DRAFT
Portland Public Schools | Human Resources
Employee Remote Work Guidelines
August 2021

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GUIDED BY OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision (including Community-minded, Connected, and Collaborative; Adaptive, Resilient, and Open to Change; Flexible, Future-Focused Environments), and core values (including Relationships; Creativity and Innovation) guide our decisions on our desired workplace culture, including our remote work options plan.

PURPOSE

These new remote work guidelines are an opportunity to create and support a culture open to positive, collaborative and transformational change where employees thrive. Being forced to work remotely during the COVID pandemic taught us skills and demonstrated our ability to be highly productive. We believe that, through thoughtfully applying the lessons from these experiences, we can work together to offer flexibility in how and where we do our work while excelling at delivering on our mission and vision for our students.

Our students have told us repeatedly that what they most value is a reliable and consistent adult presence throughout Portland Public Schools. We also know that in-person contact fosters additional connection and creates opportunities for relationship-building with students and staff in ways that cannot be fully replaced by a video or phone call. So regardless of role, all of us must be able to have regular in-person contact with our teams and our schools, and provide excellent service and support for our students, families, and each other.

The purpose of this playbook is to share expectations for PPS' flexible remote work model. This guide provides insight, a community of practice, expectations, and the ins and outs of the flexible remote work model at Portland Public Schools.

ONGOING FLEXIBLE REMOTE WORK OPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

Flexible remote criteria

There are both team and individual commitments needed to make remote work options successful as we enter this new phase. All Central Office departments need to ensure consistent physical presence of staff and service coverage during regular operating hours. All central office staff must be able to have regular in-person contact with their teams and our school communities.

Please note: at this time, PPS is not administratively designed to support employees who reside outside of the Portland-Salem-Vancouver metropolitan area.

Flexible remote work eligibility

To be eligible, employees must:

1. Work in a [role that allows for remote work](#).
2. Understand and agree to the remote work requirements.

3. Submit a plan on this form and discuss the plan and additional expectations with your supervisor.
4. Once approved by your supervisor, this form must be submitted to HR for inclusion in your personnel file.

District service-level agreements

Supervisors may approve an employee to regularly work remotely up to two (2) days per week with consideration given to the following:

- Highly responsive service and support to our internal partners and students/families.
- Ability to have regular in-person contact with our teams and our school communities.
- Attendance at monthly PPS HQ Community Days.

Remote work options

Up to 2 days per week remote work will be an option for the majority of central office team, depending on role:

- We understand and value certain roles that require staff to be in the building five days per week. This will include, but not limited to custodial, warehouse, and maintenance staff, and front office security staff.

Up to 1 day per week remote work for some customer service focused positions, senior leaders, including Chief and Cabinet-level leaders, Senior Directors, and their CEAs/Admin Assistants.

In some extenuating circumstances, exceptions to the 2 days per week may be approved. Any exceptions must be submitted in writing and approved both by the cabinet-level chief and by HR.

Remote work expectations

- PPS provides each employee with an on-site work space and tools/equipment. Employees who choose to, and are approved, have a work from home schedule are responsible for your own home equipment. PPS does not supply wi-fi, furniture, monitors, ergonomic reviews, etc., for home offices.
- Delivering on service level commitments from a remote work location means that employees must remain accessible and productively engaged during scheduled work hours.
- Comply with all PPS rules, policies, practices and instructions that would apply if you were working onsite at a PPS location.
- Follow your schedule, take required breaks and lunch, and obtain prior approval for any overtime before it's worked.
- Protect confidential information at all times, including student and employee data. **PPS files may not be maintained or stored at home offices.**
- On approved remote work days, employees who encounter power, internet, or other technical difficulties are expected to make alternate arrangements and come on-site to complete their work - or request paid time off.

- Ensure arrangements are made for regular dependent care during all work hours, understanding that telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Remaining engaged in work activities is not consistent with simultaneously caring for dependents.
- Remain flexible to adjusting schedules when work and personal needs shift. You may be called in to your work-site on short notice for unplanned or unexpected circumstances.
- Maintain a safe and secure work environment at all times.
- Report work-related injuries to your manager and Risk Management as soon as practicable.
- Remote work is not a replacement or alternative to taking sick leave or vacation. Being fully engaged in work activities during your work hours is the consistent expectation of the remote work option. If you are too ill to work from home, please use your sick time for rest, recovery, and getting medical care. Vacation time is an important opportunity to rest and recharge, and you are encouraged to take your vacation time.

