

Scoil Mhuire, Broadway,
Our Lady's Island, Co. Wexford.
Roll No. 19741A



Remote Education Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a time of uncertainty regarding school closures, we have formulated this policy to outline how the school will maintain the link between school and home.

Rationale

In the event of another whole or partial school closure, we aim to continue to communicate with our pupils through various means. We will also use these online methods of communication throughout the school year when schools remain open. This will help ensure familiarity for all parents, pupils and staff. It will ensure that if another school closure was to happen, the transition to online learning will be more transparent.

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 (including Cyber Bullying) Policy.

The primary obligation of all schools is 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).

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

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 the same statutory rules apply. This means that the school's Code of Behaviour and all of the school's policies still 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. Scoil Mhuire 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.

A school closure will affect families in different ways. Work commitments, caring responsibilities etc. impact the amount of time parents can give to Remote Education. The teachers will be cognisant of this and this will be reflected in the expectations in relation to children's learning activities.

Platforms

The platforms chosen will be evaluated to ensure they are compliant with GDPR and are helping our pupils to continue to engage with learning activities.

Online platforms currently being used include:

- Aladdin Connect
- Seesaw
- Our school website
- Gmail
- Video Conferencing

Further platforms may be used during this closure.

Protocols in relation to Remote Education

General

The following protocols have been put in place to provide guidance on what is best practice when using these online platforms to ensure the online safety of pupils and teachers:

1. Staff of the school communicate with parents by means of their school email address, Aladdin Connect and Seesaw.
2. Use of online resources and communication will be for educational purposes only.
3. Staff will communicate using parents' email addresses and not directly with pupils.
4. Staff members will seek to become familiar with online resources before using them.
5. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to the principal without delay.
6. Parental consent is sought when setting up new accounts on online platforms.
7. For video conferencing calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address or Aladdin account or Seesaw. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
8. In the case of any digital newsletter or tab being added to our school website, photographs of children are only accepted from their parents/guardians. The school will explicitly state what the use of these photographs is for prior to asking for these to be sent. An example of this may be Active Week or Creative Week.
9. It is the duty of parents/ guardians to supervise children while they are working online.
10. It is the duty of the parents/ guardians to upload work and to ensure any content which is submitted to the class teacher via the Seesaw Portfolio is appropriate.
11. Scoil Mhuire cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.
12. We encourage all parents to familiarise themselves with the information on www.webwise.ie in relation to internet usage of children.

Online Platforms

Aladdin Connect

The school and BOM will communicate all messages relating to general information via Aladdin Connect. All parents are asked to ensure they have the app downloaded. Notices will appear as notifications once they are sent from school. This app also allows parents to enter absence notes, pay online and access details such as school reports and personal details of their child. Parents will be issued an access code for their child only, and will not be able to access any other pupil's details.

Seesaw

Staff will communicate regularly with parents and pupils via Seesaw. When school is fully open staff will use Seesaw as a platform to send homework (until such time as it is safe to send work in Homework Journals.) All families are asked to download the Seesaw app and to check it daily for updates and important information. Teachers will post work for pupils each day on the app and will be available to communicate with students and/or parents/guardians between the hours 9:20-3:30.

Email

Each teacher has a class e-mail address through which he/she can communicate with parents/guardians and vice-versa. Parental queries will be addressed during the following hours only (9:20-3:30) and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning.

Pupils

For submitting learning:

1. Parents/ guardians must look at the work before they send it in.
2. Submit work and pictures that are appropriate and has been requested by your teacher.

For video conferencing:

1. Taking pictures or recordings of a video conference call is strictly prohibited.
2. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
3. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
4. Join the video with your microphone muted.
5. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
6. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
7. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
8. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
9. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
10. Enjoy!

Parents/Guardians

For learning activities:

1. Please check for assigned work each week on the Aladdin Connect or Seesaw app.
2. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
3. Communication in relation to learning activities may only take place during normal school hours.
4. The normal school calendar will apply.
5. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - a. Code of Behaviour
 - b. Anti- Bullying Policy
 - c. Child Protection Policy
 - d. Acceptable Use Policy
6. Please check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
7. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils. www.webwise.ie has a wide variety of resources that can help.

For video conferencing:

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video conferencing 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 conferencing calls 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/conferences, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
5. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a video conference call has been entered. 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. 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.

Teachers/SNAs

1. Teachers will provide appropriate learning activities via Aladdin and Seesaw.
2. Learning activities will be child centred, age and ability appropriate and are designed to encourage children to engage with learning while school is closed.
3. Teachers will check uploaded work regularly and provide feedback as appropriate.
4. SNAs will support the learning of their assigned students in conjunction with class and SET teachers.
5. Class teachers and SET teachers will liaise regarding learning activities for their pupils to ensure that there are appropriate tasks being assigned.
6. As far as possible communication should only take place during normal school hours.
7. The normal school calendar will apply.
8. Teachers and SNAs will always ensure that there are two members of staff on each video conference call.

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. In the case of 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 via Seesaw.
3. School POD instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate. Teacher will link in with the pupils via Seesaw.
4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14day isolation period). Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw.
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 Seesaw.

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

Wellbeing including physical activity during school closures

We encourage all parents to ensure that their children are getting plenty of exercise and fresh air at this time. Children can be affected in different ways by being out of their normal routine. Parents need to keep monitoring the online activities of their children both in terms of content and duration.

NEPS, the Department's National Educational Psychological Service, has developed advice and resources for keeping Children and Young People well during Covid-19. These resources aim to support children and young people's learning and wellbeing at this time.

In the context of wellbeing, NEPS has included a reference in its advice for young people and for parents of young children for the need for physical activity as part of everyone's daily routine while schools are closed.

For information, the relevant text can be found along with other resources at the following link: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/covid-19.html>

Implementation and Review:

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the Data Protection Commissioner, An Garda Síochána, Department of Education and Skills, Audit units (internal and external to the school), national management bodies, legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff and others.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school's website and provided to the Parents' Association.

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 10/12/2020.

Chairperson: *Jim Cogley*

Fr. Jim Cogley

Principal: *Tom Cousins*

Tom Cousins