

# *Flexible* **Work**

## Managers' Guide



*Achieving work-life balance*

## Acknowledgements

The Department of Education and Training acknowledges the cooperation of a range of schools, regional and central personnel and education stakeholders in the development of the second edition of the Flexible Work Options Kit.

The work of Maddocks legal firm in undertaking a legal review of the Flexible Work Options Kit, and of Work and Family specialist consultants Leonie Morgan and Sara Charlesworth are also acknowledged in the preparation of this new edition. The material was developed following extensive consultation with staff and stakeholders over a period of a year. During this time, two flexible work working parties operated within the organisation that included staff, union, principal, school council and parent representatives.

The work of Human Resources consultant Marie Crozier-Durham is acknowledged in the development of the original *Flexible Work Managers' Guide* and *Flexible Work Staff Guide* and in the preparation of this new edition.

The Flexible Work Options Kit is an initiative of the Diversity Unit, Human Resources Division, Office of Resources Management and Strategy within the Department of Education & Training.

# Foreword

A diverse, flexible and high performing workforce is essential to meet the educational challenges of the twenty-first century. The Victorian Department of Education & Training is committed to building workforce capability to drive system-wide excellence, and support teaching and learning towards the achievement of educational goals and outcomes established by Government.

Productive, healthy and resilient staff and supportive workplace cultures are significant contributors to high performance. The Department has a widely diverse workforce and recognises the needs of its employees to balance work and family and other personal life commitments that may vary at different stages of an individual's life cycle.

In response to growing case law and legislative obligations on employers to accommodate the needs of employees with family and carer responsibilities, and with the hindsight experience of the organisation in implementing flexible work, this new edition of the Department of Education & Training's Flexible Work Options Kit places emphasis on mutual flexibility, a positive approach, and regular review of the flexible working arrangements.

The Flexible Work Options Kit sets out the range of flexible work options available in Department of Education & Training workplaces, and provides guidelines to assist managers with the negotiation, implementation and review of flexible work arrangements. These arrangements are available to all staff regardless of their seniority, except where genuine job requirements mean they cannot be reasonably accommodated.

The Flexible Work Options Kit has been updated following a legal audit by Maddocks and the State Government's *Action Agenda on Work & Family Balance*.

The Flexible Work Options Kit consists of:

- *Flexible Work Guidelines*
- *Flexible Work Managers' Guide*
- *Flexible Work Staff Guide*
- *Telecommuting Guidelines and Agreement*

This Managers' Guide is designed to provide principals and other work unit managers with a strategic framework for planning, implementing and reviewing flexible work options. It adopts a management model that links flexible work to a range of accountability measures in the Department of Education & Training and to future planning.

The Managers' Guide aims to both achieve enhanced organisational capability, and work, life and family balance for all employees. It is complemented by a Staff Kit, which reinforces the message that achieving the aims of mutual flexibility requires management and staff cooperation. Managers are encouraged to examine the school/work unit benefits of flexibility, and to move from accommodating individuals to a more strategic approach. It is important to remember that measures which contribute to personal satisfaction, reduced stress and better work-life balance in individuals, assist the achievement of the goals of the Department of Education & Training in terms of improved productivity and performance, and in achieving a flexible, diverse, motivated and energetic workforce.

The Managers' Guide provides an excellent framework for managing flexibility and is a practical reference and resource to address strategies, decision making, implementation and review. I seek managers' commitment to ensuring staff have access to the information they require when contemplating flexible work options.

I commend the Flexible Work Options Kit and Managers' Guide to you as a most valuable resource to assist in improving performance and productivity through the implementation of workplace flexibility.

**Secretary**  
**Department of Education & Training**



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# Introduction

One of the major contemporary human resource management challenges is the management of workforces made up of diverse groups working in more flexible working patterns.

The changing demographics of the workforce, the recognition of the value of diversity, and the changing nature of work in the education sector require policies and practices that are more flexible and responsive. The provision of flexible work options is linked to the twin themes of enhanced organisational capability, and work, life and family balance.

Flexible work options assist the school/work unit to develop the capability to meet current and future needs and also assist individuals to better balance work, life and family needs.

## The aim of the Managers' Guide

This Managers' Guide is a companion publication to the *Flexible Work Guidelines*. The aim of the Managers' Guide is to help principals in schools and managers in other work units:

- assess, implement and review flexible work options
- ensure increasing levels of success in implementing and sustaining flexible arrangements
- move to a more strategic approach to flexible working arrangements.



