

Ballyclare Secondary School

Remote and Blended Learning Policy



“Every child should have a rewarding educational experience.”

Ethos

Ballyclare Secondary School provides a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters respect for difference, challenges prejudicial attitudes, and promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils.

Rationale

In the event of a prolonged school closure or restricted pupil access to school, Ballyclare Secondary School is committed to providing continuity of education to its pupils and will do so through a process of remote or blended learning.

Remote learning is synonymous with online learning, e-learning, or distance education, where pupils are physically separated from their teachers during instruction but online technology is used to facilitate communication and learning. Blended learning is a method of teaching that integrates remote learning practices with traditional teacher led classroom activities.

It is likely that 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 will 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. Blended learning would apply where teachers are working in school, teaching some year groups over alternating days or weeks, while supporting others at home with remote learning due to government restrictions.

Remote and blended learning may also be appropriate in situations when individual pupils, having followed government guidance, are required to stay at home for a period of time. This will require the parents of the pupil concerned to follow current government guidance to determine when their child can safely return. An example 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 students on holiday during term time.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Outline the procedures that will be undertaken during periods of time when pupils are prevented or restricted from attending school as the result of government guidance.
- Ensure consistency in Ballyclare Secondary School's approach to remote and blended learning.

- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to remote and blended learning.
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

Teachers must be available during their normal working hours and if they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness they should report this using the school absence procedure (by informing the Principal or member of the Senior Leadership Team).

Teachers are responsible for:

1. Online Learning Platform Administration

- ❖ Setting up all classes on one of the online learning platforms (via C2K), agreed by the Senior Leadership Team.
- ❖ Equipping pupils to use the platform within subject parameters, including how to access instruction regarding completion of tasks, where to upload work and how to engage with teacher feedback.

2. Setting Work

- ❖ Providing work and instructions/demonstrations via the online platform to all timetabled classes or across year groups as agreed at department level. (Heads of Department/Subject Leaders may delegate this work to department members with agreed areas of responsibility.)
- ❖ Setting tasks with a clear purpose and an indication of timescale required for completion that should take consideration of timetabled class time and possible homework extension. Deadlines should be stated along with an indication of how work will be assessed and feedback given.
- ❖ Co-ordinate with subject colleagues to ensure consistency with volume and nature of work set across year groups in line with the teaching programme.
- ❖ Recognise that not all families have access to printers so set work that accommodates this.
- ❖ If requested, provide a summary of work set each week for collation so that parents can be better informed of set pupil work across subjects.

3. Assessment And Providing Feedback On Work

- ❖ Use the electronic tools available on the online platform to provide pupils with feedback on their work within a reasonable timescale.
- ❖ Keep records of pupil progress and achievement through remote / blended learning activities.

4. Keeping In Touch With Pupils

- ❖ Use the online platform or email (C2K account) to contact individual pupils with instruction or to request the submission of work.
- ❖ Teachers are not expected to respond to pupil emails or online platform messaging outside of working hours but may choose to do so.
- ❖ Pupils who consistently fail to submit work or keep up with tasks should be reported to the Head of Department/Subject Leader and Head of Year following established school procedures.
- ❖ As per the staff Code of Conduct, staff should avoid the use of personal mobile phones. In the exceptional circumstances where staff need to contact a pupil by phone, this should be agreed by the Principal or direct line manager. When using a personal mobile, staff should ensure they withhold their number (using the prefix 141) before dialling.
- ❖ Staff should not use social media to communicate with individual pupils.

5. **Virtual Meetings / Lessons** (if deemed appropriate)

- ❖ Live online lessons should only be delivered through a C2K approved learning platform.
- ❖ Staff should ensure that, where online methods are used to conduct lessons (including form group activities), proper consent is obtained from parents. This can be in the form of a signed permission letter or parental email.
- ❖ Staff must ensure that they follow normal dress code procedures.
- ❖ Staff must use professional language and ensure high standards of behaviour.
- ❖ If conducting an online lesson from home, staff must ensure that this takes place in a public room in the house (not in a bedroom).
- ❖ Pupils must be punctual and come equipped for each session.
- ❖ For safeguarding reasons, pupils must enable their video at the start of the lesson. This will allow the host to see the pupil and verify who is in attendance. However, the teacher may choose to deliver the rest of the lesson on an audio basis.
- ❖ Pupils will only be permitted access to the online platform if they are suitably dressed (they should not be in sleepwear).
- ❖ Young people should be encouraged to sit in public rooms in their homes and must not be in a bedroom when participating in a virtual lesson.
- ❖ Doors should be open.
- ❖ Pupils must use appropriate language and ensure high standards of behaviour throughout.
- ❖ Pupils are not permitted to invite other people into the virtual classroom. They must not share login details/ID codes with others. Pupils must not use virtual backgrounds.
- ❖ Pupils must not record the meeting.
- ❖ Pupils must not share or upload any images from the meeting.

These guidelines should be read alongside the School's Acceptable use of the Internet Policy (a copy of which is on the School website).

6. **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Should staff have any concerns about what they see or hear online, this should be brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding Team

Mrs K Bell (Principal)

Mr A Nicholl, Head of Pastoral Care, Designated Teacher

Miss J Miniss, Deputy Designated Teacher

Mrs E Colgan, Deputy Designated Teacher

Mr A Cowden, Deputy Designated Teacher

Mr R Thompson, Designated Board of Governor

Heads of Department/Subject Leaders

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, as outlined above, Heads of Department/Subject Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that a common approach is taken across the subject/department regarding the use of an online learning platform through C2K.
- Considering whether any aspects of the subject curriculum need to change to accommodate remote or blended learning.

