

Remote Work/Telecommuting/Telework

The North Canaan Elementary School Board of Education (Board) recognizes that providing staff members the flexibility of working remotely may be necessary at times when widespread illness, a declared pandemic health emergency, natural disasters or other roadblocks interrupt the District's ability to conduct school and/or business on a regular basis. A federal or state authority outside the school district may, in addition to the Board and/or the Superintendent, direct school closures. In addition, the Board understands that during normal times of operation, it may be beneficial to have some staff members, with appropriate approval, fulfill their professional responsibilities by working remotely.

Telecommuting is not considered an entitlement, or a benefit. Telecommuting/Telework, for purposes of this policy, is defined as the performance of the essential functions of one's job description in a work location other than their assigned school or office. In addition, working remotely/telecommuting does not change in any manner the terms and conditions of employment with the Board. Any change in the terms and conditions of employment shall be made a part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Board and the applicable employee bargaining unit. MOUs are strongly recommended to be developed with the assistance of legal counsel.

This policy's implementation is temporary as necessary in order to address any immediate concern related to quarantine, natural disaster or other event that interrupts normal operations. To provide clarity, this policy outlines expectations and provides guidance should the need arise for staff to work from home.

Eligibility and Duration

The Superintendent of Schools will determine the eligibility and duration for telecommuting situations in Region One Schools for those classes of employees who are able to telecommute.

Central Office staff may be eligible for remote work as determined by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent or his/her designee may authorize employees other than those identified as essential, who would otherwise report to work during emergency school closings, to instead work from an approved remote work location.

When schools are closed for the summer break, the Superintendent or his/her designee may authorize eligible employees to work from the alternate work location periodically on an agreed upon schedule if they are not assigned summer school responsibilities.

Teleworking may be used when the completion of special project work requiring minimal interruptions is approved by the supervisor.

Teleworking may be used when unusual circumstances such as construction, accident, or natural disaster make the assigned work location inaccessible/uninhabitable.

Remote/telecommuting work will cease when determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Schedule

Those individuals approved for remote work will do so within the timeframe established by the Superintendent in collaboration with district administrators and the bargaining units. No employee shall work more than the contracted number of days provided in the parties' bargaining unit Agreement. The total number of contractual days will vary depending on whether an employee is considered a ten month or a twelve-month employee.

Communication Responsibilities

Teachers and administrators working from a remote location will check their school email and shall be available to students and families, or as otherwise directed by the administration during the timeframe listed above or for shorter intervals through various methods, including but not limited to email, and Google Classroom or other learning management systems.

It is the Board's expectation that remote work/telecommuting takes place during the identified workday as outlined above. It is expected that staff working during this time respond in a timely manner to requests for information and be productive employees. Lack of responsiveness on the part of the employee may result in disciplinary action.

Performance

Employee productivity will be measured on time spent on tasks and projects, response to emails, response to parents/vendors, and overall efficiency in project and task completion.

An employee's performance when teleworking will be monitored in the same manner as all employees at their assigned school or office.

The work location must be free of distractions, as much as possible, and the employee must be accessible during work hours.

Employees are responsible for protecting all data and ensuring compliance with all regulations regarding confidentiality of materials.

Equipment Required

The District will either provide a technology device for those who require remote work or provide technological assistance to enable the employee to utilize their own computer equipment to access the Internet for continuation of required work. Personal systems must have a current and updated operating system and up-to-date antimalware. A dual factor virtual private network (VPN) is required to either access the school's network resources or anytime school work is being accomplished from a public Wifi or Ethernet network to prevent compromising critical and sensitive student information and/or financial information. District technology support will be available as needed. Unknown or borrowed USB devices must not be accessed from any system used for school business.

Employees are responsible for maintaining and protecting equipment on loan from the District. Equipment on loan shall be used for work-related purposes only and use is governed by the District's Acceptable Use Policy.

Guidelines for Telework

Employees are expected to maintain their designated teleworking space in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a telework situation and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by Worker's Compensation statutes. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the Board/District of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

Adopted: June 8, 2021

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
North Canaan, Connecticut