



Nelson Infant and Wensum Junior Schools

Evolution Academy Trust
Headteacher: Ms. V McConnell

Staff Virtual Attendance and Accountability Policy

Policy agreed/reviewed by:	Date:
Head teacher signature: 	September 2020
Chair of Governor signature: 	September 2020

	Date of action:
Policy produced by: Victoria McConnell	July 2020
Policy agreed/last reviewed by: HT and LGB	September 2020
To be reviewed by: HT and LGB	September 2021

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Working remotely
4. Accountability
5. Raising complaints and concerns
6. Illness and return to work
7. Absences and sick pay
8. Absence hearings
9. Taking annual leave to look after dependents
10. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

While there are many benefits to working from home (WFH), the ease and frequency of communication that is found when working in school is difficult to achieve. From a professional standpoint, it is also difficult for the school to ensure all work is being completed and to the high standard we expect from our employees.

This policy guides staff on WFH, and outlines what the school expects with regards to staff members' productivity and attendance. The purpose of this document is to ensure that all staff members are held to account for their work when they are WFH, and to oversee the correct authorisation of absences. This policy has due regard to, and should be used in accordance with, the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy.

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
 - The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
 - The Data Protection Act 2018
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- 1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Records Management Policy
 - Working from Home and Overtime Policy
 - Lone Working Policy
 - Staff Attendance Management Policy
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
 - Complaints Procedures Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The headteacher is responsible for:
 - Holding line managers to account for their performance and attendance while they work from home.
 - Working with the IT technician to ensure all staff members can access the necessary equipment to work from home.
 - Organising and holding regular meetings with line managers to keep track of their team's and their personal progress and workload.
 - Holding all staff members to account for their output while they work from home.
 - Acknowledging and signing off any absences.
 - Acting as a point of call for all staff members seeking advice and help with tasks they are undertaking.
 - Working to set suitable targets for line managers.
 - Working with line managers to set reasonable targets for staff members.
 - Reviewing attendance data submitted by line managers.
 - Reviewing the attendance and absence rates of all line managers.
- 2.2. Line managers are responsible for:
 - Holding the staff members in their team to account for their performance and attendance while they work from home.

- Liaising with the headteacher and IT technician to ensure they and their team have all the necessary equipment to work from home.
- Informing the headteacher of any absences, including their own.
- Organising and holding regular meetings with their team, including virtual meetings, to keep track of staff members' progress and workload.
- Disclosing information to the headteacher about their own work and the work of the staff members in their team.
- Ensuring the staff members they manage are held to account for their output.
- Monitoring staff members' attendance levels and feeding back to the headteacher.

2.3. Staff members are responsible for:

- Remaining professional at all times.
- Completing all work to a high standard and meeting the required deadlines.
- Participating in meetings to share their progress with their line managers.
- The suitability and adequacy, e.g. in relation to health and safety, of their work environment.
- Liaising with their line managers to ensure they have everything they need to fulfil their responsibilities from home.

2.4. The IT technician is responsible for:

- Installing software on all devices to ensure they are secure and to help the headteacher and line managers track the performance of individual staff members.
- Installing software on all devices to ensure the headteacher and line managers can communicate with staff members and one another.
- Answering any queries in relation to using IT equipment remotely.
- Arranging, securing and setting up sufficient equipment for all staff members to work from home.
- Completing their work to a high standard.

3. Working remotely

- 3.1. All staff members adhere to the school's Data Protection Policy while WFH.
- 3.2. Staff members will be required to use the school's shared drives while working to ensure ease of access for their work.
- 3.3. Access to the school's shared drives will be provided by a virtual private network (VPN), which will be set up by the IT technician on all relevant devices, e.g. laptops and tablets.
- 3.4. Where it is not possible for a staff member to access the school's shared drives via the VPN, other arrangements will be made, e.g. transferring data via a portable device, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

- 3.5. If staff members are having any technical problems with a school-issued device e.g. connecting to the VPN, they will contact their line manager and the IT technician immediately.
- 3.6. All meetings that a staff member is required to participate in while WFH go ahead as planned, and the staff member will be required to call via a video conferencing service, e.g. Skype or Zoom.
- 3.7. Where necessary, staff members are permitted to use their home or mobile phones to make work-related calls.