This guide is designed to assist managers to make plans and decisions in relation to flexible working which are strategic, fair and transparent. It is designed to move beyond the rhetoric of flexible working to a practical, inclusive and non-discriminatory approach. It takes account of

developing work and family case law, and assists managers to ensure both that staff are better able to balance work, life and family, and that school charter/work unit goals are achieved. The Department's Human Resource Strategic Plan identifies flexible work options and diversity as key organisational priorities linked to corporate and business planning.

The focus of the *Flexible Work Managers' Guide* is on the issue of work, life and family balance. Flexible working arrangements are linked to:

- workforce planning
- health and wellbeing
- work, life and family policies
- life cycle needs of staff members—work/life/family needs change over the years
- job design and professional roles
- timetabling and work scheduling
- school/work unit culture.

## Focus on work, life and family balance

Flexible working arrangements may contribute to solving a range of work scheduling, work flow, and other organisational issues, so this Managers' Guide, in conjunction with such strategies as work scheduling analysis and work design, may be of assistance.

However, the main focus of this Manager's Guide is on work, life and family balance issues.

## Working through the Managers' Guide

The Managers' Guide comprises:

- a framework of six steps and related strategies
- an overview detailing each step and related strategies and management tools
- details of how to implement each step
- a manager's decision-making format which integrates the contents of the Managers' Guide
- assessing flexible working options sheets; details of major flexible work options are provided in a format designed to support the manager's decision-making format—in addition, a wide range of flexible work options are outlined in the *Flexible Work Handbook*.

## How the Managers' Guide might be used

Rather than prescribing an approach to implementing flexible working arrangements, the Managers' Guide offers a practical reference or resource to assist managers address strategies, decision-making, implementation and regular review. Its use may range from broad adoption to the simple adaptation of a few components. This will depend on the unique situation of each school or work unit. The framework (as a whole or in part) could be used:

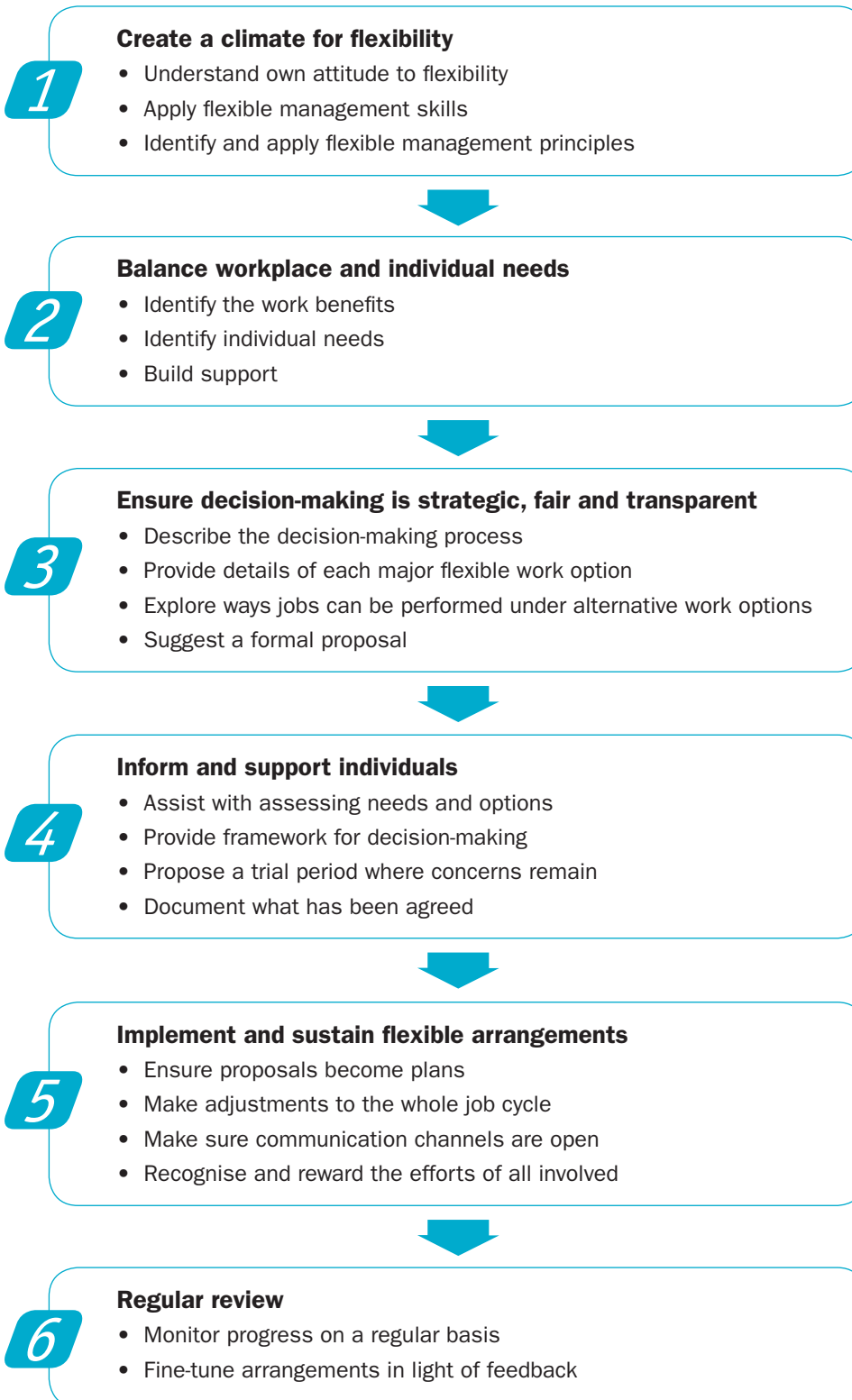
- as a guide to analysing school/work unit needs
- to check for supports and obstacles to flexible working

