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John Bel Edwards, Governor
Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary

DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM 20-15

DATE: AUGUST 19, 2020

TO: ALL DCFS STAFF

**FROM: TERRI RICKS
DEPUTY SECRETARY**

RE: GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DEPENDENT CARE CHALLENGES

DCFS recognizes that as schools have reopened and moved to distance learning, and some childcare options remain limited, there continue to be dependent care challenges. DCFS leadership will work with each employee to accommodate their needs while keeping the work of the agency in mind, as Louisianans need our services more than ever. Towards that end, all employees must recertify their need to work remotely due to a dependent care challenge. Some employees may need to request a temporary change to their work schedules to accommodate their children's schedule. All requests will be considered; however, there is no guarantee that the request will be granted as submitted.

I want to be very clear with staff that it is the expectation of the Department that employees shall attend to their work responsibilities wholly during their scheduled work hours -- whether they are working in a DCFS office or remotely. Any time an employee is not performing job assignments due to caring for a child and/or assisting a child with schoolwork during some or all of a workday, leave must be requested and approved in accordance with [DCFS Policy 4-04 Accrual and Use of Leave for All Employees](#). Such leave may include requests for leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). We are a public agency responsible to the public for the time we are paid for working.

Each employee who needs to request a temporary change to their work schedule to accommodate their children's schedules shall use the [DCFS Employee Dependent Care Form \(Form Instructions\)](#) and the [DCFS COVID-19 Temporary Work Schedule Form](#). Requests will be considered in keeping with [Departmental Memo 20-13 Phase-Two Extension Guidance](#), [DCFS Policy 4-20 Work Hours for DCFS Personnel](#) and this memorandum. Submitted forms will be routed to the employee's immediate supervisor. Final review and approval for all employee requests for such accommodations will be made by the applicable Appointing Authority.



All employees shall adhere to a fixed, approved schedule and must continue to be productive and accountable for their work time or be placed in a leave status, whether working alternate schedules and whether working remotely or in-office. Flexibility by both employees and management is necessary to manage workloads while managing scheduling challenges. Please remember, however, that civil service rules and DCFS policy mandate that the work of the department must get done, and the appointing authority may require someone to work outside of an agreed-upon schedule.

Dependent Care Accommodations

Approvals granted for this purpose are intended to be temporary. All employees will be required to recertify every 60 days and shall submit the recertification as outlined within steps 1 and 2 below. Supervisors shall assure that the temporary alternate work schedule and/or supporting documentation recertification reviews occur timely.

Employees and/or supervisors are to follow the steps below to recertify the need to work remotely and if necessary to initiate a review and approval for a flexible work schedule due to child(ren)'s school/childcare schedule(s) related to COVID-19.

Step 1: Complete and submit the [Employee Dependent Care Form](#) (with the following information:

- Name of child/children (Child is defined as biological, adopted, foster, stepchild, or legal ward either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.)
- Name of School/Childcare
- Grade/Age
- Supporting documentation, which may include any of the following:
 - a. Letter/email from school/childcare describing the schedule(s)
 - b. Print out from school website, or
 - c. Any other supporting documentation

Step 2: Initiate Discussion:

The employee may request or the supervisor may initiate a discussion of the need for changes to an employee's schedule. Together they will develop a proposed schedule that meets the needs of the employee as well as the needs of DCFS. All employees, including those who do not request a schedule change, must recertify their need to work remotely due to a dependent care accommodation. The employee will complete and submit the [DCFS COVID-19 Temporary Work Schedule Form](#) if a schedule change is needed.

Dissemination of Alternate Schedule Request and Supporting Documentation:

Requests shall be submitted to the employee's supervisor. The supervisor shall submit the request and all supporting documentation through the chain of command to the Delegated Appointing Authority for review and approval.



If approved,

- all documentation will be returned to the Supervisor and Manager/Director
- the supervisor shall notify the employee of the approval
- a copy of the [DCFS COVID-19 Temporary Work Schedule Form](#) shall be submitted to the timekeeper and Human Resources
- the supervisor shall maintain a separate file that includes all documentation

If disapproved,

- all documentation will be returned to the Supervisor and Manager/Director
- the supervisor shall notify the employee of the disapproval
- the supervisor shall maintain a separate file that includes all documentation

Employee Required Updates

If your child's school/childcare schedule changes, you must notify your supervisor and submit the change and supporting documentation on a new [Employee Dependent Care Form](#). If a change to the employee's work schedule is also needed, a new [DCFS COVID-19 Temporary Work Schedule Form](#) must also be submitted.

Management Expectations

Managers must hold all workers to the same performance standards, whether they work in-office or remotely. This includes those with alternate schedule accommodations. The establishment of objective performance expectations, feedback regarding performance expectations, and the use of performance management tools must be clearly documented and communicated to employees.

Coverage to maintain the minimum required worksite staffing must be addressed in approving alternative work schedules of employees. On a case-by-case basis, approved work schedules may be subject to change based upon the business needs of DCFS.

An employee's approved work hours should be considered when scheduling departmental meetings, but the priorities of DCFS will take precedence over an individual employee's schedule.

To maintain the continued, successful completion of assigned responsibilities for DCFS employees, supervisors should assist with prioritization of assigned tasks, and evaluate responsibilities across their unit.

POLICY AUGMENTATION

To facilitate the ability of each employee to separate work time from time spent supervising children engaged in learning, the following elements of DCFS Policy 4-20 are suspended until further notice:



1. The requirement that an approved work schedule remain unchanged for at least three months, unless changing to a 5-day workweek is revised to allow schedule changes after 60 days.
2. The requirement that alternative schedule work hours shall not begin before 6:00 a.m. or after 9:00 a.m. and shall not end before 3:30 p.m. nor extend beyond 6:30 p.m. is suspended in order to grant the flexibility to implement split shift scheduling.
3. Appointing authorities may allow the work period to extend beyond the usual 5-day workweek and may approve schedules that include weekend hours.

FINAL REMARKS

We are in unprecedented times. We want to provide unprecedented support while keeping the work of the department going. Let's continue to work together. It is our intention that this memo provides support to DCFS' most important asset, its employees.

