

Montgomery County Public Schools

Telework

Frequently Asked Questions

The frequently asked questions included in this document are grouped into the categories listed below. If you have questions that are not addressed on the telework webpage or in this document, please contact the Office of Human Resources and Development at 240-740-7010.

- 1. OVERVIEW**
- 2. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY**
**includes guidance for special educators involved in IEP meetings*
- 3. PROCEDURES**
- 4. TELEWORK FREQUENCY AND LOCATION**
- 5. TELEWORK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- 6. TELEWORK CONTINUATION**
- 7. TELEWORK AND LEAVE**
- 8. AVAILABILITY WHILE TELEWORKING**
- 9. TELEWORK AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**
- 10. EQUIPMENT NEEDED or USED WHILE TELEWORKING**
- 11. DATA SECURITY**
- 12. TELEWORK TRAINING**
- 13. WEATHER EMERGENCIES**
- 14. QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEWORK**

1. OVERVIEW

What is telework?

- Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) supports teleworking as an effective way to recruit and retain excellent employees, honor professionalism, increase flexibility, improve employee productivity, reduce the amount of time employees spend commuting to and from work, ease traffic congestion, reduce the environmental impact of car emissions, conserve office space, and promote a healthy balance between home and work.

2. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to telework?

- All MCPS employees are eligible to submit a telework request. The work required of your position must be portable and meet the guidelines established in regulation GEH-RA Telework. Your supervisor and chief must approve your request to telework.
- School-based employees are not eligible for telework on instructional days.
- Exceptions specific to a telework option for special education staff who are engaged in IEP meetings is subject to the guidance provided below per the Office of Special Education:
 - Special Education teachers, consistent with the MCPS/MCEA agreement must participate in-person for IEP meetings when a parent requests an in-person meeting.
 - Special Education teachers may be granted approval to telework when a substitute teacher has been secured and the special education teacher has provided their principal with evidence which confirms the parent's participation virtually is preferred.
 - Special Education teachers may be granted access to telework when a substitute teacher has been secured for the purpose of allowing the special education to either prepare for a series of IEP meetings or to actually conduct a series of IEP meetings during the entire day.
 - The principal/designee as required under IDEA and COMAR must participate in each virtual IEP meeting as well as ensure that all members of the IEP team, including the general education teacher, related service providers and school psychologist have access to the virtual platform for each IEP meeting.
 - Telework for the reasons stated above requires the approval of the principal; an approved telework request is not required.

How do I know if I might be eligible to telework?

- Consider the work required for your position. Some or all of this work must be portable, meaning that the work can be done from an alternate work location while not altering the employee's duties or work standards/competencies. Employees who are considering telework are encouraged to discuss their interest with their supervisor.
- Factors used to determine if a position is eligible for telework include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - The position has tasks that are portable and can be performed from a location other than the primary work location,
 - Responsiveness and transparency to the public will not be affected by telework,

- Data security can be maintained,
- Service to internal and external stakeholders will be maintained at the level as when working from the primary work location.
- Operational requirements will be met.

3. PROCEDURES

How do I apply to telework?

- Employees who wish to be considered for telework must submit a request to their supervisor using the approved Telework Request form 425-38.
- The appropriate supervisor reviews the request and recommends approval or denial of the request.
- The telework request form with the supervisor's recommendation is reviewed by the appropriate chief and the request is approved or denied. The requests that are denied must include a written rationale for the decision.
- The employee receives the completed and signed telework request form as notification of the decision regarding their request.
- Employees approved to telework must complete telework training prior to beginning to telework.

Is there a list of positions that are/are not approve for telework?

- This list has not been developed. The approval or denial of a telework request should be based on the portability of the work requirements of that position and the operational needs of that division, department, office or school.

Can telework be for a part of the day or must it be for a full day?

- Employees may be approved to telework for a portion of a day, full day(s) or for the duration of specific project(s) or task(s).

Do I have to specify a particular day of the week to telework when I make my request?

- This will be a dialogue and decision between the employee and the supervisor. In some situations, a specified day(s) may be most appropriate and in other situations a more flexible day(s) designation may be most appropriate.

Is there a deadline by which I must submit a telework request?

- Employees can submit a telework request to their supervisor at any time. Employees may not begin to telework until the request has been reviewed and approved by their supervisor and chief. Additionally, employees may not begin to telework until they have completed the required training.

Where can I find the telework request form and telework resources?

- Employees are encouraged to visit the telework webpage on the MCPS website to access forms and review available resources.

Can I submit an appeal if my telework request is denied or revised by my supervisor?

- An employee who wishes to appeal the telework request decision of their chief may submit a letter of appeal within 10 duty days of the decision to the MCPS Chief of Staff.

Does the telework regulation conflict with contract language about remote or flex work?

- All language in the association negotiated agreements remains in place and is not in conflict with this regulation.

How is telework time reported on the payroll?

- All hours worked at an alternate location are reported the same as hours worked at the primary work location.

4. TELEWORK FREQUENCY AND LOCATION

If I am approved to telework, where can I work?

- Telework can be done from any alternative work location; a setting that is appropriate for completing the assigned duties without altering those duties or impacting the employee's quality or quantity of work. Alternate work locations must be free of recognized hazards that could

How often can I telework?

- The telework regulation does not specify a minimum or maximum number of days for telework consideration.
- The telework request offers the following frequency options:
 - Recurrent Telework - Employee works from alternative work site on a regular, recurring basis
 - Intermittent Telework - Employee works regularly from primary worksite but would telework for limited periods of time based on specific circumstances or job responsibilities that could be accommodated by teleworking
- At the time of the telework request, the employee may request frequency they seek to telework. The supervisor and chief will determine the approved frequency based on the employee request and the requirements of the employee's work.

