St. Tolas N.S
Remote Learning Policy

Remote Learning Policy

Introduction

In response to this time of uncertainty regarding school closures, we have formulated this policy to outline how the school will maintain the link between school and home. In the event of another whole or partial school closure, we aim to continue to communicate with our pupils through various means.

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 Mobile Phone or 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 Code of Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying (including Cyber 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:

The Education Act (1998), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Equal Status Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), Disability Act (2005), Children First Act (2017), GDPR, Data Protection Act (2018), Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary schools, NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008), DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020), DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: *Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19* (August 2020), *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 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 statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and all of the school's policies apply.
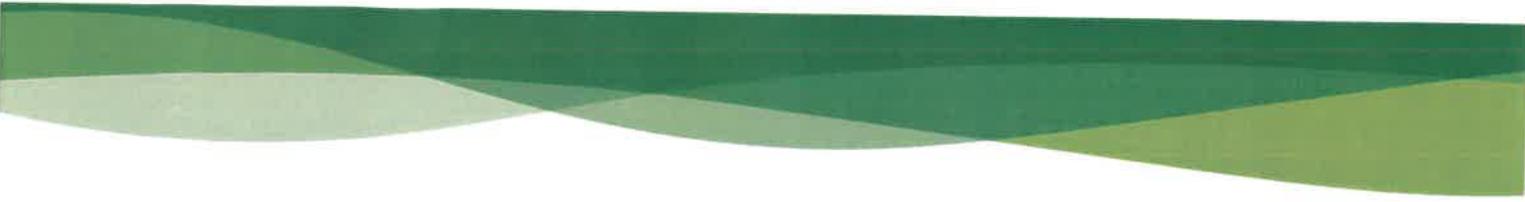
We recognise that online collaboration is essential for distance learning and that families are in favour of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. St. Tola's N.S. uses a variety of child friendly, online tools, which assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

The Role of the School in Engaging with its Pupils

In conjunction with the guidance provided on the continuity of school from the Department of Education and Skills, St. Tola's N.S. will endeavour to maintain a sense of normality for its pupils to ensure they progress in their learning, in the following ways:

- Regular engagement of students in lessons, tasks and learning experiences across the range of curriculum areas or subjects.
- Provision of specific and regular supports for students with special educational needs.
- Provision of specific and customised supports for students at risk of educational disadvantage.
- Provision of regular assignments to students that are purposeful, manageable and can be carried out independently.
- Provision of regular, practical, supportive, and customised feedback to students on the work submitted
- Adoption of a whole school approach to engagement with students to ensure consistency of approach so as not to overburden students of their parents and guardians.

How Teachers will Engage with their Pupils/ Parents:

To achieve these department recommendations outlined above, the teachers of St. Tola's N.S. will use remote learning to engage with their pupils, and parents, to continue their learning in the following ways:

Level 3

- Set up a class *SeeSaw* account where every child has their own online learning journal.
- Set up a class *Book Creator* library where every child can create their own *e-books* and showcase project-based learning.
- SETs will be added as joint teachers to the specific class *SeeSaw* accounts.
- Teachers will engage with *SeeSaw* and *Book Creator* at level 3 to assign and collect homework if deemed necessary, upload PowerPoints/ posters/ resources/links to aid children in their learning at home.
- Send emails to parents via *Aladdin* when necessary. Parents can reply directly to teachers using their school email addresses.
- If there are concerns or issues regarding any aspect of a child's holistic development the class teacher will ring the parent to discuss it.
- Zoom calls may be used for Parent Teacher meetings (to be re-evaluated at a later stage)
- Teachers will not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.

- Consent has been given to share work and images on the school blogsite and website. Names of children will not be included on any images shared on these two platforms.

