

The Auriga Academy Trust

Homeworking Policy

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Please note that all Trust policies are reviewed regularly. Should you have any queries regards this policy, note an omission or wish to propose an amendment, please email sconnor@aurigaacademytrust.org.uk.

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all employees employed by the Auriga Academy Trust.

The Trust recognises that there may be times when the ability to work from home may be of benefit to an employee. The Trust and its constituent schools support homeworking where possible and in appropriate circumstances. In accordance with the definition, homeworking may be by occasion, to respond to specific circumstances or to complete particular tasks, or on a regular basis.

Occasional or permanent homeworking can, in certain circumstances, be a means of making reasonable adjustments for an employee with a disability. It may also be requested as a means of flexible working, under the Trust's **Flexible Working Policy**.

Any employee who is suspected to have abused the provisions set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and the Trust may amend it at any time.

2. Definition

Homeworking is an arrangement where an employee carries out the full scope of their job or agreed duties from their home rather than on the school premises, either occasionally or on a regular basis. This may include working from home due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. weather disruptions, pandemic etc.).

3. Principles

- Homeworking must not compromise educational quality, safeguarding, or service delivery
- It is not an automatic entitlement and must be agreed upon by management
- The Trust / school retains the right to review or withdraw homeworking arrangements at any time.

Homeworking does not entitle an employee to choose when and how they work unless they have been advised differently by management. It simply means doing their job from home as they would in their normal work setting as far as this is possible.

If an employee works from home, contractual obligations, duties, and responsibilities remain in place and they remain subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as they would in their normal place of work e.g. at school. While homeworking, employees must continue to observe the school's workplace policies and procedures.

Employees working from home must be contactable during agreed working hours (e.g. via phone, email, Teams etc.).

If the employee is unfit to work because of illness on a day they are due to work from home, they must follow the usual procedure set out in the school's sickness absence policy in respect of reporting sickness absence.

4. Scope and Purpose

This policy sets out how the Trust / school will deal with requests for homeworking, and conditions on which homeworking will be allowed.

Homeworking could either be a one-off or an occasional arrangement or could be a more regular way of working. This policy focuses on dealing with request by employees to work at home on a regular basis.

This policy applies to employees who have successfully completed their probationary period. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, or self-employed contractors.

Requests for working from home will be considered taking in to account the role that the employee carries out. For example, requests from staff working in pupil facing roles will be unable to be granted on the days and times that they are required to be working directly with pupils. This will also be the case for requests from staff in roles required to be on school site, such as those dealing with members of the public or parents or contractors. Whether or not requests are granted and the reasons for doing so, will therefore differ between teaching and support staff and from one employee to another depending on their role.

5. Eligibility

Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for homeworking. A request for homeworking is unlikely to be approved, on either an occasional or permanent basis if:

- an employee needs to be present in the School / Trust to perform their job (for example, if the job involves a high degree of personal interaction with pupils, colleagues, parents, the public or third parties that requires the employee to be in the School / Trust or involves equipment that is only available on site);
- any aspect of the employee's performance has been identified as unsatisfactory or requiring supervision, for example by the employee's line manager or through the appraisal or capability procedure.
- an employee has an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance.
- an employee needs supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work.

The employee must also need to be able to demonstrate that they:

- can work independently, motivate themselves and use their own initiative.
- can manage their workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines.
- can identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home.
- can meet the requirements in Part 7 and adapt to new working practices including maintaining contact with their line manager and colleagues at work.
- have a suitable area and environment in which to work from home.
- have work that can be undertaken at home.
- can make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants who rely on them for support or care when they are working from home.
- can continue to work the hours required by their contract of employment.

6. Applying for Homeworking

Homeworking can either be a one-off or occasional arrangement for example to complete a specific task, or it can be requested as a more long-term formal arrangement. However, all homeworking must be approved by the Headteacher (schools) or CEO (Trust) in conjunction with the Trust HR Manager.

After successful completion of their probationary period, an employee can make an application for homeworking by submitting a written application* to the Headteacher (Schools) or CEO (Trust). The application must state:

- why they consider their job to be suitable for homeworking and how they meet the criteria for homeworking as set out in paragraph 3.
- whether they wish to work from home on a permanent basis, for a fixed period or occasionally. In all cases they should state the date from which they wish the arrangements to start and, if they wish to work from home for a fixed period, the date on which they want the arrangements to finish. For 'occasional' working from home, a pattern / days must be proposed in advance to avoid repeated requests being made and to reduce administration. The employee should try to give as much notice as possible before the proposed start date so that the request can be given due consideration, with any impact on operations or staffing being assessed.
- whether they wish to work from home for all or part of their working week and, if only part, which days they propose to work from home.

- what specific work they intend to complete and how they would organise their work from home including how they would ensure the security of documents and information, where appropriate (see section 7).
- agreement that they could be available to come to work on days they are proposing to work from home if needed. This could be to attend meetings or training days and can be requested at short notice in the event of absence cover or unexpected levels of work.
- how they envisage maintaining contact with their line manager, how their work will be set, and how progress will be monitored.

