



Flexible Working Policy

For all schools in the Bosco Catholic Education Trust

This Policy has been approved and adopted by the
Bosco Catholic Education Trust

Approved:	For review:
Feb 2021	Feb 2024

Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavour to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

“Serve the Lord joyfully”

Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline what information employees need to provide when making a statutory request to work flexibly; what matters managers need to consider when responding to such a request and the procedure that should be followed.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Bosco Catholic Education Trust, including those with less than 26 weeks’ continuous service.

In the case of the request being made by the Headteacher, the term ‘Headteacher/Line Manager’ should read as ‘Chair of Governors.’

Flexible Working

Bosco Catholic Education Trust is supportive of enabling employees to work flexibly, where this meets the needs of the organisation. This helps BCET deliver excellent education to its pupils and enables employees to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

A request agreed under this policy, forms a permanent change to the employee’s contract. This policy should therefore, only be used where the employee is seeking a permanent change to their contract, rather than wishing to request a temporary change.

Whilst there is no statutory right to have the request approved, Headteachers/Line Managers must seriously consider requests for working on a flexible basis. We expect Headteachers/Line Managers to approve such requests where this can be accommodated within the business.

Flexible working also includes working remotely for some or all of the staff member’s contracted time, not just during periods of school closure due to pandemics or other such events.

Making a Request

Any employee is able to make a statutory request to work flexibly. The employee does not need to have a specific reason for making the request. However, an employee may only make one statutory request for flexible working in a 12-month period.

If a Headteacher/Line Manager is approached by an employee who wants to make a statutory request for flexible working, they must ask the employee to put their request in writing. The Headteacher/Line Manager should then arrange to meet with the employee as soon as possible to discuss the request.

In making their request, the employee must include the following information:

- The date of their application, the change to working conditions they are seeking and when they would like the change to come into effect.
- What effect, if any, they think the requested change would have on the business and how, in their opinion, any such effect might be mitigated.
- The fact that this is a statutory request and if and when they have made a previous application for flexible working.

The employee and Headteacher/Line Manager should discuss the employee's request and carefully explore how it could be accommodated. The Headteacher/Line Manager needs to examine and weigh up the benefits to both the business and the employee of the making the changes the employee is seeking against the potential cost of making those changes. In considering the request, Headteachers/Line Managers should not discriminate against the employee or make assumptions.

It may be necessary for the employee and Headteacher/Line Manager to have more than one meeting to explore various options and there may be a need for both parties to compromise in order to achieve a workable solution

Where possible the Headteacher/Line Manager should verbally inform the employee of their decision at the meeting and confirm this in writing to them within 10 working days of the meeting.

If the Headteacher/Line Manager is unable to make a decision at the meeting, they should advise the employee of the date they intend to make their decision.

Rejecting a Request

In certain circumstances it may be that an employee's request for flexible working cannot be accommodated.

In this situation the request can only be turned down for one of the following 8 reasons:

- the burden of additional costs.
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff.
- an inability to recruit additional staff.
- a detrimental impact on quality.
- a detrimental impact on performance.
- detrimental effect on ability to meet with educational needs of students.
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work.
- a planned structural change to your business, where the flexible working change would not fit with the plan.

Where a request is turned down the Headteacher/Line Manager must explain the reason why they have turned down the employee's request and confirm this in writing to them.

An employee's request may also be considered as 'withdrawn' if the employee fails to attend a meeting and a re-arranged meeting under this procedure without good reason.

Appeal

If an employee's Headteacher/Line Manager has turned down their request to work on a flexible basis the employee may appeal to the Local Governing Body.

The appeal must be made in writing, stating the reason for the appeal, within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of their line manager's decision.

The Governors hearing the appeal will consider the employee's request and the Headteacher/Line Manager's reasons for refusal. The decision may be varied (an alternative may be agreed to or the request may be partially agreed), stay the same (original decision stands) or be overturned (the employee's request is agreed to in full).

There is no further right of appeal.

Timescales

The expectation is that all meetings will be held within 10 working days of the employee verbally making a request or submitting an appeal, and a minimum of 5 days' notice should be given for any meeting under this procedure.

The outcome of any meeting, where the employee has been verbally advised of a decision, should be confirmed in writing no later than 10 working days of the meeting.

The whole procedure to consider the request including any appeal MUST NOT take any longer than 3 months, unless both parties agree to the period being extended. This is a statutory requirement for employees who have more than 26 weeks' continuous service.

Rights to be Accompanied

The employee may be accompanied to any meeting under this procedure by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

Effect on Terms and Conditions

Any request made under this procedure including those which form part of the existing flexibilities available to employees, will become permanent.

Headteachers/Line Managers are responsible for ensuring any changes to the employee's contract that have been agreed as part of this process, are notified to the School Business Manager/Bursar for HR procedures to be completed.