



THE STAR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

AGILE WORKING POLICY

Approved by the Trust Board	30 th September 2021 15 th October 2024
Review Date	September 2024 September 2027

1. Introduction

The Agile Working Policy sets out an overall framework, enabling the Trust's workforce to carry out duties in an efficient and effective way. The framework, provides a medium for consistency, fair practice and to reduce any risk to the employee or the integrity of Trust data or reputation.

Agile working is the term used by the Trust to describe how employees can work flexibly from different locations, at different times and using mobile devices. This could be from any Trust building, within the community, or by varying degrees of home working and hot-desking. Agile working encompasses all forms of work outside the usual base including non-traditional environments such as virtual work.

Flexible working is the term used to describe the different ways in which staff can change their working pattern and is dealt with in a separate policy.

This policy applies to all employees as well as others working under the auspices of the Trust such as consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns/apprentices (who have successfully completed any applicable probationary period).

Agile working provides staff with the opportunity to choose how and where they undertake their roles. The extent to which job functions can be completed through agile working will vary, including through the individual circumstance of the employee. However, any staff who engage in planned off-site working should also engage with the key principles outlined within this policy such as to ensure secure working practise for themselves and on behalf of the Trust.

This policy aims to ensure that those working under an agile working arrangement are treated equally to workers based in the workplace and that agile working is carried out safely and in accordance with our policies and current legislation. It sets out the conditions under which agile working will be allowed and the terms that apply to all agile workers. If you are allowed to work under an agile working arrangement, you must comply with this policy.

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

2. Who is responsible for this policy?

The Board of Trustees (the Board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Board has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the CEO. Questions about the content of this policy or suggestions for change should be reported to the CEO.

Any questions you may have about the day-to-day application of this policy should be referred to your line manager in the first instance.

3. Key Policy Principles

3.1. Availability for work

Although agile workers will not always work standard office hours (unless the role dictates this), it is essential to plan and agree a work programme for others (e.g. the manager, the rest of the team and colleagues) so that they are aware of the individual's working pattern, where they are located and know when and how to contact them. The hours of work must be agreed in advance allowing employees who are using their homes as part of their agile working arrangements, to have a right to privacy out of hours and be able to separate their working and home lives.

Agile working arrangements will differ depending on the nature of your role, duties and responsibilities and so are discretionary and subject to agreement with your line manager.

Any agile working arrangement is subject to you spending an appropriate agreed minimum proportion of your work time working from your workplace. Your remaining working time may be worked from your designated workplace or your remote working location, as agreed with your line manager.

The days and times worked from your workplace and your agreed remote working location are subject to agreement with your line manager and may vary to accommodate the needs of our business.

All agile working arrangements will be subject to a trial period of 1 term. We may, at our discretion, extend this period for up to a further term. During the trial period the agile working arrangements will be monitored. At the end of the trial period you will be informed in writing if the agile working arrangements are considered appropriate to be continued.

It is recognised that any agreed agile working arrangement is subject to the requirement for you to attend the workplace on our reasonable request to accommodate the needs of our business, such as to attend training or meetings.

If you have a flexible working arrangement that has been approved under a flexible working request, then it may not be possible for you to also work under an agile working arrangement.

Agile working arrangements agreed in accordance with this policy are discretionary and may be terminated in accordance with paragraph 3.10. If you want to permanently vary your contractual working arrangements so that you work from a remote working location for all or part of your working week, you will need to make a flexible working request [in accordance with our flexible working policy].

The ability to work occasionally from home allows employees to manage their domestic responsibilities e.g. delivery of goods, assisting with childcare arrangements (for example allowing parents to complete the school run and make up their time later in the day), providing this does not have a negative impact on the individual's ability to carry out their work, or on service delivery. All agile working arrangements are subject to ongoing review and may be modified for reasons including a change in business needs or performance concerns.

Employees must note that the ability to work from home is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place, should they choose to work from home.

3.2. Conditions necessary for agile working

Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for agile working. An agile working arrangement is unlikely to be agreed if:

- a) you need to be present in the workplace to perform your job, for example, because it involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues, students or third parties or involves equipment that is only available in the workplace;
- b) your most recent appraisal identifies any aspect of your performance as unsatisfactory;
- c) your line manager has advised you that your current standard of work or work production is unsatisfactory;
- d) you have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance; or
- e) you need training and/or supervision to deliver an acceptable quality or quantity of work.

