

Omagh Academy Remote Teaching and Learning Policy



Omagh Academy	Remote Teaching and Learning Policy
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Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

The context

The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted in an increased emphasis on **remote** learning or **blended** learning.

Blended Learning: The Department of Education has defined ‘blended learning’ as: *an approach to education whereby schools will combine classroom-based teaching and learning methods within school, with a range of remote learning in order to deliver the NI Curriculum.*

Remote Learning: Remote learning is often used to refer to teaching and learning that takes place online. However, it also covers teaching and learning using hard copy resources such as text books and worksheets.

The aims of this policy:

This policy aims to guide staff, parents and pupils as to the expectations for remote learning and teaching or blended learning in the exceptional case that the School is closed or access is restricted. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to:

- Extreme or inclement weather
- Global pandemic
- Loss of utilities such as electricity, heating or water.

2. Overview

Omagh Academy has chosen the Microsoft Teams platform on the C2K system as its main means of communication during any remote/blended learning period.

Remote Learning

It must be noted that the teaching experiences will not all look the same – as with pupils when working at home, teachers have varying access to high quality broadband or they may be in school supervising other pupils. Moreover, teachers and pupils cannot be expected to cover the same amount of material as they would in a face-to-face teaching environment:

‘One key learning point that has emerged worldwide...is that schools should not expect to make similar progress to taught lessons in any given period of remote learning.’

Department of Education, NI, Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning

Therefore, there is a need to take a pragmatic approach to teaching and learning during periods of remote learning.

Blended Learning

In the event of an increased requirement for social distancing or where a pupil is required to self isolate, school staff will utilise a blended learning approach.

3. Remote Teaching and Learning

The virtual classroom is an extension of the physical classroom and the normal rules, codes of behaviour and protocols apply between staff and pupils, as well as staff and parents.

Remote learning

Live streamed classes – Microsoft Teams - Staff will never be compelled to use livestreaming, but the option of livestreaming will afford staff the opportunity to decide for themselves as a matter of informed and free professional choice. It must be recognised that live streaming requires good broadband access for staff and pupils, brings increased safeguarding implications and is more open to abuse.

Blended learning

There is no prescribed approach to blended learning, as different formats will suit different subjects. In a blended learning environment, it must be recognised that teaching staff will be teaching their full timetable inside school, as well as managing remote learning – therefore arrangements must be manageable – in particular queries from those engaged in remote learning will be handled on return to the classroom.

Livestreaming from within class – when some pupils are in school and others are at home – is at the discretion of the teacher.

There is no expectation that new materials should be produced specifically for blended learning. Access to blended learning should be available to students from collaborating schools and collaborating schools and learning partners such as South West College should include Omagh Academy pupils in their blended learning arrangements.

3.1 Teaching Staff – Key Principles for Remote Teaching Teachers should:

- Ensure that all interactions with pupils are in line with the school's Acceptable Use of IT for staff and adhere to the Child Protection Policy.
- Recognise that the pupil-teacher relationship remains central and helps support pupil motivation with remote learning – encouragement and reassurance is important.
- Keep learning purposeful, so that pupils have an understanding of the core learning requirements
- Aim to provide clear explanations, recognising the increased complexity of processing required from a pupil in remote learning. Aim to provide information and text in manageable chunks.
- Avoid long extended tasks, unless the task is broken down into interim steps and deadlines
- Give consideration to the balance between online and offline learning in the tasks set for pupils
- Give consideration to effective methods of feedback – this may include whole class feedback, use of quizzes e.g. Kahoot and/or individual feedback to pupils.
- Provide feedback which recognises pupil achievements as well as areas for improvement. Teachers may award merits and/or certificates to recognise achievements.

- Provide regular opportunities to allow pupils to reflect and review their learning, identifying where issues lie
- Recognise that 30 – 45 minutes is the optimal timing for online learning per class at a post primary level (DE Circular Number: 2020/05)
- Follow the school escalation procedures for pupils who are not engaging with work set.
- If a member of staff is ill and unavailable during a school closure they should inform the Senior Leadership Team so that appropriate work can be set for their students by the subject HOD during the period of absence.
- If school is in full closure, staff are asked to check C2K e-mails at regular intervals.
- Heads of Department will be responsible for overseeing that teachers in their department are setting appropriate tasks in line with schemes of work with appropriate resources.

