



MIDDLESEX
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

HOMWORKING POLICY

APPROVED BY:	HR and Pay Committee
DATE:	June 2024
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY:	June 2027

1. Introduction

Middlesex Learning Partnership applies this policy to all employees of the Trust (collectively referred to as "you" and "employee" in this policy).

This policy sets out the provisions that apply to homeworkers-whether occasional or permanent. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, is not intended to have contractual effect and may be amended at any time.

2. What is homeworking?

Homeworking means working from home on an occasional, a temporary, hybrid or a permanent basis. It could be a one-off day or working entirely from home for a fixed period or indefinitely.

Homeworking does not entitle you to choose when and how you work. It simply means you do your job from home. Your contractual obligations, including your contractual working hours, continue to apply unless otherwise agreed.

3. Types of homeworking

Employees may work from home on a short term or occasional/ad hoc basis (referred to in this policy as "occasional") or a permanent or longer-term basis (referred to as "substantive").

4. Occasional homeworking

Occasional homeworking usually needs to be arranged at short notice and must be pre-approved by the Head of School/Headteacher. In those types of situations, you should contact the Head of School/Headteacher as soon as you think you will need to work from home. They will decide whether or not to authorise homeworking on that occasion. Any occasional homeworking must be pre – approved, otherwise will be treated as an unauthorised absence and could result in disciplinary action. If you are not well enough to work, working from home cannot be agreed as an alternative. Occasional home working will be assessed on a case by case basis dependent on:

- if your role is suited to homeworking;
- if you have the personal attributes and skills that mean you should be able to do your job effectively from home;
- if your home environment is suitable for homeworking. This includes having a decent working area and a good internet connection.

Except where your contract of employment already provides that you will work from home on a regular basis, on each and every occasion that you want to work from home, you must secure permission to do so in advance from the Head of School/Headteacher.

Full time support staff are permitted to work from home during school closure periods subject to their role being suitable to homeworking and they have a suitable environment and equipment to carry out their duties in full.

We will not provide you with computer equipment (additional to that used on school premises), furniture, dedicated telephone line for use at home or Internet connection unless otherwise agreed in writing.

“Substantive” homeworking is where it is an agreed term of your contract, either on a permanent or longer-term basis.

5. Applying for homeworking

If you would like to make homeworking a normal part of your contract, you should discuss this with the Head of School/Headteacher as a first step. If you then decide to make a formal request for homeworking, you can do so under our Flexible Working Policy subject to eligibility criteria, although there is no obligation on us to agree to such a request.

If you apply to work from home, we will consider a range of factors which may include:

- if your role is suited to homeworking;
- if you have the personal attributes and skills that mean you should be able to do your job effectively from home;
- your personnel record, including your recent conduct and performance levels and any unexpired warnings, will be taken into account when we make any decisions;
- if your home environment is suitable for homeworking. This includes having a decent working area and a good internet connection.

Homeworker’s Guidelines

6. Hours of work

Whether you are working on school premises or at home, your hours of work remain as per your contract of employment, unless agreed otherwise in writing.

7. Place of work

For substantive homeworker’s, this will be your current home address. Where this changes, it is your responsibility to notify us accordingly. A minimum of four weeks’ notice of change of address must be provided.

If you are an occasional homeworker, your place of work will be as per your statement of terms and conditions of employment.

8. On site attendance by substantive homeworkers

In most circumstances you will be required to attend, or work from, school premises from time to time for the purposes of attending meetings, briefings or training.

In addition, you may be required to work from school premises during key times (e.g., exam periods/Ofsted inspections); to deputise for absent colleagues or in other relevant circumstances.

9. Equipment and workstation

For substantive homeworkers, we may provide any or all of the following:

- all necessary computer equipment;
- a business telephone line or mobile phone for work use only, which will be in the School/Trust's name, and itemised bills will be sent to and paid for by the School/Trust's where they are for reasonable business use;
- an account with a service provider allowing connection to the internet and the School/Trust's relevant online resources. Any such account will be in the School/Trust's, and bills will be sent to and paid for by us;
- Stationery;
- a suitable desk, chair and other required furniture; and
- a document shredder, where we consider one is required.

As regards all of the items listed above:

- they remain the property of the Middlesex Learning partnership at all time;
- they must not be removed from your home address without written permission from Head of School/Headteacher;
- they must not be used other than for work purposes;
- it is your responsibility to take reasonable care of them. You will be responsible for any damage to them which goes beyond normal wear and tear; and
- you must report any damage to them, or malfunctioning of them, to your Line Manager as soon as possible.

