Langham Village School Flexible Working Policy

Introduction

Langham Village School recognises the key role flexible working plays in attracting, retaining, developing and rewarding teachers and support. There are a variety of reasons why an employee may wish to work flexibly, including to enable caring responsibilities, to support wellbeing or to provide time for hobbies and voluntary activities. We recognise the positive impact of flexible working in:

• Supporting recruitment and retention.

• Promoting wellbeing and improving work-life balance.

• Reducing absences and improving productivity.

• Promoting an inclusive workplace and supporting equal opportunities and diversity.

• Creating attractive workplaces.

• Supporting pupil outcomes by promoting recruitment and retention of experienced staff.

As an employer, we encourage flexible working opportunities and will seek to support employees to enable successful requests for flexible working.

Guiding principles underpinning this

• Pupil outcomes and supporting pupils: we are committed to supporting flexible working and will consider each request on a case by-case basis, while ensuring that we continue to prioritise the support we provide to our pupils in school.

• Leadership: our leadership team and governors are committed to embracing and supporting flexible working. Flexible working is a core part of the school, supporting its values and objectives, and ensures it reflects the working lives of families and the communities it serves.

• Trust and fairness: we are committed to open conversations about flexible working and considering all requests fairly by following the process as set out in this policy, although in some situations it may not be possible to permit a request for flexible working. Staff working flexibly, or seeking to work flexibly, will receive fair treatment regardless of their agreed/ contractual working arrangements. All requests will be treated carefully and with sensitivity, taking into account promoting equality.

• Whole-school approach: we take a proactive approach that works for the whole school. This includes preventing any negative impact on other staff.

• Flexible hiring: we specify in all job adverts which types of flexible working are available for a role. We welcome conversations about flexible working before/at interview.

• Flexible progression: we support flexible working at every level and all stages of a career, including promotion and moving to a new role if you are already working flexibly.

• Inclusion and fair treatment of those working flexibly: we ensure those working flexibly are effectively embedded in the staff community. We will ensure that conversations take place around expectations for attendance at INSET Days, parents' evenings, CPD and responsibilities around other duties, considering the needs of those working part time, as set out in the STPCD.

Types of flexible working

Flexible working can be defined as ‘arrangements which allow employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work’ .

Types of flexible working include the below arrangements:

• Part-time working - Part time: working less than full-time hours. Employees can work full time but still have flexible work arrangements in place.

- Job share: two or more people doing one job and splitting the hours.
- Phased retirement: gradually reducing working hours and/or responsibilities to transition from full-time work to full-time retirement.
- Varied hours - Staggered hours: the employee has different start, finish and break times.
- Compressed hours: working full-time hours but over fewer days.
- Annualised hours: working hours spread across the year, which may include some school closure days, or where hours vary across the year to suit the school and employee.

• In-year flexibility. These types of flexible working are sometimes referred to as ‘informal’ flexibility.

- Personal or family days: days of authorised paid leave during term time to which all employees in a school are entitled.
- Lieu time: paid time off work for having worked additional hours.
- Home or remote working: the employee carries out work off site. For example, Planning Preparation and Assessment time conducted off site, or leaders carrying out some duties from home.

There are also other examples of flexible working not included here and it is possible for an employee to have several flexible working arrangements in place simultaneously.

We will consider requests regardless of the type of flexible working requested, although some forms of flexible working may be more suitable for particular roles than others. Employees making a request should consider which forms of flexible working are best suited to their personal circumstances and their role, as individual circumstances vary. It is possible that a flexible working arrangement can have various elements such as part-time working with compressed hours. Langham Village School considers all roles, including teaching and leadership positions, for flexible job design.

How we encourage conversations about flexible working

We welcome open conversations about formal and informal flexible working on an ongoing basis.

We will promote the inclusion of a discussion around flexible working as part of the annual appraisal conversation. This will not be the only time a request can take place but will encourage individuals to consider and discuss their needs.

Requesting flexible working

Some flexible working arrangements will not require a formal flexible working application. For example, as ad-hoc personal days can be agreed at the headteacher's discretion. In addition, some short term, temporary changes to working arrangements may be agreed with the headteacher.