- to assess the climate for flexibility
- to guide decision making in relation to individual requests
- to inform staff of options
- to develop a whole-of-school/work unit flexible work strategies
- to guide implementation
- to review, evaluate and improve initiatives once in place.

## Flexible Work Staff Guide

A separate *Flexible Work Staff Guide* is available to all staff. It is based on the framework detailed in this Guide.

# A six-step framework for managing flexible working options



# Overview

Step	Strategy	Management tools
<b>1</b> <b>Create a climate for flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand own attitude to flexibility</li> <li>• Apply flexible management skills</li> <li>• Identify and apply flexible management principles</li> </ul>	Climate for flexibility checklist
<b>2</b> <b>Balance workplace and individual needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the work benefits</li> <li>• Identify individual needs</li> <li>• Build support</li> </ul>	Flexibility benefits checklist
<b>3</b> <b>Ensure decision-making is strategic, fair and transparent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the decision-making process</li> <li>• Provide details of each major flexible work option</li> <li>• Explore ways jobs can be performed under alternative work options</li> <li>• Suggest a formal proposal</li> </ul>	Manager's decision-making format
<b>4</b> <b>Inform and support individuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with assessing needs and options</li> <li>• Provide framework for decision-making</li> <li>• Propose a trial period where concerns remain</li> <li>• Document what has been agreed</li> </ul>	Individual's decision-making – a supportive manager's checklist
<b>5</b> <b>Implement and sustain flexible arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure proposals become plans</li> <li>• Make adjustments to the whole job cycle</li> <li>• Make sure communication channels are open</li> <li>• Recognise and reward the efforts of all involved</li> </ul>	Implementation checklist
<b>6</b> <b>Regular review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress on a regular basis</li> <li>• Fine-tune arrangements in light of feedback</li> </ul>	Review checklist

# 1 Create a climate for flexibility

## Understand your own attitude to flexible working

As with all change strategies and innovations, management attitudes and support will influence the success of flexible working. Overt or covert negative attitudes are barriers to success and may lead to discriminatory practices. Identify objections to flexible work arrangements and test to see if they are sound and based on genuine job requirements or based on outdated assumptions.

As behaviour is more powerful than words, what is the real message about flexible working arrangements in your school/work unit? Flexible working is undeniably a paradoxical issue, so it is useful to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages.



## Apply flexible management skills

Managing staff on flexible work schedules requires skills of counselling, decision making, evaluating, mentoring and communication. It requires managers to focus on outputs and to think of jobs in terms of roles, performance and tasks, rather than time spent in the workplace. It certainly requires high levels of trust and tolerance.

## Identify and apply flexible management principle

Useful management principles for managing flexible working arrangements involve taking a strategic approach and setting successful management of flexible working arrangements as a goal; understanding individual staff member's needs and responsibilities, personal characteristics, and approaches to work; and seeing the impact on all stakeholders.

## Climate for flexibility checklist

### Encourage a strategic approach

- ensure all staff are informed about goals and directions
- communicate priorities.

### Establish flexibility as a part of a management goal

- means of better balancing work, life and family
- complements health and wellbeing
- enhances range of skills of staff
- contributes to culture change.

### Prepare for flexibility

- be aware of the guidelines for flexible working
- learn from success stories and problem stories
- inform and educate school community/work unit.

