



Covid-19 Distance Learning Policy

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to providing a safe environment for online learning. This commitment remains the same in the difficult circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Distance Learning model that we chose to adopt in response to the Covid-19 crisis was designed to reach the very broad demographic we serve. In exploring the options available it became clear that there was a huge digital divide in our community. Families from higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to have access to the necessary resources that might help them to overcome some of the challenges presented in the current crisis. Families from lower socio-economic backgrounds on the other hand, were more likely to be hit harder by the economic impacts and face food and financial insecurity. We also considered the impact that the lockdown would undoubtedly have on the availability of IT facilities in the family home at a time when many of our parents / carers would be forced to work from home.

As such whilst live video lessons may have initially appeared an attractive option, they would we believed, only widen the gap between those students who could readily access online content from home and those who did not have the necessary devices or an internet connection. So instead we focused on developing our pre-existing channels of communication so that we could be sure that all students were able to access the content created by our teachers.

While our initial offering was developed at very short notice it was reviewed regularly and adapted in light of the feedback received from all parties. This iterative process will continue for as long as the current pandemic exists.

We believe that it is the best interests of our students to focus on the quality of the resources provided, rather than the methods used for delivery. As such development has centred on elements such as clear explanations, improved scaffolding and providing regular targeted feedback. Although feedback on student work has been offered from the outset, with students actively encouraged to engage in dialogue with their teachers lessons learned from the first period in lockdown demonstrate that we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that any young person who is reluctant to ask for help when in difficulty is catered for.

Our key aim will be to retain as much face-to-face education and access to childcare as possible. The 'tiers of restriction' will ensure that extensive limitations on education and childcare are a last resort and that full-time on-site provision is available for vulnerable children and children of critical workers in all cases.

During any period of Distance Learning our expectations of staff and students remain the same. The principles and practices of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Online Safety Protocol, alongside the staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements for staff and students continue to apply, both to existing and any new online and distance learning arrangements introduced.

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of our students during the period that they are engaging in guided home learning, the school will continue to follow the DfE remote learning guidance:




<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Providing a Safe System

Where the site remains open, the school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.



For the purposes of guided home learning, the primary platforms used across the Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre network are Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Office 365 and Milk.

Microsoft Teams	MS Teams is the primary tool for creating a new digital hub that includes conversations, content, assignments, and apps together in one place.	
Microsoft Office 365	All students have complete access to the core Microsoft Office suite to ensure that they can continue with their studies remotely.	
Milk	Primary delivery model for remote learning. All resources shared with students and their parents. Feedback given to students primarily via Milk.	

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has day to day responsibility for online safety and will maintain an active oversight of the management of guided home learning from a safeguarding perspective. Procedures will be kept under review and action will be taken swiftly if concerns about the use of technologies arise.

The school will keep in regular contact with parents / carers, updating them as appropriate with information on how the school is providing guided home learning, how they can keep their children safe online, and any new developments.

Guided Distance Learning

The primary tools for guided home learning at Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre are MILK, Office 365 and MS Teams. These applications will enable:

- Posting activities for students at regular intervals, with students posting responses
- Providing recorded material in the form of narrated power points or video tutorials
- Directing students to web-based resources and activities they can engage with on or offline
- Interactive/live teaching in real time

Teachers will select the most appropriate format for a lesson depending on a number of factors, including the age of the students, size of the group, nature of the activity, and the degree of support required; and taking into account the need to ration screen time and provide a variety of learning experiences within a lesson, across the school day/week and through a scheme of work.

Pastoral Support for Students

School staff will be in continued contact with families during any period of lockdown through regular tutor welfare phone calls. The Pastoral Team and SENCO will continue to provide additional support for vulnerable students and those students with specific educational needs.

The school's blended learning approach has been designed to reach the widest audience in a way that supports families with low or no connectivity and those families with siblings in multiple years groups, whilst still enabling those young people who thrive on extension activities to deepen their understanding. Families with issues relating to the availability of IT resources should contact Assistant Principal.



Summary of Instructions provided to Students

We will provide Distance Learning equivalent to the length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school which is 5 hours a day for KS3 and KS4 (secondary school up to age 16). These hours include both direct teaching and time for pupils to complete tasks or assignments independently.

The following information has been provided to students to support their understanding of Distance Learning requirements:

For the start of this week you will receive one MILK homework message for each subject that you study with all the information needed to complete work for that subject across the week.

Where possible you should complete MILK tasks following the times on your normal school timetable at home. This is because during your timetabled lesson times you will be able to email your teacher from that subject (from your school account) to ask questions, look for advice and receive feedback. Teachers will include their email addresses in their MILK messages.

Please use your games lessons and PSHE time either for some form of exercise or work catch-up.

Whenever possible you should also attend the live lesson scheduled on Microsoft Teams.

If you need to contact a teacher or tutor for advice please email them using your @newent.gloucs.sch.uk email address.

Delivery of Work to Students

MILK

Teachers will send lesson details and work activities via MILK Homework Tasks and students will be asked to upload work to MILK so that teachers can provide feedback on tasks completed.

