

Blended learning policy

October 2020

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE CHANGE IN THE LAW REQUIRING CONTINUITY OF LEARNING IN CASE OF LOCAL LOCKDOWN OR SELF-ISOLATION

Version	Date Issued	Author	Changes
0.1	01/04/2020	Michelle Chappell	Draft
1.0	01/08/2020	Joe Richardson	Adopted
1.1	01/10/2020	Joe Richardson	updated to reflect the change in the law requiring continuity of learning in case of local lockdown or self-isolation

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1. Remote Learning and our Catholic schools

i. Our Mission:

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive!” (St Irenaeus)

ii. Our Vision:

Human flourishing and the uniqueness of every individual as a child of God is at the heart of our Catholic educational enterprise. In this context, a human being fully alive is one who is open to faith – to love – to joy – and to learning. They are daily becoming the person God created them to be and they are ready to delight in their God-given gifts, and to use them in the service of the Common Good.

iii. Application of this policy:

This is a new area of working for many schools across the country and is subject to rapid change. It is important that as our schools find new ways of delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, one that nourishes the whole child, and that we do so in ways that promotes

- **Love** of God and neighbour
- **Joy** in achievement
- **Learning** that is truly the best that is possible

2. The law: Schools’ duty to provide remote education

“Where a pupil, class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring pupils to remain at home, DfE expects schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should ensure remote education, where needed, is high-quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision. The Secretary of State has given a temporary continuity direction in order to require schools to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). This will come into effect from Thursday 22 October 2020. Read the [remote education temporary continuity direction explanatory note](#) for more information. The direction poses no additional expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools beyond those set out in the [guidance for full opening: schools](#) published in June.”

Department for Education

3. Aims

This remote learning policy aims to ensure the ongoing education of students under the unusual circumstances of school closure. It also covers the ongoing education of students and staff who cannot be in School but are able to continue with their education when the School is partially or fully opened, in order to:

- Ensure consistency in the Trust's approach to remote learning
- Set out expectations for all members of the Trust community with regards to remote learning
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Teachers

- Teachers must be available within normal School working hours. If they're unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.
- To maximise access to devices in the home and increase the reach of live teaching, teachers may be asked to provide teaching outside of the normal school working hours
- Teachers who are self-isolating, but are otherwise well will be required to provide live teaching and prepare lessons for students via TEAMS and other appropriate platforms
- Teachers may be required to be flexible in their use of technology, teaching multiple groups simultaneously via TEAMS to ensure provision is efficient and of the highest quality
- Teachers may be required to prepare lessons for delivery across multiple schools in the Academy Trust where there are agreements between schools to share online teaching provision

Teachers are responsible for:

- Setting work
 - Teachers should set work for each of their normal timetabled classes (or the equivalent provision where a school is collaborating)
 - The work should be set on a ~~weekly~~ daily basis and be for the equivalent amount of time for their timetabled lessons
 - The work set should ensure continuity of learning for students in the school
 - All work should be uploaded onto TEAMS or an appropriate online platform – with a flexible deadline of at least 1 week. Work should also be uploaded to / or links provided to additional resources available on Microsoft Teams or other learning platforms such as Tassomai, Educake, MyMaths, Seneca Learning etc.
 - Where teachers share classes agreement should be reached as to which teacher will set the work for the class in order to avoid duplication
 - Teachers should set work making full use of remote learning technologies, including a significant provision of live teaching that offers the best connection and continuity for learners
 - The nature of tasks set should allow students to learn independently, without the specific support of an adult at home.

- The type of task set will vary between subjects, but examples of appropriate tasks might include:
 - Live / recorded introduction and explanation of the work from the class teacher
 - Reading and noting new material from a common subject area textbook or electronic resource
 - Working through subject-specific presentations or worksheets provided by the subject area
 - Watching a relevant video resource and making notes on it
 - Completing a listening exercise (e.g. in languages)
 - Written responses to prompt questions, essay plans etc.
 - Completion of practice questions or past papers, particularly for those in examination years
 - Working through relevant exercises offered by external providers (e.g. SenecaLearning, HegartyMaths, GCSEpod)

- Providing feedback on work:
 - Teachers should acknowledge all work submitted – which can be in the form of completed online quizzes, work uploaded to online platforms or emailed to teachers.
 - Not all work will need to be marked or submitted to teachers for checking – please make this clear to students
 - Feedback can be provided via online platforms or email – or may need to wait until work can be handed back to students on return to school.

- Keeping in touch with pupils and parents:
 - Subject teachers should email pupils using the school’s email account if they need to make contact with students to explain work, chase work or give feedback.
 - Parents and carers can also be contacted on their school email account or via ParentMail (or similar)
 - Concerns should be shared with the Head of Department and Pastoral Lead, who may contact a member of the Senior Leadership team in order to make a telephone call home
 - Concerns of a safeguarding nature should be reported immediately in accordance with the Trust Safeguarding Policy and Covid-19 Addendum (April 2020)
 - Teachers must not make contact with students or parents via social media, and are not expected to respond to emails outside of normal school hours

- Attending virtual meetings with other staff members:
 - Team meetings will be held as / when appropriate using Microsoft Teams
 - Teachers should ensure they are appropriately dressed and should avoid locations with background noise. Such meeting can be held “audio only” and individual members of staff can turn video cameras off /mute microphones if needed during the meetings.

4.2 Teaching assistants and technicians

Teaching assistants and technicians must be available between within their normal School working hours. If they're unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.

Teaching assistants are responsible for:

- Supporting pupils with learning remotely:
 - In conjunction with the SENCO make at least weekly contact – by email only - with their allocated students to offer and provide assistance and support
 - The support can be in the form of liaising with subject teachers or the SENCO, or providing simplified explanations for work set.
- Attending virtual meetings with other staff members:
 - Team meetings will be held as / when appropriate using Microsoft Teams
 - Teaching Assistants should ensure they are appropriately dressed and should avoid locations with background noise. Such meeting can be held “audio only” and individual members of staff can turn video cameras off /mute microphones if needed during the meetings.

Technicians are responsible for:

- All of the above as far as is reasonably practicable
- Supporting the school in ways that are commensurate with their role as far as reasonably practicable

4.3 Subject leads

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, as outlined above, subject leads are responsible for:

- Considering whether any aspects of the subject curriculum need to change to accommodate remote learning
- Working with teachers teaching their subject to make sure work set is appropriate and consistent
- Monitoring the work set by teachers in their subject through regular meetings via Microsoft Teams and by reviewing work set
- Alerting teachers to resources they can use to teach their subject
- Liaising and meeting regularly with their SLT link to monitor and review their curriculum area
- In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the line manager to ensure work is set to her/his classes

4.4 Pastoral Leads

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, as outlined above, pastoral leads are responsible for:

- Working with teachers in their year area to make sure work set is appropriate and consistent
- Communicating with their year group on pastoral issues and providing resources and general advice regarding student welfare
- Keeping in touch with pupils and parents:

- Pastoral Leads should liaise with teachers and subject leads over students who may be a cause for concern. Pastoral Leads should email pupils using their School's email account if they need to make contact with students to provide support, chase work or give feedback.
 - Parents can also be contacted using either their School email account or via ParentMail
 - Concerns should be shared with the SLT link so that the decision can be made as to whether there is a need to make a telephone call home
 - Where any phone calls are made, pastoral leaders must ensure they are made from a blocked number (dial 141) so teacher's personal contact details are not visible.
 - Concerns of a safeguarding nature should be reported immediately in accordance with the Trust Safeguarding Policy and Covid-19 Annex (April 2020)
 - Pastoral Leads are not expected to respond to emails outside of normal school hours
- Attending virtual meetings with other staff members:
- Team meetings will be held as / when appropriate using Microsoft Teams
 - Teachers should ensure they are appropriately dressed and should avoid locations with background noise. Such meeting can be held "audio only" and individual members of staff can turn video cameras off /mute microphones if needed during the meetings

4.5 Senior leaders

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of remote learning - through regular meetings with their subject and pastoral leaders, reviewing work set and responding to enquiries and feedback from pupils and parents
- Co ordinating staff guidance and training on remote learning platforms
- In partnership with the Trust IT support team, monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations

4.6 Designated safeguarding lead

The DSL continues to be responsible for all duties as laid out in the STCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2020) and the Addendum - **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection** at each Trust School (March 2020). The Deputy DSL will provide support where the DSL is unavailable.

4.7 IT staff

IT staff are responsible for:

- Fixing issues with systems and advising staff on general issues relating to online platforms used to set and collect work
- Helping staff, parents and carers with any technical issues they may experience where the issue relates to the school systems and hardware
- Reviewing the security of systems and flagging any data protection breaches to the data protection officer

- Advising teachers / pastoral leaders who are assisting pupils and parents with accessing the internet or devices
- With the support of the school leadership team, administer the set up and distribution of new devices under government and other schemes

4.8 Pupils, parents and carers

Staff can expect pupils to:

- Take reasonable care of any devices issued to them by the school
- Be contactable during the course of a school day – although they may not always be in front of a device the entire time or have regular internet access
- Complete work to the deadline set by teachers
- Seek help if they need it, from teachers or teaching assistants
- Alert teachers if they're not able to complete work

Staff can expect parents and carers to:

- Make the School aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work
- Encourage and support their children's work, including finding an appropriate place to work, checking that set work is completed and ensuring they have some structure to the working day: start and finish times and appropriate breaks.
- Seek help from the School if they need it
- Be respectful when making any complaints or concerns known to staff

4.9 Local Academy Committees

The Local Academy Committees are responsible for:

- Monitoring the school's approach to providing remote learning to ensure education remains as high quality as possible
- Ensuring that staff are certain that systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons

5. Who to contact

If staff have any questions or concerns, they should contact the following members of staff:

- Issues in setting work – talk to the relevant subject lead
- Issues with behaviour – talk to the relevant pastoral lead
- Issues with IT – email IT Helpdesk
- Issues with their own workload or wellbeing – talk to their line manager
- Concerns about data protection – talk to their SLT link in the first instance
- Concerns about safeguarding – talk to the DSL

6. Data protection

6.1 Accessing personal data

Most staff will have a very limited need to access personal data when off-site. Where this is the case, all staff members will:

- Only access the data on devices provided through the School and via either a secure cloud service or a server in the School's IT network

6.2 Sharing personal data

Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as students eligible for free school meals or without access to digital resources as part of the remote learning system. Such collection of personal data applies to our functions as a Trust and doesn't require explicit permissions.

While this may be necessary, staff are reminded to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online.

6.3 Keeping devices secure

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Should never share passwords
- Installing antivirus and anti-spyware software - although school devices will have this installed already
- Report any concern, breach or security issue immediately to the helpdesk.
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates as instructed by the IT Helpdesk

7. Safeguarding (including advice on livestreaming lessons)

This policy reflects the advice contained in each school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2019) and the Addendum - **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection** at each Trust School (March 2020). These documents have been read by all staff and are available on each School's website.

We know that there is a serious negative impact where students do not connect with their teachers and support staff regularly. It is detrimental to their mental health and generates significant feelings of isolation. We also know that some children struggled to maintain the motivation to engage with work during the lockdown that began in March 2020. During future lockdowns or periods of self-isolation / absence Trust schools must provide continuity of learning, including a significant offer of recorded and live streamed lessons by teachers they know.

Trust Schools are advised to use appropriate caution regarding the live streaming of lessons but are expected to make a comprehensive offer to all learners having taken the appropriate precautions outlined below.

Things to consider include:

- **Which platform to use?** Schools must ensure that the platform they are using is suitable for the children's age group. Only School platforms may be used (eg. Microsoft Teams) and School accounts must be established.
- **Have staff been fully trained on how to use the platform securely** – this training must be coordinated by the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the ICT support team
- **Privacy settings must be at the highest level.** Meeting must be made private and links to meetings (invitations) should only be sent to those individuals you wish to participate.
- **Where is the recording or live teaching taking place?** Teachers should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.
- **One-to-one sessions.** One-to-one sessions should only be held in exceptional circumstances, for example pastoral care meetings. They must be risk assessed and approved by the school's leadership team (DfE, 2020). Staff must be briefed by the Safeguarding Team and ensure they know what safeguarding measures to take if they are having a one-to-one conversation with a child.
- Students and staff must know how to report any offensive or abusive content
- the stream should take place in school time and must be supervised by appropriate adults at all times
- be sensitive to the needs of individual students, including Deaf and disabled children, and children who may be sensitive to certain topics or issues that may arise during the livestream
- appropriate staff should supervise and be on hand to handle any sudden changes or upsetting developments that may occur during the livestream.
- **Students should only be able to access audio live feeds** – with their video turned off – and the students audio turned off unless they have a question. Students should not be permitted to turn on their camera at any time.
- Parental involvement during video sessions: by bringing staff instruction into the home, the lessons can feel different. The same rules of communication apply as if this were a regularly taught lesson, meaning that the interaction in these lessons are between the teacher and the pupils alone
- Teachers should record the live stream to facilitate the investigation of any potential behavioural or safeguarding concerns

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed monthly by the Trust Strategic and Executive Leader. Any changes will be subject to review and approval by the Board of Directors.

9. BTEC

We will ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation.

St Joseph's will ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

In order to do this St Joseph's Catholic High School will:

Ensure that teaching/delivery/assessment staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely. Students should access teachers' 'live' or Looms lessons via Teams.

Ensure there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered, and feedback is provided in a timely manner. This can be done live during the lesson, via email or on Teams calls with the group or via email/Teams messages.

Ensure the setting of BTEC assignments is undertaken in the face-to-face sessions and that deadlines are clear. Staff will ensure that face-to-face lessons or meetings take place with any students who are isolating.

Ensure that when learners submit work measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner. Ask learners to declare that their work is their own. All learners are asked to accompany every completed assignment with a signed declaration form confirming that their work is their own. Learners will use the BTEC/Pearson template for this purpose. Internal Assessors are responsible for checking the validity and authenticity of the learners' work and the Lead Internal Verifier will oversee this.

Maintain and store securely all assessment and internal verification records in accordance with Pearson Centre Agreement. Keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification. The Lead Internal Verifier will keep tracking, assessment and internal verification records for a minimum of three years post certification. The Exams Officer will keep records of all certification claims for a minimum of three years post certification. Programme Leaders will keep student coursework for a minimum of twelve weeks after certification

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- STCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2020) and the Addendum - **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection** at each Trust School (March 2020)
- Behaviour policy
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Online safety policy