



## Remote Working – New Operational Procedure

**To:** Governance and Policy Committee

**Date:** 28 October, 2020

**Report No.:** 10-20-3967

### Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Remote Working Procedure, as presented in this report, be received for information.

### Context

As a result of the Ontario government's initial closure of all publicly funded schools across the province following March Break due to concerns about COVID-19, the TDSB implemented a protocol for staff working from home or a remote location.

With the evolving and enduring presence of COVID-19 and based on the principles of the initial protocol, staff developed the Remote Working Procedure that was approved by Executive Council on October 20, 2020.

As part of the procedure development, staff conducted a jurisdictional scan of comparative school boards and public organizations and incorporated relevant provisions and best practices considerations in the Remote Working Procedure.

### Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Subject to the Governance and Policy Committee's receipt, the draft Remote Working Procedure will be provided to the Board of Trustees on November 11, 2020 for information.

### Resource Implications

The Procedure will be implemented within existing budget framework.

## **Communications Considerations**

Resources will be developed for staff and school communities outlining the above changes and expectations. Union and Federation partners will be engaged. The newly developed Remote Working Procedure will be posted on the Board's internal website and communicated through the System Leaders' Bulletin.

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

- Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy (P088)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (P094)
- Restrictions on Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use Policy (P095)
- Board Code of Conduct (PR575)
- Recorded Information Management (PR677)

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Remote Working Procedure

## **From**

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## Toronto District School Board

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Operational Procedure PR[number]

Title: **REMOTE WORKING**

Adopted: [date of approval of the procedure]  
 Effected: [date when the procedure came into effect]  
 Revised: N/A  
 Reviewed: N/A  
 Authorization: Executive Council

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### 1. RATIONALE

This Remote Working Procedure (the “Procedure”) supports the TDSB’s commitment to remote working, where practicable, in a manner that maintains performance standards, accountability, and service to the TDSB community.

### 2. OBJECTIVE

To outline the application process and the terms and conditions for remote working at the TDSB, including eligibility for administrative and supervisory staff and expectations surrounding performance accountability, health and well-being, level of service and responsiveness to clients.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

*Administrative Sites* refer to TDSB owned/leased administrative sites/education centres.

*Remote Working* refers to an alternate work arrangement in which work that is normally conducted by the employee at an administrative site is performed at an alternate location including the employee’s home.

*Workplace, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, refers to any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which an employee works, but does not include a private residence and its related lands.*

### 4. RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director, Business Operations and Service Excellence and the Associate Director, School Operations and Service Excellence

## 5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Procedure applies to eligible administrative and supervisory staff at TDSB administrative sites who have been authorized for remote working.

This Procedure does not apply to school principals, vice-principals or teachers and school-based support staff.

## 6. PROCEDURES

### 6.1. General Principles

A successful remote working program is built on mutual trust between TDSB employees and supervisors.

Employees may request or be required to perform their duties remotely, if practicable, on a temporary or permanent basis. Remote working arrangements may be modified or revoked by the supervisor at any time.

Due to the nature of some employees' work (i.e., client-facing, front line roles), it may not be possible for some employees to perform their job duties remotely, in which case remote working will not be approved.

Remote working eligibility will be based on employee job description, performance expectations and the ability to carry out job responsibilities remotely as determined by the employee's Executive (Executive Council member), in consultation with the Executive Superintendent, Employee Services.

In order for an employee to be eligible for remote working, the resources that an employee needs to do their job must be easily transferable or available electronically. The employee must also have access to secure and reliable internet as a condition for remote working approval.

Employees should designate a secure, clean, safe and quiet space in their residence as their work space for remote working.

Employees authorized for remote working will be expected to maintain the same level of service and responsiveness to clients, both internal and external, while working remotely.

Remote working arrangements may be revoked by the supervisor at any time with at least 5 working days' notice to the employee where possible. There should not be any expectation that a position previously approved for remote working will continue in the same manner.

All TDSB policies and procedures continue to apply as appropriate for remote working, including but not limited to the Acceptable Use of Information

Technology Resources Policy (P088), Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (P094), and the Board Code of Conduct (PR585).

