



# King's Group Academies

## Flexible Working Policy

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KGA is dedicated to fostering equality of opportunity in employment and promoting work practices that enhance work-life balance. Flexible working refers to any arrangement that differs from the standard working pattern and is designed to meet individual needs. We understand that flexible working not only supports a healthier balance between professional and personal responsibilities, but also boosts employee morale, reduces absenteeism, and plays a crucial role in retaining our talented workforce.

This policy provides all employees with the opportunity to request changes to their working arrangements, both informally and formally. Line managers are encouraged to support these requests wherever possible, unless business or operational needs prevent them from doing so.

No employee will face any unlawful disadvantage or be denied career development opportunities as a result of requesting flexible working.

KGA is committed to implementing this policy effectively and ensuring it is communicated to all employees. While the Flexible Working Policy applies solely to employees, it does not form part of any individual's contractual terms and is not intended to have legal effect. However, it reflects current KGA practices, and all employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with its contents. KGA reserves the right to amend this policy as needed.

In all decisions relating to flexible working, the needs of our students will remain a key consideration.

### 1. Who may make a statutory request to work flexibly?

Employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of their employment. This right is formally recognised in this policy and supported by our established procedure for making flexible working requests.

When a flexible working request is approved under the formal process, employees will receive updated contracts reflecting the changes to their working arrangements.

Any employee interested in flexible working is encouraged to first request an informal discussion with their Line Manager. This discussion will help explore available options. In many cases, a short-term or temporary adjustment may be possible without triggering the formal statutory process.

Leaders at the management level hold a particular responsibility to model supportive behaviour, uphold the KGA's flexible working objectives, and lead by example in fostering a balanced, inclusive work environment.

To ensure smooth facilitation of requests, Line Managers will receive training in equal opportunities and best practices. They are also encouraged to seek guidance regarding any flexible working issues.

All employees play a role in the success of this policy. It is important that they familiarise themselves with its provisions and act in accordance with its aims. Those involved in management or recruitment can request additional training or clarification if needed.

## **2. Forms of Flexible Working**

Flexible working encompasses various adjustments to an employee's working arrangements. These adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Reduction or variation of working hours, such as adjusting start and finish times.
- Reduction in the number of days worked each week, offering a more tailored schedule.
- Working from different locations, such as remote or home working, either fully or partially.

These flexible working arrangements can take several forms, including:

- Job sharing, where two employees share the responsibilities of a full-time role.
- Annualised hours, where employees work a set number of hours across the year rather than a traditional weekly schedule.
- Remote working, allowing employees to work from home either full-time or on selected days.
- Term-time working, where employees work only during the school term (part-year working).
- Compressed hours, enabling employees to work their usual number of hours over fewer days.
- Flexi-time, allowing employees to choose their working hours within agreed limits.

## **3. Making an Informal Flexible Working Request**

Employees wishing to make an informal request for flexible working may approach their Line Manager. These requests will be considered in line with the Academy's academic priorities and operational needs.

To support a smooth consideration of your request, it is advisable to:

- Submit your request in writing, specifying whether the change to your working pattern is intended to be temporary or permanent.
- Provide detailed information about your current and desired working arrangements, including the preferred working days, hours, and start/finish times, as well as the proposed start date for the new arrangement.

Once your informal request is received, the Academy will outline the steps to consider your application, which may involve a meeting to discuss the proposal. You will then be informed of the outcome.

#### **4. Eligibility for the Formal Flexible Working Request Procedure**

Employees have the statutory right to request flexible working, with no minimum service requirement, in line with the changes effective from April 2024. This policy outlines the process for submitting formal requests.

To be eligible for the formal process, you must:

1. Be an employee of the Academy;
2. Have not submitted two formal flexible working requests within the past 12 months (requests are limited to two per 12-month period, calculated from the date of the last formal application).

If you do not meet these criteria, you are still encouraged to submit an informal request, which may be considered outside of the formal process.

#### **5. Making a Formal Flexible Working Request**

If you are considering flexible working, we encourage you to first speak with your line manager and explore possible informal options before submitting a formal request.

To submit a formal flexible working request, you will need to provide a written application, which should:

- The date of the request.
- A statement that this is a statutory request for flexible working.
- Details of how you want to work flexibly and when you would like it to start.
- A statement saying if and when you've made a previous application - include the date of the previous request.

