



Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

Stratford National School

January 2021

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

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 light of the planned school closure for January and in the event of further whole or partial school closures, 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 which can be found [here](#). Rather, it is proposed as an important addition to the area of learning using digital platforms. The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Positive Behaviour Policy [here](#).

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.

Kind regards,

Gemma O'Byrne

Acting Principal

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 (DES): 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 for primary schools and special schools
- n) DES Circular 0074/2020 Communication/Teaching & Learning Platform

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

Context

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.

We recognise that online collaboration is essential for remote learning and that families are in favour of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. Stratford 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.

Guidelines for good online communication in Stratford NS:

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
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 using school approved platforms (Seesaw, Padlet, Zoom, Aladdin, Duolingo).
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Parental permission is implied when parents connect to an online platform or app.
7. For video/Zoom calls, 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.
8. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
9. Stratford NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.

Online Platforms

Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' may include a combination of online platforms for communicating and connecting with families/pupils. It will include a combination of assigned work, pre-recorded lessons (Seesaw, email & Padlet) and some live class assemblies (Zoom).

1. Teacher/Parent Email: Staff will send emails to parents using Aladdin, providing updates on school and classroom news, work lists and zoom links. Parents are asked to check their emails regularly. If you are not receiving emails, please contact to school office to update your contact details (reception@stratfordcollege.ie or 01-4922315).

2. Seesaw: This is a school communication platform used by all classes to share what is being learned in school or at home. Parents gave consent to the use of this app in September 2020. Each child has been assigned an individual access code. If you are having difficulty accessing Seesaw, please email the school office.

Seesaw Class App – Some lessons may be pre-recorded and uploaded to Seesaw, along with a range of activities for the children to engage with. The teachers can share videos, photos, messages, work, etc. via the journal. Pupils can upload items to their personal journal for teacher to see. The teacher can provide feedback using the commenting feature.

***NEW* Seesaw Family App** – By joining the family app, parents can see all of their children's work in one place. It also acts as a communication tool between a parent and the class teacher via the inbox. Teachers may make announcements to the whole class or speak privately to parents.

Parental queries will be addressed during school hours only (9:20am - 3:00pm) and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning. Communication of any other nature should be directed through the normal channels (i.e. email admin@stratfordcollege.ie or reception@stratfordcollege.ie, or phone 01-4922315).

3. Zoom: Zoom is a video-conferencing platform which will enable teachers, school staff and pupils to connect via a live link. Teachers and SNAs may connect with pupils using pre-arranged Zoom Class Meetings/School/Class Level Assemblies. Zoom links will be emailed directly to parents. For video/Zoom calls, 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.

4. Padlet: Padlet is a website where a wide range of resources can be collated and categorised. Our teachers have created a Stratford NS with many websites, games, child-friendly resources to support remote learning. The Stratford NS Padlet can be accessed here: <https://padlet.com/stratfordns>.

Rules for pupils using online communication methods

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 Zoom calls

1. Remember to ensure you join each Zoom meeting using your **surname**.
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. 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.

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.
4. Encourage your child to maintain a routine and submit work regularly on Seesaw to receive feedback.

For Zoom Calls

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video 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 call is to maintain a social connection between the school staff and pupils. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom 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 zoom account. (i.e. Surname)
5. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
6. Pupils must keep their camera on at all times during class meetings.
7. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the Zoom call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
8. 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.
9. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
10. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
11. For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit <https://zoom.us/privacy>

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.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Students

Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply, with students expected to:

- Check assigned work each day/week.
- Present all assignments to the best of their ability and on time, where possible in this evolving and unprecedented situation.
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours

- The normal school calendar will apply
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Acceptable Usage Policy
 - Child Safeguarding Policy

In so far as possible, provision for SEN students and for students at very high risk to COVID 19 will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

Responsibility of the Student

- To cooperate with their parents and teachers.
- To work well, to do what they can and to do their best.
- To do the lessons that teacher asks of them.
- To make sure that the teacher gets to see the work they have asked for when it is finished.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Parents

The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy

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 manageable amount of work every weekday for routine. We provide work and guidance and ask parents and pupils to do their best and that is all.

Responsibility of the Parent

- To ensure protocols for students are adhered to.
- To check-in on their child's schoolwork on a daily basis and to talk to their child about the work being assigned.
- To provide the time and space to support their child/children so that they can engage, complete and return the work that the teacher has set.
- To support the development of the child/children's reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.
- To encourage the development of the child/children's number skills.

- Student use of web-based tools is for educational purposes only and at the direction of a teacher and under the supervision of a parent/guardian. Please supervise your child/children online.
- To keep in touch with your child's teacher and to respond to any messages sent to you. Communication may only take place during normal school hours.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNAs

- Check uploaded work each week
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours
- The normal school calendar will apply
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
 - Child Protection Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Acceptable Usage Policy
 - Child Safeguarding Policy
- 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.

Responsibility of the Teacher

Our staff have made a considerable effort to develop their skills to provide for distance learning. They aim to:

- Motivate and engage pupils
- Check uploaded work each day
- Facilitate the further development of reading and writing skills
- Develop number skills
- Provide opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills
- Develop children's creativity
- Provide a variety of ways in which pupils can demonstrate learning

Remote Teaching and Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid 19 related scenarios:

1. 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.

- **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:**

2. 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. There are educational links on the school website that children can use while they are absent from school.
3. 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 (not video conferencing).
4. School POD (group of four-six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate. Teacher will link in with the pupils via Seesaw (not video conferencing).
5. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14 day isolation period). Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw and may also engage using Zoom. Teachers may differ in their methods under this approach.
6. Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health) Staff will engage with pupils, using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons, Seesaw and Zoom.

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

Summary:

- We are encouraging parents to do what you can, within your circumstances. The teachers have made every effort to develop a structure which should help develop a routine for children.
- There will be no schoolwork set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on Zoom, Seesaw or email during these times.
- Please monitor emails and Seesaw closely as this is our main mode of communication.

- We ask parents/guardians, students and teachers to ensure protocols are adhered to at all times.
- If you are experiencing difficulty accessing on-line platforms, please email the school and we will assist you in any way that we can.

We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare.

This plan was **ratified** by the Board of Management of Stratford NS at its meeting on 19th January 2021.