



TITLE: FLEXITIME POLICY

Effective Date	28 September 2022	Version	1.1
			This policy was updated as part of the <i>Flexi-Time Policy (Pilot Scheme)</i> which was trialled throughout the 2021 / 2022 Academic Year.
Approved By	Management Board	Date Approved	28 September 2022
		Review Date	28 September 2027 <i>or as required</i>
Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)		Owner	
1 – <i>Flexi-Time Policy (Pilot Scheme)</i> (13 October 2022)		Human Resources	
Initial Issue			

1. Purpose of Policy

The primary purpose of the *Flexitime Policy* is to provide guidance around how the system is used in Carlow College, St. Patrick’s (hereafter Carlow College). Flexitime is being offered by the College to provide a more flexible system of attendance for staff within defined limits. The College recognises the competing demands that staff have outside of work, therefore Flexitime offers a significant benefit to staff as it allows the staff member the autonomy to manage their working hours in any given day and it can also allow the accrual of up to 13 days of additional leave (defined as Flexi-Leave) in a calendar year.

Flexitime is a not a staff entitlement and is subject to the operating requirements of the College and individual offices. Flexitime will be offered and operated on the understanding that the efficiency and effectiveness of the College operations are always maintained. If the business operations in any offices are negatively affected or impacted by Flexitime, the College may be required to cancel Flexitime for those particular offices to ensure effectiveness of operations are restored. Human Resources will work collaboratively with Line Managers in monitoring the system effectiveness. The HR Office will review Flexitime every six months to ensure business operations and the system are run effectively.

Line Managers who are considering flexible arrangements for their area are recommended to contact the HR Office for advice and information on the various options and considerations for

their particular teams. The current Bright HR and Blip Systems support the implementation and maintenance of a Flexitime in collaboration with Line Managers.

This *Flexitime Policy*) does not affect the ad hoc local flexibility within teams.

2. Definitions

Flexitime is different from other ‘flexible working arrangements’ offered by the College which include part-time working, reduced hours, term time and hybrid working. Flexible working arrangements are therefore not recorded the same way *Flexitime* is.

Flexitime is a scheme whereby Staff availing of *Flexitime* can start and finish work within specified flexible bands which are outside of specified core hours when staff have to be available to the College. Staff availing of *Flexitime* can also build up hours whereby a *Flexi-Day* can be taken.

Remote Working is a different benefit and scheme offered to staff whereby they can undertake work activities from their homes. This is defined in the College’s *Temporary Remote Working Guidelines*. During this Pilot Flexitime scheme, staff cannot avail of Flexitime scheme on the days they are working remotely. However, this will be reviewed in December 2021.

Please see *Appendix 1* for list of additional definitions

3. Policy Statement

This policy is available to Professional Support Staff only at present and will be subject to ongoing review. Those who wish to use the Flexitime scheme must use BLIP for recording their working hours.

The availability of Flexitime is determined by the business needs of a particular function and role. Sufficient staff must be available to ensure continuity of service within the scope and band widths defined later in this policy. Therefore, Flexitime is not available in some departments in the College. Should an employee be appointed to or transferred to a department which does not operate Flexitime, they will not have access to the scheme.

The appropriateness of Flexitime for particular individuals and categories of staff is normally reviewed in the first instance between HR and the Line Manager. Thereafter, agreements of Flexitime are operated at the discretion of the Line Manager. Line Managers can reserve the right to exclude certain staff from using Flexitime for operational or other reasons.

Flexitime is a benefit offered to employees who use the Blip clocking in system. The introduction, application, implementation and continued use of the Flexitime scheme is based on the cooperation of all staff in departments who use this system. The effectiveness and use of the system is also based on staff working in collaboration with their team members and Line Managers to ensure that working arrangements are coordinated and always covered.

Flexi time will be the lowest level priority in terms of leave i.e., annual leave and other leave arrangements will take precedence in line with our current policies and procedures.

