

Flexible Working Policy

(Including Working Off-Site)



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Signed off by: Trust Board

Date from: November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Commitment to equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Flexible Working Policy has been approved and adopted by the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust in November 2025 and will be reviewed by November 2026.

Signed by Director of the Academy Trust Company:



Signed by Headteacher



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1) Definitions

In this Flexible Working Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i. 'Academy' means the academy named at the beginning of this Curriculum Policy and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- ii. 'Academy Trust Company' means the company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Academy.
- iii. 'Board' means the Board of Directors of the Academy Trust Company.
- iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board as appointed from time to time.
- v. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Board as appointed from time to time.
- vi. 'Diocesan Schools Commission' means the education service provided by the diocese in which the Academy is situated, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan Education Service.
- vii. 'Directors' means Directors appointed to the Board from time to time.
- viii. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the Academy who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Principal.
- ix. 'Vice-Chair' means the Vice-Chair of the Board as elected from time to time.
- x. 'Working Day' means any day on which you would ordinarily work if you were a full-time employee. In other words, 'Working Day' will apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.
- xi. 'Working Week' means any week that you would ordinarily work.

2) Objective and scope

- a) This Flexible Working Policy applies to you if you are an employee or worker at the Academy (hereinafter referred to as an "employee" or "you").
- b) For us at St Francis of Assisi Trust we believe that Flexible Working can have a positive impact on an individual and their wellbeing. As St. Irenaeus's said "The glory of God is a human being fully alive" this for us highlights the importance of human flourishing and the idea that God's glory is revealed through the flourishing of humanity. It can also maximise the potential of our employees and support us in optimising the use of new technology and challenging traditional working methods and practices.
- c) This Policy sets out the rights of the employee to request Flexible Working and also outlines the process by which employees should make an application to work flexibly.
- d) Both employee and employer need to be practical and recognise that the full range of Flexible Working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas, and we have to consider that appropriate staffing levels must remain in line with the demands of the delivery of education (the business) at all times.
- e) Working from home is part of our Flexible Working arrangements. Working from home is clarified as performing job duties from your residence instead of a traditional office, often relying on digital tools and internet connectivity.

- f) Each application will be considered on an individual basis, decisions do not form a precedent as the circumstances are different and can also change following the acceptance of each request.
- g) Note: All references in this Policy to approval by the Headteacher shall in the case of an application by a Headteacher or central Trust employee, unless otherwise stated be deemed to be a reference to the approval by the CEO of the Trust.

3) Eligibility to apply for Flexible Working

- a) You have the right to request Flexible Working from Day 1 of employment. This does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.
- b) While not all Flexible Working patterns will be suitable, you have the right to request any Flexible Working pattern you believe would support yourself and/or us.
- c) You have the right to request Flexible Working if:
 - i) you are employed from Day 1 with us at the date of the application.
 - ii) you have not made more than 2 requests for Flexible Working in the previous twelve months.
- d) It is important to understand that you do not have the automatic right to work flexibly but do have a right to request changes to the conditions of how you work, which may include how, when or where you work, and for this request to be considered fairly.

4) Impact of Flexible Working on other terms and conditions

- a) Pay and pensions

If you take up Flexible Working options which result in reduced working hours you will be paid on a pro-rata basis, according to the number of hours worked. You should obtain details of the impact on your pension from the relevant scheme administrator.

- b) Annual leave

The impact on annual leave arrangements will vary according to the type of Flexible Working option agreed. If you are part-time for example you will be entitled to annual leave and bank holidays calculated on a pro rata basis.

5) Procedure - Making a Flexible Working Application

- a) An application to work flexibly must be made in writing to the Application Reviewer which is for Academy employee's your Headteacher, or in the case of the Headteacher Chair of Governors, or in the case of the Executive the Trust Board or in the case of central Trust employee's the CEO. Chairs must inform the Trust Board via the CEO of any such requests as they are made.

Applicant	Application Reviewer
Employee	Headteacher
Headteacher	Chair of Governors
Central Trust Team	CEO

Executive	Trust Board
Employee's contracted in more than one Academy or Academy/Central Team	The relevant Application Reviewer for the location of the employee's Line Manager

- b) Request from employee's must specify the following:
- i) the date of the application.
 - ii) a statement that this is a statutory request.
 - iii) details of how you would like to work flexibly and when you would like to start.
 - iv) an explanation of any flexibilities you may have on certain days you are able to work or not work.
 - v) a statement saying if and when you've made a previous application in the last 12 months.
- c) An application form (APPENDIX TWO - Flexible Working Application Form) is set out at the end of this Policy.

