



Education Trust

Inspiring the individuals of today, for a better society tomorrow

“Aspire, Belong, Collaborate”

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Review Frequency	Annual
Reviewed	August 2026
Next Review	August 2027
Agreed by Trustees	8th September 2026



INTRODUCTION

In accordance with The Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023 and the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, employees have the right to request flexible working from their first day of employment.

There are a number of different ways of working which can be requested under this right. The most common is part-time working (reduced hours and/or reduced days) but the following are examples of flexible working which can also apply:

- Compressed Hours
- Working from Home / Hybrid Working
- Job Share
- Staggered Hours

The Trust has a legal obligation to give reasonable consideration to a flexible working request and requests can only be refused when there is a clear business reason.

Employees are encouraged to discuss potential flexible working arrangements with their line manager before submitting a formal request. These discussions are intended to explore options and should not be regarded as a formal request or decision under this policy. Where an employee wishes to make a formal request for flexible working, the request must be submitted and considered in accordance with the procedure set out in this policy.

Requests made under this policy may be approved on either a permanent basis or for a defined period, where appropriate. Where a permanent arrangement is agreed, there is no automatic right for the employee to revert to their previous working arrangements. Where a temporary arrangement is agreed, the Trust will confirm the duration of the arrangement and the review arrangements in writing.

Short-term flexible working arrangements may also be agreed informally between the employee and their line manager where appropriate. These arrangements fall outside the formal procedure set out in this policy, although the principles of fairness, consistency and reasonableness should be applied.

Employees can make up to two requests for flexible working in a 12-month rolling period.

WHO DOES THE LEGAL RIGHT APPLY TO?

All employees of Riviera Education Trust have the legal right to request flexible working, providing that they have made no more than two other requests in the last rolling 12-month period.



EQUALITY STATEMENT

This policy applies equally to all Trust employees, as above, regardless of their age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Care will be taken to ensure that no traditionally excluded groups are adversely impacted in implementing this policy.

WHAT CAN BE REQUESTED?

All employees can request changes to vary:

- The number of hours they are required to work
- The times they are required to be at work
- Where they are required to work - i.e. can request that they work full time or on an occasional basis from home.

Changes to working hours can include:

- Working part-time
- Working annualised hours (a total number of hours to be worked per year, but not over a fixed weekly pattern)
- Compressed working week (e.g. 37 hours over less than 5 days)
- Greater flexibility in existing flexitime arrangements
- Job sharing (where 2 people share responsibility for 1 post)
- Working some form of shift working
- Term-time only working (in the case of staff not already working term time).

It is acknowledged that some of the above flexible working arrangements may not be feasible within the Trust context, given the nature of term-time working and lesson delivery. However, the Trust must give due consideration to all written requests for flexible working and where a request may have an impact on pupils or the effective delivery of education, the Trust will fully consider the potential impact, consult with the employee, where appropriate, and seek to reach an agreeable solution wherever possible. If a request is to be refused, it is for one of the business reasons outlined in this policy.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

The right to request flexible working legislation requires that employees must make their request in writing, setting out the following information:



- Date of the application, the change to working conditions they are seeking and when they would like the change to come into effect
- They are making the application under their legal right to request flexible working, and if they have made a previous application for flexible working and the date of the application.
- If the employee is making their request in relation to making a reasonable adjustment for a disability (under the Equality Act 2010), they should also make this clear within their request.

CONSIDERING AN APPLICATION

HR will support managers throughout the formal flexible working process to ensure requests are considered fairly, consistently and in accordance with employment legislation and this policy.

Each request will be dealt with individually, taking into account the likely effects that the proposed changes to working hours or place of work are likely to have on the Trust, the work of the department in which the employee making the request is employed and the employee's colleagues. 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 their working pattern.

The Trust is not required to agree every request for flexible working but is required to consider every statutory request reasonably and may only refuse a request for one or more of the statutory business reasons.

