



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR  
**GENDER+SEXUAL  
DIVERSITY**



## CCGSD Working from Home in the Time of COVID-19 Policy

Approved by Board of Directors: May 29, 2020

Reviewed by Board of Directors: n/a

### Policy Brief & Purpose

These are unprecedented times and call for unprecedented adaptations. We all need to be on the same page in order to keep the organization afloat. Management is working to keep everyone employed at the same (or increased) level throughout this time of social distancing and potential isolation/quarantine. Because we are funded with public money and outputs are directly tied to our funding, we have to keep working the hours for which we are paid (though flexibility based on need is absolutely going to happen). As such, this policy outlines the basic expectations of both staff and management while we navigate this unknown territory. There is a section that outlines how to go about asking for exceptions and what will be considered.

### Scope

This policy applies to all CCGSD staff, including management, non-management, Ottawa-based and non- Ottawa-based, and full-time and part-time. If something is specific to a particular group, it will be indicated in ***bold italics*** within the policy.

### Policy Elements

All CCGSD staff and management **MUST** work from home during this time of uncertainty. In order to facilitate this, the following elements and requirements will be put in place. Note that while we are adapting to this situation, this policy does not mean to suggest that all positions can be remote. In addition to facilitating working from home, programming has been cancelled and there are many elements of everyone's job that are no longer in play. It will not be possible to implement this policy *on a permanent basis*. In accordance with the guidance of public health authorities, once we are permitted to safely return to public spaces and/or the office space, working from home will be subject to CCGSD's regular Work from Home Policy (as well as CCGSD's forthcoming Telecommuting Policy and Accommodations Policy).

### Elements and Requirements

1. All staff and management are required to update and use Basecamp consistently in order to track work and program progress.
2. All staff and management are required to update and use their Google Calendar consistently in order to trace work and program progress.
3. Google Chat and Google Hangouts will be made available for all staff and management to use. You will sign in to a group chat at the beginning of your day and use status updates to indicate when you are available/unavailable due to your lunch break, a call, a videoconference, video production, etc. You will sign out at the end of your work day. Use Google Chat and Google Hangouts as a way to contact staff members, ask for feedback, etc.

4. All staff and management are required to complete their regular hours. In the case of **full-time staff**, that is 7.5 hours per day, 5 days per week. For **part-time staff**, this varies, but you must complete your contracted weekly hours.
5. **Full-time staff:** Because of the stress of this situation and because there are significant mental health barriers at this time, you may sign in as late as 11 a.m. (please get enough sleep!). If you sign in late, you must ensure that you work for 7.5 hours or your contracted number of hours for that day. We recognize that there will be some days where that is not possible for various reasons and are willing to be understanding, but if a regular pattern emerges wherein this flexibility is being taken advantage of, disciplinary action will be taken. If you need extended breaks, for example, working from 7 a.m.- 11 a.m. and then 2 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., that is fine provided that you let your manager know.
6. **Full-time staff:** If you will have difficulty signing in before 11 a.m., please let the Executive Director or Office Manager know via email or by texting/calling the office phone (which is in the Executive Director's possession at this time). As such, you should be working for 7.5 hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. If you are in a situation, for example, where you are a caregiver for a dependent or a sick person, please communicate that situation to the Office Manager or Executive Director so that we can help you work from home successfully.
7. **Part-time staff:** Please set and stick to a weekly schedule based on your contracted number of hours. If a change needs to be made, please contact the Executive Director or Office Manager through email or by calling the office telephone (which is in the Executive Director's possession).
8. Staff Meetings: All staff will attend weekly staff meetings via Zoom Media (with the exception of the Museum Project Manager) in order to check in with each other and management. Management will coordinate these meetings.
9. **Ottawa-based staff:** You are entitled to a CCGSD laptop to work from home. If you do not have one, the delivery of a laptop to you can be arranged.
10. Please use your judgment when videoconferencing. Staff meetings, of course, are less formal (pajamas are, in fact, acceptable!); however, when videoconferencing with external stakeholders, please try to have a professional appearance and background. Please try to find a quiet space for online meetings and remember to use MUTE when you are not speaking!
11. Ensure that all meeting requests have clear communications information: appropriate Zoom link, Google Hangouts link, phone number, etc.
12. Please aim to respond to requests made in Google Chats/Hangouts from colleagues within 1 hour of receipt of the request, during times when your status is shown as Available. Even if that answer is "I cannot address that right now; please send me an email with details" or "let's set up a meeting to discuss." At a minimum, please try to acknowledge the request.
13. **Non-management:** Please try to respond to stakeholders and staff/management non-urgent requests within 24-48 hours of receipt by email. Please try to connect directly via phone or videoconference for urgent requests.
14. **Management:** Please try to respond to stakeholders and staff/management non-urgent requests within 48-72 hours of receipt of email. Please try to connect directly via phone or videoconference for urgent requests.

