

St. Joseph's National School

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Remote Teaching and Learning Policy for St. Joseph's N.S.

Introductory Statement

In response to this time of uncertainty regarding school closures, we have formulated this policy to outline how the school will maintain the link between school and home. In the event of another whole or partial school closure, we aim to continue to communicate with our pupils through various means. We recognise that online safety is of huge importance and the aim of this policy is to help to protect both school staff and pupils, while teaching and learning online.

This policy does not set out to replace our Mobile Phone & E. Device or Acceptable Usage Policy. Rather, it is proposed as an important addition to the area of learning using digital platforms. The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Behaviour Policy, SEN Policy and Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) Policy.

The primary obligation of all schools is to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learners and that personal and sensitive data is also protected under GDPR legislation. Schools must ensure that learning takes place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties.

This Policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of:

- (a) The Education Act (1998)
- (b) Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- (c) Equal Status Act (2000)
- (d) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- (e) Disability Act (2005)
- (f) Children First Act (2017)
- (g) GDPR
- (h) Data Protection Act (2018)
- (i) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary schools
- (j) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008)

(k) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020)

(l) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: *Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19* (August 2020)

This is a working document. As we continue to explore options available to support distance learning, the document will be updated accordingly.

Context

Teaching and Learning is always evolving, especially, as we move deeper into the 21st century. Developments in DT provide us all with great opportunities as learners and teachers. Never before has there been greater scope to learn using technology and it continues to change the learning relationship between teachers and students. Advances in technology mean that assignments can be delivered remotely and that greater access to information on the internet affords the opportunities for real learning to take place under the watchful and professional guidance of the teacher. However, whether a child is being directed remotely or via a traditional classroom environment, it is very important that all partners are aware that once a learning exchange takes place between a student and teacher, whether at home or school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Behaviour and all of the school's policies apply.

We recognise that online collaboration is essential for distance learning and that families are in favour of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. St. Joseph's N.S. uses a variety of child friendly, online tools, which assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Students

- The normal school calendar will apply.
- The school Code of Behaviour is applicable to remote teaching and learning including
 - ✓ Anti- Bullying Policy
 - ✓ Mobile Phone & E-Device Policy
 - ✓ Internet & Parental Permission
- Students with devices are reminded to use their school books, where possible, to complete assignments (as is the normal expectation).
- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply with students expected to present all assignments to the best of their ability and on time, where this evolving and unprecedented situation allows you to do so.
- Families who do not have access to an e-device may be loaned a device e.g. iPad for the duration of remote learning. A waiver must be signed by parents for damages to the device.
- In so far as possible, provision for SEN students and for students at very high risk to COVID 19 will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' may include a combination of assigned work and pre-recorded lessons (Seesaw). In addition, class teachers will use Zoom to engage with the children

they work with. St. Joseph's NS will use a variety of online platforms for communicating and connecting with families/pupils.

1. School App (Aladdin Connect): This App keeps parents up to date on school and classroom news via noticeboard messages. The Principal & Administration Staff will communicate with parents via the school App. All families are asked to download the Aladdin Connect App and to check it daily for updates and important information.

2. Seesaw Class App: This is a school communication platform used by the entire school to share what is being learned in school or at home. Parental consent is required prior to using this app. This consent is implied by the parents connecting to the app. Each student will be assigned an individual access code. Some lessons may be pre-recorded and uploaded to Seesaw. The teachers can assign activities, share videos, photos, messages, workload, etc. via the journal. This allows pupils to connect to a personal folder and they then have the option of uploading items to this folder for teacher to see. For those who cannot access SEESAW, work will be sent out in the post to the pupil's home.

3. Zoom: Zoom is a cloud-based video-conferencing service which some teachers will use to virtually meet with their pupils, either by video or audio only or both. All Zoom meetings will be scheduled for a time and date and parents will receive a text via Aladdin connect informing them of the zoom call.

