

Policy Title:	Working From Home Policy
Version	1.1
Member of Staff Responsible:	Chief Executive Officer
Date adopted by Trust Board:	6 th July 2026
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Reviewed:	8 th July 2024
Review:	Bi-annually

Change Record		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	06/07/2026	Changes to roles and responsibilities, safeguarding sections
1.2		
1.3		
1.4		

Primitas Learning Partnership promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care; all policies are developed and formulated with this in mind

Introduction

Further to the Covid 19 Pandemic Primitas Learning Partnership developed the following policy in order to provide structure and guidance on how it's Academies may respond to instances of Academy closure due to issues of public health.

In addition, there may be other instances where the principles of this policy will apply, for example where an employee has been granted the opportunity to work from home as part of an agreed flexible working request.

This policy aims to:

- set out expectations for employees working from home:
- outline how the Trust will support employees to work from home when they need to.

This policy applies to all employees, with the exception of volunteers.

Roles and responsibilities

Primitas Learning Partnership's Trust Board will approve this policy and delegate responsibility for its implementation to the Local Governing Board in each Academy.

The Academy's Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Working from Home Policy is applied consistently across the Academy. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that this Working from Home Policy is applied consistently across the Central Team.

Employees will ensure they follow the expectations in this policy.

Circumstances where employees can work from home

Primitas Learning Partnership supports flexible working for employees and, where appropriate, may ask or will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home, provided that such an arrangement is suitable for both parties and is likely to facilitate effective and efficient working.

In some circumstances the Trust may request that an employee works from home, for example, if an Academy is ordered to close for reasons of public health.

A specific request for working from home (from either the employer or the employee) will be dependent on an objective assessment of feasibility and whether the employee's work can be done safely from home. As every role is different and every employee is different, the Trust will work with the employee to identify and agree the work activities that can be undertaken at home and when requested by an employee whether the request can be facilitated.

Working from home can be:

- following clinical/and or public health advice and this tends to be short term and a more informal arrangement;
- following a flexible working request which tends to be longer term and a formal arrangement.

Working from home will be considered where it has been clearly identified that one or more of the following apply:

- the arrangement would enhance or maintain the employee's personal productivity;
- the employee's role is one that can be done remotely in an effective way;
- there is a demonstrable benefit to the Academy/Trust;
- the employee's team is not disadvantaged if the employee is not physically present;
- there are no significant security or data privacy concerns;

- the employee's internet speed is suitable to complete their work;
- the employee's home working space is safe, and complies with guidelines;
- there is a health and safety issue associated with the employee working in the Academy/Trust.

Working hours

When working from home, employees are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours, unless by prior agreement with their line manager.

Outside of these hours, staff are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents or students unless there is an emergency, they are working flexible hours with prior approval or they have prior written agreement from the Academy.

Duties

Employees working from home will carry out their normal duties in line with their job description/contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow Academy practice or otherwise be agreed with the individual's line manager.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties from home, their line manager will discuss and agree alternative arrangements with the individual concerned.

Where employees are unsure about what work they should be carrying out while working from home, they will speak to their line manager.

Wellbeing Support

Employees who are working from home will be able to access the usual employee wellbeing initiatives as detailed in the localised employee handbooks. They should liaise directly with their line manager who will advise if there are any specific adaptations to accessing support e.g. telephone or virtual meetings rather than face to face.

Employees should communicate with their line manager if their wellbeing is being affected while working from home and an individual risk assessment will be completed to identify specific support requirements.

Safeguarding

Where employees are interacting online with pupils while working from home, they will continue to follow our existing policies and procedures e.g. staff code of conduct, IT acceptable use policy, data protection policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Academy specific remote learning policies.

Equipment

Employees will be able to request technical equipment and where possible this will be facilitated. All requests will be subject to approval based on a hierarchy of need and availability of equipment at the time. Should the Academy be unable to provide IT equipment to employees and they are unable to complete their work remotely without IT equipment, they should speak to their line manager to discuss alternative arrangements.

Workstation Safety

Where able, employees set up an appropriate space for working at home so they do not cause physical injury to themselves. Where possible, it is recommended that employees aim to:

- sit upright at a table/desk, on a chair;
- raise their laptop/tablet (e.g. using books or a stand);
- use a separate keyboard and mouse;
- have appropriate lighting near to the workstation.

Further guidance is available at Appendix 1

Data Protection

The Academy's Data Protection policy applies for all instances of working from home. Employees must be mindful to ensure that they take all reasonable steps to protect the Academy's data when working from home. This includes but is not limited to:

- ensuring that personal data is kept safe and secure and locked away;
- confidential waste is disposed of using the Academy's confidential waste disposal procedures and is not thrown away as part of domestic waste;
- take care not to be overheard when discussing Academy business on telephone calls or during virtual meetings. Take care to ensure Smart voice activated devices e.g. Alexa, Google home are not active or in operation during work related discussions.

