



THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUSTS

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY



Christian communities are called to offer support to the educational mission of families, and they do this first of all with the light of the Word of God.

Pope Francis, 20 May 2015



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Commitment to Equality

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Flexible Working Policy has been subject to consultation with the Recognised Trade Unions. It was approved and adopted by the CMAT as detailed below:

Policy Approved By:	Date of Approval
Board of Directors – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust	17 July 2025
Board of Directors – St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust	10 July 2025
Board of Directors – St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust	08 July 2025

It will be reviewed after 24 months in consultation with the Recognised Trade Unions.

Signed by Director of CMAT Trust Board:

NIGEL STEVENSON

Signed by CEO:

JAMES MCGEACHIE



DEFINITIONS

In this Flexible Working policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions, where they appear, shall have the following meanings:

- i. 'CMAT' means the Catholic Multi Academy Trust, that is the company responsible for the management of the Central Team and the Academies and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff within the Central Team and the Academies.
- ii. "Central Team" means all staff employed in the Central Office functions of the CMAT.
- iii. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board of the CMAT from time to time.
- iv. 'Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team)' means the most senior teacher in the school who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Executive Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team).
- v. 'Operational requirements' refer to the needs and priorities of the school, including ensuring high-quality teaching and learning, maintaining adequate staffing levels, meeting the needs of students, adhering to timetables and schedules, and minimising disruption to the smooth running of the school day.

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"Some seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge: that is curiosity. Others seek knowledge that they themselves be known: that is vanity. But there are still others who seek knowledge in order to serve and edify others, and that is charity."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The CMAT recognises that flexible working plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace. By providing employees with the opportunity to request flexible working arrangements, the CMAT aim to promote a healthy work-life balance, improve job satisfaction, and reduce stress. We are committed to considering all requests fairly and reasonably, however the wishes of the employee must be considered against operational needs.
- 1.2 Flexible working can take many forms, as an organisation, we value the diverse needs of our workforce and will strive to implement flexible arrangements that benefit both our employees and our schools/central team.
- 1.3 All requests for flexible working will be considered in accordance with the provisions of this policy and in a fair, equitable way. By embracing flexible working, we aim to create a responsive, and inclusive workplace that supports the needs of all employees.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust Leave of Absence Policy which provides alternative arrangements for access to short term leave of absence which will support employees to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments which can arise for a variety of reasons.



2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 2.1 The Policy applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers as they are not employees of the CMAT. However, after 12 weeks in the job an agency worker will qualify for the same rights to flexible working as someone directly employed by the CMAT. Further details can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/agency-workers-your-rights/your-rights-as-a-temporary-agency-worker>

- 2.2 The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that employees within the CMAT understand how flexible working requests will be considered by the Head Teacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager/CEO and to ensure that all employees are treated fairly, reasonably and consistently across the CMAT.
- 2.3 Changes to terms and conditions arising from requests under this policy will be permanent and there is no entitlement to revert back to previous terms unless a temporary agreement is reached due to the circumstances.
- 2.4 The employee has the right to withdraw their request before a decision is communicated and doing so would not preclude a further request for the same or different adjustments.

3. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 3.1 The CMAT recognises that flexible working not only benefits our people but also strengthens our collective ability to innovate, collaborate, and deliver outstanding outcomes for our schools.
- 3.2 We are committed to driving a meaningful shift in our culture, one that starts from a place of “how can we make this work” rather than starting with barriers. Whilst there is a need to balance organisational and individual needs, it may not be possible to agree to every request and in these cases, we will consider alternatives and discuss these with you. If an alternative proposal is made, you will be given the opportunity to reflect on this before final agreement.

4. DEFINITIONS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

- 4.1 Flexible working refers to any working arrangement that allows employees to permanently vary their contractual terms or by agreement vary on a temporary basis with a specified end date - hours, location, or patterns of work - to better suit their needs. By adopting such arrangements, employees can balance their personal and professional responsibilities more effectively.
- 4.2 Flexible working encompasses various working arrangements, some of which are outlined below and, while flexible working can be advantageous, implementation in a school environment, can present unique challenges. The structured nature of the school day, including fixed teaching hours and lesson schedules, limits the feasibility of certain arrangements. However, all requests will be considered in an open way, and we will discuss with you what can and can't work and explain our decision.
- 4.3 Below are some examples of flexible working arrangements, however, the CMAT recognises that there may be alternatives, or a combination of options, which may be suitable to both the organisation and the employee.
- a. Part-Time Work**
- Part-time work involves working fewer hours than a standard full-time contract, often spread over fewer days. This arrangement is ideal for employees who need more time for personal commitments, studies, or caregiving responsibilities. It allows the CMAT to retain skilled employees while offering flexibility.



b. Job Sharing

Job sharing is an arrangement where two employees share the responsibilities and hours of a single full-time role. This can provide a balance between work and personal life for employees and ensures that the CMAT benefits from the combined skills and perspectives of two individuals.

c. Compressed Hours

Compressed hours allow employees to work their total contracted hours over fewer days, such as completing a 37-hour week in four days instead of five. This arrangement provides employees with extended time off while maintaining full-time work commitments. This arrangement might work for a role that does not need to be physically present each day or where operationally it doesn't matter when the work is done.

d. Hybrid Working

Hybrid working combines working from home with time spent in the school/Trust. Employees split their time between home and workplace, balancing the benefits of remote work with opportunities for in-person collaboration and team engagement.

