Flexible Working Request Policy and Procedure

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Tel: 01709 914070 | Email: admin@stfranciscmat.com | www.stfcmat.com
Registered Office: The Old Grammar School, 13 Moorgate Road, Rotherham, S60 2EN

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Changes to this Edition

DATE	VERSION	DETAILS OF CHANGES
November 2025	1.0	First Edition
September 2026	2.0	No Changes

1.0 Introduction

The Trust and its schools acknowledge that employees may wish to request a permanent change to their contracted working days/hours/pattern or location and that flexible working can promote work-life balance, improve performance and the provision of education and service delivery.

The Trust will consider flexible working requests, but also, need to ensure that the provision of education and objectives of both the Trust/school can continue to be met. The Trust will manage flexible working requests in an objective way in accordance with statutory requirements including, timescales and a communicated outcome.
This policy does not form part of the employment contract and can be amended at any time after consultation with recognised unions.

Each Flexible Working Request (FWR) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in the order they are received by the Trust/school.

The approval to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees employed either by St Clare/St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust, or one of its member schools who have a contract of employment with the Trust or one of its member schools including temporary, fixed term, full and part time employees.

This policy does not apply to agency workers employed by a third party who may be carrying out work for either the Trust or a member school. For example, supply teaching and support staff.

3.0 Eligibility

All employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of their employment.

Employees have an opportunity to submit a maximum of 2 FWR's in a 12-month period (even if they withdrew a request(s)).

An employee can only have one live request at a time. A request will stay live until any of the following happen:

- the Trust / school makes a decision
- the employee withdraws the request
- the employee and the Trust/ school agree an outcome
- it's been 2 months since the date of the request

4.0 Procedure

To make a Flexible Working Request (FWR) for a permanent change to your contract of employment, you should submit a FWR form, see appendix 1.

Once you have completed FWR form, this should be submitted to your line manager/Head teacher.

Any FWR made should include within the FWR form:

- the date of your application
- the changes that you are seeking and if they impact your terms and conditions e.g. your hours or pattern of work
- the date on which you would like the changes to come into effect
- a statement that this is a statutory request
- Confirm that you have or have not made more than 2 applications for flexible working in the last 12 months; and
- if you have made a previous FWR, the date when your previous application was made

Your line manager/ Head teacher will acknowledge receipt of your request within 10 working days and will write to you inviting you to a meeting to discuss your request in more detail.

5.0 FWR Meeting

Your line manager/Head teacher will usually arrange a meeting at the earliest opportunity to discuss the specific details of your request and any questions they may have.
A representative from the Trusts HR team may be present to support the process.

Whilst there is no legal right to be accompanied at a flexible working meeting, the school/Trust will allow you to be accompanied by a willing workplace colleague or trade union representative.

If you need any reasonable adjustments to participate in the meeting, please notify your line manager/Head teacher prior to the meeting. These will be considered, and you will be notified if these can be accommodated.

Where a FWR request can be approved without further discussion a meeting may not be necessary, and the employee will be informed in writing of the decision and the start date of the changes.

6.0 Outcome of the FWR Meeting

After the meeting, your line manager/Head teacher will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, including the potential benefits to you and the Trust/school, and any impact on the delivery of education or services to our children or other stakeholders in implementing the changes. You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of your FWR Meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable.
This letter will confirm if your request has been:

- accepted in full
- accepted on an initial trial period with an identified review date to consider any impacts and possible ways to overcome these
- declined; or
- declined but an alternative proposal is put forward by the Trust/ school

If the request is accepted in full or in part, your line manager/Head teacher will discuss with you how and when the changes will take effect.
Where the request cannot be met in full, your line manager/ Head teacher may propose an alternative option.
Any changes to your terms and conditions, and the date on which they will commence, will be confirmed in writing and sent to you as an amendment to your contract of employment within 28 days.

For any FWR that is declined, a letter confirming this will identify the reasons it has not been accepted.

7.0 Trial periods

Any FWR may be subject to a trial period of up to 3 months to check that these can work successfully and to consider any impact of the proposed changes. This will be agreed as an extension to the statutory time frame in considering the FWR.
At the end of the review period the line manager/Head teacher will meet with you to discuss the outcome of the trial period. The possible outcomes could be approving the original FWR, agreeing amendment(s) or the request is declined with an explanation why the FWR cannot be approved in writing, within 5 days of this meeting.

8.0 Reasons for declining a FWR

There may be a reason your request can not be approved and the context in which education and support services are provided to our schools will inform any decision about your FWR. There are 8 statutory reasons why a request may be declined as follows:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

9.0 Timescales

The Trust/ school will ensure any FWR is heard in full (including any appeals) within 2 months from receipt of the request in accordance with statutory timeframes.

There may be occasions whereby a the time period for considering a FWR is extended beyond 2 months, for example if the FWR is interrupted by an absence from the business of either the person submitting the request, or the manager who is hearing the request. In the event of an extension, where both parties agree, the extension will be confirmed in writing and the reason(s) for this.

10.0 Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the decision following your FWR Meeting, you can submit an appeal request to admin@stfranciscmat.com detailing your reason(s) for appeal. This request should be received by the Trust within 10 working days of receiving the outcome letter in writing

The Trust will appoint a more senior manager who is independent to the previous FWR meeting to hear your appeal. The appeal manager may be from the school where you are based, from another school or from the Trust.

The appeal manager will invite you to a FWR Appeal Meeting where you will have the opportunity to discuss your appeal and provide any evidence in support of your appeal.

You can be accompanied by a willing work colleague or trade union representative at this meeting.

Following the appeal hearing, you will receive written confirmation of the outcome and the reasons for the decision, within 5 working days of the FWR appeal meeting.

This letter will confirm if your appeal has been:

- Upheld
- Not upheld.
- The outcome of the appeal will be final and there will be no further right to appeal.

If an employee fails to attend a FWR meeting, including a FWR appeal meeting, and fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, the Trust/school may decide to hear their FWR in their absence based upon the information it has access to, or it may consider the application has been withdrawn. This will be confirmed in writing.

11.0 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2026.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Flexible Working Request - Form