For staff members that travel as part of their contract and / or role, please refer to the *TOIL Policy*.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Human Resources Responsibilities

The HR Office will provide advice and support to Line Managers in the implementation of Flexitime. Line Managers who are considering flexible arrangements for their teams are recommended to contact HR for additional advice and information on the various options and considerations.

Human Resources have other responsibilities such as:

- The Human Resources Office holds responsibility for this policy and any subsequent practices and procedures thereafter. The management of the *Flexitime Policy* will be directed by Human Resources.
- Human Resources will provide information, guidance and support to Line Managers and Staff.
- Human Resources works collaboratively with Line Managers by communicating weekly to ensure that all information is up to date and correct.
- Ensuring that both Line Managers and staff adhere to the process outlined in this Policy.
- Answer any process/procedure related queries from staff and Line Managers.
- The HR Office will provide and advise on any staff or management issues that may arise and how to address these.
- The Bright HR system and Blip application supports the implementation of Flexitime, assist with system issues and provides training.
- Human Resources uses Bright HR to run reports on flexi-leave balances and leave.
- Human Resources will monitor Flexitime on a weekly basis to ensure effective use and implementation.

5.3 Line Manager Responsibilities

Line Managers have the following responsibilities:

- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that both they and their staff understand the policy, its practices and procedures.
- Line Managers are required to adhere to this Policy and its procedures.
- Line Managers are required to consult and collaborate with Human Resources as defined within the practices and procedures of this Policy.
- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that workflow and output are maintained throughout the working day and that staff are adequately supervised at all times.
- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring there are sufficient staff in attendance always to manage operations.
- Line Managers are responsible for actively managing Flexitime hours on a daily and weekly basis. This involves approving flexi-leave for their department and ensuring that there is equitable distribution of Flexitime taken.

- Line Managers have the authority to take any action necessary (including the temporary limiting of the maximum flexibility available to staff) to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Line Managers can reserve the right to exclude certain roles from Flexitime for operational reasons. Line Managers should consult with Human Resources regarding this in the first instance.
- Line Managers and staff are encouraged to collaboratively discuss their expectations regarding approval for time away from work and the demands on operation continuity within the relevant department(s).
- It may be necessary for the Line Manager to ensure that adequate controls are in place to monitor the quality and quantity of work completed outside of core time. Such arrangements would vary according to the nature of the work which is performed.
- Line Managers may in certain circumstances, for example, when they are on leave, delegate some or all of the responsible of administration of Flexitime for their teams to another Line Manager and/or Human Resources. This will only be done on a temporary basis. It is important to note that if Human Resources is used for this purpose, that it is clear as to the level of responsibility held by Human Resources and that all staff are equally clear in this regard.
- Flexitime will be subject to maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of each department and will be subject to this policy. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to monitor Flexitime and if work appears to be suffering a result of Flexitime, then steps will be taken in consultation with HR to remedy the situation. If these steps fail to restore normal effectiveness, the scheme will be cancelled after due consultation with staff.

5.4 Staff Responsibilities

All college staff members have the following responsibilities:

- All staff of Carlow College are responsible for ensuring that they understand and adhere to the Flexitime policies and procedures.
- All staff should adhere to the reporting procedures outlined in this document.
- Professional Support Staff are required to record their working hours either using Blip or Timesheets regardless of whether they are on a Flexitime arrangement or not. However, to avail of Flexitime, staff members must use BLIP and not timesheets.
- Clocking in and out of lunch is required even if staff are not leaving the office. Staff must ensure they take at least 30 minutes for their lunch break in line with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.
- Professional and Support Staff should ensure to keep their daily clock-ins on Blip is up to date as this may impact their Flexi balance at each week end.
- There is an onus on staff using flexi time to ensure that cover in a department is always maintained.
- Employees will be responsible for coordinating their working hours with other staff in their teams and as necessary with support staff who do not operate Flexitime.

- Employees must ensure that their weekly clock-ins are updated and correct at the end of each week. Failure to complete this may lead to discrepancies in Flexitime whereby the employee will not be able to take flexi leave until this is resolved.

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: Flexitime – Practices and Procedures
- Appendix 2: Process Flowchart
- Appendix 3: How to Manage Flexitime Using Blip (Line Managers)
- Appendix 4: *Flexitime Policy* – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

NB Please see Staff Gateway for:

- Flexitime Accounting Periods

7. Referenced Policies¹

- *Annual Leave Policy*
- *Time Off in Lieu Policy*
- *IT Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Staff Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Right to Disconnect Policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy (Staff)*
- *Sickness Absence Management Policy*
- *Health and Safety Policy*

8. Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be formally reviewed initially every year by the HR Office to reflect any legislative/organisational changes and the effects on College business operations. Staff will be informed through regular email communication and through the staff portal regarding any updates to same.

Employees should also refer to the Employee Handbook, the College Benefits Handbook and the Blip AND Bright Information Guide.¹

Appendix 1: Flexitime – Practices and Procedures



Flexitime – Practices and Procedures

These practices and procedures will be managed by the Human Resources Office in the monitoring and operation of flexible working hours at Carlow College. Human Resources will business partner with Line Managers to provide assistance and guidance in dealing with issues in relation to its implementation.

1. Overriding Principles

It is the principle of the scheme that there will be no diminution in the quality of service offered by staff who chose to avail of Flexitime.

To qualify for the scheme, sufficient staff must be available outside core times as defined in the procedures section of this policy to carry out normal work.

The success of this Policy will depend greatly on staff working cooperatively with each other in providing the necessary support to ensure continuity of service.

2. Definitions

Core Time/Hours	Core Time / Hours are the primary part of the day when presence at work is mandatory. All absences during these hours must be approved by the appropriate line manager.
Flexible Time / Hours	The hours outside of core hours at the beginning and end of the day and often at lunchtime when arrival and departure times are flexible.
Bandwidth	The extended working time within which Flexitime operates.
Flexi-Credit	An allowable amount of time over the employee's standard working period, which the employee has worked in one day, e.g. Full-time Employee (working 7 hours per day) - If this employee works 7 hours and 30 minutes in one day, then they have accrued a Flexi-Credit of 30 minutes. Part-time Employee (Working less than 7 hours per day) - If an employee is contracted to work, say 9.00am - 12.30 pm daily

	(3.5 hours), and they work until 1.00pm, they have accrued a Flex-Credit of 30 minutes.
Flexi-Balance	The balance of Flex-Credits which an employee has accumulated over an Accounting Period, and which can be taken as Flexi-Leave.
Accounting Period	This is the period of four weeks during which an employee is normally required to work and during which Flex-Credits and Flex-Debits should be adjusted.
Carryover	A Flexi-Balance up to a maximum of 4 hours (full time employee) may be carried forward to the next Accounting Period up to a maximum of 7 hours (full-time employee). It is not permitted to carry forward hours in excess of 7 hours per 4-week period and excess hours will be forfeited.
Flexi-Leave	Flexi-Leave can be taken as a full day (7 hours), half day (3.5 hours) or individual hour(s). This leave should be taken within the accounting period and approved by the Line Manager.
Meetings	Meeting times are set between the hours of 9.30 am and 4.30 pm

3. PROCEDURES

3.1. Working Hours

Normal working hours are dependent on a staff member's contractual hours. Flexitime hours within an accounting period will change pending the staff members contracted hours.

Example(s)

Contracted hours per week	Normal working hours per day	Normal working hours per half day	Hours in Accounting Period
35 (Standard Week)	7	3.5	7
28 (80% of Standard Week)	7	3.5	5.6 (80%)
21 (60% of Standard week)	7	3.5	4.2 (60%)

3.2. Core Hours

The Flexitime system provides that outside of certain times of the day (core hours) when staff must be on duty, staff are given a measure of freedom to fix their own hours of attendance (flexible bands). Staff cannot be absent from the College during core hours except for absences such as Annual Leave, TOIL, Sick Leave etc.

Flexible Morning Band	Core Hours (Morning) (Where staff must be present)	Flexible Lunch Band	Core Hours (Afternoon) (Where staff must be present)	Flexible Evening Band
8.00 – 9.30	9.30 – 12.30	12.30 – 2.30	2.30 – 4.30	4.30 – 6.00
Staff can commence work any time between 8.00 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.	Staff must be present at all times during core hours unless they are on an authorised absence.	Staff can take up to a two-hour lunch break. * Staff must take at least 30 minutes for their lunch break.	Staff must be present at all times during core hours unless they are on an authorised absence.	Staff can finish work any time after 4.30 p.m. up to 6.00 p.m.

Core Hours – Building Services

Flexible Morning Band	Core Hours (Morning) (Where staff must be present)	Flexible Lunch Band	Core Hours (Afternoon) (Where staff must be present)	Flexible Evening Band
7.00 - 8.00 7.30 - 8.30	9.30 – 12.30	12.30 – 2.30	2.30 – 3.30 2.30 - 4.30	3.30 – 6.00 4.30 - 6.00
Staff can commence work any time between 7.00 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. <i>*subject to contract start and finish</i>	Staff must be present at all times during core hours unless they are on an authorised absence.	Staff can take up to a two-hour lunch break. * Staff must take at least 30 minutes for their lunch break.	Staff must be present at all times during core hours unless they are on an authorised absence.	Staff can finish work any time after 3.30 p.m. up to 6.00 p.m. <i>*subject to contract start and finish</i>

Flexible morning and evening bands are dependent on the normal opening and closing arrangements authorised by the College.

** Please note that in accordance with The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 an employee may not work more than 6 consecutive hours without receiving at least a 30 minute meal break. No employee can waive their rights as provided by the 1997 Act.*

3.3. Flexi Balance

1. A staff member may vary the number of hours worked in each accounting period for the purposes of accumulating hours known as Flexi-Credits. The total accumulated Flexi-Credits is called the Flexi-Balance.
2. A Flexi-Balance may be carried forward to the next Accounting Period up to a maximum of 7 hours for a full-time employee (pro-rata for part-time employees). It is not permitted to carry forward hours in excess of 7 hours per 4-week period and excess hours will be forfeited.
3. In exceptional circumstances, where staff have been unable to take their flexi-leave due to for example, staff shortages, in excess of 7 hours may be carried forward with the agreement of the Line Manager in consultation with Human Resources. This can be permitted for one accounting period only and cannot be carried over indefinitely.

3.4. Accounting Period

1. This is the period of four weeks during which an employee is normally required to work their standard hours and during which credits should be adjusted.
2. Employees should review and ensure all balances are reviewed and updated particularly in the last week of the accounting period.
3. The accounting period dates for each calendar year will be communicated to staff via email by Human Resources each year and will be published on Bright HR and the Staff Gateway.
4. The accounting period will operate from September to August each year.
5. Employees can check their weekly worked hours using Blip. Human Resources are available to provide training to staff.

3.5. Flexi-Leave

1. If a full-time staff member has accrued 7 hours (pro-rata for part-time staff) of Flexitime within an accounting period, they are then able to take this time as Flexi-Leave within that accounting period.
2. Staff will not be permitted to take 'Flexi-Leave' until they have earned a surplus of the relevant value in hours within the accounting period.
3. The staff member may take one day (7 hours), or two half days (3.5 hours) or in hour blocks, all of which is then deducted from the maximum allowable Flexi-Leave of 7 hours per month.
4. Staff members are not permitted to take more than the 7 hours within the accounting period.
5. Flexi-Leave does not impact standard leave requests or public / bank holidays.
6. Staff can apply for Flexi-Leave using the 'Other Absence' leave type on Bright HR using either half day / full day.

NB. Employees ahead of applying for Flexi-Leave must ensure their clock in details are correct and up to date for each day. Staff are not permitted to apply for Flexi-Leave until this has been updated.

3.6. Applying for Flexi-Leave (Using your flexi-balance)

1. Employees must submit a request to take Flexitime using Bright HR by choosing the leave type 'Other'. The comments box must be completed, indicating that they are taking flexi-leave and have sufficient time built up.
2. Employees must provide **3 days' notice of** their intention to take Flexi-Leave if they wish to take a full or half day Flexi-Leave.
3. Employees who only wish to take 1 hour of Flexi-Leave can contact their line manager on the morning of day in which they wish to avail of Flexi-Leave.
4. Employees who do not provide the sufficient notice may have their Flexi-Leave declined.

3.7. Flexi-Leave and Medical Appointments (G.P. / Dentist)

- With prior agreement of the line manager, flexi-leave can be used to cover medical (GP and dentist) appointments during core hours.
- Medical appointments during core time must be confined to cases of genuine emergency or necessity.
- If a staff member, in the case of a genuine emergency, uses Flexi-leave for a medical, G.P. / dentist appointment, this will be deducted from their flexi-balance. It is important that staff members aim to make normal appointments outside of core hours.

3.8. Opting into Flexitime

Staff who wish to opt into the Flexitime scheme, can use the following steps:

- Email your line manager of your expression of interest in the scheme.
- Your line manager will review your role to assess if it is suitable for Flexitime.
- Should your role be suitable for Flexitime, the line manager will then notify Human Resources.
- Human Resources will then invite you to a training session on Flexitime and Blip.

3.9. Opting out of Flexitime

Some staff may wish to work the standard working day and thus forego the flexibility offered by Flexitime. For the purpose of this pilot project, any staff member who wishes to opt out of Flexitime are asked to notify their line manager and Human Resources via email.

3.10. Difference between Flexitime / Flexi-Leave and Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)

The *Flexitime Policy* allows employees to choose their own start and finish times on a daily basis, hence providing more autonomy over their working week. This policy facilitates the employee working their contracted hours throughout the week, at times which are suitable to them, subject to their being available during set core hours. Additional hours worked by the staff member, in excess of their contracted hours, must be taken as Flexi-Leave within the 4-week allotted accounting period. See the Accounting Periods document for dates.

TOIL is for work which falls outside of the employee's standard contracted hours, and which is required to facilitate business operations. **TOIL is only permitted once approval has been sought in advance from the line manager**. TOIL is required to be taken within a twelve-week period. Please see the *Time Off in Lieu Policy* for further information.

Please note:

- If a staff member opts into the Flexitime scheme, TOIL will therefore only commence after 6.00 p.m.
- Employees must clock out of their normal working day ahead of commencing TOIL.
- TOIL must be recorded on the Bright HR system in line with current practices and procedures i.e. by entering the start and finish time.
- TOIL must be pre-approved by the Line Manager.
- The notes section must also provide a brief explanation of the work which was approved in relation to the TOIL claim.
- Staff cannot accrue Flexitime and TOIL at the same time. If this situation arises, the line manager must notify HR as it falls outside the standard procedures of this Policy.
- Flexitime must at no time be considered as TOIL.

3.11. Cessation of Employment

1. When resigning from the College, the balance of Flexitime must be nil.
2. Salary will not be paid in lieu of accrued Flexitime / Flexi-Leave.

3.12. Core Time Infringements

Infringements occur when a staff member clocks in during Core Time i.e., the staff member clocks in between the defined core hours mentioned above.

Core time infringements are a violation of Flexitime and may result in the individual being removed from Flexitime and/or disciplinary action.

3.13. Sanctions

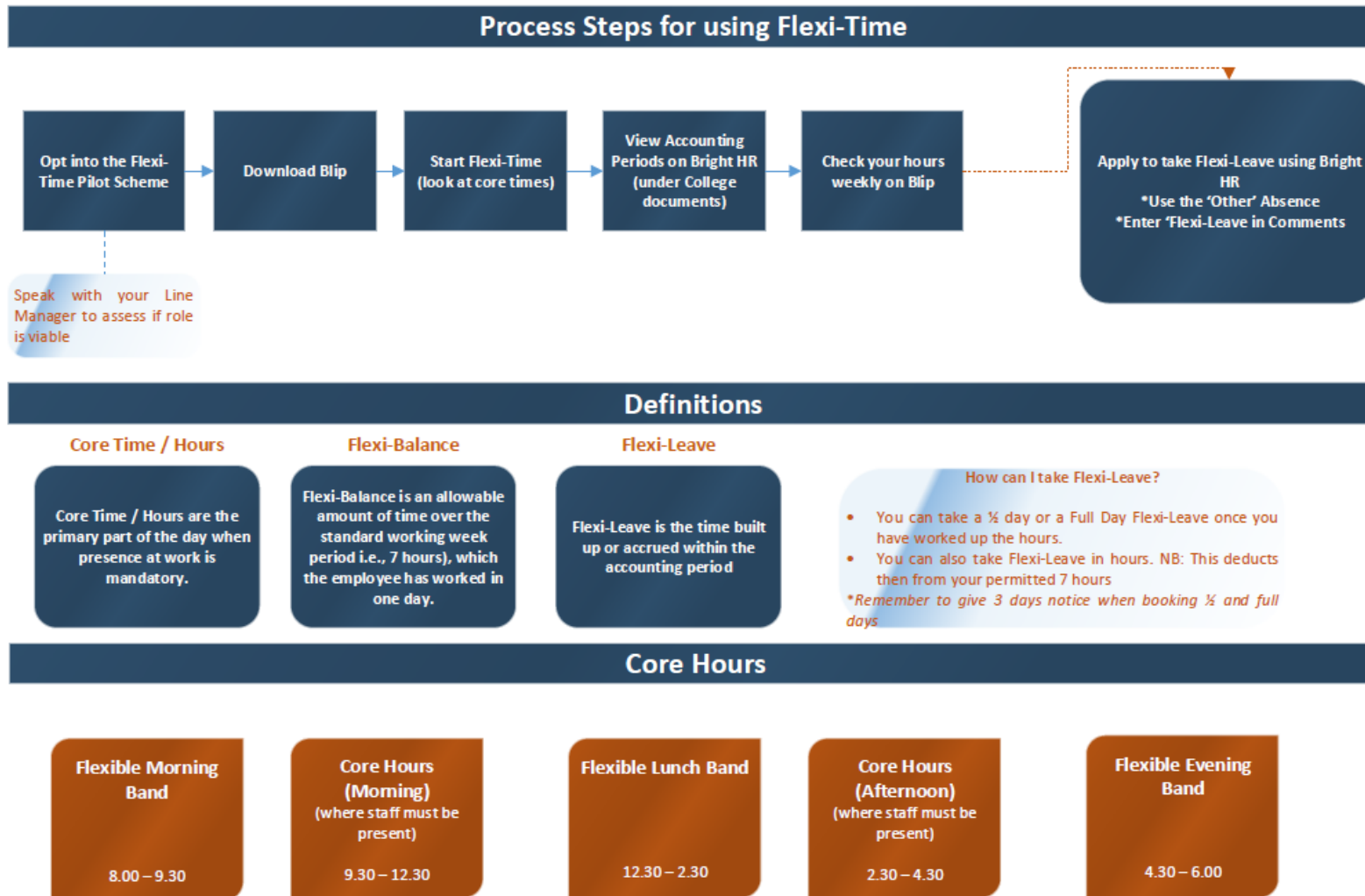
Established abuses of the system will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with procedures. Examples of such abuses include:

- Persistent omission to clock in or out at any time during the working day
- Clocking in after the commencement of core times
- Clocking out before the end of core time
- Clocking in while not working
- Exceeding the permitted hours of Flexitime
- Getting a colleague to clock in on your behalf
- Falsification of information.
- Attempting to view any other staff members' timekeeping records without authorisation.
- Persistent abuse of Flexitime

Serious abuse of the scheme (e.g., one person clocking in out out for another person), will be regarded as gross misconduct and can lead to disciplinary action up and including dismissal for those involved.

Disciplinary proceedings in relation to the above will only be taken in cases of specific abuse and not in cases where it is proven that genuine errors occurred.

Appendix 2: Process Flow Chart



Appendix 3: How to Manage Flexitime Using Blip (Line Managers)

How to Management Flexitime Using Blip (Line Managers)



1. Line Managers

- Line Managers, whose staff members use Blip, will need to download Blip on their phones. However, in a situation where Line Managers who choose not to avail of Blip and their team member(s) wish to avail of Flexitime, HR can manage adjustments. Training will be provided to both staff and Line Managers. However, if a Line Manager / staff member uses college phone, Blip can be used and downloaded.
- **Line Managers whose staff members use Blip will need to run weekly reports to review hours.**
- Line Managers will need to ensure that they run a Blip Timesheet for their staff each week to monitor hours.
- Line Managers will need to ensure that they amend any missed clock ins as non-compliance of this will lead to discrepancies.
- Line Managers will need to assess which team members qualify for the Flexitime scheme as outlined in this Policy. Line Managers should consult with Human Resources.

2. How to Manage Flexitime Using Blip (Staff)

- Staff must use Blip to avail of Flexitime and flexi-Leave.
- Staff must ensure that they use their Blip application daily to record their start / finish times and lunch breaks.
- Staff must ensure they ask their Line Manager to immediately amend any missed clock ins. Missed clock ins will affect your balance.

When apply for your Flexi-Leave, you must do so by adding 'Other Absence' on the Bright HR and detail in the 'notes' section you are availing of Flexi-Leave.

Appendix 4: Flexitime Policy – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Flexitime Policy – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



I don't use Blip; can I avail of Flexitime?

No. Flexitime is managed through the Blip application.

How do I formally opt into the Flexitime Scheme?

Staff who wish to opt into the Flexitime scheme, can use the following steps:

- Email your Line Manager of your expression of interest in the scheme.
- Your Line Manager will review your role to assess if it is suitable for Flexitime.
- Should your role be suitable for Flexitime, the Line Manager will then notify Human Resources.
- Human Resources will then invite you to a training session on Flexitime and Blip.

How do I opt out of the Flexitime Scheme?

- Any staff member who wishes to opt out of Flexitime should notify their Line Manager and Human Resources via email.

Where can I find information on Blip?

The Blip and Bright HR Information Guide is available to view on the Bright HR system under documents.

I have forgotten to clock in / out of Blip - will this affect my Flexitime?

Yes. You must ensure to use Blip correctly for Flexitime to work accurately. If you forget to clock in, you must notify your Line Manager in the first instance. HR can provide assistance also.

*For staff whose Line Manager has opted not to use Blip, HR can amend and adjust your clock in's

How can a staff member take their worked-up hours?

The accounting period means that a full-time member of staff can avail of up to an additional 7 hours each accounting period. The staff member can then apply for a full day of 'Flexi-Leave' or a half day of 'Flexi-Leave). This is pro-rata'd for part-time staff who work 'standard set hours'. Please consult your Line Manager and / or HR for information and guidance.

Can a staff member take more than the 7 hours Flexitime?

No. If a staff member works more than the required 7 hours, they are not permitted to take this within the current accounting period. Please see Flexi Balance details below.

How do I apply for Flexi-Leave?

You can apply for either a full-day or a half-day (pending contract type and hours as stipulated above) via Bright HR. You must add '*Other Absence*' and detail in the 'Notes' section that you are availing of Flexi-Leave.

Do I need to provide notice to my Line Manager that I want to take Flexi-Leave?

Yes. You must provide 3 days' notice of your intention to take Flexi-Leave through the Bright HR System.

Can I view my weekly hours on Bright HR?

No. However, you can view your weekly hours on Blip.

Can I view my weekly working hours on Blip?

Yes. HR will provide training.

Can I avail of Flexitime when Remote Working?

Yes.

Queries

Any queries or requests in relation to this Policy should be directed to your Line Manager in the first instance.

For further information or queries in relation to the above, you can contact the HR Office at:

- hr@carlowcollege.ie
- T: 059 91 53 293 / 059 91 53 288