## **6.2. Performance Accountability**

Employees assigned to remote working must continue to meet performance expectations as set out by their supervisor and will remain accountable to their direct supervisor and/or management through regular check-ins and updates.

Remote working employees are expected to be reachable when working remotely via email, virtual meeting or TDSB mobile phone (if applicable).

Remote working employees will be responsible for maintaining communication with all TDSB clients including staff, parents/guardians, and the general public.

To facilitate a successful remote working arrangement, employee duties, responsibilities and job expectations will be clearly outlined between the employee and supervisor.

Supervisors will schedule regular check-ins with their remote working employees to receive status updates and feedback on critical tasks, projects and performance expectations.

Remote working employees will be expected to complete their required working hours between standard TDSB work hours or as agreed upon with their supervisor and should provide periodic reports to their supervisor which summarizes work activities for the given period.

Remote working employees' performance will be subject to the same performance evaluation process as employees working at TDSB administrative sites.

Supervisors are entitled to discontinue remote working arrangements if the remote working employee(s) are not meeting performance expectations and will address performance related matters without delay, in accordance with the TDSB's progressive discipline process.

## **6.3. Employee Health and Well-being**

The TDSB recognizes the importance of work-life balance, socialization and unique challenges associated with remote working. Supervisors should encourage remote working employees to take regular breaks and enjoy personal activities when not scheduled for work. Remote working employees are advised to maintain regular contact by phone or virtual meetings with colleagues, connect in person with friends and family and try new working environments if desirable to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The TDSB encourages remote working employees who may be experiencing difficulty with the new work environment to contact their supervisor or access well-being resources provided to employees including the Employee Assistance Program.

#### **6.4. Attendance Reporting**

A remote working employee is required to report to work and/or report time worked in accordance with their employment agreement.

Remote working employees who are sick or unable to report to work are expected to notify their supervisor as early as possible in the same manner as when working from an administrative site. Under these circumstances, the remote working employee may take sick leave, short term disability leave or the relevant paid or unpaid leave of absence where available and eligible.

#### **6.5. Work Related Injuries and Reporting**

The TDSB will not be held responsible for any non-work related injuries that occur at a remote working location.

An employee who sustains a workplace accident or injury while working remotely must comply with the normal reporting requirements for any work-related accident as outlined in the reporting procedures. Employees should immediately seek treatment for the injury, and then report the injury to their supervisor without delay. The TDSB will not be responsible and assumes no liability for any injuries to family members, visitors and others in the employee's remote working location.

#### **6.6. Remote Workplace, Technology and Compliance**

Remote working employees may be provided with resources to perform their duties remotely as determined by the employee's supervisor such as a laptop, mobile phone and virtual private network (VPN) access.

The TDSB's Information Technology and Information Management Department will routinely update and provide training documents for various remote working platforms and software.

Remote working employees are expected to have reliable, secure and continuous access to the Internet during regular working hours. In the event of any lengthy technological disruptions (e.g., internet not working, no household power), the employee will notify their supervisor and may arrange to complete alternate work which do not require these resources.

Employees are responsible for arranging for the installation, maintenance and payment for internet service at their residence and will not be reimbursed by the TDSB for these expenses.

Remote working employees will be expected to check voicemail on desk phones at least twice each business day (morning and afternoon).

A telephone contact list will be shared by the department head/supervisor with all staff who are working remotely.

All remote working employees will ensure that VPN access is available and working (this should be tested before remote working begins).

VPN access can be granted by completing the following steps.

1. Go to [ServiceIT](#)
2. Under the 'How can we help?' Box, enter into the search field: 'VPN'
3. The VPN Access Request Form will be displayed and can be completed by the remote working employee

All VPN access must be through use of a TDSB-owned device. If a TDSB owned device is not available, access will be limited to services available on [aw.tdsb.on.ca](http://aw.tdsb.on.ca) or through [mytdsb.on.ca](http://mytdsb.on.ca).

Remote working employees must only use TDSB supplied VPN access mechanisms to access TDSB services. Using any other VPN services to access any TDSB services is prohibited.

Remote working employees should identify a workspace within the home or remote location and report same to their supervisor.

Employees should not hold work meetings at their home; such meetings should be conducted through video conferencing, telephone or in person at the TDSB work site.

