St George's National School

Distance Learning Policy

In response to this time of uncertainty regarding Covid-19 school closures, we have formulated this policy to outline how the school will maintain the link between school and home. In the event of another whole or partial school closure, we aim to continue to communicate with our pupils through various means. We recognise that online safety is of huge importance and the aim of this document is to help to protect both school staff and pupils, while teaching and learning online.

This policy does not set out to replace our Acceptable Usage Policy. Rather, it is proposed as an important addition to the area of learning from a digital platform. The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) Policy.

The primary obligation of all schools is to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learners and that personal and sensitive data is also protected under GDPR legislation. Schools must ensure that learning takes place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties.

This Policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of:
(a) The Education Act (1998)
(b) Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
(c) Equal Status Act (2000)
(d) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
(e) Disability Act (2005)
(f) Children First Act (2017)
(g) GDPR
(h) Data Protection Act (2018)
(i) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary schools
(j) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).
(k) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020)
(l) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19 (August 2020).

This is a working document; as we continue to explore options available to support distance learning, the document will be updated accordingly. Teaching and Learning is always evolving, especially, as we move deeper into the 21st century. Developments in IT provide us all with great opportunities as learners and teachers. Never before has there been greater scope to learn using technology and it continues to change the learning relationship between teachers and students. Advances in technology mean that assignments can be delivered remotely and that greater access to information on the internet affords the opportunities for real learning to take place under the watchful and professional guidance of the teacher. However, whether a child is being directed remotely or via a traditional classroom environment, it is very important that all partners are aware that once a learning exchange takes place between a student and teacher, whether at home or school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and all of the school's policies apply. We recognise that online collaboration is essential for distance learning and that families are in favour of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. St George's NS uses a variety of child friendly, online tools, which assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

Distance Learning

- In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers use Google Classroom as an 'online platform' to assist with remote teaching where necessary. Any other online platforms used will be approved by the principal.
- The individual teacher using the online platform has signed up to the terms of service of the online platform on behalf of the school and has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these online platforms provide.
- If teachers are using Google Meet or Zoom, a copy of the school's rules regarding these meetings will be forwarded to guardians before the meeting takes place. Google Meets or Zooms may be recorded by teachers.

Guidelines for Good Communication in St George's NS

- Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
- It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure that any content submitted to their teacher is appropriate.
- Staff members will communicate with pupils and their families via email and oogle Classroom (or through an online platform approved by the principal).
- Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
- Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (Zoom, Google Meet).
- For video calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
- For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
- St George's NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.

  Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of assigned work and lessons via Google Classroom and when needed video calls via Google Meet or Zoom

Online learning

Staff will communicate regularly with parents and pupils via Google Classroom. All families are asked to download the school's app and to check it daily for updates and important information from the principal and teachers.

Google Classroom and the G Suite for Education

Google Classroom is an online platform which enables our pupils to connect to their folder of work and it also allows access to their teacher when required. Our teachers may also provide feedback and communicate with pupils via Google Classroom.

Google Meet/Zoom

Google Meet and Zoom are video-conferencing platforms which enable teachers, staff and pupils to connect via a live link. Teachers will connect with pupils regularly using pre-arranged meeting links.

Rules for Pupils using Online Communication Methods

For submitting learning:

- Submit work and pictures that are appropriate. Having an adult look over the work before submitting is recommended,
- Use of kind and friendly words.

For video calls:

- Remember to ensure you join each meeting using your family name.
- Pictures, screenshots or recordings of the video calls are not allowed.
- Remember our school rules – they are still in place, even online.
- Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
- Join the video with your microphone muted.
- Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
- If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
- Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
- Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
- Be on time – set a reminder if it helps.
- Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

Guidelines for Parents / Guardians

For learning:

- It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
- Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
- Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

For video calls:

- Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
- The main purpose of a video call is to engage in online learning activities while maintaining a social connection between the school staff and pupils. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
- Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
- Please note that school staff will only accept users into a video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account. (i.e. using your family name)
- Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
- Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
- Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
- It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or a meeting being immediately terminated.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Students:

- Check assigned work each day
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours
- The normal school calendar will apply
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply, with students expected to present all assignments to the best of their ability and on time, where possible in this evolving and unprecedented situation.
- In so far as possible, provision for SEN students will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies,
- In so far as possible, provision for students at very high-risk to Covid 19 will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

Remote Teaching & Learning Protocols for Parents

Parents / guardians are asked:

- To ensure protocols for pupils are adhered to.
- To check-in on their child's school work on a daily basis and talk to their child about the work being assigned.
- The health and wellbeing of all is paramount. Circumstances may change for any of us unexpectedly; teachers or parents, so please keep schooling in perspective and do not allow anything school related to impinge on your child negatively. You are the primary educator of your child and you make those calls. We encourage a little work every weekday for routine. We provide work and guidance and ask parents and pupils to do their best and that is all.

