Remote Learning Policy

Sacred Heart P.S. Dundrum

(January 2021)

Overview

In the event of a school closure, Sacred Heart P.S. is committed to providing continuity of education to 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, but a high proportion of pupils and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home. We will continue to support at school, through supervised learning, those children that fall into Key Worker and Vulnerable categories as endorsed by the Minister of Education

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 can 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 are absent from school, with 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 children from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

Remote learning for individual pupils, assuming an absence has been agreed with the school, and the pupil in question is healthy enough to work from home, the school will then provide work for pupils who are unable to attend in person. If this occurs for an individual pupil, the collation of work and communication with the parent will be coordinated by the pupil's teacher. 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 pupils in this way if there is an agreed absence lasting more than three working days. If a significant number of pupils are

absent from school, but the school remains open, the Principal will decide whether the method of remote learning operated will take the form outlined here, or as outlined below.

Remote learning in the event of extended school closure, will provide continuity of education in the following ways:

a) Regular direct instruction from teachers, with the ability of pupils to ask questions online (via SeeSaw).

b) The setting of work that pupils complete, written responses (if relevant) completed electronically. The majority of work included in the associated work packs will correspond to daily online instruction.

c) The assessment of specific tasks that are submitted to teachers electronically and on which feedback is provided. Pupils and teachers are generally 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 Sacred Heart P.S will use to deliver continuity of education are:

- My School
- Microsoft Office
- Collaborate Ultra
- SeeSaw App
- Education City
- Literacy Bug Club
- NewsDesk

Access to a number of these platforms is via individual pupil log ins; if pupils have difficulty with logging in, they should contact their class teacher.

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.

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.

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. Naturally, remote learning will require pupils and teachers to take a different approach to working through content. It should be assumed that it is not possible to complete the same volume of content when pupils are not physically present.

The nature of tasks set should allow pupils to learn independently, however, some adult support will at times be required.

Teachers will set tasks through SeeSaw and it is the responsibility of teachers and pupils to ensure they know how to use this functionality effectively.

Teachers who wish to use the audio/video functions must follow C2K protocols and inform the Principal and ICT co-ordinator in advance of setting up sessions.

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. Assessed work will be set using SeeSaw. 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 or group feedback rather than feedback on individual pieces of work – this is an effective way of providing feedback, supported by findings from educational research.
- Providing feedback directly in the conversation function on SeeSaw.
- Recording oral feedback and sharing it.
- Using the 'edit post' facility on SeeSaw to mark a set piece of work.

Expectations of Remote Learning

Assuming that a pupil is healthy and well enough to work, pupils will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process,

completing independent work, and submitting tasks as well as working to the best of their ability.

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 pupil misses significant parts of the content, they will be able to view material posted online and the school will consider the practicalities of helping pupils to catch up once the school reopens.

If pupils or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the class teacher. If there are questions about a pupil's overall workload (e.g. a pupil feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the Principal. Teachers must work on the assumption that pupils will not necessarily have the full range of books and equipment that they would usually have in school. The school does not expect pupils 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 pupils do not have access to them at home. The school generally expects that parents have internet access at home to access remote learning resources, but teachers will make no presumption of the pupil's ability to print at home. Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and phone connectivity at home. If there are IT related issues while remote working, teachers can contact the C2K 's Service Desk. The setting and assessment of remote learning tasks will take place in accordance with school and subject area policies.

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. Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their pupils in a timely manner.

In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the Principal to ensure work is set to her/his classes. Note that illness in these cases will treated as normal and back to work discussions conducted remotely if required.

Teachers are expected to:

- Plan and deliver 'live sessions' where appropriate in consultation with the Principal.
- Plan and set tasks for their students using SeeSaw.
- Be able to set and mark assessed work promptly, in line with school 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, dialling 141 before the number will ensure the teacher's own number is kept anonymous). If contact is deemed excessive the Principal will be able to support.
- If parents ask for additional work beyond that set as part of the requirements above, teachers should have a bank of general resources available, such as interactive websites and support activities, and point pupils and parents in that direction.

In order 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 step-by-step demonstrations and attended teacher training sessions. If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult the ICT co-ordinator. 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 between the hours of 9am-3pm only, 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. Communication must always occur via official school channels (SeeSaw), and not through personal accounts or other websites.

Pastoral Care

In event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a pupil rests with their parents/guardians. However, teachers (under the guidance of Miss Murray and Mr Fitzsimons) should check in regularly with

their students to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Teachers will be expected to pass on feedback to Miss Murray and Mr Fitzsimons, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.

Safeguarding

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.

Please note that any remote working methods should adhere to GDPR guidelines. In most cases the chat function on SeeSaw will give teachers plenty of flexibility.

Before attempting any audio/video live links teachers must speak to the Principal. Teachers must not set up or join social media groups for school use with pupils (such as WhatsApp etc.). If teachers need to use any apps or materials that fall outside the C2K network, they will ensure that this is discussed with the Principal.

Expectations

Pupils are expected to:

- Try to retain structure to their working day.
- Check SeeSaw to access the resources for each lesson and work through tasks in a timely fashion.
- Complete all set work and hand in work to the teacher in the agreed manner, eg upload, photograph, scan etc.
- Use the designated SeeSaw app to communicate with their teachers and ask questions if they do not understand/require help within normal school time hours.
- Pupils may need to photograph work of a visual nature and use SeeSaw to submit this to teachers.
- Ensure all interactions on SeeSaw are of 'classroom level' discussions.

- If participating in a live lesson, it is not required to wear uniform for video learning, however, appropriate dress is expected.

Teachers are expected to:

- Upload teaching materials and lessons to SeeSaw.
- Create work packs that coincide and assimilate with online work on SeeSaw.
- Endeavour to set work equivalent in length to the lessons on their revised timetables and be available during scheduled lessons to answer any questions pupils may have via SeeSaw. It is recognised that it is not easy to estimate the time it takes for pupils to complete work and some pupils will work faster than others. An element of differentiation by outcome is to be expected. Extension tasks may be set if appropriate.
- It may be that it is more appropriate for the teacher to set one longer task that covers several shorter lessons (eg a task for the whole week), The total set work should reflect the total length of lesson time that is missed.
- Mark and feedback using SeeSaw with the same regularity they would have done if in school.
- Answer SeeSaw chats during school hours and their working day but not beyond these times or at the weekend unless at the teacher's discretion.
- Ensure a classroom level of interaction is maintained through use of SeeSaw. This is a relatively new experience for the students, and we must guide them in how to behave. (Just as in their own physical classroom, staff must set out their expectations).
- Staff should not have a one-to-one video chat with a student, they should invite another member of staff to be a silent attendee or record session/parent in attendance.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child has adequate computer equipment and internet access in order to fully participate in home learning.
- Encourage and support their children's work including finding an appropriate place to work, checking that set work is completed and

submitted by the end of each day and ensuring that the normal school schedule for the day is followed as much as possible.

- Contact the teacher if there are any concerns or difficulty in a child accessing or completing work on time.