

Effective Date: 11/26/19	400-19 Remote Work and Telecommuting Policy
Revision Date:	Approved by: DPISA Board

The Duluth Public Schools Academy, Charter School District 4020-07, has adopted the following written Remote Work and Telecommuting Policy in order provide work flexibility for eligible salaried and hourly employees. DPISA considers this a viable work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Working remotely or telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not an organization-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with DPISA. All telecommuting and remote working arrangements will be approved on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of DPISA.

I. Definitions

A “remote worker” is a full-time employee who primarily works on-campus with the occasional ability to work from home or another off-site location. A remote worker may have a regular schedule of working off-site or may have approved ad-hoc arrangements throughout the year.

A “telecommuting worker” is considered a full-time employee who primarily works off-site with occasional, designated time on-campus. A telecommuting employee may work out-of-state or locally. A telecommuting employee will be expected to be on-site a predetermined portion of the year.

II. Procedures

An employee may make a request to their supervisor for a telecommuting or a work from home schedule. A supervisor may also suggest this alternative work arrangement for their employees. A telecommuting or a work from home arrangement may be discontinued at any time at the request of the employee or DPISA.

III. Eligibility

To be eligible for telecommuting or remote worker schedule the employee must make a formal request to their supervisor (the employee’s supervisor may also suggest the possibility of a remote work or telecommuting arrangement). Further, to be eligible, the employee must have worked for DPISA in a regular capacity for a minimum of twelve (12) months and must have a satisfactory performance record. Each request will be reviewed individually based on the following criteria:

- Employee suitability – the employee and their supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters and remote workers. In order for an employee to be approved for remote work or telecommuting, DPSA must determine that the employee is likely to be successful in such an arrangement.
- Job responsibilities – the employee and their supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and how those responsibilities could be met if the telecommuting or remote work request were approved. DPSA will make the ultimate determination whether the specific job is appropriate for telecommuting or remote work arrangement.
- Equipment needs, workspace design, and scheduling – the employee and supervisor will review the physical workspace needs, the appropriate location of the telework or remote work, and what equipment (i.e. laptop, telephone, etc.) will be needed. In order for an employee to be approved for remote work or telecommuting, DPSA must determine that the proposed setup is appropriate and likely to be successful.
- Tax and other legal implications – the employee must determine any tax or legal implications under federal, state, and local laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rest solely with the employee. Further, an employee may be denied the opportunity to telecommute or work remotely if DPSA determines that the tax or legal implications of a particular arrangement is determined to be unfeasible by DPSA.

IV. Productivity Measurements

Employees that are telecommuting or working remotely are encouraged to have open communication with their supervisors on what tasks they will be working on during the day or during their time working off-site. Moreover, employees will be expected to develop goals, in collaboration with their supervisor, for the year and will be evaluated on these goals annually by their supervisor.

V. Availability

Employees that are telecommuting or working remotely are generally expected to be available within normal day-time business hours, even though they may perform some or a majority of their work outside normal business hours. A telecommuting or remote worker will be allowed to set an appropriate schedule that will be agreed upon with the employee's supervisor prior to working off-site.

A non-exempt (hourly) employee who is working remotely or telecommuting will be required to accurately log their hours worked. A non-exempt employee who is telecommuting or working remotely must receive approval prior to working over forty (40) hours per week.

VI. Responsiveness

A telecommuting employee or remote worker will be expected to respond to co-workers and supervisors within a reasonably appropriate time (generally one (1) business day). The foregoing doesn't preclude the potential need for an employee to respond more quickly in certain situations. Expectations of faster response times will be determined between the employee and the supervisor.

VII. Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, DPSA will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement (e.g. computer, telephone, etc.). Equipment provided by DPSA will be maintained by DPSA. If a telecommuting employee is unable to reasonably return broken equipment to DPSA's IT Department they may bring it to a local agency that provides similar services. The cost of repair to DPSA property will be reimbursed to the employee. Equipment supplied by DPSA is to be used for business purposes only. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to DPSA, unless other arrangements have been made.

DPSA will supply or reimburse the employee with appropriate office supplies (e.g. pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. DPSA will also reimburse the telecommuting employee for business-related expenses that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job. The telecommuting employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. DPSA will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office (e.g. remodeling, furniture, lighting, etc.).

A remote worker may take their company provided laptop and other necessary supplies home with them in order to perform their job tasks. A remote worker who chooses to take a business related phone call on their personal phone will not be reimbursed by DPSA. A remote worker is not expected to use their personal property for business needs. Other acceptable forms of communication while working remotely include email and Google chats.

VIII. Security

Consistent with the law and DPSA's expectations for information privacy and security for employees working at the office, telecommuting and remote workers will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary and/or confidential information accessible from their home office or other remote work location.

IX. Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner. 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. Telecommuting employees and employees working remotely are responsible for notifying HR of such injuries as soon as practical. Consistent with the Injury Reporting Procedure contained in DPSA's employee handbook, employees shall not be penalized, retaliated against, or have other adverse action taken for reporting an incident or injury in good faith.

X. Additional Provisions

1. Telecommuting and remote working is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate childcare needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting DPSA's business needs.
2. No employee will be terminated on the sole basis of telecommuting or working remotely.
3. In the event of a weather related or other school-wide closure, a telecommuting or remote worker will not be expected to work.
4. Temporary remote work may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, or business travel. These will be reviewed on an as-needed basis.
5. All employees that are authorized to telecommute or work remotely must follow this policy as well as all other DPSA rules and policies.

XI. Consequences for Abuse of Telecommuting or Remote Work Arrangement

Abuse of a telecommuting or remote work arrangement (e.g. not actually working as scheduled) may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.