



Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

(St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

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Remote Learning Arrangements in the event of school closure 2021-2022

Introduction

The Board of Management of St Laurence O'Toole's N.S., in consultation with staff and following feedback from the parent body, have made the following arrangements in relation to catering for Remote Learning in a Covid-19 context. These arrangements have been made adhering to the Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidance on Remote Learning and working from incidences of best practice from our own school context. Remote Learning Arrangements will be used in the case of either partial or whole school closures and also in the case of any changes being made to the school day/week which may be advised by the Department of Education and Skills. These arrangements also cater for children who are unable to come to school due to underlying health conditions which prevent them from doing so and/or Covid-19 restricted movements. The overarching aim of all Remote Learning is to ensure continuity of teaching and learning.

The Board of Management, teachers and staff have continuously worked to review the Remote Learning Plan, which was developed in September 2020, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all pupils in the school. In February 2021, following on from four weeks of Remote Learning and based on information gathered from teachers, the Plan was amended to meet the needs of pupils in all class groupings. Following on from further consultation with teachers and pupils in February and March 2021, the following amendments have been made to the school's Remote Learning Plan:

Rationale

Digital learning has been at the forefront of educational policy in recent years. The Department of Education and Skills' Learning Framework was developed to assist schools in effectively embedding digital technologies into teaching and learning. St Laurence O'Toole's N.S. have been proactive in relation to this and we are constantly reviewing our digital technologies and working to develop and embed digital skills amongst our pupils. Our Remote Learning Arrangements have been developed alongside our Digital Learning school planning. Seesaw and Zoom have been chosen as the primary platforms for use.

Remote Learning – what to expect?

To ensure continuity of teaching and learning during school closures, there will be **daily interaction** between teachers and children – this may take the form of correcting work, commenting on work submitted, live interaction with teacher and provision of pre-recorded lessons.

Seesaw

The school community successfully reverted to Seesaw during school closure in March 2020. This was deemed an appropriate and child-friendly interface and served its purpose during this time. Parental and staff feedback was sought in relation to the use of Seesaw and the school's approach to remote learning in June 2020. This feedback has been central to our development of a Remote Learning Plan. In the event of either the school in its entirety or a class being closed in the future, we will continue to use Seesaw throughout the school.

Seesaw as a platform for learning allows daily contact to occur between teachers, SNAs and pupils. Teachers will engage with children in a variety of different ways through Seesaw – videos, written feedback, oral responses - work will be uploaded for completion, feedback and corrections on work will occur, assessment of work is facilitated, portfolios of work will be kept. Parents have the option of contacting teachers through Seesaw to get clarification or support in relation to their child's learning. A timetable will be provided at the beginning of each week on Seesaw to plan the week's work.

Zoom

Three Zoom lessons will take place throughout the week for each class grouping. These will vary in length to reflect the age group of the pupils involved. The sessions will consist of a 'wellbeing check-in' between the class teacher and all pupils and the remainder of the session will consist of teacher instruction. The focus for each session will be on the core subjects (English, Irish, Maths) in each session. Pupils will be informed in advance of books needed for each Zoom lesson.

The link for the live Zoom sessions will be sent through Seesaw to pupils and parents. As per our Acceptable Use Policy, two adults will be present during these meetings. To prepare for these live sessions all children have participated in an SPHE lesson and worked through the school's Digital Citizenship Agreement. This set out the expectations of the school in relation to live sessions. Copies of the agreement were sent home and consent received from parents that they agree to the rules of engagement.

Pre-recorded Lessons

Teachers will upload pre-recorded instructional videos onto Seesaw daily for their classes. These videos will supplement the teaching in Zoom lessons. These will focus on the core subjects and integrating with other subjects (SESE/SPHE/Arts/RE/PE). These pre-recorded lessons will ensure that children are taught explicitly, and they can be viewed at a time which suits the child/family. Videos can also be kept and re-watched. Work to be completed will be uploaded onto Seesaw on a daily and/or weekly basis– depending on class level.

Special Education (SET)

The SEN teachers will provide both live Zoom teaching sessions and pre-recorded instructional videos to pupils who are in receipt of individual and group support. These will vary depending on the current level of support provided to the pupil in school. Activities will be uploaded throughout the week for children in receipt of additional support in line with the level of support that they receive in school. Each SET teacher will link in with the class teacher in assigning work. SEN children will be encouraged to prioritise the SEN work assigned during the week. Phone calls will also be scheduled to support parents and children with Remote Learning.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Special Needs Assistants who provide support to specific children throughout the school year will have access to their child's Seesaw account. They will communicate and stay in contact with children through Seesaw in the form of videos, chats and various activities. Communication between SNAs and pupils may also take the form of phone calls, which will be scheduled, to ensure that children are engaged with Remote Learning and feel connected to the school. SNAs will be present at class Zoom lessons as the additional adult present.

Remote Learning for Children unable to come to school

In the case of children who are unable to come to school due to underlying health conditions or restricted movements or children in a pod who have been requested to isolate or restrict movements, the SET teacher assigned to that particular class will assist the class teacher in assigning work for the child(ren).