6) Consideration of the request

- a) The consideration of the request should be completed within 2 months from receiving the request. This two-month period includes any meetings to discuss the request and any appeal that may occur.
- b) If the request cannot be dealt with during this period, we may extend the time limit by mutual consent. An example of when an extension might be agreed is when non-directed working time, i.e., the summer holidays, sits within the two-month timescale.
- c) We may need to meet with you to consider the request carefully, looking at the benefits of the requested changes for both you and us, and weigh these against any adverse business impact of implementing the changes.
- d) The following non-exhaustive factors may be considered for each request:
 - i) the cost of the proposed arrangement.
 - ii) the effect the proposed arrangement will have on other staff.
 - iii) the impact the proposed arrangement may have on the ability to deliver an appropriate quality of educational service.
 - iv) the impact the proposed arrangement may have on the ability of the role to deliver and perform to a satisfactory level.
 - v) the level of supervision the post holder will need to have.
 - vi) an analysis of the tasks and workload specific to the role.
- e) Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

7) Meetings regarding Flexible Working

- a) Upon receiving a written request for Flexible Working we will arrange a meeting with you to:
 - i) discuss the request.
 - ii) find out more about the proposed working arrangements.
 - iii) understand how it could be of benefit to both the employee and employer.
- b) The meeting will be held within a reasonable amount of time from receiving this request. This time frame may be extended with the agreement of both parties.
- c) Alternatively, we may choose to state in how many days the meeting will be held and confirm this time frame may be extended with the agreement of both parties.
- d) If you fail to attend a meeting without good reason, this meeting may be rescheduled. If you fail to attend the rescheduled meeting your application may be deemed to have been withdrawn.
- e) Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved, a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. You will be informed of the agreement to the request by a confirmation letter and your contract of employment will be formally changed following the request being approved.

8) Outcome of a Flexible Working request

- a) Once a decision has been made, you will receive written confirmation as soon as possible.
- b) The request may either:
 - i) Be agreed to in full – we will agree to the application and specify the contract variation and the start date on which it is to take effect.
 - ii) Be agreed to in part – we may agree to part of your request and/or propose alternative arrangements. We may also propose a modified version of the request. Please note, proposed changes from us will only be confirmed as agreed if mutual consent has been received.
 - iii) Be agreed as a trial period (see section 8) below).
 - iv) Be refused - if refused, the specified grounds for refusal must be stated. It should also be explained why those grounds apply in relation to the application.
- c) If we cannot meet your request due to business and operational reasons it may be based on one or more of the following legislative grounds for rejection:
 - i) extra costs that will damage the business.
 - ii) the work cannot be reorganised among other staff.
 - iii) people cannot be recruited to do the work.
 - iv) Flexible Working will affect quality and performance.
 - v) the business will not be able to meet customer demand.
 - vi) there's a lack of work to do during the proposed working times.
 - vii) the business is planning changes to the workforce.

- d) If at any point the change is agreed as permanent, this becomes your new working pattern and there is no right for you to revert back to your former working pattern.

9) Trial periods

- a) Where there is some uncertainty about whether the Flexible Working arrangement is practicable for both parties, or where it is unclear what potential impact the change will have on the delivery of education and service the role provides, a trial period may be agreed.
- b) The trial period is an opportunity for both parties to ensure that the arrangement is working satisfactorily before it is confirmed in the longer term.
- c) In order to accommodate the trial period and any additional necessary steps the parties will have to agree an extension to the decision date beyond the statutory two-month period.
- d) If a trial period is offered it should be for a reasonable, although not excessive, amount of time, to enable both parties to understand if this arrangement will work for us both.
- e) If a trial period is offered, the change to your terms and conditions of employment during a trial period is a temporary change for a specified period of time.
- f) If, the trial is not successful you will revert back to your previous terms and conditions of employment, and you will be entitled to exercise your right of appeal. If the requested change of working arrangements is accepted at the end of the trial, then the temporary terms and conditions will become permanent.

10) The appeal

- a) If the Flexible Working application was not concluded to your satisfaction, you may appeal to us within seven calendar days of receiving the written outcome decision. Wherever possible, the appeal will be heard by an appropriate individual or panel of individuals who have had no prior involvement in the process.
- b) The Local Governing Body will hear any appeals and the Executive team will be informed.
- c) The decision of the appeal hearing and the reasons for that decision will be communicated to all parties and confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable, usually within five working days. The decision reached at this hearing is final.

