



Extend Learning
Academies Network

Flexible Working Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Purpose	4
3. Equal opportunities	4
4. Principles	4
5. Making a Non-Statutory/Temporary flexible working requests.....	5
6. Making a Statutory/Permanent flexible working request	5
7. Outcome	6
8. Appeals.....	7
9. Review.....	7
Appendix 1 - Flow chart of Flexible Working Request Process.....	8
Appendix 2 – Statutory/Permanent Flexible Working Request form	9
Appendix 3 – Temporary Flexible Working Email	12

1. Introduction

1.1 Extend Learning Academies Network recognises the follow benefits from implementing any form of flexible working:

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

Offering flexible working arrangements can help to ensure that we are offering an employment proposition that will suit employees at different stages of their life, such as those:

- with caring responsibilities
- planning a phased retirement
- returning from a career break or maternity leave
- combining work in a school with professional development or work in their field of study.

All employees continue to have a statutory right to ask for a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly, provided they have at least 26 weeks continuous service on the date that a statutory flexible working request is made and have not made another statutory request during the past 12 months. Employees also have the option to request an Informal Flexible Working arrangement on a temporary or adhoc basis.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy is intended to set out the process by which an employee can make a flexible working request and to enable managers to handle flexible working requests in a way that is fair and consistent and complies with employment legislation.

3. Equal opportunities

3.1 The flexible working policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Extend Learning Academies Network (ELAN) Equality and equal opportunities policy.

4. Principles

4.1 Requests for formal flexible working will be considered and decided on within a period of 28 days from first written receipt, unless an extension to the period is agreed with the employee.

4.2 Each request will be dealt with individually, taking into account the likely effects that the changes will have on ELAN, the school and the pupils. Agreeing to one employee's request will not therefore set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted a similar change to his/her working pattern.

4.3 Employees can make one formal flexible working application every 12 months. Each year runs from the date the first application was made.

4.4 Once a formal flexible working request is granted, the change to the employee's contract of employment will be permanent unless agreed otherwise. Requests will only be refused for valid business reasons.

5. Making a Non-Statutory/Temporary flexible working requests

5.1 Employees may also request a temporary/adhoc flexible working e.g. a later start time or earlier finish time and/or hybrid working. Hybrid working is defined as a working arrangement where employees conduct their duties both in the workplace and remotely, such as from home.

5.2 It may be granted as part of a phased return to work after maternity or sickness absence or be a temporary arrangement due to family commitments, travel issues or domestic circumstances. This may arise in relation to specific pieces of work or for specific periods. It may also include a project or set of tasks that requires 'peace and quiet' and a lack of interruptions which working remotely/from home might better support.

5.3 This arrangement can be discussed and agreed informally between the line manager and their team member. The Line Manager should follow-up with an email confirming the agreed arrangements including initial timeframe/review date and Cc. to HR@extendlearning.org HR should also be informed if the temporary arrangement impacts the employee's pay.

6. Making a Statutory/Permanent flexible working request

6.1 Employees may wish to discuss the possibility of a statutory flexible working request informally with their manager before making a formal request.

6.2 The right to request formal flexible working requires that employees must make their request in writing, and must include the following information:

- the date of their application, the change to working conditions they are seeking and when they would like the change to come into effect
- what effect they think the requested change would have on the employer and how, in their opinion, any such effect might be dealt with
- a statement that this is a statutory request and if and when they have made a previous application for flexible working

6.3 Types of flexible working may include (but is not limited to), for example:

- changes to the hours they work e.g. part time working or compressed hours
- job share i.e. two or more people doing one job and splitting the hours.
- changes to the times/days when they are required to work
- to be able to work from another location of the business or from home (whether for all or part of the week/hybrid working). Hybrid working is defined as a working arrangement where employees conduct their duties both in the workplace and remotely, such as from home.

Note - whilst working remotely, employees maintain the same contractual obligations, such as working hours. There should also be a degree of flexibility in terms of the days worked from home and ability to alter this, via mutual agreement, based upon the needs of the business e.g. a key meeting planned for a day an employee may typically work-from-home/remotely.

Home and hybrid working may not be suitable for all roles especially those whose role requires them to interact regularly with children and/or parents. Alternatively, line managers with teams that work predominately onsite.

