Grove
Learning Trust

Flexible Working Policy

Ratified:
Dec 25

Version – 02

Vision

Vision

Together, we will create remarkable schools in which all children can thrive.

As one organisation, Grove Learning Trust, with schools that are unique and united, shares aspiration for our children, which is underpinned by a strong commitment to our values.

Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

About This Policy

1. The Trust are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing working practices and policies that support work-life balance. The purpose of this Flexible Working Policy is to give eligible Employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern in accordance with the statutory procedure for such requests. Managers are encouraged to facilitate requests unless they cannot be accommodated for business or operational reasons.

2. No one who requests flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose career development opportunities.

3. This policy does not form part of the Employee's contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and the Trust may amend it at any time.

Application

4. This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers, or interns ('the Employee')

Responsibility

5. The board of Grove Learning Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, and the HR Business Partner has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation. Suggestions for changes to this policy should be reported to the HR Business Partner .

6. Any questions the Employee may have about the day-to-day application of this policy should be referred to the Line Manager or the HR Business Partner in the first instance.

7. This policy is reviewed annually by the board of Grove Learning Trust and the HR Business Partner..

Flexible Working

8. Flexible working can include several possible changes to working arrangements, including: -

   (a). reduction or variation of working hours;

   (b). reduction or variation of the days or times in the workplace; and, or

   (c). working from an alternative location;

9. The possible changes to working arrangements may also include: -

   (a). job sharing;

   (b). working a set number of hours annually (annualised hours);

   (c). working during term-time only;

   (d). compressed hours; and

   (e). working flexitime.

Eligibility

10. To be eligible to make a request under the formal procedure as set out below,

    (a). The right to request flexible working is a day one right.

    (b). Employees have the right to submit two flexible working requests within any 12 month period.

    (c). If the Employee is not eligible to make a formal request, the Employee may make an informal request.

Formal Flexible Working Request

11. Employees interested in flexible working are advised to speak informally with their Line Manager or Human Resources Department to discuss eligibility, the different options and the effect of the proposed work pattern on colleagues and service delivery; this should be completed before submitting a formal or informal request.

12. The Employee will need to submit a written application using the flexible working application form if the Employee would like the Trust to consider a flexible working request under the formal procedure.

13. The Trust application should be submitted to the employee's Line Manager in good time and at least two months before the Employee would like the changes to take effect; the request should:

14. In most cases, the Trust will require a meeting with the Employee before making a decision. In some circumstances, the Trust may approve the request without a formal meeting. However, it will usually be helpful for the Line Manager to discuss the request with the Employee to ensure it is the best solution.

Formal Request: Meeting

15. Where required, the Line Manager will arrange a meeting with the Employee once the application has been submitted. The Employee may bring a colleague or Trade Union representative to the meeting as a companion if the Employee requests. The Employee's companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with the Employee but may not answer questions on the Employee's behalf.

16. In most cases, the meeting will be held at the Employee's usual place of work. The Trust will try to ensure that the meeting is held at a convenient time and place.

17. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the working arrangements the Employee has requested. The Employee will have the opportunity to explain how the arrangements will accommodate the needs of the business. The Employee will also be able to discuss what impact the proposed working arrangements will have on the Trust and their colleagues. If the Trust cannot accommodate the arrangements the Employee has requested, the discussion at the meeting will also provide an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.

18. the Line Manager may suggest starting an alternative working arrangement under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet the needs of the Trust and those of the team and department.

Formal Request: Decision

19. The Trust will notify the Employee of the decision in writing as soon as possible and in any event no later than two months of the original request unless an extension has been agreed with the employee.

Commented [CS1]: There is a templated form so this does not need to be detailed.

20. Where the Employee's request is accepted, or where the Trust propose an alternative to the arrangements the Employee request, the Line manager will complete a trust amendment form and send this to HR so that this can be shared on the employee's digital file

21. Unless otherwise agreed and subject to any approved trial period, changes to the Employee's contract of employment will be permanent.
22. If the Line Manager requires more time to make a decision, for example, where the Trust needs more time to investigate how the Employee's request can be accommodated or to consult other employees, the Employee will be advised accordingly.

