

MACOSQUIN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Remote Learning Policy



1. Introduction

In the event of long term closure, or self-isolation, staff at Macosquin Primary will continue to provide high quality education and support to our pupils using remote learning.

In line with DENI guidance, our school will only engage in remote learning in the following circumstances:

- DENI have stated that schools must close due to COVID 19 and move to remote learning for pupils.
- Where a group of pupils or a class are required to self-isolate due to COVID-19.
- An individual pupil is self-isolating long term, due to individual circumstances.
- Teachers are well enough to do so- If a teacher is sick during a period of remote learning, the school will endeavour to ensure a sub teacher is appointed to take over remote learning - however this may not always be possible or practical.
- If our school experiences staff shortages and we have not been able to secure sufficient substitute teaching cover to operate classes effectively.
- When experiencing support or ancillary staff shortages which may compromise the safe and effective operation of our school.

All remote learning in Macosquin Primary School will be delivered through online e-learning platforms (Seesaw in Key stage 1 and Google Classroom Key Stage 2) and live/ recorded lessons. If experiencing long term closures parents can be provided with hard copy learning resources (Key Stage 1) by request.

This will allow staff to keep in daily contact in a professional and confidential manner with their class. Teachers will be able to schedule learning in a manner that does not overwhelm our children. Teaching and learning will be tailored, changed and updated as time progresses in order to reflect classroom activity where possible. In all communications, we will prioritise the wellbeing of our children.

2. Flexibility of Learning

We realise that the circumstances that cause our school to close will affect families in a number of ways. In our planning and expectations, we are aware of the need for flexibility from all sides for the following reasons:

- Parents may be trying to work from home so access to technology as a family may be limited.
- Parents may have two or more children trying to access technology and need to prioritise the needs of young people studying towards accredited examinations.
- Teachers may be trying to manage their home situation and the learning of their own Children.
- Systems may not always function as they should.

An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to these difficulties on all sides is essential for success and for us to continue the positive working relationships between home, school and our community.

3. Digital Devices for Pupils

The school is conscious that all pupils do not have the same levels of home support nor do all households have the same level of access to resources, particularly internet connection and devices such as tablets and laptops. Consideration will be given at all times to ensuring availability of resources for pupils without ready online access.

4. Expectations

We believe that it is in the best interests of our children that we continue to provide structured support to the best of our ability. Bearing in mind the need for flexibility, no deadlines will be set. It must be noted that the work children engage in during a period of closure will be part of our current planning and so *cannot* be considered as optional. Children and parents should consider the arrangements as set out in this document as *highly recommended*.

Teaching and Ancillary Staff will work together to:

- During normal working hours, adequately plan and prepare resources for home learning.
- Share teaching and activities with their class through Seesaw (P1-4) and Google Classroom (P5-7).
- Continue teaching in line with current, extensive planning that is already in place throughout the school.
- Accept the fact that learning remotely will be more difficult, so tasks will be set in smaller steps to allow for this.
- Keep in regular contact with children through Seesaw or Google.
- Communicate with pupils and parents and set activities during normal working hours 9am – 4pm.
- Allow flexibility in the completion of activities, understanding that the circumstances leading to our closure will affect families in a number of ways.
- Take regular breaks away from the computer or iPad to engage in other professional duties as much as circumstances allow.
- Provide pupils with regular, meaningful feedback.
- Support families with accessing e-platforms.
- Contact families by phone call if necessary during long periods of school closure to check in with pupils and their families and provide support as appropriate.
- Adhere to the school's safeguarding policies.
- Support supervision of pupils in school attending vulnerable/ key worker facility if required.
- If unwell themselves, be covered by another staff member for the sharing of activities. In this case, follow up messages on Seesaw will not be undertaken until the teacher is fit to work.

Children should:

- Be assured that their wellbeing is of paramount importance and they should take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise and maintain a reasonable balance between online engagement and offline activities.
- Undertake tasks set in packs and online. Potentially work a day behind what has been shared if it is only possible to access technology in the evenings. Learning can be accessed and completed then.
- Only access the material shared by the school and ask for parental permission to use technology for anything beyond that.
- Read daily, either independently or with an adult.
- Consider using the school closure time to learn a new skill, follow their own interests to discover more about the world around us or be creative.
- Only send messages and queries that are in relation to tasks set by the teacher or in response to questions the teacher may ask them directly.

Parents should:

- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Encourage their child to access and engage with Seesaw/ Google posts from their teacher.
- Not screenshot or copy any information, messages or posts to share on social media or any other platform outside of Seesaw or Google Classroom.
- Know they can contact their class teacher through Seesaw/ Google remote learning if they require support of any kind.
- Check their child's completed work each day and encourage the progress that is being made.
- Be mindful of mental well-being of both themselves and their child and encourage their child to take regular breaks, play games, get fresh air and relax.
- Respond to any 'Check-in' phone call from your child's Teacher, Principal or Classroom Assistant in a supportive and constructive manner.

5. Policy Links/ References

This policy is written in line with the following school policies:

- Online Safety/ E-safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Seesaw Policy

Other References:

- Education Authority: Safeguarding Children Guidance for Schools and EOTAS Centres during COVID-19 Arrangements

- DE Circular 2020-5-Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning
- ETI - Safeguarding Remote & Blended Learning Challenges & Approaches -June 2020
- ETI Primary - Remote & Blended Learning Challenges & Approaches -June 2020
- Stranmillis College Report – Home Schooling in N. Ireland
- The Continuity of Learning Project – Supporting Learning. Moving to Blended Learning in the Primary School – Guidance for Primary School Leaders & Practitioners

6. Tracking and Monitoring Arrangements

The policy outcomes are monitored and tracked continually by leadership and staff ensuring it has a positive impact. During the pandemic governors are provided with termly updates on how effectively the policy is delivering its outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders every year or if any outcome gives cause for immediate review.