

Scoil Bhríde, Ráth Chormaic

Supporting the Continuity of Learning Plan

Introduction

The public health restrictions which resulted in the closure of schools in March 2020 highlighted the absolute necessity for schools to be agile in providing for continuity of schooling in the future. As a contingency for when pupils and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, or in the event of another whole or partial school closure, we have created an action plan for supporting the continuity of pupils' learning, using digital technology where possible. This new policy operates alongside all of our existing policies such as Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Health and Safety and Data Protection Policy.

Planning and Organisation

Necessary Actions: {from DES Guidance on Remote Learning }

Digital Communication Platforms to be used -

- Agreed platforms to be used include Seesaw App, Google Classroom, Zoom, Aladdin

Identify & develop the skill set of the teachers and support staff as needed.

- All teachers and SNAs will become familiar with the relevant platforms to be used in remote learning.
- Staff are aware of supports/training available from PDST and CPD courses provided by various Education Centres
- Specific training will be provided as it becomes available
- Teachers will share expertise and support each other

Teachers will enable pupils to develop the necessary skill set.

- Pupils will have opportunities to use digital platforms during term time so that they can become familiar with the specific platforms being used
- Pupils will complete homework on the chosen platform at least once a week during term time. Pupils will practise:
 - *Accessing and navigating the platform
 - *Engaging with teaching and learning materials
 - *Uploading their own work with the help of their parents or independently.

Support equity of access to digital resources:

- Scoil Bhríde will make I.T. devices available to parents on loan from the school if necessary.
- In the event that a parent/child is unable to access digital resources, books/resources will be sent by post and communication with family will be by phone/post.

Be ready to share preparation for teaching and learning:

- Teachers in Scoil Bhríde collaborate when planning curriculum activities

- Fortnightly/Weekly plans have to be prepared in advance and available where necessary, especially for substitute teachers and SET team, including preparation for pupils with SEN, using Google Drive.

Ensure relevant contact details are available:

- The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be given access to up-to-date contact details for all staff members, in the event that some/all of the school leadership team are unavailable for work.
- Chairperson will also have contact details of the assigned school inspector.

Collaborate and communicate with parents/guardians:

- Scoil Bhríde will communicate with parents through the school website, and via the platforms offered by Aladdin (text, email, notice on Aladdin Connect)
- To facilitate enhanced communication during periods of remote learning (if required) each parent will have the email address of their child's class teacher and/or SET teacher.

Partnership with parents/guardians will be critical to supporting pupils who have to learn from home for a period:

- Teachers will outline to parents how pupils' work will be monitored and how feedback will be provided. Class teachers are required to respond daily to their students. The teachers will guide the pupils on how to plan and complete the day's work giving the pupils a deadline/time for uploading projects, answers to questions etc.
- Guidance for parents on how to use Seesaw/Google Classroom has been provided by the school.
- Feedback from parents/guardians on how their child is engaging with learning in a remote/distance environment will also be sought by teachers.

Communication with external agencies:

- Scoil Bhríde will maintain appropriate contact, relevant to the needs of the pupils affected by the closure, with any necessary external agencies, including the HSE, NEPS, NCSE and Tusla Education Support Service (TESS).

Ensure relevant policies are up to date:

- Policies relevant to supporting pupils' remote learning will be reviewed.
- The Acceptable Usage Policy and Code of Behaviour Policies have been amended to reflect this new environment.
- Data Protection and Child Protection policies are to be reviewed and updated to take account of teaching and learning in a remote/distance learning environment.

Personnel to support continuity of schooling

In Scoil Bhríde, in the event that pupils and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, the class teacher and/or substitute teacher/SET teacher will provide for continuity of teaching to the greatest extent possible

- Special Education Teacher (SET): The principle of allocating the greatest level of support to those pupils with the greatest need remains, in line with the Continuum of Support. However, the SET(s) assigned to a pupil/class affected can reassign this time to supporting remote teaching and learning. The SET teacher will use this time in school to work remotely with the SEN children/other children who are at home. This may involve Zoom meetings and/or packs of work to be sent home or phone conversations

with the parents to support these children at this time. This will be done if the SEN child is well enough to participate.

- A teacher/SNA on the staff who has been advised to restrict his/her movements but is medically fit for work can support remote learning for individual pupils or classes in line with circular 0049/2020. (Part 12 page 8)
- Designated teacher from a local Education Centre: A teacher from another school who has been medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and is on the assigned list in the local Education Centre can assist in this work in line with circular 0049/2020.

Teacher Responsibilities

Planning and Preparation

- Sharing his/her short-term plans with the relevant teacher/s where necessary to enable the pupil(s) to progress in line with the curriculum and his/her peers insofar as possible. These short term plans should be uploaded to Google Drive.
- Providing frequent, constructive feedback to all pupils on their work, in order to maintain a connection with those pupils who are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements and in order to ensure and monitor progress in learning.
- In addition, SETs and SNAs should collaborate with the class teacher in order to provide learning support for pupils on their caseload with special educational needs (SEN) who are required to restrict their movements.
- The Special Education Needs Coordinator/ school principal should maintain oversight of the procedures put in place to support pupils' learning from home to ensure that the learning experiences provided are appropriate to the pupils' needs.

Engagement

- Regular engagement with pupils: The teacher(s) assigned responsibility for supporting pupils learning remotely should communicate with pupils on a *daily basis*, using Seesaw, Google Classroom, Aladdin, email or phone, while taking into account that some pupils may not be in a position to engage with remote teaching and learning each day.
- Special Education Teachers (SETs) should continue to engage with pupils on their caseload as frequently as they would under normal circumstances. Weekly or fortnightly assignment of tasks to be completed is not, of itself, sufficient because pupils need more frequent contact with their teacher(s) in order to feel connected to the school, to stay motivated, and to make progress in their learning.
- A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences: Teacher-pupil engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils. Teachers should ensure, when possible, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches including pre-recorded video, audio, presentation software and written instructions, activities from text books etc. Regular engagement with pupils when they are out of school will also help them to reintegrate when they return to school.

- Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities: Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way. It may be necessary to adjust the number of tasks usually given in the school setting to take account of the fact that pupils are doing this work from home. The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil(s), including learners with SEN, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- Skills development: Pupils need to be supported to develop age-appropriate self management, organisational and independent learning skills.
- Infant and Junior Classes: The needs of pupils in the infant and junior classes require particular consideration. Parents/guardians will require specific guidance on how best to support their children at home, when in a position to do so. We will endeavour to provide engaging and fun early literacy and numeracy skill development activities, specific opportunities for hands-on, active development of early literacy and numeracy skills, opportunities to learn from home using the home environment in an experiential way in subjects such as Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and the Visual Arts, and opportunities to share samples of learning activities with the class teacher and/or their peers.
- Regular communication between home and school will ensure that two way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and pupils is encouraged and supported. We will provide opportunities for all pupils to regularly share samples of their work with the class teacher throughout each week [one sample daily initially]. Teachers will ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided. The benefits of this for pupils are:
 - Ongoing motivation: Completing tasks for their teacher and receiving feedback on these tasks motivates pupils to stay engaged and make progress in their learning. Without this, pupils are likely to become demotivated and disengaged in learning.
 - Customised learning opportunities: Monitoring progress will guide teachers to maintain or adapt future teaching and learning as appropriate. Providing feedback will help to address misunderstandings in learning and support optimum progress for pupils.
 - Wellbeing: Frequent engagement between pupils and teachers can provide a sense of normality and connection for pupils and can contribute to their sense of wellbeing. The role of teachers /SNAs in this regard is very significant and should not be underestimated.

Remote Teaching and Learning January 2021

Principles

Distance learning is a short-term, emergency measure, and it cannot replace face to face teaching and learning. Our main priority is to connect with pupils, to support their well-being and learning at home for this period of time. We acknowledge different pupil learning needs, including the limitations of distance learning for supporting pupils with special education needs. We acknowledge different home contexts, including the number of and demand on devices in the current context. We communicate consistently with parents via Aladdin Connect, Email, text, school website and phone. We will use a whole school approach to our distance

learning plan and procedures. Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of assigned work, text book activities, pre-recorded lessons on Seesaw/Google Classroom and live sessions via pre-arranged Zoom conference calls. The plan will be reviewed regularly and feedback sought from pupils, parents and staff so that we can build on what is working well for our school community (pupils, parents and staff).

