

SUBJECT: Working Offsite/Remote Guidelines & Procedures	Policy Number HR 00022
	Section: Human Resources
	Section: Employment
	Approved Date: May 1, 2015

Introduction

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington recognizes that there may, on occasion, be circumstances when it would be more beneficial or flexible for staff to work at home, either on a permanent basis, or in order to complete a particular task, for example a special project. The Diocese will evaluate each situation on its' own merits, however, it is not possible to offer working from home to all staff as the requirements of some jobs will not be suitable for such arrangements.

This policy provides situations where:

- the member of staff is based at home and works at home
- the member of staff is based at home but works mainly 'on the road'
- occasional one-off working from home
- the employee prefers to work from home and has an option.

1. Agreement to work from home

Where an employee makes a request, prior permission is required before an employee can work at home. The employee should make the request to their Supervisor. Serious consideration will be given to any such requests and a decision regarding the suitability of working at home will take into account all relevant circumstances. There will be a joint decision of the Department Head, Supervisor and HR for approval. The Roman Catholic Diocese reserves the right to withdraw the approval for work at home of an employee at any time if the Supervisor believes its use is being abused or for any other reasonable needs of the employer to carry out its work objectives.

For certain positions, the employer may determine that the normal place of work, or 'base', is the home of the employee. Any other defined location will need additional approval.

It is possible that a position could involve some time based at home and some time based in the office.

2. Qualifying Conditions

Working at home is totally dependent upon certain criteria being fulfilled, these being that the employee:

- Has obtained prior agreement for working at home from her/his Department Head, the Supervisor and Human Resources.

- Does not have other commitments with the employer, or elsewhere at that time, including dependent care responsibilities that would conflict with the requirement to work. It is not considered appropriate to combine home based working with dependent care. Employees are expected to make appropriate arrangements for the care of any dependents during working hours.
- Has notified her/his Supervisor of her/his hours of work and location.
- Has a contact telephone number and is available to be contacted during the normal operating hours of the Roman Catholic Diocese.

3. Working Arrangements

3.1 Workload, reporting and monitoring

All arrangements for monitoring, supervision, setting work objectives, etc., will be agreed with the employee's Supervisor in line with normal procedures.

For one-off home working, the precise project or task must be agreed beforehand.

3.2 Equipment

Employees who are required to work from home would normally have all equipment and associated costs covered by the employer.

Where an employee chooses to work from home, and this is agreed by the Department Head, Supervisor and Human Resources, the employee, would ensure that the "laptop" or device that is used is secured, thus not placing any diocesan data/material at risk.

Any equipment provided by the employer for the purposes of working at home will be inspected and maintained by the employer. The member of staff is required to take reasonable care of all equipment, to keep it secure and to use it in accordance with operating instructions, and the IT policy, HR00019. The employee must ensure that any such equipment provided is returned at the end of the arrangement. Any equipment must not be left unattended in any vehicle at any time.

3.3 Insurance Cover

Employees are advised that working from home may affect the provisions of any home contents insurance and are advised to inform their insurers prior to commencing working from home. Computer equipment will be insured through the insurance policies. Laptops are insured while in suitable secured premises or on the person. They are not insured when left unattended in vehicles.

3.4 Personal Details and Safety

Employees are advised not to release their home address and telephone number to non-members of staff. Employees are also strongly advised not to meet volunteers, employees, or clients/customers/vendors at home. In the event that any employee feels this is essential they must gain prior approval from their Supervisor.

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3.5 Confidentiality and access

Equipment and files should only be accessible to the employee and safeguarded from access by other members of the household and visitors. Only staff should have access at a reasonable time to equipment and any paper records kept at an employee's home.

3.6 Review of home working arrangement

At any time, the agreement to work from home may be reviewed by the employee or Human Resources in conjunction with the Supervisor and Department Head. This policy is also subject to review and does not form part of any employment agreement.

4. Reporting Sickness Absence

In the event that the member of staff is sick during a period of working at home then the normal employer's Paid Time Off policy will be followed and reporting time will be input for time off.

5. Travel costs and other expenses

Claims may be made for travel to business appointments from and to the 'normal place of work', i.e., the employee's home. If an employee will be traveling to a parish/school etc., and the location is more than 15 miles, the employee will need to use the Diocesan vehicle. (Proper judgement is requested.)

Employees based at home are expected to provide their own furniture, heating, lighting, etc., The employee will cover the costs of consumables and communication, for example through a dedicated broadband connection.

8. Compliance

Failure to adhere to this policy and/or not fulfil the job essential functions would result in loss of working from home and could lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

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