Live streamed classes

Should staff choose to live stream classes through Microsoft Teams, they should follow the principles set out below:

- Remind the class that it is their responsibility to turn their video/audio off unless permission is given to have cameras/audio switched on.
- Set clear expectations for pupil behaviour and routines in the online environment
- Be familiar with the ability to mute or remove a pupil from the online class, should a pupil be behaving inappropriately – any such incident should be reported to the Head of Department and/or Head of Year. In most cases, the teachers should prompt positive behaviour and provide warning that if behaviour continues to fall below expected standards, they will have to remove the pupil from the class – this provides the child an opportunity to rectify their behaviour. In extreme cases, this may not be possible. Where the incident raises a safeguarding concern, normal school procedures should be followed as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.
- Give consideration to pupils who do not have the broadband capability to access live streamed classes, ensuring their learning needs can be met. Where possible, upload teaching materials in advance of the timetabled class to maximise the effectiveness of the online session
- Ensure that any period of face-to-face contact begins with a review of work completed outside school, allowing pupils to raise queries and areas of confusion. This may involve the use of retrieval practice techniques.
- Follow up on non-engagement on the part of any pupils following the procedures outlined in point 6 of this policy.

3.2 Pupils – Key Principles for Remote Learning Pupils should:

- Adhere to school's E-Safety policy and relevant safeguarding policies.
- Become familiar with the guidance in the Omagh Academy E Learning Pupil Guidance Booklet.
- Check their C2K email on a daily basis for correspondence from teachers/School.
- Use Microsoft Teams on a daily basis to help prevent work building up or becoming overwhelming.
- Check the Assignments tab in Teams on a daily basis to ensure that assignments are submitted up to date.

- Pupils should follow their school timetable where possible and complete all activities/tasks in a timely manner.
- Establish a routine for their learning which includes breaks and time away from the screen – in particular allow time for exercise.
- Consider how they can best minimise distractions in their home environment to help with their learning.
- Recognise that the online classroom is an extension of the physical classroom and that the normal rules in terms of respectful communication apply.
- Engage in all tasks set to the best of their ability – where there is an issue or they are unsure, consider the support resources available to them. These may include taking time to reread/re-watch/re-listen to the instructions; contact with peers who are undertaking the same task; advice from a parent/guardian; reference to the Omagh Academy E Learning Pupil Guide for technical support; request for further clarification or information from the class teacher.
- Recognise that some tasks will feel very challenging when they are working independently and that is okay – try not to panic if it does not come easily and they don't understand.
- Recognise that teacher feedback will often include actions for improvement – try not to feel this is personal or respond defensively but recognise that this is a vital part of how we all learn and an important function of any teacher's role.
- Seek support if they are feeling overwhelmed – speak to an adult and/or seek support from their Form Teacher/Year Head.
- Use Microsoft Teams or C2K email to communicate with their teachers during the school day. Personal email accounts should not be used.
- Stay connected to friends/peers to support their own wellbeing.

If pupils are participating in live streamed classes, they should:

- Ensure they are familiar with the Online Learning – Guidance for Pupils (Appendix 1) which sets out the code of behaviour expected for live streamed classes.
- Be aware that lack of engagement with an online class is the same as within a live lesson; it will affect progress, attainment and assessment and will be reflected in the school's reporting process. Teachers will download a record of pupil attendance from Teams if they conduct live lessons to facilitate the monitoring of attendance.
- Recognise that inappropriate behaviour will be challenged in the same way as it would in the classroom – after a warning, they may be removed from the class if they are failing to follow the expected norms as set out in the Online Learning – Guidance for Pupils (Appendix 1). On rare occasions, a pupil may be removed from the live streamed class without prior warning if their behaviour is deemed to be extreme. Any removal of a pupil from an online class will be reported.
- Pupils **MUST NOT** at any point take screen grabs or record live streamed classes. Any breach of this will be treated as a severe behaviour infringement and may be reported to outside agencies depending on the nature of the breach.
- Aim to adopt the problem solving approaches if they come across a difficulty – teachers will expect to see evidence of effort. On the rare occasion that they come across a difficulty that proves insurmountable in their remote learning and stopped them from any work completion,

they should contact their Teacher via Microsoft Teams or C2K email during school hours (0855am – 3.30pm) or ask a parent to contact school to make teachers aware of this.