Is telework only for full days?

- Employees may submit requests to telework for partial or full day(s).

If approved to telework, do I have to telework the same days every week?

- Days scheduled to telework can be consistent by week or can be flexible based on the work requirements and schedule. The employee's telework frequency, consistency and schedule will be determined at the time of the request. Requests for changes or adjustments to the telework schedule can be initiated by the employee, supervisor or chief.

5. TELEWORK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Can an employee participate in a virtual training via telework?

- Yes, if the professional development has been designated as remote and the employee has approved professional development leave. A telework request form is NOT required to participate in remote professional development.

Can I telework on school days designated as early release or professional development days?

- For school-based staff, the work location on days designated as early release days or professional development is determined by the leadership team at each school and is based on the work requirements and/or professional development content for that particular day.

6. TELEWORK CONTINUATION

What if I change jobs after I am approved to telework?

- An employee's approval to telework is only valid for the job or position held at the time of the approval. An employee who changes their job or full-time equivalent (FTE) allocation must submit a new telework request to their appropriate supervisor.

If there is a supervisor change, do all employees who report to that supervisor have to resubmit a request telework?

- A change of supervisor does not require new telework requests by those employees working for the new supervisor. It is important to note that a supervisor does have the authority to adjust or terminate telework agreements based on the needs of the office or organization.

Do I have to submit a new telework request every year?

- The telework approval will remain valid unless the agreement is changed or terminated by the appropriate supervisor or chief. Once per fiscal year, each employee newly approved for telework and those continuing to telework must complete the telework training.

If I was approved for telework prior to January 2022, do I have to submit the new request form?

- Yes, any employee who wishes to telework in any way is expected to submit the telework request form and, if approved, complete the training prior to beginning to telework.

7. TELEWORK AND LEAVE

Can I telework in order to care for children or other relatives?

- Employees may not use telework as a substitute for dependent or child care. Appropriate leave should be used to care for a dependent or child.

Can I telework when I am sick?

- Employees who are scheduled to work on-site but are experiencing an illness that limits their ability to perform their duties should use appropriate leave throughout their illness.

Due to a medical condition, I am unable to work onsite. Can I utilize telework for my duties?

- Employees who are unable to work onsite due to a qualified Americans with Disabilities Act accommodation (ADA) or medical reason should contact the ADA Coordinator in the Department of Compliance and Investigations at 240-740-2888.

If I have a personal appointment while scheduled to telework, do I have to take leave?

- The employee must request and take leave during approved telework hours in accordance with established MCPS rules.

8. AVAILABILITY WHILE TELEWORKING

If I am teleworking, do I have to be available to my supervisor and stakeholders?

- Responsiveness to the public should not be impacted by telework. Every effort must be made by an employee who is approved to telework to have interactions with stakeholders appear the same, whether they be in the office or working at an alternative location.
- Employees who are teleworking must provide to their supervisor and all stakeholders a contact phone number at which they can be reached during their scheduled duty day. MCPS phone lines should be forwarded to this contact number and the contact number should be included in the employee's voicemail message on their MCPS office phone.

If I am scheduled to telework, can my supervisor require that I work in person?

- If an employee who typically teleworks on a given day is needed to attend a meeting, hearing or event, or meet with a client in person they may be required to change their telework schedule for that period. Employees should be prepared to report to their primary work location given 24 hours' notice based on operational need.
- In urgent or emergency situations an employee approved to telework may be expected to report to their primary work location. In these situations, the employee will be given as much notice as possible.

Can I work overtime via telework?

- Before overtime is worked, proper approval must be obtained. Failure to obtain approval for leave and/or overtime may result in termination of the teleworking agreement and/or disciplinary action.

9. TELEWORK AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Is the work I do while teleworking included in my overall performance evaluation?

- The employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities, standards/competencies remain unchanged while teleworking.
- The evaluation of an employee's job performance while teleworking shall be based upon current MCPS performance expectations, competencies and standards.

10. EQUIPMENT NEEDED or USED WHILE TELEWORKING

Will MCPS provide supplies in order for me to telework?

- MCPS will not purchase equipment solely for the purpose of permitting an employee to telework

Can I use my own personal equipment/supplies while teleworking?

- The use of any personal equipment by the employee for purposes of telework is done solely at the employee's risk.

11. DATA SECURITY

Am I expected to secure equipment and data while teleworking?

- While teleworking the employee must follow the same security and privacy practices that are required at the primary work location. MCPS may require additional security protections on personally owned devices. Employees are required to inform MCPS immediately if equipment with MCPS data is lost or stolen.

12. TELEWORK TRAINING

How often do I have to complete telework training?

- Employees approved to telework must complete the online telework training annually (July 1 to June 30).

Who do I notify when I complete the training?

- Proof of completion is shown in the employee's PDO transcript. The proof of completion should be submitted to the employee's supervisor.

How can I access the telework training?

- The required telework training can be found on the MCPS Professional Development Online (PDO). The course title and number can be found on the [MCPS Telework Website](#).

13. WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Do I have to be pre-approved in order to telework during emergency weather conditions?

- The telework regulation does not apply to emergency weather conditions. All employee associations have language in their current contracts that address telework options during weather emergencies.

14. QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEWORK

Who can I contact if I have questions about teleworking?

- Employees with questions about telework requests should contact their supervisor.
- Questions about the telework regulation or telework training should contact the Office of Human Resources and Development at 240-740-7010.