Guidelines for good online communication in St. Joseph's NS:

1. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
2. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
3. 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 is appropriate.
4. Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families through school approved platforms e.g. via Aladdin Connect, SeeSaw, Zoom or through supplementary programmes (eg. Studyladder.com, Mangahigh).
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Parental permission is implied when parents connect to an online platform or app.
7. 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.
8. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to individuals, where applicable.
9. St. Joseph's NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.
10. Communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

Guidelines for Staff Members using Online Communication Methods:

1. Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 9.20am - 3pm, where possible.
2. Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
3. Staff members will be familiar with apps before using them with pupils. *A whole school CPD on seesaw will be provided to staff for appropriate professional development and support will be agreed where necessary.
4. Staff will check that consent has been given, before setting up a pupil profile for an online app.
5. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.

Rules & Responsibilities for pupils using online communication methods:

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. To cooperate with their parents and teachers.
4. To work well, to do what they can and to do their best.
5. To do the lessons that teacher asks of them.
6. To make sure that the teacher gets to see the work they have asked for when it is finished.

Guidelines for Parents and Guardians:

For Seesaw

1. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
2. Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
3. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.
4. Meaningful engagement must take place daily. Non-engagement will be reported by the class teacher to the principal & HSCL, it will be recorded on file and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

For Zoom Calls

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. The main purpose of a Zoom call is to maintain a social connection between the teachers and children they care for. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.

3. Pupils will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom call has been entered. Please note that school staff will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account. (i.e. Family Name)
4. 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. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
5. 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.
6. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
7. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
8. 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.

Responsibility of the Parent

- To ensure protocols for students are adhered to.
- To check-in on their child's school work on a daily basis and to talk to their child about the work being assigned.
- To provide the time and space to support their child/children so that they can engage, complete and return the work that the teacher has set.
- To support the development of the child/children's reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.
- To encourage the development of the child/children's number skills.
- Student use of web-based tools is for educational purposes only and at the direction of a teacher and under the supervision of a parent/guardian. Please supervise your child/children online.
- To keep in touch with your child's teacher and to respond to any messages sent to you. Communication may only take place during normal school hours.

Responsibility of the Teacher

Our staff have made a considerable effort to develop their skills to provide for distance learning. If distance learning becomes necessary in the future, they plan to continue to:

- Motivate and engage pupils
- Check uploaded work each day
- Facilitate the further development of reading and writing skills
- Develop number skills
- Provide opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills
- Develop children's creativity
- Provide a variety of ways in which pupils can demonstrate learning

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. In the case of all other children or teachers 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. There are educational links on the school website that children can use while they are absent from 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) - Throughout the isolation period, a teacher will link in with the pupil via seesaw or by phone to update the child, offer motivation and social interaction and give feedback on work submitted. The pupil is expected to engage with activities on Seesaw and follow, complete and submit all assignments given to the class. Arrangements will be made for books required at home to be collected from the school.

If the pupil isolating is receiving learning support, the Special Education Teacher will assign and correct work sent electronically in collaboration with the class teacher. The SET will link in with the pupil via Seesaw. The SET may need to reduce time allocated to the affected child's class.

Children receiving SNA support will be offered regular contact from their SNA who will provide assistance and encouragement and offer a further social contact with the school.

3. School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate. Teacher will link in with the pupils via See-Saw.

4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14 day isolation period). Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw and once or twice a week on Zoom. Teachers may differ in their methods under this approach.

5. If a teacher / number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements and their class groups are still attending school, a substitute teacher will be sought to cover that teacher's teaching responsibilities in the school for the period in question. The teacher restricting their movements will support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning for pupils as per Section 12 of Circular 0049/2020.

6. Substitute teachers will be arranged to provide remote teaching for pupils in classes where the teacher has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and/or is medically unfit to work. The principal will ensure that substitute teachers have access to appropriate digital technology.

7. Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health) Staff will engage with pupils, using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons, Seesaw and Zoom.

8. Live tutorials and live video lessons will not be facilitated during any school closure.

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

Ratification of Plan

This plan was **ratified** by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's NS at its meeting on: 24.03.2021 and is subject to change, in light of any guidance or instruction received from Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health.

Signed: Mrs. O. Egan
School Principal

Date: 24.3.2021

Signed: Frank Geary
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 24.03.2021