Level 4 & 5

- **ALL HOMEWORK** activities and tasks will be communicated to children via *SeeSaw* and with parents via *Aladdin* on the Monday of every week. **Strictly no books or stationery in or out of school.**
- Assign lessons, tasks and activities to the children in their class using the *SeeSaw Activities* feature or by uploading specific differentiated work to each child's journal.
- Upload PowerPoints/ posters/ resources/links/ audios to aid children in their learning at home.
- Provide daily/ weekly feedback and corrections on the children's homework over *SeeSaw* by voice recording or text.
- SETs can assign any homework to a specific child's learning journal as a joint teacher on a *Seesaw* account.
- Print a selection of children's work to show consistent engagement with homework for class assessment folder.
- Send emails to parents via *Aladdin* when necessary. Parents can reply to teachers using their school email addresses which can be found on the staff page of the school website.
- Regular school calendar and school hours apply to communication between teachers and pupils/ parents.
- Teachers will not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.
- Consent has been given to share work and images on the school blogsite and website. Names of children will not be included on any images shared on these two platforms.

Whole School/ Bubble/ Pod Closure/ Individual Child Absence

Where a child or children must self-isolate or restrict their movements for a period of up to fourteen days, and are fit to work from home:

- Assign schoolwork on a weekly basis using *SeeSaw.*
- Upload resources, posters, media links, PowerPoints, audio explanations, audio clips, worksheets etc. required for children to complete their lessons in the activity section of *SeeSaw* or post specifically to their learning journal.
- Email resources, lessons and activities to parents of children who do not have access to *SeeSaw* or *Book Creator.*
- Send work and resources to children via *An Post*, where considered necessary, or arrange for it to be collected from a specific place.
- Use *Aladdin* twice weekly to communicate with parents i.e. send out important announcements, notifications, or documents; check in on specific children's progress.
- Continue providing work in line with current planning, where possible, that is already in place throughout the school.

- Special Education Teachers will collaborate with class teachers and provide work to their pupils through email, post, *SeeSaw* or *Book Creator,* as appropriate.
- Teachers will not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.
- Consent has been given to share work and images on the school blogsite and website. Names of children will not be included on any images shared on these two platforms.
- If the opportunity becomes available, teachers may engage in CPD courses to upskill themselves throughout any school closures.

Teachers accept the fact that learning remotely will be more difficult, so tasks will be set in smaller steps to allow for this. Teachers will also allow flexibility in the completion of activities, understanding that the circumstances leading to our closure will affect families in several ways.

How Pupils will Engage with their Teachers:

To continue their learning journeys pupils will be encouraged to engage with their teachers using remote learning platforms in the following ways:

Level 3

- Log in to their *SeeSaw* account using their *Home Learning Code,* on an iPad, tablet or desktop computer.
- Log in to their *Book Creator* library where they can create their own *e-books* and showcase project-based learning.
- Complete any homework tasks, to the best of their ability, assigned by their teacher using *SeeSaw* or *Book Creator,* by uploading photographs of their work/ typing their work and uploading documents/ PDFs.
- Engage with *SeeSaw* and *Book Creator* to look at extra resources – posters/ PowerPoints/ video links etc. that have been uploaded to help children complete their homework activities.
- Children's *SeeSaw* journals are private and only they, their parents and their teachers will have access to the content they upload.
- Children's books on book creator will not be shared with other pupils without permission.
- Not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.

Level 4 & 5

- Children will complete **ALL HOMEWORK** activities and tasks and upload them via *SeeSaw* or *Book Creator.* Children can type their homework/ upload photographs of it to their journals. **Strictly no books or stationery in or out of school.**
- Complete this homework daily. Upload it daily/ weekly.
- Engage with activities/ PowerPoints/ posters/ resources/links uploaded to help them with their homework.
- Consider aural/ written feedback given on their homework by the class/ SET teacher and try to work towards improvement the following week.

- Not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.
- Children's *SeeSaw* journals are private and only they, their parents and their teachers will have access to the content they upload.
- Children's books on book creator will not be shared with other pupils without permission.

