



www.steppingstoneschool.ie

Roll No: 20379Q

Remote Teaching and Learning plan

Introduction:

This policy is based on circular 0074/2020 Communication/Teaching and Learning platform. Stepping Stones Special School 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.

Rationale

This policy does not set out to replace our Acceptable Usage Policy. 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 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) DES 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.

Remote Teaching and Learning Plan for Stepping Stones Special School 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.

It is important to note that 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.

Guidelines for good online communication in Stepping Stones special school:

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 through established apps. i.e. DOJO and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified.
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
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. Stepping Stones Special School cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised. Stepping Stones Special School will use three online platforms for communicating and connecting with families/pupils. These will include:
 1. Zoom
 2. DOJO
 3. Google Classroom

Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of:

1. Assigned fortnightly work
2. Pre-recorded lessons (Google classroom-cooking, PE, drama, art, SESE, project-snr students)
3. Live groups (Zoom-morning circle, music-materials required will be sent home, assembly)
If the class teacher is absent due to contracting Covid/another illness then the live groups will not be possible to be screened.
2 groups will be available daily, these will include morning group plus one other (pre-recorded or live)
Class teacher will send home a timetable for pre-recorded and live groups. Assembly will take part on Friday mornings at 10am.
4. Contact teacher details (DOJO)

Individual fortnightly plans

Their plans will be simplified by the class teacher and short explanations will be provided. The teacher will also provide further guidance on how to teach the goal if you require it. Materials needed to teach the goals will be made and sent home with the student.

These will include:

- Language and communication
- Maths
- SPHE
- Group plans – these are sent on a monthly template and are differentiated in according to the student’s abilities.

All materials needed to present the goals will be sent home to the student’s family via email. The materials we send home for the goals will be a mixture of visuals and task analysis. Materials will need to be sent home once we receive notification that the student will not be returning to school for a period of time, the materials cannot be pre made. Staff in Stepping Stones use ITT and DTT to teach academic goals in the junior classes and as parents do not have this specific training we will provide materials to be taught by student’s parents in a prompt fading method. The outline of which will be included in the teaching notes that will accompany the plans. For the group plans some subjects will be taught pre-recorded in Google classroom.

It is important to note that if a class or pod is closed and all staff and students and are sent home from that class or pod then the fortnightly plan will be sent home via email with the materials attached by the class teacher. The teacher will send a note on how to teach the goals. If the student achieves the goal that has been set by the class teacher, they should contact the class teacher who will provide them with the next goal. Please remember if staff are at home sick with Covid then the communication will be limited. **Materials will not be shared from school and home.**

If one student has to isolate at home as he/she has been deemed to be a close contact or has contracted Covid then work will be able to be prepared in school by the SNAs under the direction of the class teacher. These materials will be sent home to the student. Parents will be called prior to sending home work as the school does not want to put undue pressure on families to complete work at home when they are unwell.

Google Classroom

Google classroom is an app for pupils to connect to pre recorded group videos. Parental consent is assumed. Each class will have its own folder where the class teacher or classroom staff upload a video to correspond with the group planning template. For example in the group planning under science the goal could be “students will take part in making a pizza”. In the accompanying monthly plan there will be a list of items that the student needs and it will be differentiated in accordance with the students’ needs/abilities.

ZOOM

Zoom is a video-conferencing platform which will enable teachers, staff and pupils to connect via a live link. Teachers will connect with pupils regularly using prearranged zoom meetings. Zoom can be used to teach groups like morning circle, drama, music and materials needed to attend to these groups will be sent home to allow optimum attendance in the group.

As above, if the class/pod is closed and advised to self isolate due to Covid then zoom groups will not be possible for the students in these classes/pods. However, if a student is a close contact and has been advised to self isolate then that student can join groups through zoom. Parents will be contacted prior to setting up a zoom link to determine whether the child will participate in same.

DOJO

Teachers will communicate regularly with parents and pupils via the DOJO app. All families are asked to check it daily for updates and important information. Parental queries will be addressed

during school hours only (9.30-3.10pm) and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning. Teachers will be required to check in weekly with all parents to see how things are progressing and if there are any questions. Parents can contact teachers through DOJO or email during school hours only if there is a query in how to teach goals.

If a class teacher is at home due to Covid related illnesses then she will nominate a staff member to send and reply to DOJO messages.

Rules for pupils using online communication methods:

Please note that 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.

For video calls/Zoom

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
3. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
4. The main purpose of a video call is to engage in online learning activities while maintaining a social connection between the school staff and pupils. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
5. 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. Family Name)
6. 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.
7. The main purpose of a live video call is to engage in online learning activities while maintaining a social connection between the school staff and pupils.
8. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
9. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
10. 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 teachers/SNAs

- Parents are advised to read the fortnightly plans carefully and ask teachers questions relating to them in a timely manner.
- Maintain regular contact with families as appropriate/requested (with a requirement for a weekly check in message)
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours (9.30-3.10)
- The normal school calendar will apply
- Adhere to the following policies:
 - ✓ Child protection policy
 - ✓ GDPR policy

Behaviour support

All of the students that are enrolled in Stepping Stones have Autism and complex needs. The behaviour support team help the teachers in their planning by helping to devise IEP/long term goals for each child. Parents may need support from their behaviour analyst in teaching the plans at home. The behaviour analyst will be available to discuss behaviours through email during school hours only (9.30-3.10). The Behaviour Support team will email all their student's parents initially and then check in fortnightly after that and will have the same availability to answer behaviour related questions as the class teachers.

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

A. 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.

B. 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:

- 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. The student's teacher will contact the students' parents, and ask if they want plans sent home, if they do, then the teacher will send home fortnightly plans as above and Google classroom pre-recorded groups. If the parents decide they do not want planning to be sent home then the student will be supported to catch up on learning when he/she returns to school. If parents do not want the planning sent home then they are still welcome to join any pre-recorded groups.
- 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). The student's teacher will contact the students' parents, and ask if they want plans sent home, if they do, then the teacher will send home fortnightly plans as above and Google classroom pre-recorded groups. If the parents decide they do not want planning to be sent home then the student will be supported to catch up on learning when he/she returns to school.
- School Class instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate. Teacher will link in with the pupils as per the Remote Teaching Plan, fortnightly plan sent home with note on how to teach the goals, materials relating to those goals which can be emailed will be sent with the plan, concrete materials will **not** be sent home.
- Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health) Teachers will engage with pupils (if the teacher has Covid/is sick with another illness, the engagement will be limited to sending of fortnightly plan), using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons Google Classroom/Zoom and communicate with parents through DOJO.

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

Summary:

- ✓ Do what you can, within your circumstances. Forget about following books and workbooks outside of the work set by teachers for the moment.
- ✓ If your child is not engaging with the work that is being presented then ask the class teacher/behaviour support team for advice.
- ✓ There will be no school work set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on DOJO, Zoom, or Google Classroom during these times
- ✓ Please keep abreast of postings on the DOJO app– it is our main mode of communication going forward.
- ✓ We ask parents/guardians, students and teachers to ensure protocols are adhered to at all times.

If you have yet to connect to any of the on-line platforms please do so. If you are experiencing difficulties please email your class teacher/the behaviour support team, and we will assist you in any way we can.

Contact details are as follows:

Principal Email: principalofsteppingstones@gmail.com

Behaviour Analyst Email:

Caroline: caroline.l.steppingstones@gmail.com

Eimear: Eimear_lyons@hotmail.com

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 Stepping Stones Special School on 21/12/2020 and is subject to change, in light of any guidance or instruction received from Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson BOM)

Signed:

(Principal)

Date:

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