



St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Roll Number: 16333Q

Deputy Principal: Lynsey Dungan

RCN: 20118839

Remote Learning Policy

Rationale:

This policy is designed to provide guidance for school staff and parents in situations where a partial or full school closure is advised by Departments of Public Health, the HSE and/or as advised by the Department of Education because of a case or cases of COVID-19. It outlines how individual pupils or groups of pupils who may have to self-isolate or restrict their movements can be supported in continuing their learning remotely.

Content:

It is possible that individual pupils or groups of pupils and teachers may find that they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements on a number of occasions during the school year. This may lead to an accumulation of a significant number of days where pupils learn from home and/or teachers work from home. Therefore, it is crucial that every effort is made to support the continuation of pupils' learning effectively. This is particularly important in the context of pupils at risk of early school leaving, pupils with special educational needs and pupils at risk of educational disadvantage. Where a partial or full school closure is required, we will immediately put in place our plan of action, which we set out below, to enable continuity of learning to the greatest possible extent for our pupils.

Where pupils are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, teachers will continue to focus on supporting their wellbeing. In addition, the wellbeing of all staff and families will be taken into consideration during this time. Staff and families who are experiencing particularly challenging times will be directed to the support services available at gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/ or to the resources and supports provided by agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Túsla Education Support Service (TESS) or the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme. NEPS will be consulted in relation to the academic, social and emotional needs of our pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department's previous publications "Guidance on Continuity of Schooling", published in April 2020 and "Remote Learning in a Covid-19 Context", published in October 2020 as well as other guidance in this respect published during and after the general school closure during March 2020 and all of which are available at education.gov.ie.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the school's

- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Protection Policy



Communication:

- **Staff:** Email and WhatsApp are the two principal methods of electronic communication between staff. Use of these platforms within the school and for school business is at all times subject to the terms of the School's Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.
- **Pupils:** We have chosen Seesaw as our digital learning platform and we will use it for remote teaching and learning. Each pupil is assigned an eight letter code and a QR code for access. Parents are invited to sign up to the Seesaw Family App. Teachers and school management will have complete control over material published on the class blog in Seesaw. If any inappropriate material is received, contact will be made with the parent directly to let them know.
- **Parents:** Teachers will continue to use email as the main method of communication with parents and where family circumstances don't allow use of Seesaw, work may be sent home by email or by post. Teachers and parents may also communicate by telephone, using the school landline or mobile or, where the school or class has been closed due to Covid-19, using personal phones with caller ID turned off. In general, parents will have received an email or text from the school mobile number alerting them that teacher will be ringing from an unlisted number before the call is made.

Professional Development for School Staff:

School staff have already engaged in professional development in the use of Seesaw through short videos available on the internet and where appropriate, further courses in specific aspects of Seesaw. Teachers will continue with the ongoing sharing of expertise in this as in all other areas of professional development. Croke Park hours have been used to allow staff to upskill in Seesaw and may be used for further upskilling on this topic depending on need. Relevant and appropriate professional development programmes are brought to the attention of staff on a regular basis in regard to all aspects of digital learning.

Developing Necessary Skills in Pupils

While schools are open, teachers use Seesaw to assign small amounts of homework to their class once a week. When setting homework, teachers outline clearly the work to be done and the due date for completed work to be uploaded to Seesaw. In general, parents are given a number of days to complete and upload the homework to allow for situations where a number of people in the household are using the same device for work/schoolwork etc. Teachers will provide feedback on the homework in class or by recording a voice message or writing a comment on the Seesaw platform.

Supporting Equity of Access to Digital Resources

Where gaps have been identified in engagement with Seesaw, during a partial or full closure due to Covid-19, all relevant staff (class teachers, ANT, SNA, school management) will support those parents via email, phone calls and by directing them to relevant information, courses and webinars. This support will be ongoing as long as the pupils in question are absent due to public health advice. The precise nature of the support in every case will be determined by school management in consultation with staff.

Where necessary, packs of learning activities will be provided by email or post and supported by phone contact. Where necessary, in the absence of loans of devices from any other school etc, taking account of family income and funding available to the school, the school may consider providing a loan of a tablet where necessary in order to facilitate use of Seesaw. Where such loan is made the parents receiving the device will sign a School Device Loan Agreement.

All teachers have access to the necessary digital technologies to support remote learning.

Teacher Preparation for Teaching and Learning

Teachers plan in class level groups and every teacher has a copy of the short and long term plans for the class. These are emailed/shared digitally between teachers so that they can be provided to a substitute teacher in the event that a class teacher is unfit for work.

A substitute teacher working remotely with a class or group on Seesaw must introduce themselves on the platform and state to the class and parents that they are remotely teaching for that time period.

Relevant Contact Details

The Chairperson of the Board of Management has access to up-to-date contact details for all teachers on the staff, in the event that some/all of the school leadership team are unavailable for work. The contact details of the school's assigned inspector are also shared with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Communication with External Agencies

We 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 Tús Education Support Service (TESS).

Personnel to Support Continuity of Schooling

Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers (SETs) and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

- We will provide for continuity of schooling to the greatest extent possible for those pupils who are advised to restrict their movements.
- All teachers are expected to be flexible in their approach to supporting pupils who are asked to restrict their movements.
- ANTs and SNAs should collaborate with the class teacher in order to provide learning support for pupils on their caseload with additional needs who are required to restrict their movements. In consultation with the teacher, and in the absence of the teacher, the Principal and the SNA can use Seesaw to interact with the child via prerecorded video or audio files with the SNA perhaps reading a story, singing a nursery rhyme or doing another activity to support the pupil/SNA relationship and cater for the child's needs.
- A teacher 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.
- A teacher on the staff who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will remain on special leave with pay and must be recorded by the employer as 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' on the OLCS. Where special leave with pay has been granted, a substitute teacher will be appointed (C10049/2020.)
- The school Principal will 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 and that frequency of contact is in line with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.

Continuity of Teaching/Learning

In situations where pupils are requested to self-isolate or restrict their movements but the teachers have not been specifically advised to do so, the resources and digital infrastructure in the school building should continue to be used during the school day by these teachers.

Where it is necessary to support pupils in their learning from home for reasons related to COVID-19, school leaders should ensure that such provision is characterised by:

- Regular engagement with pupils: The teachers assigned responsibility for supporting pupils learning remotely will communicate with pupils on a daily basis, using the school's agreed


communication methods, while taking into account that some pupils may not be in a position to engage with remote teaching and learning each day. Additional Needs Teachers (ANTs) 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 teachers 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 will involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils. Teachers will ensure, as far as practicable, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches including pre-recorded video, audio, presentation software (PowerPoint or similar software) and written instructions. 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 will ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way. The number of tasks assigned will take account of the fact that pupils are doing this work from home and will need parental support.
- Learning tasks: The tasks chosen will be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupils, including learners with SEN, and will enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- Learning Packs can also be used to support learning in our junior school context where necessary/appropriate. They can contain pencils, scissors, glue sticks, mini whiteboards, copy books, worksheets, workbooks etc. They can also be tailored to accommodate children with additional needs who need differentiated learning activities using concrete materials. They will also answer the problem of access to technology and broadband, gaps in parental skills and difficulties with access to digital platforms. SNAs can be involved in the preparation of these packs where necessary.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13/4/2021

Signed



Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins,
Chairperson, BOM.