11) Withdrawing an application

- a) A request to work flexibly can be withdrawn at any time before it has been accepted.
- b) If you fail to attend two or more meetings arranged to discuss the request and do not provide a reasonable explanation, we may assume that the application has been withdrawn.
- c) We may also treat an application as withdrawn if you do not provide all the information required.

APPENDIX ONE - Working Off-Site

1. Requests to work Off-Site

Requests to work Off-Site will be considered according to the procedures set out in the Flexible Working Policy (“the Policy”).

Staff may work Off-Site – e.g. from home:

- a) Where Flexible Working has been approved in accordance with the Policy.
- b) Following clinical and/or public health advice.
- c) Where agreed in accordance with other policies and procedures e.g. the Academy / Trust Leave Policy.

The following applies to all working Off-Site unless otherwise set out or expressly agreed.

Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work Off-Site, they must speak to their Line Manager in the first instance and obtain approval from the Headteacher/CEO as appropriate.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- a) The Headteacher/CEO as applicable is responsible for ensuring that this Working Off-Site Appendix to the Policy is applied consistently.

Applicant	Request to
Employee at Academy	Headteacher
Headteacher	CEO
Central Trust	CEO
Employee's contracted in more than one Academy or Academy/Central Team	The Headteacher/CEO as applicable for the location of the employee's Line Manager

- b) Staff will make sure they follow the expectations in the Policy and Appendices.

3. Working hours

When working Off-Site pursuant to the Policy, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours. Staff should ensure that they are instantly available to be contacted by telephone or email – lengthy delays in responses will not be appropriate. Staff working Off-Site are expected to be at home; other locations might in exceptional circumstances be permitted, but these will need to be agreed in advance and in writing through agreement with the appropriate person listed in table 2a above. Working hours may also be modified in advance through written agreement with the appropriate person as listed in the table in 2a above. Total working hours may not be reduced, and it is to be expected that a significant variation will not be permitted because schools operate in session, and generally therefore the staff should be available and working at those times.

Outside of these hours, staff are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents/carers or pupils – unless it is an emergency, or they're working flexible hours as agreed in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy and this is required, or they have prior written agreement from the School/Trust.

4. Absence when working Off-Site

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working Off-Site, e.g. due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the School's normal absence procedure, as set out in the Sickness Absence Policy and / or Leave Policy as appropriate.

5. Duties

Wherever possible, staff working Off-Site will carry out their normal duties in line with their Job Description/contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow School practice or otherwise be agreed with the individual's Line Manager/the Headteacher/CEO in accordance with standard procedures.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties Off-Site, their Line Manager/the Headteacher/CEO will discuss and may agree alternative arrangements with the individual concerned.

Where staff are unsure about what work they should be carrying out while working Off-Site, they will speak to their Line Manager in the first instance.

6. Wellbeing support

Staff should communicate with their Line Manager/the Headteacher/CEO as applicable if their wellbeing is being affected while working Off-Site.

Staff are reminded to look after their own well-being. The following can help:

- a) Access Staff Well-being support through the usual channels.
- b) Set and stick to a routine.
- c) Have a dedicated workspace.
- d) Take regular rest breaks (at least 20 consecutive minutes towards the middle of the work period if working for 6 hours or more). If possible, spend time outdoors when you can during the break times.
- e) Move more, sit less: Try to break up long periods of sitting time with activity even for one or two minutes.
- f) Keep in touch with your Line Manager so that we can easily resolve any problems you might experience.
- g) Stay connected: Collaboration, connection and having a sense of belonging can help you stay well.
- h) Domestic abuse: It may be more difficult for people to get away from the person abusing them. We have a legal duty of care to our employees and will look out for signs of domestic abuse, respond appropriately, and support you if you are experiencing domestic abuse.

7. Safeguarding

Where staff are interacting online with pupils while working Off-Site, they must continue to follow our existing policies that apply in a safeguarding capacity, e.g. Staff Code of Conduct/ Behaviour Policy/Acceptable use of ICT Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Staff should take particular care to ensure they follow required policies and standards for remote teaching practices – e.g. if staff are pre-recording videos to share, live-streaming lessons, making video calls or phoning pupils. See the Governments guidance on [safeguarding and remote education](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education) for help with this: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education> .

