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Waunakee Community School District

Telecommuting / Remote Work Policy

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. Waunakee Community School District considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a districtwide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Waunakee Community School District.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Telecommuting workers can be called onsite for specific days, tasks, or intermittent reasons, as determined by their supervisor. Every effort will be made to provide reasonable advance notice of such a change. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of the district. Every effort will be made to provide 14 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with Waunakee Community School District for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and supervisor, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- Job responsibilities. The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Employee suitability. The employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and supervisor will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.

- Tax and other legal implications. The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and supervisor agree, and the human resource department concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the supervisor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and supervisor will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the supervisor and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, Waunakee Community School District will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The HR and IT departments will serve as resources in this matter. 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. Waunakee Community School District accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Waunakee Community School District reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all district property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

Waunakee Community School District will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Waunakee Community School District will not be 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.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of district information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Waunakee Community School District will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting 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 meeting district demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using Waunakee Community School District's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as quarantine or isolation order, inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the district and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business/education needs of the district.