Supporting Learning at Home

Each week, the class teacher will post a number of learning tasks on the agreed learning platform Seesaw (Infants -Rang 2) Google Classroom (Rang 3- Rang 6.) A PDF of the weekly tasks may also be posted on Aladdin (if necessary). We ask parents to check-in on their child's school work on a daily basis and talk to their child about the work being assigned. Pupils complete and submit work via Seesaw/ Google Classroom (one activity daily or as agreed by the teacher). Feedback is provided directly to the pupil by the teacher on work submitted in a timely manner.

Zoom will be used to connect with pupils on a regular basis. As a safety measure a parent is asked to be present during Zoom calls. It is expected that pupil behaviour on Zoom conferences calls and pupil engagement with the teacher on Seesaw/Google Classroom is in the same respectful manner as it would be in school. Teachers will communicate with individual parents via Aladdin Connect, email, or by phone, where necessary.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols

1. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
2. Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum. Consent is included in the Consent section of our Acceptable Usage Policy
3. Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (Seesaw, Google Classroom, Aladdin, Zoom)
4. For video/Zoom calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
5. **Scoil Bhríde** cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.
6. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an **appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.**
7. It is the duty of parents/guardians to **supervise** children while they are working online and to ensure that any content submitted to their teacher/s is **appropriate.**
8. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
9. Under no circumstances should **pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.**
10. Parents should regularly revise online safety measures with pupils.

Rules for pupils using online communication

For submitting learning work:

1. Submit work and pictures that are appropriate - have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.
2. Use kind and friendly words.
3. Let others know when you are making a voice recording so that other voices are not recorded.

For video calls/Zoom:

1. Remember to ensure you join each Zoom meeting using your family name.
2. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
3. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
4. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background..
5. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
6. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
7. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
8. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
9. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
10. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

Any breach of the above rules may result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or a meeting being immediately terminated.

Guidelines for Parents regarding video calls/Zoom

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
3. The main purpose of a video call is to engage in online learning activities while maintaining a social connection between the school staff and pupils. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
5. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom call has been entered.
6. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the Zoom call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time.
7. Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
8. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
9. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
10. For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit <https://zoom.us/privacy>

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or a meeting being immediately terminated.

Remote Teaching and Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid 19-related scenarios

A. Provision for children who are at very high risk to Covid 19:

The school will engage directly with relevant parents, regarding remote educational provision for children who are deemed to be at **very high risk** to Covid-19 (see HSE Guidelines) where medical certification has been provided to the school.

B. Provision for all other children who are instructed to self-isolate by their GP or HSE Public Health, educational provision will be provided as follows:

1. Children who are awaiting Covid 19 test results for themselves or a family member and have been instructed by their GP to isolate at home for a few days.

These pupils will be supported to catch up on their learning on their return to school.

2. Children isolating at home on instruction from their GP due to a confirmed case within their own family/close contact outside of school (14-day isolation period).

Teachers/Staff will link in with the parents and pupil via Aladdin/ Seesaw/ Google Classroom

3. School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate.

Teacher/SET teacher will link in with the pupils via Aladdin/ Seesaw Google Classroom

4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14 day isolation period).

Teachers/Staff will engage with the bubble daily on Aladdin/ Seesaw/ Google Classroom and may also use Zoom

5. Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health)

Teachers/Staff will engage with parents and pupils, using a blended learning approach (as outlined above).

Please note that the current situation is quite fluid and these circumstances may vary throughout the year.

This Policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of The Education Act (1998)

- a) Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- b) Equal Status Act (2000)
- c) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- d) Disability Act (2005)
- e) Children First Act (2017)
- f) GDPR
- g) Data Protection Act (2018)

- h) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary schools
- i) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).
- j) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020, January 2021)
- k) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: *Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19* (August 2020 Updated January 2021).
- l) Guidance on Remote Learning in a COVID-19 Context: September – December 2020
- m) Circular 0074/2020

This is a working document and as we continue to explore options available to support distance learning, the document will be updated accordingly. Elements of the plan may also change in light of any guidance or instruction received from the Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16/02/2021

It will be communicated to parents and staff via the school website.

Signed: _____

Marie Walsh

Chairperson

Date _____

Signed: _____

Mairéad Uí Íomhair

Principal

Date _____