8. Technical support Equipment

The School will not ordinarily be able to provide additional ICT equipment to staff. If staff are unable to complete their work remotely without ICT equipment, they should speak to their Line Manager to discuss alternative possible arrangements. If staff are borrowing equipment, they must agree and sign an ICT equipment loan agreement before they receive the equipment.

9. Equipment and Setup

If you are working remotely, you must have a secure, private, and appropriately lit and heated space to work in, with a reliable and secure internet connection. You are expected to be able to make video calls from your working location. If you do not have a suitable remote location to work from, we reserve the right to ask you to work from School. For more information about Display Screen Equipment setup and keeping yourself safe please [click here: https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/](https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/)

If you are provided with a laptop or other equipment it remains your responsibility to move between workplaces. You must take care of the equipment provided to you and notify your Line Manager and the CFO/ICT immediately if there is any damage to, or theft of, the equipment. On leaving employment you must ensure that all equipment is returned to us.

10. Costs of Set-Up

Any costs for Wi-Fi, heating, lighting and electricity and commuting costs to your designated place of work will always be a personal expense in line with HMRC guidelines. You may be able to claim tax relief for this – further details can be found on the HMRC website [here: https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home](https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home) .

You should check that there isn't anything that would prevent you working from home, in your mortgage agreement, lease, or home insurance. It is your responsibility to check this.

You should inform your home insurer that you will be working from home – even part of the time – before you begin working from home. You should also get confirmation of cover from your home insurer should work equipment cause any damage to your home.

11. ICT support

If staff are having issues with technical equipment while working Off-Site, they should contact IT support in the usual way.

12. Workstation safety

The Trust recommends that staff set up an appropriate space for working at home, so they do not cause physical injury to themselves.

Where possible, it recommends that staff aim to:

- a) Sit upright at a table/desk, on a chair.
- b) Raise their laptop/tablet (e.g. using books or a stand).
- c) Use a separate keyboard and mouse, and use the mouse with a straight wrist.
- d) Have appropriate lighting near to the workstation.

Staff will be required to complete a Working Off-Site Risk Assessment (see Appendix Four to the Policy) and where applicable a Display Screen Risk Assessment: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm>

13. Data protection

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol).
- b) Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device.
- c) Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time.
- d) Not sharing the device among family or friends.
- e) Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software.
- f) Keeping operating systems up to date, including always installing the latest updates.

14. Sickness Absence

When you are working remotely, you should report sickness absence in the usual way according to the Sickness Absence Policy.

Working Off-Site should not be used as a way of carrying on working when you are sick. If you are ill, then you need to take time off until you have recovered and follow our Sickness Absence Policy and reporting procedures.

15. Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment can still happen when you are working Off-Site. If you feel you have been bullied or harassed you should follow our Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, talk to your Line Manager or HR.

16. Moving Home

If you move home, and you work from home regularly, you should discuss your move with your Line Manager to determine if this will impact your ability to continue to work from home. If the move may

adversely change your work environment and therefore your ability to continue to work from home, your Informal Flexible Working arrangement will be reassessed.

To apply for Leave for moving home, please follow the process set out in the Leave Policy.

APPENDIX TWO - Flexible Working Application Form Notes on Completion

Before completing this form, please read the flexible working policy.

- When completing this form, please ensure that you provide as much information as possible to allow a thorough assessment of the request. You should ensure that you submit your application well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.
- If you have submitted a flexible working request, you must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.
- Please tick the appropriate response unless the question expressly asks you for more information

Section 1 – Personal Details

Name:		Role:	
Employment start date:			
Date application form submitted:			
Have you submitted a previous request for flexible working?		Yes	No
If yes, when did you submit your last request for flexible working?(please denote the date and month and year)			
What is the reason for the request?			

Are you a disabled person whose request for flexible working is related to your disability?	Yes	No
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What is the period of time for which the change is requested?	Permanent	Temporary
If this is a request for a temporary arrangement, please specify time period e.g., Spring term or 6 weeks.		

Section 2 – Working Pattern

A. Please describe your current working pattern e.g. days hours worked	
B. Please describe the working pattern you would like to work in the future e.g. days/hours/times:	
C. When would like this new working pattern to commence from?	Date:
D.1 Please detail any other working patterns / considerations you would like us to consider?	

