

Newtownmountkennedy Primary School

Remote Learning Policy

1. Introduction

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 when directed to do so by the Department of Education and Skills.

We recognise that online safety is of huge importance and the aim of this document 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 or Acceptable Usage Policy. Rather, it is proposed as an important addition to the area of learning from a digital platform. The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Behaviour 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).
- m) Guidance on Remote Learning in a COVID-19 Context: September – December 2020

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

During any period of long term closure, staff at Newtownmountkennedy Primary School will continue to provide education and support to all our children using remote learning, as directed by the DES. School hours will remain the same (9.00-2.40pm Monday to Friday). All learning will be conducted using Google Classroom platform and Zoom This will allow

staff to keep in daily contact in a professional and confidential manner with their class. Teachers will be able to schedule learning that does not overwhelm our children. Teaching and learning can be tailored, changed and updated as time progresses. In all communication we aim to prioritise the wellbeing of our pupils.

2. Context

Teaching and Learning is always evolving, especially, as we move deeper into the 21st century. Developments in IT 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 Positive 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. Newtownmountkennedy Primary School 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.

3. Guidelines for online communication in Newtownmountkennedy Primary School

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
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 will communicate with pupils and their families via Aladdin connect, email, phone calls or through an established platform, e.g. Google Classroom.
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified - Google Classroom
7. By using Google Classroom, parents are giving their child permission to engage in online platforms for educational purposes.
8. For video call, parental permission is implied. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
9. Cameras should be turned on for all video calls.
10. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.

11. **Newtownmountkennedy Primary School** cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.

Newtownmountkennedy Primary School will use Google Classroom and Zoom for communicating and connecting with families/pupils. Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of assigned work, pre-recorded lessons and Daily Meet video calls.

Media which the school will use

- **Aladdin**
- Google Classroom
- Zoom

4. Rules for pupils using online communication

For submitting learning:

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. Be positive and respectful.

For video calls

1. Remember to ensure you join each Video Call meeting using your child's name. and have your video turned on.
2. Waiting Room will be enabled by the teacher. Children who have their name correctly displayed will be allowed to enter the call.
3. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
4. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
5. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
6. Join the video with your microphone muted.
7. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class. Raised hand icon can be used on Zoom video calls.
8. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
9. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
10. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
11. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
12. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

5. Guidelines for parents and guardians

For learning

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.

For video calls/Zoom

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
3. The main purpose of a video call is to maintaining a social connection between the school staff and pupils. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
5. Please note that school staff will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your account. (i.e. Family Name).
6. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the video call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
7. 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.
8. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
9. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
10. For detailed information online security visit webwise.ie
11. 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.

6. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Pupils

1. Check assigned work.
2. The normal school calendar will apply.
3. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - a. Code of Behaviour
 - b. Anti- Bullying Policy
 - c. Acceptable Use Policy
 - d. Child Protection Policy
4. Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply, with students expected to present all assignments to the best of their ability, **where possible** in this evolving and unprecedented situation.

- a. In so far as possible, provision for SEN students will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.
- b. In so far as possible, provision for students at very high-risk to Covid 19 will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

7. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Parents

1. We ask parents/guardians to ensure protocols for students are adhered to.
2. Check-in on their child's school work on a daily basis and talk to their child about the work being assigned.
3. The health and wellbeing of all is paramount. Circumstances may change for any of us unexpectedly, teachers or parents, so please keep schooling in perspective and do not allow anything school related to impinge on your child negatively. You are the primary educator of your child and you make those calls. We encourage a little work every week day for routine. We provide work and guidance and ask parents and pupils to do their best and that is all.

8. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNA's

1. Check uploaded work daily.
2. SNA works under the direction of the class teacher.
3. Communication via school email, Google Classroom, Aladdin, phone call
4. The normal school calendar will apply.
5. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - a. Child Protection Policy
 - b. Data Protection Policy
 - c. Anti-Bullying Policy
 - d. Acceptable Use Policy
6. 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 possible.

9. Remote Teaching and Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid 19 related scenarios

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.

Provision for all other children 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.

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).

Teacher will link in with the pupil. Work may be uploaded on Google Classroom.

3. School POD instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate.

Teacher will link in with the pupils via Google Classroom.

4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14day isolation period).

Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Google Classroom and have a Daily Meet video on Zoom.

5. Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health)

Teachers will engage with pupils, using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons on Google Classroom and Daily Meet calls on Zoom.

Provision for all other children who are NOT instructed to self-isolate by their GP or HSE Public Health, educational provision will be provided as follows:

While we will work with parents as much as possible in the current situation, we will not be in a position to facilitate 1:1 teaching remotely for children who remain at home due to parental concern and are not instructed to self-isolate. These children will not be provided with work individually as school will be open for all pupils and it is a parental decision to keep the child at home. We hope you understand that we will not be providing work for your child should this happen, as the teacher will be teaching the class onsite and is not in a position to do so. Work will only be provided in situations listed above. Pupils are reminded that they will be marked absent. Since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 schools are obliged to report on school attendance and if any child reaches 20 absent days it will be referred to TUSLA as per NEWB guidelines.

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

10. Flexibility of Learning

We realise that the circumstances that cause our school to close will affect families in a number of ways. In our planning and expectations, we are aware of the need for flexibility from all sides: -

- parents may be trying to work from home so access to technology as a family may be limited;
- Parents may have two or more children trying to access technology and need to prioritise the needs of young people studying towards Junior Cert/Leaving Certificate or 3rd Level;
- staff may be trying to manage their home situation and the learning of their own children

- systems may not always function as they should.

An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, these difficulties on all sides is essential for success.

11. Expectation Management

We believe that it is in the best interests of our children that we continue to provide structured support to the best of our ability and we will continue to teach and progress through the curriculum during this period. Bearing in mind the need for flexibility, no deadlines will be set. Children and parents should consider the arrangements as set out in this document as highly recommended.

Children will:-

- Be assured that wellbeing is at the forefront of our thoughts and the need for children to take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise and maintain a reasonable balance between online engagement and offline activities;
- Only send messages and queries on Google Classroom that are in relation to tasks set by the teacher or in response to questions the teacher may ask them directly;
- Only access the material shared by their teacher and ask for parental permission to use technology for anything beyond that
- Read daily, either independently or with an adult;

Parents will:-

- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability;
- Encourage their child to access and engage with Google Classroom/Zoom from their teacher
- Contact their child's teacher if they are having difficulty learning a concept/understanding the topic being covered.
- Refrain from screenshotting or copying any information, messages or posts to share on social media or any other platform outside of Google Classroom/Zoom.
- Know they can continue to contact their class teacher as normal through Google Classroom or email if they require support of any kind;
- Check their child's completed work each day and encourage the progress that is being made;
- Be mindful of mental well-being of both themselves and their child and encourage their child to take regular breaks, play games, get fresh air and relax;

N.B. In compliance with Copyright Law and regulations governing the use of photocopiable materials parents must note that resources are for viewing online only on our secure class platform unless otherwise specified. They must not be printed, photocopied or distributed. The school will not take responsibility for any breach of Copyright Law.

12. **Remote Learning Systems Access Information**

- All pupils have been provided with a newtownprimary gmail address.
- This address is used to access Google Classroom.
- Instructions on how to access Google Classroom are available on our school website www.newtownprimary.ie