

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Policy

Flexible Working

Policy type	Trust wide
Review	Three yearly
Author	Trust People Manager
Approved by	Chief Operating Officer
Ratified by	Finance, People and Operations Committee
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Date of next review	February 2027

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented without any amendments

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The Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England No 10449374 Registered Office:
Manshead CE Academy, Dunstable Rd, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4BB



Our mission, vision and values

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work, and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, 'flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all of its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least "Good" within 3 years post-conversion. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

Our community

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all
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stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

Statement of Intent

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) Flexible Working policy and must be implemented and adhered to in each of the academies within the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust along with those working within the central team.

This policy will also be implemented and adhered to from the first day of any other academy joining the Trust. For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT.

Please read the DSAMAT Staffing Policy Statement in conjunction with this policy.

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Introduction

The Trust recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and promote well-being. Therefore the Trust wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests with the intention of supporting staff at different stages of their life as well as retaining experienced staff. The Trust is committed to considering flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of the Trust, school and the employee can be met.

It is the Trust's policy to encourage open discussion with employees. An employee who thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to contact their line manager, Headteacher (school based employees), COO (central team employees) or Trust People Team to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

Some forms of flexible working may be more suitable for particular roles in schools than others. Employees making a request should consider which forms of flexible working are best suited for their role, as individual circumstances vary. It is possible for employees to have more than one type of flexible working arrangement in place. Arrangements may be altered as an individual's circumstances change.

Flexible working includes but are not limited to the below arrangements:

- Part-time working

Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who only works Monday to Wednesday.

- Term-time working

Term-time working is where an employee reduces their hours or takes time off during any school holidays. Any weeks above their annual leave entitlement will be unpaid. Salary will be paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.

- Job-sharing

Job-sharing is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible, and meet the needs of the Trust. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each works. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where two individuals wish to work part-time. The suitability of posts for job-sharing will be stated in any internal or external advertisements.

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- Home- working

Home-working is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises. Home-working may be considered as an occasional agreed day, a mix of home and school / office based work each week or as a full time arrangement.

- Compressed hours

Compressed hours is where an employee works their usual full time hours in fewer days by working longer blocks meaning that there is no reduction in their pay. For example, a 5-day week is compressed into four days, or a 10-day fortnight into 9 days.

The needs of the Trust

The Trust is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However employees and school leaders need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed the Trust will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other employees
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This flexible working policy gives all employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern.
- 1.2. No-one who makes a request for flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career development opportunities as a result.

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2. Eligibility for the formal right to request procedure

- 2.1. To be eligible to make a request under the formal procedure set out in paragraph 6 and 8 you must:
 - a) be an employee;
 - b) not have made more than two formal requests to work flexibly during the last 12 months (each 12 month period runs from the date when the most recent application was made).
- 2.2. Employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the formal procedure, but who want to make either permanent or temporary changes to their working arrangements, may make an informal request under the procedure set out in paragraph 10 to their Headteacher (school based employees) or COO (central team employees), who will consider the request according to the school's educational and operational needs or central team's business and operational needs.
- 2.3. Employees whose requests for flexible working are accepted under the formal procedure will have permanent changes made to their contracts of employment to reflect their new working arrangements. If they do not want changes to be permanent, they can follow the informal procedure instead.
- 2.4. Any employee interested in flexible working may request an informal meeting with their line manager to discuss potential options before submitting a formal or informal request.

3. Responsibility for Implementing the Policy

- 3.1. The Headteachers and COO have responsibility for operating the policy within their areas.
- 3.2. All employees are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Those involved in line management or recruitment may request training and address any questions about the content or application of this policy to the Headteachers or Trust People Team.

4. Making a Formal Flexible Working Request

- 4.1. You will need to submit a written application if you would like your flexible working request to be considered under the formal procedure.
- 4.2. Your written and dated application should be submitted to your Headteacher or COO and, in order to meet the requirements of the formal procedure and to help your Headteacher or COO consider your request, should:
 - a) state the reason for your request,

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- b) provide as much information as you can about your current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which you want your desired working pattern to start;
 - c) state whether this is a statutory formal request and whether you have made a previous formal or informal request for flexible working and, if so, when; and
 - f) state if you are making your request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example as a reasonable adjustment for a disability;
 - g) ideally be submitted at least two months before you wish the changes you are requesting to take effect.
- 4.3. Your Headteacher or COO might be able to agree your proposal without the need for a meeting (which is the next stage of the formal procedure). If that is the case, your Headteacher or COO will write to you, confirming the decision and explaining the permanent changes that will be made to your contract of employment.
- 4.4. If your proposal cannot be accommodated, there will be consultation between you and your Headteacher or COO which may result in an agreed alternative working pattern that may be acceptable to you.

