



Remote Learning Policy

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While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Heathermount School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.
- A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Heathermount School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Heathermount School.

The policy documents of Heathermount School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Introduction

In the event of a school closure, Heathermount School is committed to providing continuity of education to its learners through remote (online) learning. This policy sets out how education will continue if learners and staff are unable to attend the school site but are otherwise healthy and able to work from home.

Extensive remote learning applies particularly when the school is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of learners and teachers are fit to continue working remotely. This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term closures (e.g. due to severe weather) or brief absences.

Remote learning may also be provided when individual learners, with agreement from the school, are absent for an extended period but are able to work from home to some extent. Examples include:

- exclusion from school,
- longer-term illness (where the learner is well enough to complete work), or
- self-isolation following an infectious disease outbreak without symptoms.

Heathermount School recognises that students with ASD may face unique barriers to accessing online learning, including anxiety, sensory needs, or rigid thinking patterns (e.g. “home is home, school is school”). Provision will be adapted as appropriate to meet individual needs.

There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education for learners whose absence is unauthorised. Examples include parents removing learners from school for holidays during term time, or choosing to keep learners at home without agreement with the school or against official guidance. In these cases, the Attendance Policy applies.

Remote Learning in the Event of Extended School Closure

In the event of an extended closure, the school will provide continuity of education in the following ways:

- Regular direct instruction from teaching staff, with opportunities for learners to ask questions online.
- Learning tasks set through Google Classroom, with work completed and submitted electronically.
- Assessment and feedback on specific assignments submitted via Google Classroom.

Learners and teachers are expected to have internet access at home. The school recognises that many families may not have printers and therefore will not require the printing of materials.

The main platform for remote learning is **Google Classroom** (<https://classroom.google.com>), which is accessible via app, desktop, or browser.

Secondary platforms may be used to supplement learning in specific subjects or age groups, including:

- My Maths: online maths lessons, games and assessments.

- Read,Write Inc (Oxford Owl): online reading games and activities.
- Seneca Learning: personalised online pathways for secondary learners, addressing knowledge gaps and promoting memory retention.
- Accelerated Reader: A online and physical book reading platform

The methods of instruction used will vary depending on the length of closure, learners' needs, and staff availability. The school may adjust its approach based on experience and circumstances.

A full home learning timetable may not be available from the first day of closure. However, some remote learning opportunities will be put in place immediately, and a full programme will be available within 48 hours.

Live Lessons

Academic subject areas may choose to deliver content live (via Google Meet) using text, audio, or video. There is no expectation for every lesson to be delivered live.

Google Classroom allows resources to be shared, tasks to be set, and learners to ask questions in real time. Where Google Meet is used, learners will be provided with session details and are expected to attend if they are asked and able to. Live sessions can be particularly valuable in supporting communication and maintaining connection between teachers and learners. Learners can respond to questions and ask their own via chat or microphone functions.

All learners will be provided with a school email address. Parents/carers and learners are not expected to provide or use personal email accounts.

Assessment

Providing timely and meaningful feedback is an important part of teaching and learning. While remote learning presents some challenges, teachers will continue to provide regular feedback on assignments that require submission. Not all tasks will be formally assessed, as is normal practice.

Feedback methods may include:

- Whole-class feedback, rather than feedback on individual pieces.
- Private comments for assignments submitted in Google Classroom.
- In-document comments on Google Docs, Slides or Sheets.
- Direct email to learners with feedback or targets.

Teachers are encouraged to design tasks that allow meaningful feedback to be given.

Expectations of Learners & Families

Learners who are healthy and well enough to work are expected to:

- participate fully in remote learning,
- attend live sessions when required,
- complete independent work,
- submit assignments promptly and to the best of their ability, and

- read and respond to school communication regularly.

Learners should also complete any administrative tasks that allow the school to monitor progress. Questions about specific tasks should go to the relevant subject teacher. Questions about workload (e.g. feeling overwhelmed) should be raised with the tutor/class teacher.

Teachers will assume that learners may not have the full range of books and equipment available at home. Teachers will scan or upload resources where possible. No specialist equipment normally provided by school (e.g. science or art resources) will be required.

Families are expected to have internet access but not printers.

Parents are expected to provide a suitable space for remote learning. Ideally this will not be a bedroom, but where this is unavoidable, doors should remain open and parents should check in regularly.

Class teachers are responsible for managing behaviour during remote learning. Parents with concerns should contact the class teacher by email after the lesson.

Expectations of Teachers

Work will be set and assessed in line with subject policies.

Tasks should include a balance of screen-based and offline activities. Teachers are responsible for providing timely and constructive feedback.

If a teacher is unwell, their line manager will ensure that work is set for their classes.

Teachers should be available to contact parents via school email or phone. Where contact is excessive, line managers will support.

