

## Home Working Policy (Core Team)

Prepared by:	Director of People in consultation with CEO, Core Team Directors and all Core Team employees
Applies to:	Core Team colleagues, WHMAT
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Links to	WHMAT's Flexible Working Policy WHMAT's Probationary Period Policy WHMAT's Health & Safety Policy
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## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Scope and purpose of policy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Implementation of policy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.1 Issues to consider when requesting/approving homeworking</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.2 Health and Safety</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.3 Requesting to work from home</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Data security and confidentiality</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Review of policy</b>	<b>6</b>

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Homeworking is a flexible working option available to Washwood Heath Multi Academy's Trust's (WHMAT's) Core Team. Home working for wider MAT colleagues during Covid-19 will be dealt with via separate WHMAT guidance.
- 1.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **2. Scope and purpose of policy**

- 2.1 This policy covers all employees within WHMAT's Core Team, including part-time and fixed-term employees. However, all new employees must have successfully passed their probationary period before they can request to work from home, see policy at [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy) policies tab.
- 2.2 This policy only covers occasional/ad hoc home working without a formal variation to contract. Colleagues who wish to request a more formalised "working from home" arrangement, e.g. a day per week, either on a temporary or permanent basis, should follow WHMAT's Flexible Working Policy, see [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy) policies tab.
- 2.3 WHMAT acknowledges that the world of work continues to change and that for many current or prospective employees, the ability to work flexibly has a positive impact on engagement, motivation and discretionary effort. The purpose of this policy is therefore to create a more agile workforce and to help embed a culture of flexible working in order to improve the work-life balance of employees. WHMAT also accepts that homeworking arrangements may also be driven by WHMAT's operational needs.
- 2.4 Any references to the CEO in this policy also include the Deputy CEO.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

- 3.1 The CEO has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, the Deputy CEO and functional directors are responsible for the day-to-day management of requests from colleagues whom they line manage. With that in mind, any questions concerning the operation of this policy should be directed to relevant line managers. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy and any recommendations for change lie with the Director of People, in consultation with the CEO, Deputy CEO and other Core Team Directors as appropriate.

## **4. Implementation of policy**

### **4.1 Issues to consider when requesting/approving homeworking**

- 4.1.1 In order to assess which aspects of a post are appropriate for carrying out work at home, the following general points must be taken into account by line managers who are considering requests from employees (see further for process at 4.3 below).

- Clear objectives and/or measurable outputs should be agreed by employee and line manager;
- The level and quality of performance should not be compromised by homeworking;
- Homeworking should have no adverse impact on costs;
- The workload of other colleagues must not increase as a result of an employee working from home;
- That the employee can cover their role from home and has the appropriate technology to do so (access to cloud/emails/shared servers/Microsoft teams) before a request is approved so that the service to WHMAT stakeholders is not compromised;
- Effective communication between the employee and their line manager should be maintained whilst the employee is working from home.

## 4.2 Health and Safety

- 4.2.1 When working from home, **employees must take personal responsibility for their own health and safety in line with WHMAT's guidance on health and safety (see further at [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy))**. Employees are reminded that they have the same health and safety duties as other employees even when working from home. This means not only ensuring that they take reasonable care of their own health and safety but that they also take care of anyone else who could be affected by their actions and omissions from home.
- 4.2.2 Employees working from home must ensure that their working patterns and levels of work do not cause detriments to their own health and wellbeing. They are **expected to take a lunch break and regular rest breaks from the computer in line with the working time regulations and health and safety guidance**.
- 4.2.3 WHMAT retains the right to check home working areas for health and safety purposes. Any need for such an inspection to take place will be considered in regard to the circumstances, including the nature of the work undertake and will be undertaken by/via WHMAT's Estates team.
- 4.2.4 Before requesting to work from home, employees should ensure that their working environment is fit for purpose and safe; namely:
- By ensuring that they have access to relevant email, cloud-based drives and other relevant IT systems, including suitable and sufficient broadband/Wi-Fi capability and access to a (mobile) phone (colleagues should liaise with WHMAT's Director of ICT on this);
  - That they have a suitable desk or table from which to carry out the work;
  - That they are able to keep confidential information (written or during conversations) secure and confidential); and
  - Fulfils health and safety requirements.
- 4.2.5 Homeworking should not be considered as an alternative to care for a dependant, i.e. there should be no care responsibilities for dependants whilst working from home

(unless previously agreed with the appropriate line manager on the basis of exceptional circumstances). Colleagues who need to request time off work to care for dependants may do so in line with WHMAT's Life Leave Policy, see [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy), policies tab.