##### **a. Submission Timeline**

For classroom-based employees, requests should be submitted as early as possible, given the challenges of altering timetables mid-year. Employees in other roles should aim to submit requests at least two months before the desired start date.

##### **b. The Decision Process**

Once your request is submitted:

- The Academy may agree to the changes without requiring a meeting. If so, you will receive written confirmation, including details of how your employment contract will be updated.
- If further discussion is needed, a meeting with your line manager will be arranged promptly. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to this meeting for support.
- The meeting will explore your proposed working arrangement and its impact on your role, team, and service delivery. It may also serve as an opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements if your request cannot be fully accommodated.

Where necessary, your line manager may propose an initial trial period to assess whether the new arrangement works for both you and the Academy.

### **c. Outcome Notification**

After the meeting, you will be informed of the decision in writing, typically within 14 days. If your request is accepted or modified, the Academy will:

- Provide details of the agreed working arrangement, any trial period, and the changes to your contract of employment.
- Ask you to sign and return the confirmation letter, which will be kept on file to formalise the variation in your employment terms.

If the Academy needs more time to make a decision, you will be notified with an explanation for the delay. All requests will be considered and concluded within a maximum of two months from the initial submission date.

### **d. If Your Request is Denied**

In cases where the Academy cannot accommodate your request due to academic or operational reasons, you will receive:

- A written explanation outlining the reason(s) for the refusal.
- A detailed explanation of how these reasons apply to your situation.
- Information on the appeals process should you wish to challenge the decision.

No application will be denied without first holding a formal meeting to discuss it.

### **e. Reasons for Denying a Request**

The Academy may decline a flexible working request based on the following criteria:

1. The burden of additional costs.
2. Detrimental effect on meeting the needs of students.
3. Difficulty reorganising work among existing staff.
4. Inability to recruit additional staff.
5. Detrimental impact on quality or performance.
6. Insufficiency of work during the periods proposed.
7. Planned structural changes.

## **f. 6. Appeal Procedure**

If your flexible working request is rejected, you have the right to appeal the decision.

To ensure a fair process, your appeal must:

- Be submitted in writing, dated, and include the specific grounds for your appeal.
- Be sent to the Chair of Governors within 14 days from the date you received the written rejection of your original request.

## **g. Appeal Timeline and Process**

The appeal process must be concluded within two months from the receipt of your original request. Once your appeal is submitted:

- The Chair of Governors will arrange a meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, typically within 14 days of receiving your appeal.
- The meeting will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all parties involved. As in the initial meeting, you may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative for support.

An Appeals Officer, independent and impartial, will be appointed to oversee the appeal. This person will be selected from either the Governing Board or the Senior Leadership Group to ensure neutrality.

## **h. Outcome of the Appeal**

After the meeting, you will be notified of the decision in writing, typically within 14 days. If your appeal is upheld:

- You will receive written confirmation of the new working arrangements, any applicable trial periods, and changes to your contract of employment, along with the commencement date.
- You will be required to sign and return a copy of the confirmation letter, which will be added to your personnel file to formalise the change in your employment terms.

Additionally, your Line Manager may discuss any practical matters such as handover arrangements to ensure a smooth transition into your new working pattern.

## **i. Rejection of Appeal**

If your appeal is rejected, you will receive a written explanation outlining the academic or operational reasons for the decision and how they apply in your case.

## **7. Withdrawing a Request for Flexible Working**

If you choose to withdraw a formal request for flexible working, you are only eligible to submit one more request for a period of 12 months from the date of your initial submission.

Additionally, there are specific circumstances under which a formal request will be considered withdrawn. This may occur if:

3. You fail, without valid reason, to attend two scheduled meetings intended to discuss your request; or
4. You unreasonably withhold essential information needed for us to properly assess your request.

In such cases, the Academy will notify you in writing that your request has been deemed withdrawn.

## **8. Extending Time Under the Formal Procedure**

The Academy aims to communicate a final decision regarding a formal flexible working application within two months of receiving your request. However, in exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to complete the review within the expected timeframe. If an extension is necessary, and mutually agreed upon, you will be provided with a written confirmation of the extension, including the revised deadline for a decision.

## **9. Management of policy**

The King's Group Academies Trustees have overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. They will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes. King's Group Academies policies will be reviewed regularly and will include an evaluation for impact on workload and working hours.