



Schools Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

May 2026

This model policy will apply to both teaching and non-teaching staff working in Wiltshire Schools and has been agreed with the following recognised unions:
ATL, NUT, NAHT, NASUWT, ASCL, Unison, Unite and GMB

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

- Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith
- Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate
- Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum
- Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management
- Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected
- Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils
- Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities
- St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge and St. Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon.

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What is it?

1. The policy outlines the school's procedure for employees to follow if they want to request to work flexibly in line with the statutory legislation (The Flexible Working Regulations 2014). It details how Headteachers should deal with such requests. Flexible working requests can cover areas such as: change to number of hours, change to start and finish times, change to working days and different patterns of work etc.

Who does it apply to?

- 2 This policy applies to all teaching and support staff within LM/VC Schools and is extended to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools.
- 3 The guidance covers permanent, temporary or fixed-term contracts.

When does it apply?

4. A request for flexible working becomes a "day one" employment right, this removes the old requirement for employees to have at least **26 weeks' service** before submitting a flexible working request.

This flexibility of working in the workplace is a particular concern not just for staff with out of work responsibilities but also for new & expectant parents. This updated maternity law, allows staff to request flexible work arrangements from day one of employment.

What are the main points?

- 5 St John's Catholic Primary School school recognises the benefits that flexible working can bring. The Headteacher will give due consideration to all flexible working requests. However, if there is a business reason for refusing a request as set out in the legislation, (see point 27), the school retains the right to do so.
- 6 Staff can request flexible working but a whole school/departmental/faculty approach may generally be taken when deciding whether a request can be agreed.
- 7 Any change to working conditions agreed in accordance with this policy is a permanent change to the employee's terms and conditions of service and contract of employment. Under the April 2024, an employee can submit up to two flexible working applications in a 12-month timeframe.
- 8 Any decision on flexible working should be based on feasibility and operational merits the employee does not need to justify their reasons for requesting flexible working.

Making an individual staff flexible working application

- 9 The employee should discuss flexible working with the Headteacher.
- 10 The employee must make any request in writing by completing the Flexible Working Application form (Toolkit 2) which requires them to give information on:
 - the change(s) to the working conditions that they are seeking.
 - the effect, if any, that the requested change(s) would have on the employee
 - the date from which the employee would want the change to be effective.

- 11 Flexible Working Application forms that are not completed fully will be considered void.
- 12 If the request is being made in relation to the Equality Act 2010 such as a reasonable adjustment for a disability the employee needs to make this clear in their application on the Flexible Working Application form.
- 13 If a flexible working request to work less hours is agreed this will have an impact on the employee's pension provision, annual leave, bank holidays, sick pay, maternity pay etc.

Handling a flexible working application

- 14 Once a flexible working application form has been received the Headteacher must consider the request and normally hold a one to one meeting with the employee. (Toolkit 7 Handling a request for flexible working)
- 15 Under the legislation the request must be handled within two months (including any appeal) unless an extension can be agreed between the Headteacher and the employee.
- 16 Flexible working requests that have already been agreed may well affect the Headteacher's ability to grant further requests.
- 17 The Headteacher may also want to have team discussions to discuss how flexible working could work for the school.
- 18 If the Headteacher intends to approve the request a meeting to discuss the flexible working request is not always necessary although having a meeting can be helpful to ensure that the proposal is the best solution and to discuss exactly the changes that are being sought and the best way to accommodate these.
- 19 An employee can be accompanied to the meeting by a work colleague or a trade union representative. The employee must be given 5 working days notification of the meeting.
- 20 The meeting should be held in private but does not have to be face to face. It can be held by conference call.
- 21 If the request is not possible the Headteacher may discuss other flexible working options at the meeting and mutually agree with the employee an alternative flexible work arrangement.
- 22 If the employee fails to attend the meeting to discuss their flexible work application a further meeting will be arranged. If they also fail to attend this meeting, without good reason, the flexible working request will be considered withdrawn which will be confirmed in writing to them. (Toolkit 5 Model Letter 9)

Short Term/Temporary/Informal Arrangements

- 23 An employee may want an informal change to their work pattern for a short period of time to cover a temporary situation such as coping with a bereavement or pursuing a short course of study. Whilst, in these circumstances a flexible work request could be considered under the statutory legislation another variation to contractual terms cannot be requested for 6 months. The employee could make another flexible working request but this would be outside of the statutory legislation. The Headteacher may consider allowing the employee to revert back to their old

conditions after a specified period e.g. three months but this would need to form part of the one to one meeting.

Trial Period

- 24 There may be instances where the Headteacher is unsure whether the arrangements requested are sustainable in the longer term for the school or the possible impact on other employees' requests for flexible working. The Headteacher may want to agree to a trial period. This will need to be confirmed in writing with review dates to discuss how the new arrangements are working and to make any necessary adjustments. (Refer to Toolkit 5 Model Letter 6) If at the end of a trial period the flexible working request cannot be agreed the Headteacher will need to confirm this in writing detailing which of the business reasons apply as listed in paragraph 27 below. The employee will have the right to appeal against this decision following the appeal process detailed within this policy.

Deciding on a Request

- 25 The Headteacher must consider any request carefully looking at the benefits of the requested change(s) for the employee and the school and weighing these up against any adverse business impact of implementing the changes on the school.
- 26 The Headteacher will take into consideration any specific requests that are made because of one of the protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 such as a reasonable adjustment for someone with a disability or someone with a caring responsibility such as caring for a dependent with a disability.
- 27 The Headteacher is under no statutory obligation to agree with the request and can refuse it for one of the following business reasons as detailed in the statutory legislation:
- the burden of additional costs
 - the inability to reorganise work amongst staff
 - an inability to recruit additional staff
 - a detrimental impact on quality
 - a detrimental impact on performance
 - detrimental effect on ability to meet pupil demand
 - insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
 - a planned structural change to the school

If the request is agreed or agreed with modifications

- 28 If the Headteacher agrees to the flexible working request in whole or with modifications it is a permanent change to the employee's contract of employment and there is no automatic right for the employee to return to their original pattern of working. (Refer to Toolkit 5 Model Letter 4) To change the flexible work arrangement the employee would need to make a new flexible working application request. Under the new legislation effective from April 2024, an employee can make two applications in a 12 month period.
- 29 The Headteacher needs to confirm in writing the new working arrangement with the employee. (Refer to Toolkit 5 Model Letter 4)

- 30 The school's payroll provider needs to be informed of the changes. For schools that buy Wiltshire Council payroll service this is done by completing a change of employee job details form and emailing to hr@wiltshire.gov.uk

If the request is declined

- 31 The Headteacher must confirm in writing the decision to reject the flexible working request stating the operational ground(s) and business reason(s) why the proposal cannot be accepted. (Refer to Toolkit 5 Model Letter 5) The business reasons for refusing a request under the legislation are given in paragraph 27.

Appeal

- 32 The employee has the right to appeal against the decision to reject their flexible working application. Any appeal will be heard by the schools appeal panel of 3 governors. As legally there are specific time limits for handling flexible working requests the employee needs to make an appeal by completing the Flexible Working Appeal form. They must not follow the school's general appeals policy. See the Guidance for Flexible Working for suggested time scales. (Refer to Toolkit 1)
- 33 There is no further right of appeal against the decision of the appeal hearing and no other procedure of the school such as the Grievance procedure can be used.

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

Headteacher: Mrs K O'Rourke

Chair of Governors: Mrs C Doogue

Review cycle:	Annually
Next review due:	May 2027