PPS HQ community day

One consistent day per month will be formally designated as a "PPS HQ Community Day" when all staff are expected in the office in person (unless on pre-approved leave). The PPS HQ Community Day is dedicated time to build and deepen interpersonal connections and relational trust with each other, our organization, and our vision and strategic plan.

Additional supervisor information

- Supervisors **may not require** an employee to work from home.

- From time-to-time, employees **may request to work from home on an ad hoc basis** to deal with personal issues that may not be managed at other times, such as letting the furnace repair person in the house. Supervisors are encouraged to use their best judgement when reviewing these requests - they should be made in advance and the employee should still be expected to participate in all required meetings.

- **Encourage vacation.** Flexible remote work allows employees to work from a location they choose - it is not intended to prevent employees from taking vacation time. Employees should be encouraged to take vacation time free of any work expectations.

- **Changes** in an employee's regular remote work schedule may be made by **mutual agreement**. Should situations arise where the employee's work has shifted and the number of days remote work may need to be **reduced**, or if for any other reason a supervisor feels a remote work schedule needs to **stop**, they **must contact their HR Employee & Labor Relations** partner to discuss the situation.

WORKSPACE + EQUIPMENT + SYSTEMS + TOOLS
Home workspace

When creating a remote workspace, consider the following:
- Safety - ensure your workspace is safe by removing trip hazards and securing cords

- Comfort - set up your workspace in an ergonomic friendly design, have a comfortable chair or a standing desk. Visit Risk Management's ergonomic program website for additional resources.
- Distractions - limit distractions by finding a quiet, private workspace
- Self Care - identify a space with natural light and temperature control

Equipment

PPS provides each employee with one workstation. Employees who choose to, and are approved, have a work from home schedule are expected to provide their own home equipment.

Equipment	Use
Computer and docking station (if needed) x1	PPS will provide one computer and docking station for laptops. Employees who are approved for regular remote work are required to transport their equipment to and from the office.
Monitor (one or two)	PPS will provide up to two monitors. Employees who are approved for regular remote work must decide if they set up their monitors at their home office or on-site. Employees may choose to transport their monitor(s) regularly or opt to use or purchase their own.
Mouse & Keyboard x1	PPS will provide one mouse and keyboard. Employees who are approved for regular remote work must decide if they set up their mouse and keyboard at their home office or on-site. Employees may choose to transport their mouse and keyboard regularly or opt to use or purchase their own.
Chair x1	PPS will provide one chair for employees. Chairs are for use when on-site only and may not be taken home.
Standing Desk	PPS may provide employees with a standing desk option. Standing desks are for use when on-site only and may not be taken home.
Other	Employees who need additional equipment may make a request of their supervisor. Supervisors will assess the need and determine if the additional equipment is provided for on-site use only or may be used at home.

Software & tools

PPS primarily uses the Google suite of applications. Here is a brief overview of available collaboration and learning tools and resources that different departments utilize.

Gmail (email and calendar)	Google Drive (documents, spreadsheets, slides, forms)	Google Chat (instant messaging)

Google Hangout (video conferencing)	Additional software tools by job function.	Zoom (video conferencing)
Jamboard (collaboration)	PepperPD (online learning and in-person training)	Smartsheets (project management)

Employees are expected to follow the **Acceptable Use Policy** (8.60.041-AD) when using district equipment and conducting district business. See also **Computer Use Policy** (8.60.040-P).

Equipment that is damaged, lost, or stolen must reported immediately. Review **Risk Management's website** to report damaged, lost, or stolen equipment.

BESC conference rooms
All Central Office conference rooms have been outfitted with a PolyStudio Camera, TV or Projector, Air Tame.

Facilitator is responsible for bringing their laptop/chromebook for presentation.

Click **here to view an instructional video/flyer** on how to use the PolyStudio Camera when having meetings with staff remote and in-person. A flyer on connecting your laptop can be found in each conference room.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Connecting with your team

From having lunch together to saying hello in the hallways, from playing cards in the breakroom to conducting a walking meeting - many people find it easier to connect socially with their peers when working at the office.

