



5.1220.1p

Telework

Standard Operating Procedure Outline

<i>Category:</i>	Human Resources	<i>Department:</i>	HR Administration		
<i>Procedure:</i>	Telework				
<i>Policy Reference #:</i>		<i>Version:</i>	1.0	<i>Date Revised:</i>	7/2022

Operational Objective(s)

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) is committed to maintaining a workplace that facilitates the recruitment of new employees and helps in the retention of existing employees. Additionally, MNPS desires to maintain work facilities that are contemporary and comparable to work settings in the private sector but are also compatible with the K-12 educational environment and the provision of services to schools and employees.

Teleworking is a work arrangement where eligible employees are allowed to perform their normal duties and responsibilities through the use of hardware and software at an alternate location from their normal work site. This procedure establishes and defines telework and those that are eligible to apply for it and defines the procedures for applying for and performing work from an alternate location.

The Chief of Human Resources may, at the request of the Director of Schools, modify the requirements of this procedure to accommodate the needs of the district during a public health emergency or other extended closure of district offices.

Procedure

Definitions:

1. **Ad-hoc Assignment** – a temporary telework agreement for the purposes of allowing an employee who does not have an eligible job to work at an alternate location. Ad hoc assignments of more than 2 days will require the approval of the division Chief and the Chief of Human Resources.
2. **Alternate Work Location** – a work site other than the employee's central work location. This is usually the teleworker's home.
3. **Central Work Location** – The location where the employee would be required to work if they were not doing telework.
4. **Eligible Employee** – An employee in a job approved as being suitable for telework.
5. **Eligible Job** – A job in which the employee is not providing direct service to schools or employees, identified and approved by the Chief of the division and the Chief of Human Resources.
6. **Telework** - a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.
7. **Teleworker** - an eligible and approved employee with work assignments that can be fulfilled from an approved alternate work location using agency provided computer-based solutions.

General Guidelines:

1. Teleworking at MNPS is a management option and not an employee right. If the duties and responsibilities of the eligible person are suitable, MNPS management may allow an employee to telework on a schedule to be determined jointly between the supervisor and the employee.
2. An employee's participation in the MNPS teleworking program is voluntary.
3. In the case of permanent teleworking arrangements, MNPS management may set up a shared workspace arrangement at the Central Work Location where the teleworker shares a workspace with another teleworking employee.
4. No expenses will be paid for traveling to and from the employee's Central Work Location. Employees participating in the program must cover all of their expenses associated with travel to and from the employee's Central Work Location even if they are required to come in on a day that they are scheduled at the Alternate Work Location.
5. An employee's participation in the program can be discontinued by the employee or the manager at any time, with or without cause.
6. Teleworking may not be used as alternative for child or dependent care. The teleworker must continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the Central Work Location.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. MNPS Chiefs will identify eligible jobs within their division(s) and submit those to the Chief of HR for approval prior to July 1 each year.
2. To be eligible to apply for teleworking, an employee must hold a position at MNPS that is eligible for teleworking and should have satisfactorily completed at least 90 days on the job. The 90-day requirement can be waived at the discretion of the division Chief.
3. MNPS division leaders will identify skills and characteristics necessary for a teleworker, taking into account but not limited to the following:
 - a. The employee's history of work performance

- b. The employee's demonstrated ability to work effectively and independently in accomplishing work assignments
- c. The nature of the work and the work products required
- d. Sufficient portable work for the amount of telework proposed
- e. Comfort with and willingness to fully utilize the technologies necessary for successful telework and continued interaction with co-workers
- f. Good communication with managers, co-workers, and customers that will enable a relatively seamless transition from onsite to offsite
- g. Telework office space that is conducive to getting the work done
- h. Ability to be flexible about the telework arrangement to respond to the needs of the manager, the workgroup, and the work
- i. Organized work practices and strong planning skills
- j. Effective communication skills.

