



SCOIL MHUIRE CARLANSTOWN

ROLL NO. 18132 Q

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY 2020

Introduction and Rationale

This document is designed to provide guidance for situations where a partial or full school closure is advised by Public Health HSE because of a case or cases of COVID-19 in our school. It is also intended to advise how individual pupils or groups of pupils who may have to self-isolate or restrict their movements can be supported in continuing their learning remotely. Scoil Mhuire recognises that online collaboration is essential to distance learning and may provide access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing and messaging among staff, students and parents.

The Department recognises that despite the best efforts of all stakeholders, there will be situations where individual pupils or groups of pupils, teachers, or possibly entire school communities, are requested by Public Health HSE to self-isolate or restrict their movements because of a case or cases of COVID-19. It should be noted that decisions around advising pupils, teachers or other school staff to restrict their movements for COVID-19 related reasons are made solely by Public Health HSE.

The development of our Distance Learning Methods comes in response to our experience of the first school closure from March – June 2020 and our parent surveys and feedback. We recognise that online safety is of huge importance and we hope that this document helps to protect both school staff and pupils, while online. This document must be considered in conjunction with our existing internet acceptable use policy which is available on www.carlanstownns.ie. Please remember this is a working document and as we try out new ways of supporting distance learning, the document will be updated.

This document sets out how we will plan for and support pupils' learning in a number of possible scenarios which could occur during the 2020/21 school year. As the extent to which these scenarios may occur cannot be predicted, it is possible that individual pupils or groups of pupils and teachers may find that they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements on a number of occasions during the school year.



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CARLANSTOWN NS - WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO DISTANCE LEARNING	
2 - 3 DAY ABSENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils continue with their homework plan for the week ▪ Teachers, where appropriate, may assign activities that they feel can be completed at home independently
14 DAY PUPIL ABSENCE (E.G. RESTRICTED MOVEMENT AS A RESULT OF BEING A CLOSE CONTACT OF A CONFIRMED CASE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils continue with their homework plan for each week ▪ Continue with Spellbound, Fuaimenna & Focail, Mental Maths daily ▪ Teachers, where appropriate, will assign activities in core subjects that they feel can be completed at home independently ▪ An SESE Project or series of SESE tasks will be set (1st – 6th) ▪ Creative tasks/challenges
14 DAY CLASS CLOSURE OR FULL SCHOOL CLOSURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers will email or upload to Seesaw an overview of the week's work ▪ There will be a blend of direct teaching input daily in core subjects(e.g. mini zoom lessons, or video, audio messages, images via Seesaw) and also independent tasks. ▪ Teachers will communicate directly with their class at the start of the restricted period /start of the week by posting a recording via Seesaw or scheduling a zoom/video call with their class, the purpose of which is to explain the expectations for the week's work and allow the children to ask questions. This communication is really important to motivate and engage pupils and support their well-being during a period of school closure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All of the above plan is based on the presumption that the child is well and able to engage in learning tasks, ▪ It is understood that not all children may be available for the Zoom calls. ▪ In as far as is possible we will send home the books that the children may need. However, we may be notified of a closure outside of school hours and sending home books may not be possible. We will have to look at each situation as it arises. ▪ Where children receive additional support from the Special Education Teachers, this support will continue in consultation with the class teacher. 	



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The following rules for Pupils apply when using Video Calls/Zoom:

- *Pictures or recordings of the video call are strictly not permitted and must never be shared. This will be deemed a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and dealt with accordingly.*
- *Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.*
- *Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call. School uniforms are not required.*
- *Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background but with an adult close by.*
- *Try to test out your camera and audio before you start. Try to have all of your head showing especially your mouth, this ensures everyone can see who is talking.*
- *Check that your microphone is muted when you join the video.*
- *Raise your hand when you wish to speak, just like you would do in class. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.*
- *Eliminate distractions and focus on the video call. If you are using your phone/tablet or laptop to attend the video call, close all other apps and mute notifications.*
- *No eating is allowed during video calls.*
- *Try your best to stay seated and stay present during the video call. Do not leave the room or talk to others not participating in the video call.*

The following are guidelines for Parents and Guardians when using video calls/Zoom:

- *When your child is participating in group video calls, an adult should be present in the background.*
- *Please be mindful that when a video call is active, anything going on in the background may be seen and/or heard. Therefore an appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.*
- *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. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video call, or they may be locked out.*
- *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, should they be asked to do so.*
- *Should you as a parent/guardian wish to speak to the teacher or the Principal, this should be arranged privately via email. For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit <https://zoom.us/privacy>*

Sanctions

It is important to note that staff reserve the right to remove pupils from the video call who are not engaging in a respectful way. Should this occur, the child's parent/guardian will be informed. Any inappropriate behaviour online will be dealt with in line with our Code of Behaviour and Anti- Bullying Policy.



