

Flexible Work Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the College on 9743 3322.

1. Background

Melton Secondary College values the importance of flexible work arrangements and family friendly work practices in maintaining a diverse, adaptive and high performing workforce. The success of flexible work arrangements requires 'give and take' and a shared responsibility between staff and the Principal to make the arrangements work. A staff member and the Principal may agree to make a flexibility arrangement to meet the genuine needs of the staff member and school.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the arrangements of flexible work that are available to teaching staff and education support staff at Melton Secondary College.

3. Guiding Principles

Flexible work arrangements:

- must not be unlawful. They must comply with the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2022 (VGSA 2022), and the Fair Work Act 2009.
- should result in the staff member being better off overall than the staff member would be if no arrangement was made.
- should not require altering to the staff member's role description.
- should not require the student learning program to change to accommodate staff flexible work.
- must be documented and agreed to by the staff member and the Principal
- can be terminated by the Principal or the staff member by providing notice in writing.

4. Implementation

Individual Flexibility Arrangement

A staff member and the Principal may agree to an Individual Flexibility Arrangement at the request of a staff member. A staff member can apply for an Individual Flexibility Arrangement at any time in writing to the Principal.

Individual Flexibility Arrangements must be agreed to by both the staff member and the Principal in writing. The agreement must include the details of the terms of the VGSA 2022 that will be varied by the arrangement, how they will be varied and how the staff member will be better off because of the arrangement.

The Individual Flexibility Arrangement will state a start date and an end date at which the arrangement will be reviewed.

9-Day Face-To-Face Fortnight

Melton Secondary College constructs the timetable with reference to staff preferences around teaching load and responsibilities, and the Student Resource Package. One preference which Melton Secondary College invites all eligible staff to consider is a 9-day face-to-face fortnight.

In a 9-day face-to-face fortnight arrangement, a staff member may request that their timetable is scheduled such that one day per fortnight (or two-half days per fortnight) is free from face-to-face duties. On this day, the staff member has further flexibility in their work location and can apply to work offsite as part of an Individual Flexible Arrangement.

This arrangement is only available within the constraints of the timetabling priorities set by the Principal and is not a guaranteed arrangement for any staff member. Due to timetabling restrictions this arrangement generally only works for staff working full time.

This arrangement is only available to staff who have at least 7.5 hours of work duties per fortnight within their role description that are able to be performed offsite.

A staff member can apply for a 9-day face-to-face fortnight schedule for the following year during Term 3 when timetabling preferences are sought. Timetabling decisions regarding a 9-day face-to-face fortnight schedule will be made for the duration of the following school year.

If requesting to work offsite, the staff member must be able to provide an alternative safe and functional work environment that ensures the requirements of their role are able to be met, including OHS, internet and phone, and confidentiality requirements.

Termination of an Individual Flexible Arrangement

An Individual Flexible Arrangement may be terminated if there are changes to the staff member's time fraction, timetable, duties and/or other reasonable grounds.

If the principal has concerns about a staff member's performance while on an Individual Flexible Arrangement, they will raise this with the staff member in writing, and provide a reasonable timeframe for the staff member to respond to the concerns raised. If after this time the principal continues to have concerns about the staff member's performance, the principal may write to the staff member and terminate the Individual Flexible Arrangement.

A staff member can choose to end the timetabling of the 9-day face-to-face fortnight arrangement and revert to a 10-day teaching fortnight at the end of a semester.

5. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or as required.

Date Reviewed	August 2024
Author	Principal
Approval required	No
Consultation required	NA
School Council approved	NA
School Council noted	-
Mandatory	No
VQRA	No
Responsible for Review	Principal
Review Date	August 2027
Published	Website/Internal Circulation

Frequently asked questions about the 9-day Face-To-Face Fortnight Trial.

The purpose of this section is to support Melton Secondary College staff to understand the implementation of the Flexible Work Policy. Every school will need to consider their own context when exploring and implementing any flexible work arrangement. This document is not intended for direct application to other school settings.

1. **Why has MSC implemented this policy?**

Staff data shows that many staff find it necessary to take regular time away from school to allow them to be their best when they are face-to-face with students. We believe that allowing staff to take time away in a planned manner will support staff to provide more consistent support for student learning. Early data from our 2024 Trial of the policy indicates staff on a 9-day face-to-face fortnight take less personal leave than other staff.

Structure and organisation

2. **Do students also work offsite? Do teachers take classes virtually? Do teachers need to prepare extras for their non-face-to-face day?**

This arrangement does not result in changes to the student learning program. Participating teachers' timetables are scheduled so that they have one day where they have no classes. No extras are left on non face-to-face days. Student hours of attendance will remain the same.

3. **Do teachers have to teach more than 18.5 hours in a week to make this work?**

No. The VGSA 2022 is clear that 18.5 hours per week is the maximum allocation that a teacher can have. No teacher can be allocated teaching time over 18.5 hours in any given week.

This means the "feel" of the 9-day face-to-face fortnight will be a 'normal' teaching week followed by a week of Five days of classes taught in Four days, with a non-face-to-face day on the Fifth day.

4. **Do all staff have to take up a 9-day face-to-face fortnight arrangement?**

No. Flexible work arrangements are only made by request and application by an individual staff member.

5. **Do teachers still get planning time on the days that they are at school?**

Teachers on a full load are allocated 23 hours of planning time a fortnight. 6.5 of these planning hours can be used in a non face-to-face day. On a full load there would be an additional 16.5 hours of planning time allocated across a teacher's fortnight.

