



**Clarendon Primary School, Nursery & Family Centre**  
**Draft Remote Working Policy and Protocols**

## **1. Introduction**

This remote Working Policy introduces new and modern ways of working which will enhance the ways in which we support the children and families of Clarendon Primary School and serve the families of Spelthorne through the ongoing delivery of the requirements of the Surrey Family Centre Specification.

## **2. Principles of Remote Working**

2.1 These principles entail a cultural shift in mind set for all staff; particularly in the areas of trust and flexibility. This empowers employees to take responsibility for their work, it is reliant on there being trust between managers and employees. This is so fundamental to the success of Remote Working as well as an understanding that any breach of trust will be treated very seriously, may be regarded as misconduct and result in action being undertaken under the Disciplinary Policy. (If misconduct is found, the facility to work remotely may be withdrawn.)

2.2 Remote working is not an automatic right for all staff. There will be some circumstances where this is not a viable option or where the operational needs necessitate a different approach. Such situations will be the exception, not the norm. The aim of this policy is to set out the standards and expectations for all employees in implementing the Remote Working principles and way of working.

## **3. Attendance and Availability for Work**

3.1 Staff must be available and able to work on their contracted days or work pattern whether they are in the office or working remotely, unless absence is for an authorised form of leave or sickness. Any variation to this arrangement can only be made by prior agreement with the manager.

3.2 Employees should remember that the needs of the children, families and the service will always take priority. This will mean that staff are expected to be available to come into the office on a remote working day should a need arise that requires their attendance in the office. Within the Family Centre, this may include situations when they are unable to connect to the Computer Network Systems, or if they are asked to do so by their manager, e.g. in the event of sickness of a colleague, inadequate cover, emergency or other service need.

3.3 Managers will be aware of the personal circumstances of their staff and should try to balance individual needs when calling staff in on remote working days.

3.4 Where an employee is being asked to attend the office at short notice, managers should endeavour to make the call at a time that enables the employee to arrive at their normal starting time. Where this is not possible the employee's travelling time will be considered as part of their working day.

3.5 Staff should switch on their mobile phones and/or laptop, clearly indicating that they are working and signify their availability status throughout their working day. This entails ensuring that e.g. outlook calendars are kept open, accessible to colleagues and are up-to-date. A persistent failure to do so will be considered as misconduct and action will be taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

3.6 As a rule staff are expected to work in a similar way, whether they are in the office or working remotely. For example, if they would usually be available to answer the telephone, respond to emails or Instant Messaging etc. during the hours of their agreed work pattern, they will be expected to do this when working remotely or from home, unless a change is agreed with their line manager. Whether or not the line manager agrees to a change, will depend upon the circumstances of the request and its impact on the team and service delivery.

3.7 In the case of a computer systems failure, employees should contact their manager, who will need to establish the extent of the system failure and the impact on the service and decide on the most appropriate course of action. In some cases this will involve seeking advice from senior management. Managers should activate their business continuity plans as appropriate.

## **4. Patterns of Work**

4.1 The Remote Working Policy does not mean that employees are able to choose when and where they work. The days that employees work in the office or work remotely will be organised, planned and agreed in advance with their line manager.

4.2 The needs of the service will always take priority; however a collaborative approach between management and staff is more likely to achieve a mutually beneficial arrangement.

4.3 Ultimately the manager will have the responsibility for ensuring that service needs take priority; that staff are treated fairly and trusted to take responsibility for themselves and their work when working remotely.

4.4 Managers will, in consultation with their staff, decide a rota pattern that best meets the needs of the service.

4.5 Employees must understand that these rotas are subject to change; there is no entitlement to work remotely on specific days of the week. Consequently employees must be ready to alter their working pattern if required and should be wary of making any commitments on remote working days as these may need to change.

4.6 Depending on your role and the availability of space in the area you normally work in there may be some situations where you will be required to work from different sites.

4.7 The arrangements for the scheduling of rotas, if required, will vary to suit operational needs. Rotas will also need to be reviewed to take into account new starters and leavers.

