

St. Mary's Primary School

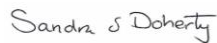


Blended Learning / Remote Learning Policy Jan 2021

Signature of Chairperson



Signature of Principal



Date : 8th Jan 2021

Mission Statement

"St Mary's Primary School will be a welcoming, child centred school and a community of good practice, where all feel valued and inspired. Our excellent staff will collaborate to meet the aspirations of our pupils through high quality learning and teaching. We will work in partnership with our parents, parish and community to meet the needs of our children in this rapidly changing global society. Our Catholic ethos, pastoral care and family atmosphere will permeate every aspect of school life to ensure the well being and safety of every child. We will endeavour to support each child to reach their full potential"

Ethos

Together We Achieve.....

Introduction

St Mary's Primary School will provide Blended / Remote learning (online & paper based) for pupils that are not able to attend school in order that no-one falls behind in their learning. This policy provides an outline of the provision that will be made and some guidance given on the role of pupils, teachers and parents.

St Mary's Primary School are fully aware that these are exceptional times and would like to make it clear that the completion of work can prove difficult at times and this document seeks to inform and guide families and not impose unrealistic expectations. Each family is unique and because of this, should approach 'blended/ remote learning' in way which suits their individual needs.

Blended/ Remote Learning

Remote learning is where the children and the teacher are not physically present in the classroom. The teacher provides information, lessons and 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 as a result 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.

Possible scenarios during the current 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 self-isolating due to Covid19;
- ✚ Online homework in place of or complementing traditional paper homework.
- ✚ Class/School at home for a period of time eg. 'Lockdown/Circuit Breaker' scenarios

If the whole class is to remain at home, then remote learning will take place provided the teacher is well enough. The Year Group 'partner teacher' alongside a temporary teacher (sub) will assume responsibility for the class if the teacher is unavailable. If there is sufficient notice, then some paper copies of work in the form of a 'Educational Learning Pack' (LP's) may be made available to take home if appropriate.

In the event of the school being closed (holiday period exempt) the following will apply:

- ✚ Messaging on Seesaw will be turned on during periods of remote learning, between 09:00 and 15:00 each day;
- ✚ Teachers will upload the different activities onto Seesaw before or as the week progresses;
- ✚ We cannot assume that all parents will be at home and children may be at childminders or with grandparents so teachers will ensure that the children are aware of how to complete the activities set. This may be done through text instructions or a video or an audio recording etc.
- ✚ Children may send back their work to be marked throughout the day. The teacher will mark the work between the periods 08:45 - 16:00 (Mon-Tues) and 08:45 – 15:00 (Wed - Fri) as per their 'Directed Time' budgets;
- ✚ Any work sent back to the teacher after 16:00 may not be marked until after 08:45 the following teaching day.

It is important that we monitor all children when school is closed. If a child does not submit work for more than 2 days in a row, then the appropriate Vice Principal(VP) will be informed who will make contact with home. There may be a good explanation for this, however, it is prudent for child protection and safeguarding reasons that the VP contacts any child's parents to ensure that the family have support and advice if needed.

Some children in the class may be at home due to medical conditions or self-isolating due to Covid19.

Children may have to stay at home for up to 14 days or more because of advice from the PHA to self-isolate due to Covid-19 or because of an illness which requires them to 'shield'.

Appropriate work will be set in the form of online tasks via Seesaw as well as paper based activities where appropriate.

The following guidance will apply for children who are self-isolating and where the teacher still has a 'face-to-face' teaching responsibility with the rest of the class in school:

- ✚ Teachers will not be available on Seesaw from 9am – 2.30pm (P1 & P2), 09:00- 3pm (P3), 09:00-3.15pm (P4) & 09:00-15:00 (P5-P7). Teachers will be carrying out their teaching duties for the day during this period;
- ✚ Work will be sent home to children either daily/weekly before school or after day – see above times;
- ✚ Children will receive one ‘core’ Literacy activity and one Numeracy activity each day as well as being kept up with spellings/tables – if appropriate;
- ✚ These ‘core’ activities will be based on what the children in class were learning during that particular day/week;
- ✚ The teacher may create an activity in Seesaw based on the children’s learning, including samples of learning materials used in class;
- ✚ We cannot assume that all parents will be at home and children may be at childminders or with grandparents so teachers will ensure that the children are aware of how to complete the activities set. This may be done through Seesaw text instructions or a video/audio recording etc.;
- ✚ Any Seesaw Activities that are set for homework during the 2020-2021 academic year will be completed by children who are self-isolating and therefore learning at home;
- ✚ Due to the teacher completing their normal teaching duties, work that children send back to teachers may not be marked straight away but will be marked as soon as possible.