Should the home/hybrid working request be approved, the Trust will supply homeworkers with the necessary equipment relevant to their job role remotely e.g. a

laptop computer. Employees should take reasonable care of the Trust equipment and only use it for Trust business.

The costs of home insurance, electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the Trust. These costs will remain the employee's responsibility.

Employees must keep Trust data and Trust materials safe and secure at all times, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection requirements.

The Trust's health and safety policy applies to homeworkers. Employees should refer to the separate health and safety and Homeworking guidelines for more details.

6.4 Applications must be submitted in writing to the employees' line manager in the first instance using the form in appendix 2.

6.5 Once a request is received, the line manager and/or appropriate member of the SLT should arrange to meet and discuss it with the employee as soon as possible. The employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague if they wish.

7. Outcome

7.1 Following the meeting, flexible working requests will be considered carefully and objectively, taking into account the benefits of the requested changes for the employee and ELAN and weighing these against any adverse business impact. The decision will be confirmed in writing within 14 working days of the meeting as follows:

- accepting the request and establish the start date and any other action
- confirming a compromise agreed through discussion at the meeting, such as a temporary agreement to work flexibly as a trial period e.g. six-months or an alternative flexible arrangement
- rejecting the request, setting out clear business reasons and how these apply, and outlining the appeal process

7.2 Employers are under no statutory obligation to grant a request to work flexibly and it should be recognised that a full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all roles across all areas of ELAN and ELAN schools. However, if a request is rejected it must be for one of the following business reasons:

- the burden of additional costs
- inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes

8. Appeals

8.1 Employees have the right to appeal a flexible working decision.

8.2 Appeals must be made in writing to the headteacher or in cases involving the headteacher these should be sent to HR, within 10 working days of the date of the letter confirming the decision reject a flexible working request.

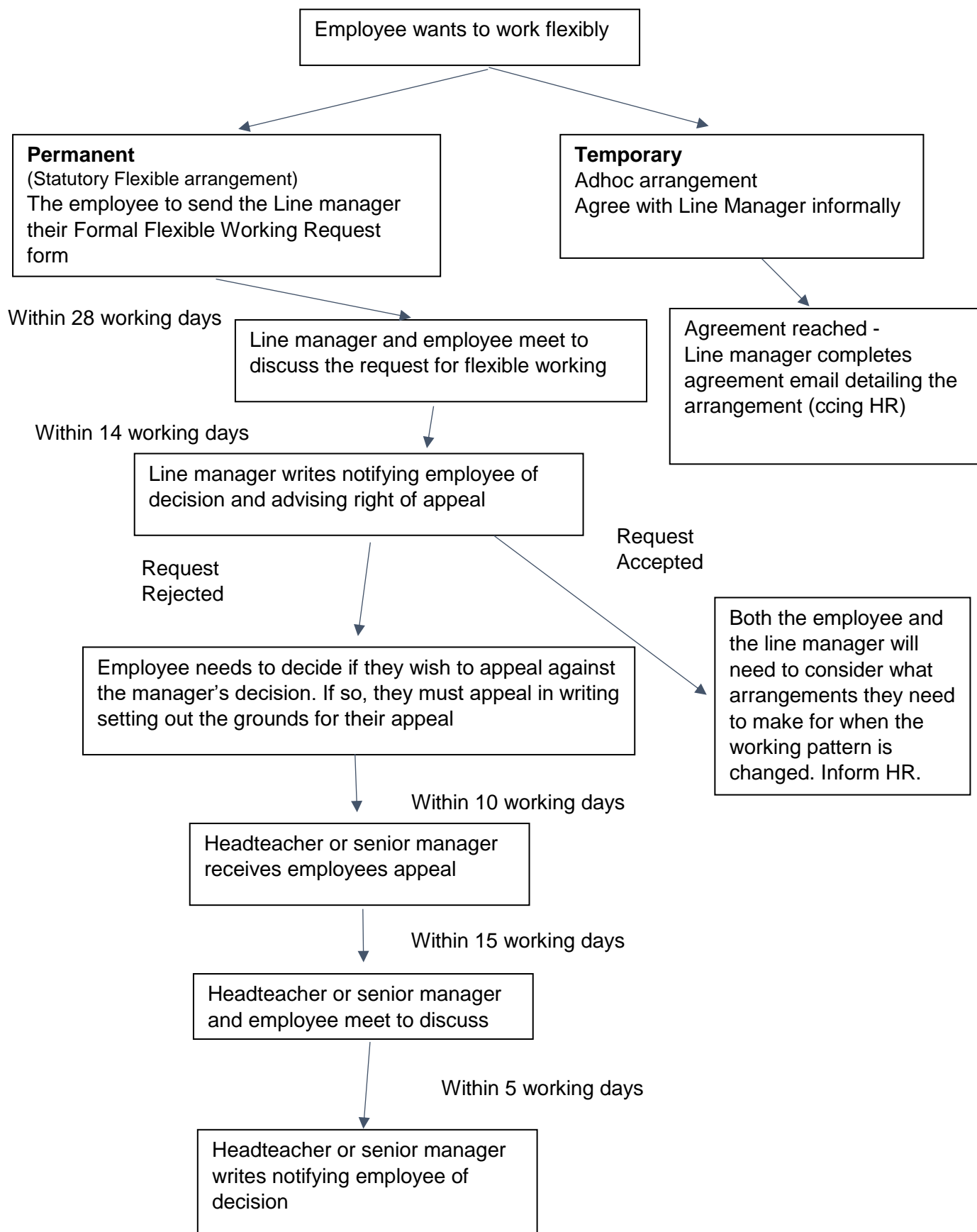
8.3 The employee will receive written notification of the details of the appeal hearing, which will normally take place as soon as possible on receipt of the employee's appeal. The employee will be given ten working days' notice of the appeal meeting date and advised in writing of their right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a trade union representative or work colleague. Advisors such as HR may also be present at the meeting.