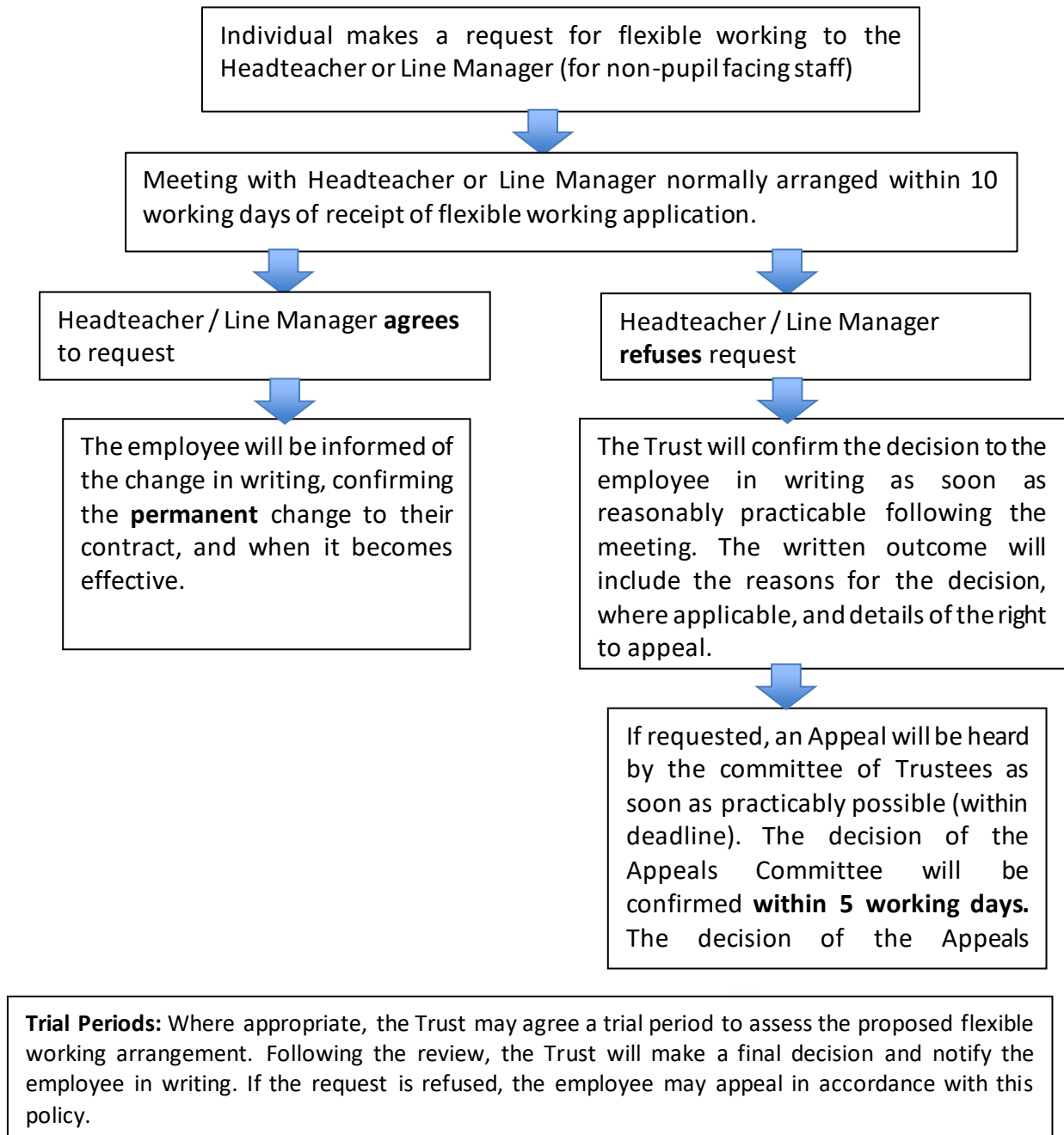
Important Note:

The Trust will aim to complete the flexible working process within the indicative timescales set out below. These timescales are intended to support the prompt handling of requests and may be varied where operational requirements, school closure periods or the availability of those involved make this necessary. In all cases, the Trust will ensure that requests, including any appeal, are concluded within the statutory two-month period unless an extension is agreed with the employee.

Where a request is received immediately before or during a school closure period, the Trust will make reasonable efforts to progress the request without unnecessary delay. Timescales for individual stages may be adjusted to reflect the availability of the employee, managers, HR, governors or trustees, provided the statutory two-month timescale is met unless an extension is agreed with the employee.



REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCESS



MAKING A FAIR DECISION

If a school within the Trust receives more than one application for flexible working at the same time, a fair and reasoned decision must be made, based on the circumstances, and taking into account the possible consequences for the school. Whatever the outcome, a written record of the decision and the reasons for it should be retained.

Where a school receives more than one request, they should be dealt with in the order that they are received. School managers are not required to make value judgements about the most deserving request. Each request will need to be considered on its own merits, taking into consideration the business case and the possible impact of refusing a request. Further discussions may be needed to see if there is any room for adjustment or compromise before coming to a decision.

TRIALLING NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the Trust, a trial period may be agreed upon. If a trial period is arranged the organisation will allow sufficient time for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement. Where a trial period is agreed, the Trust will confirm in writing that the request has been approved on a trial basis, together with the duration of the trial, the review arrangements and the date on which the Trust will decide whether the flexible working arrangement will be confirmed as a permanent contractual change or brought to an end.

ON WHAT GROUNDS CAN A REQUEST BE REFUSED

In accordance with the statutory Acas Code of Practice on requests for flexible working, requests may only be refused for one or more of the statutory business reasons set out below:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff or recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality or performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes.

If a request is refused, the employee must be provided with an explanation as to why the particular reason (from the list above) applies in their particular circumstances.



APPEAL

The employee may appeal the decision in writing within 14 calendar days of being notified of the decision, setting out the grounds for appeal.

Any appeal will be heard by a separate Committee of Trustees as soon as reasonably practicable, taking account of the availability of the employee, their representative and the appeal panel.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable following the appeal hearing and, where the appeal is unsuccessful, will explain the reasons for the decision and why the relevant statutory business grounds apply.

If the request is accepted following the appeal hearing, the employee will be notified of the change to their working pattern in writing and when it will start (as set out previously).

In exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to arrange meetings, issue decisions or send correspondence within the indicative timescales set out in this policy (for example, due to school closure periods or the absence of the employee, manager or members of the appeal panel). In such circumstances, the employee will be kept informed of any delay and the Trust will make reasonable efforts to conclude the request within the statutory two-month period unless an extension is agreed with the employee.

If the employee is dissatisfied with the way it's been handled s/he can raise a grievance under the organisation's grievance procedure.

If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting and fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

WHERE DO I GO FOR FURTHER ADVICE?

HR can assist in helping to consider any request that might be made and responding to such requests.

Further guidance is available from Acas, including the statutory Code of Practice on requests for flexible working and supporting guidance available on the Acas website.



DETAILS OF AMENDMENTS

December 2019

- Created Flexible Working Hours Request Policy 2019

May 2021

- Page 4 Flow Chart updated to allow for the CEO / Head of School to make the original decision on flexible working with an appeal heard by a committee of Trustees

May 2022

- Reviewed without change

October 2023

- Minor formatting changes
- Review date amended - Awaiting finalised changes to legislation which should be agreed early 2024

March 2024

- Changed to reflect change in legislation on 6 April 2024; The Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023 (the regulations) and the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 (the Act). This includes:
 - Day one right to make a request for Flexible Working
 - Allowing employees to make two flexible working applications in a 12-month rolling period
 - Requiring flexible working requests to be resolved within 2 months (including any appeal process)

Other changes were brought into force as a result of this legislation but these had already been adopted as part of best practice

- Changed to include more information around trial periods
- Gender neutral pronouns used

June 2025

- Reviewed without change

August 2026

- Removed internal timescales amended indicative timescales for operational flexibility
- Clarified the arrangements for permanent, temporary and informal flexible working requests.
- Clarified commitment to conclude requests, including any appeal, within the statutory two-month timeframe unless an extension is agreed



- Added guidance on managing requests received during school closure periods
- Clarified HR's role in the formal flexible working process
- Updated the section on trial periods to clarify the process for agreeing, reviewing and confirming trial arrangements
- Revised the appeal process to remove fixed hearing and outcome timescales and replace them with "as soon as reasonably practicable"
- Removed the section relating to Employment Tribunal claims
- Updated references to Acas guidance and removed outdated links
- Minor drafting amendments made throughout to improve clarity, consistency and readability