5. Formal Procedure: Meeting

- 5.1. Where necessary, your Headteacher or COO will arrange to meet with you within 28 days of your application being submitted. A member of the Trust People Team may also be present. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting as a companion if you wish. Your companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with you, but may not answer questions on your behalf.
- 5.2. In most cases, the meeting will be held at your usual place of work. However, we will ensure that the meeting is held at a time and place that is convenient to you.
- 5.3. The meeting will be used to consider the working arrangements you have requested. You will also be able to discuss what impact your proposed working arrangements will have on your work and that of your colleagues. If the arrangements you have requested cannot be accommodated, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.
- 5.4. Your Headteacher or COO may suggest starting new working arrangements under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet your needs and those of your school or central team.

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6. Formal Procedure: Decision

- 6.1. Following the meeting, your Headteacher or COO will notify you of the decision in writing within 14 days.
- 6.2. If your request is accepted, or where we propose an alternative to the arrangements you requested, your Headteacher or COO will write to you with details of the new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work, that your Headteacher or COO will discuss with you.
- 6.3. You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and that you are not able to make more than two formal requests for flexible working within a 12 month period.
- 6.4. If your Headteacher or COO needs more time to make a decision, they will ask for your agreement to delay the decision for up to a further 14 days. A request for an extension is likely to benefit you. For example, your Headteacher or COO may need more time to investigate how your request can be accommodated or to consult several members of staff.
- 6.5. There will be circumstances where, due to educational, business and operational requirements, we are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, your Headteacher or COO will write to you:
 - a) giving the business reason(s) for turning down your application;
 - b) explaining why the business reasons apply in your case; and
 - c) setting out the appeal procedure.
- 6.6. The eight business reasons for which we may reject your request are:
 - a) the burden of additional costs;
 - b) detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
 - c) inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
 - d) inability to recruit additional staff;
 - e) detrimental impact on quality;
 - f) detrimental impact on performance;

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- g) insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work; and
- h) planned changes.

[Appendix A gives a brief overview of the way in which the Trust will interpret and apply these business reasons.]

7. Formal Procedure: Appeal

- 7.1. If your request is rejected, you have the right to appeal.
- 7.2. Your appeal must:
 - a) be in writing and dated;
 - b) set out the grounds on which you are appealing; and
 - c) be sent to the COO if from a school or the CEO if the central team within 14 days of the date on which you received the written rejection of your request.
- 7.3. The COO or CEO for the central team will arrange for a meeting to take place within 14 days of receipt of your appeal. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending and you may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- 7.4. You will be informed in writing of the Appeal Panel's decision within 14 days of the date of the appeal meeting.
- 7.5. If your appeal is upheld, you will be advised of your new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment. There may also be some additional practical matters, such as arrangements for handing over work, that your Headteacher or COO will discuss with you.
- 7.6. You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and you will not be able to make more than two formal requests for flexible working within a 12 month period.
- 7.7. If your appeal is rejected, the written decision will give the business reason(s) for the decision and explain why the reason(s) apply in your case. You will not be able to make more than two formal requests for flexible working within a 12 month period.

8. Extending Time under the Formal Procedure

- 8.1. There will be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete the consideration process (including any appeal) within 2 months of first receiving the request. Where an

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extension of time is agreed with you, your Headteacher or COO will write to you confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.

- 8.2. If you withdraw a formal request for flexible working, you will not be eligible to make more than two formal requests within a 12 month period. In certain circumstances, a request made under the formal procedure will be treated as withdrawn. This will occur if:
 - a) you fail to attend two meetings under the formal procedure without reasonable cause; or
 - b) you unreasonably refuse to provide information we require to consider your request.
- 8.3. In such circumstances, your Headteacher or COO will write to you confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

9. Making an Informal Flexible Working Request

- 9.1. Employees who wish to make an informal request for flexible working may make a request to their Headteacher or COO if the central team, who will consider it according to school educational, business and operational requirements.
- 9.2. It will help your Headteacher or COO to consider your request if you:
 - a) make your request in writing and confirm whether you wish any change to your current working pattern to be temporary or permanent;
 - b) provide as much information as you can about your current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which you want your desired working pattern to start;

Monitoring and Review of the Policy

- 9.3. The Headteachers and COO are responsible for monitoring the implementation, use and effectiveness of this policy/procedure.

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Appendix A: Interpretation of “Business Reasons”

All decisions will be made on a case by case basis and those making the decision will consider how the individual request and/or alternatives to this request, can be accommodated alongside the needs of the school / Trust.