By signing this form, I confirm that I wish to submit a statutory request for flexible working as detailed in this form and in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

Signature:		Date:	
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Please send a completed copy of this form to the Headteacher/CEO as appropriate.

APPENDIX THREE – Informal, Temporary or Ad Hoc Flexible Working

1. Key principles

- a) This Appendix relates to Informal, Temporary or Ad-Hoc (“Informal Flexible Working”) arrangements made in accordance with local Academy or Trust policies and procedures and agreement with the Headteacher/CEO as appropriate. It does not apply to formal Flexible Working requests which should be made in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy.
- b) Informal Flexible Working will not change your contractual terms and conditions of employment in respect of working hours or normal location of work and may be changed from time to time depending on business needs.
- c) All of the Trust and individual Academy Policies continue to apply.
- d) The expenses you can claim will be unchanged.
- e) Informal Flexible Working should not impact the level of quality or output of your work, and if there are concerns about either, it may be withdrawn.
- f) If there are concerns about your conduct, performance, or health and wellbeing, the Informal Flexible Working arrangements may be revoked.
- g) Informal Flexible Working is not intended as a way of managing emergency leave or childcare responsibilities.
- h) Informal Flexible Working arrangements should not result in extra work for your colleagues or compromise the objectives of your role/job description. Working in this way should not significantly change how many hours you usually work.

2. Working Hours

You are expected to be available and contactable during your normal working hours unless otherwise agreed. It is important to make use of tools such as Outlook calendars, email signatures and Teams updates to help others know who is working, where and when.

3. ICT Security and Privacy

- a) When working from home, where possible, create a guest account on your Wi-Fi router for work use only.
- b) If you are working from a public place, you must protect personal data, ensure utmost confidentiality, and be aware of IT security risks. You should not work from a shared, open internet network if you are dealing with any personal data according to [GDPR](#).
- c) Wherever you are working from, please make sure that you have security enabled. For more information please familiarise yourself with our Acceptable use of ICT Policy.
- d) You must always keep materials safe and secure, using secure file sharing services and password protections when transferring documents and confidential information.

4. Sickness Absence

- a) When you are working remotely, you should report sickness absence in the usual way according to the Sickness Absence Policy.
- b) Informal Flexible Working should not be used as a way of carrying on working when you are sick.
- c) If you are ill, then you need to take time off until you have recovered and follow the Sickness Absence Policy and reporting procedures.

APPENDIX FOUR – Off-Site/Home Working Risk Assessment

Date of review by HFL: April 2024

This template has been developed to assist you in specific situations, it is not a policy or statutory practice. Please contact HR Services for further advice: hrrservices@hfleducation.org/ 01438 544463.

Review and tailor the contents of this generic risk assessment to meet your individual circumstances, actions determined as required but not yet in place should be placed in the “What further action is necessary?” column. Record any other **significant** findings and actions required to reduce risk further where existing controls are insufficient, assigning these actions to an appropriate manager or member of staff.

Name		What are you risk assessing?	
Position		The potential risks of day to day working in their home environment.	
Department			
Employer			
Risk assessment number/ref			
Assessment by:		Date:	
Manager Approval:		Date:	
Assessment review date:	dd/mm/20yy (Usually within one year, or earlier in the event of an incident, a change in conditions or if more frequent review is warranted)		

What are the hazards?	Yes	No	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Is the room/area separate from other living areas in the home?						
Does the room have ventilation?						
Is there adequate lighting?						
Is there a source of heating to maintain a comfortable temperature?						
Are there sufficient fixed electrical sockets to cope with essential electrical equipment?						
Is a suitably adjustable chair available?						
Is a suitable table/desk available?						
Will you be using your Display Screen Equipment [DSE] for more than 3 hours a day or more than 1 hour continuously?						
Do you have appropriate broadband signal for effectively working?						
Do you carry out any significant manual handling activities associated with working from home?						
Are there any slip or trip hazards?						
Are there any security concerns?						

What are the hazards?	Yes	No	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Are your laptop/computer and confidential data /files secure when not in use?						
Are work items, papers, files, disc/encrypted memory stick stored appropriately so they do not pose a security risk?						
Have you previously suffered from discomfort, stress or ill health which you believe to be as a direct result of work?						
Do you have opportunities to maintain regular contact with your manager and colleagues while working from home?						

This must be completed by the employee and reviewed by the Line Manager and saved in the employee's HR file and Academy/Trust risk assessments.