



# Hybrid and Home Working Policy

**June 2024**

Updated policy	Updated
Page	Summary of Change
Title Page	Name changed from Home Working Policy to Hybrid and Home Working Policy
3 - 11	Reference to the Trust and hybrid working added throughout the policy.
3 - 11	Reference to executive Headteachers added throughout the policy.
3	Clause 1.2 added in the option to request a temporary home working arrangement.
3	Clause 1.3 added that some roles maybe identified as having the potential for hybrid working.
3	Clause 1.4 added the benefits of hybrid and home working.
3	Clause 1.5 added reference that the policy is not contractual.
3	Clause 2.2 added the reference to the probationary period.
3 and 9	Amended the right to request hybrid/home working changed to one day following legislation changes. Added reference to the flexible working request addendum.
4	Clause 2.4 added that approval of requests will be if it is mutually beneficial.
4	Clause 2.5 reference to posts where travel between schools and Trust premises is required.
4	Clause 3.2 incidents must be reported to your Line Manager and the Operations team. Maintain confidentiality, be mindful of surroundings, and blurring or adding the DDAT background for online meetings added.
4 - 11	Line Manager replaces Manager throughout.
5	Clause 3.4 The senior responsible individual responsible for providing advice is replaced by Data Lead and IT Lead.

6	Clause 3.5 employees who undertake hybrid or home working arrangements will be managed consistently with all other Trust staff, and given the same opportunities for training, development, and promotion.
6	Clause 4.4 added reference to giving notice to carry out checks/risk assessments in the home.
6	Clause 4.6 reference added to clause 3.2 in relation to physical meeting.
6 – 7	Other appropriate professional e.g Estates and Health & Safety Lead for the Central Team to conduct risk assessments. Operations Team replaces the HR/Operations Department for providing advice throughout. If the risk assessment identifies any concerns, the Line Manager will record who will make the changes and the timescales in which they must be actioned.
7	Clause 5.3 School/Trust equipment must not be used for personal use, unless agreed in advance with your line manager
7	Clause 5.4 when using home telephones, the numbers should be withheld and not stored.
8	Clause 6.6 deleted as duplicated.
8 - 9	Any data breaches or confidentiality breaches must be reported to the Data Lead and via GDPRiS. All disregarded paper copies should be disposed of through the appropriate school / Trust paper disposal methods and not in individual's general home waste.
10	Clause 12.6 reference added to the flexible working policy.
10	Removal of reference to tax relief for working at home.
10 - 11	Responsibility of employees added.
11	Helpful contacts added.

**Approved by the Trust Board on: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**To be reviewed: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 DDAT (the Trust) is committed to adopting modern flexible working practices - where appropriate to do so. The Trust recognises that there may, on occasion, be circumstances when it would be more beneficial for the Trust or flexible for staff to work from home on a temporary / ad hoc basis or as part of a hybrid working model.
- 1.2 Hybrid and home working are types of flexible working (see flexible working) policy, however there should be no assumption that other aspects of flexible working such as amended hours are automatically part of this hybrid and home working policy. A temporary hybrid or home working arrangement may be put in place to accommodate the completion of a set piece of work / project, or as part of a temporary reasonable adjustment to accommodate an employee's return to work.
- 1.3 Some roles could be identified as having the potential for hybrid working, where employees' duties can be fulfilled adequately with their time split between home and work locations.
- 1.4 Hybrid working and home working can increase some staff's motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress levels, and improve performance and productivity. There are potential benefits for the Trust, including increased employee satisfaction, better recruitment and retention of staff, potential cost savings on office space plus recruitment and retention. There are, however, certain implications to hybrid and home working, for example staying compliant with the GDPR, overtime, and possible health and safety issues around home set up etc. This policy outlines good practice to overcome any potential implications that may occur and ensure that the Trust & school's protocols will continue to be upheld by staff working from home.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Trust may amend it at any time following consultation with recognised Trade Unions. It has been implemented following consultation with all recognised Trade Unions.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Trust employees upon successfully completing their probationary period and whose roles have the scope to work from home. The policy will not normally apply to employees who are within their probationary period and or within an informal or formal performance capability process unless previously agreed in advance by their Line Manager. This is to ensure that appropriate training, support and monitoring can be provided.
- 2.2 It is recognised that not all roles are suitable for hybrid and / or home working, for example those who provide a direct service to the pupils, or roles where direct face to face contact is needed on a frequent basis (for example reception) as the requirements of the organisation. Each role will be considered on its own merit. Employees have a day one statutory right to formally request their employer considers flexible working arrangements. This policy works alongside the flexible

working policy and therefore should be read in conjunction with the flexible working policy and the flexible working request addendum.

