

Flexible Work Arrangements To Enhance Work Life Balance

1. THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE (CEO) AS EMPLOYER

The Catholic School Community focuses on the whole person whose dignity is respected and affirmed.

As an employer the CEO recognises that work is an important part of the pursuit of meaning and fulfilment in life for all people, men and women alike and that people are vital contributors to the achievements of the Church's mission. The protection and wellbeing of staff is a critically important objective which reflects on the Church's credibility.

The CEO works from an awareness of the differences between men and women in the workplace and is particularly mindful that many of the practices that promote participation and involvement of all employees will enrich our workplaces as places of best practice and contribute positively to the quality of learning and teaching. The CEO is mindful of responding to the need to facilitate the employment of staff in schools particularly during certain times in their lives such as the early years of child rearing, in later years prior to retirement or a career change, or at times when domestic responsibilities require a significant change in work related duties.

2. KEY OBJECTIVES OF FLEXIBILITY

Catholic education exists to serve its students and their families. Flexible work policies and practices are implemented having regard for student learning and teaching, the ability of the school to function as a learning community and the creation of workable arrangements.

2.1 The CEO will develop and review policies regularly to ensure that work practices support the choices of families in their parental and working roles and promote a sense of growth and development.

2.2 The CEO greatly values the commitment and work performance of our staff and will support those with carer responsibilities to obtain their family and career aspirations.

2.3 Catholic values, particularly the principles of pastoral care and social justice will underpin flexible work arrangements for staff.

2.4 To create a workplace that is just, pastorally caring, effective and satisfying requires a collaborative relationship, based on a sharing of the mission of the church and individual responsibility.

3.0 NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

The National Employment Standards are minimum standards applying to employment. Under the National Employment Standards staff may request change in working arrangements as outlined below:

a. Staff members who are parents, or have responsibility for the care of a child may request the employer for a change in working arrangements to assist the staff member to care for the child if the child:

- (i) is under school age; or
- (ii) is under 18 and has a disability.

Note: Examples of changes in working arrangements include changes in hours of work, changes in patterns of work and changes in location of work.

b. Staff members are not entitled to make the request unless:

(i) staff other than a casual—must have completed at least 12 months of continuous service with the employer immediately before making the request; or

(ii) casual staff who are long term staff of the employer may immediately before making the request; and has a expectation of continuing employment by the employer on a regular and systematic basis.

c. The request must:

(i) be in writing.

(i) set out details of the change sought and of the reasons for the change.

(iii) the employer must give the staff member a written response to the request within 21 days, stating whether the employer grants or refuses the request.

(iv) the employer may refuse the request only on reasonable business grounds.

(v) if the employer refuses the request, the written response under must include details of the reasons for the refusal.

3.1 Permanent Part-time Employment

Permanent part-time status refers to staff who have been employed on a permanent part-time basis and who work less than 76 hours per fortnight (for example where a school has identified a role that requires less than a full-time load to complete). Ongoing part-time status is in all respects the same as full-time status except that entitlements are accrued pro-rata in accordance with the hours worked under the

part-time contract.

Staff who are permanent full-time must make application through their Principal or Team Leader to have the status of their employment modified permanently from a full-time equivalent to a part-time status. Although this arrangement results in a permanent reduction of hours for a staff member the exact quantum of FTE may need to be negotiable on an annual basis in order to meet the staffing needs of the school in any given year (e.g. between .4 and .6).

3.2 Temporary Part-time Employment

Temporary part-time status refers to staff who for an agreed period of time (usually 12 months) will work less than the full-time work load.

In any other circumstance this period will not extend beyond two years. This is due to the Enterprise Agreement provisions relating to the employment of Teachers and School Support Staff on temporary contracts.

There are a number of roles within schools that are suitable for temporary part-time employment on a stand-alone basis. These include some school support roles, executive relief and other roles that may from time to time be established at the school under their staffing allocation, such as literacy support. From time to time there will be additional positions over the staffing allocation arising from additional funding of a temporary nature.

3.3 Job Sharing - Permanent

Job sharing is a voluntary arrangement whereby a designated fulltime job is shared between two staff members. This can occur where on a permanent basis, two people work a part-time load equivalent to the full-time task. In such instances there is no entitlement to revert to full-time status, staffing this position wishing to later change status would have to apply and be the successful candidate for an advertised full-time vacancy. Although this arrangement results in a permanent reduction of hours for an employee the exact quantum of FTE may need to be negotiable on an annual basis in order to meet the staffing needs of the school in any given year (e.g. between .4 and .6).

3.4 Job Sharing -Temporary

Temporary job sharing is a voluntary arrangement whereby two staff members temporarily share a fulltime position to reduce their working time. Temporary job share arrangements are for a one year period. Partners under this temporary arrangement have the right to return to their full time position. On the completion of the one year arrangement individuals are required to resubmit a request for temporary job share arrangements.