Whole School/ Bubble/ Pod Closure/ Individual Child Absence

Where a child or children must self-isolate or restrict their movements for a period of up to fourteen days, and are fit to work from home:

- Complete the schoolwork assigned by their class teachers and Special Educational Teachers via *SeeSaw, Book Creator,* and email, daily to the best of their abilities and at their own pace.
- Complete schoolwork daily to maintain a routine.
- Send pictures/ Microsoft word documents of their completed work to their teachers via *SeeSaw, Book Creator* or email for feedback and constructive praise, where possible.
- Read daily, either independently or with an adult.
- Exercise daily with challenges assigned by their class teachers or extra-curricular bodies and agencies.
- Consider using the school closure time to learn a new skill, follow their own interests to discover more about the world around us or just be creative.
- Not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.

Throughout this remote learning journey, or any in the future, the children will be assured that their wellbeing, happiness and health is the most important thing and will therefore be encouraged to take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise daily and maintain a reasonable balance between online engagement and offline activities.

It will be stressed that the children shouldn't worry about the schoolwork assigned and to only to what they can to the best of their abilities, and at their own pace. It is not expected that all children complete all activities assigned.

How Parents will Engage with their Child(ren)/ Child(ren)'s Teachers:

To support their children through with remote learning, parents will be encouraged to:

Level 3, 4 & 5

- Help their child(ren) log in to their *SeeSaw* and *Book Creator* accounts on an iPad, tablet or desktop computer.
- Monitor and check their child's homework before they upload it and when it has been uploaded onto either platform.
- Read emails received from their child's class teacher and subsequent emails from their child's special education teacher, if applicable, to be aware of any homework or remote learning activities which have been assigned for their children.

- Read regular emails and messages from the School Principal
- Know that they can contact the class teacher via their specific school email address if they have any queries or require support (within school hours). These can be found on the staff page of the school website.
- Not record, take screenshots, or copy any information, messages, or posts to share on social media or any other platform without permission.

Whole School/ Bubble/ Pod Closure/ Individual Child Absence

Where a child or children must self-isolate or restrict their movements for a period of up to fourteen days, and are fit to work from home:

- Help their child(ren) log in to their *SeeSaw* and *Book Creator* accounts on an iPad, tablet or desktop computer to access weekly lessons and resources.
- Encourage their child(ren) to engage in the resources uploaded to help them complete their schoolwork/homework and to access lessons on *SeeSaw, Book Creator,* and emails.
- Monitor and check their child's schoolwork before they upload it and when it has been uploaded onto either platform.
- Help their child set up a home learning routine along with the class teacher to engage in work daily.
- Read biweekly emails received from their child's class teacher and subsequent emails from their child's special education teacher, if applicable, to be aware of the schoolwork which has been assigned and any other important information.
- Read regular emails and messages from the School Principal
- Know that they can contact the class teacher via their specific school email address if they have any queries or require support. These can be found on the staff page of the school website.
- Parents and pupils can contact their teachers and SNAs through the technologies established by the class teacher i.e. *SeeSaw, Book Creator* and email.
- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Be mindful of mental well-being of both themselves and their child and encourage their child to take regular breaks, play games, get fresh air, and relax.

How SNAs will Engage with their Pupils:

SNAs, in accordance with government directive, will work alongside the child's class teacher to engage with their pupils in the following ways:

Level 3, 4 & 5

- SNAs will engage with their pupils in the classrooms daily.

Whole School/ Bubble/ Pod Closure/ Individual Child Absence

Where a child or children must self-isolate or restrict their movements for a period of up to fourteen days, and are fit to work:

- Be added as a co-teacher to their class *SeeSaw* account.
- Provide support to specific children by adding resources/ notes of encouragement and praise to their specific journal.
- Send the class teacher content e.g. poems, social stories, activities, notes, messages, songs to forward on to specific children via email, *SeeSaw*, or *Book Creator*.
- Have access to their class' *Book Creator* library in order to add specific books for specific children.
- Parents and pupils can contact their SNAs through the technologies established by the class teacher i.e. *SeeSaw, Book Creator* and email.
- If the opportunity becomes available, SNAs may engage in CPD to upskill themselves.

