Remote Learning Policy (Whole School)

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Approved by:	**Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors**
Lead of Review:	**Mr M Cavanagh, Assistant Headteacher**
Last reviewed on:	**January 2021**
Next review due by:	**December 2021**

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 remote 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.

Remote 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 remote 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 remote learning, owing to widespread illness, for example.

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:

- Live lessons, when possible, according to students' normal timetable
- Pre-recorded lessons that the teacher has produced
- Links to pre-recorded lessons that have been produced elsewhere such as by The Oak Academy or Hegarty Maths
- Online activities such as quizzes that provide instant feedback to problems set
- Individual set tasks that enable students to work independently
- Project work that pupils can work on independently
- Staff will set schoolwork and homework on Microsoft Teams

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:

Zoom: accessed with your school zoom account log-in details.

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 remote learning. For shorter closures, for example, teachers may set work on Microsoft Teams 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 remote 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 Microsoft Teams. Tasks will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work where possible, 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, remote 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 – this does not need to be synchronous. The nature of tasks set should allow students to learn independently, without the specific support of an adult at home. Students should receive meaningful and ambitious assignments each day in different subjects. Remote tasks should be as challenging as tasks set in school and the level of work should be pitched correctly.

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.

Pre-recorded lessons

Academic curriculum areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content via pre-recorded lessons produced by teachers within the department or pre-recorded lessons that have been produced elsewhere such as by The Oak Academy or Hegarty Maths. Teachers can also combine live sessions with pre-recorded lessons.

Combining live sessions with pre-recorded material and short tasks for learners to complete allows the teacher to be in the background checking in with the students, checking the practice that the student is doing and give feedback to pick up gaps and misconceptions.

Variety of delivery is important to ensure that students are not spending 5 hours a day in front of a screen.

Assessment

Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with remote 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 remote learning.

Assessed work will be set using Microsoft Teams, 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. Teachers will check all work submitted within a fortnight period and provide written or verbal feedback on at least one piece a fortnight.

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).
- Providing verbal feedback during a live lesson.
- 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 remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, viewing pre-recorded lessons that the teacher has produced, following links to pre-recorded lessons that have been produced elsewhere such as by The Oak Academy or Hegarty Maths, completing online activities such as quizzes that provide instant feedback to problems set, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability. The way students complete this work remotely may look different to those students who are in school (e.g. students may create a PowerPoint rather than give a live presentation to the class). 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 remote 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 remote 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 remote 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 on Teams.
- 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 remote 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 3pm, 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

Pupils will always have access to help and support from their class teachers. If a pupil is working independently on a set task and they require some support, they may message their teacher directly through Microsoft Teams. Teachers will receive notifications and will be able to respond accordingly.

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.

Students have daily contact (written, verbal or video) with at least one teacher, and at least weekly contact with the same staff member (e.g. a teacher, their form tutor, pastoral leader or a member of pastoral staff)

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 and Zoom. Safeguarding policies and procedures will continue throughout. An amendment to the safeguarding policy is on the school website.

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

Wellbeing of staff and students

When staff are teaching some pupils remotely and some in school, it is important that staff do not spend as much time on other tasks if they do not feel these are making a difference to the quality of teaching and learning.

Teaching staff must:

- Not feel overburdened with tasks.
- Leave school, or log off, at a reasonable time.

When staff are teaching students remotely and in school (or planning for this eventuality) other responsibilities may be reduced e.g. running clubs, middle leadership responsibilities or additional time out of class to do this.

Expectations on how long staff should spend on each activity

To minimize workload staff should do the following:

- Record video in a single take rather than re-record it, even if it means there might be some mistakes
- Limit screen time to a maximum of 45 minutes within a single lesson to ensure that staff and students have the opportunity to come away from the screen and move about.
- Plan for a variety of tasks within a live lesson to help reduce the amount of screen contact time for both staff and students.
- Divide responsibilities within Curriculum Teams or work with a partner to share resources, e.g. one teacher in a pair records videos, while the other prepares resources and marks work.

If any member of staff is having problems with workload or wellbeing, related to remote learning please discuss this with any of the following members of staff:

- Line Manager directly responsible for you
- Curriculum Leader
- Curriculum SLT Link
- HR Manager
- Headteacher

If any member of staff is having IT issues that are adding to their workload, they must report the issue to their line manager and inform IT Services in order to try and resolve the issue – need to possibly add expectation/timescale for this to be resolved, procedure if not resolved, expectation on staff while the issue is being resolved?

Report IT issues to the service desk helpdesk@epchs.co.uk

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.

The features and permission settings of our digital education platform are in line with our behaviour, safeguarding, and online safety policies.

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 in 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 this with your line manager.