



Ashbourne Community School Blended Learning Policy

Introduction

Ashbourne Community School has developed a blended learning policy to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19. This is a challenging period as we strive to support the learning and wellbeing of students where teaching and learning approaches have had to change.

Blended learning refers to a mixture of in-person teaching in the classroom, live online teaching, pre-recording and self-directed online teaching.

Rationale

This document was developed based on feedback from staff, students and parents based on our experiences of remote teaching in the period March-October 2020 and January 2021.

The student-teacher relationship is central to effective learning, the aim behind an increased use of digital technology in our school is to allow us to maintain this connection as much as possible in situations where people are physically distant from each other.

Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching and learning cannot take place without considering the social and emotional wellbeing of both staff and students. Our aim as a school is to provide the best possible learning environment in challenging circumstances, while safeguarding the wellbeing of both students and staff. Teaching and Learning is a vital part of education. Both teachers and students will look at various strategies to encourage, promote and improve learning throughout the entire school body.

Relationship to The Mission Statement

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to prepare all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respect the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community. Our vision of Blended Learning is to have high expectations for all our students to ensure they can realise their potential and become life-long learners. We are committed to continual and consistent efforts to improve IT standards. This may include providing upskilling opportunities and extra available resources including devices to both staff and pupils.

Links to Other Policies

- Acceptable User Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Wellbeing Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Homework Policy

Software

Ashbourne Community School is a Microsoft school, and it is our policy to prioritise using Microsoft software when providing remote learning to our students.

Scenarios

This policy aims to address the following scenarios that may occur due to COVID-19:

- 1. Student working from home due to restricted movements (fit to work).**
- 2. Teacher working from home due to restricted movements (fit to work).**
- 3. A whole school closure.**
- 4. Some year groups working from home and some year groups in school.**

1 - Student working from home due to restricted movements (fit to work).

Maintaining the wellbeing of students, supported by their families, is of the utmost importance at these exceptional times. Some students may be coping well with staying at home, social/physical distancing and completing schoolwork at home, whereas others may be struggling with these changes. We aim to provide as much access to the class learning environment and school support structures as possible.

- Students should follow class timetables from home including support classes.
- Teachers should communicate classwork at the beginning of the lesson, where live broadcasting is going ahead.
- Homework should be available on Teams or Outlook by the end of the school day.
- Students are responsible for checking and completing this work in a timely manner.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.
- Teachers may stream the class or share resources from the class such as slides or a photograph of work from the board where possible. This can then be shared using Teams or Outlook.
- Parent(s)/guardians should provide the student with an appropriate learning environment at home.
- Designated staff member or key worker to be the link person between the student and the school for students who are working from home on a long-term basis.

2 - Teacher working from home due to restricted movements (fit for work).

The wellbeing of teachers is important as they navigate a challenging situation, while trying to support their students from home. Teachers should engage with their colleagues and school management to ensure collegiate support during this time. It is essential that teachers develop strategies and access support as necessary to safeguard their own wellbeing. The school support structure will be available to all staff working from home.

- Teachers should schedule work for each of their timetabled classes including SEN lessons on Teams or Outlook. This work should be available at the beginning of the class.
- The option exists for a pre-recorded lesson and self-directed assignment with appropriate differentiation. This would be the recommended option.
- Where possible, the teacher should be available at the scheduled time to respond to students via Outlook or Teams.
- Students are responsible for checking and completing this work in a timely manner.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is acknowledged and relevant feedback is provided when appropriate.
- Where practicable, real time interaction with the group should be provided at least once a week.
- It is essential that students have earphones in their bag for recorded lessons.

3 - Full school closure

Remote learning may be experienced differently by each student and member of school staff. Encouraging communication and supporting students and staff to voice their needs is important in preventing feelings of isolation, frustration, and disengagement.

In the routines of school life, students can feel a sense of community, structure, and culture that help them sense belonging and direction. To preserve this, the structure of the school day will be followed as much as possible during a school closure and the normal school timetable will be observed.

- Work should be scheduled by teachers at the beginning of the day for all classes via Teams or Outlook.
- A variety of activities is very beneficial such as pre-recorded lessons, self-directed learning, live video lessons, project work. A mix of these approaches is the preferred option.
- If teachers are scheduling a video call with students, it needs to adhere to the timetable for that class.
- Where possible, the teacher should be available at the scheduled time to respond to students via Teams or Outlook.
- Due dates for assignments and homework should be set.
- Students are responsible for completing their work in a timely manner.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is acknowledged and relevant feedback is provided when appropriate.
- Support structures should be in place to follow up on students who are not engaging or experiencing difficulties.
- The school will make devices available for students struggling to access the online materials.

4 - Some year groups working from home and some year groups in school.

Maintaining the wellbeing of students, supported by their families, is of the utmost importance at these exceptional times. Some students may be coping well with staying at home, social/physical distancing and completing schoolwork at home whereas others may be struggling with these changes. We aim to provide as much access to the class learning environment and school support structures as possible.

- Students at home should follow class timetables from home including support classes.
- Teachers should communicate classwork at the beginning of the lesson.
- Homework should be available on Teams or Outlook by the end of the school day.
- Students are responsible for checking and completing this work in a timely manner.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.
- Teachers may stream classes or share resources from the class such as slides or a photograph of work from the board where possible. This can be shared using Teams or Outlook.
- Parent(s)/guardians should provide the student with an appropriate learning environment at home.
- Designated staff member or key worker to be the link person between the student and the school for students who are working from home on a long-term basis.

Evaluation & Review

The Blended Learning Policy will be reviewed as required. The evaluation will take place on a regular basis and will include teachers, students, parents, and senior management.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting 23rd March, 2021 (Meeting Nr 260)



Date: 23rd March, 2021

Chairperson

Board of Management

Ashbourne Community School