4.8 Working from home is not a substitute for caring for dependants. Employees are expected to have made alternative arrangements for the care of their dependants during their working day.

## **5. Exceptions from Remote Working**

The following are examples where managers may consider making exceptions. This is not an exhaustive list and advice may need to be sought from HR depending on the circumstances.

**Staff on probation, Support Plans, Apprentices and Trainees**

5.1 Depending upon the confidence and abilities of the member of staff, managers may need to plan for them to come into the office rather than working remotely until they are considered fully competent.

5.2 This may mean reorganising working arrangements for other team members who may be needed to support the member of staff by coming into the office and/or asking other members of the team to work remotely on particular days.

#### **Staff who require specialist equipment.**

5.3 Staff who have special requirements, which require adjustments to workstations, where practically possible to do so will have the same opportunities as other staff to work remotely.

5.4 In discussion with the individual, and after seeking advice from the Health and Safety Team, managers should take individual circumstances into account and ensure that staff are treated fairly and according to their particular needs.

#### **Staff whose personal circumstances are not conducive to home working.**

5.5 There could be a number of reasons where working at home is not possible for a member of staff, e.g. nature of job role, shared flats/houses, insufficient space, someone else caring for children/relatives in the home, etc. In these circumstances, managers need to explore other remote working options with their member of staff, e.g. another family centre, (where they can access secure Wi-Fi) and encourage them to experiment with different locations.

## **6. Hours**

6.1 The Family Centre operates a Monday to Friday, 52 weeks per year service as a result the scheme of flexible working hours will operate in order for us to deliver the requirements of Surrey County Councils Family Centre Specification. Staff will therefore be required to work hours that facilitate and enable the operation of services. (The school operates Monday to Friday for 39 weeks a year. This includes staff INSET training days.)

6.2 Employees will work contractual hours whether or not they're working in the office or remotely.

6.3 The hours can be worked flexibly, in line with service needs, and with the agreement of a line manager in order to achieve a better work life balance.

6.5 The headteacher, deputy headteacher, Family Centre Manager and Satellite Centre Site Leads will therefore need to consider the suitability of flexi-time within the operational demands of the school and Family Centre Service. As a result variations may arise across teams. Once decisions are made these should be discussed and clearly communicated to the staff group.

6.6 Lunch break: There is no set time for lunch but a break of at least 30 minutes must be taken; for standard office hours this would normally be between 12.00 and 14.00.

6.7 Additional hours: These are hours that have been previously agreed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, Family Centre Manager or Satellite Centre Site Leads and are worked outside the contracted hours.

## **7. Absences**

7.1 The existing procedures for requesting and notifying absences continue to apply. Therefore all requests for leave should be made in the normal way on a holiday request form and agreed in advance with line managers.

## **Sickness**

7.2 Where an employee is unable to attend for work due to sickness, they must on the first day off contact their manager at the earliest opportunity. Wherever practicable this should be before their normal starting time. Thereafter employees should contact their manager in accordance with the process set out in the Management of Absence Policy.

7.3 The method(s) for reporting in, (e.g. phone call, email, call to service centre) will be determined by operational needs and must be clearly set out by the line manager to all employees as part of their induction

7.4 Failure to comply with the procedure for reporting sickness, (or other absences) may result in action being taken under the School's Disciplinary Policy.

## **Working From Home When Sick**

7.5 Remote working is not to be used as a substitute for a working in the office day, when an employee feels "under the weather" i.e. they feel unable to make the journey into the office but feel able to continue their normal work from home. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where such requests may be agreed. In their discussion the manager should consider the hours the employee expects to be able to work and their likely output before determining whether it is appropriate for the employee to work from home in this situation.

7.6 An employee who has reported in as sick is not expected to work either in the office or remotely. Managers should be mindful of this and not pressure them into working, simply because employees have the equipment to work from home.

## **8 Performance**

8.1 Remote Working relies on outcome based management. This means that staff are managed based upon their results. To achieve this staff are expected to deliver outcomes within their contractual hours. The arrangements for how hours are worked will be agreed in advance with line managers, see sections 4 and 6.

