

Monkstown Nursery School: Remote & Blended Learning Policy



Introduction

This policy provides support for families, staff and pupils as we deal with any situation of working from home including lockdown and periods of isolation. This outlines our Remote Teaching and Learning Policy, pupil expectations, key information about pupil learning and information regarding our online platforms.

Specific Policy Aims

- To outline Monkstown Nursery School's approach for pupils that, from September 2020, will not be attending school through enforced school closure or where a class bubble is directed to self-isolate due to a positive case in school.
- To outline Monkstown Nursery School's expectations for staff that, from September 2020, may not be attending school due to self-isolation but that are otherwise fit and healthy and able to continue supporting with teaching, assessment and planning for pupils and contributing to staff development.

Context

- The Covid 19 Pandemic resulted in an increased emphasis on remote learning; the closure of schools throughout lockdown, moved learning online.
- As we continue to navigate an uncertain context, there may be times when staff and pupils engage in remote learning or blended learning.

Definitions

- **Remote learning** is where the children and the teacher are not physically present in the classroom. The teacher provides information activities through an online platform and children may or may not be able to return their work to the teacher.
- An effective home-school platform allows communication between the teacher and the children, in a managed and well communicated way.
- **Blended learning** in its current guise because of the Covid-19 pandemic occurs when some children in a class may be at home participating in remote learning while some children are in school receiving face-to-face instruction from the teacher.

Who is the policy applicable to?

In line with government guidance, pupils, staff and families should self-isolate if they display any of the following symptoms :-

- A continuous, dry cough
- A high temperature above 37.8°C
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste
- Have had access to a test and this has returned a positive result for Covid-19

Possible scenarios during the 2020-2021 academic year:

- Whole class / school to isolate at home for a period of time
- A number of the children in the class learning at home due to medical conditions or isolating due to Covid19
- Online activities and ideas to support learning at home shared in place of traditional paper newsletters and topic overviews

Delivery of remote/ blended learning

- As nursery school is non statutory and teaching strategies in nursery are practical and hands on play, a full teaching programme cannot be delivered to individual children who are isolating at home.
- Staff will not be expected to provide this due to practical teaching demands and the rigorous cleaning routine and classroom turn around due to Covid19.
- Where able to, staff will share aspects of the teaching day (photos, story starters, links etc) and this will provide starting points for parents to encourage discussion and to provide learning opportunities at home.
- The main motivation for this will be to ensure the child maintains connections with nursery school which will help them to settle back in on their return.
- Monkstown Nursery School is fully aware that these are exceptional times and would like to make it clear that the completion of these tasks is not compulsory and that this document seeks to inform and guide families and not impose expectations.
- Each family is unique and because of this, should approach home learning in a way which suits their individual needs.

Family (pupil/parent/guardian) Role

It is a recommendation that where possible, families and children engage with the learning opportunities set as it provides a basis for continuation of learning and language development. We also would recommend that each 'school day' maintains a small amount of structure and routine. In addition to this, we encourage parents to:

- allow their child to engage in quality periods of uninterrupted play.
- A mix of independent play and engagement with an adult in play is a quality way to develop speech, language and conversation.
- A daily story or reading time before bedtime has been proven to aid development and would be highly recommended during school time and during times of isolation or lockdown periods.
- Encouraging children to engage in daily routines and life skills tasks such as tidying, helping to set the table, help to put shopping away, gardening, feeding and caring for pets and sorting laundry (pairing and matching socks, folding, pegging washing etc)

- Allowing children time to develop independence skills such as dressing, putting on and taking off shoes, learning how to do zips and buttons, and lots of practice with independent hand washing and toileting.
- Opportunities for counting in a real context for example, 2 scoops of pet food into the bowl, 4 spoons on the table for breakfast.
- Opportunities for children to write, draw or mark-make are always recommended. Notebooks, drawing books, chalk boards, pens, pencils and crayons are a valuable part of learning. No formal letter writing is a requirement but allowing children to make marks freely during their play is recommended.

