



TRCA Home Working Policy

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Good practice

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Definitions

In this **Home Working Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Home Working Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Governance Professional'** means the Governance Professional to the Board or the Governance Professional to the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board of the Directors or the Local Governing Body appointed from time to time.
- vi **'Catholic Senior Executive Leader'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Governing Body'** means the governing body of the School.
- ix **'Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the School, from time to time.
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body elected from time to time.

1. Scope

- 1.1 These guidelines can be applied in principle to all Academy employees, regardless of contract type or duration, other than those employed on a casual basis, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, Home Working would not be practical.
- 1.2 Positions with at least one of the following requirements will **not** normally be considered for Home Working:
- teaching time with pupil contact
 - direct face to face contact on a frequent basis (for example reception duties for internal and external visitors);
 - being a member of a team who needs to have face to face contact with other team members such as checking off or signing documents, providing cover during breaks;
 - servicing and serving facilities or assets (e.g. Site Services Officers, Catering, Cleaners, Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants, IT Technicians);

2. Introduction

- 2.1 For a variety of reasons, it may be necessary for staff to undertake some of their duties away from the schools sites. Whilst there is an expectation that normally staff will be in the workplace, it is accepted that occasionally there will be circumstances where an individual and the relevant line manager agree that it is mutually beneficial for that individual to work at home.
- 2.2 These guidelines define Home Working arrangements to perform work, set out entitlements, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply, and have been developed to provide a clear approach for dealing with Home Working on a regulated and frequent basis. They are not intended to address the ad hoc one-off arrangements for Home Working for short periods to complete specific agreed pieces of work, nor are they intended to change existing arrangements or working practices.
- 2.3 The intention is that this will ensure fair treatment and consistency of approach, which is understood by all staff. It provides a standard framework for reporting, monitoring and managing Home Working in line with business and individual need.
- 2.4 These guidelines are underpinned by an expectation that there is no detriment to pupils' experience and impact on colleagues or provision of services and this is always a priority when considering applications and arrangements.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 Home Working means performance of work for agreed hours from the home (i.e. normally in the employee's private dwelling) or another remote location. The flexibility and productivity outcomes available from Home Working can be attractive to both the Academy and employees. The arrangements are based on a management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit.
- 3.2 Working from home can save use of cars, fuel and commuting time and can ease car-parking requirements. Circumstances where working at home may be mutually beneficial usually arise where work needs to be done with minimum distraction or interruption. Working from home should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.3 Working from home:
- 3.3.1 Is granted at the Academy's discretion and requires the prior approval of the appropriate line manager following consultation and discussion with the employee; it will not alter an employee's general terms and conditions of employment;
 - 3.3.2 Is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours;
 - 3.3.3 Will not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual;
 - 3.3.4 Does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the Academy for use at home.
 - 3.3.5 It is expected that where Home Working arrangements are agreed that colleagues would be present onsite when required.

4. Equality and Diversity Statement

4.1 This guidance should ensure an appropriate and equitable response to employee requests for Home Working, with decisions taken and communicated in an efficient and fair manner and will be implemented in conjunction with the Academy's commitments to diversity and equality. This can be found in the TRCA Single Equality Duty

5. Health and Safety Considerations

- 5.1 Most of the work that staff would undertake at home is paper-based work or work on a computer, and in general such work is not high risk.
- 5.2 The employee must refer to the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) [guide](#), regarding the use of computer equipment and how to set up a workstation. It is expected staff will adopt the same principles as used onsite with regard to setting up the workstation and taking regular breaks.
- 5.3 The employee must also refer to the Lone Working [guide](#) for HSE guidance on working alone.

6. Key Information for Employees

6.1 Equipment and technology

- 6.1.1 As the School/Academy remains a work base for the employee and a desk and equipment is provided onsite, the Academy will not normally provide the employee with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they have an acceptable workplace station and staff will be asked to undertake a self-assessment of their Home Working provision by completing the checklist at (Appendix 1).
- 6.1.2 The employee is responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband services where required, and for contacting the service provider in the event of any technical issues. It is not possible for the Academy to provide IT support for equipment owned by members of staff.
- 6.1.3 Employees who are using Academy supplied and supported equipment can receive telephone/email support from IT Services on the relevant contact details but if the issue cannot be resolved by telephone, they will be required to bring the equipment on-site, as home visits are not possible. This is also the case where upgrades, installations of new software or maintenance is required.
- 6.1.4 All staff are required to use their own and supplied equipment correctly and to take reasonable steps to maintain any equipment provided, removing defective equipment from use and reporting defects on supplied equipment to their line manager. Academy equipment may not be used by others i.e. family and friends etc.
- 6.1.5 IT services can provide appropriate software (such as Microsoft Office suite) for the use of employees working from home.
- 6.1.6 Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of Academy property and all Academy information, files, documents, data etc. within their possession, including both paper and electronic material. All employees who have off site working arrangements are required to adhere to the Academy's policies and guidance on data security.
- 6.1.7 Any third-party data storage solutions, such as Apple Dropbox and Apple iCloud should not be used without corporate data being encrypted first and ideally staff should only use the Microsoft SharePoint/Google drive or web-drive solutions provided for data transfer.