- Note anything they remain unsure of during non-contact time which can be raised on return to school.

3.3 Parents – Key Principles for Remote Learning

The need to be pragmatic in our approach to remote learning extends to parents. We recognise that parents are not replacement teachers – we also recognise that they will have competing demands in terms of their own work and care for others in the household; some Key Workers may not be present during the day when remote learning is happening.

Parents should:

- Ensure the child can access online resources, using a PC, laptop or smartphone and wi-fi and notify the school if there are issues.
- Ensure their child is familiar with the Omagh Academy E Learning Pupil Guidance Booklet.
- Discuss their child's working environment to make sure it is suitable. Have a discussion with them about how they will manage distractions
- Encourage a routine – in particular, regular morning start times and reasonable bedtimes
- Discuss their child's learning – this does not need to be in-depth – it can be as simple as asking about what classes they had that day and what tasks they found tricky or enjoyed. Research indicates that this helps build pupil motivation. This will also allow a parent to be more aware of potential concerns such as non-engagement or a child feeling overwhelmed.
- Encourage problem-solving – emphasise it is okay to find tasks difficult or not to understand. This will help support a child who may be inclined to panic and help develop their independence and resilience. Calmly work through the strategies they have tried such as re-reading tasks, peer support, online videos and contact with the teacher – encourage them to attempt the task even if unsure. If they cannot attempt the work at all, the parent can contact the school to make them aware of the issue.
- Recognise that teacher feedback to their child may involve steps/actions for improvement – encourage them not to take this personally or feel criticised – this is normal and a vital part of the learning process .
- Notify the school via telephone (028 82 242688) or the school info account (info@omaghacademy.ni.sch.uk), if adverse circumstances are preventing their child engaging with remote learning, such as a house move, illness/other family circumstances or loss of internet connection. Please note, teachers will follow up non-completion of work and if they are unaware of difficulties at home, this can lead to additional stress.
- Recognise that normal protocols apply and they should contact the school via telephone (028 82 242688) or the school info account (info@omaghacademy.ni.sch.uk) to raise any concerns – a teacher, Year Head or member of the senior staff will be in touch with them to discuss these concerns.
- Encourage their child to maintain contact with peers, to take regular breaks away from screens and to exercise to support physical and mental wellbeing.

If pupils are participating in live streamed classes, parents should:

- Ensure their child is familiar with the Omagh Academy Live Stream Guidance for Pupils (Appendix 1) which sets out the code of behaviour expected for live streamed classes – in particular, ensuring their child understands that behaviour that is not appropriate will lead to their removal from the class.
- If possible, providing a secure, private space for the child to work; it would not be appropriate for a parent to observe or attempt to participate in an online lesson. If a parent does so, the pupil will be asked to leave the class and a member of the senior staff will be in touch to discuss the incident.
- Recognise that any queries about a child's work or progress should come from the child and be communicated to the teacher on the online platform. A parent may make contact with the school via the info account (info@omaghacademy.ni.sch.uk) or by telephoning school (028 82 242688).
- Discuss the severity of an offence such as screen grabs or recording of an online live streamed class without prior permission with their children. Make pupils aware that this is a GDPR data breach and therefore is a legal issue – it will be considered a very serious behaviour infringement by the school. Any such behaviour will be referred to external agencies as appropriate.

4. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Vulnerable Pupils

If the context requires a return to remote or blended learning, pupils with special educational needs and those designated as vulnerable will be supported in line with DENI/ EA guidance.

In Omagh Academy, arrangements may involve:

- Enhanced monitoring of pupil work on Microsoft Teams and support phone calls home
- Remote support from classroom assistants to encourage pupils to organise their work and stay engaged.
- A request for a pupil to complete learning in school where that is possible and deemed appropriate.

