



**MILWAUKEE**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# **Milwaukee Public Schools**

Remote Work Standard Operating Procedure

Updated July 2020

# **DRAFT**

## Purpose

The following document provides procedure guidance to all district employees regarding remote work for Milwaukee Public Schools in the event of an extenuating circumstance if/when they occur. The expectation of any remote work is that the situation is temporary and a return to on-site operations will happen as soon as possible. The remote work policy will only be approved in extreme circumstances, such as a public health crisis. Remote work is not an option otherwise.

## General Guidance

### **1. What is remote work?**

Remote work is a work arrangement in which some, or all, of the work is performed from home or another off-site location. In general, regular office hours are worked in order to continue effectively collaborating on various tasks and projects. Some flexibility and deviation from that schedule may occur, after discussion between employee and supervisor, for work activities that do not require collaboration.

### **2. Which factors should departments/units consider when determining if remote work is possible?**

- Operational requirements
- Security of work data
- Technological capabilities and equipment necessary to perform job duties
- Productivity
- Accuracy of records reflecting time worked by employees

### **3. Which jobs are suited for remote work?**

Remote work is easiest to implement for jobs or tasks that require reading, writing, research, working with data and talking on the phone. In general, and at leadership's discretion, a job is suited to work remotely if the job or some components of it can be done off-site without disruption to the flow of work and communication.

### **4. Which jobs are not as well suited for remote work?**

It is not uncommon to require employees in positions needing physical labor, in-person contact/customer service or that rely upon specific equipment or supplies to work on site.

### **5. What is most important for starting a productive remote work arrangement?**

Clearly outlined and executed remote work arrangements can prove beneficial to employees and supervisors alike. Supervisors should articulate clear procedures regarding check-in times and hours of availability. With proper planning, communication problems can be minimized.

## Determining Remote Work

When an extenuating circumstance occurs, remote work should be approved at the discretion of the chief. Some things to consider when determining remote work may include, but are not limited to,

- Availability of regularly used equipment/services such as internet, business applications, computer, phone, printer, scanner (see Issuing Board Equipment to District Employees below)
- Safety of the remote work environment such as adequate lighting, ventilation, heating/cooling, allergy or environmental hazards, electrical access, trip or fall hazards
- Security of the remote work environment such as a separate room away from any household member, lockable furnishings for any physical files, password protection for electronic devices
- The remote work environment such as a chair, desk or other work surface, keyboard and mouse considerations, monitor size, understanding correct posture, taking regular breaks if performing repetitive tasks
- Determining if the employee has any special requirement for remote working and if those requirements can be met i.e. ADA considerations, etc.
- Ensuring the employee understands hazard and incident reporting while working remotely. Information on the process can be found [here](#). The statement of injury form can be found [here](#).
- Ensuring the employee understands how to report/request leaves of absence for illness, vacation, funerals, etc.
- Ensuring the employee understands methods of communication and has access to emergency contact information

## Issuing Board Equipment to District Employees

District administrators and school leaders need to be aware of the procedure to follow when issuing Board equipment (computers, etc.) to district employees:

1. Board equipment is to be issued to district employees only to permit performance of job duties. When Board equipment is issued to a district employee, the employee may be held personally responsible for equipment loss or damage if the loss or damage results from the employee's negligence, carelessness, or intentional conduct.
2. A signed receipt must be procured from the employee prior to issuance of any Board equipment. If the employee declines or refuses to sign the receipt, do not issue the equipment. The required receipt is attached to the remote work acknowledgment form. This is the only form authorized to be used when issuing Board equipment to an employee.
3. The original of the signed receipt should be retained by the issuing principal or administrator. A copy should also be provided to the employee receiving the Board equipment.
4. The signed receipt must specify a date certain for the return of the Board equipment, within the same school year as issued. Board equipment used by an employee over the

summer, or for the following school year, must be documented by a new, separate receipt for that specific time period.

5. Should the employee fail or refuse to return the Board equipment to the issuer on the due date specified on the receipt, immediately discuss the matter with the employee and deliver a written directive requiring return of the Board equipment on a date certain set forth in the written directive.

6. Should the Board equipment not be returned by the specified date certain, immediately refer the matter for investigation of potential misuse of district property. Do this by contacting the Division of Benefits and Insurance Services and forwarding the signed receipt and written return directive.

7. Take no action to procure direct reimbursement from the employee of the value of the equipment, deduction from employee wages for reimbursement of the value of the issued equipment, or the withholding of delivery of the employee's paycheck.

