



'OPENING DOORS OF
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2023



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Mission Statement

Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured.

Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences.

Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.

Context

Remote or distance learning, online learning, and blended learning are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same.

Remote Learning describes any learning where the teacher and the learner are not physically together. The pandemic created the need for a period of emergency remote teaching, where both teachers and learners had to adjust very quickly to a new way of communicating with each other. Remote learning is the method of teaching which will be used in the event of a prolonged period of school closure, or in the event of a class/teacher having to isolate for an extended period.

Online Learning is a generic term that refers to any learning that is done using digital resources. It encompasses both learning that is done entirely in a digital format as well as learning that is done digitally within a broader learning programme. Online learning can be completely self-directed, or it can be structured by someone other than the learner. Online learning is used throughout the school year both inside and outside of school.

Blended Learning is where the learning is structured to blend face-to-face learning and teaching with remote/online learning. This may involve using digital tools and other educational resources. This is a very specific type of learning and requires some changes to pedagogical approaches, requiring less interdependence between learner and teacher, whilst developing independence for learning, from both the teacher and the pupil as the lead learner. The aim of blended learning is to maximise the time in the classroom to ensure the learners are equipped to maximise the independent learning time between lessons. Blended learning is a system which may be deployed if children are required to attend school on a staggered basis.

Approaches to Learning;

- **asynchronous approaches** where teaching materials, which may include video/audio clips, are posted online and learners work through these materials in their own time, communicating with each other and the teacher via discussion forums or email.
- **synchronous approaches** where the teacher is present at the same time as the learners through the use of video conferencing and live chat or instant messaging.

Asynchronous approaches provide greater flexibility as learners can work at their own pace and at times of the day which are convenient for them and their parents; they are easier for parents/carers/guardians to manage at home. These should therefore remain prevalent when organising remote/online learning.

Department of Education guidance states '*there is no compelling evidence to indicate that synchronous learning is more effective at improving pupil outcomes than asynchronous approaches*'. It also draws on the conclusion that not all children would be able to access synchronous learning at the same time. There are also considerations to be made in relation to synchronous learning regarding child protection and safeguarding.

The use of Seesaw provides **asynchronous** learning and allows the best delivery of learning for primary school pupils on a platform which they are familiar with and which can be accessed by the pupils and their parents/guardians at a time appropriate for family circumstances.

Teachers will use a variety of resources to support learning through Seesaw which may include:

- Website links
- Online video resources
- Numeracy/Literacy games
- Teacher created support videos
- Textbook resources
- Other appropriate resources as used in school.

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.
- Parents may be working 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 in certain year groups.
- Teachers may be trying to manage their home situation and the learning of their own children.
- Online platforms/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.

Delivery of Remote Learning

Platform

Seesaw is a platform which has been used in school for a number of years by both teachers and pupils and provides a familiar environment for learning.

Seesaw can be accessed via a wide range of internet enabled devices including tablets, laptop/desktop computers, smartphones, Smart TVs, and games consoles with internet browsers.

Each pupil has a unique Seesaw home learning code which allows them access to their profile while ensuring that they cannot see the work of others, nor can their work be accessed by other pupils.

Curriculum

Remote Learning will encompass a broad curriculum, where possible to include the core curriculum subjects. Pupils will be assigned a minimum of one Numeracy and one Literacy activity per day. These activities will be accompanied during the course of Remote Learning by a range of other learning opportunities including Spellings, Reading, World Around Us topic work, PE and Arts, in fitting with the curriculum.

The activities designed and delivered by teachers will include a mix of learning approaches which allow them to be completed online or offline, to facilitate those pupils who may not have access to a device which allows completion of activities online.

In the event of whole-school remote learning, devices will be made available in school for pupils of keyworkers/vulnerable children to complete schoolwork while attending school.

Homework

As a school we appreciate the value of a blended approach using Seesaw and paper to complete homework. Periodically, some year groups will use Seesaw alongside paper homework, if doing so will enhance the learning experience for the child.

Whole School/Class Learning at Home

In the unlikely event of whole school/class remote learning being deployed, learning will take place via the Seesaw platform. Classes in KS2 *may* also use Google Classroom during this time.

- Activities will be assigned to pupils on a daily basis on the Seesaw/Google Classroom platform the night before they are scheduled to be completed.
- Pupils should complete the activities on the day they are assigned for and return the completed work for marking/review by their class teacher.
- Marking of pupils' work will take place where possible on the day it is returned, or during the next school day.
- Activities will remain assigned on Seesaw/Google Classroom during the week they are assigned. This will allow pupils to catch up on any work they may miss due to circumstances at home. Activities will be removed at the end of each week for the start of the new school week. This will allow pupils to start afresh each week and not be overwhelmed by a backlog of activities.
- Parents should monitor the work of pupils where possible. Pupils may need help with the reading of instructions or explanations of new concepts. Pupil work should be checked before being submitted to teachers.
- Teachers will be available on Seesaw/Google Classroom throughout the school working day. They will not respond to messages outside of school hours but will endeavour to answer the next working day.

Children Learning at Home Due to Isolation/Medical Conditions

As in normal circumstances, if pupils are ill they should take time to rest and recover and should not be working from home.

If an individual child, or a small number of pupils within a class, or across a year group, have to self-isolate for a designated period due to a pandemic, the Department has advised, in the past, that parents should talk directly to their school about provision of education materials. Schools will wish to support pupils as much as possible, however, clearly in these circumstances teachers will be continuing to teach all classes during the school day so expectations must be realistic.

(DENI Curriculum Planning Circular August 2021)

In the event of a child having to learn at home due to a period of isolation or medical condition, learning will take place via the Seesaw platform.

- Activities will be assigned to pupils on a daily basis on the Seesaw platform the night before they are scheduled to be completed or after 3.00 pm on the day they have been taught in class. It will not be possible to assign all activities completed in class as some will not lend themselves to remote learning.
- Pupils should complete the activities on the day they are assigned for and return the completed work for review by their class teacher.
- Activities will remain assigned on Seesaw during the week they are assigned. This will allow pupils to catch up on any work they may miss due to circumstances at home. Activities will be removed at the end of each week for the start of the new school week. This will allow pupils to start afresh each week and not be overwhelmed by a backlog of activities.
- Parents should monitor the work of pupils where possible. Pupils may need help with the reading of instructions or explanations of new concepts. Pupil work should be checked before being submitted to teachers.
- Teachers will not be available for contact through Seesaw during the school day as they will be teaching the remainder of the class working in school.
- Pupils learning at home will also be able to complete homework activities which are assigned via Seesaw, for the duration of the school year.

Expectation Management

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 during periods of disruption to 'normal' school learning. It must be noted that the work children engage in during a period of closure will be part of 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 staff will:

- Share teaching and activities with their class through Seesaw.
- 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 contact with children through the Seesaw App. This will include replying to messages about assigned activities, setting work, and giving feedback on activities during the normal teaching hours 9.00 am – 3.00 pm.
- 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 eg Policy Development.
- If unwell themselves, be covered by another staff member for the sharing of activities. Follow-up of messages on the Seesaw app during this time will not be undertaken until the teacher is fit to work.

Children will:

- Be assured that wellbeing is at the forefront of our thoughts. Pupils need to take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise, and maintain a reasonable balance between online engagement and offline activities.
- Potentially work a day or two behind what has been shared through Seesaw.
- 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.
- Only access the material shared by their teacher 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 just be creative.

Parents will:

- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Encourage their child to access and engage with Seesaw posts from their teacher; Remote Learning is not optional but rather an adaption of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- Refrain from screenshotting or copying any information, messages, or posts, to share on social media or any other platform outside of the Seesaw App.
- Know they can contact their class teacher through the Seesaw App during the school day, or contact the school office.
- 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.