Remote Working Policy

Review Due:	**In response to changes in circumstance relating to Covid 19 or annually as a minimum**
Approved:	July 2021
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Review Date:	July 2022

1. Introduction

This policy provides a framework to support Trust staff in remote working. It includes any periods of remote working associated with full or partial school closure as well as during any period when staff have been identified as having to isolate in line with Government Guidance for reasons associated with Covid 19. It does not apply to staff who are absent due to illness or rota'd lieu time.

The Trust retains professional expectations of staff and high expectations of pupils. All schools will have in place a remote learning policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

2. Conduct:

Staff are expected to conduct themselves professionally both in school and online, and to continue to carry out tasks within a reasonable interpretation of their job description.

Trust HR Policies continue to apply whilst working remotely, including Staff Code of Conduct, Disciplinary and Staff Sickness Policies. Copies of all policies can be found on the Trust website (www.thepartnershiptrust.co.uk).

3. Working Hours

The expectation is that staff will follow their usual working patterns where possible. However, we recognise the circumstances leading to staff home working as a result of Covid 19 are unprecedented and there may need to be some adaptations to allow for:

- Domestic arrangements: for some staff their usual patterns of work will not be able to be followed due to their home circumstances (for example responsibilities for dependants).
- Safe opening of the schools as directed by the Government to enable the care of children of key workers and vulnerable children, including during the school holidays, bank holidays and weekends where directed. This may require staff being redeployed to another school or asked to work outside of their usual working days/hour (staff will be given time in lieu).

Headteachers should ensure that:
- Individual needs are considered, e.g. childcare or disabilities and take sensible and sensitive decisions to home working routines
- Staff are supported to adjust to the new working routines
- Staff are encouraged to give feedback about how working arrangements from home may be improved
- The plans for which tasks can be carried out from home are regularly reviewed
- Flexibility about deadlines is considered.

We appreciate that staff teams will want to support each other during any period of remotely working. However no staff member should feel that they are carrying an unreasonable burden of responsibility and should speak to their Headteacher should this be the case. Staff should ensure that they keep their Headteacher appraised, in advance where possible, of any difficulties they may have in their working routines. Any changes to working routines must be approved by the Headteacher.

Headteachers who find themselves in a similar position should speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will be making regular contact with them.

4. Staff attendance and absence

Staff should report absence in the usual way when remote working.

In the event that school's are required to partially open, staff leave during any rota period will be either paid or unpaid, according to policy and principles set out by The Partnership Trust in the existing suite of HR Policies available on the Trust website.

https://thepartnershiptrust.co.uk/about-the-trust/trust-policies/

5. Staff welfare and well-being

We appreciate that, as a result of Covid 19, staff may feel a higher level of stress and anxiety; they may be managing difficult and upsetting circumstances in their own lives or may find it difficult to adapt to the changes in their work and personal routines.

Staff have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety. To support staff in achieving this aim, it is important that Headteachers ensure that there are opportunities for school staff who are working remotely to:

- Receive regular updates from the school leadership team
- Keep in touch with their school leadership team
- Keep in touch with their school staff team
- Be encouraged to maintain a healthy work/life balance, taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of their working day (we would suggest that if your working hours have changed, you mark this on your email signature).

Keeping in touch will involve adapting to new ways of communicating, such as video or conference calls.

If staff are concerned about their work life balance/well-being they should speak with their Headteacher/ SLT. Likewise, Headteachers should speak to their Chair of Governors, Trust Leadership Partner and/or the CEO.

6. School equipment and resources

All staff who take equipment off-site, including school laptops, are required to follow the guidance in the Equipment Loan Agreement (see Appendix 1). If you require resources whilst remote working, please contact your school's Headteacher/office manager. It may be possible for you to receive these through the post, collect them from school or for you to be reimbursed for any purchase if agreed in writing and in advance by the Headteacher.

7. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Staff will be expected to continue with CPD during any period of remote working but there may be changes to what this will look like. Staff will be directed to CPD that is required to be completed as part of their working hours. Staff should ensure that CPD that is completed during this period of school closure is kept in their usual CPD log.

8. Ensuring confidentiality and compliance with GDPR

Use of IT: It is important that staff are aware of and follow Trust and school IT processes and procedures in order to ensure that personal and confidential information is protected appropriately. The Trust's Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Agreement (Appendix 2) has been signed by all staff and applies whether staff are working in school or remotely.

Confidentiality: All Data Protection and GDPR Policies apply throughout the period of school closure.

9. Keeping in touch
Video and telephone conference calls - safeguarding staff and pupils

It is important that systems used are confidential and secure and direction should be provided by the Headteacher for the methods that staff should use.   We would remind staff of the Code of Conduct when taking part in conference calls. We appreciate that it may be difficult for a number of reasons for staff to take part in video conference calls, for example a space in the home that enables confidential discussions to take place. Headteachers should take this into account when planning the appropriateness of group calls.