Provided reasonable notice is given, substantive homeworkers must allow other employees of the Middlesex Learning Partnership, and contractors acting on our behalf, to have access to their home at any reasonable time, in order that those employees or contractors may:

- install, inspect, replace, service, repair or maintain the items listed above; or
- carry out a risk assessment, or
- collect items belonging to the School/Trust (including any of the items listed above) on termination of employment, if they have not already been returned within the period requested.

You will be required to provide a secure room in which you will work, preferably dedicated to work purposes.

If you intend using any personal equipment such as a computer for homeworking you must check with your Line Manager first to ensure it is suitable. Any personal equipment

that we agree to you using remains your responsibility, so you would need to cover the cost of things like repairs.

10. Insurance

All School/Trust property provided to you for use in your home will be covered under the School/Trust's insurance policy.

Where you are provided with School/Trust's property at home you must not do, cause or permit any act or omission which will avoid coverage under the Trust's insurance policy. If in any doubt as to whether particular acts or omissions will have this effect, you should consult your line manager immediately.

You must notify your insurer of your homeworking arrangements, and are responsible for ensuring that those arrangements do not breach any policy condition, restrictive covenant affecting your home address, lease, local authority planning restriction or mortgage condition.

11. General liability

As owner/occupier of your home, you remain responsible for ensuring:

- the safety of any visitors to the premises, as well as any other family members, particularly children; and
- that the general fabric of your home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which you work, are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work there; e.g., electrical sockets and other parts of your domestic electric system are your own responsibility.

12. Confidentiality

In accordance with our policies and procedures from time to time in force, you are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of any School/Trust related resources/equipment or information to which you have access. In particular:

- you must take reasonable steps to restrict the access of family and friends to work equipment, materials, documents and other data in order to:
 - a) avoid damage or loss; and
 - b) maintain confidentiality.
- you must ensure that all confidential material that requires disposal is shredded or, in the case of electronic material, securely destroyed, as soon as any need for its retention has passed; and
- you must take reasonable care of work-related information and School/Trust property when travelling to or from home.

13. Data protection

You must comply with your duties and obligations with regard to confidentiality and data protection under our Data Protection Policy.

14. Health and safety

We may on occasion perform a risk assessment of the work activities you carry out as a homeworker. The purpose of completing a risk assessment is to identify any hazards relating to your work activities and to prevent or reduce such risks.

Such risk assessments may be carried out by you as a self-assessment or another employee or contractor on our behalf. Any necessary training or guidance to assist you in completing any self-assessment will be provided.

Where you work with display screen equipment:

- we will ensure that the equipment is safe and fit for use, and advice will be provided to you on how to use it safely, including information on breaks from work; and
- you may be entitled to eye tests paid for by us in line with standard guidelines for other employees.

All risk assessment findings will be recorded and reviewed as appropriate.

For further health and safety information, see our Health and Safety Policy.

15. Obligations and Communication

If you work from home, you are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do our workplace policies.

We want you to remain as involved as possible in our business and our activities while you are working from home. To minimise the potential isolation of substantive homeworkers, and/or to allow for your proper supervision and management, Line Managers will, where appropriate, involve you in regular meetings or consultations. You are required to attend such meetings. If you cannot attend a scheduled meeting for good reason, you should notify the person organising the meeting in advance of this fact.

In addition to regular meetings, managers will ensure that regular contact is made between you and the members of your team.

You are expected to be contactable, within reason, during the agreed hours of work. Contact outside these hours will only be made in cases of urgency.

If, at any point, you feel isolated, left out, or lacking guidance or support you should discuss this with your Line Manager.

Where an IT or other problem prevents you from working effectively from home, you should contact IT straightaway. You may need you to come into work until the issue has been resolved.

If you cannot work on a homeworking day because of illness or injury, you must follow the procedure set out in our Managing Sickness Absence Policy. If you are not well enough to attend work, working from home will not be permitted.

16. Training and development

Training of substantive homeworkers will take place as appropriate and required.

You will be expected to participate in any team, departmental or other training.

You will have the same opportunities as office-based workers to apply for advertised vacancies within the Trust

You will be required to be on site for inset days.

17. Monitoring and Review

The homeworking policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

In the unlikely event that the homeworking arrangement is not operating effectively, The Trust solely reserves the right to withdraw such arrangements and require you to undertake your work instead on school premises on a permanent basis. It is therefore advisable not to make changes to domestic arrangements.

Linked policies:

- Flexible working policy
- Data protection policy
- Health and safety policy