



Blended Learning Policy (whole school)

Rationale

In the event of a school closure, the school is committed to providing continuity of education to its students and will do so through a process of remote (online) learning. Extensive blended learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the school is closed for an extended period, but a high proportion of students and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home. This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term school closures (e.g. because of inclement weather) or a short-term student absence.

Blended learning may also be appropriate in situations when students, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from school, or longer-term illness, assuming students are able to complete schoolwork at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, students are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.

There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to students who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention to school or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take students on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their children from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

This policy is under review and may be revised as necessary in light of further experience of blended learning and the circumstances around its necessity. For example, the extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both students and teachers to participate in blended learning, owing to widespread illness, for example.

Blended learning for individual students

Assuming an absence has been agreed with the school, and the student in question is healthy enough to work from home, the school will provide work for students who are unable to attend in person. If this occurs for an individual student, the collation of work and communication with the parent will be coordinated by the student's Pastoral Leader and subject teacher.

The student's subject teachers will use Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams to make work available to the student. If there are any issues with the compilation of work, tutors should liaise the relevant head of year or subject leader (particularly if a classroom teacher is unavailable).

Though every case will have its own specifics, a rough guideline for the frequency of communication between school and parent would be once per week. Work will only be provided to students in this way if there is an agreed absence lasting more than three working days.

If a significant number of students are absent from school, but the school remains open, the Head will decide whether the method of blended learning operated will take the form outlined here, or as outlined below.

Remote learning in the event of extended school closure

In the event of an extended school closure, the school will provide continuity of education in the following ways:

1. Staff will set school work across Show my Homework (Satchel one) **and** Microsoft teams.
2. Regular direct instruction from teaching teachers, with the ability of students to ask questions online (via Teams)
3. The setting of work that students complete, written responses (if relevant) completed electronically
4. The assessment of specific assignments that are submitted to teachers electronically and on which feedback is provided

Students and teachers are expected to have access to the internet whilst at home; the school recognises that many families may not have home printers and will therefore not require the printing of material. The primary platforms the school will use to deliver continuity of education are:

Show My Homework (Satchel one): access to SMHW is via the relevant app or any browser, using the URL:<https://www.satchelone.com>
For login details contact Mr C Jones.
cjo@epchs.co.uk

Microsoft Teams: accessed via the relevant app or desktop application, or via the following URL: <https://teams.microsoft.com>

Access to these platforms is via a student's normal school login; if students have difficulty with logging in, they should contact the school's IT support.
helpdesk@epchs.co.uk

The extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both students and teachers to participate in blended learning. For shorter closures, for example, teachers may set work on SMHW for submission in person once the school has reopened. For longer closures, teachers would make more use of live sessions and electronic assessment. The school reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide blended learning tasks, feedback, and interaction, based on the circumstances of any closure, and based on our experience.

The setting of tasks (using Teams)

Subject areas will provide work broadly in line with students' timetables through the Microsoft Teams. Tasks will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work, and tasks will be designed to allow students to progress through schemes of work at the same pace as if they were in school, where possible. Naturally, blended learning will require students and teachers to take a different approach to working through content, but tasks should ensure the pace of content coverage is as close as possible to in-school teaching, and ensure students do not fall behind. The nature of tasks set should allow students to learn independently, without the specific support of an adult at home.

Unless there is a good reason not to, tasks will be set for individual classes. The type of task set will vary between subjects, but examples of appropriate tasks might include:

- 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. Seneca Learning, HegartyMaths, The Everlearner)

Teachers should include line managers as group members of class Teams to allow them to monitor and support as required.

Live sessions

Academic curriculum areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner (either by text or audio and/or visual means).

Microsoft Teams is a platform that allows for resources to be shared, teachers to provide exposition, and students to ask questions in 'real-time'. Students will be provided with details about sessions and will be expected to participate in them if they are asked and able to. Live sessions can be particularly helpful as they can facilitate contemporaneous communication, with students able to respond to teachers' questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in teams.

In a live session, there is no need for teachers or students to broadcast audio or video, as the text (conversation) function is adequate.

Assessment

Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with blended learning, teachers will endeavor to provide regular feedback to students on pieces of work that they are required to submit. Under normal circumstances, not all pieces of work are formally assessed by teachers and this would continue to be the case should the school employ blended learning.

Assessed work will be set using Microsoft Teams and Show My Homework regardless of how students' work is eventually submitted (e.g. by Microsoft Teams or Show My Homework), with clear due dates given to students for completion, thereby helping students to organise their time. Students and teachers should keep accurate records of all work completed, submitted, and assessed.

Given the nature of the tasks, the type of feedback teachers can provide may not have the same format as marking an exercise book. Teachers are encouraged to ensure, when they set assessed work, that it is designed in such a way that meaningful feedback may be provided.

Possible methods may include:

- Providing whole class feedback rather than feedback on individual pieces of work – this is an effective way of providing feedback, supported by findings from educational research.
- Using the “Comments” function on online documents on google or Microsoft.
- Providing feedback directly in the chat function on Teams.
- Sending a direct email (or Teams message) to students with specific feedback / targets.
- Feedback via another website / piece of software (e.g. Seneca Learning, The Everlearner, Hegarty Maths).
- Recording oral feedback and sharing an audio file with the student on Teams.

Additional functionality is available in Teams if teachers want to create assignments for students to complete. These might include, for example, the creation of a tailor-made quiz (containing either multiple choice or extended answers) and teachers are able to use assignments to give feedback within Teams.

Expectations of students

Assuming that a student is healthy and well enough to work, students will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the blended learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability. Students will also be expected to read and respond to communication from the school (e.g. an email from a form tutor or class teacher) on a regular basis.

In the event of an extended school closure, teachers will continue to deliver content in line with existing schemes of work once the school is reopened; if any student misses significant parts of the content, they will be able to view material posted online and the school will give consideration to the practicalities of helping students to catch up once the school reopens.

Students should ensure that, in addition to completing the tasks promptly, they should complete any administrative tasks that allow the school to monitor their progress. For example, where tasks are set using Teams, students need to submit assignments before deadlines so that teachers can monitor their progress. If students or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the relevant curriculum area. If there are questions about a student’s overall workload (e.g. a student feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the student’s Pastoral Leader.

Teachers must work on the assumption that students will not necessarily have the full range of books and equipment that they would usually have in school. However, if advance notice is possible, teachers will instruct students to take relevant equipment from their lockers home, or for parents to ensure they have duplicates. The school does not expect students to have access to any specialist equipment that would usually be provided by the school (e.g. science or art). Teachers should ensure they are able to scan or upload photos of important resources in case students do not have access to them at home. Online textbooks are helpful in this regard and many subjects are now moving over to these.

The school expects that parents have internet access at home to access remote learning resources, but teachers will make no presumption of the student’s ability to print at home.

Expectations of teachers (and curriculum areas)

Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home. If this is not available for any reason, teachers can request a school device. If there are IT related issues while remote working, teachers can contact the IT Manager via the service desk email – helpdesk@epchs.co.uk

The setting and assessment of blended learning tasks will take place in accordance with school and subject area policies. Under normal circumstances, subject areas take different approaches to the setting and assessment of students' work – for example, the frequency of substantive task set, and the regularity of written assessment provided – and subject area policies will be applied in the event of blended learning.

In order that we are providing a consistent approach, Curriculum Leaders are responsible for overseeing the nature and frequency of tasks set and assessed within their subject areas. All teachers should pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that students have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen. Curriculum Leaders will monitor this and should be included in the classes to allow them to monitor what is being set in Teams.

Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their students in a timely manner. Curriculum Leaders are responsible for overseeing the form and regularity of feedback and will liaise with Key Stage Coordinators and Second in Departments to ensure consistency.

In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of blended learning, it becomes the responsibility of the line manager to ensure work is set to her/his classes.

Curriculum areas are expected to:

- Plan and deliver 'live sessions' where appropriate in consultation with Key Stage Coordinators and Second in Departments.
- Respond to reasonable amounts of communication from students, parents, and teachers.
- Plan and set tasks for their students in Teams and/or ShowMyHomework.
- Be able to set and mark assessed work promptly, in line with school and subject area policies, returning it to students electronically (or after the period of remote working for written and project work).

Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (when phoning from personal devices, dialing 141 before the number will ensure the teacher's own number is kept anonymous). If contact is deemed excessive the line manager will be able to support and, if necessary, escalate to SLT.

If parents ask for additional work beyond that set as part of the requirements above, Curriculum areas should have a bank of general resources available in Teams, such as interactive websites and support activities, and point pupils and parents in that direction.

To ensure teachers can perform the minimum expectations outlined above; the school will provide a range of training opportunities that teachers should access before any planned school closure. Teachers should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions, watched Zoom Skills training videos, watched the How to Teach in Zoom Manhattan Prep Series and attended teacher training sessions. If teachers require support with any aspects of blended learning, they are encouraged to consult their line managers. All professional development training can be found on Teams in the Teaching & Learning 2020-21 Team and the folder titled Blended Learning. This folder will be updated with further training resources from time to time. Teachers will be informed of any updates by e-mail and Teams.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, students, and parents. Teachers also should ensure their communication with students does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during usual office hours, with no expectation for colleagues to read or respond to emails after 4pm, although responses should be made to electronic messages within one working day in normal practice. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work.

Communication must always occur via official school channels, and not through personal accounts or other websites. Permitted methods are (please also see appendix regarding live links and flipped learning):

- Email using school email addresses only (both teachers and student)
- Microsoft Teams
- Google classroom (docs/sheets etc.)
- The Everlearner

Support for pupils with SEND, EAL and other specific learning enhancement needs

Teachers should ensure that work is differentiated as required for all learners when setting online tasks. Profiles are available for SEND pupils and advice can be sought from the SENCO or EAL coordinator. In addition, the SENCO and learning support assistants will maintain contact with pupils on their lists requiring regular support, by email or phone with parents/pupils and feed back to teachers using CPOMS if required.

Pastoral care during a school closure

In event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a student rests with their parents / guardians. However, form tutors (under the guidance of the Pastoral Deputy and Pastoral Leaders) should check in regularly with their tutees to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Form tutors will be expected to pass on feedback to Pastoral Leaders, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication. Pastoral Leaders will continue to provide assemblies for their year group so that PSHCE and Personal Development topics can be covered.

The Pastoral team will continue reaching out to families via both Microsoft Teams, Zoom and home visits where deemed appropriate and adhering to Government Guidance. Safeguarding policies and procedures will continue throughout.

Safeguarding during a school closure

In the event of a school closure, pupils, parents, and teachers are reminded that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school.

More advice on safeguarding and pastoral issues is available in the guidance for teachers document. Any questions or concerns about safeguarding should continue to be raised to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs. J Jones J.Jones@epchs.co.uk

Review: September 2020

Reviewed by MCA

Signed off by SLT 16 September 2020

Appendix - remote working, flipped classroom, GDPR and safe working practice

Please note that any remote working methods should adhere to GDPR guidelines. In most cases remote working via shared documents on Teams will give you plenty of flexibility. However, you must use your school account (google classroom / Microsoft teams / outlook etc.) and if you are using flipped learning techniques, uploading videos or video conferencing, please ensure your background is blurred or neutral.

Instructions for setting up video conferencing and live links are available in the blended learning folder. Live video links can be particularly useful for staff meetings or small groups, perhaps A Level, where spoken explanations are better than written ones.

It is possible to record meetings Zoom and this is required, both for possible future reuse and to demonstrate safe working practice if needed. Students can also be prevented from recording the sessions and this function must also be selected.

Teachers must not set up or join social media groups for school use with pupils (such as WhatsApp etc.).

If you need to use any apps or materials that fall outside the school network, please ensure you have discussed with your line manager.