6.2 Insurance

- 6.1.8 It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of home-based work with respect to household insurance.
- 6.1.9 The Academy holds liability insurances that provide cover for the legal liabilities of the Academy and its employees whenever they are engaged in Academy business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

6.3 Costs/ expenses

- 6.1.10 No contribution will be made by the Academy towards normal household expenses attached to Home Working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs. When an employee is working at or from home,

journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed.

6.4 Communication

- 6.4.1. Good communication is an essential part of any successful Home Working arrangement. Provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and external clients during the working day.
- 6.4.2. If contact is required during set hours or at specific times the employee must ensure that they are contactable at these times (email/telephone). The arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home and kept up to date.
- 6.4.3. The employee's personal telephone numbers and home address and personal non work email address may not be divulged to third parties without their express permission.
- 6.4.4. Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for pupils, parents, clients or representatives to meet with the employee at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the school sites in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism and safety.
- 6.4.5. Visits from Academy staff to a home worker's home should only take place under exceptional circumstances, such as welfare reasons or for security purposes.

7. Requests for Home Working

- 7.1 An employee should follow the [Flexible Working Policy](#) for a request for Home Working.
- 7.2 A manager should aim to be as flexible as possible in accommodating such a request but may refuse a request to work from home for legitimate business or logistical reasons.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Line manager responsibilities:

- To consider and grant permission for Home Working at their discretion.
- To notify employees of relevant arrangements, and to provide the employee with a copy of this Home Working guidance.
- To ensure that the employee is aware of expectations and the required standard of work, including specific deliverables for each occasion of Home Working.
- To provide feedback and to discuss and evaluate the arrangement.
- To evaluate and review the arrangement on a regular basis (minimum annually) to ensure appropriate outcomes are being delivered.
- Failure of the employee to achieve appropriate performance outcomes whilst under the home working policy, may result in the arrangements being withdrawn.

8.2 Employee responsibilities:

- To abide by the requirements of this document.
- To give details of a mobile and/or home telephone number and email address to facilitate communication with the Academy as appropriate.
- To deliver the expected work outcomes.
- Understand and consider all the information within these guidelines, in particular their own responsibilities regarding health and safety, data security and confidentiality.

8.3 Human Resources responsibilities:

- To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with Home Working at departmental or individual level.
- To assist managers with the fair and consistent application of the guidelines.

9 Other Relevant Guidance

- 9.1 In certain adverse conditions, Home Working may be a practical alternative to travel. Information about adverse weather will be communicated to staff as appropriate.
- 9.2 Home Working may be requested as an adjustment to support staff with a disability. Managers who are considering requests from staff with as an adjustment for a disability should consult with their Human Resource contacts.
- 9.3 Home Working may be an option in circumstances where someone has short-term mobility issues where they are unable to travel to work but are otherwise fit for work.

10 Monitoring and Review

- The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed by **CC2 Strategy, People and Organisational Development**.

11 Link to other policies

- TRCA Code of Conduct
- TRCA Flexible Working Policy
- TRCA Information Security Policy
- TRCA Special Leave of Absence Policy

12 COVID – 19 Addendum

This is an interim policy on Home Working in response to government recommendations relating to COVID-19 to enable social distancing and for employees to work from home wherever possible. In response to the partial closure of the schools, it is designed to determine if staff are able to work from home safely and effectively and to set out the steps that should be taken if Home Working is embarked upon.

For staff that cannot meet the necessary requirements, discussion with line managers and Human Resources will determine what action will be followed, for example, use of the TRCA Special Leave of Absence Policy.

The Romero Catholic Academy understands that the impact of COVID-19 may mean that:

- The Romero Catholic Academy is required to enforce a partial closure of schools to staff, children and visitors, with the exception of key worker children and Year groups identified by the DfE; there are a limited number of staff. Therefore, the only way for the organisation to continue to operate, is if as many staff as practical are able to work from home.
- Working from home where possible should be supported.
- PPA time can be done from home where possible at the discretion of the Principal.
- Some staff will have enhanced caring responsibilities that may make it more difficult to attend work.
- Staff may have to self-isolate and are therefore are not able to attend work.

For clarity, home-based work or working from home means performance of your duties, from a home or private setting.

Ordinarily, working from home:

- Does not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment.
- Does not attract subsidy.
- Does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the Academy for use at home.

Undertaking caring responsibilities while working from home would not normally be considered possible, therefore staff are asked to seek alternative childcare arrangements where practicable. Please note that as key workers,

dependents will be offered school and nursery places. However, we do recognise the exceptional situation and if you are required to provide care, and the dependent is not of age for a place in school or nursery, then you should discuss the arrangements with your manager including what the impact on outputs will be and/or the hours that you are able to work. It may be appropriate for you to use one or more of the special leave or working from home policies or use annual leave. This should be discussed and agreed with your manager.

If you are due to work remotely but you are unwell, you must inform your manager using the normal sickness reporting procedure.

