



Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust **Working From Home Procedure - COVID Response**

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RWBAT Responsibility: MAT LT

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Relevant Policies:

- Health & Safety VDU Policy
- GDPR Data Protection Policy
- KCSIE & Safeguarding
- Code of Conduct

Relevant Training:

- National College – Free 65-minute training; Certificate in Display Screen Equipment in Schools. This training should be completed where users are required to work from home for Covid related reasons.

Please note: This policy should be read alongside the COVID Safeguarding Update adopted by RWBAT schools. Any home working must be mutually agreed with the member of staff and the Headteacher, regular (at least monthly) reviews should take place to ensure that this mutual agreement is working. This agreement may be revoked by either side at any time.

1. Introduction and scope

1.1 This is an interim policy on home working in response to government advice relating to COVID-19 particularly employees who have to work from home due to a COVID related reason such as; a national or local lockdown, being categorised as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) or if they are self-isolating. This policy is designed to help support staff to enable them to work from home safely and effectively.

1.2 For the purposes of this policy, home-based work, home working or working from home mean the performance of some or all of an employee's work/duties, will be from a home or private setting.

1.3 This is a temporary position which will be continually assessed regularly or when required.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 RWBAT understands that staff may be working from home in difficult situations so we:

- Understand that hours may need to be flexible, in consultation with their headteacher this would mean outside of their usual core hours;

- Accept that during these exceptional times colleagues will be working on a best effort basis, not on a business as usual basis;
- Will consider work from an output and quality perspective rather than how long it took to produce it, accepting that individual situations may reduce employees' speed and capacity;
- Trust staff to work productively and give their best endeavours;
- Recognise that staff are juggling caring responsibilities with work. Staff in this situation should be encouraged to ask for support where possible and encouraged to take annual leave as a respite from work.

2.2 In these extraordinary circumstances, we recognise that many staff may be required to provide care for others. Where this applies, employees should discuss this with their headteacher/line manager so that an appropriate solution can be found; this may include the consideration of flexible working hours, special leave and/or the use of annual/unpaid leave.

2.3 If an employee is due to work remotely but is unwell, they must inform their line manager using the normal sickness reporting procedure.

3. Ability and agreement to work from home

3.1 This policy can be applied to all RWBAT staff, regardless of contract type or duration, other than those employed on casual contracts, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, home working would not be practical/possible.

3.2 To support working from home taking place, some staff who have prolonged use of DSE may be asked to undertake a self assessment of their homeworking provision by completing the VDU checklist (Please read the Health & Safety VDU Policy). This checklist should be sent to the appropriate person within your school (usually HR or office/resource manager).

3.3 In addition to completing the checklist, staff should agree / consider with their line managers:

- Contact arrangements and frequency of contact. For staff who normally have a standard working pattern or a contract with fixed working hours, a discussion around if/how this may need to temporarily flex or vary due to, for example, other commitments such as childcare, should also take place;
- IT requirements as determined by the job (e.g. laptop, mobile phone, access to VPN), and whether they are able to use personal equipment to support home working;
- Whether equipment that will be used is in safe working order;
- Revising familiarity with the relevant health and safety policies

3.4 Where a member of staff who otherwise would be able to work from home is not able to do so because of a disability or other health condition, they should discuss with their line manager whether reasonable adjustments may be made.

4. Communications and safety

4.1 Home working is a form of lone working. This means that there may be a risk of staff not having immediate access to another person for assistance or supervision if circumstances require, i.e. in an emergency situation.

4.2 To mitigate against this risk, staff that are working from home are required to:

- Keep their work diary up-to-date
- Agree a schedule or protocol for keeping in touch with their line manager
- Be contactable via email and/or by voice as agreed with their line manager
- Ensure they take regular breaks from Display Screen Equipment

4.3 Under no circumstances should students be invited to visit a member of staff at home when remote working, nor should any member of staff provide a private phone number or address for correspondence.

5. Use of RWBAT or personal IT equipment and mobile devices.

5.1 Staff, regardless of whether using RWBAT or personal equipment, should:

- Ensure they abide by RWBAT GDPR policy and procedures
- Treat RWBAT property with due regard and care;
- Be conscious of other individuals within their household who may have access to their devices and where possible restrict such access;
- Log out of school systems and not allow the device to remember passwords, or write passwords down / share passwords with others;
- Be conscious that other people within their household may be able to see information on their screen/overhear phone calls and take measures to ensure confidentiality;
- Should not store data on their personal device unless absolutely necessary;
- Should not take paper documents containing personal or otherwise confidential information home.
- Be cautious of phishing emails and other fraudulent activity, especially in light of the current situation.
- If staff need to make calls home via their own device they must ensure they withhold their caller ID either by the settings on their mobile device or by dialling 141 as a prefix before the number you are calling.
- For primary staff if a 1:1 video call is made with a primary aged pupil, an adult must be present with the child.

Staff are advised to disguise their home with different or anonymised backgrounds

6. Expenses and reimbursement

6.1 Internet services and utilities (e.g. water, gas and electricity) will not be paid for or reimbursed. Call costs will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and only when the costs to be incurred have been agreed in advance with line managers. Itemised billing is required.

6.2 Employees may be able to claim tax relief for some household bills if they have had to work from home, either because their workplace has closed, or they are following advice to self-isolate and are working from home. Staff can visit the HMRC tax relief webpage to find out if they are eligible and to complete the process.

7. Insurance

7.1 It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of home-based work with respect to household insurance.

8. Terms and Conditions and other RWBAT policies

8.1 An employee who is remote working is still governed by the same terms and conditions of their standard contract of employment.

8.2 This interim policy does not form part of any contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

8.3 The Code of Conduct and all other RWBAT policies, procedures and associated guidance remain in place and should be adhered to during any period of remote working.