



PORTADOWN COLLEGE

REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

1. RATIONALE

In the event of a full College closure that means all students have to be taught remotely, the College is committed to providing continuity of education and will do so through a process of remote or blended learning.

Blended Learning: The Department of Education has defined 'blended learning' as: *an approach to education whereby schools will combine classroom-based teaching and learning methods within school, with a range of remote learning in order to deliver the NI Curriculum. (DENI Circular 2020/06: 23 June 2020).*

Remote Learning: Remote learning is often used to refer to teaching and learning that takes place online. However, it also covers teaching and learning using hard copy resources such as text books and worksheets.

Remote learning takes place via the most appropriate platform in accordance with DE/EA guidance (in the policy thereafter this will be referred to as the platform), unless there are technical reasons why this cannot happen and another platform may be nominated in limited circumstances. Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when students, in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the College, have a period of absence but are able to work at home.

Please note, as recognised in the DENI Circular 2021/24 (December 2021): *"that in circumstances where teachers are continuing to teach face to face classes...expectations must be realistic...it may not be possible for schools to provide the same volume of remote learning as during the extended period of closures..."*. Only in exceptional circumstances is it realistic or appropriate to expect live remote lessons when the College is open.

There is no obligation for the College to provide continuity of education to students who absent themselves from College, with or without parental permission, in contravention of College or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents/carers choose to take students on holiday during term time. Similarly, this may apply if parents/carers make the decision to absent their child from College 'as a precaution', against official guidance and is therefore an unauthorised absence from the College, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease, including COVID.

This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term College closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term student absence including COVID.

2. AIMS

This policy aims to guide staff, parents/carers and students as to the expectations for remote learning or blended learning in the exceptional case that the College is closed or access is restricted.

3. OVERVIEW

In using the platform for remote learning it may be noted that the teaching experiences will not all look the same – as with students when working at home, teachers have varying access to high quality broadband or they may be in College supervising other students. Moreover, it is not a realistic expectation that teachers and students can be expected to cover the same amount of material as they would in a face-to-face teaching environment.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has found that the effectiveness of remote teaching is determined by many of the same factors as determine the effectiveness of classroom teaching. For example:

- ensuring students receive clear explanations;
- supporting growth in confidence with new material through scaffolded practice;
- application of new knowledge or skills; and
- enabling students to receive feedback on how to progress.

(Source: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Remote_learning_evidence_review/Remote_Learning_Rapid_Evidence_Assessment.pdf)

These factors which would normally be integrated within the face-face learning environment in the College will be replicated in our online provision. These characteristics of good teaching are more important than the medium of delivery.

The virtual classroom is an extension of the physical classroom and the normal rules, codes of behaviour and protocols apply between staff and students, as well as staff and parents/carers (See Section 4).

Remote learning

Live streamed classes – It is not a requirement for staff to live stream lessons, but the option of live streaming will afford staff the opportunity to decide for themselves as a matter of informed and free professional choice. It must be recognised that live streaming requires good broadband access for staff and students, brings increased safeguarding implications and is more open to misuse.

In the event of all students engaging in remote learning, the College expects that if teachers are not providing a live lesson, some forum to meet with students each week to complement the learning is facilitated. Students can raise any issues relating to their studies in such a forum.

Blended learning

There is no prescribed approach to blended learning, as different formats will suit different subjects. In a blended learning environment, it must be recognised that teaching staff will be teaching their full timetable inside College, as well as managing remote learning. Therefore, arrangements must be manageable – in particular, queries from those engaged in remote learning which may be handled on return to the classroom.

There is no expectation that separate learning resources should be produced specifically for blended learning.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching Staff – Key Principles for Remote Teaching

Teachers should:

- Ensure that all interactions with students are in line with the College's Acceptable Use of ICT for staff and adhere to the Child Protection Policy.
- Recognise that the student-teacher relationship remains central and helps support student motivation with remote learning – encouragement and reassurance is important.
- Keep learning purposeful, so that students have an understanding of the core learning requirements.
- Aim to provide clear explanations, recognising the increased complexity of processing required from a student undertaking remote learning.
- Avoid long extended tasks, unless the task is broken down into interim steps and deadlines.
- Give consideration to the balance between online and offline learning in the tasks set for students.
- Provide feedback on student work at least once every fortnight.
- Give consideration to effective methods of feedback – this may include whole class feedback, use of quizzes e.g. Kahoot and/or individual feedback to students (text or MOTE audio clips).
- Provide feedback which recognises student achievements as well as areas for improvement.