If parents request additional work, subject areas should provide general resources and direct families to these.

Teachers must track attendance and engagement in remote learning through Google Classroom submissions and Google Meet participation. Concerns about engagement should be raised with the class tutor and shared with the appropriate AHT/Pastoral and Family Lead.

The school will provide training opportunities for all staff to ensure they are confident using Google Classroom and Google Meet. Teachers should review instructions, walkthroughs, and attend training sessions. Staff needing further support should consult their line manager or SLT.

Teachers should be contactable remotely by colleagues, learners, and parents unless there are extenuating circumstances. All communication should occur during normal office hours. Staff are not expected to respond to emails after 4.30pm, but should reply within one working day. Part-time staff are only expected to respond on their normal working days.

Communication must take place via official school channels only:

- School email accounts
- Google Classroom

Staff must remain alert to safeguarding concerns during remote learning. Any concerns must be logged on MyConcerns in line with the Safeguarding Policy, and urgent issues raised directly with a DSL.

Staff should follow the school's **Good Practice in Google Classroom and Meet** guidance, which outlines expected conduct and boundaries when using these tools.

Primary: a minimum of three remote lessons will be taught each day, including English, Maths, and a topic-based session.

Secondary: each class will receive virtual lessons from two of the three core subjects daily. Additional sessions will be provided for History, Geography, and PSHE. Vocational subjects will run timetabled drop-in lessons to support qualification tasks.

Pastoral Care

During school closure, parents and carers hold primary responsibility for their child's pastoral care. However, tutors (under the guidance of the Senior Leadership Team) will check in with learners twice a week to monitor both wellbeing and academic progress.

Tutors will share concerns or lack of engagement with the Senior Leadership Team or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

APPENDIX A - Good practice when using Google Classroom

These guidelines are to support staff to ensure that they and all members of the group are safeguarded and should be read in conjunction with Heathermount's existing policies.

Google has issued a comprehensive set of guidelines on how to use their platform:

https://edu.google.com/intl/ALL_uk/why-google/for-educators/

Do	Don't
Log in to Google Classroom and Google Meet with your Heathermount @heathermount.org email on a school laptop.	Do not use personal Google accounts to conduct lessons.
Schedule Google Meet sessions via the correct Google Classroom to ensure only enrolled students can join.	Do not allow family members, children, or others to appear in your Meet session.
Use the "blur background" or "replace background" function in Google Meet. Position yourself with a neutral background, free of personal photos/items.	Do not display personal details (notes, photos, private/confidential info) in the background.
Wear appropriate clothing, as you would in school.	Do not wear clothing with offensive images or language.
Use professional, appropriate language at all times.	Do not use casual or inappropriate language.
Test your audio, video, and resources before starting. Keep only necessary tabs open.	Don't open lots of applications or tabs – it reduces audio/video quality.
Keep lessons to 45 minutes in line with the timetable.	Do not significantly delay or overrun lessons – students may have other classes.

Share clear learning objectives at the start (what they will do, learn, and why).	Do not start a lesson without a clear structure or aims.
Plan your session in advance and upload resources to Classroom before the call.	Do not attempt to send resources last minute during the call.
When screen sharing, select only the tab/document/presentation you need. Open these before the session.	Do not share your entire desktop – this risks showing private or confidential information.
Give clear, slowed-down instructions and check understanding regularly.	Do not assume students can always ask questions or indicate confusion.
Use mute controls to minimise noise and encourage students to unmute only when contributing.	Do not allow background noise to go unmanaged.
Reinforce rules for speaking and listening. Establish “Google Meet rules” and encourage parent/carer support.	Do not ignore poor behaviour or disrespectful communication online.
Encourage participation using chat, whiteboard, Jamboard, annotation, and breakout rooms.	Do not rely solely on teacher talk – students disengage quickly online.
Use resources students are likely to have at home (e.g., pasta instead of Numicon).	Do not plan activities that require specialist items students may not have.
Be calm, smile, use open body language. Treat lessons as a chance to connect as well as teach.	Do not rush through – it can appear disinterested and reduce engagement.
Use breakout rooms for small-group or supported work where appropriate.	Do not use breakout rooms without clear planning and support structures.

<p>If recording a lesson, explain this to students and parents/carers first.</p>	<p>Do not record without permission and explanation.</p>
<p>Allow senior staff/managers to join lessons at any time; introduce them to students.</p>	<p>Do not ignore or fail to explain the role of an additional adult joining the call.</p>
<p>Set assignments with clear deadlines, resources, and instructions. Provide feedback through private comments or directly on work.</p>	<p>Do not use the class comment stream for personal feedback or progress discussions.</p>
<p>Keep all feedback professional, constructive, and linked to learning objectives.</p>	<p>Do not use casual, personal, or ambiguous language in written feedback.</p>

10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For school staff and teachers, there is a lot to consider and planning is key to ensuring a smooth transition from classroom to home. That's why we've created these top tips to help school staff ensure they deliver the most secure and safest remote learning experience they can, both for themselves and their students.

