

# St. Catherine's Nursery and Primary School



## Remote/ Blended Learning Policy

Devised by Staff: December 2020

Presented to B.O.G: January 2021

Review Date: As per Guidance

Chair of Board of Governors : Mrs. B. Allen

Date : January 2021

## Introduction

This policy is designed to assist St Catherine's Primary School in fulfilling their duties in school. This applies to all of our staff, pupils and parents.

The Principal, Vice-Principal, ICT Leader and Health and Safety Leader make up our Remote/ Blended Learning Management Team.

The Principal and Remote/ Blended Learning Management Team are further responsible for conducting any necessary reviews or making changes to the school's policies or procedures in the light of any potential risks that they or other members of staff discover.

We recognise that for many of the students, the routine and structure of school is extremely important for their wellbeing, so we aim to maintain normal routine as much as possible.

## Remote/ Blended Learning Introduction

### Definition of Remote Learning:

Remote Learning is where the student and teacher are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment for a specified period.

### Definition of Blended Learning:

Blended Learning is an approach to education whereby schools will combine classroom-based teaching (where appropriate) and learning methods within school with a range of Remote Learning in order to deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

During a period of long-term closure, in the event of a class isolating or where small numbers in each class are isolating, staff at St Catherine's PS, Strabane will continue to provide education and support to our pupils using Remote/ Blended learning. In this case, the Department recommends that all schools aim to engage with pupils on an ongoing basis through the wide range of eLearning platforms available rather than provide hard copy or emailed resources alone, if at all possible.

The predominant eLearning platform that St Catherine's will be using during Remote/ Blended learning will be Microsoft Teams where pupils are enrolled with their class group and can use their c2k login details to access the activities. This will allow staff to keep in contact, in a professional and confidential manner, with any pupil in their class and their parent, should they need to. Teachers will be able to schedule learning in a manner that does not overwhelm or concern our pupils.

Teaching and learning can be tailored, changed and updated as time progresses, allowing for replication of classroom activity to the best of our ability. In all communications we will adhere to our commitment to maintaining pupil wellbeing.

## When is Remote/ Blended Learning Provided?

Remote/ Blended Learning applies to children who are self-isolating, Bubble Group closure or Whole School closure.

When the whole class/ school, including the class teachers and classroom assistants, is isolating, the points in the expectations section will be expected.

For small numbers in the class who are self-isolating or long-term absences, not all expectations below can be fulfilled daily, due to the demands of teachers teaching their class.

Remote/ Blended Learning does not apply to pupils who are off sick short term or awaiting a COVID test.

Remote/ Blended Learning will be provided through Microsoft Teams. Children at home choose best how to record their work. Examples include: exercise books, typed documents, photographs or videos – all which are uploaded and submitted via our Microsoft Teams platform or returned to school once the period of isolation is complete.

## Nursery

The Nursery teachers have also uploaded some work for the Nursery children to look at during the period of isolation.

This work can be found on our school website, under the Secure Home Learning Section. This is due to the fact that they do not have access to a c2k login and so cannot access Microsoft Teams.

Website: [www.stcatherinesps.co.uk](http://www.stcatherinesps.co.uk)

There is a password for Home Learning section. The Nursery teachers will email this to their parents.

Link: <https://www.stcatherinesps.co.uk/parent-home-learning-support/?class=8>

A Remote/ Blended learning pack consisting of an exercise book, pencil, rubber and necessary login details will be sent home with pupils.

Teachers will keep at home a prepared teacher pack, such as textbooks and resources, in the event of whole school or class isolation.

## Flexibility

We realise that the circumstances that cause our school to adopt a 'Remote/ Blended learning' approach will affect families in a number of ways. In our planning and expectations we are aware of the need for flexibility from all sides: parents may be trying to work from home and so access to technology as a family may be limited; teachers may be trying to manage their home situation and the learning of their own children, or the effective planning for both in-school and remote learning opportunities; systems may not always function as they should. An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, these difficulties on all sides is essential for success.

## Expectations

In the case of long-term closure/ Class Bubble shutdown, we believe that it is in the best interests of our pupils that we continue to provide structured support to the best of our ability. Bearing in mind the need for flexibility, we understand that work may be completed out of sync. That said, the work that pupils engage in during a period of closure, or as part of the 'Remote/ Blended learning' approach, will be part of our current planning and so cannot be considered as optional.

