

Policy 460 REMOTE WORK

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Northfield School District employees and supervisors regarding the availability and expectations of any remote work accommodations.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Remote work options may be appropriate for some positions and/or job duties but not for others. Remote work options may also be available for all or part of an employee's assignment. The employee may be able to do some of their work at home and some of their work may require in-person attendance. In all cases, the Remote Work Procedures, listed below, must be completed by the employee and the supervisor. Approved remote work agreements will be considered approved under a trial basis and will be assessed regularly for feasibility. The agreement may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the employee or the district. If the agreement is discontinued by the district, administration will allow for a reasonable transition period so that the employee can establish the necessary accommodations for returning to work onsite (e.g. transportation, child care, etc.).
- B. Employees, regardless of whether the work is completed onsite or remotely will be held to the following expectations:
 - 1. Perform duties during the designated work schedule unless otherwise agreed upon and approved by administration.
 - 2. Remain productive, responsive, and available to the department, supervisor, and/or students and parents/guardians during the designated work schedule.
 - 3. Request additional work or guidance from administration when workload is diminished.

III. DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy remote work means that an employee is authorized to perform their work duties from an approved site other than a district facility. This policy does not address short term changes in the academic calendar such as e-Learning or distance learning.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Remote work options may be appropriate for some positions/jobs but not for others. Positions that have been evaluated and are not eligible for remote work include positions under the Northfield Education Association master agreement, Educational Assistants, Child Nutrition and Buildings & Grounds. Portage online employees, regardless of their bargaining unit, may be eligible for remote work.

- B. Employees must have a satisfactory performance record in order to be eligible for remote work options. Probationary employees or employees currently undergoing supervised training may not be eligible for remote work options.
- C. Before establishing a remote work agreement, the following areas will be reviewed for feasibility:
 - 1. Responsibilities/Job Duties
 - a. Is it feasible for the job duties to be performed off-site?
 - b. Are there job duties/responsibilities that require an onsite presence?
 - 2. Internet Access
 - a. Is the employee's home internet service sufficient to support remote work?
 - b. The district will not reimburse remote workers for internet access fees.
 - 3. Employee Suitability
 - a. Do the employee's typical work habits translate well in a remote work setting?
 - 4. Accountability
 - a. Are there strong measures of accountability in place to support the remote work agreement?

V. EMPLOYEE PROCEDURES

Employee Assignment. When requested, employees should discuss their preferences for remote work or work onsite with their supervisor. Employees who have been assigned for remote work, for part or all of their assignment, should:

- 1. Assess their remote work space for ergonomic comfort and safety precautions.
- 2. Determine what, if any, accessibility needs they may require to complete their work tasks from their remote space.
- 3. Assess the remote work space for security and data privacy concerns.
- 4. Any accessibility needs or security concerns should be communicated prior to completing the remote work agreement.
- 5. Discuss remote work assignment parameters with supervisor and complete Remote Work Agreement.

Employee Request. Employees may request to work remotely; however, this must be formally approved prior to transitioning to remote work. Employees who would like to request remote work should:

- 1. Complete and submit the remote work request form (Appendix A) to their supervisor.
- 2. Discuss remote work availability and assignment parameters with their supervisor.
- 3. Communicate any accessibility needs or security concerns prior to completing the remote work agreement.

4. Complete remote work agreement (Appendix B) with their supervisor.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Employee Assignment. To develop effectiveness and efficiencies, as well as work space accommodations, employees may be assigned to remote work for part or all of their regular assignment. Administration will also consider employee preference for working remotely or onsite when determining remote work assignments. Supervisory staff will:

1. Work with Human Resources to develop remote work agreements (Appendix B) for employees identified for remote work.
2. Meet with designated employees to discuss remote work assignment parameters and complete remote work agreement (Appendix B).
3. Submit remote work agreements to Human Resources. A copy should be retained by the employee and the supervisor.

Employee Request. Employees must have formal approval prior to transitioning to remote work. Supervisors who receive these requests should:

1. Review and assess the remote work request form (Appendix A).
2. Discuss remote work availability and assignment parameters with the employee.
3. Discuss any accessibility needs or security concerns prior to completing the remote work agreement.
4. Complete remote work agreement (Appendix B) with the employee.
5. Submit remote work agreements to Human Resources. A copy should be retained by the employee and the supervisor.

A. Equipment

1. The district will determine the appropriate equipment needs, including technology, furniture, and supplies for each remote work arrangement on a case-by-case basis. The supervisor and technology department will determine appropriate equipment in consultation with the employee, subject to change at any time at the supervisor's and/or technology department's discretion. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. The use of personal computers for remote work is prohibited. Staff are required to use district issued computers. The district accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used in accordance with district Policy 441 Use of Technology and Telecommunications Systems by Employees. The employee must continue to comply with all policies, procedures, and regulations especially related to technology and security of information. The district will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.

2. The employee will establish an appropriate office environment within their home for work purposes. The district is not responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. It is intended that the employee maintain a single location as their work environment.

B. Security

1. Consistent with the district's expectations of information security for employees working onsite, remote work employees will be expected to ensure the protection of private and confidential data. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment. Remote work employees should ensure a space that allows for confidential or private conversations. Use of headsets when listening to virtual meetings or classrooms is required.
2. The employee must comply with all record retention policies.

C. Safety

1. Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Remote work employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee will allow the employer to have access to the remote work location for purposes of assessing safety and security, upon reasonable notice, if applicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.
2. Working remotely is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and expectations. Employees requesting a remote work assignment are required to discuss expectations of the remote work assignment with family members prior to entering into a remote work agreement.

D. Time Worked

1. Non-Exempt employees who have entered into a remote work agreement will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the district's time and attendance system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek **require advance approval** by the employee's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the

remote work agreement. Employees unable to work due to illness or other personal reasons while working remotely will still be responsible for completing an absence request using the district's absence management system. Employees should discuss remote work absences with their supervisor to ensure appropriate coverage is available.

E. Evaluation

1. Evaluation of performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone, video conference, and email between the employee and the direct supervisor, and weekly meetings to discuss work progress and issues. At any time during the remote work agreement, the employee and supervisor can complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for modifications. Evaluation of performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with current policies and practices of the normal employment arrangement but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.
2. An appropriate level of communication between the employee and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After the conclusion of the trial period, the direct supervisor and remote work employee will communicate at a level consistent with the normal employment arrangement or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

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Board of Education
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 659
Northfield, Minnesota