

Martinstown National School

Remote Teaching and Learning Plan

Introduction

In response to this time of uncertainty regarding school closures, Martinstown NS has 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 Policy 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.

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. Martinstown 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 Martinstown NS

Methods of Communication:

Seesaw:

The use of Seesaw as a learning platform has been considered and has been permitted for use in our school. Seesaw is our main online learning platform. Seesaw is a digital portfolio tool which allows pupils to upload and store their work in an online space and gain feedback from their teacher. It effectively enables teachers to set tasks or assignments and include instructions or templates for use at home. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and content in connecting with pupils through Seesaw. Each pupil, through their parents, is provided with a unique secure login code. Pre-recorded concepts/topics, tutorials, clips and links to relevant websites may be uploaded to Seesaw based on the requirements of lessons. Permission from parents to engage with Seesaw will be sought by the staff and will be included in enrolment procedures going forward.

Zoom:

The use of Zoom as a platform has been considered and has been permitted for use in our school, as a means to communicate with our school children during the school closure following the Coronavirus pandemic. Such meetings are permitted in these circumstances as a means to cater primarily for the wellbeing of all our students.

Email:

Staff may use email to communicate with parents during the period of remote learning. Each teacher has a dedicated school email address. Teachers may be contacted during school hours via this email address. The school email martinstownns@gmail.com is also in use and messages are responded to by the school secretary and principal.

Aladdin Connect:

Principal and staff may use Aladdin to communicate to families using the noticeboard, text and email functions. Parents are asked to regularly for updates or new information. Support is available to parents in setting up and using the app.

Phone Contact: The school mobile number is available to parents and guardians and the principal and school secretary respond to any messages received on it. The school landline allows parent(s)/guardian(s) to leave messages which are followed up on by the school secretary and principal. When necessary, staff may contact parents directly on personal phones. Staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

Guidelines for Pupils, Parents and Guardians

Seesaw Online Learning Platform:

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 all work and photos are appropriate. All content uploaded should be specific to educational purposes and in response to work assigned by staff.
3. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils

Zoom:

1. Ensure that you have access to Seesaw or email in order to receive invitations for joining apps and meetings. Children must use parents'/guardians' zoom link under supervision to connect to event / video call, as children under 16 are not of the digital age of consent. These login details cannot be shared with anyone other than those to whom the class teacher has invited.
2. Parents are required to be in the room, supervising their children while video calls are taking place.
3. Pupils are requested to join the call with video on and your microphone muted.
4. Remember to ensure children join each Zoom meeting using their full name.
5. 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.

6. While the school believes that participation in these group Zoom calls will be beneficial to pupil's wellbeing, it is not compulsory for children to join meetings. Parents can opt out and notify the class teacher.
7. The recording of Zoom meetings will not be permitted.
8. Photographs of Zoom meetings will not be permitted.
9. The sharing of content in relation to such meetings on social media will not be permitted.
10. Recording of meetings, taking of photographs, or sharing of content will be deemed a serious breach of GDPR and may be reported as such.
11. For video/Zoom calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email or Seesaw account. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
12. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
13. Martinstown National School cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.
14. It is important that appropriate dress is worn and the background is clear of distractions. A wall as background can optimise privacy.
15. Only the child requested to attend the call should appear on video – this is to ensure your own personal privacy at home for other family members.
16. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom call has been entered. Please note that school staff reserve the right to refuse entry to any participant whose identity cannot be verified.
17. 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.
18. 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

Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods

1. Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls without prior permission from parents.
2. Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 9.00am – 3:00pm, where possible.
3. Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
4. Staff members will notify parents/guardians of the date, time and password for a video call via the parents Aladdin account or Seesaw.
5. Staff are encouraged to generate a new meeting ID and password for each Zoom meeting being held. Two staff members will co-host each meeting.
6. Zoom meetings are for the purpose of a social catch up and student wellbeing.
7. Instructional lessons via Zoom applies to SET teachers. Two staff members will co-host these lessons.

8. Teachers should keep a record of those children who attended the meeting.
9. General notes of the meeting should be kept.
10. All participants joining the meeting will be muted initially and should remain muted until the teacher gives them an opportunity to contribute to the meeting.
11. Teachers should 'lock' the meeting once all members have joined the meeting.
12. Teachers should inform the school's DLP if they notice or have any concerns of child protection issues or should a disclosure be made to them.
13. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.
14. School staff may refuse entry to any participant whose identity cannot be verified.

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. 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.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNA's

1. Check uploaded work each week
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. Child Protection Policy
 - b. Data Protection 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.

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).**

Class Teacher will link in with the pupil via See-Saw.

- 3. School POD (group) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate.**

Class 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).**

Class Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw and regularly on Zoom.

- 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, Seesaw and regular contact on Zoom.

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

Summary:

1. Please follow the teachers schedule of work. We understand that each familys' circumstances can differ, do what you can. Liaise with the class teacher we are there to support.
2. There will be no school work set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on Zoom or Seesaw during these times
3. Please keep abreast of postings on the school Aladdin platform as it is our main mode of communication.
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 **Martinstown NS** at its meeting on:

_____25/02/2021_____ and is subject to change, in light of any guidance or instruction received from Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health.

Signed: _____Helen O Flaherty_____

(Chairperson BOM Martinstown NS)