If a request to work flexibly is rejected then a specific “business reason” will be provided, which must be one of the eight stated in the legislation:

1. Burden of additional costs
2. Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
3. Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
4. Inability to recruit additional staff
5. Detrimental impact on quality
6. Detrimental impact on performance
7. Insufficiency of work during the period the employee proposes to work
8. Planned structural changes

The Trust’s interpretation of the “business reasons” are set out below in order to provide a clearer understanding of the specific circumstances in schools.

1. Burden of additional costs

It may, in some circumstances, be more costly to employ part time staff rather than full time staff but this would not normally be a key reason for rejecting an application.

2. Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand

The school’s customers are their pupils and parents/carers. It is important that the quality of teaching and learning is not adversely affected by agreeing to flexible working. In particular the Headteacher will consider the impact on the need to spread the teaching of individual classes over more than one teacher (split classes), pressure on the timetable to fix particular lessons on a reduced number of days in the week. This is particularly the case where the employee is the sole specialist in a subject. In the case of support staff there is a need to ensure that service provision is maintained at a satisfactory level.

3. Inability to re-organise work among existing staff

In addition to 2 above, where the employee has leadership or management responsibilities, it is necessary to take into account the ability of the school to distribute these to other employees at times when the part time member of staff is not working. This may require a job-share or a reduction in the allocated responsibilities. The school may wish to set a minimum contract for a Head of Department, or senior leader, for example. The school will also need to consider whether

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it is appropriate for a leader or manager to be absent for whole days in the week as a result of flexible working.

4. Inability to recruit additional staff

Excellent quality teaching is paramount for raising school standards. It is not always possible to recruit excellent teaching staff but the school will make attempts to do so as appropriate. In relation to 3 above, where a job share is required to fulfil the job description, this may only be possible if there is a colleague who is able and willing to undertake a part of the leadership responsibility. Where necessary and appropriate, the school will seek to recruit additional staff.

5. Detrimental impact on quality

See section 2 above in relation to the possible impact on the quality of learning and teaching.

6. Detrimental impact on performance

Timely marking of pupils' work is essential for their progress. Pupils' work must be marked on a regular basis in accordance with the school marking policy. Teachers who work flexibly must be able to manage the weekly workload of planning and assessment in the classroom and it must not have a negative impact on the quality of learning and on other members of staff.

It is the responsibility of part time staff to manage weekly workloads to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on performance.

7. Insufficiency of work during the period the employee proposes to work

If more than one member of part time staff requires the same working period, it may be difficult to accommodate all part time staff requests. Whilst individual preferences for working days and times can be considered, the needs of pupils and effective service delivery are paramount. This is particularly an issue where the timetable for teachers requires teams of staff to deliver the curriculum to a pool of pupils. The impact of a part time teacher being absent from school for one day per week may be to pressurise the timetabler to allocate a predominance of non-teaching periods for others in the team on that day. The extent to which the proposed flexible/part time work pattern affects the work-patterns of the team will be considered before a flexible working application is agreed.

8. Planned structural changes

The school will need to consider the impact on its ability to accommodate flexible working on the basis of planned curriculum changes, reduced pupil numbers or changes to the staffing structure.

9. Such other ground as the Secretary of State may specify by the regulations

No such grounds are specified currently.

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Appendix B: Form to Request Flexible Working

Note to the employee

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly under the right provided in law. Before completing this form, you should first read the Flexible Working Policy and Appendix A carefully and check that you are eligible to make a request.

You should note that it may take several weeks to consider your request and allow for consultation and meetings between us and further time for implementation where a flexible working pattern change is agreed to. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application to your Headteacher or COO if the central team well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help us to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your Headteacher or COO if the central team and keep a copy for your own records. We will then have 28 days after the day your application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted, this will normally be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

1. Personal Details

Name:

Job Title:

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided under The Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023. I confirm I meet the eligibility criteria as follows:

Either Please tick below. If you do not qualify to make a request to work flexibly under the statutory procedure, this does not mean that your request may not be considered, but you should explore this separately under paragraph 11 of the policy.

[] I have not made more than two requests to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months,

Date/s of any previous request to work flexibly under this right:

2a. Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

2b. Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):

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2c. I would like this working pattern to commence from:

Signed:

Date:

Return slip

Confirmation of Receipt (to be completed and returned to the employee)

Dear

I confirm that I received your request to change your work pattern on:

I shall be arranging a meeting to discuss your application within 28 working days following this date. In the meantime, you might want to consider whether you would like a workplace colleague or trade union representative to accompany you to the meeting.

Signed:

Date:

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