



Coronavirus:

Working from Home Arrangements during Pandemic

20 MARCH 2020

DoE is committed to maximising everyone's wellbeing and safety at this time. These guidelines are designed to give principals/managers guidance on considering working from home arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising that these arrangements may not be considered ideal under normal circumstances.

These guidelines have been developed to address the specific circumstances of the current pandemic and will only be applicable for the duration of the pandemic. They recognise that additional flexibility may be required when considering working from home requests.

The existing Working from Home Guidelines will not apply during the pandemic however current working from home agreements can continue to apply.

Principals and managers are likely to receive additional requests from staff to work from home and as the pandemic situation progresses it may be necessary for work sites to consider more widespread working from home arrangements. These guidelines are designed to address both these circumstances.

Specific pandemic related considerations

During the pandemic principals/managers should give particular consideration to working from home requests from staff:

- who have been directed to self-isolate by the Director of Public Health
- considered to be at a higher risk if exposed to COVID-19 due to diagnosed underlying health conditions including people diagnosed with the following chronic medical conditions:
 - compromised immune systems (such as people who have cancer)
 - heart disease
 - diabetes
 - chronic lung condition
 - acute respiratory symptoms.
- who are primary carers and live with someone in the above categories
- over 70 years of age

In addition to the above categories, and recognising that there is heightened anxiety across the community at this time, there may be other employees seeking short term approval to work from home.

A legitimate consideration for principals/managers is whether the working from home agreement will minimise the risk for all employees in the workplace by reducing the number of employees at a workplace at any given time and therefore increasing the opportunity for social distancing.

Principles

Applications to work from home should be considered on a case by case basis and are subject to the following principles:

- The majority of the employee's duties can be undertaken effectively at home or reasonable adjustments to those duties can be made, or alternative duties allocated, having regard to operational requirements;
- Adequate communication channels with colleagues and the principal/manager are in place;
- Appropriate monitoring arrangements can be put in place;
- There is adequate support for the employee to enable ongoing contact and inclusion in the team; and
- WHS risks identified in the completed [WH&S & IT Checklist](#) can be effectively mitigated.

Requirements & Responsibilities

The standard Working from Home Agreement does not need to be completed. However the following requirements apply.

- Principals/managers and employees need to ensure that arrangements do not impact service delivery or achievement of business outcomes.
- Arrangements should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are working.
- The principal/manager can withdraw or change the working from home agreement at any time if it is not working.
- Working from home arrangements under these guidelines will be time limited and subject to regular review.
- Employees should work within standard hours unless otherwise agreed with their principal/manager and will not ordinarily accrue flex time credits or be eligible for overtime where relevant.
- Employees must ensure they are available for communication with their principal/manager and team during standard hours and maintain regular communication with the workplace.

Where the working from home request does not meet these principles, the principal/manager and employee should discuss alternative arrangements. Such alternatives would include continuing to attend the usual workplace, considering an alternative workplace, or utilising accrued paid leave or leave without pay.

Procedure for approving requests

Principals/managers are responsible for considering and approving the working from home requests and any liaison with the employee. The following procedure applies:

- Employees must complete the [WH&S & IT Checklist](#) and provide it to the principal/manager prior to commencing working from home;
- Principals/managers must sign the completed [WH&S & IT Checklist](#) to confirm acceptance: and
- Approved arrangements are to be recorded on this [Register Spreadsheet](#), to be retained in the workplace.

Employees who become ill while working from home are required to notify their manager and the normal arrangements for accessing personal leave apply.

Site Closures

In the event of site closures, principals/managers should attempt to support employees working from home in the first instance.