On Microsoft Teams, each year group will upload a variety of work activities based on subjects the children would normally study in class. These subject activities will include Numeracy, Literacy, World Around Us, The Arts and Religion. It will be expected that as much of this work as possible will be completed by the children as it will not all be written. Some of the work will be interactive. However, 1 set piece of Numeracy and 1 set piece of Literacy work will be uploaded to Teams and earmarked for the children to complete. These pieces of work will be submitted to the class teacher for feedback/ marking within a 48-hour timeframe. These pieces will be clearly labelled. All other pieces of work completed can also be emailed/ uploaded for the class teacher to look at. All pupils will be encouraged to complete as much of the work set as is possible, not just the one set piece of Numeracy and Literacy.

Pupils and parents should consider the arrangements as set out in this document as highly recommended. Teaching staff will expect to receive all home assignments within a 48-hour timeframe. Should families encounter any difficulties with this arrangement, they must be discussed with the child's class teacher in the first instance.

Additional interactive activities, links to learning websites are also available for parents and children to use via our school website in the Home Learning Area of the website as was the case in the first lockdown. This is located within the 2019/2020 bar on the secure Home Learning Support Area. It is accessed by a password which has been made available to parents previously and will be resent upon request.

### **Teaching staff will...**

- Continue teaching in line with current, extensive planning that is already in place throughout the school.
- Continue to ensure a progression in learning appropriate to the child's year group and also their needs.
- Inform families via Microsoft Teams/ Parent Emails of the work that is to be completed by the pupils on a daily basis.
- All tasks will be differentiated according to the needs of the pupils.
- Specific tasks in Microsoft teams could provide links to videos, online experiments, animations and podcasts. These will be very helpful in providing pupils with different ways of explaining concepts, assisting those who are less confident, and to work in lieu of teacher-led explanation.
- Learning tasks could integrate other e-learning platforms that are being utilised by the

school. Examples include: -

	C2k Newsdesk	Google Apps	iPad Apps
Mathletics	Accelerated Reader	myON	Office 365 Apps

- Learning tasks should integrate a range of off-line learning tasks also.
  - Mark all activities within 48 hours (unless teacher is unwell) and work should be submitted at a reasonable time by pupils.
  - Correspond with parents, as and when appropriate, and in relation to tasks. Although it is a convenient platform for communication, all general queries must go through the school office or the class teacher's c2k email by parents.
  - Make allowances for asynchronous learning and will not set deadlines for completion of activities, understanding that the circumstances of Remote/ Blended learning will affect families in a number of different ways. However, the overall aim is to ensure that tasks are completed daily, as in the normal classroom environment.
  - Make contact with parents if learning tasks are not being completed or submitted. If lack of engagement continues, Principal or Vice Principal will then contact parent.
  - Live meet ups and/ or pre-recorded videos/ podcasts will be encouraged and made available to children where possible. This only applies in the event of whole class isolation or school lockdown.
  - Notify the Principal,  
if unwell during a period of isolation or lockdown,  
OR  
if family member is ill during a period of isolation or lockdown
- An announcement will be made to parents and pupils to make them aware of this current situation. At this point, children will use the Bubble Lockdown pack already provided on Microsoft Teams.
- Support parents who are unable to provide their pupils with Laptop or Ipad devices. St Catherine's will lend a device (pending stock availability) temporarily to the parent to ensure the pupil can engage in Remote/ Blended learning.
  - Support parents without Internet access. The onus is on the parent to communicate with the school to discuss possible alternatives.
  - Showcase children's work by uploading samples to the school website under 'Our Learning' for each class. These samples will then be promoted using school social media platforms. Teachers should adhere to GDPR permissions, where parental consent has been given.
  - Continue to demonstrate and adhere to appropriate Staff and ICT Code of conduct Procedures.
  - If a teacher in the year group becomes unwell, parents of that class will be informed and queries with regards to work relayed to the Principal/ Vice-Principal or other Senior Leader as appropriate.