This policy does not apply to staff who wish to submit a request to support regular Home Working as part of a formal flexible working request. You should refer to the TRCA Flexible Working Policy [in](#) these circumstances.

Ability to work from Home

This policy can (in principle) be applied to all Academy employees, regardless of contract type or duration, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, Home Working would not be practical.

To support ad hoc/occasional working from home taking place, staff will be asked to undertake a self-assessment of their Home Working provision by completing the checklist at Appendix 1 (scroll to the bottom of this document). This should be sent to the appropriate line manager.

In addition to completing the checklist, staff should agree/consider the following with their managers:

- Contact arrangements and frequency of contact, including the hours during which they will be working if these are to be different to the normal work pattern.
- IT requirements as determined by the job (e.g. laptop, mobile phone, access), and whether you are able to use personal equipment to support Home Working.
- Whether equipment that will be used is in safe working order.
- Revising familiarity with the relevant health and safety policies including the need to record incidences.

It is important to read the DSE [guide](#), and for you and your manager to consider the recommendations. The Academy will not normally provide office furniture (e.g. desks and chairs) to enable Home Working. If no space is available that meets the guidance in the DSE, you should discuss your options with your line manager.

Where a member of staff, who otherwise would be able to work from home, is not able to do so because of a disability or other health condition, they should discuss with their line manager whether reasonable adjustments may be provided.

Communications, Working Hours and Safety

Home Working is a form of lone working. This means that there may be a risk of staff not having immediate access to another person for assistance or supervision if circumstances require.

To mitigate against this risk, staff that are working from home are required to:

- Keep their work diary up-to-date so colleagues know where and what they are doing, and if there is a proposed variation to normal working hours, agree this with their line manager and/or their teams of the hours being worked.
- Agree a schedule or protocol for keeping in touch with their manager. This would normally be on a daily basis. This action is particularly important for ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff that live alone.

- Be contactable by voice during all working hours either through home phone/mobile phone or via Microsoft TEAMS/Google Hangouts
- Under no circumstances should pupils or parents be invited to visit a member of staff at home when remote working, nor should any member of staff provide a personal address for correspondence.

Use of IT equipment and mobile device

Staff, regardless of whether using Academy or personal equipment, should familiarise themselves with, and adhere to the TRCA [Information Security Policy](#) It is the responsibility of staff to:

- Treat Academy property with due regard and care.
- Ensure personal devices feature up-to-date antivirus software and ensure operating systems and software are up-to-date and secure.
- Be conscious of other individuals within their household who may have access to their devices, and where possible, restrict such access.
- Log out of Academy and School systems and not allow the device to remember passwords, or write passwords down/share passwords with others.
- Be conscious that other people within their household may be able to see information on their screen/overhear phone calls and take measures to ensure confidentiality.
- Refrain from storing data on their personal device unless absolutely necessary (use of Office 365/OneDrive may help here).
- Refrain from taking paper documents containing personal or otherwise confidential information home with them unless absolutely necessary. If paper documents are taken home they must be kept secure.
- Be cautious of phishing emails and other fraudulent activity, especially in light of the current situation.
- While the Academy is appreciative of staff using their personal equipment at this time, failure to adhere to the relevant data protection and IT usage policies could result in disciplinary action if policies are wilfully disregarded.

Expenses and reimbursement

Internet services and utilities (e.g. water, gas and electricity) will not normally be paid for or reimbursed. Call costs will not normally be paid or reimbursed, only to be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and only when the costs to be incurred have been agreed in advance with line managers.

Insurance

It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of home-based work with respect to household insurance.

Terms and Conditions and other policies

A colleague who is remote working is still governed by the same terms and conditions of their standard contract of employment.

This document and its related documents are not intended to have any express or implied contractual commitments for staff, and its continuation or otherwise is at the absolute discretion of the Academy.

The Code of Conduct and all other policies, procedures and associated guidance remain in place and should be adhered to during any period of remote working.

Appendix 1: Home Working Self-assessment Checklist

This form should be completed initially by the home worker and returned to the line manager. Any matters of concern should be resolved before Home Working commences, if at all possible.

Name:

School:

Address of Home Working site:

Please tick the boxes to confirm you will or have carried out the necessary actions:

- I am able to work from home and confirm that I have read and understood these guidelines.
- I agree to read the DSE guide, and bring to my line managers attention any unsuitability of working from home for my individual circumstances.
- I will inform my manager of changes to my home or personal circumstances, which could affect the suitability of Home Working for me e.g. change in caring responsibilities, becoming sick.
- If required, I will inform my landlord/mortgage provider of my intention to work at home.
- If required, I will notify my insurance company of my intention to work at home and inform them of any additional equipment which has been provided by the Academy.
- I agree to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of Academy equipment and data.
- I am aware and understand my responsibility to notify my manager when I am absent from work due to sickness or any other reason.
- I understand that if I have an accident while working remotely I must inform my manager as soon as is practicable, seek appropriate medical help, and record the incident.

Employee Signature:

Date: