

## Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been formulated to outline how the school will maintain the link between school and home in the event of another whole or partial school closure.

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 Acceptable Use Policy, 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) 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 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. St Vincent de Paul Girls' School uses child friendly, online tools, which assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

## Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are in line with current government guidance on Remote Teaching and Learning:

- to support all pupils in their access to high-quality remote teaching and learning
- to provide a clear remote learning strategy, including how and when learning should be assigned remotely, how it will be communicated, how pupils will submit work and how they will receive feedback on submitted work
- to anticipate, identify and address any concerns associated with remote learning, relating to safeguarding, data protection, and health and safety
- to make staff, parental and pupil roles and responsibilities clear in relation to remote learning
- to declare the software and online tools approved for use by St Vincent de Paul Girls' School to support remote learning



## Guidelines for good online communication in St Vincent de Paul Girls' School

1. Under no circumstances should pictures, screenshots or recordings be taken of video calls. The only device permitted is the device being used for online teaching and learning, no other devices are permitted. Therefore, the only communication permitted is between teacher and pupil(s) and vice versa.
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 via Google Classroom or through an established app (e.g. Seesaw) and occasionally through Zoom.
5. Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication that have been approved by the school and sanctioned by the class teacher, for example (Google Meet/Hangout, Zoom, Google Classroom).
6. These services, although not owned by St Vincent de Paul Girls School, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy.
7. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
8. Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (e.g. Google Classroom, Zoom)
9. Parental consent for a pupil to be set up on a communication forum, such as Google Classroom is assumed as the initial email with login details are sent to the parent's/ guardian's email. (this consent is also given by signing AUP policy).
10. 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. Separate consent will be necessary where one to one sessions are appropriate (e.g for SET setting)
11. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
12. St Vincent de Paul Girls' School cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are compromised.
13. It is the duty of the parents to supervise children on their end.
14. All communication with staff members must be from parents, not children. This can be done using email.
15. For face to face communication (video conferencing) the initial contact will be set up using the staff member's email and the parent's email
16. Although communication using a mobile phone is not the first resort, in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members should change their settings on their phones so the recipient of the call sees "No caller ID".

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School will use online platforms for communicating and connecting with families/pupils. Our 'Remote Teaching and Learning Plan' will include a combination of assigned work, pre-recorded lessons (Google Classroom) and live sessions (Zoom), as appropriate.



## Media which the school will use

### School App

Staff will communicate regularly with parents and pupils via the school App, Aladdin Connect and/or school email account. All families are asked to download the school app and to check it daily for updates and important information. All families are responsible for ensuring their details are up to date on Aladdin Connect.

Each teacher has been assigned a school email address through which he/she will communicate with parents/guardians and vice-versa. Parental queries will be addressed during school hours only (9:00am-2:40pm) and should relate strictly to your child's teaching and learning. As teachers are engaged in teaching and learning during the day they may not be in a position to reply on the same day. Every effort will be made to reply as soon as possible and these replies may be sent after the normal school day ends (no later than 4pm)

### Seesaw

*Seesaw Class App* is not currently being used at St Vincent de Paul Girls as an interactive online learning tool. It may, however, be used by some classes to keep parents/guardians updated on news/photos etc. taking place in school - individual class teachers will communicate with parents if Seesaw is being used with their class. This app requires a QR which can be accessed through the school email. Parental consent is required prior to using this app. Each child will be assigned an individual access code. Unfortunately, single family log in is not facilitated on Seesaw.

### Google Classroom: (also includes Google Meet where appropriate)

Google Classroom is an online platform which enables our pupils to connect to their folder of work and it also allows access to their teacher during school hours. This will be the primary remote teaching and learning tool that will be used across the school. Work for the day will be made available by the teacher by 8pm on the previous evening. Teachers will communicate with pupils via Google Classroom during school hours and feedback will be provided during these times. As teachers are engaged in teaching and learning activities during the school day there may be times that feedback is provided later in the day. Some lessons will be pre-recorded and uploaded on Google Classroom. Parental consent is required prior to using this app – this is given as part of our AUP policy.

### 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 pre-arranged Zoom Meetings.



## Rules for pupils using online communication

### For submitting learning:

1. Submit meaningful work and pictures that are appropriate - **have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.**
2. Use kind and friendly words in all communication, including any comments made.
3. Comments are only permitted when directed to do so by the teacher and should only be between the teacher and pupil, except in instances whereby the teacher gives permission for whole class commentary (e.g. birthdays, etc.)
4. Students are expected to uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline.

