



QUANTOCK

EDUCATION TRUST

Homeworking Policy

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POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: HR Director

TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS COMMITTEE: People, Pay & Performance

AUDIENCE: Staff

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1. Introduction

At Quantock Education Trust (QET), we recognise that flexible ways of working can help our staff balance their responsibilities whilst continuing to make a strong contribution to our shared purpose. There may be times when the ability to work from home may be of benefit to you and the QET, for example, when recovering from injury, when quiet space is needed for focussed work or when travel presents challenges. We therefore support homeworking where possible and in appropriate circumstances.

This may be:

- 1.1.1 Occasionally, for example to respond to specific circumstances or to complete particular tasks; or
 - 1.1.2 On a regular basis.
- 1.2 Occasional or permanent homeworking can, in certain circumstances, be a means of making reasonable adjustments for an employee with a disability.

It can be requested as a means of flexible working under our flexible working policy.

- 1.3 Any employee who is suspected to have abused the provisions set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in line with the Trust's disciplinary procedure.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out how requests for homeworking will be considered and the expectations associated with working from home. The homeworking location is your home address provided to the school.
- 2.2 Homeworking could either be a one off or an occasional arrangement, or could be a more regular way of working.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

3. Eligibility

3.1 We want staff to feel confident in making requests for homeworking. At the same time, we must ensure arrangements are sustainable and appropriate. Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for homeworking.

3.2 A request for homeworking is unlikely to be approved, on either an occasional or permanent basis if:

- You need to be present in the Trust to perform your job (for example, because it is pupil facing; involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues, parents, the public or third parties that requires you to be in the Trust; or involves equipment that is only available on site).
- Any aspect of your performance has been identified as unsatisfactory or requiring supervision, for example, by your line manager or through the appraisal or capability procedure.
- You have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance.
- You need supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work.

3.3 You will also need to be able to show that you:

- Can work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative.
- Can manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines.
- Can identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home.
- Can adapt to new working practices, including maintaining contact with your line manager and colleagues at work.
- Have a suitable area and environment in which to work from home.
- Have work that can be undertaken at home.
- Can make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants who rely on you for support or care when you are working from home.
- Can continue to work the hours required by your contract of employment.

4. Applying for homeworking

4.1 Applications for home working should be made through the Trust's flexible working policy.

4.2 All requests will be considered fairly and consistently, taking into account the needs of individual roles, and circumstances and in line with the Trust's commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion.

4.3 Any terms on which it is agreed that you may work from home will include the following:

- You will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if you worked on Trust premises.
 - If any concerns are raised through the appraisal process or by your line manager in relation to your performance, or you are subject to any warning in relation to your conduct, you may be required to return to work at the Trust premises.
 - Your line manager will remain responsible for supervising you, will regularly review your homeworking arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will also ensure you are kept up to date with circulars and information relevant to your work.
 - You will be provided with the same opportunities for training, development and promotion as staff based in the workplace. If your homeworking arrangement will impact on your ability to apply for certain roles, your line manager will discuss this with you to ensure that you are not denied any opportunity unfairly
- 1.4.1 You agree to attend QET premises for meetings, training or other events which you are required to attend.
- 1.4.2 Working at or from home may affect your home and contents insurance policy. You must make any necessary arrangements with your insurers before commencing homeworking, ensuring that you have appropriate level of cover.
- 1.4.3 You will be required to work from your home address for the duration of your homeworking arrangement. If you wish to work from a different location at any time, you will need to agree this with your line manager in advance.
- 1.4.4 If you wish to work from a location abroad at any time during your homeworking arrangement, this will require separate approval from the HR Department and there is no guarantee that this will be possible. Working from home from a location abroad is not subject to this policy due to different compliance and legislative requirements. If we agree to you working from an address other than your home address, this will be subject to our right to require you to return to your home address on two weeks' notice.

5. Equipment

- 5.1 We want to support staff to work effectively from home and will provide any equipment that we consider you reasonably require to work from home, which will remain the property of QET. This may include current computer equipment, such as a laptop that is supplied to you by the Trust. We will make all necessary arrangements for installing and removing equipment from your home. Where equipment is provided you must:
- Use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it.

- Take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures.
 - Make it available for collection by us or on our behalf when requested to do so.
- 5.2 We request that you do not use any personal device or computer for work as we cannot be held responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by you when working for the Trust.
- 5.3 You are responsible for meeting the associated costs working from home, such as heating, lighting, electricity, broadband internet access, mobile or telephone line rental or calls.
- 5.4 We will consider reasonable adjustments for colleagues with a disability and ask that you inform us of any additional equipment you require to work from home comfortably. We will bear the reasonable cost (or reimburse you for the reasonable cost) of providing the equipment.
- 5.5 All equipment and information must be kept secure. In particular, private and confidential material must be kept secure at all times. Your line manager must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with our requirements.
- 5.6 Any computer or communications equipment (e.g., laptop, mobile phone etc.) provided by the Trust must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

6. Health and Safety

- 6.1 Your wellbeing is central to our duty of care. The Trust recognises that working from home can support staff wellbeing and worklife balance. Line managers will monitor arrangements to ensure that they remain sustainable and do not lead to isolation or excessive working hours.
- 6.2 Staff working from home must follow the same health and safety expectations as other staff by maintaining a safe working environment and reporting concerns promptly. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and avoid patterns that negatively affect wellbeing or that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions.
- 6.3 We retain the right to check home working areas for health and safety purposes. The need for such inspections will depend on the circumstances, including the nature of the work undertaken.

- 6.4 You must not have face to face meetings in your home with parents, pupils or other individuals associated with the school and must not give details of your home address or telephone number.
- 6.5 When you are working at or from home you are covered by our accident insurance policy.
- 6.6 If you are ill during a period of homeworking, you must report your absence in the normal way using the sickness absence reporting procedure.

7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 7.1 Staff working from home are expected to continue to comply with obligations with regard to confidentiality and data protection under the requirements of data protection legislation, being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, and the Trust's data protection policy.
- 7.2 In accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation and the Trust's data protection policy, when working at or from home, you are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of any Trust-related resources/equipment or information to which you have access.

In particular:

- 7.2.1 You must restrict the access of family and friends to work equipment, materials, documents and other data, in order to avoid damage or loss, and maintain confidentiality.
- 7.2.2 You must ensure that all confidential material that requires disposal is shredded or, in the case of electronic material, securely destroyed as soon as any need for its retention has passed.
- 7.2.3 You must use best endeavours to ensure the care of work-related information and Trust property when travelling to or from home.
- 7.2.4 You must maintain a private space for confidential work calls.
- 7.2.5 You must ensure that any display screen equipment is positioned so that only you can see it, or a privacy screen is used.
- 7.2.6 You must lock your computer terminal whenever it is left unattended.
- 7.2.7 You must ensure any wireless network used is secure.
- 7.2.8 You must send work-related emails and messages through our designated communication facilities

- 7.3 If you discover or suspect that there has been a data breach or an incident involving the security of information relating to the Trust, our pupils, or anyone working with or for us, you must report it immediately to your line manager.

8. Review of Policy

- 8.1 This policy is reviewed every two years to ensure that it reflects good practice and continues to support staff effectively. Feedback is welcomed as part of our commitment to improvement.