If you are working under an agile working arrangement you agree to:

- a) have a suitable working environment at your remote working location that enables you to carry out your role effectively;
- b) continue to work the hours required by your contract of employment;
- c) work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
- d) manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
- e) identify and resolve any new pressures created by working from a remote working location;
- f) adapt to new working practices, including maintaining contact with your line manager and colleagues at work;
- g) exercise flexibility to make changes on our reasonable request to the agile working arrangement, including to the days, times and location from which you work (as between your workplace and your agreed remote working location), to meet the needs of our business;
- h) determine any resulting tax implications for yourself;
- i) make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants when you are working from your remote working location; and
- j) finance any travel and/or related expenses incurred when travelling to and from your remote working location and your workplace.

3.3. Location

Your primary remote working location should be agreed with your line manager in advance and is subject to their approval.

Your primary remote working location must be within commuting distance of and within the same country as your workplace unless approval has been provided by the CEO.

If you wish to work from a different remote working location at any time during your agile working arrangement, this will need to be agreed with your line manager in advance and is subject to their approval.

If you wish to work from a remote working location abroad at any time during your agile working arrangement, this will require separate approval from the CEO and there is no guarantee that this will be possible. Working remotely from a location abroad is not subject to this policy due to different compliance and legislative requirements.

If we do agree to you working from a different remote working location at any time during your agile working arrangement, this will be subject to our right to require you to return to your primary remote working location on written notice.

3.4. Security of information

All staff who are considering agile working must also sign the current Trust Acceptable Use Agreement. Failure to adhere to Trust policies may lead to withdrawal of the agile working facility and/or disciplinary action being taken.

Where staff are utilising home work spaces they should ensure that no sensitive information of any kind is left unsecure and that all devices left unattended are password protected. The risks associated with a particular employee working occasionally from home will depend on the nature of the work, the type of records used and the access required and the employee's home circumstances. The employee will have to take responsibility for the confidentiality of any records held remotely (either in paper or electronic form) and for their transportation. Any paper documents, must be disposed of according to Trust policies and staff should not be printing documents and taking them home but instead using the mobile devices and remote access they have been provided with. All employees must take adequate precautions to protect the Trusts responsibilities with regard to the Data Protection Act at all times.

To comply with data protection obligations, you will only store or process Trust data or personal data on equipment which has been provided by or authorised by us.

To comply with data protection legislation, we retain the right to conduct a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) to assess the risks involved with data processing in your remote working location. Where this is necessary, we will contact you to arrange the DPIA.

You confirm that you have read and understood our data protection policy and Acceptable Use Policy and that you will regularly keep yourself informed of the most current version of these policies. You will also attend any training on data protection and confidentiality whether online or in person when requested to do so.

If you discover or suspect that there has been a data breach or an incident involving the security of information relating to us, the governors, students, parents or anyone working with or for us, you must report it immediately to your line manager.

Where visiting staff are offered space to work at another Trust site, the 'clear desk' principles should be ensured before that space is offered, removing all appropriate materials beforehand.

Should any member of Trust staff need to work whilst in transit on public transport, extreme caution should be taken as to: 1. Connection to network should not be made via Trust devices; 2. Sensitive documents should not be processed.

When working from your remote working location you undertake to:

- a) change your password each month and comply with our instructions relating to password security;
- b) comply with our instructions relating to software security and to implement all updates to equipment as soon as you are requested to do so;
- c) send work-related emails and messages through our designated communication facilities;
- d) make all work-related calls through our designated routes;
- e) maintain a private space for confidential work calls;

- f) ensure that any display screen equipment is positioned so that only you can see it or a privacy screen is used;
- g) lock your computer terminal whenever it is left unattended;
- h) ensure no one else in your remote working location has access to confidential information stored on your computer or other devices;
- i) ensure any wireless network used is secure;
- j) change your wireless network passwords and ensure that your wireless network router has software security updates applied;
- k) keep all papers in filing cabinets that are locked when not in use, and ensure that no one else in your remote working location has access to such papers; and
- l) shred or otherwise dispose securely of confidential information when it is no longer required and at all times comply with our instructions on document retention.

3.5. Supervision arrangements

Managers and staff should explore opportunities for both formal and informal supervision and agree any changes to the current format prior to commencing agile working. Supervision should be a forum for discussing performance against pre-agreed performance management outcomes and discuss any concerns related to Agile Working practices as well as an opportunity to discuss additional support and training opportunities.

Your line manager will regularly review your agile working arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will ensure that you are kept up to date with any changes to the workplace or information relevant to your work.

You will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if you worked permanently in the workplace.

If you receive an unsatisfactory grade in an appraisal or a review or are subject to a verbal or written warning for any reason, your agile working arrangements may be terminated immediately and you will be expected to return to work in the workplace.

The ongoing wellbeing of staff should be monitored through regular review of agile working arrangements by managers.