23. There might be circumstances where, due to business and operational requirements, the Trust are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, the Line Manager will write to the Employee:

    (a). explaining the business reasons for declining the application; and

    (b). setting out the appeal procedure.

24. The business reasons for which the Trust may reject the Employee's application are as follows:

    (a). the burden of additional costs;

    (b). detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer *(service user)* demand;

    (c). inability to reorganise work among existing employees;

    (d). inability to reasonably recruit additional employees;

    (e). detrimental impact on quality;

    (f). detrimental impact on performance;

    (g). insufficiency of work during the periods that the Employee propose to work; and

    (h). planned structural changes.

24. In any event, the Trust will consult with the employee before a flexible working request is rejected.

Formal Request: Appeal

25. In circumstances where the Trust rejects the Employee's request, the Employee will have the right to appeal; the Employee appeal must:

    (a). be in writing and dated;

(b). set out the grounds of appeal; and

(c). the Employee must send a copy to the Human Resources Department within fourteen days of the date on which the Employee received the written notice providing a copy of the outcome of the Employee's flexible working request.

26. Following receipt of the Employee's notice of appeal, the HR Business Partner will arrange for a meeting at a convenient time for all those attending. The Employee may be accompanied by a colleague of their choosing or a Trade Union Representative.

27. Where possible, the appeal meeting will be conducted by the HR Business Partner or a Senior Manager who has not been previously involved in considering the Employee's flexible working request.

28. The Employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as possible after the appeal meeting.

29. In circumstances where the appeal is upheld, the Employee will be advised of the new working arrangements and details of any trial period, with an explanation of the changes to the employee's contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. The Employee will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on the Trust personnel file to confirm the variation to the Employee's contract of employment.

30. The Employee should be aware that changes to their contract of employment will be permanent.

31. If the Employee's appeal is rejected, the written decision will give the business reasons for the decision and explain why the reasons apply in the case.

Commented [CS2]: 2 requests are allowed in a 12 month period, providing the first request is not still live (being discussed).

Extending Time Under the Formal Procedure

32. There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete consideration of the Employee's flexible working request within the expected time limits. Where an extension of time is agreed upon with the Employee, the Trust Line Manager will write to the Employee confirming the extension and the date on which an outcome will be provided to the Employee.

33. In certain circumstances, a formal request will be treated as withdrawn. This will occur if the Employee fails to attend a meeting without good reason or does not attend an appeal meeting without good cause. In such circumstances, the Line Manager will provide written correspondence to the Employee confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

Making an Informal Flexible Working Request

34. Employees who are ineligible to make a formal request for flexible working may make an informal request to their Line who will consider it according to the Trust business and operational requirements.

35. It will assist Grove Learning Trust.

    (a). If the Employee makes the request in writing and provides as much information as possible on the current and desired working pattern, including working days and start and finish times. The Employee should give the date from which the Employee wants the requested working pattern to commence, considering what effect the changes will have on the Employee's role, the working pattern and on Trust colleagues and service. If the Employee has any suggestions about dealing with any potentially harmful effects on the team or department, the Employee should include these in the written application to the Line Manager.

    (b). The Line Manager will then advise the Employee what steps will be taken to consider the Employee's Flexible Working Request, which may include inviting the Employee to attend a meeting before confirming the outcome of the request to the Employee.

Review of policy

36 This policy is reviewed every year or upon change of relevant legislation. The Board will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
Draft 01	Autumn 23	Completion of first draft	PJB(AU)
Final – A	Feb 24 Autumn 24	Legislation updates added Signed off by Trust Board Signed off by Trust Board	CS (AU) Trust Board (AP) Trust Board (AP)
Reviewed	Autumn 25	Completion of review	CS (AU) AW (AP)

Review

Next Review	