



Merchant Taylors' School

Stanfield, Merchant Taylors' Remote Learning Policy

Remote Learning Policy

Author: Headmistress/SLT/SMT
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Rationale

In the event of a school closure, the school is committed to providing continuity of education to its pupils 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 of time, but a high proportion of pupils 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. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term pupil absence.

Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when pupils, 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 pupils are able to complete schoolwork at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their child 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 pupils and teachers to participate in remote learning, owing to widespread illness, for example. During a closure of the premises, it is vital that we have a consistent approach to the setting and assessment of work and that we maintain in regular contact with classes as we teach them remotely to ensure continuity in their learning and progress.

Teaching classes and setting work

- Classes should continue to be taught remotely according to the school timetable in all curriculum subjects. Please refer to individual year group timetables, which will be published on Firefly, for more detail. Practical subjects such as PE, Music and Art should do their best to replicate the learning experience of the pupils remotely, although it is recognised that there will be limitations in some subjects.
- Remote learning will be achieved through a combination of different remote learning resources and strategies and all teaching staff will receive ongoing training to ensure consistency in remote delivery for all children.
- There can be no single approach as the best method of delivery for a particular lesson will depend on the age of the pupils in the class, the subject in question and whether the lessons are having to be delivered synchronously and asynchronously.
- Teachers should use Microsoft Teams to communicate remotely with the pupil and should note the children who are in attendance at each session. Depending on age and the specific lesson being taught, pupils may have the option to complete the work set 'live' on Teams or may leave the call to complete work independently and return for the plenary section of the lesson. In the juniors, for English and Maths, the teacher will stay on the call for the entire lesson so they are available to provide help for pupils, although there is no expectation that

pupils themselves will spend the entire lesson on Teams and, in fact and in the interest of the pupils' wellbeing, it is desirable that they spend time away from the screen for parts of a lesson whilst completing the set tasks.

- Work and resources should be shared via Firefly or Teams.
- During the daily morning registration time at 9am, teachers should register their class remotely via Teams to ensure a sense of 'normality' and to allow the pupils to have some contact with their class teacher and allow them to see their peers. This will support the pupils' wellbeing. The registers will be taken on the usual register platform and any pupil who has not made contact with the teacher for more than one day, the absence will be followed up as per the Attendance Policy. An update on pupil absence during periods of remote learning is given to the relevant Key Stage Leader.
- Pupils should be set enough work for the number of lessons they would normally be taught during the period of premises closure. Work should be set separately for each separate lesson on the timetable. Homework set will be appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils involved and may include reading and spellings.
- For efficiency, work should be submitted electronically as much as possible, through Firefly, however for some tasks it will need to be scanned / photographed if it has been completed by hand. Most infant work is completed in this way.
- All Infant and Junior pupils will receive an individual 'contingency' pack which will contain age appropriate resources, exercise books etc. This is designed to help support families and offer a different way to present and access work. Practical, play based work is a firm foundation in early years and primary practice. As a result, pupils will be encouraged to work as practically as possible using different resources to help make learning fun and engaging.
- If necessary, pupils will be offered support in school with each case being judged on an individual basis.
- Those students who require SEND provision will continue to receive this in line with their IEPs
- Vulnerable children will be assessed individually to ensure that they are still able to access the full remote learning provision

The primary platforms the school will use to deliver continuity of education are: Firefly and/or Teams. Access to these platforms is via a pupil's normal school login via Office 365; if pupils have difficulty with logging in, they should contact the school's ICT support. 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 pupils and teachers to participate in remote learning.

For shorter closures, for example, teachers may set work on firefly for submission in person once the school has reopened. For longer closures, teachers would make more use of live sessions (see specific guidance below and appendix) 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 particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience. Tasks will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work, and tasks will be designed to allow pupils to progress through schemes of work at the same pace as if they were in school, where possible. Naturally, remote learning will require pupils 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 that pupils do not fall behind.

Live sessions

For some lessons teachers will deliver content in a ‘live’ manner. There is an expectation that all teachers should carry out a balance of live lessons, as appropriate to the age of the children and the subject being taught. Pupils will be provided with details on the 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 pupils able to respond to teachers’ questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in Teams and meet. Conversation function is not being used in most infant lessons.

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 endeavour to provide regular feedback to pupils 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 via the Firefly tasks function, regardless of how pupils’ work is eventually submitted, with clear due dates given to pupils for completion, thereby helping pupils to organise their time. The tasks function on Firefly also allows pupils to submit work to the teacher before a task can be signed off.

Pupils 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 Microsoft
- Providing feedback directly in the tasks function on Firefly
- Sending a direct email (or Firefly message) to pupils with specific feedback / targets
- Feedback via another website / piece of software (e.g. MyMaths)
- Providing oral feedback.

Additional functionality is available in Firefly if teachers want to create assignments for pupils 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 Firefly.

Expectations of pupils

Assuming that a pupil is healthy and well enough to work, he / she will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attend relevant live sessions, complete independent work, and submit assessed tasks promptly.

Expectations of teachers

Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home. If there are IT related issues while remote working, teachers can contact the ICT Operations Manager via the service desk email.

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 pupils' work – for example, the frequency of substantive tasks 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, Heads of Key Stage, subject leaders and members of SLT 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 pupils have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen. Members of the SMT will monitor this.

Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their pupils in a timely manner. Heads of Key Stage are responsible for overseeing the form and regularity of feedback, and will liaise with SLT 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. Note that illness in these cases will be treated as normal and recorded in line with normal HR procedures with back to work discussions conducted remotely if required.

Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (when phoning from personal devices, dialling 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 the Head of Key Stage or a member of the SLT.

In order to ensure teachers are able to perform the minimum expectations outlined above, the school will provide, time permitting, a range of training opportunities that teachers should have access to before any planned school closure. Teachers should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions, watched walkthroughs and attended teacher training sessions. If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult their line managers or SMT.

The relevant pages in Firefly are a useful source of training – simply search for the element required. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, pupils and parents. Teachers also should ensure their communication with pupils 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 pupil)
- Firefly messaging (which can allow teachers to reply to an entire class)

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 Head of Learning Support. In addition, the Head of Learning Support 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 pupil rests with their parents / guardians. However, class teachers should check in regularly with their tutees to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Class teachers will be expected to pass on feedback to Heads of Key Stage, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.

Form times to be used as a pastoral ‘check-in’ each day between 9.00 - 9.20.

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.

Review of pupils’ Progress Once the School re-opens

Once the School re-opens, following a period of closure, it will seek to identify any gaps in pupils’ progress and make any suitable adjustments (such as choices about what to prioritise) by putting in place a suitable action plan to get pupils back on track.

Policies for reference:

Behaviour Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Attendance Policy

Marking Policy