How Teachers will Communicate with Each Other as a Whole Staff

An open network of communication between teachers and other staff members is deemed essential throughout long-term school closures to keep updated and to provide support. The teachers of St. Tola's N.S. will communicate with each other in the following ways:

Level 3, 4 & 5

- Principal and secretary will post information and messages to the notice board in *Aladdin* for whole staff/ specific teacher's attention.
- Class teachers check their Aladdin notice board daily.
- Teachers receive emails from members of staff to their school email address.
- Share ideas, relevant documentation, and resources with each other via the staff *WhatsApp* group within school hours only. Share curricular expertise on specific areas to support and help one another.
- Upload yearly plans to the school One Drive.

Whole School/ Individual Teacher Absence

Where teacher or teachers must self-isolate or restrict their movements for a period of up to fourteen days, and are fit to work from home:

- Upload fortnightly plans and Cuntas Míosula to the One Drive.
- Share ideas, relevant documentation, and resources with each other via the staff *WhatsApp* group within school hours only. Share curricular expertise on specific areas to support and help one another.
- Attend any scheduled *Zoom* meetings organised and set up by the Principal.
- Engage in other professional duties as much as circumstances allow e.g. Policy Development, Planning.
- Principal and secretary will post information and messages to the notice board in *Aladdin* for whole staff/ specific teacher's attention.
- Class teachers check their Aladdin notice board daily.
- Teachers receive emails from members of staff to their school email address.

- Know that they can contact the Principal through the school email if they have any queries or require support or are unwell themselves.

Remote Teaching and Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid 19 related scenarios

A. 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.

B. In the case of all other children/staff 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 been instructed by their GP to isolate at home for a few days. 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 due to a confirmed case within their own family/close contact outside of school (14-day isolation period). Teacher will link in with the pupil via See-Saw and email.
3. School POD (e.g.: group of six) instructed by HSE Pubic Health to self-isolate. Teacher will link in with the pupils via See-Saw and email.
4. School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14day isolation period). Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw and occasionally on Zoom if deemed necessary.
5. Teacher instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate/restrict their movements (14day isolation period), will link in with the class where feasible. If the teacher cannot continue, a substitute teacher will continue with the online learning arrangements.
6. 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 Seesaw, Book Creator and contact on Zoom where deemed necessary.

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

Board of Management

The board of management will support the teaching and learning which will take place remotely through the ways discussed above, by the sanctioning and purchase of any ICT equipment and resources which are needed to make such remote learning feasible.

Board of Management meetings will continue over *Zoom*.

Flexibility

The teachers and staff at St. Tola's N.S. realise that the circumstances which resulted in such a lengthy school closure will affect families in a number of ways. We are also cognisant of the varying home life situations which can make remote learning a huge challenge for parents and teachers. In the schoolwork that is assigned for children, teachers are aware and understanding of the following:

- Parents may be trying to also work from home and therefore may be busy and under pressure meeting their own deadlines and keeping up with their workload.
- The health and care needs of all may change from time to time, especially during the time of such a health crisis.
- Access to technology as a family may be limited. An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, these difficulties on all sides is essential for success.
- Similarly, technological systems may not always function as they should.
- Parents may have two or more children needing support, including trying to access technology.
- Staff members may also be trying to manage their home situation in the provision of online learning experiences.

St. Tola's main concern is the health and happiness of its pupils, parents and staff and will approach any instances of remote learning with flexibility to cater for everyone's specific situational needs.

Special Educational Needs

We are committed to providing learning opportunities that are appropriate for all pupils. Special Education Teachers will continue to provide specific tasks and activities to the children under their remit via *SeeSaw, Book Creator,* and the SEN email.

In consultation with the SEN team, class teachers will endeavour to provide differentiated tasks and activities to meet the individual needs of certain pupils.

Teachers and SNA staff of the Autism Unit will use *Book Creator* extensively to provide social stories, lessons, videos, and photographs to engage with their pupils at an appropriate level.