Communication within the staff team: Headteachers should provide guidance on the most appropriate platforms for communication between colleagues. It is important that when making decisions about the platform, no staff member should be excluded from taking part in a 'team discussion' due to not having either the technology or technical ability to access the platform. Staff should be remotely supported to have in place any IT that is required.

Telephone Communication with Parents: Staff should not contact parents/carers or pupils from their own telephone. Any telephone calls to parents/carers should be made from telephones on site or school mobile phones.

Where this is not possible e.g. the school is not open, then the following guidance should be followed:
- Calls should be made in school hours on the parent's telephone.
- Ensure that someone else at school is aware that the call is taking place and keep a record of the time and date.
- Use an app e.g. 3cx that will route calls through the school number or block your own number.
- If it is absolutely necessary to speak with a child, the parent should be present and the call should be on loudspeaker.

Staff Video Calls to parents/carers or pupils:

It is not appropriate for staff to hold one-to-one video calls with children or their parents/carers in any circumstances except where it is specifically necessary to support the pupil's pastoral care and arrangements and where the detailed arrangements have been agreed in advance by the Headteacher.

Some schools may deliver 'on line' sessions for pupils. We refer you to the school's Remote Learning Policy for guidance on how to deliver such sessions in a manner that protects both children and staff.

Staff should refer to their school's Remote Learning Policy and Safeguarding Policy for further guidance, in addition to taking account of the following protocols**:**
- Always follow the protocols in Trust's Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Agreement and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Always use devices supplied by your school and/or ensure that you are logged into your school/work account.
- One-to-one calling (telephone or video) between a teacher and one pupil should never take place.
- If a pupil raises a concern during an online lesson the protocol set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy must be followed.
- Ensure that the camera is straight ahead and focussed on head and shoulders, that there is a clear background with no inappropriate or unwanted imagery and that you are set up in an appropriate area of the house e.g. not a bedroom.
- Ensure that you will not be inappropriately interrupted by other household members during transmission.
- Wear suitable clothing.

There is useful guidance on The Key, which supports safeguarding pupils and staff on various platforms.

https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/covid-19/safeguard-and-support-pupils/safeguarding-while-teaching/remote-teaching-safeguarding-pupils-and-staff/?marker=visited-articles)

10. Expectations of staff

Where appropriate, further information regarding the expectations of staff in different roles at individual schools is set out below at Appendix 3.

11. Review

This guidance will remain under review, as these are new ways of working in an environment of changing circumstances**.**

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Equipment Loan Agreement

Appendix 2: ICT Acceptable User Policy and Agreement

Appendix 3: Expectations of staff at individual schools (to be completed by school)

Appendix 1: Equipment Loan Policy/Agreement

DFE Laptops lent to parents/carers (See separate loan agreement)

Appendix 2: The Partnership Trust ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement

Appendix 3: Expectations of staff at Paulton Infant School

Headteacher:
Expectations as for the SLT plus:
- Keep up-to-date with latest developments in respect of the reasons for school closure/partial closure and the need for staff to work remotely.
- Disseminate key information to the workforce in a timely manner.
- Monitor the well-being of staff and address needs as they arise.
- Take active steps to ensure that the school is complaint with statutory guidance and that policy is in place to support this.
- Ensure that safeguarding practices remain fully operational and respond to the change in circumstances.

SLT:
- Attend weekly virtual SLT meetings. Agendas for these meetings should include an update on staffing levels and staff welfare and wellbeing; safeguarding; health and safety; staff CPD activities; review of home learning.
- Provide all staff with a weekly 'briefing' update via email.
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher.
- CPD as agreed with the Headteacher (weekly).

Teachers:
- Plan and deliver home learning for pupils.
- Communication with parents/carers and pupils as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader.
- Mark/provide feedback to pupils on learning completed at home.
- Monitor pupils' engagement in home learning and feed this feedback to SLT.
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader.
- Complete CPD as directed by the SLT (weekly).

Teaching Assistants:
- Provide support for home learning – work under the direction of the class teacher to prepare and plan home learning
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader
- Complete CPD as directed by the SLT (weekly).

Administrative Staff:
As directed by headteacher/line manager to include:
- Management of mailboxes
- CPD
- Preparation in readiness for school reopening
- Kitchen staff – Staff should be prepared to step in for colleagues if they are unwell, or to come in to carryout kitchen cleaning tasks at different times of the day from those in which the rest of the team are in to cook.
- Complete CPD including online learning with certification e.g. food hygiene related

- Site management - When off-site, site management staff should continue to respond to emails and contact contractors and complete paperwork as required. On-site, the schedule of maintenance will be adhered to.