Remote working employees will complete a Workspace Safety Compliance Checklist (see Appendix A) to ensure workplace compliance and safety and provide it to their supervisor before commencing remote working.

Remote working employees will ensure that their workspace is kept free of hazards at all times and maintained with sufficient lighting and ventilation, smoke detectors, etc.

Remote working employees will comply with the TDSB's Restrictions on Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use Policy (P095) and all rules and regulation regarding a smoke-free workplace while on duty and using their remote workspace.

Remote working employees will be required to complete safety training and review resources related to remote working on the Key to Learn platform or through the TDSB's annual compliance training.

### **6.7. Records Management and Protection of Privacy**

Remote working employees will comply with the Records and Information Management Policy (under development) and the Recorded Information Management Procedure (PR677).

Remote working employees will minimize the amount of paper files and hard copies of TDSB materials removed from TDSB property. Confidential or sensitive files should generally not be printed in hard copy or removed from TDSB property. In the event that documents are to be removed for the performance of duties, sensitive documents must be treated as confidential and not exposed to unauthorized parties, including family members or individuals in the same remote working location.

Content created or modified will be done using only a TDSB or encrypted device.

Remote working employees will use secure WIFI connections when browsing internet or creating content.

Confidential or sensitive files should be downloaded onto an encrypted USB flash drive when carried back and forth from different working locations. Any removable media that is used must be fully encrypted.

Employees may consult with IT Services and the TDSB Privacy Office for further guidance in ensuring cybersecurity and privacy protection.

Remote working employees will be responsible for making sure unauthorized individuals do not use or damage TDSB issued equipment and devices while working from home/remote location. Each remote working employee will be responsible for safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Board information in their possession.

## **7. EVALUATION**

This Procedure will be reviewed one year after the effective date and then at minimum every four years thereafter.

## **8. APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Remote Workspace Safety Compliance Checklist



## 9. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### Policies:

- Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy (P088)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (P094)
- Restrictions on Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use Policy (P095)

### Operational Procedures:

- Board Code of Conduct (PR585)

### Legislative Acts and Regulations:

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Employment Standards Act*
- *Human Rights Code*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*

**Toronto District School Board  
Remote Workspace Safety Compliance Checklist**

Department/Section	Inspected By (Employee Name)
Location	Date Inspected

**The employee:**

- Completes the checklist and submits the checklist to the supervisor

**The supervisor:**

- Signs and retains a copy of the checklist

Employee Services:

- Maintains a copy of the completed form for record purposes

**Workplace conditions**

Considerations	Response	Action Required/Comments
Floors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of trip, slip and fall hazards</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	
Stairs (if applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handrail installed and in good condition</li> <li>• Clear and unobstructed</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	
Exits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and unobstructed</li> <li>• Outside landings, walkways clean</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	
Lighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking/working areas adequately illuminated</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	
Ergonomics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee knows and uses ergonomic principles at their workstation</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	
Equipment/Furnishings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In safe operating condition</li> </ul>	<yes/no>	

**Electrical**

Considerations	Response	Action Required/Comments
Power cords in good condition	<yes/no>	
Power cords used safely	<yes/no>	
Adequate number of receptacles (No overloaded outlets)	<yes/no>	
Receptacle plates in good condition (not broken, no evidence of shorting)	<yes/no>	
Power bars and surge protectors plugged directly into wall receptacles (not into each other)	<yes/no>	

**Personal safety**

Considerations	Response	Action Required/Comments
Do you feel safe working remotely?	<yes/no>	
Are there any issues that TDSB should be made aware of with regards to your safety while working remotely?	<yes/no>	

**Fire protection**

Considerations	Response	Action Required/Comments
Working smoke alarm(s)	<yes/no>	
Working carbon monoxide detector	<yes/no>	

**Emergency procedures**

Considerations	Response	Action Required/Comments
Evacuation plan established	<yes/no>	
First aid supplies adequate	<yes/no>	
Emergency contact numbers posted near the telephone	<yes/no>	

**Additional comments**

<Additional comments from the employee>

APPENDIX A

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Supervisor's comments**

<Additional comments from the supervisor>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Once completed, please send signed documents to your Supervisor.**

**The Supervisor will circulate the completed form to Employee Services.**