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Distance Learning Guidelines for Staff

- *Each staff member has been issued with a secure school email address which they can use to make contact with parents. All email communication with staff members must be from parents, not children, through the dedicated email address.*

- *Students will only have access to discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication that have been approved by the school and sanctioned by the class teacher, i.e. Seesaw, Zoom, Class Dojo etc. These services, although not owned by Carlanstown NS, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy.*

- *Any electronic forms of communication will only be used for educational purposes. In advance of using these communication forums, parental permission for the child is required. Furthermore, as the links for lessons are being communicated through parents, the cover note will state that by virtue of the children logging in to the resource, permission is assumed.*

- *It is the duty of the parents to supervise children on their end. Carlanstown NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of such online platforms in the event they are hacked. Students are expected to uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.*

- **Video Conference/Live Call or Lessons**
 - *Please use your staff email address when setting up the Zoom account for class video call. For Zoom, it is preferable that passwords be used as well as the link.*
 - *Staff are required to familiarise themselves with the application before using it, especially the functions - muting, sharing and 'hands up' options.*
 - *From the outset, be clear with the ground rules regarding the children's participation in the meeting*

 - *Staff members will only admit participants to video calls, if they recognise the email address/username as being connected to a pupil.*
 - *The meeting should be "locked" after five minutes. Where practicable, the use of the "Waiting Room" is recommended.*



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- *Staff members will mute all microphones on entry to a video call. Staff members will control everyone's microphone and turn it on when a pupil is invited to speak, allowing the child to share their thoughts without distraction or frustration. Staff members will ensure that the chat function is not enabled.*
- *If at any point staff feel uncomfortable, the call should be ended immediately and concerns reported to management.*
- *Preferably, individual staff members will not meet any single child using an online meeting. If there is a need for a meeting between a child and a staff member, another staff member and parent must be visibly present at the meeting and the meeting must be recorded.*



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Distance Learning Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

As 'first educators', parents and guardians have a central role to play regarding the participation and engagement of children in distance learning. Remote learning takes place online and with that comes a great deal of responsibility, especially in terms of online safety and the protection of children. In accordance with policy, parental permission must be received by the school prior to any engagement in distance learning forums by children.

How can parents/guardians support children during distance learning?

- *It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.*
- *Establish a daily routine - create a timetable that incorporates school work, family activities and leisure time*
- *Provide a quiet space in which the children can work so that they are ready for learning*
- *Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate and reflects their ability.*
- *Talk to the children about the work in which they are engaging and praise their efforts*
- *Regularly check for communications from the school*
- *Parents are expected to ensure that children uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline*

How can parents/guardians support children to stay safe while learning remotely?

- *Be aware of the methods the school is using for online learning*
- *Explore and discuss the importance of online safety with children on a regular basis*
- *Monitor the online activities of children on a frequent basis and keep a record of usernames and passwords*
- *Children who attend Scoil Mhuire will only have access to electronic communication that has been approved by the school and sanctioned by the class teacher, i.e., Zoom, Class Dojo, Seesaw and Google Classroom - it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that this is being adhered to in the home*
- *Encourage children to follow the rules set out by the school and/or the teacher(s) for online activity.*
- *Install age-appropriate web browser and internet filters*
- *A parent must be visibly present at an individual online meeting between a child and a staff member. The meeting must be recorded in such situations.*
- *All email communications between home and staff must be from parents, not from the children and via the dedicated school email address provided by the school/teacher(s).*



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CONTINUITY OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN VERY HIGH RISK GROUPS

Carlanstown NS is cognisant of the fact that pupils who are medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 may not be able to attend school. The school also recognises how important it is that pupils who fall into this very high risk category are afforded the opportunity to maintain a meaningful connection with their class and their school, both academically and socially.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to seek medical advice and certification to indicate if their child is at very high risk to COVID-19 and to inform the school of this. On receipt of this, the school, in consultation and collaboration with the relevant stakeholders (parents, pupils, staff and Education Welfare Officer), will organise continuity of learning support for pupils. The school will enable pupils at very high risk to remain connected to their class and classmates, as far as possible, in line with the curriculum and in a manner that is closely aligned to the learning of their classmates. For pupils with additional needs, appropriate differentiation of their learning will continue to be a priority of the school. The school will utilise a variety of age/class appropriate online platforms to enable pupils to engage in remote learning at home. There will be ongoing two-way communication between teachers and parents to support the pupils' engagement with learning and their continuous connection with their classmates and the school community. Pupils in the 'very high risk' category who engage with learning from home will be marked present on attendance records.

School Leaders: *School leaders will ensure that there will be ongoing two-way home-school communication and collaboration, including clear expectations about the level of support that is expected of parents/guardians and the support the school will put in place to facilitate continuous learning for these pupils.*

Class Teachers: *The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that the needs of pupils at very high risk to COVID-19 are met in an appropriate way. In order to maintain a sense of connectedness, the class teacher will facilitate weekly opportunities for the pupil learning from home to interact with their peers, through online video conferencing.*

Parents/Guardians: *The school expects parents and teachers to work together to establish the expectations related to the level of support that is necessary from parents/guardians and the support the school will put in place to facilitate continued learning for pupils at very high risk. Regular review meetings / check-ins with parents will take place to establish how the pupils are experiencing remote learning. It is recommended that parents/guardians consult the school's Distance Learning Guidelines for Parents referenced earlier in this document. These guidelines will assist parents/guardians in providing support and protection to children who are participating in distance learning.*



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Other Relevant Policies

- *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- *Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Acceptable Use of the Internet*
- *Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Guidelines*

Support Structures

The following websites are a selection of websites that offer support and advice in the area of Internet Safety:

- NCTE - <http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/>
- Webwise - <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- Make IT Secure - [http://makeitsecure.](http://makeitsecure.com)
- Safe Internet - <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/>

Roles and Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of the staff and pupils to implement the policy. Parents and the Board of management will support the plan.

Review & Ratification.

It will be reviewed as often as is required when changes occur but will be reviewed by the whole school staff at the end of the academic year.

Signed: Sean Wright 19.11.20

Sean Wright, Chairperson to the Board of Management

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Signed: Sarah Curran 19.11.20

Sarah Curran, Principal