

# **Dixons Academies**

## **Policy Documentation**

### **Policy: Flexible Working**

**Ratified by Governing Council: October 2015**  
**Responsibility for Review: Executive Principal**

# Flexible Working Policy

## Introduction

The Trust believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

Employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously. Employees cannot make a flexible working request if they have made one in the previous 12 months (even if they withdrew that request).

All flexible working requests will be considered in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable timescale.

## Requests for flexible working

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home.

All requests must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy concerned.

Any request made under this policy must include the following points:

- The date of the application.
- The changes the employee is seeking to his/her terms and conditions.
- The date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect.
- What effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation.
- How, in his/her opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.
- A statement that this is a statutory request.
- Whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working.
- If the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.
- Where the request is being made by a disabled person as part of a request for a reasonable adjustment to his/her working arrangements, the employee should state this in the written application.

A request that does not contain the required information will not be rejected without consideration. However, the employee will be asked to resubmit the request with the required information.

### **Meeting to discuss a flexible working request**

Once a request for flexible working is received, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but no later than the deadline set out below. A meeting will be arranged with the Principal of the Academy concerned to discuss the request. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the Academy.

Where a request can be approved without further discussion in line with the terms stated in the employee's written application, a meeting will not be necessary and the employee will be informed in writing of the decision.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. They will be entitled to speak and confer privately with the employee but may not answer questions on their behalf.

### **Outcome of a flexible working request**

After the meeting has taken place, the Principal will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the Academy against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. 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 his/her working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the organisation may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

Unless otherwise agreed, the changes to the employee's terms and conditions will be permanent.

### **Reasons for turning down a flexible working request**

The Principal will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are as follows:

- The burden of additional costs.
- An inability to re-organise work among existing staff.
- An inability to recruit additional staff.
- A detrimental impact on quality.
- A detrimental impact on performance.

- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- Insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work.
- A planned structural change to the business.

If a request has been rejected, the employee will be informed in writing which of these reasons apply, and will be informed of the appeal procedure.

### **Flexible working requests that are granted**

If the request is upheld in full or in part, the employee and the Principal (along with the relevant Line Manager) will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions, and the date on which they will commence, will be put in writing as an amendment to the individual's contract of employment/written statement of terms and conditions of employment, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **Timescales**

All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision or any appeal. The meeting with the Principal will take place within 28 days of receiving the request and the decision will be notified to the employee within 14 days of the meeting. This allows sufficient time for any appeal to be concluded.

Time limits detailed in this policy may be extended where both the employee and Academy are in agreement. For example, the Principal and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period of the flexible working arrangements.

### **Appeal**

Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request can lodge a written appeal to the Chair of Governors within 14 days of the notification. The appeal must be heard within 14 days. Written appeals must be dated and must set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the appeal and staff have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of the meeting. There is no further right of appeal.

### **Problems with a flexible working request**

If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, clarification from the relevant Principal should be sought. If an employee is dissatisfied with the way in which their request has been handled, they can raise a grievance under the Academy's grievance procedure.

The Principal will have regard to the Academy's equal opportunities policy when considering the request.

If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a re-arranged meeting without good reason, the application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.