REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

Covid 19

November 2021

BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY

Title	Remote Learning Policy – COVID 19
Summary	Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: Remote Learning Policy – COVD 19 for pupils and staff.
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of the importance of the Remote Learning Policy – COVID 19 in the event of a school closure
Operational Date	November 2021
Review date	November 2023
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To be posted on School website	Yes
Date and version posted (if applicable)	November 2021

Belfast Royal Academy - Remote Learning Policy – COVID 19

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Rationale

In the event of a school closure, Belfast Royal Academy is committed to providing continuity of education to its learners 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 learners and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home.

Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when learners, in agreement with the school, are absent due to COVID 19 related matters.

'Remote Learning' refers to the provision of work, teacher support, assessment and feedback from teachers to pupils in the event that normal lessons are unable to be delivered in a 'face-to face' format.

There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to learners who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention of school or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take learners 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.

Individual Remote Learning

This section of this policy applies to situations in which the school remains open and working as normal, but an individual pupil is unable to attend lessons as normal due to a period of advised self-isolation.

In this case, school work will be coordinated by the pupil's Class Teacher, as per the pupil's timetable and placed on the relevant Google Classroom.

A Period of School Closure

Belfast Royal Academy is committed to providing continuity of education for its pupils in the event of an extended school closure. While such situations are inevitably highly varied in their causes and ramifications, we will endeavour to provide continued learning for our pupils during any period of closure in one or more of the following ways:

- The provision of relevant, developmental written work for each subject area and each year group which enables pupils to make continued progress

- Regular contact from staff, with provision for pupils to ask questions of their teachers in real time or electronically

- The opportunity for pupils to have their work assessed by their teachers and receive feedback

Any provision of remote learning assumes that pupils and staff have access to the internet at home. All staff are provided with iPads which they can use to access any of the services by which remote learning will be provided. However, we cannot assume that everyone has access to printing facilities, so any work set and submitted for assessment will be entirely electronically set and distributed.

Work will be set, submitted for assessment and assessed through the Google Classroom online platform.

Google Classroom is a collaborative platform which allows for contemporaneous, real-time communication and sharing of resources between teachers and their classes. Every member of the Belfast Royal Academy School community has access to Google Classroom, via the G Suite network. Pupils will be expected to participate in live sessions if they are asked and able to. Pupils will be expected to have their cameras switched on. Live sessions can be particularly helpful as they can help communication, with learners able to respond to teachers' questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in Google Meet, or by posting a question via a private comment in a Google Classroom assignment.

Pupils are provided with a school email address and this must be used for all sign in to Google Classroom, as per the IT Acceptable Use Policy. There will be no facility for parents/guardians or learners to provide their own email addresses for use; due to safeguarding reasons. Similarly, parents and guardians should not use the Google Classroom platform to communicate with members of staff.

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 learners 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 particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience.

Live sessions

Academic subject areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner (either by text or audio and/or visual means). There is no expectation of teachers to carry out live lessons, but there is a minimum expectation that teachers will 'connect' with classes either by a pre-recorded video, pre-recorded welcome or a live welcome.

Live lessons delivered via Google Meet is a much more intense experience for both pupils and staff; therefore, the lessons will be shorter and the teaching strategies will be varied.

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 learners 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.

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 in Google Classroom

- Sending a private comment in Google Classroom to pupils with specific feedback / targets

- Feedback via another website / piece of software

- Using the Google 'Question' function

Short term closure

For non-consecutive, short-term closures (up to a five working day period), departments will set tasks via dedicated pages in Google Classroom. At least one task will be set for each year group in each subject. Where possible, this will be designed to last an equivalent amount of time as that subject's lessons and homework times during one calendar week.

Long term closure

In the event that the school is closed for longer than 5 working days, we will move to a model by which academic departments will set work for classes via Google Classroom as per the school timetable, supported by contact with teachers.

The school reserves the right to vary the methods described, in the light of developing situations surrounding the reasons behind any closure.

What is expected of Belfast Royal Academy staff

Belfast Royal Academy has an expectation of how teachers should interact with pupils during a long term period of remote learning.

As a minimum, pupils should expect to:

- Hear the teacher's voice at the start of each lesson to help the pupils stay connected.

- Receive live teaching or a link to a video made by their teacher or a colleague, or sourced from on-line resources.

Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and telephone connectivity at home. If this is not available for any reason, teachers should inform the Principal as soon as possible.

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 learners' work. For example, the frequency of substantive task set, and the regularity of written assessment provided. Subject area policies will be applied in the event of remote learning.

In order to provide a consistent approach, Subject 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 learners 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 learners in a timely manner.

In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the Subject Leader to ensure work is set for her/his classes.

Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or telephone. Where possible, staff should use telephone facilities in school, but if they choose to contact a parent from a personal device they should dial 141 before the number to ensure that their own number is kept anonymous. Parents are encouraged to answer 'withheld' telephone numbers during school hours.

In order to ensure teachers are able to perform the minimum expectations outlined above; the school have provided a range of training resources that teachers should access in the **Staff ICT Training - Google Classroom**. Teachers should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions and watched video walkthroughs. If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult their Subject Leader or the Senior Leadership Team.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues and learners (via Google Classroom). Teachers should also ensure their communication with learners 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 3.10pm, 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.

- Email using school info@bfsra account only

- Google Classroom

Contact between pupils and staff through personal telephones or personal email accounts, using third-party messaging software or video conferencing software (e.g. WhatsApp, Skype etc.), is strictly prohibited.

What is expected of Belfast Royal Academy pupils

Pupils must behave as they would in class.

They must not:
- Unmute during a Google Meet, unless asked to, to pose a relevant question
- Share their screen during a Google Meet - unless asked to do so
- Use the chat function with other pupils during a Google Meet
- Share their Google Classroom or Google Meet code with anyone outside of their class

They must:
- Be dressed appropriately
- Have their camera switched
- Be working from an appropriate location
- Understand that they will have to follow their school timetable, including attending assemblies

The lessons will be held in accordance with the Belfast Royal Academy *Positive Behaviour Policy*. The same tiered approach will apply as it would if the lesson was taking place in the school building.

Pupils are expected to work on tasks during the week in which they are set.

Pupils are encouraged to take part in the live sessions that are available if they are well enough to do so. If a pupil does not have access to an appropriate digital device AND/OR is unable to access Wi-Fi from home, the parent/guardian should contact school in the first instance and ask to speak to the Principal or any of the Vice Principals.

Assuming they are well enough to work, pupils are expected to:

- Complete all work set for them and promptly submit work which is requested for feedback. Check for Google Classroom notifications regularly and read and respond to communication from the school

- Pupils are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct and behaviour during live online lessons as they would be expected to in school. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Ensuring appropriate language is used in Google Meet comments, and that any comment is on-topic and relevant to the task in hand
  - Ensuring full engagement with the tasks in hand, including submission of any required work by the deadline that has been set
  - Ensuring that clothing is appropriate, following the same guidance as a normal "non-uniform" day in school
  - Ensuring that they are participating in 'Live' sessions in a central area of their home

What is expected of Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Encourage their child to use the Google Classroom and Google Meet, appropriately and as if they were in school
- Encourage their child to keep up to date with their work
- Ensure their child takes regular breaks and not encourage their child to work <u>excessively</u> long hours on their school work
- Ensure their child asks for support if they need it
- Get in touch with their child's teacher if there are any difficulties
- Ensure their child practices safe online activities

Parents are expected not to:

- Screenshot or copy any of the materials provided by Belfast Royal Academy, or share on any social media platforms

Safeguarding and Child Protection

During any period of school closure, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy still applies in the event of remote learning being employed by the School, as does the Staff Code of Conduct and the IT Acceptable Use Policy. Any live contact between pupils and staff must only take place through official school channels. This includes emails from pupils to teachers, which should only be sent from a pupil's @c2ken.net email address.

If a parent has a safeguarding concern, they should contact the safeguarding team – **safeguarding@belfastroyalacademy.net**

Pastoral care

In event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a pupil rests with their parents / carers. However, Heads of Year should check with their Year Group on a regular basis via a telephone call. Heads of Year will be expected to pass on feedback to the Senior Leadership Team, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.

Belfast Royal Academy is committed to providing exemplary pastoral care, and this will continue during any period of school closure or remote learning. During such periods, communication regarding pastoral care remain open; pupils can contact the Pastoral Care team using the email address info@bfsra for the attention of their Head of Year, as the subject header. The school counsellor will also be available for consultations and to provide support to the pupils.   There will be a weekly assembly for all pupils.

Support for pupils with SEN

The SENCo and Assistant SENCo will maintain contact with pupils by emailing or phoning parents/learners and will feedback pressing information to teachers if required. Parents should make contact with the school SENCo if there are particular issues so that these may be addressed in a timely manner.

Classroom Assistants should log onto the Google Meet lessons as per the school timetable.