With the permission of a school leader or director, employees may check out a variety of technology equipment that is needed to work remotely, if the equipment is available. The only thing that employees cannot check out is telephones. Questions regarding these procedures should be discussed with the department head or administrative specialist.

## Methods of Communication

Per the remote work acknowledgement, an employee should remain accessible during the remote work schedule and provide a response to supervisors immediately, and make every effort to respond to other emails and phone calls within 24 hours. The supervisor and employee should agree on communication methods and how often.

## Procedure for Completing Remote Work Request

All district offices and schools should follow the procedure presented in this section. Any extra information being requested by supervisors, directors, chief, and/or school leaders should not be excessive or impact the ability of the employee to complete the remote work request. All signature requests related to remote work requests will be handled in a timely fashion.

The administration reminds all employees that any employee who retaliates against an individual who has raised questions or concerns regarding their health, safety, or remote work status will be subject to discipline consistent with [Administrative Policy 6.35](#).

## Process

*Note: Employees who have already completed and submitted approved remote work requests do not need to resubmit new requests with the updated versions of the acknowledgement form, work plan, and equipment receipt.*

**Step 1.** Employee completes the Remote Work Acknowledgement Form (which includes the Work Plan and Receipt for District Equipment). **These forms are always required for the remote work request to be completed.**

**Step 2. Central Services Staff:** Employee gives completed form, plan and receipt to supervisor for review and signature. Supervisor double checks completeness of acknowledgement form, accuracy of work plan, and confirms any identifying information on equipment receipt. Supervisor signs.

**School-based Staff:** Employee gives completed form, plan and receipt to school leader for review and signature. School-leader double checks completeness of acknowledgement form, accuracy of work plan, and confirms any identifying information on equipment receipt. School leader signs.

*At this point, there should be no questions about the details of the employee's request. If there are still questions, the supervisor or principal should work with the employee to provide more clarity on the acknowledgement form, work plan, or equipment receipt.*

**Step 3. Central Services Staff:** Supervisor gives completed acknowledgement form, work plan, and equipment receipt to chief or chief's administrative assistant in order to obtain final approval signature. Chief may review the acknowledgement form, work plan, and equipment receipt. Chief signs.

**School-based Staff:** School leader or head secretary scans the paperwork, informs the employee that remote work request is approved and provides a copy of signed documents. School leader or head secretary uploads the signed documents to the [submission form](#) for tracking purposes. **For school-based staff, the process is complete.**

**Step 4. Central Services Staff:** Administrative assistant scans the paperwork, informs the employee that remote work request is approved and provides a copy of signed documents. Administrative assistant uploads the signed documents to the [submission form](#) for tracking purposes. **For Central Services staff, the process is complete.**

Remote work requests should be reviewed regularly during the extenuating circumstance.

### **Different Methods to Consider**

Deviations in the above process may occur if a more efficient method is found for reviewing/signing as long as the updated process is shared with the employees of the department/office/school that is making changes to the process. Large departments/offices/schools are not required to but may consider designating one or more employees as a remote work request "coordinator." This person could assist in collecting forms, double checking

information provided for accuracy, ensuring timely responses on signature requests, and scanning and uploading completed forms.

## **Additional Resources**

### **1. Milwaukee Public Schools Tech Support Information**

If employees have any questions about how to access technology or experience any issues with technology while working remotely, please contact the MPS Help Desk.

- [tsc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:tsc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us)
- 414-438-3400

### **2. Human Resources**

If employees have any questions about the remote work process including denial of the remote work request, please contact the Office of Human Resources Department of Employment Relations.

- 414-475-8280

### **3. Microsoft 365 Training Center**

The Microsoft 365 Training Center features tutorials on a variety of tools available to all Milwaukee Public Schools staff which includes Outlook, Teams, Planner, OneDrive, and many others.

- <https://support.office.com/en-us/office-training-center>

### **4. Google Tools**

Google offers tutorials on all their tools available to Milwaukee Public Schools staff which include Docs, Sheets, Forms, and more.

- <https://support.google.com/>

### **As-Needed Leave Forms (Sick, Absence, Etc.)**

An absence report template form can be found [here](#). Employees should follow the leave form reporting preference of their department.

### **As-Needed Injury Report Form**

If an employee is injured while on the job, the employee should complete an injury report form found [here](#).



Supervisors may already be using many of the following best practices in their work on-site, but they are also helpful to consider while staff work remotely.