- Provide regular opportunities to allow students to reflect and review their learning, identifying where issues lie. Recognise that 30 – 45 minutes is the optimal timing for online learning per class at a post primary level (DE Circular Number: 2020/05).
- Follow the College procedures for students who are not engaging with work set.
- If a member of staff is ill and unavailable during a College closure they should inform the Head of Department so that appropriate work can be set for their students by the subject Head of Department during the period of absence. If the Head of Department is ill, they should inform the Curriculum Vice-Principal who will liaise with other members of the department to arrange work. In the case of single teacher departments, the Curriculum Vice Principal will seek to make alternative arrangements, taking guidance where possible from the Head of Department.
- If College is in full closure, staff are expected to check C2K e-mails at 9am and at regular intervals each working day.
- Heads of Department will be responsible for overseeing that teachers in their department are setting appropriate tasks in line with schemes of work with appropriate resources.

Live streamed classes

Should staff choose to live stream classes through the platform, they should follow the principles set out below:

- Follow the College Timetable (Week A/B) to ensure there are no clashes with other subjects.
- Remind the class that it is their responsibility to turn their video/audio off unless permission is given to have cameras/audio switched on.
- Set clear expectations for student behaviour and routines in the online environment.
- Be familiar with the ability to mute or remove a student from the online class, should a student be behaving inappropriately – any such incident should be reported to the Head of Department in the first instance. In most cases, the teachers should prompt positive behaviour and provide warning that if behaviour continues to fall below expected standards, they will have to remove the student from the class – this provides the student an opportunity to rectify their behaviour. In extreme cases, this may not be possible. Where the incident raises a safeguarding concern, normal College procedures should be followed as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.
- Give consideration to students who do not have the broadband capability to access live streamed classes, ensuring their learning needs can be met. Where possible, upload teaching materials in advance of the timetabled class to maximise the effectiveness of the online session.
- Ensure that any period of face-to-face contact begins with a review of work completed outside College, allowing students to raise queries and areas of confusion. This may involve the use of 'Flipped Learning' techniques.
- Follow up on non-engagement on the part of any students following the procedures outlined in Section 7 of this policy.

Students – Key Principles for Remote Learning

Students should:

- Adhere to the College's Online Safety policy and relevant safeguarding policies.
- Become familiar with the guidance in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Check their messages on the platform and C2K email on a daily basis for correspondence from teachers/College.
- Use the platform on a daily basis to help prevent work building up or becoming overwhelming.
- Check the 'To Do' menu in the platform on a daily basis to ensure that assignments are submitted within specified timescales.
- Ensure any notification system is turned on.
- Students should follow their College timetable where possible and complete all activities/tasks in a timely manner.
- Establish a routine for their learning which includes breaks and time away from the screen – in particular allow time for exercise.
- Consider how they can best minimise distractions in their home environment to help with their learning.
- Recognise that the online classroom is an extension of the physical classroom and that the normal rules in terms of respectful communication apply.

- Engage in all tasks set to the best of their ability – where there is an issue or they are unsure, consider the support resources available to them. These may include taking time to re-read/re-watch/re-listen to the instructions; contact with peers who are undertaking the same task; advice from a parent/carer; request for further clarification or information from the class teacher. Recognise that it is normal for some tasks to feel very challenging when they are working independently.
- Recognise that teacher feedback will often include actions for improvement – this is a vital part of how we all learn and an important function of any teacher’s role.
- Seek support if they are feeling overwhelmed – speak to an adult and/or seek support from their Year Head.
- Use the platform or C2K email to communicate with their teachers during the College day. Personal email accounts should not be used.
- Stay connected to friends/peers to support their own wellbeing.

If students are participating in live streamed classes, they should:

- Ensure they are familiar with the Online Learning – Guidance for Students (Appendix 1) which sets out the code of behaviour expected for online communication, including live streamed classes.
- Be aware that lack of engagement with an online class is the same as within a live lesson; it will affect progress, attainment and assessment and will be reflected in the College’s reporting process. Teachers will download a record of student attendance from the platform if they conduct live lessons to facilitate the monitoring of attendance.
- Recognise that inappropriate behaviour will be challenged in the same way as it would in the classroom – after a warning, they may be removed from the class if they are failing to follow the expected norms as set out in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (Appendix 3). On rare occasions, a student may be removed from the live streamed class without prior warning if their behaviour is deemed to be extreme. Any removal of a student from an online class will be reported.
- Students **MUST NOT** at any point take screen grabs or record live streamed classes. Any breach of this will be treated as a severe behaviour infringement and may be reported to outside agencies depending on the nature of the breach.
- Aim to adopt problem solving approaches if they come across a difficulty – teachers will expect to see evidence of effort. On the rare occasion that they come across a difficulty that proves insurmountable in their remote learning and stops them from any work completion, they should contact their Teacher via the platform or C2K email during College hours (9:00am – 3.35pm) or ask a parent/carer to contact College to make teachers aware of this.
- Note anything they remain unsure of during non-contact time which can be raised on return to College.

Parents/Carers – Key Principles for Remote Learning

The need to be pragmatic in our approach to remote learning extends to parents/carers. We recognise that parents/carers are not replacement teachers – we also recognise that they will have competing demands in terms of their own work and care for others in the household; some Key Workers may not be present during the day when remote learning is happening.

Parents/carers should:

- Ensure their son/daughter can access online resources, using a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone and Wi-Fi or mobile data and notify the College if there are any issues in this regard.
- Ensure their son/daughter is familiar with the College Acceptable Use Policy.
- Discuss their son/daughter’s working environment to make sure it is suitable. Have a discussion with them about how they will manage distractions.
- Encourage a routine: in particular, regular morning start times and reasonable bedtimes.
- Discuss their son/daughter’s learning: this does not need to be in-depth – it can be as simple as asking about what classes they had that day and what tasks they found challenging or enjoyed. Research indicates that this helps build student motivation. This will also allow a parent/carer to be more aware of potential concerns such as non-engagement or their son/daughter feeling overwhelmed.
- Encourage problem-solving – emphasise it is normal to find tasks difficult or not to understand. This will help support a young person who may be inclined to panic and help develop their independence and

resilience. Calmly work through the strategies they have tried such as re-reading tasks, peer support, online videos and contact with the teacher – encourage them to attempt the task even if unsure. If they cannot attempt the work at all, the parent/carer can contact the College to make them aware of the issue.

- Recognise that teacher feedback to their son/daughter may involve steps/actions for improvement – encourage them not to take this personally or feel criticised – this is normal and a vital part of the learning process.
- Notify the College via telephone (028 38332439) or the College info account (info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk), if adverse circumstances are preventing their son/daughter engaging with remote learning, such as illness/other family circumstances or loss of internet connection. Please note, teachers will follow up non-completion of work; if they are unaware of difficulties at home, this can lead to additional stress.
- Recognise that normal protocols apply and they should contact the College via telephone (028 38332439) or the College info account (info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk) to raise any concerns – a teacher, Year Head or member of the Senior Leadership Team will be in touch with them to discuss these concerns.
- Encourage their son/daughter to maintain contact with peers, to take regular breaks away from screens and to exercise to support physical and mental wellbeing.

If students are participating in live streamed classes, parents/carers should:

- Ensure their son/daughter is familiar with the Netiquette for Students (Appendix 1) which sets out the code of behaviour expected for live streamed classes – in particular, ensuring their child understands that behaviour that is not appropriate will lead to their removal from the class.
- If possible, providing a secure, private space for their son/daughter to work; it would not be appropriate for a parent/carer to observe or attempt to participate in an online lesson. If a parent/carer does so, the student will be asked to leave the class and a member of the senior staff will be in touch to discuss the incident.
- Recognise that any queries about their son/daughter's work or progress should come from the young person and be communicated to the teacher on the online platform. A parent/carer may make contact with the College via the info account (info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk) or by telephoning College (028 38332439).
- Discuss the severity of an offence such as screen grabs or recording of an online live streamed class without prior permission with their son/daughter. Make students aware that this is a GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) data breach and therefore is a legal issue – it will be considered a very serious behaviour infringement by the College. Any such behaviour will be referred to external agencies as appropriate.

5. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND VULNERABLE STUDENTS

If the context requires remote or blended learning, students with special educational needs and those designated as vulnerable will be supported in line with DENI/EA guidance. In the College, arrangements may involve:

- Enhanced monitoring of student work on the platform and support phone calls home.
- Remote support from classroom assistants to encourage students to organise their work and stay engaged.
- A request for a student to complete learning in College where that is possible and deemed appropriate.

6. PASTORAL CARE PROVISION

The College counselling service will be offered online, with referrals being made via the Pastoral Vice Principal, Mr **Lappin** who can be contacted by phoning College.

The Year Head will use the Year Group part of the platform, email and telephone calls to support students and parents/carers. A list of email addresses and contact numbers may be kept for this purpose in the event access to the SIMS console is not possible.

7. NON-ENGAGEMENT BY STUDENTS WITH REMOTE LEARNING

The College Review and Support system is adapted for any period of Remote Learning with four stages of intervention. Parents/carers will be contacted if the concern is not resolved by the class teacher at Stage 1. Please see Appendix 2 for details of each of the four stages.

8. RETURNING TO COLLEGE AFTER A PERIOD OF REMOTE LEARNING

When a return to College happens after any period of remote learning, teachers should take time to reassure and encourage students; there may be a period of readjustment required.

Where a student has not engaged in remote learning, it is unrealistic for a teacher to re-teach all of the material covered during school closure. Instead, they will identify key concepts and support/practise materials to be prioritised – the focus should be on a way forward and what can still be achieved.

9. EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Should there be any changes to the contents, timing or format of external examinations during any period of remote learning, the College will communicate any changes to all students, parents and carers.