### View flexibility from a broad perspective

- staff member is viewed as a whole person
- work, life and family commitments interact
- what happens at school/work unit affects work, life, and family balance for parents/clients
- need to balance organisational and individual flexibility needs.

### Understand the individual's perspective

- remember each case is different
- discuss the impact of a job change on:
  - the school/work unit
  - role in the school/work unit
  - meeting family/lifestyle need
  - financial situation.

### Know how individual staff members work

- discuss performance record
- discuss work style
- discuss personal suitability for specific flexible working options
- ability to make appropriate home arrangements.

**Rethink ways work can be done**

- consider a range of possible options
- analyse tasks and jobs in view of suitability for flexible working arrangements
- explore ways tasks and job can be performed under flexible work options.

**Understand life cycle demands**

- demonstrate understanding of the impact different life cycle stages have on staff members' lives
- recognise circumstances change over time
- assist staff to balance these responsibilities
- assist staff to see all the dimensions of the issue.

**Pre-empt and address the concerns of school community/other staff members**

- discuss broad issue of flexible work with school community/other staff members
- ensure other staff members are not disadvantaged
- recognise and reward team members' assistance
- ensure appropriate flexible working options are available to all, regardless of seniority, age and gender, and not seen as the prerogative of only certain groups.

**Sustain and evaluate**

- recognise the need to sustain goodwill in all the parties involved
- acknowledge the benefits to the school/work unit as a whole
- acknowledge that flexible working arrangements need regular review, fine tuning and evaluation.

## 2 Balance workplace and individual needs

### Identify the benefits to the school/work unit

The benefits of flexible working must link to the school charter/work unit goals, global budget and workforce plans. Indeed, rather than simply accommodating a staff member, flexible work options may supply the answer to meeting strategic needs.

### Identify individual needs

To meet workforce planning requirements, it is important to check the needs and expectations of staff in relation to work, life and family balance. Anticipate possible requests for future flexible arrangements as part of such planning.

### Build support

Managers need to show their support and openly acknowledge that flexibility in the workplace is a contemporary reality. Attention should be paid to issues such as how flexible working is communicated to students and parents/clients. School community/work unit culture is an important factor in making flexible working a success.

It is important for principals and managers to engender support and cooperation to make sure that the workability of any proposed flexible work options

can be realistically assessed. Consult regularly with parents and other staff to build support for flexible work options.



### Flexibility benefits checklist

#### Achieve goals

- Explore the way certain charter/work unit/budget/workforce planning goals could be met using flexible working options.

#### Attract and retain quality staff

- The availability of flexible working arrangements signals a desire to accommodate quality staff.

#### Motivation, performance and satisfaction

- Flexible working options can help improve motivation and performance and increase staff, student and client satisfaction.

#### Workforce planning

- Better match workload and staffing numbers.

#### Values

- Put values statements into practice and demonstrate care of and commitment to staff.

#### Diversity

- Attract and retain a more diverse staff group.

#### Energise stressed and tired staff

- Flexible working, better work/ life / family balance, and particular options such as sabbatical leave, purchased leave arrangements or leave without pay can help energise and enthuse staff.

#### Expand services

- Certain parts of jobs could be done at different times and provide service over a longer period.

#### Choose best location for work

- Some work could be done away from the regular work place.

#### Health and wellbeing

- Flexible working arrangements may alleviate the stress caused through struggling to maintain a positive work–life balance

**Reduce absenteeism**

- The attendance management audit may indicate staff needs in relation to flexible working arrangements.

**Capability**

- Flexible arrangements can contribute to getting the right mix of skills now and to ensuring future needs are met.

**Cost–benefit**

- Flexible working arrangements may reduce costs, and not having flexible arrangements may actually incur costs.

**Role models**

- Managers could show leadership in work, life and family initiatives and provide models of staff who can balance multiple roles.

**Comply with legislative requirement**

- Flexible work options should be available to all staff regardless of seniority, except where genuine job requirements make this unreasonable. Requests for flexible work should not be rejected without serious consideration, particularly where such requests relate to a staff member's status as a parent, carer or worker with family responsibilities.

## 3 Ensure decision making is strategic, fair and transparent

### Describe the decision-making process

The decision-making process in relation to responses to flexible working options needs to be strategic, fair and transparent. Staff should have access to the decision-making process in order to construct their proposals.

### Provide details of each major flexible work option

Principals, managers and staff should have access to details of the major flexible working options:

- part-time work
- telecommuting
- job sharing
- flexible attendance arrangements

Details of a greater range of flexible options are included in *The Flexible Work Guidelines*.

