

Working from Home Policy

This policy has been approved by Directors and the Operations Board



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Date of next renewal: Jan 2023.....

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Statement of intent

Skills for Life Trust believes that allowing staff to work from home occasionally can increase their motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

The Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working alone at home. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Trust has a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

In light of the above, this policy has been created in order to outline the risks associated with working from home and the procedures that are in place to minimise hazards and ensure good practice. This policy also includes guidelines for costs, equipment, insurance and data protection.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation

2. Lone-working

2.1. For the purpose of this policy, working from home is understood to be lone-working, as employees work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

2.2. The school has a duty to assess and advise of the risks associated with lone-working for employees, and ensure that the environments are safe for working practice.

2.3. Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves when lone-working, as well as any other people affected by their work.

3. Principles

3.1. Working from home is not:

- An automatic contractual right through express or implied terms; it is granted at the school's discretion and requires prior approval from their Line Manager/Headteacher.
- Intended to create a situation in which staff members feel obliged to work excessive hours.
- Subject to funding as the benefits are seen as being mutual.
- A condition in which the Trust must provide equipment for use at home.
- A substitute for care of dependants, e.g. children.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The Trust is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with working from home.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring incidents associated with working from home.
- Providing the resources necessary to action the procedures in this policy.

- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy regularly and communicating any changes to members of staff.

4.2. **The Trust Admin Manager and Health and Safety Officer is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that employees working from home are at no greater risk than employees working within the school.
- Ensuring that risk assessments surveys are completed by staff and reviewed.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice, which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working from home.
- Ensuring that members of staff identified as being at risk are provided with necessary information, instruction and training, including refresher training as necessary.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through a robust system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.
- Providing work station information.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is provided to staff involved in any incident.

4.3. **Staff members are responsible for:**

- Completing and submitting a HSE Risk assessment via the Survey provided.
- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work.
- Following the guidance and procedures outlined in this policy for safe working practices.
- Reporting any incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others to the Health and Safety Officer, and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Taking part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have in respect of working alone at home.
- Ensuring that they do not arrange any meetings with parents/carers or other members of the public when working from home.
- Following and understanding the current GDPR and Trust Data Protection Policy.

5. **Application for working from home (Non Covid)**

- 5.1. All requests for working from home, where it is deemed suitable for the role carried out, should be first discussed with your line manager.
- 5.2. The Line Manager will discuss this with the Headteacher/CEO as to whether this arrangement will work for the job role and the school.
- 5.3. Following the meeting the Line Manager will inform the staff member of the decision.

6. Assessing risks

- 6.1. The Trust has a duty to assess risks to staff members working from home, and provide effective control measures to manage these risks and promote safe working practices.
- 6.2. Staff will be provided with a HSE risk assessment which must be completed by the member of staff. Health & Safety Officer offer advice on any highlighted risks.
- 6.3. Applications may be rejected if the level of risk associated with a staff member working from home is too high, or the risks cannot be managed effectively.
- 6.4. Risk assessments will be reviewed annually, or when there has been a significant change in working practice.

7. Equipment

- 7.1. If the school remains a frequent work base for a member of staff and equipment is retained on the premises, the school will not usually provide staff members with additional equipment to use at home.
- 7.2. The only exception to the above is the possession of a school mobile phone for communication purposes. Staff members are required to ensure that the phone is charged, in good working order and has sufficient credit remaining.
- 7.3. Staff members may use school equipment for home working purposes where this is already provided by the school, e.g. school laptops, unless equipment is required in the classroom.
- 7.4. Any defects on school equipment used for home working will be reported to the ICT Trust Manager for repair.
- 7.5. Staff members are required to use their own equipment and take reasonable steps to maintain this equipment to ensure that it is in good working order.
- 7.6. Staff members are responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband available, and for contacting their provider in the event of any technical issues.
- 7.7. The ICT Trust Manager is not responsible for providing IT support to equipment owned by staff members.
- 7.8. All Laptops provided by the Trust must be returned to the Site team for annual PAT testing.

8. Data protection

- 8.1. Staff members are responsible for maintaining security of school information, files, documents and data within their possession, including in paper and electronic form, at all times.
- 8.2. Due to the sensitive nature of some information, e.g. personal data, it is strongly advised that this is not taken home by staff members for home working purposes, due to the risk of it being leaked or misplaced.
- 8.3. If staff members wish to take personal data home, approval will first be sought from the Line Manager, and it will be ensured that appropriate security measures are in place by the ICT Trust Manager, e.g. secure passwords, encrypted devices (where applicable) and virus protection.
- 8.4. Staff members are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school equipment which contains sensitive data.
- 8.5. Staff members will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Trust Data Protection Policy when transporting school equipment and data.
- 8.6. Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust Data Protection Policy, General Data Protection Regulation and the Trust Disciplinary Policy.

9. Costs and expenses

- 9.1. The school will not contribute to any household expenses incurred whilst performing home working duties, e.g. heating, lighting, broadband or council tax.
- 9.2. The school will not reimburse any costs for travel between staff members' home and the school premises.
- 9.3. If a staff member is provided with a school mobile phone, an agreement will be written and signed between the Headteacher/IT Department and the staff member prior to commencing home working, outlining the terms and conditions of usage and costs.

10. Communication

- 10.1. All staff members working from home must be contactable throughout normal working hours by the Headteacher/Line Manager or other work colleagues.
- 10.2. Arrangements for contact will be agreed prior to commencing home working, which usually involves regular contact with the Headteacher/Line Manager to monitor working practices.
- 10.3. A staff member's phone number and home address will not be shared to others without their permission.

- 10.4. The school understands that staff working at home have the right to privacy out-of-hours and should be able to separate their working and home lives, and so communication is only compulsory during working hours.
- 10.5. Staff members are not permitted to arrange visits to their home from pupils or clients. Any meetings of this kind will always be conducted on the school premises to maintain professionalism and safety.
- 10.6. The Headteacher or Line Manager may request that staff members attend the school on any normal working day, e.g. to provide sickness cover, to attend meetings.
- 10.7. If staff members need to report sickness or absence when they are due to be home working, they will adhere to the usual procedures outlined in the Trust Staff Absence Policy and Sickness Policy, and will inform the Headteacher/Line Manager of their absence by 7:00am.
- 10.8. If any incidents or near-misses occur in a staff member's home, they are required to report these to the Health and Safety Officer immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.
- 10.9. A meeting will be held with the Health and Safety Officer following any incident and, if necessary, another risk assessment of the staff member's home will be conducted.

11. Insurance

- 11.1. The school holds liability insurance that provides cover for the legal liabilities of the school and its employees.
- 11.2. The liability insurance policy held by the school covers staff members who work from home; however, this will not cover staff members for personal liabilities or theft arising from non-work activities.
- 11.3. Staff members are advised to ensure that they have their own domestic insurance policies in places for household contents and buildings.

12. Monitoring and review

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis by the Trust. Any changes will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 12.2. All members of staff will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

13. Associated Policies

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy

- Portable Electronic Devices Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff sickness Policy
- Staff absence Policy
- Lone working Policy
- DSE Policy