- 2.3 Home working arrangements must not have an adverse effect on any particular group or service.
- 2.4 Any arrangement for home working must meet business needs and the employee's needs so it is favourable for both parties. The policy operates on the principle that any request for hybrid or home working will only be approved if it is mutually beneficial, that is that the schools / Trusts needs are met.
- 2.5 Trust premises will be the main place of work for all employees; however, some roles may require employees to travel between schools or Trust premises from time to time to fulfil their role. Some roles may allow for some flexible hybrid or home working, with time split between an employee's home and their normal place of work (school/office) or other Trust premises.
- 2.6 The decision about whether an employee or group of employees should be allowed to work at home will rest with the Headteacher / Executive Headteacher / CEO and / or the Trust.
- 2.7 Whilst working from home, employees are still bound by the Trust policies and should be cognisant of the Trust's Data Protection Policy, Information Security, Acceptable Use Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy and any other relevant policy.
- 2.8 The Trust reserves the right to withdraw hybrid and or home working from an employee following discussion with their Line Manager. Notes of the decision should be maintained. Line Managers will regularly review appropriateness of hybrid or home working.

### **3. Expectations**

- 3.1 Working from home is not:
  - An automatic contractual right through express or implied terms; it is granted at the Trust's or school's discretion and requires prior approval.
  - Intended to create a situation in which staff members feel obliged to work excessive hours.
  - A condition in which the school or Trust must provide equipment for use at home. The equipment already provided for the role should be efficient to allow employees to undertake the duties at home. Where it is not then this may determine if hybrid or home working is appropriate.
  - A substitute for the care of dependants, e.g. children.
- 3.2 Employees should be able to demonstrate they can:
  - Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work.
  - Maintain confidentiality at all times.
  - Be mindful of the surroundings visible in the background. A Trust background is recommended alternatively, please blur the background.
  - Dress professionally in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.

- Follow the guidance and procedures outlined in this policy for safe working practices whilst working at home.
- Report any incidents to your Line Manager and the Operations Team that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and ask for guidance as appropriate.
- Take part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy.
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have in respect of working alone at home to their Line Manager.
- Ensure that they do not arrange any physical meetings with parents, pupils, employees of other agencies parents or other members of the public to be held at home.
- Maintain safeguarding standards in line with the Department for Education statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education Document (as amended).
- Work independently and on their own initiative; Motivate themselves; Complete projects within set deadlines; Manage workload effectively; Cope well under any new pressure posed by working at home; Adjust to new work practices; Maintain contact with all affected by own work.

### 3.3 Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with working from home. Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out regularly.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that employees working from home are at no greater risk than employees working within the school or Trust.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring incidents associated with working from home.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice, which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working from home.
- Providing an outline of how work will be monitored, produced and delivered. Clear work objectives with measurable outputs must be established and documented, in advance of the arrangement commencing. For hybrid or home working to take place it must be established that the work to be done at home can be completed without regular/frequent face-to face contact or direct supervision.
- Contact times and availability should be established in advance and be within the agreed contracted hours.
- Remind staff that all other conditions of employment as set out in the contract apply.
- Making it clear and record how productivity and performance management issues will be assessed.
- Ensuring all members of staff working from home adhere to this policy & Safeguarding Standards & Practices.

### 3.4 The Data Lead and IT Lead are responsible for providing advice to Headteachers / Executive Headteacher / CEO / Trustees on:

- Ensuring all laptops used for work have sophisticated anti-virus software and malware protection.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the data protection principles outlined in the GDPR.
- Ensuring laptops used for lone working are resilient, are able to efficiently recover lost data and have sophisticated cyber security.

3.5 Employees who undertake hybrid or home working arrangements will be managed consistently with all other Trust staff, and given the same opportunities for training, development, and promotion.

#### **4. Health and Safety**

4.1 The Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working alone at home. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the school / Trust has a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

4.2 Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves when lone working at home, as well as any other people affected by their work.

4.3 Before agreeing to hybrid or home working, Line Managers should consider any further training necessary and any risk assessments in place.

4.4 The Trust retains the right to check the employee's work areas in their own home for Health and Safety and information security purposes. Appropriate notice will be given to the employee to carry out the checks. These checks will normally be carried out by the Line Manager / appropriate professional and may be carried out at the initial set-up, as part of the risk assessment, for testing electrical equipment, or to review any concerns raised. The need for such inspections will depend on the nature of the work undertaken. Whilst working at home temporarily, there is no increased risk using display screen equipment (DSE) if you are using the equipment correctly e.g. sat at a desk/table and not having to bend your neck too far forwards or backwards. Laptops should not be placed on cushions or your lap causing the vents to become obstructed as this could cause the device to overheat.