This may take the form of the SET teacher teaching the class while the class teacher prepares work for the child(ren) who are absent or the SET teacher may prepare and assign work to the child(ren) on behalf of, and in consultation with, the class teacher. In these instances, the class teacher will continue to teach the rest of the class and work assigned to the child(ren) absent will mirror the work assigned in the classroom. The class teacher may use digital technologies to encourage collaboration between children on projects which can be presented digitally.

In the case where a teacher from the staff has been medically certified as being at high risk to Covid-19 and is available to work, or, who is unable to attend work and has been advised to restrict their movements, this teacher will take on the role of preparing and assigning work for children who are unable to attend school. This is in line with circular 0049/2020.

In the case where a whole class has been told to restrict their movements and cannot attend school, the class teacher will provide remote learning for the children from the school building using Seesaw and Zoom as per the school's Remote Learning arrangements. If the teacher is required to restrict his/her movements, this will be provided from the teacher's home.

Any teacher who is medically fit for work but is required to restrict their movements is available to work remotely and will be asked to deliver teaching and learning remotely to children who are unable to attend school. A substitute teacher will be hired to teach the children in their class for this period.

Substitute teachers will be employed to provide remote teaching for pupils in the case where the class/school is closed, and the class teacher is unable to work due a Covid-19 diagnosis. Substitute teachers will have access to the teacher's plans of work and digital technology, where necessary.

Preparation for Remote Learning

The following has been put in place in September 2020 in preparation for Remote Learning:

Pupils and Parents

- The school plan for Distance/Remote Learning in the case of school closures was sent out to all parents in mid-September to outline the school's arrangements.
- Codes for Seesaw were sent out to all families for individual pupils with instructions for how to set up Seesaw on home devices.
- Parents were asked to ensure that they have devices/computers available for their child and sufficient broadband access so in the event of remote learning, it will be possible for their child to continue with their education online.
- Parents were asked to contact the school in relation to devices available in the home for effective distance learning. Any families who have struggled to cater for their child's learning needs due to a lack of digital technology in the home were asked to contact the school in relation to this.
- A list of families with either broadband or sourcing of devices was compiled, and arrangements made for working closely with such families were devised.
- Children have been provided with instructional videos in relation to the use of Seesaw and preparation has been made through the assigning of homework through Seesaw, thus ensuring families are familiar with the platform.
- Children engaged in an age-appropriate lesson on Digital Citizenship. A hard copy of the agreement was sent home with all pupils to discuss with parents. Aladdin Permission notices were sent to parents to confirm that parents have discussed Digital Citizenship Agreement with their child/ren and that they have read and understand the Remote Learning Plan which the school has adopted.
- Books and work portfolios are ready in all classrooms for the event of school closures. Books will be sent home with children. A record of books being sent home has been made, and any rental books will be collected back again. Failure to return rental books will result in parents replacing books.

Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Staff

- Staff consultation in relation to remote learning approaches used in term three of 2019-2020 school year during school closures. Updated Remote Learning Arrangements devised using best practice from previous closures.
- Board of Management encouraged teachers to engage in professional development over the summer months focusing on Digital Technologies for teaching and learning.
- Support received from PDST for digital technologies
- Teacher/staff skills assessed, and teachers provided training to each other in relation to the use of Seesaw and Zoom.
- Three teachers engaged in Microsoft Teams professional development training
- Training for secretary in upgraded Aladdin Connect System

Arrangements for families with technological issues

- Devices will be sent home with children who have been identified as needing extra support. Agreements to be signed by parents that they understand that such devices are the property of the school and must be returned to the school after use.
- Hard copies of worksheets/school assignments will be posted to families who are unable to access broadband in their area. Work will be sent to pupils by post. Phone calls will be made between teachers and pupils/parents to assess how work is being completed, work through any concerns and keep the child connected to the teacher and school.

Communication throughout the School Community

In the event of school closure, a designated email address has been set up which parents can use to contact the school in relation to any administrative issues, queries, or concerns. This is remotelarning@roundwoodns.ie

If parents have any questions, queries, or concerns regarding their child's learning during school closures, parents are asked to contact teachers through Seesaw in the first instance.

Class teachers and SET teachers may contact parents through phone if there are any concerns about engagement with remote learning or work presented. These phone calls will be pre-arranged by teachers or can be requested by parents.

Teachers and staff will communicate with each other through email via Microsoft Office. Staff meetings will be conducted through Zoom / Microsoft Teams. The principal will contact staff by phone in the case of prolonged school closure to ensure teacher wellbeing.

The principal will stay connected with developments within the Education sector and from various external agencies such as, HSE, NEPS and NCSE and pass on relevant information and documents to staff and parents, as necessary.

The Board of Management will communicate through Zoom meetings and via email where necessary during school closures or where face-to-face meetings cannot be conducted.

Teacher planning and preparation

All teacher short term and long-term plans to be uploaded onto Microsoft Teams. In the event of teacher absence, plans will be emailed to a designated substitute email so teaching and learning can continue.

Monitoring and Review

Feedback will be sought from teachers, staff, parents, and children following on from implementation of these arrangements to ensure that the needs of all are being adequately met.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Fitzmaurice', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Jamie Fitzmaurice
Chairperson of the BOM

March 2021