3.6. Training and workplace attendance

You will be provided with the same opportunities for training, development and promotion as provided to staff based permanently in the workplace. If your agile working arrangement will impact on your ability to apply for certain roles, your line manager will discuss this with you to ensure that you are not denied any opportunity unfairly.

You agree to attend the workplace or other reasonable location for meetings, training courses or other events which we expect you to attend.

You understand that when you do attend the workplace, you may have to hot desk or share a desk with someone else.

3.7. DSE assessment and health and safety

When working from your remote working location you have the same health and safety duties as other staff. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions and omissions. You must attend our usual health and safety courses, read the health and safety policy and undertake to use equipment safely.

To identify any potential health and safety hazards at your remote working location and take appropriate steps to minimise risk, where you are considering undertaking substantial, ongoing work from a particular set base, such as your home environment, then you should discuss with your line manager whether your ICT usage necessitates the need to do a Display Screen Equipment Assessment (self-assessment) before or shortly after you begin agile working. We will contact you to arrange completion of the risk assessment. The need for such inspections will depend on the circumstances, including the nature of the work undertaken.

You must not have meetings in your remote working location with parents or students and must not give parents or students the address or telephone number of your remote working location.

You must ensure that your working patterns and levels of work when working from your remote working location are not detrimental to your health and wellbeing. If you have concerns about your health or wellbeing arising as a result of your workload or working pattern, you should inform your line manager without delay so that we can discuss measures to deal with this.

You must use your knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to your line manager OR the Health and Safety Officer.

3.8. Equipment and suitable workplace

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from your remote working location. We are not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by you when working for us.

To arrange installation or service of any equipment that we provide, you should contact the appropriate IT department which can guide you through the process remotely. If this is not possible, we may need to arrange a visit to your remote working location and will contact you to arrange this where necessary.

When travelling between your remote working location and your workplace you agree to keep equipment provided by us secure at all times.

On termination of your agile working arrangement or on termination of your employment you will return all equipment provided by us. Where necessary, we may need to arrange a visit to your remote working location to reclaim equipment and will contact you to make the appropriate arrangements.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a suitable workspace at your remote working location with adequate lighting for working.

If you have a disability you should inform us if you require any special equipment to work from your remote working location comfortably. [We will bear the reasonable cost (or reimburse you for the reasonable cost) of providing any

special equipment or making any necessary adjustments to your remote working location to enable you to work from there].

3.9. Insurance, Council Tax and expenses

If the individual and manager both agree to the inclusion of occasional home working within the employee's agile working arrangement (this could be on an ad hoc basis or a more formal arrangement e.g. two days per week) then the individual must contact their Insurance Company to confirm there are no restrictions on their domestic policy. Failure to inform domestic insurers may result in home insurance cover rendered invalid. The Trust will not be responsible for any additional costs as a result.

We shall be responsible for taking out and maintaining a valid policy of insurance covering any equipment we provide against fire, theft, loss and damage throughout your employment. You shall not do, cause or permit any act or omission which will invalidate the insurance policy.

We are not liable for any loss, injury or damage that may be caused from any equipment that is not provided by us but required by you to work from your remote working location.

If your remote working location is your home address, you should check the terms of your mortgage, lease or rental agreement before commencing working from home to ensure this does not breach any of the terms. It is your responsibility to inform your bank, mortgage provider or landlord that you are working from your home address and seek any necessary approval before commencing agile working.

Advice from gov.uk website states that individuals do not need to pay Business rates for home-based working if they use a small part of their home i.e., an office or a bedroom. If however it has been agreed that you can work from home on a regular basis for the majority of your time advice would need to be sort from the local authority.

Through working at home a member of staff may incur increased cost such as energy bills, internet costs, mobile or telephone line rental or calls etc. The staff member is responsible for exploring any additional costs at the outset as part of the agile working agreement, as the Trust will not cover additional costs, except in exceptional circumstances.

The Trust's existing process for mileage claims still applies and must be followed when processing travel expenses. One key benefit of agile working is the expected reduction in the amount of travel by staff and therefore a reduction of mileage claimed. All staff will have a designated base which must be used for mileage claims calculations.

When you are working from your remote working location you are covered by our employer's liability insurance policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately to your line manager in accordance with our health and safety policy.

3.10. Termination of agile working arrangements

We reserve the right to terminate the agile working arrangement, for example, due to a change in business needs, performance concerns or if your role changes such that agile working is no longer suitable, subject to one month's written notice.

If you want to terminate your agile working arrangement, you must give your line manager one month's notice to allow us to arrange a desk space for you in the workplace and collect any equipment that is no longer required.