1) Familiarise yourself with the relevant policies

Whilst remote learning might be uncharted territory for you and your school, ensure you still adhere with the relevant policies around safeguarding, acceptable use, data protection, student behaviour and online conduct, for example.



2) Consider your surroundings

The use of webcams, video and live streaming must be done with careful thought. Ensure the positioning of any camera is in an open space with a plain background if possible and with no personal information on display. Avoid bedrooms.



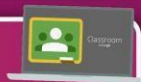
3) Create and disseminate a clear distance learning policy and guidance

This is important so that parents and pupils are clear as to what is expected of you, including around behaviour and conduct. It will also provide them with a level of confidence and reassurance.



4) Only use school approved platforms and communication channels

Make sure that you keep to communicating through official outlets, such as your school online portals or assigned email addresses. Never communicate using personal emails or numbers and refrain from communicating outside of school hours.



5) Maintain professional dress at all times

Treat any online lesson the same as delivering a lesson in the classroom. Maintain a professional image and never wear anything inappropriate or revealing. Encourage your students to also wear their school uniform.



6) Distribute a class timetable/schedule for remote learning

This will help to maintain a structure and lesson plan to classes. Include the frequency of lessons, duration, how they will be delivered, times for online and offline learning and any links. This will give parents a sense of structure and reassurance around lesson delivery.



7) Ensure you use the correct/appropriate technology

Remote learning will mean that you will need to employ the right technology and software to ensure that students are able to access learning in the safest and most secure way. Look to distribute a list of safe apps and software that are secure and won't raise any safeguarding concerns.



8) Protect personal data

Only use appropriate systems and software that require email and password login. It's always best-practice to only use school-provided email addresses.



9) Consider the needs of SEND pupils and vulnerable learners

It's important to try and accommodate all students, including children with SEND or those who are more vulnerable, and take into account different levels of learning.



10) Try to make lessons fun and engaging and encourage regular feedback

Remote learning is a fantastic way to be imaginative with teaching and learning and a great way to encourage independent thinking. Try to encourage a two-way flow of communication with parents and students to help maintain transparency and confidence in the learning process.



10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For students, it's the perfect way to ensure they still get the education they need, despite not being at school. However it also requires a level of discipline and careful planning. That's why we've created this guide to help pupils understand different aspects of remote learning and to support them in ensuring their experience is as safe and secure as it can be.

1) Treat remote learning the same as classroom learning

Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.



2) Use classroom language

If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid posting negative comments or spamming the chat.



3) Take regular screen breaks

Whilst remote learning might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices.



4) Always conduct video learning in an open space at home

To get the best experience from remote learning, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate.



5) Only communicate through approved school portals and platforms

It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as internal learning portals or approved platforms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure.



6) Stick to teacher rules and guidelines around online learning

Your school should issue you with guidance around remote learning and the rules to follow. Always maintain classroom behaviour and try to remember that you are in a learning environment and not a social setting.



7) Dress in school uniform

As part of your learning environment, try to maintain school uniform/dress. This will help as part of replicating classroom learning in the home. Try to avoid wearing anything too casual as this could be deemed inappropriate for school.



8) Don't share passwords or other sensitive information

In order begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others.



9) Don't use school platforms to discuss personal matters

It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning.



10) Look after your mental health and wellbeing

Remote learning ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up.



10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR PARENTS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For parents and carers, the idea of remote learning isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote learning experience.

1) Take an active interest in your child's learning

As a parent or carer, remote learning will be a new concept for your child and there are bound to be a few teething problems to start with. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.



2) Monitor your child's communication and online activity

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.



3) Establish a daily schedule and routine

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.



4) Encourage screen breaks away from devices

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teachers will invariably advise on screen breaks however it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.



5) Ensure your learning device is in a public space in the home

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.



6) Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software

Dependant on how your school implements remote learning, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.



7) Ensure your child only uses official school communication channels

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.



8) Familiarise yourself with relevant school policies

Schools should have a policy on remote learning and direction that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.



9) Maintain feedback with teachers

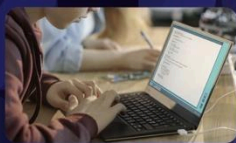
Engage in communication with teachers where possible and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.



10) Monitor your child's wellbeing and mental health

Remote learning will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as you can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends everyday might take its toll.