Application Process:

1. An eligible employee wishing to routinely telework in an eligible job shall submit a written application/agreement to their immediate supervisor on the form provided along with the Work Location Safety and Orientation Checklist. The supervisor and department head will submit all requests to the division Chief (or his/her designee) for recommendation. The division Chief will forward all recommended application/agreement forms to the Chief of Human Resources for final approval.
2. All signatures and approvals must be obtained prior to the beginning of telework. Agreements must be renewed by June 30 of each year. All decisions made regarding an employee's application for telework are final and may not be appealed.
3. Requests for ad-hoc telework assignments will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may require additional documentation (i.e., medical note or other documentation).
4. Ad-hoc assignments shall not be used in such a way that employees are routinely working in an alternate location.

Working Conditions and Expectations of Employees during Teleworking:

1. Employees who are teleworking should assess the portability of their work and the level of technology available at the Alternate Work Location as they prepare to telework. In many cases, employees will need to plan their telework days in advance in order to be as effective as possible. While planning, employees should consider the following questions:
 - a. What files or other documents will be needed from the regular workplace for teleworking the next day(s)?
 - b. What equipment will be needed?
 - c. Who needs to be notified of scheduled teleworking?
 - d. What other steps may be needed before leaving the Central Work Location (e.g., forwarding calls, etc.)?
 - e. To prepare for the contingency of an unscheduled telework day, what should be available at all times at the Alternate Work Location that would enable the employee to be functional without coming onsite to retrieve materials?
2. Although managers are ultimately responsible for the healthy functioning of the workgroup, teleworkers must help manage the group's expectations and their own communication in order to avoid any negative impact on the morale or productivity of non-teleworkers. Issues that should be considered include:
 - a. Backup: Even with very portable work, there are inevitably instances where physical presence is required and a co-worker needs to step in. Co-worker backup should be planned. It should also not be burdensome, and it should be reciprocal. Resulting cross-training has broad organizational benefits.

- b. On-the-spot assistance: Teleworkers may occasionally need someone who is physically in the Central Work Location to assist them, for instance, to fax or scan a document to them, or to look up information. Again, these arrangements should not be unexpected or burdensome, and they should be reciprocal.
 - c. Communication: The manager and co-workers need to be kept apprised of the teleworker's schedule, how to reach him/her, how to handle telephone calls or other communications that need to go to the teleworker, and how customers are to be handled.
3. Employees are prohibited from conducting work related face to face meetings at their homes (if that is the Alternate Work Location). Needed meetings should occur at an MNPS facility or a public, commercial establishment (i.e., a restaurant).
4. Employees must take responsibility for the security of the data and other information they handle while teleworking. Additionally, employees are required to comply with the district's information security policies, participate in offered information security training, follow security protocols for remote connectivity, and maintain security of any relevant materials, including files, correspondence, and equipment. Depending on the sensitivity of the information being handled, the Alternate Work Location may need to include security measures such as locked file cabinets, similar to what may be used at the Central Work Location. If so, these items will be provided at the employees' own expense.
5. Employees must ensure that the Alternate Work Location is appropriate and provides the work environment, connectivity, technology, resource access, and security authority consistent with the work in which the employee is engaged.
6. Employees must procure and provide internet services appropriate to the work effort at their own expense.
7. Employees must maintain flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the supervisor, work team, and agency (communication and collaboration).

Expectations of Supervisors of Teleworking Employees:

Supervisors of employees utilizing Alternate Work Location arrangements have certain responsibilities which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Setting forth appropriate measures to protect confidential information.
2. Ensuring that customer service is not adversely affected by an employee's teleworking arrangement.
3. Undertaking the necessary risk assessments of the office design and working practices.
4. Clearly defining and setting forth the teleworking employee's responsibilities
5. Setting expectations for all employees who are teleworking regarding professionalism in online communication.
6. Maintaining effective communication with teleworking employees.
7. Ensuring there is not a hardship or burden placed on other employees (additional work, etc.), especially those serving as a Central Work Location backup.
8. Maintaining responsibility and accountability for treating all teleworking and non-teleworking employees similarly in acts involving managerial discretion, including but not limited to: distribution of assignments among employees in the work unit, use of appropriate tracking and communication tools, performance management, both informal and formal feedback, performance coaching, learning and development, reassignment, promotions, retention, and discipline.
9. Providing advance notice, if practical, to teleworking employees regarding requests to report to the regularly assigned Central Work Location (notice is not required and does not absolve an employee's responsibility to be physically present upon request).