#### **Non-teaching Staff will...**

- Support class teacher in preparation of support packs/activities.
- Support, where necessary, individual/small groups of pupils by providing tailored activities which can either be used in school or when learning at home.
- Special Needs Assistants/ General Assistants will communicate with children / parents as and when appropriate during a lockdown period in order to support their learning

- Inform the Principal/Vice-Principal (if unwell).
- Ensure their communications have been shared with the class teacher and/or SENCO

#### **Pupils will...**

- Log in to their Home Learning daily during isolation/ lockdown periods. (Teachers know when the Home Learning Via Microsoft Teams is being accessed by each pupil and this is monitored to ensure all children are working to the best of their ability)
- Only access the material shared by their teacher and will ask for parental permission to use technology for anything beyond that.
- Read daily, either independently or with an adult.
- Continue to stay safe online using St Catherine's SMART targets and will adhere to all internet safety rules whilst using online learning.
- Post messages appropriately on TEAMS and other relevant platforms
- Complete and submit the learning tasks set through the relevant platforms
- Engage in the completion of the emergency pack during the special exemptions listed previously.
- Be assured that wellbeing is at the forefront of our thoughts and they should take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise and maintain a reasonable balance with Remote/ Blended Learning activities
- Consider using the school closure time to learn a new skill, follow their own interests to discover more about the world around us or "be creative".

#### **Parents will...**

- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Encourage their child to access the Home Learning on a daily basis (even if out of school hours) and engage with their teacher when necessary.
- **Not** screenshot or copy any information, messages or posts to share on social media or any other platform.
- Follow the agreed policies in school that are connected with Remote/ Blended Learning.
- Ensure their child is safe and responsible when using online platforms.
- Know they can continue to contact their class teacher as normal through the Microsoft Teams/ Email if they require support of any kind in relation to Remote/ Blended Learning. Parents should be mindful that there are protocols in place for when teachers respond and answer queries.
- Check announcements provided by the class teacher via the Email, text Message or Microsoft Teams.
- Check their child's completed work each day and encourage the progress that is being made. (We understand that access may be out of school hours due to parents other commitments)
- Contact the Principal or Vice-Principal if their child is unable to engage in learning due to being unwell or having symptoms.
- Contact the teacher if your child does not have access to a laptop or ipad device and internet access, so that a suitable provision can be put in place.
- Be mindful of mental well-being of both themselves and their child and encourage their child to take regular breaks, play games, get fresh air and relax.

### **School Closure**

Current Government advice is that a whole school closure is only appropriate if advised by PHA or DE themselves.

Mrs Wilders and the Board of Governors may take the decision to close the school for other reasons also:

- High absence level in staffing so that the safety of children cannot be guaranteed
- Excessive illness in staffing or pupils due to Covid19
- Covid19 outbreak in surrounding areas meaning risks are too high to attend school.

### **Parental Choice**

The school recognises that some parents/carers may judge that the risk to a child will be minimised if they do not attend school. This is most likely to be the case for those students at highest risk from COVID-19. The school will authorise such absences only when medical evidence is provided. It is essential that children attend school if they are well.

\*It is worth noting that although this policy was created in June 2020, and amended in January 2021. This document will change in according to the government guidance provided to schools. This policy will be reviewed as and when required.\*

### **Communication to Parents during COVID 19**

School will endeavour to communicate with parents regularly re any concerns. Staff emails have been made available to parents of children in each bubble. Principal/ Vice Principal emails are available. School can be phoned during the day. Principal answers messages sent to School Facebook Page.

Letters/ updates/ Guidance etc is sent to parents (as required) via the following media;

1. Text message
2. Email
3. School website
4. School App

### **Related policies:**

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy

### **Related Documents:**

Education Restart – Publication of Guidance on Supporting Staff to Return to Schools

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-supporting-staff-return-schools>

DE Guidance was issued regarding Reopening Schools

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-re-opening-school-guidance-new-school-day>

**DE Circular Number: 2020/05 GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON SUPPORTING REMOTE LEARNING TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY (5th June 2020)**

[Circular 2020/5 - Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

**DE Circular Number: 2020/06 Curriculum Planning 2020/21**

[circular curriculum planning 202021.pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

**Latest HSE guidelines for Schools in Northern Ireland**

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>