

YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG Y CASTELL



Distance Learning Policy

September 2020

This policy outlines how the school will return to home learning if another lockdown occurs or classes are required to self-isolate due to close contact with a person diagnosed with a positive Covid-19 result. The school is aiming to follow Governmental and union guidance and will update this policy when necessary.

This policy will ensure a shared understanding and agreement of what home learning will look like for children at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Y Castell.

These are unprecedented times. Taking care of everyone's physical and mental health is absolutely crucial at this time and our main priority.

1. Aims of Policy

- To ensure that the school communicates the expectations in relation to home learning;
- To provide a balanced, supportive and achievable package of home learning through-out this period;
- Ensure consistency in the school's approach to home learning;
- To ensure home learning activities are stimulating and challenging for pupil;
- To ensure that all members of the school including staff, governors, parents, volunteers adhere to the principles of this policy in the best interests of the children;
- Enable pupils to understand that independent learning is vital and is now part of a new way of life.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1: Teachers

Teachers must be available between 8.45am and 3.45pm, Monday to Friday, during full lockdown / a period of self-isolation through close contact, although SLT understands that everyone's family commitments will vary. Therefore, if deemed necessary, SLT will discuss and attempt to agree a fair and flexible working pattern with individuals to ensure that they are able to cover their statutory teaching hours. All teachers are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

During statutory teaching time, teachers are expected to act in a professional manner in line with their terms and conditions of employment. It is expected that they will engage with the pupils to provide stimulating learning activities through Google Classroom / Purple Mash, attend virtual staff meetings, check work on professional emails and keep in regular contact with SLT. The normal curriculum and teaching activities have been suspended, although teachers should be supporting parents with home learning ideas.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Working as a year group team to ensure the work is planned and delivered;
- Posting a weekly menu of work for their class including daily language and mathematics tasks and other tasks from subjects from across the curriculum;
- Setting differentiated work on **Google Classroom** (KS2) or **Purple Mash** (FP);
- Posting timetables of MS Teams meetings by Friday for the following week;
- Providing suggestions for daily physical activity and wellbeing activities;
- Uploading work the evening before for parents to organise their child's work;
- Communicating tasks and deadlines clearly to pupils and parents via email, MS Teams meeting or learning platforms;
- Providing feedback within 24 hours of the work being completed on learning platforms. Feedback will only be provided by the teachers during school hours;
- Running a daily MS Teams session for every group in class to explain tasks, answer questions related to work tasks and check in on the welfare of pupils - no more than 15 minutes per group and adhering to practice in '[Live Streaming and Video Conferencing: Safeguarding Principles and Practice](#)';
- Providing their class with login and passwords for their different accounts;
- Keeping a register of pupil engagement - if a child misses two Teams sessions without a valid reason or does not engage in work, teachers are expected to contact the parent. If there is no improvement, the SLT must be notified
- Communicate directly with parents using a professional email account. Contact should be polite and encouraging. Any concerns should be reported to SLT.
- Email messages should be replied to within 48 hours. Teachers will only send replies during school hours of 8.45am – 3.45pm;
- Completing online courses and posting certificates to google classroom.
- N.B. If school is in full lockdown, the HLTAs will be responsible for childcare hubs and the TAs working in these. Therefore, parents will be informed that teachers will be allocated half a day PPA every Friday afternoon and will not be available to undertake duties noted above.

2.2: HLTA:

HLTAs are expected to act in a professional manner in line with their terms and conditions of employment during periods of distance learning.

When childcare hubs are operating during full lock-down, Higher Level Teaching Assistants must be available to work between 8:20am – 4:10pm, Monday to Friday **on a rota basis**, completing their contractual hours flexibly, as supported by the unions. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

SLT understands that everyone's family commitments will vary. Therefore, SLT will discuss and attempt to agree a fair and flexible working pattern with these individuals to ensure that they are able to cover their statutory teaching hours.

Higher Level Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Managing and leading provision in the school based childcare hubs for key workers on a rota basis;
- Providing stimulating fun activities for the pupils and managing their wellbeing;
- Assisting pupils with their distance learning, including accessing daily MS Teams meetings with the teachers;
- Liaising with the SLT on matters relating to H&S and Safeguarding (a member of SLT will be on site during the working hours)
- Check professional e-mails on a daily basis.