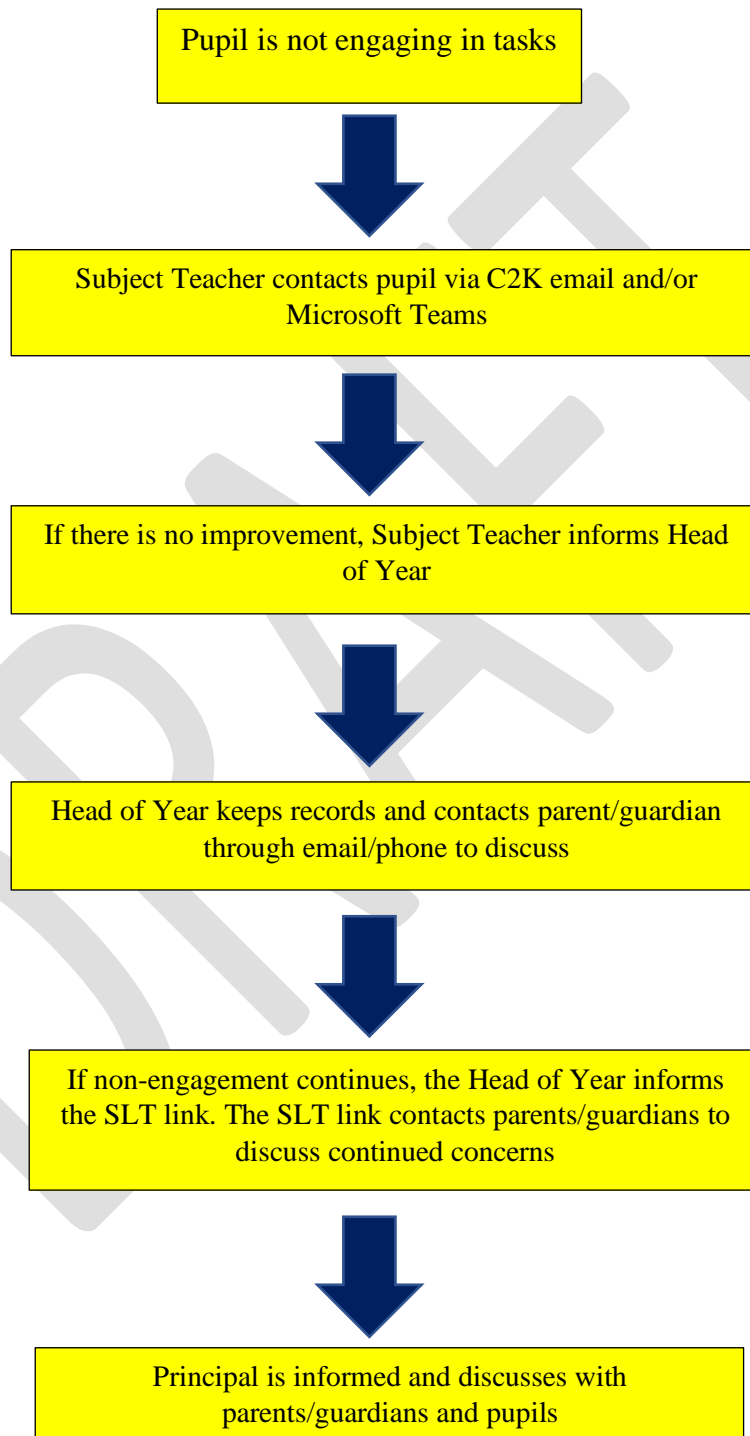
5. Pastoral care

- The school counselling service will be offered online, with referrals being made via the Pastoral Vice Principal, Mrs Gervais who can be contacted by phoning school.
- The Head of Year will use the Year group Team, email and telephone calls to support pupils and parents/guardians. A list of email addresses and contact numbers may be kept for this purpose in the event access to the SIMS console is not possible.

6. Non-engagement by pupils with Remote Learning

The Department of Education NI, has stated that it is vital that schools follow up non-engagement with remote learning with pupils as it has the potential to hinder a pupil's long term engagement with education and lead to undue stress on their return to full time schooling.