4.5 Reporting Accident/Near Miss reporting procedures apply equally to incidents arising in the employee's home.

4.6 As per clause 3.2, physical meetings with parents/carers, pupils and employees of other agencies must not be held at your home. Where appropriate meetings should be held virtually via Teams or Zoom. Meetings with employees at home should be avoided.

4.7 Where the agreed working pattern allows for flexibility, both Line Manager and employee should monitor to ensure excessive hours are not being worked. It is important that working patterns and hours are not detrimental to the employee's health and comply with the Working Time Regulations.

- 4.8 The Line Manager / other appropriate professional e.g. Estates and Health & Safety Lead for the Central Team will conduct an individual risk assessment following the initial request to work from home and consider any reasonable adjustments. If the risk assessment identifies any concerns, the Line Manager / Estates and Health & Safety Lead for the Central Team will record who will make the changes and the timescales in which they must be actioned. All changes within the home will be paid for by the employee. Requests may be rejected by the Line Manager after seeking further advice from the Central Operations Team if the level of risk associated with a staff member working from home is too high, or the risks cannot be managed effectively.
- 4.9 If concerns are raised with the employee regarding their working practices or working environment at home have not been addressed by the employee, the Trust reserves the right to refuse further requests for hybrid or home working until the concerns are resolved.
- 4.10 Risk assessments will be reviewed by the Line Manager / Estates and Health & Safety Lead for the Central Team on an ongoing basis, or when there has been a significant change in working practice.

## **5. Equipment**

- 5.1 The school / Trust will not usually provide staff members with additional equipment to use at home. Employees may use school / Trust equipment for home working purposes where this is already provided by the school /Trust, e.g. school / work laptops.
- 5.2 Employees will be responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband available and contacting their own provider in the event of any technical issues.
- 5.3 Any school / Trust equipment will remain the property of the school / Trust and will be returned upon request. School / Trust equipment must not be used for personal use, unless agreed in advance with your Line Manager. Any faults with the equipment provided by the school / Trust must be reported to your Line Manager Estates and Health & Safety Lead for the Central Team immediately.
- 5.4 The Trust is not responsible for the maintenance, replacement, or repair of any personal equipment that is used. When using a home telephone or personal mobile phone for official work purposes a detailed record of official calls should be kept for reimbursement purposes. Calls from a personal device should be kept to a minimum after alternative methods of communication have been exhausted (e.g. email or Teams calls). Telephone numbers should be withheld, and the number dialled should not be stored for further use outside of the nature of your role.

## **6. GDPR and Security**

- 6.1 The employee must ensure that information and equipment are kept securely. In particular private and confidential material must be kept in lockable secure storage at all times and all equipment should be stored away safely and securely at the end of each day. This is to prevent damage and any unauthorised use. Line Managers must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the ICT policy. Wherever possible, personal data will not be taken home by staff members for the purposes of hybrid or home working, due to the risk of data being lost or the occurrence of a data breach. If any unauthorised person has access to data, this is considered a data breach.
- 6.2 Any data breaches or confidentiality breaches must be reported to the Data Lead and via GDPRiS and may be dealt with in accordance with the DDAT's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 6.3 Staff working from home will be encouraged to go paperless, where possible, as paper files cannot be protected digitally and may end up misplaced.
- 6.4 If the use of paper is unavoidable, the school / Trust requires employees to store paper copies of personal data in lockable secure storage which is in a secure location within the home. All disregarded paper copies should be disposed of through the appropriate school / Trust paper disposal methods and not in individual's general home waste.
- 6.5 Employees are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school or Trust equipment. Screens must be locked when the employee moves away from their laptop at home and in the school / office.
- 6.6 Staff are responsible for the security of confidential information when working from home.

## **7. Communication**

- 7.1 It is essential that good communication is maintained at all times between the employee and their Line Manager. The Line Manager and employee should plan and agree how they will communicate effectively with each other. These arrangements should be agreed and regularly reviewed considering operational experience. This will help to mitigate the potential increased feelings of isolation and ensure that the employee and Line Manager are kept up to date.
- 7.2 The employee must agree arrangements with their Line Manager on an ongoing basis to ensure effective communication, and to enable the Line Manager to fulfil their duty of care.