Hardware, Software, Supplies:

1. Employees approved for telework must maintain a dedicated, safe, and ergonomic work environment.

2. General office supplies such as pens and paper will be provided by MNPS and should be obtained at the Central Work Location. The employee will not be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally provided by MNPS unless the offices are closed for an extended period of time, such as during a public health emergency.
3. Office furniture will not be provided by MNPS for teleworkers.
4. Employees who telework are subject to the same policies regarding the use of MNPS provided equipment and services as that of employees at the Central Work Location.

Security:

An employee who teleworks shall not allow anyone other than MNPS employees to utilize MNPS provided services or equipment. Employees will keep remote work and information confidential, secure and safe. This includes protecting assets and information in accordance with MNPS policies and practices.

Termination of Privileges:

MNPS may terminate the Teleworking Agreement at any time, with or without cause and this determination is final. Depending on the circumstances, an employee's violation of the Teleworking Agreement may result in disciplinary action.

Reporting:

All divisions will submit a report to HR at the end of the fiscal year regarding staff utilization of teleworking.

Forms

Telework Employee Application and Agreement
Work Location Safety and Orientation Checklist

Performance Measure/Accountability

Continuous evaluation of procedure to ensure efficiency and compliance with all regulations.

MNPS TELEWORK APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT

The following is an application for and agreement between MNPS and _____ (Employee Name), _____ (Job Title) to participate in the teleworking program and to adhere to the policies and to the Terms and Conditions.

Time and Days agreed upon for Teleworking

_____ Annual Agreement _____ Ad Hoc Agreement _____ End Date of Ad Hoc Agreement

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Telework Hours					
In Person Hours					
Telework Address					
Cell Phone:					

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Communication. While teleworking, the employee shall be reachable by telephone/cell phone, fax, text, or e-mail during agreed-upon work hours. The employee and supervisor shall agree on the most efficient means for communication and expected response times from employee.

Conditions of Employment. The employee's conditions of employment shall remain the same as for non-teleworking employees: wages, benefits and leave accrual will remain unchanged.

Equipment. Employees are responsible for maintaining and protecting equipment on loan from the employer. Equipment on loan shall be used for work-related purposes only.

Equipment liability. Equipment and connection requirements shall be reviewed following request so that the supervisor is aware of cost to the district to support remote teleworking and to ensure proper configuration to support work requirements. MNPS will repair and maintain, at the MNPS worksite, any equipment loaned by the District to support the teleworking arrangement. Employee agrees to use surge protectors at all times with any MNPS computer used at the remote site. The employee will be responsible for:

- any intentional damage to the equipment;
- damage resulting from gross negligence by the employee or any member or guest of the employee's household;
- damage resulting from a power surge if no surge protector is used; maintaining the current virus protection software;
- Minimal connection to MNPS network twice per week through overnight hours

Dependent Care. Teleworking is not a substitute for childcare, eldercare or other personal needs. Employees who telecommute shall make or maintain childcare or eldercare arrangements to permit full attention to MNPS duties during regular agreed-upon work hours.

Remote Work Site. Employee warrants that the home or other designated remote work site is quiet, clean, and safe, with adequate lighting and ventilation.

Hours of Work. The employee will have regularly scheduled work hours agreed upon with the supervisor, including specific core hours and telephone/other electronic accessibility. The employee must promptly and accurately report all exception time to regular hours (vacation, sick time, other leave time) in accordance with MNPS practices for exempt and non-exempt employees. The employee will attend job-related meetings, training sessions and conferences in person as requested by supervisors. In addition, the employee may be requested to attend "short-notice" meetings in person.

Incidental Costs. Unless otherwise stated in the Teleworking Agreement or agreed upon in writing with a supervisor, all incidental costs, such as residential utility costs, internet service or cleaning services, are the responsibility of the employee.

Inclement Weather. If the primary worksite is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather, the supervisor will contact the employee. The employee may continue to work at the remote work site. If there is an emergency at the remote work site, such as a power outage, the employee will notify the supervisor as soon as possible. The employee may be reassigned to the primary work site or an alternate work site.