Other types of flexible working will require a formal application, for example, when requesting a permanent change to working hours or days worked. All employees have the statutory right to make a request for flexible working from the first day of employment. All employees have the statutory right to make two flexible working requests within any 12-month period.

An employee may have only one live request for flexible working with their employer at any one time. Once a request has been made, it remains live until any of the following occur:

- a decision about the request is made by the employer.
- the request is withdrawn. o an outcome is mutually agreed.
- the statutory two-month period for deciding requests ends, or any agreed extension ends.

We will consult with individuals before rejecting a flexible working request. This will enable us to explore with individuals whether alternative workable options may be available.
We will reach a decision (including the outcome of an appeal) within two months, or such longer period as might be agreed by the employer and the employee.

It might also be helpful for employees to consider whether they would like a trial period, before making their request.

All requests will be considered reasonably on a case-by-case basis.

Formal applications must be made in writing via letter or email to the Headteacher and include:

• The date of the request.

• A statement that this is a formal request to work flexibly.

• Detail of the flexibility being sought in relation to hours, times or place of work.

• The proposed start date for the flexible working arrangement.

• Whether any other request for flexible working has been made in the last 12 months.

• If the request is being made in connection with a protected characteristic, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, you may wish to note this on the form.

Considering a request and communicating the outcome

All formal requests, including any appeals, will be dealt with as soon as possible, and always within two months beginning with the date on which the application is made. We will always aim to reach a decision in quicker time. Both parties may agree to an extension of the period and the employer should confirm this in writing. If the Headteacher intends to approve the request without further discussion, a meeting may not be necessary.

If the request cannot be quickly approved, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting as soon as possible on receipt of an application. The purpose of the meeting is to explore the desired working pattern, to explore

whether alternative workable options may be available, and to give the application serious consideration, in a 'reasonable manner' as set out in the statutory framework. Employees will be able to bring a trade union representative or work colleague to this meeting. Sufficient notice will be provided ahead of the meeting taking place.

The Headteacher will write to the individual within 14 days of the meeting to either:

• agree the new working pattern in full, and agree the date new arrangements will come into effect and any adjustments to contract of employment, if applicable

• agree the request in part: for example, on the basis of an agreed trial period or on an agreed temporary basis, or

• provide clear business grounds as to why the application cannot be accepted. This may include offering an alternative proposal. Requests will be supported where possible and will only be refused based on the eight reasons set out below. The grounds for rejecting a request are set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996:

- the burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand o inability to reorganise work among existing staff o detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- inability to recruit additional staff
- insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes

Timescales may be extended where both parties are in agreement.

Headteachers seeking flexible working should make their request to the Chair of Governors and follow the same process set out above. Any meeting to discuss flexible working will be held with the Chair of Governors, who will also be responsible for considering the request in a reasonable manner and managing any appeals process. An individual may wish to request an alteration to their arrangement as a result of a change in circumstances. Any changes to arrangements would need to be agreed by both parties through discussion and formalised in writing.

Trialling a new arrangement

A new working pattern may be agreed subject to a trial period which is agreeable to both parties, for example for one academic year. At the end of this period the headteacher will meet with the applicant to discuss the experience of the trial period and whether the arrangement can be made permanent. At this point it may be appropriate to revisit the arrangements to suit all parties. All trial period arrangements and their agreed outcomes will be confirmed in writing.

Right to appeal

An employee may appeal the outcome of a formal flexible working request.

The appeal should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 7 days of receipt of the outcome, stating grounds of the appeal. A meeting will be held within 14 days of receipt of appeal between the headteacher, Chair of Governors and the applicant, to discuss and consider the appeal. The appeal will be dealt with impartially and the applicant may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the appeal.

The outcome and reasons for the decision will be confirmed in writing within 7 days. Unless agreed otherwise the whole process, including an appeal, will not exceed two months, beginning with the date on which the application is made.

Date agreed by staff: October 2025
Date agreed by governors: October 2025
Signed ……P Kossowicz……. Headteacher

Signed:……Ms Kate Jackson…… Chair of Governors
Date of next review: October 2026