Guidance on 'how to upload work to MILK' and 'how to see teacher feedback' is given here:

<https://support.milkstudentplanner.com/hc/en-gb/articles/360008691258-Submitting-homework-through-Milk>

Assessment, marking and feedback of work will be undertaken on a weekly basis through MILK Homework Tasks and Assignments using Microsoft Teams.

Accessing Microsoft TEAMS lessons

Some lessons within the timetable will be able to live online sessions with teachers via Microsoft TEAMS during certain lessons of the week. Not all lessons will be via Microsoft TEAMS and at all other times students should follow their normal two-week timetable and complete lesson tasks that have been set via MILK. Students will be able to log in to their school Office 365 accounts via www.office.com

There will be a slightly different layout of buttons depending on whether students access their Office 365 accounts through phone, tablet, PC, laptop (or even through the browser functions on Xbox or Playstation) but the functions will all be the same.

Students will receive invites with dates and times of live lessons directly to their email account. Lessons will be automatically added to their Outlook and Microsoft TEAMS calendars.



To join a live lesson, students will need to click the 'Join' button on either their email or calendar when the lessons are due to start.

Both students and teachers will have the option to have cameras on or off, but we encourage the use of cameras being on. Teachers will direct the lesson and student participation. Additional notes that are shared with students:

- Always log on through your school account and use your Newent School email for any contact with school or classmates.
- Do not make recordings, take screenshots/screengrabs or photographs, or store footage of teachers or other students.
- Be aware that some live online sessions may be recorded by the teacher and then uploaded for students who were unable to access the live lessons. You will be informed if this takes place.
- Dress appropriately for online lessons.
- Ensure that you have a safe and appropriate place to participate from. Blur your background if necessary.
- Follow the school rules for conduct during lessons as if you were in school.
- Have a pen and paper ready for the completion of any written tasks.

If any students have any problems logging in to their Office 365 or MILK accounts they should email ict@newent.gloucs.sch.uk. Students are also encouraged to email teachers for advice and guidance on any aspect of their Distance Learning.

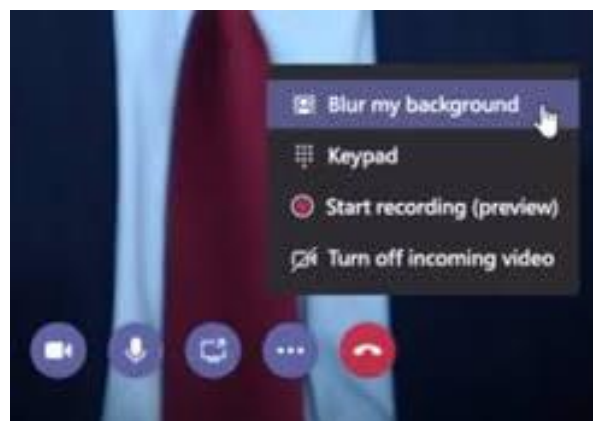
Live Online Teaching

Live online teaching is an important part of this overall package for students of all ages. Interaction with a teacher is an important part of the learning process, and whilst online contact cannot replicate face to face contact, live sessions are particularly helpful as they allow contemporaneous communication, with students able to respond to staff questions – and vice versa. Live contact is an important part of pastoral support, and provides students with a direct interface with a familiar trusted figure at a time of significant change and uncertainty. Live classes also give students the opportunity to interact with peers and maintain important social connections during a period when they could otherwise become isolated.

However, it should be remembered that live online teaching remains 'one tool in the box' and, for the reasons set out above, it should be balanced alongside learning opportunities in a range of other formats.

To blur your background during a video meeting in Teams, during a call click the three dots in the bottom toolbar. Depending on whether your camera is already on there should be a "blur background" or "start camera with blurred background" option. Click this and your background will be blurred.

In order to safeguard both students and staff, live online sessions must be conducted following the protocols set out below.



Protocols for Staff in Relation to Guided Home Learning

- Only use school approved platforms; do not use social media in communicating with students.
- Reinforce online safety messages regularly in your teaching.
- Bear in mind the current circumstances and how they are affecting children and families when setting expectations of student.



- Consider online safety when sharing resources – vet websites and videos/apps carefully and bear in mind that the home environment will not have the same content filtering systems as at school. If introducing new apps and resources, ensure these meet GDPR requirements. Contact your line manager for further guidance.
- If concerned about online safety/resources, check with the IT Technician / Vice Principal.
- Ensure that passwords and secure information – such as log-ins for SIMS – are kept confidential.
- Adhere to copyright and GDPR guidelines.
- Continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk – which may differ from typical triggers in a school environment. Report any concerns to the DSL without delay in the usual way.
- Do not provide students or parents with personal contact details – email, home or mobile numbers, details of web-based identities etc.
- Do not arrange to meet students or ask them to deliver work to your home.
- Remain professional and objective in all email and other forms of correspondence.