4. Accountability

- 4.1. The headteacher schedules regular group video calls with line managers to check their progress and the progress of the staff members they manage. In this call, any problems, e.g. with IT equipment or missed deadlines, are discussed.
- 4.2. Line managers schedule regular group video calls with the staff members they manage to ensure they are completing their work and are able to meet any upcoming deadlines.
- 4.3. All staff members, including line managers, are held to account for their work in accordance with the school's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.
- 4.4. To ensure meetings can be scheduled at suitable times, staff members will communicate any changes to their working hours to their line manager.

5. Raising complaints and concerns

- 5.1. Complaints and concerns will be raised in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 5.2. If, for example, staff members are required to work from home due to social distancing measures, complaints hearings and/or meetings that involve face-to-face communication will be postponed until a time when it is suitable to do so.
- 5.3. All complaints will be submitted to the complaints co-ordinator for further investigation. As part of this investigation, the complaints co-ordinator may contact complainants directly for more information.

6. Illness and return to work

- 6.1. If a staff member is too ill to work, they will inform their line manager via email or phone immediately, who will allow the staff member to stop working until they feel better. If a line manager feels unwell and cannot work, they will inform the headteacher.
- 6.2. Line managers will treat all illnesses with the utmost confidentiality and treat all requests to stop working compassionately and sensitively.
- 6.3. All staff members have access to the phone numbers and email addresses of the deputy headteacher and the headteacher, to ensure they can contact someone if they do not feel well enough work.
- 6.4. After a period of sickness, all staff members will undergo a return to work interview. These will be conducted by line managers or, if a line manager has been ill, by the headteacher.

- 6.5. Return to work interviews are conducted on the staff member's first day back to work via a video conference call.
- 6.6. Remote return to work interviews address the following areas:
 - Whether there have been any organisational changes the staff member needs to be informed of
 - Whether the employee is completely fit to return to work and if they require any additional support
 - Whether a referral to occupational health is required to seek advice on medium- and long-term fitness for work
 - Whether there is scope to learn any trigger points that may exasperate the employee's illness/fitness for work
- 6.7. Illnesses will be handled and return to work interviews will be conducted in line with the Staff Attendance Management Policy.

7. Absences and sick pay

- 7.1. While WFH, all absences will be reported to line managers, who will authorise them and inform the headteacher.
- 7.2. If line managers are not well enough to work, they will report this to the headteacher.
- 7.3. Absences are managed and authorised in line with the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy.
- 7.4. Any staff member who is absent from work due to sickness must not participate in any other work (regardless of whether it is paid or unpaid or outside of their normal working hours) without written authorisation of the headteacher.
- 7.5. To qualify for statutory sick pay (SSP), an employee must fulfil both of the following:
 - Be sick for at least four or more days in a row (including weekends and bank holidays)
 - Earn an average of not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- 7.6. SSP is paid by the school for up to a maximum of 28 weeks.
- 7.7. The school will consistently review sickness absence. When monitoring staff attendance rates, pre-determined review points are in place which alert the school if an employee's attendance has reached a point where there may be cause for concern. In accordance with the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy, the following review points are used:
 - Three or more occurrences of sickness absence in any six-month period
 - Seven or more days absent due to sickness in any 12-month period
 - When operational need dictates, e.g. if the number or pattern of absences causes concern

8. Absence hearings

- 8.1. Absence hearings and appeals will be carried out in line with the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy.
- 8.2. If, for any reason, the school is closed (or partially closed), and staff members are required to work from home, all formal absence hearings will be postponed until they can be carried out in person. In the meantime, an informal discussion between the staff member, their line manager and the headteacher is held via a video conference call to see if any reasonable adjustments can be made.

9. Taking annual leave to look after dependents

- 9.1. The school understands that there are times when staff members may be forced to use holidays to look after dependents who may have fallen ill.
- 9.2. If any staff member requires time off to look after dependents, they will submit a request to the headteacher with at least 5 working days' notice. If the staff member cannot give the required amount of notice, e.g. due to an emergency, the headteacher will review their workload and any deadlines before making a decision.
- 9.3. The headteacher takes responsibility for deciding how much holiday pay the staff member will receive while they are looking after their dependents.
- 9.4. If a staff member is WFH and requires time off to look after dependents, they will submit a request as normal, giving as much notice to the headteacher as possible.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher and IT technician.
- 10.2. Any updates are communicated to all staff members.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **21.07.20**.