### **Understand relevant guidelines and expectations.**

Review guidelines and expectations as outlined in the remote work standard operating procedure. Supervisors should verify that their employees have read and understand all information and have completed all required forms.



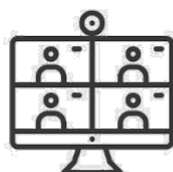
### **Make a communication and accountability plan.**

Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work progress and what those updates should include. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.



### **Review technology needs and resources.**

Identify the technology tools that employees use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Also ensure that employees know how to access the MPS technology department should they need assistance.



### **Be positive.**

A positive attitude toward working remotely and a willingness to trust employees to work effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive.

### **Review work schedules.**

Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule. Discuss any need for flexibility as well.

### **Ensure your employees are on the same page.**

Review the questions below with employees and work through answers together.

- What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce those impacts?
- What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each colleague to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary remote working arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?





## Remote Work Best Practices for Staff

Staff may already be using many of the following best practices in their work on-site, but they are also helpful to consider while working remotely.

### Define your workspace.

Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work.



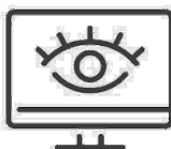
### Eliminate distractions.

Remote work can mean pets, children, or a favorite hobby only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a “do not disturb” sign, close a door, or use headphones to block noise.



### Prioritize privacy.

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone else read your computer screen? Can others hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too. Check to see if there is anything around you that would not want visible during a video conference with your supervisor or colleagues.



### Set daily goals, track them, and share your progress.

Start each day of remote work by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your plan needs to be adjusted.

### Stay connected.

Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home. You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is working remotely any time you would walk to their office or call them if they were working on-site.

### Dress appropriately for online meetings.

Dress as you would in the office for any video conferences.



## Optional Template Work Status Checks

Work status checks should be customized appropriately to each employee. Some employees and supervisors may already be completing work status checks and therefore do not require an additional check. Employees and their supervisors should determine scheduled check-in times and what each employee should be tracking.

### A few recommended ways to do this are:

**Microsoft Excel:** Excel has tracking templates, or easy capabilities to create a tracker that fits the needs of each team.

**Microsoft Planner:** Planner is a great collaborative tool to manage projects on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. It is customizable for multiple projects.

**Microsoft Forms:** Forms is a great way to stay engaged with employees and get a pulse check weekly or daily on what was accomplished and how the employee is doing.

- A few examples can be found here:
  - [Daily status check](#)
  - [Weekly status check](#)

The suggested tools can be loaded in your office suite in your email account and are readily available with current MPS licensing.

## References

The Remote Work Standard Operating Procedure, Remote Work Acknowledgment Form, and other remote work-related documents were compiled in part or whole from the following sources:

- [City of Milwaukee Department of Employee Relations: Policy and Administrative Guidelines Employment and Workplace Considerations Related to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\). Revised June 10, 2020.](#)
- [City of Milwaukee Department of Employee Relations: Protocols for Resuming In-Person Operations and Returning Employees to the Workplace. June 2, 2020.](#)
- [Milwaukee County: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Phased Re-Opening Guidance for Milwaukee County Services and Facilities. May 27, 2020.](#)
- [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\): Coronavirus Resources. Accessed June 2020.](#)
- [University of California - Berkeley: Telecommuting Policy | People & Culture. Accessed June 2020.](#)
- [University of Central Florida: Working Remotely. Accessed June 2020.](#)
- [University of Oklahoma: Remote Work Guide. Accessed June 2020.](#)
- [Wright State University: Remote Work During COVID-19. Accessed June 2020.](#)

## Required Milwaukee Public Schools Remote Work Acknowledgment Form

### I. Expectations

In the instance of an extenuating circumstance, remote work is a work arrangement in which some, or all, of the work is performed from home or another off-site location. Regular office hours should be worked and deviations from that schedule require supervisor approval. In times of emergency, remote work may be an option or a requirement for applicable employees. This extends to ensuring that applicable Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) employees are able to work from home or another remote location when necessary.

Not all jobs are appropriate for remote work. The employee must be in a job classification that is capable of being performed remotely. Job functions that are not able to be performed remotely may explore options with their supervisor. Supervisors are responsible to ensure that their departments perform critical work to care for and maintain operations to the appropriate extent communicated by Milwaukee Public Schools.

Remote work during an emergency must be discussed with and approved by your chief in advance. As work progresses, Milwaukee Public Schools will regularly assess how well the remote work concept functions.