Where a staff member applies for temporary job share and no other staff member is willing to job-share, it may be possible for the school to recruit a job share partner on a temporary contract to share the position. In all circumstances the approval of the Head of School Services is required.

3.5 Flexible attendance

Where the position allows the staff member and the Principal/Team Leader may negotiate start and finish times and for staff members to take unplanned days/time off without loss of salary. This is contingent on the possibility of rescheduling, or on the basis that lost time will be made up.

3.6 Telecommuting

Telecommuting involves employees undertaking work-related tasks away from the regular workplace and may require access to a computer and workplace system. These arrangements may be approved on a short term basis.

3.7 Compressed working week

Where the position allows the staff member and the Principal/Team Leader may negotiate a compressed working week. A compressed work week is an arrangement whereby staff members work longer shifts in exchange for a reduction in the number of working days in their work cycle (i.e. on a weekly or bi-weekly basis).

3.8 Short term changes to working arrangements

Short term changes to working arrangements, for example a part-time staff member changing work days for one week, may be accommodated at the discretion of the Principal or Team Leader. Such changes need to be recorded at the workplace but do not need to be advised to payroll. Any changes that may impact Enterprise Agreement conditions should be checked first with Human Resource Services.

3.9 Other leave arrangements

Various flexible leave arrangements are available to assist staff members to balance their work, life and family responsibilities.

These include:

- Long service leave on full or half pay
- Carer's leave
- Annual leave single days (non-teachers)
- Leave without pay
- Paid Parental and adoption leave
- Study leave.

4. APPLICATIONS

a. Discussing Flexible work option with Principal/Team Leader

Staff seeking to change status and adopt different work arrangements must discuss their proposal with their Principal/Team Leader in the first instance. For teaching and non-teaching staff who are considering applying for flexible work arrangements, there should first be dialogue regarding:

- a. The nature of the position and consideration of the extent to which the arrangement will meet the outcomes required of the role, including for teaching staff the well being of the students and ongoing provision of quality learning and teaching;
- b. The appropriate number of flexible work arrangements that the workplace can manage at any period of time, including within the school environment the ability to sustain a community of professionals in the school;
- c. The need to include professional development planning and consideration of career development opportunities. In a job sharing arrangement, generally the job share partner at work attends the professional development and shares the learning with their partner; however, the job share partner is also welcome to seek to attend the professional development in their own time. Where training is compulsory it will be on a paid basis;
- d. With respect to job sharing, the suitability and compatibility of the applicants;
- e. The consideration of whether the implementation of the flexible work arrangement will incur an additional cost to the workplace;
- e. How the arrangement will deliver the outcomes of the position and how this will be monitored and reviewed.

b. Submitting and approval of your application

- a. Any proposal seeking approval for a flexible working arrangement must be set out in writing and specify the way in which key aspects of the position will be performed and how the arrangement will deliver the outcomes of the position. The application for Flexible Working Arrangement (including Job Sharing) is available on the CEO Infopoint site under Human Resource Services - Policies.
- b. Within a school environment staffing is generally arranged year to year, requiring that applications be considered in the school year prior to the proposed change to enable classes and timetables to be planned ahead. The application for Flexible Working Arrangement (including Job Sharing) must be **submitted to the Principal by the end of week 8 in term 3**, for approval.
- c. If there are a large number of applications priority will be given to those staff who are seeking to enter into a flexible working arrangement to meet carers' responsibilities (in the first instance care of

children under school age or children with a disability under 18 years of age, followed by sick relatives or other domestic concerns).

Then priority will be given to those who can demonstrate that they are seeking to utilise the arrangement to assist in their professional development and those who can demonstrate that a reduction in work load will be of benefit to them and their work life. Applications based on other reasons will be considered in the light of the above priorities.

- d. Generally a new flexible working arrangement will initially be for a temporary change of status for a period of one full calendar or school year, whichever applies. This enables evaluation of the arrangement to occur.
- e. Some positions may not have these constraints and may have greater flexibility for consideration such that in an emergency situation an application may be considered. In such cases an application must be submitted as soon as possible through the Principal/ Team Leader for urgent consideration.

3.3 Extensions of Flexible Working Arrangements

- a. Upon successful review the workplace/school may agree to submit a further application to extend the temporary work arrangement to a second year, if the Head of Human Resource Services and the employee/s concerned agree.
- b. Otherwise, upon successful review the workplace/school may agree to submit a further application for a permanent flexible working arrangement, if the Principal/Team Leader, the Head of Human Resource Services and the staff members concerned agree that it is in the best interests of all concerned.

This policy may be changed by the CEO at any time. Updated policies will be placed on Infopoint.