8.2 This approach will require a strong commitment by managers and employee to plan and ensure that regular 1-2-1 meetings take place.

8.3 Remote Working requires a different relationship between employees and their managers. As a result there are different responsibilities for all staff. These responsibilities are set out below.

### **8.4 Employees will:**

- a) Agree working arrangements with their manager, (and in consultation with other team members).
- b) Ensure that their manager knows when and where they are working at all times.
- c) Use their time in a way that prioritises the needs of the service.
- d) Ensure their Outlook calendar is up-to-date with working status showing at all times.
- e) Hold regular discussions with their manager to plan and to make the most effective use of time.
- f) Ask for help whenever this is necessary, particularly in relation to ensuring that objectives and outcomes are on track and continue to reflect service needs.

- g) Meet agreed work objectives, deadlines and monitoring arrangements, with a focus on outcomes and achievement.
- h) When working in the office:
- follow the protocols in relation to sharing space and facilities, including the use of interactive spaces, formal and informal meetings areas.
  - exercise care and consideration for colleagues and visitors whilst working in a shared working environment.
- i) Take care of school equipment such as laptops, particularly when travelling or working remotely. Any loss, damage or theft must be reported to the manager and the police if appropriate.
- j) Comply with the school's IT security and data protection requirements detailed in the Data Protection Policy.
- k) Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and follow the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations and other health and safety arrangements and procedures.

#### **8.5 The headteacher, deputy headteacher, Family Centre Manager and Satellite Leads will:**

- a) Trust that their staff are working whether they are in the office or working remotely.
- b) Ensure that safe working practices are understood by employees and that they have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively.
- c) Ensure, in consultation with other managers, that working arrangements actively contribute towards the needs of the service.
- d) Plan which members of staff are working in and out of the office on any given day. This will necessitate thinking creatively about how remote working could work for their staff.

#### **8.6 The headteacher, deputy headteacher, Family Centre and Satellite Leads will ensure that their staff:**

- a) Have access to the appropriate technology to work effectively both in the office environment and remotely.
- b) Have a safe and well-managed working environment when they are in the office and take responsibility for creating a safe working environment when working remotely.
- c) Have their individual circumstances and requirements, (particularly where an employee has a disability) taken into account, including the needs of newly appointed staff, trainees and apprentices who may initially need to come into the office more often for support rather than working remotely.
- h) Have access to continuous performance review process which includes (within the Family Centre) regular 1:1 conversations and/or supervision.
- i) Adhere to the clear desk policy and workplace protocols, when working in school and Family Centre offices and remotely.
- j) Ensure that information governance and health and safety requirements are adhered to at all times.

8.7 A failure by employees to follow and adhere to the Remote Working Policy may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

## **9 Recruitment**

9.1 Working within a remote environment requires particular skills. It is therefore important that these are incorporated when making new appointments.

## **10 Expenses and Travel**

10.1 The School will not pay for additional equipment for remote working, other than that which is provided as standard issue; unless this is a reasonable adjustment to enable the employee to carry out the duties of the post.

10.2 It is anticipated that, in the majority of cases, the costs of working remotely will be offset by the cost and time of commuting to work and the benefits of an improved work/life balance. Therefore any costs incurred by working at home will not be met by the school.

10.3 Travel expenses will be paid where the employee incurs costs over and above their normal cost of travelling to work. In all cases the usual commuting costs must be deducted from the cost of any other work related journey. A claim can only be submitted where the cost incurred for the work travel is higher than the normal commuting cost.

## **11 Additional Guidance and Support**

11.1 This policy provides an overview of the purpose and responsibilities of managers and staff.

11.2 There are additional policies and documents which provide further support and guidance in specific areas which should be read in conjunction with this policy. These policies are available on Clarendon Primary School website and are updated as necessary.

## **12. Review of this policy**

If no prior amendments are required to be made, this policy will be formally reviewed again in the Autumn term 2023.

Date Agreed by the governing body: Autumn term 2020

Next planned review date: Autumn term 2023