### Explore ways job can be performed under flexible work options

In considering staff requests for specific flexible work options, principals and managers should explore the ways jobs and tasks could be performed under such options. Principals and managers should also explore the impact on the work/family responsibilities of staff when initiating flexible work arrangements. This enables the advantages and disadvantages of particular options for the school/work unit and the individual staff member to be carefully considered.

### Suggest a formal proposal

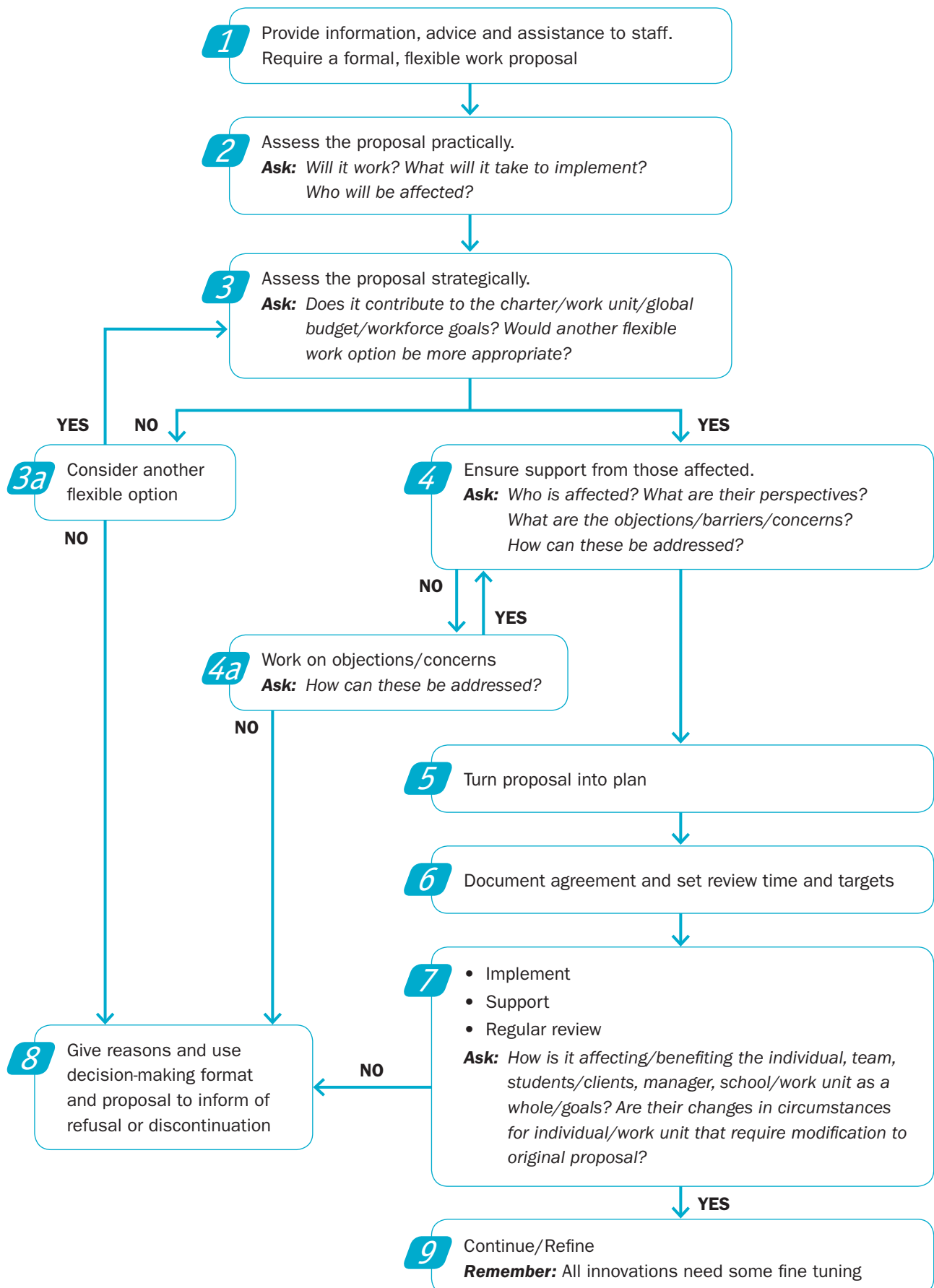
A simple, formal system for proposing flexible working options based on the framework and capturing the data to inform the decision-making process contributes to the development of a strategic, fair and transparent approach.

By placing the responsibility on the staff member to develop a proposal seeking flexible working arrangements, strategic, work, team and personal requirements have to be articulated. This assists in a mutual exploration of the situation and in decision making.