Online Educational Platforms in Use

SeeSaw

SeeSaw is an online platform which creates a powerful learning loop between students, teachers, and families. Children upload content e.g. photographs of work, projects, tasks, activities, to their personal online learning journal. They can annotate this work, add a voice recording to present a project, or type an explanation. Teachers can then see this work and provide the child with specific feedback. Teachers can also upload tasks, lessons and activities and assign them to the whole class or a specific child. Families can gain access to their child's online learning journal to view their work.

Teachers of St. Tola's N.S. have set up a *SeeSaw* account for their class where they assign lessons and activities and give constructive, individual feedback to work uploaded by the children. Children are encouraged to upload pieces of their work to *SeeSaw.*

https://web.seesaw.me/

Book Creator

Book Creator is a simple tool for creating online digital books. Teachers can create teaching resources or children can take the reins by combing text, images, audio, and video to create interactive stories, digital portfolios, research journals, poetry books, science reports, instruction manuals, comic adventures, history projects and much more.

Teachers of St. Tola's N.S. have set up a *Book Creator* library for their class and have given each child a code where they can log in and access the class library to make their own books. Children are encouraged to complete project work on *Book Creator*.

https://bookcreator.com/

Zoom

Zoom is an online video call platform which enables lots of people to take part in a video call and has screen sharing capacities to share PowerPoints, lessons, videos, and images. *Zoom* will only be used in specific situations over the course of the school closure and will not be used to deliver academic lessons due to GDPR. Some examples of situations where zoom may be used are outlined below:

- Staff Meetings
- Board of Management Meetings
- If a zoom call is deemed necessary for pupils and class teacher.

In the instances of *Zoom* calls for pupils, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- Zoom call is set up by the teacher to include a meeting password and a waiting room so only specific people can join the call.
- Meeting links and passwords shall not be shared with anyone outside of the parents or guardians of the participating pupils, the class teacher and Principal.
- The class teacher is on the call for supervision and management purposes.
- The pupil will not use their own names when joining the call, but rather a username.
- The pupil must partake in the call in a communal area of the household.
- The pupil is not allowed to wear headphones and a parent or guardian must be in the vicinity at all times to monitor their interactions.
- Consent must be emailed to the school before participating in the *Zoom* call.

In the instances of *Zoom* calls for staff and board of management meetings, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- The Principal/ Chairperson of the BOM who sets up the *Zoom* call must use a meeting password and the waiting room function so only specific people can join the call.
- Meeting links and passwords shall not be shared with anyone outside the members of staff or the BOM.

- Participants should be suitably dressed for these meetings and ensure that meeting takes place in suitable area as background will be visible.
- Meeting host will generally mute all participants and unmute when necessary. Should this not happen, participants must mute themselves when asked and only unmute when asked to do so, or if they want to contribute to the conversation.
- Meetings can be recorded by the host for the purposes of recording minutes.

Staying Safe in the Remote Learning Environment

It is important that teachers maintain the safe and ethical use of the internet during remote learning and assist parents and guardians to be aware of their role also. As highlighted in government guidelines[1] there are helpful resources available at https://www.webwise.ie/ to support teachers, parents and students. This policy has been written up in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) to inform and guide remote or distance learning activity.

The Principal and teachers of St. Tola's will keep data safe when working from home and follow the data protection policy around the use of email in schools. Teachers are also alert to the possibility that a child protection concern may arise in relation to pupils they come in contact with and should follow the relevant reporting procedures in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools 2017, and the schools specific Child Protection Policy.[1]

Policy Review

As ICT resources increase and pupil and teacher ICT competence develop the remote learning policy will be reviewed annually to include any new online learning platforms which become available or are used by the staff of St. Tola's N.S. This annual review will help ease confusion if such a closure were to take place again.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy at its meeting on _16th October._

Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents, and guardians.

A copy will also be available on the school website.

Signed: _Séamus Ó hÉanaigh_   Date: 16th October 2020

Fr. Séamus Heaney, *Chairperson BOM*

Signed: _Eileen Smyth_   Date: 16th October 2020

Eileen Smyth, *Principal*