability, race etc.).

6. Appeal process

- 6.1 The employee has a right to appeal formally against their employer's decision. Any appeal must be lodged within 10 working days of the decision being notified to the employee (although at this juncture it may be helpful for the employee to speak informally to the headteacher/principal/line manager about their decision as this may reveal new information or an omission before the next stage of the process is initiated).
- 6.2 An appeal should be based on either:
- new information that was not available to the employer at the time the initial decision was made; or
 - a belief that the initial decision was unreasonable.
- 6.3 An appeal will be heard by an individual (or panel) who is (or are) independent of the initial decision making process and is (or are) senior in authority to the person making the initial decision. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or union representative.
- 6.4 The appeal decision should be communicated in writing (within 10 working days of the appeal being heard) and is to be regarded as final. There is no recourse to the grievance procedure.

APPENDIX 1 – Flexible working request flowchart



Note: Although there is no longer a requirement to deal with flexible working requests within a strict timetable there is a requirement to handle such requests in a 'reasonable manner'. This is interpreted as including (as well as completing the process within a maximum of 3 months) the following elements:

- assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the application
- holding a meeting to discuss the request with the employee
- offering and completing an appeal process.



APPENDIX 2 – FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST APPLICATION FORM

Note to the employee

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly under the right provided in law (Employment Rights Act 1996).

You should note that under the right it may take up to 3 months before consideration of the request need be completed (and this timescale can be extended by agreement). You should therefore ensure that you submit your application to the appropriate person well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help your employer to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be considered valid.

1. Personal Details	
Name:	Post:
Line Manager:	

When completing sections 3 and 4, think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues.

Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your line manager (you might want to keep a copy for your own records) who will then (within a reasonable period of time) arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions (unless otherwise agreed).

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern. I confirm I meet both of the following eligibility criteria:

- I have worked continuously as an employee of the company for the last 26 weeks.
- I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

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

2a. Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):
2b. Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):



2c. I would like this working pattern to commence from **(insert date)**:

3. Impact of the new working pattern - I anticipate this change in my working pattern will affect my employer and colleagues as follows:

4. Accommodating the new working pattern - I think any related impact on my employer and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:

Employee Signature:

Date:

This form should now be passed to your Headteacher/Principal