Remote Teaching & Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNAs

- Check uploaded work each week.
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours.

- The normal school calendar will apply.
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
- Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply with students expected to present all assignments to the best of their ability and on time, where possible.

Remote Teaching & Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid-19 related scenarios:

Provision for children who are at very high risk to Covid 19
The school will engage directly with relevant parents, regarding remote educational provision for children who are deemed to be at very high risk to Covid-19 (see HSE Guidelines) where medical certification has been provided to the school. In the case of all other children who are instructed to self-isolate by their GP or HSE Public Health, educational provision will be provided as follows:

Children who are awaiting Covid 19 test results for themselves or a family member and have been instructed by their GP to isolate at home for a few days.
These pupils will be supported to catch up on their learning on their return to school

Children isolating at home on instruction from their GP due to a confirmed case within their own family/close contact outside of school (14-day isolation period).
The school will link in with the pupil via Google classroom.

School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate.
The school will link in with the pupils via Google classroom.

School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14 day isolation period).

The teacher will engage with the class daily on Google Classroom.

Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health).
Teachers will engage with pupils, using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons, Google Classroom and regular contact on Google Meet or Zoom.
Please note that the current situation is quite fluid and these circumstances may vary throughout the year.

Summary:

- Do what you can, within your circumstances. Forget about following books and workbooks outside of the work set by teachers for the moment.
- There will be no school work set for planned school closures / holidays: there will be no interaction on Google Meet, Zoom or Google Classroom during these times.
- Please keep note of postings on the school app as it is our main mode of communication going forward.
- We ask parents/guardians, students and teachers to ensure protocols are adhered to at all times.
- If you have yet to connect to any of the on-line platforms/School App, please do so. If you are experiencing difficulties please contact the school and we will assist you in any way that we can and please contact the school with any further queries you may have.
- We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare.

Our Distance Learning Policy will be subject to regular monitoring and reviewed by the Principal and Middle Management Team and is subject to change, in light of any guidance or instruction received from the Department of Education and/or HSE Public Health.

Appendix 1

Zoom Safety

https://www.schooldays.ie/articles/Keeping-your-family-and-kids-safe-using-zoom

https://blog.zoom.us/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/

Readworks.Org

1. Set up an account.

2. Import your Google classroom into it

3. Use for Reading Assignments every week.

Screen castify (Supporting Videos)

Records your voice and shares screen (Maths link , PDF) ....basically gives a lesson guidance with teacher voice and resources.

Jamboard Application in Google (whiteboard sharing) suite is really useful.

https://wow.boomlearning.com Interactive slides for google classroom (use fast pin), Ms Mullen recommends ASD Creation Station's Boomcards

 Free Cam 8 screen recorder that is very simple to use:

https://www.freescreenrecording.com

On Windows 10 the window and G button records the screen

For google classroom **Google forms** are great for checking engagement and seeing who is working and when (as opposed to MS office)

Motebook

On Google classroom sends a voice recording which is an oral comment as opposed to a written comment. Also shows when the comment has been listened to.

https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources Need to set up account but there are free powerpoint presentations/resources

wordwall.net Nice activities for zoom :tricky words quizzes multiple choices

acorneducational.ie on sale SEN section; Art & Crafts, Games for tricky words

Google Virtual Escape Rooms (its on Google Docs and works on g-suite) (Ms Corrie recommends this e.g next week she is doing jumanji)

Appendix 2:

In addition to a pared back plan of work for your child/children, we suggest the following Apps for your child's use too, if you can access them. If not, do not worry, they are helpful but not essential. Following our meetings- some points which have arisen and may help everyone are:

Cúla 4: Excellent for younger pupils for Irish vocab – very child friendly. There are also videos of your children's favourite cartoons here as Gaeilge which would be useful to watch occasionally to keep up with Irish
Doulingo: most suitable from 2nd class upwards. Excellent app. Tests your child Irish ability level at the start and they work away at their own level for 10mins daily
Mathduel: For tables. Fun and interactive
Starfall: For spellings. Again, very child friendly and useful to keep spellings progressing without feeling like schoolwork
Jolly Phonics App: to keep up phonics learning for infant classes
Dolch Words Apps: (there is a wide range available): for the development of sight words

Nessy Apps: for reading for pupils with dyslexia or difficulties

PinkFong: Digital stories for infant classes. Excellent and engaging

Khan Academy: Useful for maths for older pupils especially

Kahoot: for general knowledge and quizzes

Toontastic: probably the best app ever for digital storytelling – pupils can devise their own digital story, picking a range of characters, settings, even musical background. They plan a beginning, middle and end to their story and can record their own voices to tell the story

Puppetpals: similar to toontastic – useful for younger pupils. They can record themselves telling the story also

Lightbot – Coding app – super for all ages.

Signed_____

Chairperson Board of Management.

Date_____