Blended Learning Approach

In the event of long term closure, staff at St Mary’s Primary School will continue to provide education and support to our pupils using Blended / Remote / Online learning. In this case, all learning will be conducted using educational ‘Learning Packs’ (LP’s) of resources complemented by the use of the online platforms ie. Seesaw, Mathletics and Accelerated Reading. This will ensure that the needs of all pupils are catered for and these platforms will allow staff to keep in daily contact, in a professional and confidential manner with each pupil in their class. 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 well-being.

Flexibility

We realise that the circumstances that cause our school to close will affect many 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; 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. Anyone who does not have sufficient access to a digital device or WiFi should contact the School Office to complete the ‘Loan Device’ application process.

Expectations

In the case of long term closure, 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 when it is shared and as such, no unrealistic deadlines will be set. That said, the work that pupils engage in during a period of closure will be part of our current planning

and so cannot be considered as optional. Pupils and parents should consider the arrangements as set out in this document as highly recommended.

Specific Aims

- ✚ To outline St Mary's Primary School's approach for pupils who, from September 2020, will not be attending school as a result of it being closed due to a 'Lockdown/Circuit Break' in line with Government Guidance- see Attendance Covid Recording Help sheet on C2K Exchange.(included as appendix)
- ✚ To outline St Mary's Primary School's expectations for staff who, from September 2020, are not attending school due to self-isolation or 'lockdown' but that are otherwise fit and healthy and able to continue supporting with the teaching, marking and planning for pupils.

Who is the Policy applicable to?

In line with Government Guidance, the policy is applicable to pupils, staff and families who are affected by 'lockdown' pupils or who have to shield or 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;
- ✚ A child's parent has been contacted by 'Test and Trace' and told their child must self -isolate for 14 days.

Family (Pupil/Parent/Guardian) Role

Where possible, it is beneficial for young people to maintain a regular and familiar routine. St Mary's Primary School would recommend that each 'School Day' maintains structured.

For those pupils unable to attend school for the reasons outlined above, teachers will upload the different activities onto Seesaw on/before Monday or as the week progresses; Families should view this together, and then make appropriate plans to complete the work for the period ahead.

Should anything be unclear in the work that is set, parents can communicate with the class teachers through Seesaw and follow the advice/guidance below:

- ✚ If you need to contact the teacher, it should be made clear which subject area the query relates to and concisely what the issue is;
- ✚ Written work that children complete at home should be kept safe, ideally in the pupil's home learning folder, and can be brought back to school when safe to do so;
- ✚ Attempt to make use of the resources shared;
- ✚ Encourage and support your children's work, including finding an appropriate place to work and, ensure they complete it to the best of their ability;

- ✚ Support pupils with their work by encouraging them to work with good levels of concentration;
- ✚ Every effort will be made by staff to ensure that work is set promptly on appropriate platforms but the school cannot guarantee that the chosen platforms will work on all devices. If this is the case contact your child's teacher to try and reach a solution;
- ✚ Should accessing work be an issue, parents should contact school promptly and alternative solutions may be available. These will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.
- ✚ Anyone who does not have sufficient access to a digital device or WiFi should contact the School Office to complete the 'Loan Device' application process.

Teacher Expectations

In addition to their work in school, teachers will continue to support children that are unable to attend for the reasons outlined above.

- ✚ Teachers will plan lessons that are relevant to the curriculum focus for their year group and endeavour to replicate this through tasks for home learners. Pre-recorded videos may include for example, demonstrating a new focus in numeracy;
- ✚ Any resources used, including websites and worksheets, should, where possible, be shared with home learners. Staff will do this electronically and it will be the responsibility of families to print/use these resources at home if appropriate;
- ✚ Teachers will respond promptly, within reason, to requests for support from families at home. Such requests should be sought via Seesaw;
- ✚ Should a staff member require support with the use of technology, it is their responsibility to seek this support in school from Mr Lafferty UICT Co-Ordinator or Mr Mc Hugh (ICT- Support Technician) who will ensure that support is given promptly.

Remote Teaching for Staff who are Self-Isolating

Teaching staff are required to self-isolate if they show symptoms outlined at the start of this policy or they have been told to shield and 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;
- ✚ Get tested immediately if they show symptoms of COVID-19. Once a staff member is tested, it is expected that they share the result of this test immediately with the Principal or Vice-Principal so that appropriate plans can be made;
- ✚ Whilst self-isolating, and if able to do so, staff may be given an individual project to work on which is in line with whole school improvement priorities. These projects will be communicated by the Senior Management Team 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 if appropriate.

