



Distance Learning Policy

This new Distance Learning Policy reflects the evolving response to circumstances brought about by Covid-19 and the significant increase in the use of technology to continue learning. This policy replaces a previous policy which was ratified in June 2020. This policy outlines the various applications used for the delivery of online lessons remotely. Distance learning may continue on a phased basis when the school reopens. This policy may be used at times when St. Mochta's N.S. experiences an enforced or unforeseen closure.

This new policy operates alongside all of our existing policies which can be viewed on our website www.stmochtas.ie.

Introduction

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of the use of technology for distant or remote teaching and learning during the current COVID-19 crisis. It will hereafter be referred to as “distance learning” – it operates in addition to our existing Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The following factors were taken into consideration when drawing up this policy:

- Access to devices for children
- Access to devices and media hardware for staff
- Access to quality broadband for children and staff
- Pressures and stress on parents and families (particularly frontline workers)
- Well-being of our whole school community
- The varying levels of technological skill among staff

Scope of this Policy

This policy covers all aspects of student distance learning as used by our staff at St. Mochta's National School. The applications that will be used for distance learning will be:

- Google Classroom (4th-6th classes)
- Aladdin Connect (JI-3rd classes)

There may be some additional applications that teachers may use, and if this is the case, the teacher will provide the child / parent with the information required to access them. Additional applications may include a range of video recording, editing and distribution platforms to aid teachers in their delivery of video lessons.

Children from fourth to sixth classes must use their @stmochtas.ie account to log in to Google Classroom. Children are not permitted to use any other account under any circumstances for the purposes of distance learning within the school.

Distance Learning Approach

Distance learning will take an approach which is known as a blended approach and teachers may differ in their methods under this approach.

- Children may be asked to complete practical activities at home and then send in a photo of the task.
- Children may be asked to complete work in their text books or copies.
- Children may be invited to complete an online activity e.g. Joe Wicks, Body Coach.
- Children may also be asked to view televised learning programmes such as The Home School Hub on RTE2 or Cúla4 Ar Scoil on TG4.
- Parents may be asked to sign up to free educational websites such as edco.ie, cfallons.ie, twinkl.co.uk in order to access educational resources or book schemes to aid distance learning.

In all cases, the primary aim is to cover elements of the required curriculum areas for their class level. The teacher will decide the most effective method to use in order to achieve this aim.

- Children will be invited to return work to their teacher for review.
- Teachers will provide a menu of work for the children each day. We are conscious that every home is unique and some parents/guardians may have more time to complete school work than others. Therefore, the work set by teachers is a menu for parents to choose from. There will be optional work listed should your child wish to do extra work. We expect all children to engage in some work and return some allocated work to their teacher.
- Mainstream class teachers will record up to a maximum of two videos per week to be shared with children.
- Teachers will follow up with families if children are not engaging in any work. The wellbeing of our children, staff and families is our first priority at this time. School work is a secondary concern to us. Parents are invited to get in touch with teachers if they have any concerns or if they wish to share what is happening at home with their children.
- Teachers can be contacted via email or a parent can respond to a teacher on the noticeboard on Aladdin connect.
- Teachers will respond during school hours only.
- Children in senior classes can ask for help from their teachers via Google classroom.
- Teachers will provide specific and regular supports for children with special educational needs in line with the targets in their IEPs.

Child Safety & Child Protection

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Health & Safety Statement and Child Protection Policy. Live tutorials and/or 'Zoom' gatherings will not be facilitated during our school closure to protect the safety of pupils and staff at all times.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Some children with SEN have been allocated assistive technology. This equipment normally remains on the school premises as part of our AUP policy. Parents may seek the assistive technology equipment for their child from the school. A contract will be issued by the school and must be signed by the parent. The child can have access to the equipment for the duration of the school closure.

It is particularly important that children with SEN are supported in maintaining their engagement with learning during the school closure. Supporting children with special educational needs through distance learning requires an individualised approach. The SET team will support children and parents with regular contact and provide ongoing opportunities for engagement. Due to the specific nature of their role, the SET team will use a variety of methods of communication to achieve continuity of learning for the children they work with.

Responsibilities for all who participate in distance learning

For staff and teachers:

- Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class or group and provide work on a daily basis.
- Teachers will do their utmost to give feedback on work returned by the children.
- Teachers will be available to respond to any queries from parents via email or the parent's noticeboard on Aladdin.
- Teachers will be flexible and agree timelines for return of work with parents and children
- SNAs will check in with children in their care via a phone call.

For Children:

- Children in the senior classes will communicate through their @stmochtas.ie account only. The use of any other account or e-mail address is expressly prohibited. Accounts remain the property of St. Mochta's N.S. and will be disabled at the end of 6th class. Children will be invited to remove any documents from their accounts before they are disabled.
- Children are asked to try their best with their work.
- Children must always be civil and respectful to fellow pupils and teachers when using Google Classroom.

For Parents:

- Please encourage your child to complete some school work and return work to your child's teacher.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher and respond to any messages sent to you.

All videos issued by St. Mochta's NS are the intellectual property of St Mochta's NS and should be viewed only by the intended recipients of the videos. St. Mochta's NS does not permit the sharing of these videos electronically or by any social media platform (e.g. WhatsApp). These videos will be accessible for 2 weeks and after this date they will be deleted.

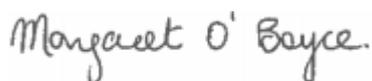
Our Distance Learning Policy operates in addition to the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) 2018 and Privacy Policy which are available from our website. For clarity, we will outline aspects specific to Distance Learning but this should be read alongside our existing policies mentioned above.

This policy is open to review by the Board of Management.

Ratified and signed on behalf of the Board of Management of St. Mochta's National School.



**Valerie Haslam
Chairperson**



**Margaret O'Boyce
Acting Principal**

23rd March 2021

Date