Pedagogy

Each area of learning should have a priority of - key knowledge, understanding and skills
Before planning our remote learning approach, it is important that we look to our pedagogical considerations first and foremost. Questions will need to be considered such as what are the learning outcomes for our students? What are the core elements of our curriculum and what is essential that will require a teacher led approach? The technological considerations will come after.
Key pedagogy will need to remain the focus of any remote learning approach:

- Clear Learning Objectives and Success Criteria communicated to students
- Clear links to Schemes of Work within each department
- Linking to prior learning
- Synchronous and asynchronous approaches to learning, to cope with numerous children learning at the same time in one household
- Adjustment from existing practice to engaging remote learning tasks
- Introducing new materials in manageable chunks
- Stretch and Challenge for all students
- Use of the full range of Assessment for Learning strategies
- Use of feedback / model answers returned as quickly as possible
- Having clear goals and high expectations
- Avoidance of cognitive overload
- Embedding knowledge and skills in the long term memory
- Appropriate support in place for our learners
- Online learning tasks should last approximately 30-45 minutes
- Offer the chance for pupils to collaborate in group discussions, where possible

Planning for learning will take these into account with a view to ensuring continuity of learning.

Belfast Royal Academy has a 3 strand approach to the use of technology to aid, augment and enhance the learning process.

- Strand 1 – Use of Google Classroom
- Strand 2 – Use of Recorded materials
- Strand 3 – Use of Google Meet

Learning & Teaching strategies

Remote learning can be used in a number of ways to enhance the learning. Some strategies are as below. Home learning can also include paper-based activities. This is not an exhaustive list and the strategies used should be in-line with whole school practice of high quality learning and teaching.

Remote Learning

- Watch video clips
- Inquiry based research
- Read about a topic
- Summarise text/ Cornell note taking
- Pre-recorded audio lesson
- Mind Maps
- Brain storming

Follow on from face to face lessons

- Quizzes
- Answer questions / past paper questions
- Complete booklets
- Complete practical write ups
- Redraft/ upgrading work
- Respond to teacher feedback
- Online collaborative work
- Mind maps
- Revision activities such as revision cards
- Reading
- Research

Appendix 1

Remote learning – pupil provision

Form 1-3

- Google Classroom
- Scheduled work set
- Assignments / uploaded work
- Explain Everything tutorial videos / iPad screen record videos
- Online videos from a reputable resource bank
- Live or pre-recorded welcome to the class

- Google Meet – live teaching with classes

Form 4

- Google Classroom
- Scheduled work set
- Assignments / uploaded work
- Explain Everything tutorial videos / iPad screen record videos
- Online videos from a reputable resource bank
- Live or pre-recorded welcome to the class

- Google Meet – live teaching with classes

Form 5

- Google Classroom
- Scheduled work set
- Assignments / uploaded work
- Google Meet – live teaching with classes
- Explain Everything tutorial videos / iPad screen record videos
- Online videos from a reputable resource bank
- Live or pre-recorded welcome to the class

L6-M6

- Google Classroom
- Scheduled work set
- Assignments / uploaded work
- Google Meet – live teaching with classes
- Explain Everything tutorial videos / iPad screen record videos
- Online videos from a reputable resource bank
- Live or pre-recorded welcome to the class

Appendix 2

Staff Guidance – Google Meet

With any digital platform there will be risks. In order to manage these risks, you must follow the guidance below:

- **Only use the video Icon to facilitate a Google Meet** - Do not post a video meeting link into your Google Classroom, this can be used by the pupils when you are not on a call. You should reset the link at the end of each call.

- **Microphones** - you cannot mute participants in a Google Meet, you must instruct the participants to ensure that they are muted during the teaching session, and only unmute when requested.

- **Ensure that the 'people' in the Google Classroom are @c2ken.net participants** - If someone tries to join your Classroom and isn't logged in your class, you should remove them immediately. The 'people' section of your Classroom should be cross referenced with your SIMS roll.

- **Screen sharing** - Any participant in a Google Meet can share their screen. At the beginning of each lesson you should warn the pupils that they mustn't share their screen unless they are directed to do so.

- **Screen sharing security** - When sharing your screen, consider what the other participants will be able to see e.g. files, images, browsing history. Never ask for, or share personal information, including contact details during the session. You should also switch off the annotations function which will prevent other pupils drawing on the screen.

- **In call messaging** - Any participant in a Google Meet can send in call messages. At the beginning of each lesson you should warn the pupils that they mustn't message unless they are directed to do so.

- **Background** - Ensure your background and the pupil's background is neutral, free from distractions and any inappropriate or identifiable information. Do not use virtual backgrounds at any stage throughout the meeting.

- **Communication** - Comments in Google Classroom should be turned on. Pupil should be encouraged to ask their teacher questions via the private comments function of a Google Classroom assignment.

General Advice

- Advise pupils in your Google Classroom of the date and time of the Google Meet. Begin the Google Meet five minutes before the stated time. You must ensure that you are the **last person** left in the Google Meet and that after you end the call, you reset the meeting link.

