

Remote Learning Policy

Kilbonane National School

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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.

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 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 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) and Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- b) Equal Status Act (2000)
- c) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- d) Disability Act (2005)
- e) Children First Act (2017)
- f) GDPR - Data Protection Act (2018)
- g) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary schools
- h) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).
- i) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020)
- j) DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: *Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19* (August 2020).
- k) 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.

1. 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 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. Kilbonane National 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.

2. Guidelines for good online communication

1. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online and adhere to the guidelines and protocols circulated to all members of the school community via our school e-mail.
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 will communicate with pupils and their families via our school e-mail, Seesaw, Aladdin Connect and Zoom/Google Meet/Microsoft Teams. Students and staff will communicate only using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified.
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
7. Pupils will only be invited to a Zoom session once the circulated guidelines and protocols are accepted by their parent (via e-mail). Once the initial Zoom permission has been obtained, parental permission is implied for all further Zoom sessions.
8. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
9. Kilbonane National School cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.

3. Media which will be primarily used by the school:

E-mail

Each teacher will communicate with parents/guardians and pupils via their professional e-mail and vice-versa. Parental queries will be addressed during school hours only and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning.

Seesaw:

Seesaw is an online platform which enables pupils to connect to their folder of work and to access their teacher when required. Some lessons may be pre-recorded and uploaded on Seesaw.

Aladdin Connect

Staff may communicate with parents via Aladdin Connect. All families are asked to download the Aladdin Connect app.

Zoom (Google Meet and Microsoft Teams may also be used)

Zoom is a video-conferencing platform which will enable teachers, staff and pupils to connect via a live link. Teachers will connect with pupils regularly using pre-arranged Zoom meetings.

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.

For video calls/Zoom:

1. Pupils joining meeting must be supervised by a parent/guardian at all times.
2. When joining a video meeting please use a clearly identifiable name (first name and surname).
3. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
4. Join the video with your microphone muted, and earphones in (if possible).
5. You must have your video on.
6. Dress appropriately and take the call in an appropriate place.
7. In the unlikely event of a Zoom meeting being hacked, please turn off your screen. The teacher will immediately press the 'end meeting for all' button.
8. Taking photographs or screenshots of the meeting is not permitted.

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 engage in online learning activities while 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. Parents should ensure that their child is on time for the scheduled Zoom meeting. Please wait for the host to start the meeting.
6. 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.
7. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
8. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
9. Any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. It may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or a meeting being terminated.

6. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Pupils

1. Check assigned work each school day
2. Communication may only take place during normal school hours
3. The normal school calendar will apply
4. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - a. Code of Behaviour
 - b. Anti-Bullying Policy
 - c. Acceptable Use Policy
5. 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 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 student 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/SNAs

1. Check uploaded work daily
2. Communication may only take place during normal school hours
3. The normal school calendar will apply
4. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - a. Child Protection Policy
 - b. Data Protection Policy
5. 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. Relevant feedback will be provided by the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher on an ongoing basis.

9. 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. Provision for all other children who are instructed to self-isolate or restrict their movements by their GP/HSE Public Health or in the event of a school closure advised by the 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. If a staff member feels a particular child might be in need of additional support for a particular reason, an arrangement specific to that child might be put in place.

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).**

The pupil is expected to engage with Seesaw and follow, complete and submit all assignments given to the class. Throughout the isolation period, a teacher will link in with the pupil via Seesaw and e-mail to update the child, offer motivation and social interaction and give feedback on work submitted.

Arrangements can 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 and e-mail. 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. a) School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate. Teacher in school.

As above (#2)

b) School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate/teacher isolating.

Where the teacher is self-isolating also, they will prepare the work for the pod using Seesaw and Zoom. They will check in with the pod on a daily basis to offer social contact and motivation. A substitute teacher will teach the remaining pod groups within the class.

c) Where the teacher at home is on sick leave

The Special Education Team will provide the instructional activities for the pod using the time allocated to the class in question.

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

The class teacher will be required to provide remote/distance teaching to all the pupils in the class using the school's digital platforms or other agreed method as needed.

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

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

Our school acknowledges how crucially important it is that the learning of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage, is supported at this time. For that reason, the following requirements in relation to remote teaching and learning of all pupils are particularly important:

- **Regular engagement with pupils/students:** Teachers will engage with their pupils on a daily basis. This engagement will involve a mixture of Zoom meetings, recorded video lessons, audio presentations, the assignment of independent learning tasks and projects by way of Seesaw and any other platform approved by the school.
- **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..
- **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.
- **Learning tasks:** The tasks chosen will be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and will enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- **Two-way feedback between home and school:** Two-way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and their pupils is encouraged and supported. Manageable and accessible opportunities for all pupils to regularly share samples of their work with the teacher(s) throughout each week will be provided. In so far as possible, teachers will ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.
- **Support for pupils/students with SEN:** Special education teachers (SETs) will continue to engage with the pupils on their caseloads and class teachers will differentiate teaching and learning in line with their pupils' needs to minimise disruption to their learning and progression.
- Where appropriate, 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.

Please note....

A timetable for Zoom will be furnished to prevent any overlap in the use of devices and to facilitate all family members accessing a device when needed. This timetable will be subject to change depending on the progress and requirements of particular classes

6. A teacher/number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

If the teacher's class group is 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

7. The school is required to close on foot of public health advice and a teacher is medically unfit to work from home.

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.

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

10. Summary:

1. Please keep an eye on any emails sent to you by the school. It is our main mode of communication.
2. Be guided by the work set by your child's teacher(s). Families are only expected to do what they can, given their particular set of circumstances. We place great value on talking to your child and reading for them and with them as well as encouraging them to read independently.
3. There will be no school work set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on Seesaw or Zoom during these times.
4. We ask parents/guardians, students and teachers to ensure protocols are adhered to at all times.
5. If you have yet to connect to any of the on-line platforms, please do so. If you are experiencing difficulties please email the school and we will assist you in any way that we can and please contact the school with any further queries you may have.

We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management of Kilbonane National School at a meeting on 7 December 2020.

It is subject to change, in light of any future guidance or instruction received from Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson BOM Kilbonane National School)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal, Kilbonane National School)

Recommended Apps

In addition to a pared back plan of work for your child/children, we suggest the following Apps for your child's use too, if you can access them. If not, do not worry, they are helpful but not essential.

- Cúla 4: Excellent for younger pupils for Irish vocab – very child friendly. There are also videos of your children's favourite cartoons here as Gaeilge which would be useful to watch occasionally to keep up with Irish.
- Doulingo: most suitable from 2nd class upwards. Excellent app. Tests your child Irish ability level at the start and they work away at their own level for 10mins daily.
- Mathduel: For tables. Fun and interactive.
- Starfall: For spellings. Again, very child friendly and useful to keep spellings progressing without feeling like schoolwork.
- Jolly Phonics App: to keep up phonics learning for infant classes.
- Dolch words Apps (there is a wide range available): for the development of sight words.
- Nessy Apps: for reading for pupils with dyslexia or difficulties.
- PinkFong: Digital stories for infant classes. Excellent and engaging.
- Khan Academy: Useful for maths for older pupils especially.
- Kahoot: for general knowledge and quizzes.
- Toontastic: probably the best app ever for digital storytelling – pupils can devise their own digital story, picking a range of characters, settings, even musical background. They plan a beginning, middle and end to their story and can record their own voices to tell the story.
- Puppetpals: similar to toontastic – useful for younger pupils. They can record themselves telling the story also.