Guidance on Using Seesaw

Seesaw will be the main forum for communication between school and home during the pandemic. Teachers will be expected to post work and or important messages as the need arises.

We don't want Seesaw to dominate a teacher's daily routine so it is important for them to set time boundaries when replying to parental queries. The SMT recommendations to teachers are as follows:

- ✚ Ensure P1-P7 pupil has at least one parent signed up and is accessing Seesaw. Send reminder Seesaw QR codes and if this fails, let the Vice-Principal know and they will contact the parent to ascertain the reason.
- ✚ Any replies to parents will be made between 08:30-09:00 each morning (if appropriate) and during the allocated 'directed time' periods as per 'Teachers' Time Budgets' for each afternoon;
- ✚ Teachers may switch off after their contracted working hours and avoid checking Seesaw in the evenings and/or weekends;
- ✚ Any messages of complaint will be discussed with a member of SMT before replying. Advice will be given in the first instance to make a phone call to the parent to try and resolve the issue promptly;
- ✚ The Year Group/Key Stage will decide what is an appropriate amount of items to post each week. Some teachers might use Seesaw to a higher level than others and this is acceptable, but this does not mean that everyone has to necessarily follow this lead.

Possible Recommendations for Items to Post :

- ✚ Videos for teaching new Numeracy focus and or phonics (teachers could take turns to produce these videos);
- ✚ Samples of childrens' work to showcase good practice;
- ✚ Photos of a new class display;
- ✚ Newsletter;
- ✚ Monday Update/Timetable -work for the week – English and Maths for pupils self-isolating etc.;
- ✚ Photos of the Pupil of the Week, Birthday Pupils etc.
- ✚ Samples of something that a child has done that shows that he/she has, "Gone Above and Beyond".

Blended/Remote Learning Start Date

The above measures will come into practice on the first day that schools are advised to close long term by the Department of Education or the Education Minister unless that coincides with a holiday period.

Teaching staff will:

- ✚ Prepare educational 'Learning Packs' of resources where appropriate to meet the needs of each child;
- ✚ Share additional teaching and learning activities with their class through Seesaw;
- ✚ Continue providing work and support in line with current, extensive planning that is already in place throughout the school;
- ✚ Give credence to the fact that learning remotely will be more difficult, so tasks will be shortened and supported in smaller steps to allow for this;
- ✚ Keep in contact with pupils through Seesaw only;

- ✚ Be recommended to reply to messages, set work and give feedback on activities during normal teaching hours ie. 09:00 until 15:00;
- ✚ Make allowances for on-line learning and will not set unrealistic deadlines for completion of activities, understanding that the circumstances leading to our closure will affect families in a number of ways;
- ✚ Take regular breaks away from the computer or iPad to engage in other professional duties as much as circumstances allow;
- ✚ Inform the Principal/Vice-Principal if they are unwell to ensure cover by another staff member for sharing of activities and keeping in touch with parents.

Non-Teaching Staff will:

- ✚ Support the class teacher in preparation of educational 'Learning Packs' (LP's) and also in the operation of the online learning platforms, if applicable;
- ✚ Inform the Principal/Vice-Principal if they are unwell;
- ✚ Support and work alongside the class teacher when delivering on line learning.

Pupils will:

- ✚ Be assured that well-being is at the forefront of our thoughts and they should take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise and maintain a reasonable balance between online engagement and offline activities;
- ✚ Undertake the tasks prepared in their educational 'Learning Packs' and online platforms;
- ✚ Potentially work a day behind what has been shared through Seesaw App if it is only possible to access technology at certain times of the day eg. evenings. Learning can be downloaded and completed the following day if appropriate; Only send messages and queries that are in relation to tasks set by the teacher or in response to questions that the teacher may ask them directly;
- ✚ Not send messages, photos, videos etc. to the teacher that are not related to the learning tasks set;
- ✚ 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;
- ✚ 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;
- ✚ Ensure their child completes the 'core' tasks set in their 'Learning Pack' of resources;
- ✚ Encourage their child to access and engage with Seesaw posts/activities from their teacher;
- ✚ Know they can continue to contact their class teacher as normal through the Seesaw App if they require support of any kind;
- ✚ Check their child's completed work each day and encourage the progress that is being made;
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ N.B. Not screenshot or copy any information, messages or posts to share on social media or any other platform outside of Seesaw;

This Policy was written in line with the following documents:

St Mary's Primary School Policies on:

- + Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy;
- + E-safety Policy;
- + Child Protection Policy;
- + Pastoral Care Policy;
- + Seesaw Guidance