- 4.2.6 Where possible, WHMAT will distribute any equipment that it considers an individual may reasonably require in order to work from home. This property shall remain in the ownership of WHMAT. The individual must, if equipment is provided:
- a) endeavour to only use the property for work purposes;
  - b) endeavour to take reasonable care in the use of that property and do so only in compliance with any operating instructions and WHMAT's policies and procedures;
- 4.2.7 WHMAT is not responsible for any associated costs of the individual working from home which includes telephone calls, printing, broadband/WIFI, electricity, lighting and heating.

#### **Home working and sickness**

- 4.2.8 Whilst we want employees to provide excellent service levels, it is essential that colleagues do not come into work and spread germs to others if they are unwell. Instead, they should stay at home until they are fit enough to return. It is common knowledge that coming into work when unwell can lead to presenteeism, lack of productivity and to colleagues taking longer to recover in the long term.
- 4.2.9 Colleagues who come into work showing signs of illness, may be advised by their line manager to go home as part of their duty of care towards you. If this is the case, please listen to them and rest assured that WHMAT does not expect or want you to be working from home in these circumstances. WHMAT's position is that you are either well and working from home, in the office or off sick. Depending on when you leave work, this will be counted as a days' absence under WHMAT's Sickness Policy, see further at [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy) policies tab.

#### **4.3 Requesting to work from home**

- 4.3.1 Before working from home, prior agreement must be obtained by the employee from the appropriate line manager. Any request must be made via email so that there is a paper trail between the line manager and the employee. The email should clarify a) when, b) why and c) a rough idea of work that they will be undertaking. Ideally, the colleague should give as much advance notice as possible so that there is no detrimental impact on the wider team or on service delivery.
- 4.3.2 To ensure effective communication is maintained, the employee should provide their contact details (e.g. home and/or mobile telephone number) in advance to their line manager. Requests made to the CEO should be copied into her PA. Once approved,

all relevant Core Team employees must keep their online diaries updated and marked “working from home”.

- 4.3.4 If an employee works for several consecutive days from home, they should not normally exceed their contracted daily working hours in order to maintain positive wellbeing.

## **5.0 Data Security & Confidentiality**

- 5.1 Information and equipment provided must be kept in a secure location. All required steps should be taken by an individual to guarantee that private and confidential material is secure.
- 5.2 An individual is only permitted to use equipment authorised and provided by WHMAT and must comply with any instructions concerning software security by implementing any required updates to equipment as soon as possible upon receiving instructions to do so.
- 5.3 Individuals confirm that WHMAT’s policies relating to computer use, electronic communications and data security have been read and understood. Individuals must also agree to regularly keep themselves informed updated versions of these policies by going to [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy) policies tab.
- 5.4 If an individual discovers or suspects that they have committed a data breach whilst working from home, which relates to the security of information relating to WHMAT, its clients, customers or anyone working with WHMAT, they should report this promptly to WHMAT’s external DPO at [www.whmat.academy](http://www.whmat.academy), copying in the Core Team “Local Point of Contact”, Jamila Dogaru at [jdogaru@whmat.academy](mailto:jdogaru@whmat.academy). The local Point of Contact will maintain contact with the external DPO, the employee and/or their line manager as appropriate.

## **6. Review of policy**

- 6.1 This policy shall be reviewed every 12 months by the People Matters team in consultation with relevant colleagues. The People Matters team will monitor the policy against employment law and good practice and also take feedback from relevant colleagues to ensure that it is working effectively.