

Date Approved	Effective date	Date of next review	Policy owner	Policy lead
16/07/2019	06/08/2019	01/07/2020	Director of Human Resources	Head of HR Business Partnering

## Agile Working Policy

A work life mix that's right for you leads to wellbeing, better use of time and resources and us all succeeding together. That's why through our Agile Working policy we give you control over how and where you work. Our principle of Trust is key here. Working with your manager and team, you can decide how you best perform your role, while flexing your hours and location to fit.

### Here are the key facts:

- There is no one size fits all pattern. Agile Working arrangements will vary between teams and individuals based on what works for them.
- Trust and good communications are vital to making Agile Working effective for individuals, teams and the charity.
- We have core hours (11:00am-3:00pm) so you know when your colleagues will be around, and you can flex your work around your life.
- Working outside of a Teach First office does not need to be at your home, we encourage you to think about other working locations like libraries, shared office space and more. You should pick the location for your working day which is appropriate to your needs, your team's needs and the work you're doing that day.
- Agile working is different from Flexible Working. Agile provides us with flexibility to live and work well as and when needed, it does not change your contracted hours or base or work. You could be asked to be in the office or flex your arrangements.
- Flexible Working gives you and your team certainty around flexible arrangements by protecting these through your contract.
- If something happens while you're working at home that affects your wellbeing or health & safety or data related to Teach First you must tell us as soon as possible.

### Policy detail

#### 1) Agile working

- a) Agile Working means we trust employees to work where and when it's appropriate, so they can do their job most effectively and balance other commitments. Employees are fully accountable for their results and performance. They should make the right choices to maximise those. Employees are judged on impact not on visibility.
- b) We provide IT equipment and design our office spaces to increase the opportunities for agile working.

- c) Not every role or circumstance is compatible with every location or timing. We expect employees to make choices which fit the outcomes they are expected to deliver, the way they do their work, which includes good communications with their line manager and colleagues, external stakeholders, value for money, data security and health and safety.
- d) Employees should discuss their plans for agile working with their manager before they start to work in an agile pattern. Once these plans are in place employees are trusted to manage their time and work. If there is a change to how an employee would like to use agile working on an ongoing basis, they should discuss this with their manager. An example would be if an employee had regularly been working two days a week away from the office but wanted to start to work three days away from the office regularly. In this instance a conversation between the employee and line manager would be useful to discuss impact on the individual – their work and wellbeing – and the same for the team. Reasonable plans will not be refused but permission may be denied where there are grounds to believe performance might suffer. Arrangements may be cancelled if performance does suffer.
- e) It is vital that employee choices involve courtesy towards others, including leaving and clearing facilities they're no longer using, being appropriately available for discussion, considering the impact of noise and activity on neighbours, etc.
- f) Agile Working should not be confused with Flexible Working which describes the different contractual changes employees can request including part-time working, protected days working from home and job-sharing.

## 2) PRINCIPLES

- a) The extent to which an employee can be agile will depend on the requirements of their role. All Agile Working plans will be considered and supported where they don't negatively affect performance – individual, team or charity. The need to create and maintain team culture and ways of working in Teach First offices should also be taken into consideration. Where there are groups of employees completing the same role, each employee will be treated consistently so that they have the same entitlement. Line Managers should clearly document decisions to refuse plans with the appropriate business reason.
- b) Agile Working should not impact the level or quality of service to stakeholders. Equally, there should be no increase in workload for colleagues because of a colleague working away from their assigned office or flexing their working hours.
- c) Presence does not equal performance. Employee performance should be judged by measurable results and outcomes, not necessarily by how many hours employees work or how long they stay in the office.
- d) Employees should make decisions about the location of their working day based on their needs, the needs of their team, the ways of working of their assigned office and the type of work they're doing that day (for example collaborative work or focused work).
- e) The way an employee uses Agile Working must be compatible with the amount of face-to-face contact and supervision required to perform their role.

- f) Agile Working should not have an adverse effect on an employee's health, safety or wellbeing.
- g) Arrangements must be put in place to protect confidential and personal information including that held on remote devices and at home.

### **3) LINE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Line managers should champion agile practices, trusting team members to make responsible decisions. Line managers are required to:
  - Ensure flexibility, openness, constructiveness and consistency in the way Agile Working is applied within their team/department.
  - Consider any health and safety implications when agreeing to Agile Working arrangements by consulting the Workplace team regarding any risks and the need to complete any Risk Assessments where necessary. For more information email [Healthandsafety@teachfirst.org.uk](mailto:Healthandsafety@teachfirst.org.uk)
  - Periodically reviewing Agile Working arrangements to make sure their team(s) are using Agile Working in line with the policy.
  - Consider any information governance and security implications associated with Agile Working and seek advice as appropriate from Governance, Legal and Compliance.
  - Make sure employees take responsibility for the security of Teach First equipment and sensitive, confidential data. Ensuring they comply with GDPR, reporting any data breaches or loss or theft of such immediately. For more information read the Data Protection information and resources page on the intranet.

### **4) EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Responsibility for making Agile Working work rests equally with employees and line managers. Together they need to assess the opportunities and challenges, openly and honestly. This includes the need to balance requests for Agile Working equitably across teams. All employees are required to:
  - Make sure their line manager is happy with their plans for Agile Working before starting to work in an agile pattern.
  - Let their line manager know of any changes to agreed Agile Working arrangements in a timely manner.
  - Raise any concerns arising from Agile Working arrangements, including health and safety and information governance, concerns to their line manager.
  - Ensure flexibility, openness and constructiveness in all discussions and agreements about Agile Working with their line manager, remaining focused on the needs of the charity.
  - Be contactable via Skype.
  - Liaise with their line manager for advice and clarification as required.
  - Take ownership for being a part of creating team culture, working actively with their team to create a good working culture.

## 5) AGILE WORKING IN PRACTICE

### 5.1 Equalities

- a) There are some roles which prevent the employee from being totally flexible with their working arrangements.
- b) The agile work style will be jointly determined by a manager and an employee, taking into consideration the most appropriate work style to support effective delivery of the service.
- c) When agreeing an agile work style, it's important for the manager and the employee to agree the practical and operational arrangements. Expected work outputs for the employee and the arrangements for communication, support and any 'housekeeping' rules need to be in place before the employee starts Agile Working.
- d) If an employee's request to work agilely is not agreed, the line manager should confirm this as soon as it is reasonably practical to the employee, providing a rationale for the rejection of the request. The line manager may wish to seek HR advice in such instances via HR Advisors.

### 5.2 Working hours

- a) Full-time employees are contracted to work 37.5 hours per week. The charity's normal hours of work are from 9:00am to 5:30pm from Monday to Friday, with one hour for lunch each day.
- b) Employees are empowered to flex these hours, subject to business needs and operational requirements, to balance work and other commitments. However, it's expected that employees will work 'core hours' between 11:00am and 3:00pm, so there's sufficient time during the working day when employees can collaborate. As guidance meetings requiring colleagues to travel to another Teach First office should be organised within core hours and shouldn't ordinarily start earlier than 10:30am. Though, as ever, good communication is key to making Agile Working work. Those organising meetings should discuss flexibility of timings with those attending.
- c) Although employees can flex their working hours around core hours, if required to be available in normal working hours (9:00am-5:30pm) or their assigned office for a key meeting or piece of work, employees should expect to be available. If an employee needs to have certain hours or a location of work protected on a regular basis, we advise that they put in a request for a flexible working arrangement. (Please see our Flexible Working Policy).
- d) It's an employee's responsibility to discuss Agile Working arrangements in advance with their line manager.
- e) Each line manager is responsible for ensuring adequate team cover during normal hours (9:00am – 5:30pm). Note that there will be no additional operational support (Workplace, Technology, Finance and HR) beyond normal hours.
- f) Agile Working is not a substitute for Flexible Working, nor is it considered a contractual right or a permanent arrangement. Informal arrangements are not in any way intended to be a variation to an

employee's contractual hours. In instances where an employee needs regular flexibility in working patterns our Flexible Working Policy should be considered.