Milwaukee Public Schools reserves the right to cancel any and all remote work arrangements at any time. As technologies and work requirements change over time, this guidance covering work outside of the office may require adjustments. New conditions may arise that are not covered by this guidance. Employees may contact the Department of Employment Relations at 414-475-8280 with any questions.

Failure to complete assignments; lack of support for co-workers; inability to perform quality work; or abuse of remote work policy may result in a loss of remote work privileges.

1. This acknowledgment is between ("the department" ) and ("name of employee" ) to establish the terms and conditions and for temporarily performing work at an alternate work site with the following frequency (e.g.daily each week, on the same day every week, or on some routine basis).
2. This acknowledgment begins on (date) . You understand that this acknowledgement is to permit you to work remotely is a temporary measure only, and will be reviewed continuously. Milwaukee Public Schools may alter this schedule or end the temporary remote work acknowledgment at any time at its discretion.
3. This acknowledgment will remain in effect unless altered or terminated at any time as described.
4. The following conditions apply:
  - a. Employee's remote work schedule is
    - i. (Specify days and hours. If it varies, please include those details).

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- b. Employee's remote work site location is
    - i. (X)
  - c. Employee's remote work phone number is
    - i. (X)

**While working remotely, employee will:**

- a. remain accessible during the remote work schedule and provide a response to supervisors immediately, and make every effort to respond to other emails and phone calls within 24 hours;
  - b. have access to a computer, internet connection, phone, work voicemail and all needed work supplies;
    - i. If your access to any of these tools is limited, employee will contact their supervisor immediately.
  - c. check in with the supervisor to discuss status, open issues and determine projects employee is responsible for;
  - d. be available for video/teleconferences, scheduled on an as-needed basis;
  - e. be available to come in to work and complete any tasks that require being onsite;
  - f. take rest and meal breaks while working remotely in full compliance with all applicable policies or collective bargaining agreements; and
  - g. request supervisor approval to use vacation, sick, or other leave in the same manner as when working at employee's regular work location
5. Employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with Milwaukee Public Schools remain unchanged except those obligations and responsibilities specifically addressed in this acknowledgment. Job responsibilities, standards of performance, and performance appraisals remain the same as when working at the regular Milwaukee Public Schools work site. The supervisor reserves the right to assign work as necessary.
- a. Supervisor and employee must predetermine projects and tasks assigned at the start of each week/day. A work status check should be maintained and can be unique to each employee, as long as predetermined work is being noted and accomplished.
6. The parties acknowledge that this acknowledgment may be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that employee's work quality, efficiency, and productivity are not compromised by the remote work arrangement described herein.
7. Employee acknowledges that they contribute to the reputation of Milwaukee Public Schools in the way they present themselves. All employees are expected to dress in a professional manner. The district recognizes the varied job responsibilities of its employees, and as such, employees are expected to dress in a manner which reflects the responsibilities and duties of the employee's position, including virtual meetings.

Clothing with MPS logos is permitted and encouraged where appropriate for the employee's position and duties.

8. Employee acknowledges that if their manager deems that the temporary remote work arrangement described in this acknowledgement is not working effectively or as envisioned, management may at any time adjust or end this acknowledgement. Management will strive to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice of any changes to this acknowledgment.
  - a. Expectations are as follows:
    - i. Business Continuity. What is working well and what challenges are you facing during the telecommuting arrangement?
    - ii. Network connectivity. Is the employee able to access necessary files, programs, and applications?
    - iii. Independence. Is the employee able to stay on track with work and business expectations and timelines?
    - iv. Participation. Is the employee available to customers and co-workers and able to participate in meetings and/or projects via remote collaboration tools?
    - v. Communication. Supervisors, team, and employees are in regular contact and working together effectively and productively for ensuring time deliverables.
    - vi. Good work environment. Supervisors and employees should discuss an effective work environment.
9. Employee understands methods of communication and has access to emergency contact information.
10. Employees and supervisors should collaboratively review work plans and debrief.

## **II. Safety & Equipment; Information Security**

1. Employee agrees to maintain a safe, secure work environment and to report work-related injuries to the employee's supervisor at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Employee agrees to hold Milwaukee Public Schools harmless for injury to others at the alternate work site. Regarding space and equipment, set-up, and maintenance for telecommuting purposes:
  - a. Employee is responsible for providing space, telephone, printing, networking and/or Internet capabilities at the telecommute location, and shall not be reimbursed by the employer for these or related expenses.
    - i. If employee is using an internet connection they do not own, such as Wi-Fi from a café downstairs or a neighbor's network, employee must take extra care by using a [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#).
  - b. Employee will follow Milwaukee Public Schools security practices, found in [Administrative Policy 6.34](#).
  - c. Employee agrees to protect Milwaukee Public School-owned equipment, records, and materials from unauthorized or accidental access, use, modification, destruction, or disclosure. The precautions described in this agreement apply

regardless of the storage media on which information is maintained, the locations where the information is stored, the systems used to process the information, or the process by which the information is stored.

