BALLINABRANNA NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Remote Teaching and Learning Plan for Ballinabranna National School

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.

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 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.

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. Ballinabranna NS 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 good online communication in Ballinabranna NS

1. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
2. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls or meetings.
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 Seesaw and via the teacher's school email address. The Funky Frog App is used as a school messaging system which also provides for - seeking parental consent, yes/no polls of parents and secure online payments to the school.
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 (Seesaw, Funkyfrog, School email)
7. Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
8. For video calls/meetings, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
9. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.

10. Ballinabranna NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.

Ballinabranna NS will use an online platform for communicating and connecting with families/pupils. Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of assigned work and pre-recorded lessons (Seesaw).

The Department of Education's guidance on remote teaching and learning requires primary schools to have -

- **Regular engagement with pupils/students:** It is important that teachers engage with their pupils/students; in a primary setting this should, ideally, be on a daily basis;

- **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences**: Teacher pupil/student engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils/students.

- **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities:** Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils/students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way.

- **Learning tasks:** The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil/student, including pupils/students with SEN, and should 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:** Schools should ensure that two-way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and their pupils/students is encouraged and supported. Schools should provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all pupils/ students to regularly share samples of their work with the teacher(s) throughout each week. Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.

- **Support for pupils/students with SEN**: Special education teachers (SETs) should continue to engage with the pupils/students on their caseloads and class/subject teachers should differentiate teaching and learning in line with their pupils'/students' needs to minimise disruption to their learning and progression.

4. Media which the school will use

Funkyfrog
The school will communicate regularly with parents via the school App Funkyfrog. All families are asked to download Funkyfrog and to check it daily for updates and important information.

The Funkyfrog app will also be used for –

- Parents seeking to make online payments to the school
- Seeking parental permission
- For Yes/No polls of parents

For urgent messages, the Funkyfrog app allows a text message to be sent directly to parents if they have not seen the app message within a specific timeframe.

School Email

Each teacher will be assigned a class e-mail address through which he/she will communicate with parents/guardians and vice-versa. Parental queries will be responded to during school hours only (9:20-3:00) and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning.

This email address is hosted at the school domain @ballinabranna-school.ie and allows the teacher access to a range of google tools, docs, forms, google meet and calendars.

During school closures for remote learning each teacher will communicate with their pupils' parents regarding the best way for parents to contact them (school email) and giving parents/children information on when to expect communications/lessons/activities from them and how or when these should be submitted while establishing boundaries and expectations for working together.

If sending a group email all the parents' email addresses are included in the "bcc" option rather than the "to" part of the email to ensure that we don't share every parent's email address with the entire class.

Where relevant, the 'log of actions' section of a student's Support Plan should be updated to reflect communication;

Phone Contact

Teachers may need to phone or email individual parents. The most current details for parent contact numbers are available to teachers through our school Aladdin database. If using their own mobile to contact parents, staff should put their personal phone number onto the private setting. The school phone can be used by a staff member for contacting parents and children.

A log of all calls shall be maintained. Where relevant, the 'log of actions' section of a student's Support Plan should be updated to reflect any communication.

Seesaw

Teachers will post work for pupils daily via the Seesaw app.

During School Remote Learning Days Seesaw will be used to send home lessons/activities in the 3 core subjects – English Irish and Maths each day. This can be supplemented by suggestions for the other subject areas or well-being with a clear indicator to parents of what is required and what is optional.

This requirement is reviewed regularly.

We ensure little or no requirement for parents to print materials to use, as many families don't have access to printers at home.

This app is used from Junior Infants – Sixth Class and requires a QR which children have been using in school since September 2020. Teachers and children have been using the Seesaw app in class and for homework since the start of the 2020-2021 academic year to ensure that the children are familiar with it and prepared for its use during any remote learning closures.

Parental consent is required prior to using this app. Each child is assigned an individual access code.

Seesaw (http://seesaw.me), is a secure online journal where students can document and reflect on what they are learning in class. Children will be able to add activities based on the topics we work on (including photos, videos, worksheets, drawings and voice recordings) to their Seesaw journal and we can share them privately with parents to view and comment on throughout the school year.

Seesaw helps us work together to provide students with meaningful learning experiences at home. It ensures more interaction with home. We use Seesaw to share learning activities and resources, capture a child's learning, and communicate about student progress and needs.