15. All staff and management should follow up on requests sent that have not received a response within the timeframes outlined above. **NOTE:** This does not mean that your request will be complete within those timeframes, merely that the request will be acknowledged and added to the recipient's to-do list within those timeframes. As usual, timelines should be suggested and negotiated based on the schedule of both the person requesting something and the person responding to the request.
16. Specifics for Basecamp usage (to be continued during regular office work as well):
  - a. Overall team productivity is tracked and measured through Basecamp. Please be sure to keep your project management up-to-date and schedule and check off tasks accordingly, including time spent on each.
  - b. Help your colleagues and management team understand your priorities on your to-do list by labeling task Priority. Assigners will use this same tool to indicate their priorities for your program/workload. Use ["Blocker"] for the highest priority tasks you need completed in order to move your own work forward. Feel free to follow up with task assigners or assignees on any questions or relevant information you have for your tasks.
  - c. Basecamp should be updated at the end of each workday as Daily Reports are being done.

### **Exceptions and Flexibility**

1. We want to remind you that it is acceptable to take sick and vacation days if you feel the need to take some time for yourself.
2. The Board will consider requests for additional paid sick leave (up to 2 days per month of quarantine) on a case-by-case basis. Please do not abuse this policy; only take these sick days if you need them.
3. Your mental health is important. If you need additional mental health supports at this time, please reach out to your direct manager and they will do their best to help you find what you need affordably (if money is an issue, we may be able to provide financial support).
4. Communication is key! Please communicate fully and openly with each other and your direct supervisor.
5. If you find that your workload is too much, please let your direct manager know. There are programs that have had to be postponed or cancelled and staff previously working on those programs might be able to help.
6. If you find that your workload is too light for the hours you are expected to work, please let your direct manager know. Your colleagues may need support, and there is a significant amount of help needed in the areas of fundraising and policy work.
7. Let the Executive Director or Office Manager know if you need any technology or office equipment to help you work from home, including headsets and microphones. CCGSD laptops have a webcam and a speaker/microphone; however, if you are experiencing issues with these, please let your direct manager know and they will try to get you additional hardware. Please take care of anything you borrow and return it to the office in the same condition that it was in when you started using it.

8. If you are having issues with your internet connection, please let your direct manager know as soon as possible via telephone. You may use data from your personal phone plan and claim amounts caused by that additional usage. You may also use accrued or extra sick time or vacation days or time in lieu hours and not work the day. If your internet connection is a persistent issue, please let your direct manager know and we will help you problem-solve around the issue.
9. While some internet providers are not charging for data use over the contracted limit, if your provider is and you incur additional charges for data overages, please let your direct manager know and any overuse due to work will be compensated. You will be required to submit reports detailing usage, which will be reviewed prior to reimbursement.

### **Tips and Tools for Working through Social Distancing and Self-Isolation**

1. Structure your days! Create a morning routine that includes checking into Google Chat and mimic your typical eating/lunch cycles.
2. Move around – have a dance party, walk around the block, feel free to break up work. Take a lunch break! Take 5-10-minute breaks, as usual, throughout the day.
3. Change your clothes! Even from one set of pajamas to another, your body will respond to the change, which will help you focus on work. You can also try wearing casual work clothes and shoes some days.
4. If you can, create a designated workspace in your home. Defining spaces will help you separate work and home life. Ideally, you should have a clean/professional background for work-related videoconferences (can include an empty wall or a wall with paintings/pictures, house plants, etc. If you need to get creative, for example, Calla once did a national interview in front of a clean wall, with her head blocking a child's play kitchen. If it works, it works! Pay attention to lighting. You want enough light so that you do not get tired, but you do not want the sun in your eyes!
5. Turn on email, chat, and text notifications while you are working so you do not miss anything from your colleagues. If you need a block of uninterrupted time and will be offline, please discuss this with your manager.
6. **Non-management:** Request 10-minute check-ins with the Office Manager daily to keep lines of communication open.
7. **Management:** Check-in with each other for 10 minutes daily to ensure you are consistently on the same page.
8. **Executive Director:** Update the President of the Board every week at minimum (preferably more often) on the macro issues facing the office. Request help from the Board of Directors as needed.

Adapted from: <https://www.wholewhale.com/tips/nonprofit-work-from-home-policy/>