In relation to live online teaching:

- Keep a record/log of live online lessons – date and time, attendance, what was covered, any incidents. Any serious incidents should be reported in the usual manner depending on the nature of the issue.
- Maintain professional conduct during live streaming – dress appropriately, consider your surroundings (background, other household members who may come into view etc.) and blur¹ if necessary, and remember that your microphone may be on.
- Maintain the same boundaries and insist on the same standard of behaviour as in a school setting.
- Make specific protocols clear at the outset, eg muting of microphones at appropriate times, use of the chat function etc.
- 1:1 teaching and guidance are an important part of school provision for some students and this should be maintained as far as possible during guided home learning. 1:1 sessions that would have been in place in school in normal circumstances (eg pastoral/counselling meetings, SEN support, certain A level subject groups) may continue online, at the Principal's discretion. The Principal must be advised in advance of all such arrangements. All 1:1 teaching sessions must be recorded. Support and pastoral 1:1 sessions must be recorded unless the student is unhappy about this, in which case it is acceptable for detailed notes to be kept instead.

Reporting an issue for staff:

- Any child protection or safeguarding concern must be reported to the DSL without delay.
- Concerns about the safety of procedures, behaviours or use of technology should be referred to the DSL
- Routine queries about the use of apps or online materials should be addressed to your line manager or IT support depending on the nature of the issue.
- SWGfL Professionals Online Safety Helpline is a good source of external advice. Co-funded by the European Commission, The Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) was set up in 2011 to help all members of the community working with or for children in the UK, with any online safety issues they, or children and young people in their care, may face.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/services/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

Protocols for Students in Relation to Guided Home Learning

- Always log on through your school account and use your Newent School email for school business.
- Do not make recordings, take screenshots/screengrabs or photographs, or store footage of teachers or other students.
- Be aware that some live online sessions may be recorded by the teacher.



- Dress appropriately for online lessons.
- Ensure that you have a safe and appropriate place to participate from. Blur your background if necessary
- Follow the school rules for conduct during online lessons as if you were in school.
- Do not undermine in any way the technology used to offer video lessons.
- If you have concerns about online safety, or if you feel you are being bullied, talk to someone you trust.

Reporting an issue for students:

- Speak to a trusted adult
- Contact Childline 0800 1111 or click CEOP

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>

The Role of Parents

- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that students are monitored in their use of technology for guided home learning as they would ordinarily do when their children are using technology at home. Monitoring screen time is particularly important in the current circumstances.
- While students are working from home they are connected to their home broadband so their traffic doesn't go through the NCS firewall – parents will therefore need to ensure that age-appropriate filtering or safe search is enabled at home. Information on setting this up can be found at:

[Parental controls offered by your home internet provider | Safer Internet Centre](#)

and

[Parental Controls & Privacy Settings Guides - Internet Matters](#)

- Communication during online learning is between student and teacher: parents should communicate with school/staff in the usual manner, via school email or telephone during a period of guided home learning
- Any parent wishing to supplement the school's guided home learning with support from online companies or individual tutors should be mindful of the importance of using reputable organisations or individuals who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children – further information can be found in the sources of support below.
- Social media, networking apps and gaming platforms are particularly popular at the moment. Parents are advised to be mindful of age restrictions and to oversee their child's social media activity.
- The school will update parents regularly on online safety matters. Parents are requested to heed the school's advice and contact the school if they have concerns or encounter risk online.

Reporting on Issue for Parents

- Contact the DSL for any safeguarding or child protection or online safety concern.
- You can also report an incident to CEOP at:

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/Should-I-make-a-report-to-CEOP-YP/Should-I-make-a-report-to-CEOP-concerned-adult/>

- You can report Harmful Content at:

[Report Harmful Content - We Help You Remove Content](#)

- Contact your child's tutor in the usual way for routine queries about guided home learning.
- See the sources of support and advice at the end of this document.

Distance Learning for Non-Examinations Assessment Activities

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- If non-examination activities take place within times of Distance Learning then the principles and protocols of the Non-examination Assessment Policy will still be followed.
- Teaching will take place using the platforms described in this document.
- Timely feedback will be provided via MILK or student emails.
- Assignments will be set during Microsoft Teams virtual lessons. Criteria and deadlines will be posted on the MILK platform.
- Internal verification procedures will be followed to ensure that work submitted is authentic and has been completed by the learner.
- All assessment and internal verification records will be stored securely on the school OneDrive platform.

Sources of Support and Advice

UK Safer Internet Centre	https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/	A range of activities for children of different ages
CEOP / Thinkuknow	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/	a range of home activity packs
National Online Safety	https://nationalonlinesafety.com/	Good guides for parents and staff
Parent Information	https://parentinfo.org/	specifically aimed at parents
Internet Matters	https://www.internetmatters.org/	specifically aimed at parents
Net Aware	https://www.net-aware.org.uk/	NSPCC's advice on online matters

If you have any further queries relating to the Distance Learning approach adopted by the school please contact the Vice Principal via email on viceprincipal@newent.gloucs.sch.uk.

January 2021