



College council will review this policy every three years or as directed by DET

**Date approved:** March 2017

**Date of next review:** 2020

## RATIONALE

Flexible work and work-life balance issues are in high profile in the community and demand for flexible work in the Australian workforce is increasing significantly. The trend is driven by labour market, social, demographic and legislative changes. It is a trend which is growing as the representation of women, parents, carers, and older workers increases.

Flexible working arrangements can help employees balance the changing demands of work and personal life and can benefit the employer by contributing to improved performance and productivity. Flexible work opportunities may also assist to attract and retain people with valuable skills and is an important contributor to the optimal participation of diverse groups in the workforce such as older workers, employees with disabilities and those with family and caring responsibilities. In multi-generational workforces, differing life cycle demands may result in any staff member requesting flexible work arrangements.

The Department recognises the importance of flexible work options and family friendly work practices in maintaining a diverse, adaptive and high performing workforce able to meet current and future needs.

The legislative context regarding flexible work options can be found in Fair Work Act (2009 Commonwealth), National Employment Standards (NES), Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

## PURPOSE

Workplace flexibility which supports the needs of the individual *and* the workplace enhances human capital and is important in relation to:

- Attracting and retaining highly skilled and competent employees
- Increasing levels of employee engagement
- Tapping new and diverse sources of talent
- Supporting work-life balance
- Contributing to employee health and well-being
- Developing an innovative and agile workforce
- Reducing absenteeism
- Offering broad subject choice and role models to students
- Allowing schools to compete favourably for talent as skills shortages grow.

## GUIDELINES – CRITERIA

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

- be in writing
- outline the personal circumstances under which the request is made
- detail the arrangement the employee is seeking; and
- 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
- the Principal will seek advice and consult with the Local Consultative Committee (LCC)
- be provided no later than 21 days following submission of the request. In circumstances which prevent this occurring seek the agreement of the employee.
- describe how the arrangement will work within the work area.
- note any modifications to the original request following discussions
- Where the application is not approved provide the 'business' reasons for the rejection of the request which will be within the context of meeting sustainable levels of flexibility. If there is evidence that the proportion of employees working in flexible arrangements is resulting in operational needs not being met, the principal may modify or decline further requests and/or review existing arrangements. To assess the optimum ratio of full-time to part-time staff to achieve sustainable student outcomes, or any saturation or tipping point which might hinder progress, the principal will: monitor the impact of flexible work arrangements on the school's performance, curriculum and management requirements and monitor the external supply of suitable staff and assess what role flexibility could play in improving the school's ability to attract suitable staff. Consideration must also be given to the effect of the time fraction change on other employees.

## **GUIDELINES – IMPLEMENTATION**

- The days on which part time staff will be expected to work and the number of days that they attend should be determined through negotiation between a representative of the Principal team.
- A teacher may negotiate to work their preferred allotment, where they may attend an extra day over the usual amount e.g., a teacher who is 0.6 could work over 4 days.
- Part-time Staff are not required to attend if the Parent Teacher Staff (PTS) interviews fall on their normal day off. Part-time staff in this situation who wish to attend may be granted time-in-lieu in consultation with the Principal class.
- In relation to attendance regarding professional responsibilities such as meetings, Professional Learning (PL) activities, camps and PTS interviews to attend if the Parent Teacher Staff (PTS) interviews: it needs to be recognised that there are no additional resources given to schools because they provide work places for part time staff. The SRP does not include monies for the funding of 'time in lieu'.
- Part time staff are not expected to attend professional learning activities that are conducted on student free days that they are not working. Part-time staff who wish to attend when PL days fall on their day off will be granted time in lieu in December in consultation with the Principal Class.
- Part time staff are expected as professionals to make themselves available for all PTS days assuming they fall on a day they have duties. Part time staff will attend PTS days for the normal designated hours that is 7.6 hours. As an equity and educational issue, the calendar should be developed so these days fall where the majority of staff are in attendance for normal school duties.
- Shared allotments are a basis for meeting the requests of staff to work part time. Preference will be given to job sharing where two staff are prepared to share a full-time allotment. The onus will be on the teachers involved to present to the principal an arrangement that will not disadvantage the students to be taught by them.
- If a staff member is medically unfit for work five days per week, the staff member may be eligible to work reduced number of days for as long as the medical condition prevails. This pathway depends on the staff member having personal leave credits available and the doctor continuing to certify the staff member is only fit for duty on a reduced number of days per week.

## **REFERENCES**

DET, [Flexible work in Victorian Government Schools](#), 16 June 2011

Victorian Government Schools Agreement, 2008

[Fair Work Ombudsman: Work and Family](#)

[Victorian Human Rights Commission: Employers Home Page](#)

[Workforce Victoria, Ways2Work website](#)

State Service Authority, [Making Flexible Work a Success: A Guide to Promoting Work/Life Balance in the Victorian Public Service](#)