- g) Agile Working shouldn't compromise our wellbeing. Therefore, Agile Working should not be used as a way for an employee to continue working when sick. If an employee is sick they shouldn't be working from home and should take a sick leave in line with our Sickness Absence Policy.
- h) Agile working should not be used by new employees in their first week of work with Teach First. New employees should work in-person during this time while they settle into ways of working and getting to know colleagues. Equally their line manager should be present in-person for this week or make arrangements for colleagues to be present. At the end of their first week the employee should discuss with their line manager:
  - our Agile Working policy
  - what's expected of them
  - any Agile Working plans they wish to put in place.

Agile Working arrangements should then be discussed alongside performance as part of the new employee's probation review.

### 5.3 Office environment

- a) The working environment has been designed to provide agility and choice to enable employees to work in the most appropriate location, and in the most effective way to do their job. The working spaces are a mixture of formal and informal spaces, which are suited to different activities.
- b) By keeping desks clear when not in use, shared space is still available for others to use who may not be part of that department or team.
- c) Employees are welcome to have personal items on their desk if they are cleared away when the desk is left for more than two hours.
- d) All employees must respect the confidential and sensitive nature of work carried out across the charity when working in a zone that is different to their assigned zone.
- e) Employee work can be kept in secure storage units and lockers will be available to store personal items.

### 5.4 Remote working

- a) When working remotely all employees must be contactable by Skype. Employees should use their calendar in Outlook plus location and availability settings in Skype so colleagues know when and where they are working.
- b) The ability to work from home or away from the office allows employees to manage their domestic responsibilities (e.g. delivery of goods, assisting with childcare arrangements), providing this does not have a negative impact on the individual's ability to carry out their work, or on service delivery.

- c) Where an employee wants to have a contractually protected right to work from home on specific day(s), they should make a flexible working request. For more information see our Flexible Working Policy. Without this contractual protection a manager can request an employee is present for work in-person and the employee would need to meet that request.
- d) The ability to work from home or away from the office is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. It is the employee's responsibility to make sure adequate provision is in place, should they choose to work from home.
- e) When an employee works from home, whether it is regularly or on an ad hoc basis, their home becomes their workplace. And Teach First has a responsibility to ensure their safety, and that of others present in their workplace. Health and Safety law also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace (whether the workplace be the office or at home). Teach First expects employees to be honest in reporting their homeworking environment and any serious accidents which happen while working at home. For more information please see our Health and Safety Policy.
- f) Employees are responsible for any costs associated with working away from the office on an ad hoc basis (for example, home office equipment, internet broadband costs and so on). Note that a Mobile Phone Allowance won't be put in place simply because an employee wishes to work remotely or from home. Skype should be used for this purpose. A Mobile Phone Allowance will only be granted where the job role demands it (i.e. it is a requirement of the job that the employee is mobile). For more information see our Mobile Phone Allowance Policy.

### **5.5 Agile Working and Performance Management**

- a) Managing employees in an agile environment can be a challenge, as their contribution may be less obvious to a line manager who is not present to witness the impact. However, employees should be valued for their performance rather than the number of hours they work.
- b) Managers should focus on what the employee achieves and how they achieve it. Employees need to understand:
  - What they are expected to do
  - The method of agreeing/monitoring workload
  - How success will be measured
  - How this feeds into the performance management process
  - What communication is required from them
  - How the line manager will communicate with them.

### **5.6 Home office & travel expenses**

- a) All employees have an assigned Teach First office, this is a contractual base of the employee for HMRC, mileage/travel claims, and other expenses purposes. Please see Employee Expenses Policy for more information.
- b) Any agreement to work agilely will not constitute a change to an employee's assigned Teach First office. Employees who would like to consider a permanent change of home office should contact their HR Advisor.

### 5.7 Data protection

- a) It is the responsibility of employees to make sure they comply with Teach First's Data Protection Policy and act in accordance with our Information Security Handbook - including taking all reasonable steps to safeguard equipment from loss or damage. Failure to keep Teach First property and information secure will be considered a very serious matter and could result in disciplinary action.