All employees will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol);
- complying with the Academy's procedures for ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device;
- making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time;
- not sharing the device among family or friends;
- complying with the Academy procedures for installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software;
- complying with Academy procedures for keeping operating systems up to date.

Homeworking Principles

- Homeworking requires the agreement of both employee and line manager and should be under regular review.
- An agreement to short-term homeworking does not form part of the contract of employment and the agreement may cease at any time.
- Short-term homeworking is in response to a specific need and is not intended to be for an extended period of time.
- If the agreement to work from home is withdrawn and the employee does not attend for work, the Trust's policies which deal with sickness absence or other time off will apply.
- Should an employee wish for the homeworking to apply on a long term or permanent basis they will need to put their request in writing to the Headteacher for due consideration, under a request for flexible working (as per the Flexible Working Policy.) In such circumstances this may lead to a change to the terms and conditions of employment.
- A health and safety risk assessment should be carried out to ensure that homeworking can be undertaken safely. This risk assessment will include consideration for instances of lone working. Further guidance can be found in the Lone Working Policy.
- A Data Protection Risk Assessment should be carried to ensure that information is processed securely.

Other Procedural Considerations

- The reason for homeworking eg due to self-isolation, caring for others, or Academy closure.
- Identification of the work activities that can be undertaken appropriately from home.
- Working time and arrangements for contact with line manager for supervision and guidance.
- Contact with other colleagues including those who may also be working from home.
- Workspace, seating, use of display screen equipment.
- Confidentiality and processing of sensitive personal data.
- Whether the employee can attend meetings at locations other than the Academy if homeworking is due to Academy closure.
- Arrangements to update the employee on work related matters.
- Sickness absence reporting procedures will continue to apply as well as performance management.

Appendix 1 Workstation Safety - Working at Home Hints and tips

The guidance is aimed at helping staff to avoid or minimise the risk of experiencing possible health effects from using DSE such as:

- neck ache and shoulder pain;
- pain in the hands, wrist and elbows;
- back pain;
- eye strain.

When working at home you probably won't have access to the same type of workstation setup and equipment as you do at work. Nevertheless, there are simple actions you can take to 'optimise' your work area layout and maintain your physical wellbeing.

Workspace/Desk

Try to work on a surface with enough space to allow you to have your equipment close to you so you can avoid constant twisting and over stretching. Get rid of any clutter and unnecessary items to give you space.

To avoid back and shoulder pain, make sure you don't use a work surface that you can't sit up close to. There should be enough room under the surface for your legs.

Chair

You should aim to use a chair that provides a seating position which allows you to have your elbows at about 90 degrees and your forearms in front of you. Ideally you should be able to rest your forearms/wrists on the work surface. To achieve this, the height of the work surface in relation to the height of the chair is important; the higher the work surface is, the higher the chair needs to be.

Whilst seated, you should be able to place both feet flat on the floor. If you can't, find something suitable to use as a footrest such as an old large book or plastic box.

Adjusting your seating position to achieve a good posture is important and can be done in a couple of ways. Firstly, use cushions or pillows so you are sitting at the correct height for the work surface. This will help promote good upper body posture and reduce the risk of upper back, neck and shoulder pain. Secondly by using cushions and or a rolled-up towel you can improve the support for your lower back.

Avoid perching on the front of your chair as this will not provide any support for your upper body.

Screen Position

Ideally your screen should be positioned about arm's length away and centrally in front of you. Try to set its position so the top of the screen is at or just below your eye level when sat at the workstation. If you're using a laptop, find something suitable to use as a platform to put the laptop on such as boxes or thick books. Avoid using anything which is soft such as a cushion because this may cause the laptop to become over heated through lack of ventilation.

When using information from a hard copy document, try to place the document side by side with the screen so that only minimal eye movement is necessary to look between the source and the screen. This will avoid or significantly reduce any aches caused by repetitive neck movements and leaning forward/looking down. A makeshift clipboard will help to hold your copy document in place.

Remember to adjust the screen brightness and contrast to suit your conditions and minimise eye strain.

Inputting

When using a laptop for long periods, you should use a separate keyboard and mouse. You may already have these at home that you can use or maybe able to borrow from a friend/relative. A basic keyboard and mouse is cheap to purchase and widely available online.

If your work surface is shiny and you don't have a mouse mat, create your own mat by using an A4 pad or cardboard folder.

Tip: If you sit centrally on an imaginary line through the centre of your screen, keyboard, chair and footrest (where applicable), you will always be sitting centrally at the workstation”.