Seesaw uses a child's name to associate work, such as, their photos, videos or voice recordings with their account. Seesaw only uses this information to provide the service. There are no advertisements in Seesaw, it doesn't create profiles of students, or share or sell a child's personal information or journal content.

More information on Seesaw's privacy policy can be found here
: https://web.seesaw.me/privacy.

Our School is using Seesaw Schools.

Google Meet
Our School uses Google Meet for remote organisational meetings such as staff meetings, Board of Management Meetings, PA meetings and parent teacher meetings.

5. 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/meetings in school or with external providers e.g. GAA coaching
1. Remember to ensure you join each meeting using your family name.
2. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
3. **Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.**
4. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
5. Join the video with your microphone muted.
6. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
7. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
8. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
9. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
10. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
11. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

6. 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/meetings
1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls/meetings.
2. **It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they are on a video call or meeting.**
3. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
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. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a call has been entered. Please note that school staff will only accept users into a video call if you can be identified by the display name on your account. (i.e. Family Name)
6. Please ensure that you/ your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the 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 yourself and your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, know 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.

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.

7. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Pupils

1. Check assigned 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. Code of Behaviour
   b. Anti- Bullying Policy
   c. Acceptable Use Policy
   d. Data Protection Policy
   e. Child Safeguarding Statement
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.

6. Any images/videos/voice recordings of teachers sent to children and parents in an educational context should not be shared

8. 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. Any images/videos/voice recordings of teachers sent to children and parents in an educational context should not be shared
4. 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.

9. Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNAs

1. Check uploaded work on school days.
2. Schedule communication during normal school hours
3. The normal school calendar will apply
4. The following school policies apply specifically to remote teaching and learning:
   a. Child Safeguarding Statement
   b. Data Protection Policy
   c. Acceptable Use Policy
   d. Code of Behaviour
   e. Anti- Bullying 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.

10. What if children aren't engaging with remote learning

If families haven't connected via Seesaw or are returning less than three activities per week than the teacher will contact the family by phone. There may be many reasons why a family hasn't been able to be actively engaged (illness/work commitments etc), if following the phonecall the class or SET teacher still has a concern about engagement they are asked to discuss this with the principal and a follow up is coordinated for this family.

Where there are further relevant concerns the school will follow its Child Safeguarding plan and contact TUSLA for advice.

Offline work for children who cannot access online platforms

During the March to June 2020 lockdown families received regular printed out work in the post. Some families had no access to internet/printers. From January 2021 on it is intended that work will be dropped in and collected from any families receiving postal work to help to ensure any children receiving printed work are accessing regular learning, suitable work and teacher feedback.

11. Supporting our children with additional needs –

Our SET will be engaging with children with additional needs using Seesaw connecting with them through the class teacher's app. Our aim is to support the children without overwhelming them.

SET will

- Keep in regular contact with the children and their families
- Support the children with the activities set by the class teacher
- Suggest additional games and activities that would benefit the child
- Send a message to parents by email to explain their role.
- Give children access to an "Ask the teacher?" section on Seesaw, where they can go to if they need additional support on an activity
- Contact parents via phonecall to see how they are getting on and if they need additional support.
- In consultation with the class teacher where there are children who need a differentiated programme from the class material, our SET will work with the class teacher to prepare differentiated activities for the child separate to the class material.
- Where needed, support materials including photocopied materials will be sent to the child's home and returned to the school.

SNA support

Our SNAs are available to help support our children with additional needs. This includes support specific to the children they work with under the direction of the class teacher, including regular phonecalls, messages to the child, prepping materials for home etc. They can also prepare materials or support other children in the school with additional needs where needed.

One of our school support team is on call each day of the week during remote learning closures to help (in school building) with any practical preparation of materials needed for pupils including any photocopying or printing needed. A rota is being used for this support to help to reduce the numbers in the school building for Covid-19 safety.

12. 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 via See-Saw

3. **School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Pubic Health to self-isolate.**
   Teacher will link in with the pupils via See-Saw

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 a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons and activities on Seesaw
   Please note that the current situation is quite fluid and these circumstances may vary throughout the year.

13. Summary:

1. Do what you can, within your circumstances. Forget about following books and workbooks outside of the work set by teachers for the moment.
2. There will be no school work set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on Seesaw during these times
3. Please keep abreast of postings on the Funkyfrog app– it is our main mode of school wide communication going forward.
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/school App, 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 BOM of Ballinabranna NS at its meeting on:

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

Signed: _____

(Chairperson BOM Ballinabranna NS)