



Teaching & Learning at home policy

Rationale

Remote learning will take place in the event of a school closure owing to Covid-19 recommendations by NPHET/Department of Education. Remote learning will also take place where the school must close owing to adverse weather conditions.

The primary obligations that all schools have are to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learners under Child Protection Policy and that their data is also protected under GDPR legislation.

Schools must ensure that learning may be able to take place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties. This Policy is prepared, therefore, 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 2017
- (g) GDPR
- (h) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools
- (i) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008). Relationship to school aims and mission

This interim Policy has been developed during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when remote teaching and learning was imposed on the school community, without prior knowledge and preparation. Coláiste Muire Ballymote endeavours to make it very clear to all of our partners that the values that are instilled in all of our policies remain, no matter how we change our teaching and learning methodologies or the location of that teaching and learning. This includes remote learning or when a child is being taught in an environment that is not within the school building and the teacher is working remotely and is not present

with the student(s). Remote learning will allow the continuation of teaching and learning so that students can continue to engage with teachers and work towards achieving their best.

Operation

- Remote learning will be conducted using the Microsoft Teams platform. All students have a Microsoft 365 account with a username and password. Teachers establish a Team for each class and the students in each class will be added to the relevant class Teams.
- Students who experience issues/problems with their Teams should contact the Principal/Deputy Principal in the first instance. The query will be either managed at that stage or referred to the appropriate person with the skills to handle the query.
- Social media sites e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Hangouts, WhatsApp etc, to communicate with students is never permissible and teachers have been advised accordingly.
- In the event of a school closure, teachers will schedule virtual lessons in Teams.
- Lessons will be conducted as per the timetable with at least one virtual lesson per week in each subject. Other timetabled lessons in each subject will be used by students to engage with work set by the teacher in that subject.
- Teachers will liaise with students in advance to notify them of the days/times of the virtual lessons. To this end, students must check their Teams in each subject each evening to ensure they receive the notifications on time.
- Certain subjects will lend themselves to virtual lessons more than others, resulting in differing levels of active engagement by students across subjects.
- Teachers, when working remotely will on most occasions try to communicate online during normal working hours and will endeavour not to communicate with students outside of these hours. However, everyone's circumstance is different and we have to be as accommodating to all members of our school community as we can, especially in these uncertain times. Parents and students need to be aware that teachers may have to send material/ assignments outside of regular school opening hours. This does not mean there is an expectation on the student to begin work at the time it is received. Likewise, there is never an expectation on the teacher to have to correct or comment on work sent on Teams outside of normal school hours. Whilst it might suit teachers or students to communicate outside of normal working hours, it is essential that everyone agrees that responses or actions outside of normal working hours are not required. We would urge all members of the school community to turn off notifications outside of their learning/working hours.
- In so far as possible, provision for SEN students, will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

Expectations

- All students are expected to have appropriate devices with the appropriate software installed (Teams/OneNote apps).

- The Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use policy will apply to virtual lessons. Teachers are the owners/managers of the Teams they create. Most Teams will be whole class groups but this may vary. When students are invited onto and put into a Team it is the exact same as being in the classroom and being with a class group. They have a teacher and the school's same rules continue to apply.
- Other Teams created by students themselves within a Team created by the teacher is not permitted.
- Students are expected to attend each live lesson as scheduled.
- Students are expected to complete work assigned to them and upload their work, as requested by the teacher, to the relevant Team for correction and feedback.
- Students should endeavour to contact their subject teachers during their scheduled contact times on their timetable and should make this contact in Teams.
- All communication between students and teachers must be by Teams and not by email.
- Students will join a virtual lesson with video switched on and audio switched off. The teacher will alternate between audio/video on/off to suit the lesson.
- Students must follow best practice when participating in a virtual lesson, i.e. a quiet location (not a bedroom), proper attire, neutral background, no family members visible.
- The material created by the teacher on Teams is the property of the teacher and students do not have permission to share to others outside of the Team unless given permission to do so. No live recording will be done using Teams – this is to respect the personal data of all, both teachers and students who participate in each virtual lesson. No recording or screen photographing of any part of the virtual lesson should be made by any other means. The recording and onwards sharing of personal data would be unlawful as well as a contravention of the school's policies.
- Students will use the 'raise hand' feature to communicate with the teacher.

Review & Ratification

This policy was reviewed by the Digital Team in October 2020 and ratified by the Board of Management on 20th October 2020.