### For video calls/Zoom:

1. Remember to ensure you join each Zoom meeting using your family name.
2. Under no circumstances should pictures, screenshots or recordings be taken of video calls. The only device permitted is the device being used for online teaching and learning, no other devices are permitted. Therefore, the only communication permitted is between teacher and pupil(s) and vice versa.
3. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
4. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
5. Join the video with your microphone muted.
6. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
7. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
8. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
9. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call and video calls should take place in an appropriate setting with only the necessary resources/equipment present for the session as other items can be distracting for one's own learning and for others on the call.
10. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
11. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

## Guidelines for parents and guardians

### For learning

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 it is appropriate.
3. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

## Guidelines for 'live' video calls/zoom



### For video calls/Zoom

1. Under no circumstances should pictures or recordings be taken of video calls – the only device to be available to the child is the device being used for online teaching and learning, as per guidelines and rules for online communication.
2. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
3. 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. Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
8. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
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 Pupils

1. Check assigned on work each day
2. Communication may only take place during normal school hours (no later than 4pm)
3. The normal school calendar will apply
4. The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning:
  - a. Code of Behaviour
  - b. Anti- Bullying Policy
  - c. Acceptable Use 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 in this evolving and unprecedented situation.

## 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 during school hours
2. Communication may only take place during normal school hours (feedback can be provided outside 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.

Protocols for Staff: When using the video conferencing app, Zoom, Google Hangouts please follow these guidelines;

- Use your class email address when setting up the Zoom account for class video conferencing
- Familiarise yourself with the application before use, especially the functions - muting, sharing and 'hands up' options.
- Only admit participants from the waiting room whose email address you are familiar with - it may be helpful if you have a list of the email addresses of the parents to hand, as they wait to be admitted
- From the outset be clear with the ground rules regarding the children's participation in the meeting e.g. use of hands up, muting etc. Below is an example of good practice in this regard but you can use whatever is appropriate for your context.
- Consent for children using Zoom is assumed (see above)
- If at any point you feel uncomfortable, end the call immediately and report your concerns to management.
- For security reasons generate a new meeting ID and password for each zoom meeting you hold.
- The teacher will be the last person to leave the video conference/live call or lesson.
  
- If no parent/guardian is present for one to one session (where applicable) this session will not proceed



## 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 not been instructed by their GP/HSE to isolate at home for a specified time.**  
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/HSE due to a confirmed case within their own family/close contact in a residential setting (as per HSE isolation period).**  
Teacher will link in with the pupil via Google-Classroom (not video conferencing).
- 3. School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate.**  
Teacher will link in with the pupils via Google-Classroom (not video conferencing)
- 4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (as per HSE isolation period).**  
Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Google Classroom and 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/Google Classroom and live contact on Zoom.

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



## Summary:

1. Do what you can, within your circumstances. Forget about following books and workbooks outside of the work set by teachers for the moment.
2. There will be no school work set for planned school closures/holidays. There will be no interaction on Zoom, Seesaw or Google Classroom during these times
3. Please keep abreast of postings on the school app (Aladdin) – 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 St Vincent de Paul Girls' School on:

\_\_\_\_\_ 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

## Recommended Apps

In addition to a pared back plan of work for your child/children, we suggest the following Apps for your child's use too, if you can access them. If not, do not worry, they are helpful but not essential.

- Cúla 4: Excellent for younger pupils for Irish vocab – very child friendly. There are also videos of your children's favourite cartoons here as Gaeilge which would be useful to watch occasionally to keep up with Irish.
- Doulingo: most suitable from 2nd class upwards. Excellent app. Tests your child Irish ability level at the start and they work away at their own level for 10mins daily.
- Mathduel: For tables. Fun and interactive.
- Starfall: For spellings. Again, very child friendly and useful to keep spellings progressing without feeling like schoolwork.
- Jolly Phonics App: to keep up phonics learning for infant classes.
- Dolch words Apps (there is a wide range available): for the development of sight words.
- Nessy Apps: for reading for pupils with dyslexia or difficulties.
- PinkFong: Digital stories for infant classes. Excellent and engaging.
- Khan Academy: Useful for maths for older pupils especially.
- Kahoot: for general knowledge and quizzes.
- Toontastic: probably the best app ever for digital storytelling – pupils can devise their own digital story, picking a range of characters, settings, even musical background. They plan a beginning, middle and end to their story and can record their own voices to tell the story.
- Puppetpals: similar to toontastic – useful for younger pupils. They can record themselves telling the story also.
- Lightbot – Coding app – super for all ages.