In our new flexible remote work environment, connecting with each other and building relationships is more important than ever. as for Team Connecting -
- warm welcome - invite colleagues to share something positive that occurred recently
- optimistic closure - round robin style, individuals provide kudos for another employee (may or may not be in the same meeting)
- theme days - as a group select a theme and wear something to inspire joy all day
- show and tell - select a photo taken that week and describe what is special about the photo

Connecting individually
- conduct a virtual walking meetings, put in your headphones and walk at the same time, from your own location!
- grab virtual coffee, schedule time with a colleague to get to know them better, each while enjoying a cup of coffee, tea, or water.

Communication between employees & supervisors

Employees – communicate up

- Share your accomplishments
- Ask for help when you hit a roadblock
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Request clarity when needed
- What do you need to be successful?
- Review goals and project timelines and action items, ensure you are on track
- Ask for feedback

Supervisors – set clear expectations
- Define and communicate team norms and expectations
- Clarify SLA, response times and availability
- How to communicate with you - what's the best way to reach you? Chat, call, text, email
- Verify priorities for employees
- Provide a minimum of 48 hours notice if you must request an employee be onsite during their regularly scheduled remote work day

Meeting norms

The following are standard recommended meeting norms as well as suggestions to support meetings where participants may be working on-site or from a remote location.

- End meetings 5 minutes early to allow for "passing time"
- Invite appropriate stakeholders - be mindful of everyone's time, if someone is invited in order to "inform" some individuals - think of other methods for informing them.
- Commit to being present and participating. Stay engaged and focused. Avoid reading and responding to emails or multitasking. Participants may need a bio-break, have a pet that unexpectedly jumps on screen, or need a drink of water during a meeting - that's okay, we are all human and have personal needs that need attending briefly!
- Include a Google Hangout or Zoom link for all meetings to accommodate those working remotely. If all participants are expected to attend the meeting in person, ensure this is clearly communicated well in advance, and when possible, consider holding those meetings on PPS HQ Community Days or other days when all meeting participants are already expected to be onsite.

APPENDIX A - Remote Work Agreement Form

insert final version of the form here

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APPENDIX B - Remote Work Exception Form

insert final version of the form here

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APPENDIX C - Position Eligibility List

The list of central office positions with remote work eligibility can be viewed here.

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APPENDIX D - Supplemental Supervisor Information

It is important to remember, as we return to the office, that employees have had varying experiences and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees may be experiencing heightened anxiety, uncertainty, and increased stress during this time.

As leaders it is our responsibility to have empathy and model a culture that is open to positive, collaborative and transformational change where employees feel supported and thrive.

Trauma Informed Oregon has developed a number of resources for leaders as they support their employees in returning to the workplace. A few we would like to call your attention to are:

- Considerations for a Trauma Informed Response for Work Settings
- The Wellness Society Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook (in multiple languages)
- A Trauma Informed Workforce: An introduction to workforce wellness
- Hosting a Meeting Using Principles of Trauma Informed Care
- Hosting a Virtual Meeting Using Trauma Informed Principles

Employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides services to help people privately resolve problems that may interfere with work, family, and life. Services include 24-hour crisis help, confidential counseling (up to 5 free sessions per situation, per year), and childcare and eldercare referrals. Visit the EAP website for additional information.

Additional mental health & safety resources are available. If you are worried about your mental health or someone else's, please know we care about you. A wide variety of resources are available:

- Call to Safety: If you are an adult and worried about your safety at home, 888-235-5333. Interpretation line available.
  - **Proyecto Unica:** Spanish version of Call to Safety, 503-232-4448
- DHS Hotline (Oregon Department of Human Services) If you are worried about the safety of a child, 855-503-7233. Interpretation services available.
- Multnomah County Crisis Services: Call Center/Crisis Line, 503-988-4888 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Interpretation services available.
- Kaiser Crisis Line: Available if you have Kaiser insurance, 503-331-6425
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: English, 800-273-8255; Spanish, 800-628-9454 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Interpretation services available.
- Oregon Youthline: For youth to connect with other youth, text "Teen2Teen" to 839863 to instantly text with another person. Interpretation services available.
- Trevor Project: Supporting LGBTQiA+ youth. Text "START" to 678678 or call TrevorLifeLine, 1-866-488-7386
- Trans Lifeline: Supporting trans community members, call 877-565-8860