During whole class self-isolation periods

When there is a whole school or class closure, school will enhance these ongoing activities with topic or subject/skill specific ideas

- Each normal school day, staff will set two activities for completion, this will be ten per week.
- These can be shared with families and completed at their convenience.
- Should carers be working from home, we would ask adults to please fit these around their and their child's schedule and not feel pressured to complete these.
- The involvement of other siblings and family members is also encouraged and can be beneficial and will help to enhance a learning experience.
- Work **may** be shared via the 'inbox' on the seesaw family app.
- Parents can photograph children's work or play experiences and provide a message to outline how the children enjoyed it or their experience. The staff will then provide individual feedback on the work submitted.
- In some cases, the staff may ask for permission to share with the class or on the school website in our 'Learning at Home' Section.
- This can be really valuable in sharing the learning but also keeping strong connections between the children.
- Staff will always ask before sharing work submitted with the class or community.
- Should accessing work or Seesaw be an issue, parents should contact school promptly by email and alternatives can be discussed.
- We will endeavour to get printed copies to you, if staff are isolating along with children, printed work or paper copies cannot be provided safely.

Teacher Expectations

- Teachers should plan learning opportunities and prompts that are relevant to the curriculum focus for that class and may support this through photos or video clips and tasks for home learners.
- Videos may include an explanation of what to do, a link to a learning activity or a link to an example completed by staff.
- Any resources used, including websites and activity grids should, where possible, be shared with home learners via Seesaw.

- In most cases these will be accessible and practical activities using resources that most families will have available at home.
- In the event of sending activity books, during the latter part of the school year, these are not compulsory but intended as supplementary where families feel they wish to print and use.
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Remote teaching for staff who are self-isolating

- Teaching staff are required to self-isolate if they show symptoms as outlined at the start of this policy or they have been told to shield via PHA Track and Trace and/or have received a letter to confirm this.
- If a member of staff is required to self-isolate, they are expected to:
 - ✓ Follow normal reporting procedure for planned absence.
 - ✓ School will ask staff about their intention to get tested should they be displaying symptoms. Should a staff member be tested, it is expected, as per national guidance, to share the result of this test with school so that appropriate plans can be made.
 - ✓ Whilst self-isolating, and if able to do so, staff will contribute to planning and assessment and may also be given an individual project to work on which is in line with whole school improvement priorities. These projects will be communicated by the Principal and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Staff may also be asked to support with the online learning provision for their year group, should this be needed.

Guidance on using Seesaw

We pride ourselves on ensuring excellent communication between home and school. As part of this we use Seesaw as our main communication tool, as a medium to share children's achievements in school and home learning ideas. In line with GDPR, parental consent is sought to use Seesaw with families.

Teachers are expected to post updates or important information as the need arises.

Seesaw should not dominate teacher's daily routine so it is important for teachers to set time boundaries when they reply to parent queries.

The following recommendations for Seesaw during periods of school closure are outlined as follows:

- Each child has at least one family member signed up
- Staff will respond, within reason, promptly to requests for support from families at home during normal daytime school hours
- Families must not expect responses to Seesaw outside school hours in line with teacher's working conditions. Any urgent contact, for example, to inform us of a family emergency or child protection issue, please email the school. This will be monitored by the principal: kwilson562@c2kni.net
- Staff have the right to switch off devices after working hours and are advised to avoid checking Seesaw in the evenings and/or weekends

Areas of Learning Supported

All work and learning prompts provided will support our Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education set out by DE and CCEA.

The areas of learning are as follows:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Early Language Development
- Early Mathematical Experiences
- Physical Development
- The Arts
- The World Around Us

Special Educational Needs

Work provided will also take into account children with additional needs and Special Educational Needs where a child has a Personal Learning Plan. If a child has a 1:1 support assistant then support materials and activities may be provided by them, in consultation with the class teacher.

Wider Community

Monkstown Nursery School may share links and learning ideas from outside agencies, other professionals and nurseries where they feel they are beneficial and developmentally appropriate. These will be shared in line with GDPR regulations.

Policy Developed October 2020