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# Flexible Working Programme



**FLEXIBLE  
WORKING  
AMBASSADOR  
MATS AND  
SCHOOLS**

## Top Tips for Managing Up – Why Flexible Working Matters

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Feeling empowered to build flexible working into your People Strategy but need help securing buy-in from your leadership team or governance professionals? Read our top tips below.

## Why Flexible Working Matters

### Tip 1 – Refer to the evidence base

Evidence demonstrates that flexible working can impact positively on staff wellbeing, attraction and retention and enable you to have a more diverse and inclusive workforce (see appendix). Consider referring to this as part of your business case for implementing a strategic approach to flexible working.

### Tip 2 – Understand your CEO/Head Teacher's Perspective

Put yourself in their shoes and show how flexibility can support, not hinder these priorities:



**Priorities: Pupil Outcomes** – Within recent qualitative research, most interviewed leaders reported that the benefits of flexible working outweighed the costs. Participating leaders felt that flexible working helped retain good staff and improve teacher wellbeing, which were perceived to ultimately lead to better pupil outcomes (IFF Research, 2023).



**Concerns: Timetabling** – Timetabling complexity is often cited as a barrier to the implementation of flexible working in Schools. There are multiple examples of schools across the country who have successfully managed the introduction of flexible working arrangements without compromising on curriculum delivery via the timetable. There are two very informative webinars on the Capita/Entrust DfE Flexible working website: [Home | Flexible working in Multi-Academy Trusts and schools](https://flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk/admin-user/includes/download-resource.php?id=81)

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<https://flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk/admin-user/includes/download-resource.php?id=174>



**Concerns: Parental Perceptions** – A 2022 survey of parents, pupils, and learners explored their experience or expectations of being taught by job-share teachers. The majority of surveyed parents (62%) reported that this arrangement had either a positive impact or no impact on their child (26% reported a positive impact and 36% reported no impact) (Kantar, 2023)



**Lead with Evidence** – Consider sharing case studies from our Flexible Working Ambassador Schools and Trusts so that there are actual stories of the why and the impact. Focus on examples that resonate with your setting  
<https://flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk/resource-library>



**Remember to capture base line data from your own setting** – For example, how many employees have left due to or partly due to them not being afforded flexible working in one of its guises. What can you glean from exit interviews or stay check-ins? How many informal and formal requests are received over an academic year and what % were approved versus declined? What does your staff wellbeing survey data tell you about attitudes to flexible working? What % of positive responses do you have prior to your strategy commencing and e.g. 12 months after it has embedded.

### Tip 3 – Request early support from our Flexible Working Ambassador Schools and MATs

Our Flexible Working Ambassador Multi-Academy Trusts and Schools (FWAMS) have been appointed by the DfE to support school leaders to implement and embed flexible working in their schools. They can offer bespoke practical advice on designing a policy, on overcoming common challenges such as timetabling and budgeting, as well as highlighting the importance of 'flexible hiring'. They can also offer trust level support. Whether you are a leader in a MAT, a mainstream primary or secondary, a special school or an alternative provision/pupil referral unit setting, a FWAMS will be able to offer bespoke support. For further information, go to <https://flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk/about-fwams>.

### Tip 4 – Educate leaders about flex in all of its guises

For. Remember that flexible working comes in many guises (part-time, varied hours and in-year flexibility). It's not just about part-time working and job shares. Educate and train leaders and wider employees about other key types such as phased/flexible retirement. Useful DfE guidance is here: [Flexible working in schools - GOV.UK](#), or our range of webinars here: [Home | Flexible working in Multi-Academy Trusts and schools](#).

### Tip 5 – Use Staff Voice

Share survey results or testimonials from employees about how different types of flexible working in your organisation have had positive impacts on pupils and/or employees. Storytelling, ideally with details of the impact that flexible working has had, can help get you buy-in. Our range of case studies may help you: [Resource Library | Flexible working in Multi-Academy Trusts and schools](#)

## Final Thought

Culture change takes time. Be persistent, patient, and positive. Every small step can build momentum and help support with recruitment and retention challenges in your setting.

For questions on the attached, contact Michelle at [michelle.gabriel@capita.com](mailto:michelle.gabriel@capita.com). For general queries on the programme or resources on our website, [www.flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk](http://www.flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk), or contact our help desk at [flexibleworkingineducation@capita.com](mailto:flexibleworkingineducation@capita.com)

## Appendix – Flexible Working Evidence Base



Flexible working can help to retain teachers and leaders - For leaders in schools that offer flexible working, the majority (82%) surveyed agreed that flexible working helped to retain teachers and leaders who might otherwise leave (IFF Research, December 2021). In 2019, three quarters (76%) of surveyed teachers reported that they would be more likely to remain in the profession long term if they could work flexibly (CooperGibson Research, 2019).



Teachers leaving the profession go on to work flexibly - NFER analysis of 2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data found that around a fifth of full-time teachers who left teaching moved into part-time work (Worth and McLean, NFER, 2022).



2018 research into factors affecting teacher retention found flexible working to be a potential solution, viewed positively among respondents (CooperGibson Research, 2018).



Can lead to better employee wellbeing - For leaders in schools that offer flexible working, the majority agreed that flexible working had a positive impact on overall teacher and leader wellbeing (85% agreed to at least 'a small extent') and productivity (74% agreed to at least 'a small extent'). 58% agreeing that there was a positive impact at least 'to a small extent' on reducing absences (IFF Research, December 2021)



Can widen talent pool during recruitment and increase diversity of your workforce – According to (IFF Research, December 2021), it helped to attract a greater number of candidates (53%) and create a more diverse workforce (50%). Within recent qualitative research, most interviewed leaders reported that the benefits of flexible working outweighed the costs. Participating leaders felt that flexible working helped retain good staff and improve teacher wellbeing, which were perceived to ultimately lead to better pupil outcomes (IFF Research, 2023).