8.4 Appeals will be heard by the Headteacher or another senior manager as appropriate, who will communicate the decision, in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. This decision will be final.

9. Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Appendix 1 - Flow chart of Flexible Working Request Process



Appendix 2 – Statutory/Permanent Flexible Working Request form

Flexible Working Request

Date:

This form should be used to make a formal application to work flexibly under the statutory right provided to eligible employees.

Under the right you should be aware that it may take up to 3 months for your request to be considered and where a longer decision period has been agreed, this could be increased further.

Please ensure that your application is submitted to your line manager well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help us 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 on the form otherwise your application may not be valid.

Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your line manager and retain a copy for your own records.

Unless otherwise agreed, if the request is granted, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions.

☐ I confirm I have at least 26 weeks of service

☐ I have not previously made a statutory request for flexible working **OR**

☐ I have previously made a statutory request for flexible working

Date of previous request:

Please note that in accordance with legislation only one flexible working request can be made in any 12-month period. If you've previously made a request, please ensure you wait 12 months before making your next request

My current working pattern is as follows:

Please include full details of your current hours, days, rotas etc. including any local arrangements

I would like my new working pattern to be as follows:

Please set out here the arrangements you are looking to put in place and provide as much detail as possible

I think this new work pattern would impact the school/business as follows:

I believe the impacts listed above could be overcome as follows:

I would like the new working pattern to come into force on:

This should not be less than three months from the dater at the top of this form

My reason for making this request is:

☐ I would be happy to attend a meeting to discuss my request in more detail and to be given a chance to address any concerns that you may have regarding my suggested new working pattern

Name	
Signature	
School or business location	

Appendix 3 – Temporary Flexible Working Email
(Line Manager to send to Employee and Cc. to HR@extendlearning.org)

Temporary Flexible Working Request

Date:

I am writing to confirm the outcome of our informal discussion on a temporary flexible working arrangement for yourself. You requested this due to (insert relevant circumstances). You requested the following flexible working arrangement: -

- Bullet details of new temporary working arrangement e.g. working from home on Mondays, starting work 15mins later and finishing 15mins later etc...

We agreed this temporary request could be accommodated. Your temporary flexible working arrangement will start on (insert date). All your other terms and conditions of employment remain unchanged.

We will review this arrangement after (insert number of weeks/months) to assess if it is still applicable and meeting the needs of you as an individual and the business. This review date will be on (insert date).

Thank you.