When childcare hubs are not operating, Higher Level Teaching Assistants must be available between 8:50am – 3:45pm, Monday to Friday in line with their terms and conditions of employment. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

Higher Level Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Supporting pupils with learning, by planning and delivering learning activities for the pupils in line with their PPA timetable;
- Providing differentiated tasks for the classes on **Google Classroom** (KS2) or **Purple Mash** (FP) in line with PPA timetable;
- Communicating tasks and deadlines clearly to pupils and parents via email. MS Teams meeting or learning platforms;
- Providing feedback within 24 hours of the work being completed on learning platforms;
- Running a daily MS Teams session for established class groups (following PPA timetable) to explain tasks, answer questions related to work tasks and check in on the welfare of pupils - no more than 15 minutes per group and adhering to practice in ['Live Streaming and Video Conferencing: Safeguarding Principles and Practice'](#);
- Checking professional emails on a daily basis;
- Completing online courses and posting certificates to google classroom.

2.3: Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants are expected to act in a professional manner in line with their terms and conditions of employment during periods of distance learning.

When childcare hubs are operating during full lock-down, Teaching Assistants must be available to work between 8:20am – 4:10pm, Monday to Friday **on a rota basis**, completing their contractual hours flexibly, as supported by the unions. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

SLT understands that everyone's families commitments will vary. Therefore, SLT will discuss and attempt to agree a fair and flexible working pattern with these individuals to ensure that they are able to cover their statutory teaching hours.

Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Working in the childcare hubs under the guidance of the HLTAs;
- Providing stimulating fun activities for the pupils and ensure that pupil welfare is paramount to provision;
- Assisting pupils with their distance learning, including accessing daily MS Teams meetings with the teachers;
- Liaising with the SLT on matters relating to H&S and Safeguarding (a member of SLT will be on site during the working hours)
- Check professional e-mails on a daily basis.

When childcare hubs are not operating, Teaching Assistants must be available to work between 8:50am – 3:45pm, Monday to Friday completing their contractual hours.

Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Attending morning MS Teams meeting with teachers and pupils from their class;
- In year group pairs / triads, supporting pupils with learning during afternoon timetabled Tric a Chlic / RWI sessions through MS Teams;
- Taking responsibility to ensure that all necessary resources are available at home to deliver learning e.g. Tric a Chlic sets, IT equipment;
- Undertaking normal administrative duties to support the teacher e.g. preparing resources, laminating, recording stories;
- Completing online courses and posting certificates to google classroom;
- Helping with equipment collections and drop off facilities.

2.4: Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team are expected to act in a professional manner in line with their terms and conditions of employment during periods of distance learning.

When childcare hubs are operating during full lock-down, Senior Leaders must be available to work between 8:00am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday **on a rota basis**,

completing their contractual hours flexibly, as supported by the unions. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

They will be responsible for leading the Health and Safety and Safeguarding of all pupils and staff on the premises.

When childcare hubs are not operating, Senior Leaders are responsible for, (alongside any teaching responsibilities):

- Supporting staff and pupils' health, wellbeing and safety through weekly check in sessions with staff;
- Co-ordinating the home learning approach across the school;
- Coordinating regular phone calls with vulnerable families;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of home learning – reviewing work set by teachers on a weekly basis and monitoring engagement;
- Monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations (HT/DHT);
- Reporting developments to the Governors and LA (HT/DHT);
- Attending all meetings including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, HR, Governors, LA, EAS, WG, cluster meetings (HT/DHT);
- Coordinating and leading all necessary preparations for school reopening, including RAs, timetables, communicating with all stakeholders and ensuring that these all meet with WG guidelines (HT/DHT);
- Coordinating sickness policy (HT/DHT);
- Providing professional learning for all staff (HT/DHT);
- Completing online courses and posting certificates to google classroom;
- Fixing issues with systems used to set and collect work;
- Helping staff and parents with any technical issues they're experiencing and distributing IT equipment to vulnerable pupils;
- Assisting pupils and parents with accessing the internet or devices.

2.5: Office Staff

The office staff must be available to work between 8:45am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday completing their contractual hours flexibly, as supported by the unions. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.

SLT understands that everyone's families commitments will vary. Therefore, SLT will discuss and attempt to agree a fair and flexible working pattern with these individuals to ensure that they are able to cover their statutory hours.