- d. Employee will keep Milwaukee Public Schools owned property safe by:
    - i. Keeping equipment password protected
    - ii. Store equipment in a safe and clean space when not in use.
    - iii. Refrain from downloading suspicious, unauthorized or illegal software.
  - e. Employee agrees to report to their supervisor any incidents of loss, damage, or unauthorized access at the earliest reasonable opportunity.
2. Employee understands that all equipment, records, and materials provided by Milwaukee Public Schools shall remain the property of Milwaukee Public Schools.
  3. Employee understands and agrees that employee's personal vehicle may not be used for Milwaukee Public School business unless specifically authorized in writing by the employee's supervisor in advance of such use.
  4. Employee agrees to return Milwaukee Public Schools-owned equipment, records, and materials within five days of termination of this agreement. Within five days of written notice, employee must return Milwaukee Public Schools-owned equipment for inspection, repair, replacement, or repossession.
  5. Employee emergency contact information may be used in the event that the employee cannot be contacted using other methods.

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby affirm by my signature that I have read this remote work acknowledgment and understand and agree to all of its provisions.**

_____ Employee Signature	_____ Date
_____ Supervisor or School Leader's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Chief's Signature	_____ Date

**NOTE: A scan of this signed acknowledgment must be [uploaded here](#) by the office administrative assistant or school head secretary.**

*The employee and the supervisor should each keep a copy of this acknowledgment for future reference.*

## Required Milwaukee Public Schools Work Plan

The work plan below should be a general indicator of what an employee works on each week. Other projects or tasks may come up that are not reflected in the plan below; some projects or tasks may occur on different days when other circumstances arise. As other projects or tasks come up, the employee and supervisor will work together to ensure they are monitored and completed. More specifics such as days in or out of the office should be added to section 4 of the Remote Work Acknowledgment Form.

**Employee Name, Position Title:**

<b>On-site Tasks</b> (This is a list of tasks that the employee has to be on-site to complete.)	
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Day	Planned Task/Project		Actual Task/Project
<b>Monday</b>	Job responsibility	Tasks related to responsibility	Tasks and projects will be monitored by the employee and supervisor per established system of monitoring or system created at the discretion of the department or office.
		Tasks related to responsibility	
<b>Tuesday</b>	Estimated % of time spent each week	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	
<b>Wednesday</b>	Job responsibility	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	
	Estimated % of time spent each week	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	
<b>Thursday</b>	Job responsibility	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	
	Estimated % of time spent each week	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	
<b>Friday</b>	Job responsibility	Tasks related to responsibility	
		Tasks related to responsibility	

### Comments/Notes

- Any comments or notes
- Any comments or notes

### Upcoming Projects/Tasks

- General date/time idea of when a larger task/project is coming up
- General date/time idea of when a larger task/project is coming up



## Required Milwaukee Public Schools Receipt for District Equipment

<b>Date:</b>	(mm/dd/yy)	<b>Name:</b>	(first and last)
<b>Location:</b>	(department/school/office)	<b>Position:</b>	(job title)
<b>Equipment Return Due Date:</b>	(mm/dd/yy or within X days of returning to onsite work)		
<b>Equipment Issued (describe item(s), make, model, etc. in space below)</b>			
(describe equipment issued here)			
<b>MPS Property Tag #(s)</b>	(asset tag numbers)		
<b>Equipment Cost</b>	\$		
<b>Issued by</b>	(name of department/school/office)		
<b>Person Issuing</b>	(name and title)		

The equipment receipted above is being provided to me by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (Milwaukee Public Schools) to permit me to better carry out my job duties. It is furnished solely to, and shall be used only by, me for business purposes. I shall not modify, add, delete, or copy any of the software furnished with the equipment.

I understand I may be held financially responsible for any damage or loss to this equipment caused by me through my own carelessness or negligence. Additionally, I may be subject to employee discipline for misuse of Board property or for not properly caring for the issued equipment.

Signature	Date

This Form Is to Be Retained at the School/Department/Office