Proposal forms already exist in some schools and work units. A sample proposal form is provided in the *Flexible Work Staff Guide* as a guide.



## Manager's decision-making format



## 4 Inform and support individuals

### Assist with assessing needs and considering options

Staff members who are considering taking up or making the transition to flexible work arrangements as a means of better balancing work, life and family responsibilities may need assistance in understanding the needs of the school/work unit and in choosing the best ways of meeting their personal needs.

### Provide a framework for decision-making

The decision to make changes to work schedules will affect matters in the individual's work and personal life. Staff members need to consider the impact on both and look for solutions inside and outside the workplace. A decision-making format is provided in the *Flexible Work Staff Guide*.

### Propose a trial period where concerns remain

Where concerns remain about the appropriateness of a particular option, propose a trial period to see whether there are really structural or organisational reasons why a flexible work option cannot succeed.



A trial of a flexible work option needs to be time limited with agreed criteria against which the success of the trial will be assessed. Once the trial has been evaluated, the arrangement can continue, be modified or the employee can return to their previous work arrangement.

### Document what has been agreed

Approval of flexible work options and of any trial periods should be documented. Agreements should cover any changes to working hours and other terms and conditions of employment, duration of the arrangement, performance targets, details of equipment supplied or required, any legal obligations, as well as specific dates for regular review. Whether there is to be any contact and, if so, the level of contact during absences should also be agreed and documented. This is particularly important where the

flexible work option involves either an extended period of leave or a flexible attendance arrangement.

## Individual's decision making —a supportive manager's checklist

### 1 Prepare

Make sure as a manager you have the appropriate information. Refer to:

- *Flexible Work Guidelines 2004*
- *VPS Staffing Guidelines 2003*
- *Assessing Flexible Work Options section in this guide*
- *Flexible Work Staff Guide 2004*
- *Telecommuting Guidelines and Agreement*

### 2 Set the ground rules

Confidentiality and privacy needs to be assured. In discussing work, life and family matters, the territory covered does extend beyond traditional work matters.

### 3 Assist the staff member to outline the issue

Assist the staff member to be specific about the issue to be resolved and their initial thoughts about resolving it. Talk through the alternatives. Make sure the staff member sees the work issues to be resolved as well as the personal ones.

### 4 Select the appropriate strategy

If it does not involve flexible work options, discuss a plan. If it involves proposing flexible work options, refer to the *Flexible Work Staff Guide* and suggest developing a proposal.

### 5 Set a date for reviewing the proposal

Set a date to ensure a timely decision is made about the proposal.

### 6 Communicate the decision

Make sure the staff member understands the reasons for the decision. Work together on any modifications the proposal may require. Document and mutually agree on the arrangements decided.

# 5 Implement and sustain flexible arrangements

## Ensure proposals are turned into plans

Have a definite time in which to assess the success of the arrangement. Where the proposal is to be implemented on a trial basis, set the time period for the trial. Check flexible work plans and trials against the agreed criteria in the approved proposal

## Make the necessary adjustments to the whole job cycle and employment requirements

Ensure work rearrangements include job redesign and consideration of the impact on other staff. There may be a need to consider job and role responsibilities, for example, collegiate roles, client/parent relationships which exist regardless of time fractions being worked.

Performance reviews should take into account flexible work arrangements and the impact these may have on the ability of the individual to achieve the outcomes of the job.

Flexible work options should not disadvantage an individual in their employment or career. Training, staff development and promotion opportunities must take into account people working in flexible work arrangements and any impact these arrangements have on these requirements.

## Make sure communication channels are open



Communication is a two-way process. Managers and staff members each have responsibilities. Time devoted to information exchange and coordination is of special importance in relation to flexible working arrangements.

Staff working in flexible working arrangement must be informed and included in the life of the school or work unit. Meetings should be scheduled to maximise the opportunities for all staff to attend. Where that is not possible or practical, innovations such as a 'buddy' system might ensure those working in flexible arrangements are informed and included.

As flexible working arrangements require a level of goodwill on the part of a number of people, work unit or school community perceptions about how the arrangement is going should be checked on a regular basis.

## Recognise and reward the effort of all involved

Successful implementation of flexible working arrangements require the commitment of the teacher or staff member involved, other team members and the manager or principal. This commitment should be recognised and rewarded. Some mention should also be made in relation to the school community or work unit as a whole about succeeding in developing alternative models of working and maximising the talents of diversity through accommodating work, life and family needs.