- 7.3 All staff members working from home will be contactable throughout their agreed normal working hours by their Line Manager or other work colleagues. Work calls are confidential, and employees should be mindful of who can hear the conversation when working from home.
- 7.4 A staff member's phone number and home address will not be shared to others without their prior permission.
- 7.5 The school / Trust understands that staff working at home have the right to privacy out-of-hours and should be able to separate their working and home lives, and so communication is only compulsory during the agreed contracted working hours.
- 7.6 Please refer to section 13 of this policy and speak to your Line Manager if you are feeling isolated or struggling with your mental health.**
- 8. Costs and expenses**
- 8.1 The school / Trust will not contribute to any household expenses incurred whilst performing home working duties, e.g. heating, lighting or council tax.
- 9. Sickness Absence**
- 9.1 If staff members are sick during a period of working at home, then the normal sickness reporting rules must be followed, and they will adhere to the usual sickness absence procedures.
- 10. Insurance**
- 10.1 The schools / Trust's existing insurance policies (both public and employer's liability as part of the DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement - RPA) will continue to operate and cover the homeowner as a third-party claimant. Hybrid and home working employees are advised to take out a household insurance policy if they do not currently have one. It is a condition of this policy that employees inform their household insurers, and check that they are covered if any work equipment causes damage, and for a claim from a third party. Any additional chargers for such cover and associated costs will be paid for by the employee.
- 10.2 Employees should check that there isn't anything in their home insurance that prevents them from working from home.
- 10.3 If regular home working is undertaken, the Trust may request a copy of the current household insurance policy and a copy should be kept on the personal file.
- 11. Mortgages and Tenancy Agreements**
- 11.1 Employees working from home must inform anyone with an interest in the property (e.g. Building Society, Bank and Landlord/Owner) of the position.
- 11.2 Employees should check that there isn't anything in their mortgage or lease that prevents them from working from home.

## **12. Requests and Agreement to work from home**

- 12.1 Temporary and ad-hoc requests: Prior permission needs to be obtained from the Headteacher / Executive Headteacher / CEO and / or the Trust before an employee can work from home. The employee should make an informal request to the Headteacher / Executive Headteacher / CEO or the Trust as appropriate.
- 12.2 Ongoing hybrid working / home working request: Can be made in writing by an employee from day one of their employment with the Trust to their Line Manager.
- 12.3 Hybrid or home working may be considered as a reasonable adjustment where the employees role allows.
- 12.4 Consideration will be given to any such request and a decision regarding the suitability of working from home will take into account all the relevant circumstances.
- 12.5 The Line Manager will advise the employee whether the application is agreed, including reasons for non-approval if applicable. The outcome of the decision will be provided within a maximum of two months including any appeal.
- 12.6 In the event of a non-approval, the employee has the right to request a review of the decision within 10 working days from the original decision date as per the flexible working policy. The decision will be reviewed by the school Local Academy Committee / Trustees or a director's nominee of the Trust in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. There is no further right of appeal following the review committee's decision.
- 12.7 The Line Manager will then finalise the working arrangements, considering any equipment or other resource issues required and carry out a risk assessment.
- 12.8 A hybrid or home working declaration form (see appendix A) must be completed and signed by the employee and their Line Manager prior to hybrid or home working. A copy must be retained by the employee and a copy will be held on their personal file / HR system. The declaration form should be reviewed annually.

## **13. Helpful contacts**

- 13.1 Employees should contact their Line Manager to enquire if counselling/support is available through the schools / Trust's sickness absence insurance scheme.
- 13.2 Support is available via 0800 562561 or: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk>
- 13.3 Updated contact details can be sourced through the DDAT HR Department or the Trust's Mental Health First Aiders.
- 13.4 MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/coronavirus-and-work/tips-for-supporting-yourself-and-your-team/>

## Appendix A

### Hybrid or Home Working Declaration Form

I have read, understood, and agree to the Trust's policy and guidelines on hybrid and home working.

I accept the offer of hybrid / home working (delete as appropriate) and any associated costs. I also accept that this offer may be withdrawn by my Line Manager at any time following discussion.

<b>Employee Check List</b>		<b>Line Manager Check List</b>	
Suitable internet connection		Risk assessment completed and actions followed up	
Suitable phone connections/service		Probationary period complete	
Suitable workstation		Training provided relating to hybrid / home working	
Appropriate equipment available		Equipment will be stored away securely	
Insurance Provider informed		Documents will be locked away	
Mortgage/landlord etc informed		Agreed ways of communication	

Signed:

Employee:

Date:

Line Manager's Signature:

Date Agreed:

To be reviewed and signed annually.