



## FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS 2024-2025

### Child Safe Standards

Children have the right to be safe and protected, including at school.

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes>

### IMPLEMENTATION

Critical components of successful flexible arrangement implementation include:

- Work arrangements
- Communication
- The attitudes of principal, the leadership team and other colleagues.

### OPTIONS FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The range of flexible work options available within the Department are determined by legal, organisational and role requirements. Refer to the chapter Appendix 2 — Overview of key flexible work options.

Most flexible work arrangements are subject to negotiation between the employee and the principal. Some arrangements are entitlements with the timing of the arrangement subject to approval, for example, long service leave. Different flexible work options will be more or less suited to particular roles and areas of working. Operational feasibility plays a key role when considering proposals for flexible work arrangements.

The major flexible work arrangements available to teaching staff are part-time, job share and some flexible start and finish arrangements.

For non-teaching staff in schools, the range of flexible work options may include part-time, job share, flexible start and finish times, compressed work week, working from home and purchased leave.

### AD-HOC OR SHORT TERM REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility requests to meet short-term needs such as the attendance of an appointment or occasional work from home are not continuing arrangements and therefore are not within the scope of this policy.

One-off requests should be managed in the context of the school's daily program.

### DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Department's policy regarding flexible work arrangements and how they are managed is consistent with the principles and provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 and Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010. It assists employees to reconcile work and family responsibilities.

All requests for flexible work arrangements and the responses to them should meet the following criteria. Requests for flexible work arrangements should:

- be in writing
- outline the personal circumstances under which the request is made
- detail the arrangement the employee is seeking
- describe how the arrangement will work within the work area

The principal's response to a request for flexible work arrangements should:

- be in writing
- be provided no later than 21 days following the submission of the request. In circumstances which prevent this occurring, seek the agreement of the employee
- note any modifications to the original request following discussions, including where an agreement has been reached to trial the arrangement
- where the application is not approved, provide the business reasons for the refusal of the request

## REASONABLE BUSINESS GROUNDS

Reasonable business grounds may include the following:

- that the new working arrangements requested by the employee would be too costly for the employer
- that there is no capacity to change the working arrangements of other employees to accommodate the new working arrangements requested by the employee
- that it would be impractical to change the working arrangements of other employees, or recruit new employees, to accommodate the new working arrangements requested by the employee
- that the new working arrangements requested by the employee would be likely to result in a significant loss in efficiency or productivity
- that the new working arrangements requested by the employee would be likely to have a significant negative impact on customer service

## PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

- Communication is a two-way process. Leadership and all employees each have their respective responsibilities. Information exchange and co-ordination is important to making flexible working arrangements successful.
- Meetings will be scheduled to maximise attendance. Employees working in flexible arrangements should have at least some hours in common in the week and these should cover attendance at key meetings.
- Arrangements will be publicised for transparency so that the work schedules of those working in flexible arrangements are known. It is important that everyone knows when and where colleagues are working.
- Arrangements will to be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. This may involve letting students, parents, colleagues and School Council members know of the arrangements.
- Email signature blocks should indicate hours of availability. Employees working in flexible arrangements have a joint responsibility to keep the parent community informed of any changes to their routine to help ensure smooth operation. Techniques and tools such as phone protocols, buddy systems, sign-out books, voice mail, email, social networking and mobile phones may also assist with communication.

- Arrangements will be made for colleagues to access documents and resources that may be required when they employee is not available. It is the responsibility of the employee in flexible work arrangements to access these documents and resources to remain informed of the school's operation. There is an expectation that employees working in flexible arrangements access and read the daily Bulletin and any Department/Grade Level meeting minutes.
- School leaders should be able to contact employees in flexible work arrangements if necessary. Respect for privacy means such contact should occur only when necessary.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in May 2024 and will be reviewed in February 2025.