During periods of full remote learning, the school will implement the following escalation procedures to follow up on non-engagement of pupils with their learning.



If a blended learning approach is being adopted by the school, follow up of non-completion of work will be undertaken during in-school sessions and may result in the pupil attending after school support sessions. During remote learning, the pupil can be directed to attend school for supervised learning.

7. Return to school following a period of Remote/Blended Learning

When a return to school happens after any period of remote/blended learning, teachers should take time to reassure and encourage pupils; there may be a period of readjustment required. Teachers should avoid language which focuses on catch up, missed work and an emphasis on being behind which can add additional pressure and reduce motivation or risk further disengagement from pupils. Where courses build on prior learning, teachers should take time to consolidate and check what learning is secure from the remote learning period and what aspects may need additional support. However, where a pupil has not engaged, it is unrealistic for a teacher to re-teach all of the material covered. Instead, they will identify key concepts and support/practise materials to be prioritised.

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Appendix 1

Online Learning – Guidance for Pupils

Pupil checklist – Live Lessons

- Pupils are expected to keep their cameras switched off unless invited by the teacher to switch them on, for example, to confirm attendance, when the pupil is asking/answering a question, or during a whole-class discussion.
- Pupils should be dressed appropriately. This should be formal attire such as school uniform or semi-formal attire (no pyjamas will be permitted)
- Pupils must be in a shared area in their home. They should not be located in bedrooms when joining a livestreamed lesson;
- Pupils should ensure that no personal information and/or unsuitable personal items are not visible, either on screen or in video backgrounds. Indeed, backgrounds could be ‘blurred’ at the start of lessons by selecting this background in Teams.
- Pupils are expected to keep their microphones on mute unless invited by the teacher to come off mute to contribute. (Teachers can disable incoming audio);
- The teacher will decide if and when pupils may have the opportunity to take part in online discussion, either via the chat or microphone functions. It is expected that pupils follow classroom etiquette when they do so, ensuring that they address the teacher formally and respectfully at all times; They should use the ‘Hands-Up’ function to alert the teacher to a question or issue and keep the microphone muted until called into the lesson by the teacher.
- Pupils must never interrupt teachers during a livestreamed lesson, and if the opportunity arises for discussion, must take it in turns to speak;
- If inappropriate language or behaviour takes place, participants involved will be removed by staff, the session may be terminated, and concerns will be reported to the appropriate Head of Year.
- Pupils should make sure any extra devices are switched off so they won’t become distracted;
- Pupils should have all they need ready e.g. pens, booklets, textbooks and/or exercise books.
- Live lessons may be recorded by the teacher and uploaded onto the class team. Pupils must not record, store, or distribute the live lesson;
- Pupils should be aware that lack of engagement with an online class is the same as within a live lesson; it will affect progress, attainment and assessment and will be reflected in the school’s reporting process. Teachers will download a record of pupil attendance from Teams if they conduct live lessons to monitor engagement.

Appendix 2: Staying Safe Online

As pupils learn from home, they will most likely use the Internet much more than they normally would. It's important that never share their password, personal details or private information with anyone online.

Sources of support:

The Safer Schools App

The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), has partnered with INEQE Safeguarding Group to provide the award-winning Safer Schools App to support all school staff, parents and carers to keep children in their care safer online. Search for 'Safer Schools' in the iOS App Store or on the Google Play Store.

(You can download it on more than one device)

[Safer Schools Northern Ireland – Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#)

CEOP

CEOP has lots of help and advice for staying safe online and can be accessed here:

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

For pupils in Years 8, 9 or 10, they can find help here: https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/

For pupils in Years 11, 12, 13 or 14, they can find help here:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/

General guidance points

- Pupils should be wary when receiving emails with links to click or emails requesting personal information.
- Pupils should use their school email for school, not for any other reason.
- Pupils should only use your C2k username and password for Microsoft Teams and ensure all communication with teachers is like it would be in school face to face.
- They should consider their 'screen time' – they will be using a device all day as a learning tool so don't use it all night too. They should switch off for 5 minutes every hour and get out for some fresh air.
- If pupils use Social Media, they should review their privacy settings to make sure only their friends can contact and interact with them.