6. **What are the impacts on the school-wide timetable?**

Each year the whole school timetable may need to incorporate some of the following to enable staff to access a 9-day face-to-face fortnight:

- There may be very few staff who will be able to teach only senior classes
- Double periods are highly likely in both junior and senior classes
- The one-hour SEL class may be unable to be scheduled at the same time, even in year levels
- Junior assembly can be timetabled but SEL teachers are likely to be unavailable. Staff that are face-to-face on the day would need to cover supervision.
- Some staff may need to have half days across the fortnight rather than a full day of non face-to-face time.

7. **Can staff claim WFH tax benefits? Can staff tax deduct home office equipment or is this provided?**

Staff may tax-deduct office equipment that they purchase to accommodate offsite work. Staff are responsible for the set-up of offsite office spaces. Furniture and equipment will not be provided to staff to accommodate offsite work.

8. **What happens if a non face-to-face day falls on a Curriculum Day, Professional Practice Day or required school activity?**

It is expected that staff applying for a 9-day fortnight will organise a plan for their workflow considering whole school activities. If there are two or more non-face-to-face days taken by a Curriculum Day or required school activity within a term, staff may apply for an individual planning arrangement with the Director of Operations.

9. **If staff are sick on a non face-to-face day, can the non face-to-face day be rescheduled?**

No. As with illness on any other day, workflow will need to be rescheduled by individuals and teams to manage the impact of illness.

10. **What if it is not possible to schedule the timetable to allow a staff member a whole day per fortnight?**

If a whole day with no face-to-face duties is not possible, two half days will be attempted. In some cases it may not be possible to allocate a staff member any non face-to-face time. In this case a 9-day face-to-face fortnight will not be available.

11. **What if staff don't have stable internet at home?**

It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure that when working offsite OHS, internet and phone, and confidentiality requirements of their role are met. If these

are not able to be met, the staff member cannot work offsite.

12. Can a non face-to-face day be split over 2 days?

Yes. From a timetabling perspective this is easier to schedule. If this is your preference, please include this in the application for a 9-day face-to-face arrangement.

13. Can staff nominate which day their non face-to-face day is?

No. All non face-to-face days will be entirely dependent on timetabling priorities.

14. Who is ineligible for the 9-day face-to-face fortnight?

Staff who do not have 7.5 hours of work per fortnight in their role description that can be completed offsite are ineligible. Whilst part-time staff are not ineligible, the timetable is also unlikely to allow staff who do not work full time to undertake this arrangement.

Duties

15. What are staff expected to be doing when at home?

Staff are expected to complete duties that are within their role description that do not require face-to-face work with students.

16. Do staff have to attend meetings?

Yes. All regular meetings are compulsory, regardless of the location that a staff member is working from. Meetings will be available via Webex.

17. Do staff have to be offsite on non-face to face days? If staff want to come onsite is there a protected space available that can be accessed?

Staff can work from school during their non face-to-face day. There is no capacity to create additional workspaces to accommodate staff. Work from school should occur in staffrooms or the social staffroom. Staff should not book meeting spaces or occupy small workspaces to work from school during non face-to-face days.

18. Do staff have to be contactable on non face-to-face day?

Yes. On non-face-to-face days staff are expected to be contactable on a phone that has a number that can be shared with all staff. Work phones or numbers will not be provided by the College. Our regular MSC Communications Guidelines ([internal](#)) and ([external](#)) email protocol policy applies for contact on email and other platforms.

19. How should staff speak with parents and the community when offsite? Is there an expectation that staff are available to answer student questions while working offsite?

Staff should remain available to students via email and respond in the agreed timeframe outlined in our [email protocol policy](#). Staff working offsite will be required to use school platforms or their mobile phone to contact members of the community. A private setting is recommended for use with parents, or a separate work phone number. **Staff should not contact students (call or text) under any circumstances unless directly instructed to by the Principal.**

20. What things might compel staff to be onsite during my scheduled non face-to-face day?

The Principal may require attendance onsite for any reason that supports the running of the College. This may include whole school activities such as Professional Learning, activities such as sports days or to provide coverage of classes in the event that classes are not able to be covered by other means.

21. Can staff care for children on my non face-to-face day?

Staff must be able to complete the requirements of their role while working offsite. Viability of caring arrangements will depend on the needs of the children. Concerns with staff capacity to fully perform duties while offsite may result in a Flexible Work Arrangement being terminated.

22. Can staff hold parent meetings offsite?

No. All face-to-face contact with parents must occur on school grounds.

Flexibility

23. Do staff have to work during regular work hours? Can staff schedule appointments on my non-face-to-face day if this does not impinge on work?

Normal arrangements for personal and medical leave apply to non-face-to-face days. Staff can use discretion around the scheduling of their non-face-to-face time, if they meet the requirements of their role and are available to be contacted on their mobile phone during the workday. Concerns with staff capacity to fully perform duties while offsite may result in a Flexible Work Arrangement being terminated.

24. Can staff work from a café or public space?

Staff have flexibility of location during their non face-to-face day provided they maintain appropriate OHS, internet and phone, and confidentiality requirements.

25. If a staff member cannot work from home what are the other options?

Not all roles in schools or society are able to be performed offsite. Additionally, some teaching allotments will not be able to be accommodated in a 9-day face-to-face fortnight. Some staff will not be able to arrange necessary OHS, privacy or internet and phone requirements. Under the VGSA 2022, Individual Flexible Arrangements are a benefit, not a right.

An application for a time fraction reduction is another form of flexibility that all staff may apply for.