The bursar and clerk are responsible for:

- Taking responsibility to ensure that all necessary IT resources are available at home to complete their tasks;
- Managing all administrative duties from home;

- Managing the school's email account and informing SLT and staff of any important messages;
- Processing invoices for payment (Bursar);
- Recording staffing absence on I-Trent (Bursar);
- Coordinating Health and Safety priorities through RAMIS (Bursar)

2.6: Parents / Carers

Parents / Carers are responsible for:

- Creating an environment which supports time management, a quiet space and provides appropriate resources;
- Regularly review their child's progress, reminding and prompting when appropriate;
- Engaging with the school website which includes latest news, resources and documents;
- Contacting the class teachers to seek further support or advice if needed;
- Alerting the class teacher about any problems with home learning;
- Being respectful when making any complaints or concerns to staff.

We fully understand that not all of our pupils will be able to access all the learning due to technology constraints, other children in the household, illness, family and work commitments. Parents can only do as much as they can, given their own situation and the well-being of the family. The school appreciates that children will not work for their parents in the same way as they work in school. We do not expect parents to be teachers.

2.7: Pupils

Staff can expect pupils to:

- Be contactable during the hours of the school day 9:00am – 3.30pm – although they may not always be in front of a device the entire time. They are also expected to take an hour lunch break each day.
- Complete the tasks set by the class teacher within the agreed timescale;
- Practise and build on what they have learned in school;
- Seek help if they need it, from teachers or teaching assistants;
- Alert them if they're not able to complete work;
- Recognise the value of home learning in supporting their classroom learning and progression, making time to complete work to the highest standard possible.

3. Applications

3.1 Google Classrooms (KS2)

Learning tasks are posted onto Google Classroom pages. Teachers are able to post feedback relating to tasks to help motivate the children with their home-schooling tasks. There are other facilities such as MS Teams that the staff will be using for daily contact sessions with groups of pupils.

3.2 Purple Mash (Foundation Phase)

All tasks will be made available on Purple Mash. Teachers will post resources, worksheets and PowerPoints to support learning. The teachers are currently exploring Purple Mash activities which can be completed on the app. Pupils are able to use their home learning codes to submit work back to their class teacher. There are other facilities such as MS Teams that the staff will be using for daily contact sessions with groups of pupils.

3.3 Sumdog (Foundation Phase / KS2)

This is a motivational online resource that supports pupils through interactive activities, games and challenges. Every child has been given a login for Sumdog which means they are able to access the resources throughout the period of extended home learning.

3.4 School Website and Twitter

This will keep you up to date with the latest news about the school.

There are also a number of useful links to free curriculum resources that are available to extend the learning of every child on their relevant class page.

4. General guidance for parents when undertaking Home Learning with their children

Do not worry about trying to maintain a full routine for your child like they had at school. But children will feel more comfortable and learn better with a predictable routine to the day, even if this is difficult. When schools provide children with work they may give you advice on how to structure the day. But generally, you should try to make sure that they:

- get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- have regular meal times
- have regular breaks
- make time to be active - children are used to regular play at lunch and breaktimes

Using digital devices

Your child's school may set them work that can be done on a digital device such as a laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone. Set age-appropriate parental controls on any devices your child is using and supervise their use of websites and apps. See advice on keeping them safe online and talk to your child about online safety

Reducing screen time

Digital devices are not the only way to learn. Manage screen time with a timer and break up screen time by getting your child to:

- use books and other printed materials that you have at home;
- write by hand – try asking them to complete work by hand, write a diary, a summary of things they have learned or done each day or 'to do' lists;
- be active and get away from the screen regularly – see a selection of physical activity resources for primary school children;
- stop using digital devices at least an hour before bed.

Reading together

When you read with your child, try to express the emotion in the story, give colour to the characters using voices, tone and pace. Finally, discuss the things you are reading. You can make a story more interesting and help your child develop their understanding of a book by linking what you are reading to their life. Ask your child questions about what you are reading as you go.

Library services - Borrowbox is a new service where you can download 10 eBooks and 10 eAudiobooks for free on your personal devices for 21 days, if you are a library member.

Talking

Talk with your child throughout the day and try to explain new words. For example, discuss everything you are doing and pick out words that might be new to them.

Incidental Maths

Mathematics does not have to be completing sums upon sums! Expose children to the language of mathematics and mathematical concepts in meaningful ways. Reinforce new knowledge with real items, making it more likely to be retained. There are many math learning opportunities available in routine daily life.

Written by HC Nuttall and Gareth Hughes (September 2020)

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