A GUIDE TO SAFER LIVE LESSONS



An online lesson occurs when teachers use video conferencing software to 'live stream' lessons to their pupils. Some of the most popular apps and websites that support this include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype and Microsoft Teams. Online lessons can be a great way to replicate classroom interaction, ask immediate questions and gather instant feedback. It's also convenient and allows learning to take place anywhere with an internet connection. However, live lessons aren't always accessible to everyone and younger children will need a lot of parental supervision, which isn't always practical.

What teachers need to consider

CONDUCT

If you decide to host an online lesson, it's important that you maintain a level of professionalism and treat any online lesson in the same way you would treat a classroom lesson. Dress appropriately and find a setting which has a plain background and has no personal information on display. Remind pupils of acceptable behaviour and their conduct during class. It's worth remembering that live streaming means screenshots and video recordings of your lesson could occur so you should always observe professional conduct at all times.



COMMUNICATION

Hosting a live lesson means that you will have to think about how you communicate and through what channels. Children will need access to the internet, have the appropriate technology and will need to download the relevant software or application. Some, or all, of these may not be widely available to everyone. It's also important to consider that the software that you choose to use is secure and has the relevant privacy and security settings in place. Any contact should only be through a platform provided by the school and not through personalised accounts open to public viewing, comments or sharing.

CONTENT

Planning your content will be a key factor to consider prior to hosting an online lesson. It's important to ensure that all content is age-appropriate and that any tasks that you set which require use of the internet won't lead children towards anything offensive or inappropriate. Always try to ensure that live lessons take place with the whole class but bear in mind that some pupils may work slower than others depending on the type of tasks you set.



What parents need to consider

CONDUCT

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite and remember their manners. Position your computer or webcam in an open environment where you can monitor their activity, preferably not in a bedroom. Try to keep the background neutral with good quality lighting and sound.



COMMUNICATION

If your child is part of an online lesson, they may need support in setting up the relevant software and communication platforms in order to take part. Your school will usually provide the relevant details on how to do this however it's worth ensuring that you have some awareness of the privacy and security settings so that you know that all communication is secure. It's important to raise any concerns that you have with the school if you are unable to accommodate an online lesson for any reason.

CONTENT

Try to take an interest in your child's live lesson if you can and stay close so that you can aid them if necessary. Try to find out who is hosting the lesson, what the lesson is about and what tasks they will be set. If they are required to conduct internet searches, ensure parental controls are in place. If you're using Zoom, make sure that screen sharing is only shared with the host. This will avoid 'Zoombombing' whereby uninvited guests use the screen-sharing feature to broadcast porn or other inappropriate content.



Some commonly used platforms

SOURCES:
<https://www.ettf.org/deepinks/2020/03/what-you-should-know-about-online-tool-sharing-considerations>
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115000538082-Attendee-attention-tracking>
<https://hangouts.google.com/>
<https://support.office.com/en/faq/f3a3649/protecting-your-online-safety-security-and-privacy>
<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/security-compliance-overview>

zoom

Zoom is one of the most popular video conferencing apps at the moment. Schools using Zoom can monitor attendee's activity while screen-sharing, track real-time activity, record live lessons and recall video, audio, transcript and chat files. Admins can also see the IP address and admin information of all attendees.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- Change privacy controls so that screen sharing is limited to the host only.
- Turn file transfers off to reduce any risk of hacking or installing a virus/malware.
- Create a strong password for your account incorporating letters, numbers and symbols.
- Keep the software as up to date as possible with the latest security patches.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts allows communication through video, audio or messaging, although isn't end-to-end encrypted. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Google has been making the advanced features in Hangouts Meet available to all schools around the globe using G Suite for Education.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- Ensure that any call made via the app is private or by invite only.
- Customise who you can receive invites from through the privacy settings to block unwanted contact.
- Keep all anti-virus software up-to-date and instate a firewall.
- Always sign out after use to prevent anyone else from accessing your account.

skype

Microsoft owned Skype is a well-known communication tool that specialises in providing video chat and voice calls. It is one of the biggest apps in the world, providing end-to-end encryption between Skype users, as well as facilitating screen sharing and the ability to record calls.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- Ensure you have the latest anti-virus software installed on your computer and set up a personal firewall.
- Keep profiles hidden and don't share any unnecessary personal information on your profile.
- Don't download anything from profiles you don't know and block any suspicious contacts.
- Always adjust privacy settings, including only allowing children to communicate with approved contacts.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams describes itself as a group chat software and collaboration tool. It provides the ability to chat, meet, call and collaborate from anywhere and is popular given it's ability to seamlessly integrate with other Microsoft applications like Word and Excel.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- Turn off guest access so only school issued email addresses communicate.
- If linked to an Office 365, enable Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) to help prevent against threats via emails, links, and attachments.
- Make sure your operating system has the latest updates and security patches.
- Beware of phishing emails asking for your password - Microsoft will never ask you it.