- Developing asynchronous (setting independent learning tasks to be completed in own time) and / or synchronous (live interaction via video / audio) teaching approaches that are deemed suitable in the subject context.
- Working with teachers in their department to make sure work set is appropriate and consistent.
- Adapting assessment procedures in the department to cater for meaningful formative/summative and feedback in a remote and blended learning context. This may include individual and whole class written feedback as well as oral, recorded feedback.
- Monitoring the work set by teachers through regular meetings (online video or face to face).
- Alerting teachers to resources that could be beneficial in teaching the subject.
- Liaising with colleagues about disengaged or underachieving pupils and co-ordinate a department response during periods of blended learning.

Class Teachers

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, class teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining pastoral contact with pupils over extended periods of remote or blended learning absence from school to monitor pupil wellbeing. This will require following procedures specific to the circumstances.
- Liaise with Subject Teachers and Heads of Year if pastoral issues are identified.
- Help collate weekly remote or blended learning schedules from subject teachers for Key Stage 3 classes before sending to parents, if required (possibly complete this for other key stages).

Heads of Year

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Liaising with class teachers and if relevant, the SENCO, to formulate actions when pastoral issues are identified during periods of remote / blended learning.
- Follow agreed monitoring and intervention strategies.
- If required, contact parents to support pupil wellbeing.
- During extended periods of remote learning, support class teachers to determine how best to support disengaged pupils.
- Help co-ordinate weekly remote or blended learning schedules for Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils before sending to parents (possibly other key stages).

SEN Coordinator

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, the SEN co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Monitoring all SEN pupils and formulating Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to support specific needs.
- Liaising with parents during extended periods of remote / blended learning to monitor pupil wellbeing.
- Training and equipping classroom assistants to provide support to SEN pupils through remote / blended learning.

Classroom Assistants

Classroom assistants must be available during their normal working hours and if they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.

Classroom assistants are responsible for:

- Supporting SEN pupils to prepare for remote/ blended learning.

- Engaging with the online learning platforms used by class teachers to support SEN pupils with their learning activities.
- Attending virtual online meetings with teachers, pupils and parents to support the SEN pupil.
- Keep in regular daily contact with their pupils as agreed with the SEN co-ordinator.

ICT Support Staff

ICT staff are responsible for:

- Supporting staff to deliver live lessons with use of video and audio technology (where required).
- Supporting staff in their use of online learning platforms via the C2K network.
- Providing staff and pupils with hardware to support remote / blended learning if available.
- Keeping staff informed of procedures required to maintain device security.
- Reviewing the security of systems and flagging any data protection breaches to SLT.

The DT is responsible for:

- Responding to child protection or safeguarding disclosures by following guidance in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Head of Learning

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, the Head of Learning is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the remote / blended learning approach across the school.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of remote/blended learning through Heads of Department/Subject Leader meetings, staff, pupil and parent feedback.
- Monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations.
- Responding to concerns raised by staff, pupils and parents regarding the arrangements in place for teaching and learning.

Head of Pastoral Care

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

- Monitoring the pastoral impact of remote/blended learning through Pastoral and Year Team meetings, staff, pupil and parent feedback.
- Monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations.
- Responding to concerns raised by staff, pupils and parents regarding the arrangements in place for pastoral welfare.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Leading the school's approach to providing remote /blended learning, ensuring continuity of education, security of data protection, staff wellbeing and maintaining of child protection measures

Governors

The Board of Governors are responsible for:

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

Pupils and Parents

Staff can expect pupils to:

- Be contactable during school hours via the online learning platform (and email) although consider they may not always be in front of a device the entire time.
- Complete work to the deadline set by teachers.
- Engage in 'live' lessons via the online learning platform where appropriate and if technology allows, following agreed netiquette rules for behaviour.
- Seek help with their work if they need it from teachers, form tutors or classroom assistants.
- Seek help with technology issues from the ICT staff.
- Alert teachers immediately via the online learning platform or email if they are not able to complete work.

Staff can expect parents to:

- Make the school aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work.
- Seek help from the school if they need it with technological issues.
- Consent to their child taking part in online learning activities.
- Monitor their child's weekly overview, online learning platforms and email to support their child with the completion of work and meeting of deadlines.
- Be respectful when making complaints or raising concerns.

Who to Contact

If staff have questions or concerns when working remotely, they should contact the school office or the following individuals:

- Teaching and Learning queries: Mrs E Colgan, Head of Learning
- Pastoral queries: Mr A Nicholl
- SEN queries: Miss J Miniss
- Technical Support: Mr N Curran

Data Protection

Accessing Sensitive School Data

- When accessing sensitive school data, all staff members should use school laptops or iPads rather than their own personal devices.

Sharing Personal Data

- Staff members may need to collect and / or share personal pupil data as part of the remote/blended learning system. Such collection of personal pupil data applies to our functions as a school and doesn't require explicit permissions. While this may be necessary, staff are reminded to collect and / or share as little personal pupil data as possible online.

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
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Updating the device over the school network to ensure that antivirus and antispyware software is effective
- Keeping operating systems up to date - always install the latest updates

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biannually or when an unexpected school closure and period of remote/blended learning is required.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy

Remote Learning update specifically for September 2021 based on DE Guidance:

As in normal circumstances, if pupils are ill they should take time to rest and recover and should not be working from home.

If an individual child or a small number of pupils within a class or across a year group have to self-isolate for a designated period due to COVID-19, the Department of Education has advised that parents should talk directly to their school about provision of education materials. DE note that schools will wish to support pupils as much as possible, however, clearly in these circumstances teachers will be continuing to teach all classes during the school day so expectations must be realistic.

If a whole class is instructed to isolate by the PHA, remote learning should commence for that class. Teachers timetabled for these classes will remain free from cover to facilitate this.

Date: 24th September 2021

Review date: July 2022