* In some circumstances, e.g. a teacher wishing to take their PPA time at home, a written request need be completed only for the first time and, unless circumstances change, such as moving home, the employee may make verbal request to work from home.

It may assist an application for homeworking if the employee first discusses their proposal with their line manager informally. This may identify potential problems with an application, such as a need to be in the school / Trust on occasions the employee had not considered, which the application can then address.

In considering an application the Headteacher/CEO and / or HR Manager may invite the employee to a meeting to discuss their proposal.

If the application is accepted, Trust HR MUST be informed. Trust HR will confirm the agreed arrangements in writing and will confirm whether the arrangement is subject to a trial period. A record of the correspondence will be placed on the employee's personnel file.

Any terms on which it is agreed that an employee may work from home will include the following:

- The school / Trust reserves the right to terminate the homeworking arrangements, subject to reasonable notice.
- The employee will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if they worked on school or Trust premises.
- If any concerns are raised through the appraisal process or by their line manager in relation to their performance, or the employee is subject to any warning in relation to their conduct, the homeworking arrangements may be terminated immediately, and the employee will be required to return to work at the school or Trust premises.
- The employees line manager will remain responsible for supervising them, will regularly review their homeworking arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will also ensure the employee is kept up to date with circulars and information relevant to their work.
- The employee agrees to attend the school or Trust premises for meetings, training or other events which they are required to attend.
- Working at or from home may affect the employee's home and contents insurance policy. The employee must make any necessary arrangements with their insurers before commencing homeworking, ensuring that they have appropriate public liability cover. Depending on the circumstances, Trust HR may request a copy of the employee's current insurance policy (HR@aurigaacademytrust.org.uk).

*

7. Equipment

The Trust / school will provide any equipment that it considers the employee reasonably requires to work from home. This equipment remains the property of the Trust / school. This may include current computer equipment that is supplied to the employee by the school or Trust. The Trust / school will make all necessary arrangements for and bear the cost of installing and removing equipment from the employee's home. Where equipment is provided the employee must

- use it only for the purposes for which it was provided.
- take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and in accordance with the Trust's **IT Security and Acceptable Usage Policy**.
- make it available for collection by the Trust / school when requested to do so.
- not use any personal device or computer for work.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from home. The Trust / school is not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by the employee when working for the school or Trust. Insurance must be in place through home insurance. This does not include general wear and tear of Trust / school equipment where there is a programme of replacement in place.

The Trust / school is not responsible for the associated costs of the employee working from home including the costs of heating, lighting, electricity or telephone calls. Where the employee is using their own resources e.g. paper or a printer, an expense claim can be submitted to recoup personal outlays having received the prior approval from their line manager.

If the employee has a disability, the employee must inform Trust HR of any equipment they require to work from home comfortably.

All equipment and information must be kept secure. Private and confidential material MUST always be kept secure. The Headteacher/CEO must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the Trust's requirements in line with GDPR and Trust Policy.

Any computer or communications equipment (e.g., laptop, mobile phone etc) provided by the school or Trust must be used for work related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

8. Health and Safety

When working at home an employee has the same health and safety duties as other staff. The employee must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their actions and omissions. The employee must attend all courses required, comply with the Trust / school policies and procedures, and agree to use equipment safely.

The Trust / school retains the right to check home working areas for health and safety purposes. The need for such inspections will depend on the circumstances including the nature of the work undertaken.

The employee MUST NOT have face to face meetings in their home or share their home address or personal telephone number with staff, parents, pupils or other individuals associated with the Trust / school. When participating in online meetings, employees must use an appropriately professional background filter to hide their domestic location.

The employee MUST ensure that their working patterns and levels of work both over time and during shorter periods are not detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

The employee MUST use their knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to their line manager, Headteacher (Schools) or CEO (Trust).

When the employee is working at or from home they are covered by the Trust's / school's accident insurance policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately to Trust HR (HR@aurigaacademytrust.org.uk) and a record of this must be made by the school or Trust.

If the employee is ill during a period of homeworking, they MUST report their absence in the normal way using the School or Trust's sickness absence reporting procedure.

9. Data Protection and Confidentiality

In accordance with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation and the Trust's Data Protection Policy, when working at or from home an employee is responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of any school/Trust-related resources/equipment or information to which they have access. As general guidance, the employee

- MUST restrict the access of family and friends to work equipment, materials, documents and other data in order to avoid damage or loss and maintain confidentiality.
- MUST ensure that all confidential material that requires disposal is shredded or, in the case of electronic material, securely destroyed, as soon as any need for its retention has passed.
- MUST ensure the care of work-related information and School/Trust property when travelling to or from home.
- MUST maintain a private space for confidential work calls.
- MUST ensure that any display screen equipment is positioned so that only they can see it, or a privacy screen is used.
- MUST lock their computer terminal whenever it is left unattended.
- MUST ensure any wireless network used is secure.

If the employee discovers or suspects that there has been a data breach or an incident involving the security of information relating to the school /Trust, its pupils, or anyone working with the school / Trust, this must be reported immediately to their line manager and recorded on GDPRiS in line with Annexe.2 of the **Trusts Data Protection Policy (Annexe.2 Data Protection - Personal Data Breach Procedure)**.