Movement and Flexibility

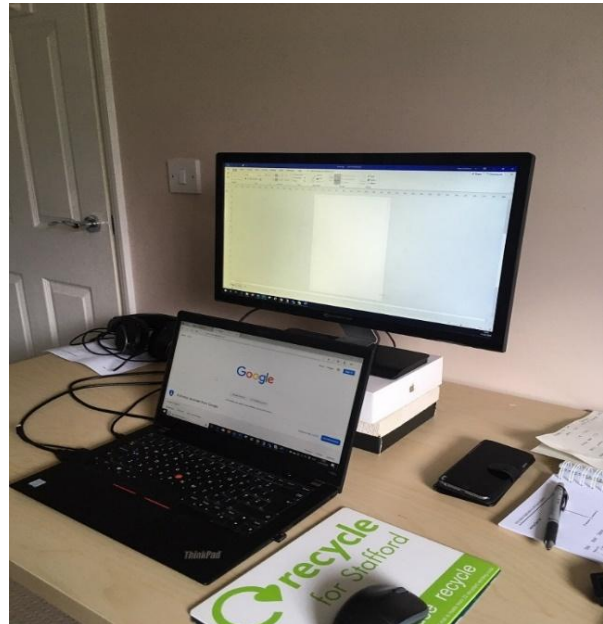
Maintaining a static posture for long periods causes fatigue and can result in increased aches and pains. Regular movement is important so think about how you can vary your posture and include physical movement into your day. Although access to your laptop is important, what other tasks do you do that can be done away from the computer? Maybe writing notes, thinking time, taking phone calls, reading etc. can all be done away from the computer. Use changes in activity as opportunities for natural breaks away from your workstation.

Adjust your posture as often as you can. As a minimum, ensure you get up off your chair at least every hour to give you a break away from your workstation. You could set a reminder on your outlook calendar or phone to move regularly. Desk exercises will help to maintain your flexibility, reduce any stiffness and give you a rest from using the computer.

Additional Information

If you have any concerns about your workstation, these should be discussed with your line manager.

Examples of a Home Workstation Set-Up



Follow the links below to short video clips on setting up a work station at home

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLwIP8cBaWA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af7q5j14muc>

EXAMPLE Risk Assessment Record Form

Academy Assessor(s).....

Description of Task – Working From home (Health & Safety and Data Protection Risk Assessment)

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L?	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L?
Working From Home General Health and Safety	Staff working at home – general well being	Staff aware of Working from Home policy. Staff to make Line Manager aware of any pre-existing ill health condition or other condition that may be relevant when Working from Home. A referral to OHU for guidance and support may be necessary. Line manager is aware of hours of work and tasks to be undertaken whilst working from home. Staff member to work with line manager to develop the risk assessment. If the member of staff is required to undertake a task that is deemed as lone working e.g. home visit whilst they are working from home they must ensure that a Lone working risk assessment is completed and localized procedures will apply.				

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L?	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L?
Working from Home – Work station	Staff working at home Injury from accident/ ill health	Staff to ensure that they take regular breaks away from their work station during the working day. The line manager is to discuss the work station set up with the staff member to understand the potential risks to staff member and a full review of any equipment deemed necessary. A VDU risk assessment may be necessary for those individuals who habitually use DSE equipment.				
Poor Housekeeping	Staff working alone Minor or major injury, slips trips, falls	A dedicated work area to be allocated for instances of home working Lockable storage to be available for paperwork undertaken Adhere to tidy workplace practices and good hygiene principles				
Data protection considerations	Data subjects, personal & sensitive data may be at risk	Line manager to approve where the employee can work when working flexibly				

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L?	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L?
		Online meetings – not in the present of other household users Telephone calls – not in the present of other household users Screen placement – screen to be placed so it is not in sight of other household No sharing of equipment – no unauthorised use of equipment Confidential Waste – to be disposed on in line with the Academy procedures Paperwork – minimal paperwork to be taken off site, use of electronic files and systems Only Encrypted portable devices to be used and computer to be set up with encryption, fire walls, anti virus software, back ups and two factor authentication. Acceptable Use Policy to be followed				

4. Tick (✓) if any of the identified hazards relate to any of the following specific themes:

Hazardous Substance	Manual Handling	Display Screen Equip	Fire	Work Equip / Machinery	Stress	Individual Person such as Young Person New/ Expectant Mother or Service User

If any are ticked a specific risk assessment form must be completed separately. For example a COSHH form must be completed if a hazardous substance is used.

5. Risk Rating

The risk rating is used to prioritise the action required. Deal with those hazards that are high risk first.

Risk Rating	Description	Action Priority
High	Where harm is certain or near certain to occur and/or major injury or ill-health could result	Urgent action
Medium	Where harm is possible to occur and/or serious injury could result e.g. off work for over 3 days	Medium priority
Low	Where harm is unlikely or seldom to occur and/or minor injury could result e.g. cuts, bruises, strain	No action or low priority action

6. Assessment

Signature of Assessor(s):

Signature of Line Manager:

Print Name:

Print Name:

Date Assessed:

Review Date:

7. Communication and Review

This risk assessment should be adapted by the Line Manager for all instances of Lone working in conjunction with all employees and relevant persons who may come into contact with the hazards being assessed. The assessment must be reviewed annually or following a significant change, accident or violent incident.