10. DATA PROTECTION

Accessing personal data

When accessing personal data, all staff members will work within their allocated C2k account and associated drives on the platform.

Sharing personal data

Staff members may need to collect personal data such as e-mail addresses as part of the remote learning system. While this may be necessary, staff are reminded to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online and to do so in accordance with the College's GDPR protocols.

Keeping devices secure

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol).
- Ensuring the device/hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device.
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time.
- Not sharing the device among family or friends.
- Installing antivirus and antispyware software.
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates.

11. SAFEGUARDING

The normal Safeguarding procedures as detailed in the College Child Protection Policy operate during any period of remote learning when the College building may not be open to students. To report a safeguarding concern, students or parents/carers should send an email to the College information account (info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk) with the following information:

- *Safeguarding Concern* – in the E-mail title
- Name
- Contact telephone number

No details regarding the concern should be contained in the e-mail. A member of the College Safeguarding Team will be in contact as soon as possible to get the necessary details and advise on what steps will be taken to support the young person concerned. As detailed in our policy: *The young person's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a young person is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.*

12. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy is linked to the College:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy notices
- Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

13. DURATION OF THE POLICY

This policy covers the 2022/23 academic year.

*Approved at a meeting of the Board of Governors
27 January 2022*

Amendment to the policy passed at a meeting of the Board of Governors on 22 September 2022

APPENDIX 1

Netiquette: a guide for teachers and students when learning on line

The word netiquette is a combination of 'net' (from internet) and 'etiquette'. It means respecting other users' views and displaying common courtesy when posting your views to online discussion groups. Please familiarise yourself with the following points:

Behind Every Name There is a Person:

- Respect the views of class members and what they share in class.
- Ask for clarification if you find a discussion posting difficult to understand. If you come across a posting you regard as offensive, report this to your teacher.
- Avoid sweeping generalisations. Back up your stated opinions with facts and reliable sources.
- Understand that people may not always hold the same viewpoint and that exposure to other people's opinions is part of the learning experience.
- Be respectful of each other. Before posting a comment, ask whether you would be willing to make the same comment to a person's face.
- Keep in mind that everything you write, indeed every click of your mouse is recorded on the network server. On the Internet there are no take backs.
- Keep in mind that you are participating in a class. Something that would be inappropriate in a traditional classroom is also inappropriate in an online classroom.

Online Communication:

- Be careful with humour and sarcasm. Both can easily be misunderstood!
- Review all discussion postings before posting your own to prevent repetition.
- Stay on the topic which has been identified in the initial post or heading.
- Check your writing for errors by reviewing what you've written before submitting it.
- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms eg BBL (Be Back Later) as many users may not know what you mean or misinterpret your comment.
- No matter what forum, writing in all capital letters is considered SHOUTING and is considered very rude. A word or two in caps is fine, but shouting is not recommended.
- Obey copyright laws. Don't post material in a workspace or as an attachment in a discussion forum without acknowledging the source e.g. This picture was downloaded from www.thinkuknow.com

(Source: Portadown College Online Safety Policy)

PORTADOWN COLEGE – HOME STUDY INTERVENTIONS

Stage	Concern	Response
1	Student not engaging in work/work not submitted or late	Teacher engages with student with personal message in the stream in the platform (Google classroom)/e-mail and asks for reason for work not being submitted. If no valid reason, warning given that next stage is communication with parents/carers.
2	Problem persists i.e. no improvement in next activity/submission of work	Teacher communicates with parents/carers by telephone (mobiles have been provided to all teachers).
		If the problem persists, teacher to contact HoD who will then contact parents/carers by telephone .
3	After intervention from class teacher and Head of Department, student is still showing no engagement/work is not being submitted on time and to a high enough standard	Fill in the details in the relevant document by 1pm each Friday . Please ensure precise information is provided on the spreadsheet for use in the letter home e.g. nature of work not completed, date of deadline missed etc. using drop down menus. Before 1pm the following Friday, please provide a short update comment in right hand column so YH/HoD can monitor impact.
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>Year 11 and 12 HoD to refer student of concern to Year Head (via appropriate spreadsheet) Up to three subject concerns – YH will refer to HoD for further follow up by letter. HoD to send letter home via office. Please provide details of student name and address where possible.</p> <p>The letter should provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of the concern - Specific actions required - Timescale for actions required <p>[Cc –Year Head] More than three subject concerns – YH will make contact with home.</p> </td> <td> <p>Year 13 and 14 HoD sends letter home via office. Please provide details of student name and address where possible.</p> <p>The letter should provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of the concern - Specific actions required - Timescale for actions required <p>[Cc –Year Head]</p> </td> </tr> </table>
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4	Actions are not taken within timescale set out by YH/HoD	Referral to Curriculum Vice Principal - R&S (Review and Support) can be implemented if required on return to College.