Communicate positive results such as reduction in absenteeism, improved health and wellbeing attributable to flexible working arrangements. Regular and open consultation with parents and staff will ensure support for flexible work options can be sustained.

## Implementation checklist

- Job redesign/work load
  - balanced workload components
  - impact on others' work requirements
- Performance measures
  - realistic and explicit
  - attitudes to flexibility
- Professional development
  - available
  - cost–benefit
- Technology to enhance flexibility
  - accessible
  - occupational health and safety check
  - insurance
- Communication processes, meetings and support networks
  - time for whole group to meet
- Turn proposal into plan/written agreement
- Recognise and reward all involved
- Set regular dates to review arrangement, be clear what is to be reviewed and basis on which it is to be reviewed
- Managers' own performance measures cover management of flexible working arrangements

## 6 Regular reviews

### Monitor progress at both school/work unit and individual levels

Monitoring and review mechanisms need to be established at the time a proposal is first implemented.

The ongoing implementation of flexible work options should be reviewed on a regular basis to address any concerns that may arise or any change in circumstances that may necessitate some adjustment to the arrangement.

Seek feedback and check perceptions of staff working in flexible arrangements in relation to expectations and needs; seek feedback also from the school or work unit in relation to the progress of flexible work options once in place.



At the school or work unit level, monitor the uptake rate of different options; satisfaction; attitudes and perceptions; impact; and positives and negatives.

### Fine tuning arrangements in light of feedback

As with any human resource management policy, mutually agreed improvements should be looked for and implemented, tasks reviewed and further opportunities for flexibility identified.

It is important that principals, managers and staff understand the spirit and intent of flexible work options. Training about flexible work options should be provided to ensure that any problems that arise in implementation can be addressed and arrangements that have been implemented can be supported in a sustainable way.

### Review checklist

The following checklist should give a picture of areas of success and areas needing improvement:

#### Manager's check

Are there opportunities for staff to express views about work, life and family balance?

What examples are there of flexible working arrangements in the school/work unit?

How successful are these arrangements:

- staff members working in flexible arrangement perspective
- team perspective
- manager/principal perspective
- student/parent/client/other stakeholder perspective?

What impact have flexible working arrangements had on:

- retention
- attraction of staff
- budget
- diversity
- morale
- performance
- health and wellbeing
- enhanced services
- productivity
- quality
- other?

What problems have been identified?

What needs to be changed/improved?

How can the arrangements be better supported?

#### Individual's check

How does the arrangement contribute to a positive work, life and family balance?

What are the positives?

What are the negatives?

What needs to be changed/improved?

# Assessing flexible working options

## Job share

Job-sharing involves the voluntary sharing of the duties and responsibilities of one position between a number of employees; e.g. two people working part time.

### Success factors

Likely to succeed if:

- a real benefit to the school/work unit can be shown
- arrangement has management and team support
- manager's attitude positive, sees the benefit and is recognised for the effort
- students and parents/clients/co-workers informed of the arrangements
- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- job share partners are personally compatible
- job share partners have similar or complementary work philosophy
- job share partners are able to develop a proposal that identifies potential problems and solutions
- communication strategies are well thought out
- job share partners have similar employment benefits and career opportunities as other comparable staff
- there is regular review of the arrangement.

### Proposal

Proposal should include:

- benefits to the school/work unit
- work and time schedules
- respective roles and responsibilities including cross coverage
- communication plan
- proposed dissolution plan
- review period.

### Advantages

The possible advantages are:

- multiple skills and experience for one salary
- diverse perspectives on the one job
- mutual support
- mutual review and development
- increased motivation
- access to cover for absence.



### Disadvantages

The possible disadvantages are:

- increased management and coordination load
- difficult to design job share to match skills and accommodate individual differences
- communication
- ensuring career development
- dissolution.

### CHECKLIST

There should be no doubt about these issues:

- ✓ hours of work
- ✓ who affected
- ✓ communication plan
- ✓ cross coverage
- ✓ remuneration
- ✓ respective roles and responsibilities
- ✓ procedure for covering absences
- ✓ discontinuing partnership
- ✓ dates and criteria for review.

## Part-time

Part-time employees work less than seventy-six hours per fortnight on average.

### Success factors

Likely to succeed if:

- the position or specific task is able to be undertaken part time and the benefit of it being done this way is evident to the school/work unit
- arrangement has management and team support
- manager's attitude is positive, sees the benefit and is recognised for the effort of supporting flexible working arrangements
- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- performance review system realistic
- part-time staff members are able to accept the need to be flexible, accessible and available
- communication strategies are well thought out
- coverage (when the person is not at work) does not pose problems
- part-time staff have similar employment benefits and careers opportunities as other comparable staff
- there is regular review of the arrangement.