Inspections. In case of injury, theft, loss, or tort liability related to teleworking, the employee agrees that agents of MNPS may investigate and/or inspect the remote work site.

Injuries. Employees involved in teleworking are eligible for IOD benefits for work-related injuries that occur in alternate work locations, including the employee's home, during the defined work period. Injuries occurring during the defined work period should be reported within 24 hours to the supervisor and handled according to MNPS IOD policy and procedures. MNPS is not responsible for any injury sustained at the alternate work location that did not occur in the course of performing job duties for MNPS. MNPS is not responsible for injury to any person other than the employee at the remote work site. Employees involved in teleworking agree that their home owners' insurance shall be kept up to date and is the sole source of liability coverage for any injury sustained that is not work-related or that occurs to other persons who are not employed with MNPS.

Leave. The employee must obtain supervisory approval before taking leave in accordance with the usual practices of the office and MNPS policy.

Network Access. MNPS is committed to supporting teleworking by providing network access to remote locations. However, network access is not guaranteed. Employee agrees that where network access is necessary for the efficient performance of MNPS job duties, employee will promptly notify the supervisor of any disruption in network access or normal functioning.

Office Supplies. MNPS shall provide any necessary office supplies. Out-of-pocket expenses voluntarily incurred by employee for supplies normally available in the office will not be reimbursed.

Performance & Evaluations. The supervisor and employee will formulate objectives, expected results, and evaluation procedures for work completed while the employee is teleworking. The supervisor and employee will meet at regular intervals to review the employee's work performance.

Personal Business. Teleworking employees shall not perform personal business during hours agreed upon as work hours.

Quality of Work. All work shall be performed according to the same high standards as would normally be expected at the primary worksite.

Record Retention. Products, documents and records that are used, developed, or revised while teleworking shall be copied or restored to MNPS's network record system. Whenever possible, all such information shall be backed up, preferably on the VPN server.

Security. Security and confidentiality shall be maintained by the employee at the same level as expected at all worksites. Restricted access or confidential material shall not be taken out of the primary worksite or accessed through a computer unless approved in advance by the supervisor. The employee is responsible to ensure that non- employees do not access MNPS data or records, either in print or electronic form. All confidential or private material must be maintained in a locked, secure location.

Telephone/Internet Expenses. The employee and supervisor will use the most efficient and effective way of handling long distance calls, whether that is the use of a cell phone, calling card or reimbursement of long-distance business calls. MNPS will not reimburse employee for internet service at a remote site.

Travel. The employee will not be paid for time or mileage involved in travel between the remote work site and the primary work site.

Taxes. A home office is not an automatic tax deduction. Telecommuters should consult with a tax expert to examine the tax implications of a home office.

MNPS Property. Equipment such as computers, printers, software, provided on loan by the MNPS remain the property of MNPS while on loan, and must be returned upon termination of the teleworking arrangement. If MNPS equipment is provided, each piece of equipment must be listed with its serial number when the employee takes possession. Employees must return the equipment in the same condition in which it was originally received, minus normal wear and tear.

Insurance. MNPS assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's home workspace outside of work hours or injuries not sustained in the course of performing job duties for MNPS. Employees should note that some homeowner policies do not automatically cover injuries arising out of, or relating to, the business use of the home. Employees are responsible to ensure that the homeowners' insurance is adequate to cover anticipated losses and is in effect at all times.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Agreement shall expire on June 30 each year, unless terminated by either party under the terms set forth in this agreement. The employee understands that he/she must re-apply each fiscal year for the privilege of teleworking.

I have read, understand and will comply with the above terms and conditions relating to this Teleworking Agreement. I have also read, understand, and will comply with MNPS Teleworking Checklist and MNPS Teleworking Procedure.

If the Chief of the Division (or his/her designee) recommends the Teleworking application/agreement, this form should be sent to the Chief of Human Resources for final approval. The Chief of Human Resources will return the signed form to the division. Copies of approved forms should be given to the employee, supervisor and timekeeper.

Decisions regarding an employee's request to telework are final and may not be appealed.

Signatures:

Employee: _____ Date _____

Division Chief Recommendation: Yes No Signature _____ Date: _____

Chief of HR Approval: Yes No Signature _____ Date _____