e. Annualised Hours

Annualised hours involve working a set number of hours over the year, rather than per week or month. This arrangement allows for fluctuations in workload, as employees work more hours during busy periods and fewer hours during quieter times, offering flexibility for employees.

f. Staggered Hours

Staggered hours mean employees, in some roles, can start and finish work at different times from standard working hours. This can reduce congestion in the workplace (where we have more people than desks for example) or on public transport and accommodate employees' individual schedules such as child caring responsibilities. It can also enable services to schools to offer extended hours by staggering working times in the team.

g. Term-time Working

Term-time working is designed for employees who wish to work during school terms and take either all or some of the school holidays off. This arrangement is particularly beneficial for parents or guardians, aligning work schedules with school calendars.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 ELIGIBILITY

All employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of employment and can make up to two requests in a 12-month period but can only have one live request at a time. The request will stay live until any of the following happen:

- The Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team) makes a decision in writing.
- The employee withdraws the request.
- The employee and the Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team) agree an outcome.

An employee can make a request to change where, how or when they work because of their disability, and this would be requesting a reasonable adjustment. These circumstances do not always require a flexible working request.



6. CONSIDERING A REQUEST

- 6.1 All requests will be considered reasonably and fairly, taking into account the potential benefits of the proposed arrangement, the impact on operational requirements (students, colleagues, operational delivery), the ability to reorganise work amongst other employees and whether the arrangement will result in an additional cost to the school. The school will consider reasonable adjustments required due to disabilities.
- 6.2 Each request will be considered by the Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team) in the order it is received. If a request for flexible working is agreed, it will not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.
- 6.3 It may be possible for the Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team) to support the request using the information contained within the Flexible Working Request Form, if a decision is made to agree the request, this will be confirmed in writing by the Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team) within 10 working days of receipt of the Flexible Working request Form.
- 6.4 Where further discussion (known as consultation in the legislation) is required, a meeting will be held within 10 working days of receiving the request. The 10 working days can be extended with the agreement of both parties. The employee may bring a trade union representative or work colleague to the meeting. At this consultation meeting any suggested alternatives will be discussed as well as the impact of the request already submitted. If an alternative suggestion is put to the employee, a timescale will be mutually agreed by which a decision needs to be made. This time is excluded from the two-month statutory period for concluding the request (including appeal where applicable).
- 6.5 Following the consultation meeting a decision will be made and confirmed in writing within 10 working days of either the meeting, or end of the extended mutually agreed consideration period. If the request is rejected a right of appeal will be included in the outcome letter.
- 6.6 Where agreement is reached on either the request submitted or an alternative arrangement, the employee will receive a contract variation letter or a new contract (as applicable) amending their terms on a permanent basis or when agreed on a temporary basis with a specified end date at which the prior working pattern resumes.
- 6.7 Where a request is refused, the reason will be explained and must be for a valid reason, as set out in legislation including:
- extra costs that will impact the CMAT
 - the work cannot be reorganised among other staff
 - people cannot be recruited to do the work
 - flexible working will affect quality – this could be outcomes for students or service quality
 - flexible working will affect performance in the school or team/function
 - the CMAT will not be able to meet student demand/need
 - there's a lack of work to do during the proposed working times
 - the CMAT is planning changes to the workforce
- 6.8 This decision should be confirmed in writing within 10 working days of the decision being made, along with a right of appeal if rejected.



- 6.9 Whilst a flexible working request change is permanent, there maybe elements of the request subject to change. For example, a request for part time that specifies working days. If this was agreed the reduction in the contracted hours would be permanent, however the non-working day(s) would be subject to change in line, for example, with timetable changes. In these cases, we would accommodate requests where we can without impact and if a change in days was needed, we would consult with you and reasonable notice would be given at the earliest opportunity (annual timetable changes for example).
- 6.10 When a flexible working request is agreed and the working pattern or contractual hours change, the Manager must ensure that iTrent is updated with these details and that requests and outcome letters are saved on the HR record for the employee.

7. APPEALS

- 7.1 In cases where flexible working has been declined and we have not been able to agree an alternative, the employee has a right of an appeal meeting within ten working days, as follows. The outcome letter will specify who the appeal should be addressed to and the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague will be given in the letter.

Decision Maker	Appeal Manager
Headteacher/CMAT Executive Team Line Manager (for the Central Team)	Director of Performance & Standards or CEO
Director of Performance and Standards	CEO
CEO	A nominated Director

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 The application of this policy will be monitored by the CMAT HR Team to ensure compliance and fairness of application. The outcomes of the application of the policy will be reviewed under equalities legislation and shared with the Trade Unions.



APPENDIX 1 - Flexible Working Application Form

1: PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name	Employee or Payroll Number
Academy/Location	Job Title
Line Manager	

I would like to apply to work flexibly under my right provided under section 80F of the Employment Rights Act 1996.
I confirm I meet each of the eligibility criteria as follows:

- I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right more than twice during the past 12 months ☐

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

NOTE: If you are unable to tick the above box, unfortunately you are not statutorily entitled to make a flexible working request. However, we may still consider your request.



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)

2c: I would like this working pattern to commence from the following date and I understand the change will be permanent and I have no right to revert to my current arrangement:

Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

NOW PASS THIS APPLICATION TO YOUR LINE MANAGER



**Diocese of
Nottingham**
Multi Academy Trusts

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Moving Forward Together