

Flexible Working Policy

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Red Balloon Educational Trust's Vision and Core Values

Red Balloon Educational Trust (RBET) provides a robust academic education, wellbeing and therapy, and social re-engagement programme for young people aged 11 -21, out of school due to bullying, trauma and/or mental ill-health. The overall aims of our provision are that students will regain their self-esteem, get back on an academic track, and return to mainstream education, and that employees are given opportunities for personal and professional development.

Our Vision

To provide the Red Balloon Recovery Programme to more of the young people who self-exclude from school; to employ well-trained employees to support that programme.

Our Values

This document is for your guidance only and should not be regarded as a substitute for taking professional advice.

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- Inclusivity
- Negotiating the Curriculum
- Student Voice
- Unconditional Positive Regard

RBET fully supports the independence and distinguishing characteristics of its Learner Centres, each of which is committed to the Red Balloon vision and values.

RBET is committed to supporting its Learner Centres for the benefit of the communities that they serve. RBET expects the Centres to work together and provides a strong, responsible foundation enabling them to develop and grow, offering the best possible learning experiences for their students.

1. Introduction

Red Balloon Educational Trust believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress, and improve performance and productivity.

All employees have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously by the Trust. Employees have the right to submit a flexible working request of their employment with RBET from day one. Employees can make two statutory flexible working requests in a 12-month period (even if they withdrew a request or requests). This includes requests for part-time, term-time, flexitime, compressed hours, and varied working locations.

We will deal with flexible working requests in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time. In any case a decision will be made and communicated to employees within two months of the application.

2. Requests for flexible working

A request for flexible working could include part-time, term-time, flexitime, compressed hours, and varied working locations such as hybrid working or working from home.

All requests must be made in writing by filling in the application form attached to this policy, that should be submitted to the employee's line manager/Head of Centre. Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application;

- the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions;
- the date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.

Where the request is being made by a disabled person as part of a request for a reasonable adjustment to their working arrangements, the employee should state this in the written application.

The Trust should not reject a request that does not contain the information required. The employee's line manager should explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

3. Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

Once the Head of Centre / line manager receives the employee request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, and in any case within two months following the submission (allowing a window for appeal within that). The Head of Centre/line manager will usually arrange a meeting at a convenient time and place to deal with the request. Where a request can be approved without further discussion in line with the terms stated in the employee's written application, a meeting will not be necessary, and the employee will be informed in writing of the decision.

An employee should be given the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at any flexible working meeting. They will be entitled to speak and confer privately with the employee but may not answer questions on their behalf. The meeting should take place in a private meeting room so that the discussion is kept away from other employees. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the Trust.

4. Outcome of a flexible working request

After the meeting, the Head of Centre will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the Trust

against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis: agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, RBET or the Centre may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

If a decision is made to reject the flexible working request, the full rationale behind the decision will be provided as outlined below.

Unless otherwise agreed, the changes to the employee's terms and conditions will be permanent.

5. Reasons for turning down a flexible working request

The line manager/Head of Centre will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

If a request has been rejected, the employee will be informed which of those reasons applies in writing, and of the appeal procedure.

6. Flexible working requests that are granted

If the request is upheld in full or in part, the employee and the line manager/Head of Centre will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and

conditions, and the date on which they will commence, will be put in writing and sent to the employee as an amendment to their contract of employment and written statement of terms and conditions of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable.

7. Timescales

All requests will be dealt with within a period of two months from first receipt to notification of the decision on any appeal. The line manager/Head of Centre should hold the meeting within a maximum of 28 days of receiving the request and notify the decision to the employee within 14 days of the meeting so that there is enough time for any appeal to be concluded.

Time limits detailed in this policy may be extended where both the employee and the Trust are in agreement. For example, the line manager/Head of Centre and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

8. Appeal

Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request are allowed to lodge an appeal in writing within 14 days of the notification, with the appeal to be heard within a maximum of 14 days. Any appeal must be dated and must set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

A meeting will be held to discuss the appeal. As explained above, an employee should be given the right to be accompanied.

The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of their appeal, and the reasons for the decision, within a maximum of 14 days of the appeal meeting. There is no further right of appeal.

9. Problems with a flexible working request

If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should seek clarification from the line manager/Head of Centre. If an employee is dissatisfied with the way in which their request has been handled, they can raise a grievance under the Trust's grievance procedure.

Line managers/Heads of Centre who receive a request will have regard to the Trust's equal opportunities policy when considering the request.

If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST – EMPLOYEE PROFORMA

Employee name:

Job title:

Date employment commenced:

Line manager:

CURRENT WORKING PATTERN	
Days/hours	
Location	

PROPOSED NEW WORKING PATTERN	
Days/hours	
Location	
Any additional technology or resources required	
Proposed start date	

IS THIS REQUEST IN RELATION TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?
If yes, please provide details and other supporting evidence

DECLARATION OF ANY PREVIOUS STATUTORY REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

I confirm that:

- › This is a statutory request for flexible working
- › This request does not bring my total number of statutory flexible working requests in the last 12 months to more than two.

Signed:

Date: