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## 2.8 Telecommuting Policy

Saint Mary's College of California

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## **2.8 Telecommuting Policy**

### **2.8.1 Rationale**

In appropriate and approved limited circumstances, Saint Mary's may permit staff employees to telecommute (work from home or an alternate location). If such permission is provided, the telecommute period shall be for no more than 20% of the employee's work week and only after taking into consideration the campus service requirements of the position, and the needs, requirements and/or constraints of both the department and the employee. Any exception(s) to this limitation require the written approval of the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee, whose decision in such matters is final. Telecommuting is a cooperative employment arrangement between the College and the employee, and must be approved in writing by the employee's supervisor, the area Vice President and the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee, prior to being implemented.

### **2.8.2 Suitability for Telecommuting**

In general, Saint Mary's does not encourage ongoing telecommuting arrangements because the employee not working on campus loses the community interaction that makes Saint Mary's a special place to work. Also, most positions are not suitable for telecommuting. Jobs best suited are those that require independent work and minimal face-to-face interaction, result in a specific, measurable work product, and benefit from quiet and uninterrupted time. These jobs typically consist of thinking and writing (writing decisions and reports), and computer-oriented tasks (programming or data analysis). Jobs typically not suitable for telecommunicating include those

that provide office or counter coverage, supervisory positions, or where face-to-face contact is an essential requirement of the job. Individuals approved to telecommute should have proven time-management skills and a demonstrated history of independent and effective work performance.

### **2.8.3 Telecommuting Procedures**

The employee who wishes to initiate telecommuting should talk with his/her supervisor. If the supervisor thinks the arrangement is reasonable and the director of the department supports the arrangement, the employee, supervisor and/or department director should meet with the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or her/his to discuss the proposed arrangement and, with the agreement of the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, sign a Telecommuting Agreement (“Agreement”). A copy of this Agreement will be placed in the employee’s personnel file.

NOTE: an Agreement is not required for incidental telecommuting resulting from emergencies or for relatively brief tasks, however, supervisor approval is required in all instances.

Telecommuting is a business arrangement between the College and the employee that is not triggered by a medical condition or a disability, e.g., a leave of absence or reasonable accommodation. The initial period during any telecommute arrangement will be considered a trial period for the College to determine if the employee is satisfactorily completing his/her work and is meeting job expectations. Notwithstanding the completion of any trial period, Saint Mary’s will continue to reserve the right to terminate any telecommute arrangement and require the employee to return to regular work attendance at employee’s regular work location.

### **2.8.4 Telecommuting Requirements**

The employee will remain obligated to comply with all College and departmental policies and procedures.

- Telecommuting is not intended to be used as a substitute or supplement for ongoing childcare or care of family members. (Saint Mary’s policy on Family and Medical Leave has provisions for care of family members under some circumstances.) Although an individual employee’s schedule may be modified to accommodate childcare needs, the focus of any telecommuting arrangement must remain on College work and meeting departmental and College needs. Prospective

telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering into a trial period.

- A telecommuting employee who is unable to perform his/her duties on a designated telecommuting day is required to follow their department's call-in procedure to notify their supervisor to notify their supervisor that they are unable to work and thus are calling-in sick, in order to ensure both that the supervisor and department is aware of the absence for that date.
- The telecommuting employee is expected to be accessible by phone or e-mail within a period of time agreed upon by the supervisor and employee. The supervisor may require a telecommuting employee to return to the office on a day normally scheduled for telecommuting, should the department needs or work situation warrant such an action.
- The College may, but is not obligated to, provide off-site equipment related to the employee's duties. In addition, the employee's personal home computer, when used for work-related purposes under any scenarios, may be subject to discovery should the matter on which the employee worked be subject to a legal process involving the College.
- Existing time-recording procedures, including time off and leave records must be maintained for all employees including telecommuters: Attendance or Absence forms must be completed by the telecommuter, signed by the employee's supervisor, and submitted as usual. All agreements must conform to the overtime and record keeping provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for staff members covered by those provisions. Therefore, although exempt employees may be managed by results, supervisors must ensure accurate recording of hours worked. Non-exempt employees who telecommute are to work overtime only when directed and approved by the supervisor in advance. Working overtime without such approval may result in termination of the agreement and/or other appropriate action.
- Telecommuting agreements must have a start and end date, and shall be for a period no longer than one (1) year.

### **2.8.5 Information Security**

Employees must take precautions necessary to secure confidential and/or privileged information and prevent unauthorized access to College systems and abide by all College and departmental policies. For more detail, see the Technology Use Policy and the Staff Handbook sections on Professional Conduct, Prohibited Conduct, Confidentiality of College Related Information, and College Intellectual Property.

### **2.8.6 Discontinuation**

A telecommuting arrangement may be discontinued at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the department head. The telecommuter agreement can be terminated by the department head or by the College. Effort will be made to provide notice of such a change to allow the employee and the department to make appropriate arrangements; there may be instances, however, where no notice is possible. The supervisor, with concurrence of the department head, is ultimately responsible for any decision to terminate a Telecommuting Agreement. When the telecommuting ends, all College property is to be returned to the department.

## **2.9 Dress Standards**

Each employee is expected to dress appropriately for the type of work she/he does in a manner that maintains a standard of professionalism consistent with the Saint Mary's College community. Since the appropriate standard may vary by department, the department head will communicate the dress standard to employees in that department. Clothing should be generally in good condition (i.e., not frayed, torn or too revealing). If a specific type of clothing is required due to safety or other reasons, the College will provide appropriate clothing.

## **2.10 Friends, Family and Children (14 and under) in the workplace**

Many employees enjoy bringing children (14 and under) to their work site to introduce to coworkers and to show their children their work environment. Beyond brief visits, however, the workplace is not the appropriate place for child care. Even during short, periodic visits children must not be left unattended. Similarly, when an employee is visited at work by family or friends during working hours, the visits should be brief. To maintain and preserve an environment conducive to learning and productive work, employees and students who bring children 14 and