### Proposal

Proposal to include:

- benefits to the school/work unit
- work and time schedules
- clear description of roles and responsibilities
- communication plan
- continuity considerations—the gap, including how the tasks will be covered when the person working part time is not at work
- review period.

### Advantages

The possible advantages are:

- match work load with staffing
- meet individual needs
- retaining and attracting staff
- reduce down time
- provide flexibility to afford extra staff
- increase range of skill
- provide for graduated change, e.g. reduced work load on return from maternity leave, prior to retirement
- means of meeting specific needs.



### Disadvantages

The possible disadvantages are:

- increased management and coordination load
- restricted ability to participate in the full range of workplace activities
- continuity
- communication
- possible lack of choice regarding work load, e.g. class levels and subjects
- reduced timetable flexibility through reduced availability
- ensuring career development
- financial disincentives, e.g. impact on superannuation.

#### CHECKLIST

- ✓ hours of work
- ✓ who affected
- ✓ communication plan
- ✓ continuity details
- ✓ remuneration
- ✓ roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ dates and criteria for review.

## Telecommuting

Involves regular performance of work-related tasks away from the regular place of work using telecommunications technology to communicate with the school/work unit.

### Success factors

Likely to succeed if:

- a real benefit to the school/work unit can be shown
- manager is comfortable with the arrangement and trusts the staff member
- face-to-face contact requirements are minimal or can be time specific
- aspects of the job are better done in isolation and without interruption
- necessary technical support is available
- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- individual has the personal characteristics of flexibility, independence, dependability and is trustworthy
- individual has good organisational and work scheduling skills
- individual has a high level of competence and self-motivation
- individual is able to accept the need to be flexible, accessible and available in the workplace at requested times
- communication strategies are well thought out
- telecommuting staff have similar employment benefits and careers opportunities as other comparable staff
- there is regular review of the arrangement.

### Proposal

Proposal to include:

- benefits to the school/work unit
- work and time schedules
- clear description of roles and responsibilities
- communication plan
- review period.

### Advantages

Possible advantages are:

- productivity improvement
- improved morale and motivation
- better use of time, e.g., cut travel
- retention of valued staff
- decreased absenteeism
- accelerated use of technology in the school/work unit as a whole.



### Disadvantages

Possible disadvantages are:

- home office costs
- occupational health and safety issues
- insurance and security issues
- reduces face-to-face contact on site at the school/work unit
- personal and professional isolation.

### CHECKLIST

- ✓ hours of work
- ✓ who affected
- ✓ communication plan
- ✓ coordination details
- ✓ required attendance in the workplace
- ✓ technology
- ✓ occupational health and safety check
- ✓ insurance of equipment
- ✓ roles and responsibilities
- ✓ notification of absences
- ✓ dates and criteria for review

## Flexible attendance arrangements

Involves arrangements which enable an employee and their principal or manager to negotiate start and finish times and for employees to take unplanned days off without loss of salary provided that work rescheduling is possible, or on the basis that time lost will be made up. Flexible attendance arrangements include:

- compressed full-time hours
- flexible start and finish times
- flexible scheduling of work

### Success factors

Likely to succeed if:

- a real benefit to the school/work unit can be shown
- arrangements are tailored to suit both the work requirements and personal needs
- work flow is irregular or variable, therefore does not match standard hours
- absence does not compromise service
- team staff are experienced and knowledgeable
- individual has the personal characteristics of flexibility, independence, dependability and good organisational skills
- individual is able to accept the need to be flexible, accessible and available in the workplace at requested times in keeping with workflow requirements
- communication strategies are well thought out
- staff working flexible hours have similar employment benefits and careers opportunities as other comparable staff
- there is regular review of the arrangement.

### Proposal

Proposal to include:

- benefits to the school/work unit
- work and time schedules
- communication plan
- coordination details
- review period.



### Advantages

The possible advantages are:

- means of better matching workflow and staffing
- means of covering peak work times
- means of tailoring hours to meet individual needs
- means of tailoring hours to meet changing or fluctuating needs
- means of retaining full-time position while meeting multiple responsibilities.

### Disadvantages

The possible disadvantages are:

- difficulty of coordination
- over taxing individuals—trying to do too much
- may mask the need for reorganising work schedules /altering workflow.

### CHECKLIST

- ✓ hours and time of work
- ✓ who affected
- ✓ communication plan
- ✓ coordination details
- ✓ roles and responsibilities
- ✓ dates and criteria for review

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