- For your first class, set aside some time to introduce your pupils to Google Meet and ensure that they are able to connect their audio and video.

- Give an agenda or plan for each class. This gives pupils a clear idea of how the class will progress, what will be covered, and the activities in which they will engage in.

- Discuss online etiquette and expectations of the pupils.

- Utilise Whiteboard apps such as 'Notability', 'Explain Everything' or 'Jamboard' to annotate a shared document. This will let your pupils engage with your documents, screen or images.

- Take time to promote questions, comments and reactions from your class. Allow pupils the time to become familiar with the various functions which are available on Google Meet such as, muting/unmuting and screen share (when appropriate).

- You can also allow pupils to be the presenter and share projects with the class. This allows your pupils to show what they are working on while practising their presentation skills. It also allows pupils to hear from one another.

- Look at the camera to create eye contact with your pupils. This helps to create a more personal connection while teaching over video.

- Speak as if you're face-to-face with the class while ensuring you're at the appropriate distance from the microphone for the best audio experience.

- When delivering a presentation, sharing images, files or video, give your pupils a moment to open or take in what you've shared.

- Embrace the pause. Take a moment after the end of your comments and allow for pupils to engage before continuing on.

Things to Remember

- You should be in an appropriate inside venue.

- You should be dressed appropriately.

- You must sign in using your @c2ken.net school password.

- Do not share the Google Meet link with anyone.

- Ensure your background is neutral, free from distractions and any inappropriate or identifiable information.

- Do not use virtual backgrounds at any stage throughout the lesson.

- Any behaviour which is deemed to be inappropriate should be reported immediately to the relevant Key Stage Leader. The Key Stage Leader will make contact with a parent/guardian following the meeting and make it very clear that their son/daughter will be removed from all subsequent meetings if there is any repeat of inappropriate behaviour.

Staff procedure for online learning

Google Classroom

All departments to create a generic Google Classroom for Form 1 - M6. Each member of staff should also have an individual Google Classroom for each timetabled class.

Each Generic year group Google Classroom should have at least the following areas:

- Specification(Link)
- Past Papers (Link)
- Workbooks (Complete year)
- Homework upload section
- Video resources

Teachers should show pupils how to navigate the subject area of their examination board website.

Staff preparation for online learning

All teachers should ensure that they know the passcode to their school iPad and that it is charged and working correctly.

Staff should be aware that if they download any confidential school files from 'My School' to their home computer that they mustn't save them, this could be a breach of GDPR.

Appendix 3

Belfast Royal Academy - Online Learning pupil guidance

To ensure that pupils can access Google Classroom at home, they **must** be logged into Google using their @c2ken.net domain name.

This is accessible in the top right hand corner of the Google home screen (see below)

If you are having problems with an aspect of Online Learning, please email info@bfsra.belfast.ni.sch.uk using the subject title **online learning problems**

Google Classroom guidance - November 2021

1. How to Join a Google Classroom.

https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020297?hl=en&ref_topic=9049977

1. How to set work set for a class.

https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020284?hl=en&ref_topic=9050121

1. How to work with a document that has been assigned to you.

https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/9073815?hl=en&ref_topic=9050121

1. How to answer a specific question set in Google Classroom.

https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020296?hl=en&ref_topic=9050121

1. How to turn in work set in Google Classroom.

https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020285?hl=en&ref_topic=9050121

Belfast Royal Academy guidance to pupils for maintaining wellbeing during periods of <u>remote learning</u>.

Keep connected with others

Maintaining friendships and relationships with loved ones is important for your mental well-being. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while you are staying at home – by phone, messaging, video calls or social media – whether it's people you usually see often or connecting with old friends.

Lots of people are finding the current situation difficult, so staying in touch could help them too.

Talk about your worries

It's normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember: it is ok to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too.

Look after your body (your physical wellbeing is important too)

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly.

You should try and perform one form of exercise a day – like a walk, run or bike ride. But make you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others. There are lots of home workouts available for free on YouTube if you're looking for some inspiration.

Do not stay glued to the news

Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

You could set yourself a specific time to read updates or limit yourself to checking a couple of times a day.

Use trustworthy sources – such as GOV.UK or the NHS website – and fact-check information from the news, social media or other people.

Carry on doing things you enjoy

If we are feeling worried, anxious, lonely or low, we may stop doing things we usually enjoy.

Make an effort to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. If not, picking something new to learn at home might help.

Make time to relax

Relaxing after a day of remote learning can help with difficult emotions and worries, and improve our mental wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help deal with feelings of anxiety.

Think about your new daily routine

Life is changing for a while and you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines and set yourself goals.

Look after your sleep

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough.

Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practices.