



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852

Tel: 978-674-4324
Fax: 978-937-7609
E-Mail: jhall@lowell.k12.ma.us

To: Superintendent
From: James Hall
Date: February 2, 2024
Re: Second Reading of Remote Work/Hybrid Schedule

I request the enclosed policy be placed on the School Committee's agenda for a "second reading" of the policy. If approved, I recommend that the Remote Work/Hybrid Schedule" policy be labeled as "File: GEA" in the policy book.

Policy for
Remote Work/Hybrid Schedule

Purpose: To provide parameters regarding approval and appropriateness of Remote Work and/or a Hybrid Schedule and relay standards that must be adhered to in regard to accountability and work production when such work is approved by authorized administrators within Lowell Public Schools.

Applicability: This policy applies to unaffiliated personnel and administrators working at Central Office and other employees with contracts, including but not limited to principals, Assistant Superintendents, and the Superintendent.

Authorization: Remote work is generally not encouraged, but may be approved in exceptional cases after following certain procedures. A supervisor may recommend a remote work authorization or hybrid schedule policy to the supervising Assistant Superintendent, who may then approve the schedule for up to three (3) days at a time. For any proposal which amounts to more than three (3) work days at a time, or which may then exceed more than ten (10) days cumulative for the school year, or more than five (5) days in a particular month; the proposal must be approved by the Superintendent, after review of the Assistant Superintendent's recommendation. All requests for hybrid or remote work lasting more than one (1) day must be submitted in writing. Assistant Superintendents are authorized to approve remote work for up to an 8-hour period without a written request, if an emergency situation exists and if the employee provides a report of the work or actions completed during the remote work day.

Requirements prior to implementation:

1. Supervisors will approve or deny requests for telework based upon the organization's requirements; the employee's performance, disciplinary history, work habits, and the needs of the employee's team and supervisor;
2. Supervisors will ensure completion of paperwork authorizing remote work, including reports of work completed by the employee while working remotely or within a hybrid schedule;
3. Supervisors will continually review the work performance of employees working remotely and assess whether remote work is diminishing an employee's work performance or impacting the responsiveness or operations of Lowell Public Schools;
4. Supervisors will terminate remote work for an employee if it is not meeting the needs of Lowell Public Schools or if the employee's work, performance, or conduct does not comply with Lowell Public School's policies;

5. Supervisors shall only approve employees for remote work for more than one (1) business day, only if the employee has designated a space within their home as an official work station for remote work, the employee has ensured that the area complies with safety requirements, and the employee certifies that they will comply with Lowell Public School's policies and procedures while working remotely and that they will promptly report any work-related injury or accident that may occur at an alternative worksite and provide medical documentation related to the injury in a timely manner consistent with Lowell Public Schools' procedure and policies. An employee must also certify that they will safeguard private information, if applicable, and be available to come to the office, even on scheduled remote work days, if the supervisor determines such is in the interest of Lowell Public Schools due to work requirements or absences of other employees. Employees will also maintain a satisfactory work level while working remotely and work a full work day schedule. The employee will also certify that all work and records produced while working remotely are the property of Lowell Public Schools and that they will adhere to appropriate safeguards to protect and preserve records and their confidentiality. Should a breach of confidentiality occur, the employee must also certify that they will immediately report such to the supervisor;

6. Eligibility for consideration of remote work or a hybrid schedule will be determined without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Additionally, this policy in no way limits an individual from requesting a reasonable accommodation. Eligibility shall be determined upon the duties of an employee and determined on a case-by-case basis. Supervisors should consider whether the employee has characteristics suited for remote work, the ability to function independently, the ability to avoid distractions, and time management skills. Employees whose position requires regular face-to-face contact should not be approved for telework unless authorized by the Superintendent on a limited basis and in consideration of a plan for others to cover those face-to-face duties. Employees who are within their first year of work or whom have had disciplinary actions within the last two (2) years, should also not be approved for remote work without the written authorization of the Superintendent. Employees in positions determined not to typically be appropriate for remote work may be approved by their Assistant Superintendent in emergency situations for the duration of the emergency, not to exceed three (3) days. Additionally, remote work should not be approved for individuals who have been absent for work without permission within the last year, or for employees who have exceeded ten (10) sick days per year, unless authorized in writing by the Superintendent;

7. Approval for remote work or a hybrid schedule is within the sole discretion of the supervisor or superintendent, as appropriate. Remote work or a hybrid work schedule may be ended for an employee in the Superintendent's sole discretion, depending upon the needs of Lowell Public Schools, due to work performance decline, or due to employee discipline. Approval is also position dependent, as some duties may not be effectively completed in a remote status;
8. Hybrid or remote work may also be approved during periods of injury or illness where an employee is not able or eligible to report to work, but such injury or illness does not preclude an individual from performing her duties at home or another approved location;
9. The location of approved remote or hybrid work should be detailed in a requested for approval. When approved, remote or hybrid work is only approved for that location; and
10. If a request for remote or hybrid work is denied by a supervisor or an Assistant Superintendent, the employee may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final. Such appeals may be filed with the Chief Operating Officer.