



St George's
School Edgbaston

COVID-19 ONLINE REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

Revised: April 2020



Introduction

This is and has been a really challenging time for everybody with schools across the whole of the UK closing due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). We would like to offer huge thanks to the whole of our School Community for the support offered and for adapting so swiftly to our school being closed since the end of March.

This policy seeks to define how we move forward in a time when we need to educate and be educated in a world when we for now cannot gather together physically.

As a School, our aims and values remain as strong as ever as we look to build and develop our educational offer for our students and look to positively supplement our remote learning platform. We also stress upon our message that safeguarding everybody within our school community is as important as ever during this digital development and insist that kindness remains central to our working.

This policy was developed by a working group utilising feedback and information offered by parents, students and staff and applies to all within our St. George's School Community including staff, students, parents/carers and volunteers/ external providers of education.

'Remote Learning' refers to the provision of work, teacher support, assessment and feedback from teachers to pupils in the event that normal lessons are unable to be delivered 'face-to face' as normal.

Guiding Principles

SGSE looks to develop our remote learning offer to ensure:

- Aid consistent routine for our students
- To enable greater and more consistent contact with teachers
- To offer as far as we can under the current enforced isolation, a broad, creative and engaging curriculum
- To continue to improve our remote learning offer, to suit the learning and emotional needs of our student profile.

We hope that the development of remote online learning through Microsoft Teams increases the level of guidance, stability, structure, commonality of purpose and our shared message of community at St. George's School.

Staying Connected

Students can stay connected with the wider school community and all the activity that is taking place 'outside' the classroom through a variety of channels. Social Media if used responsibly is a great source to maintain and develop friendships during this time.

Guidance and useful information is posted within the well-being hub on the remote learning platform (<https://remotelearning.sgse.co.uk>) every week. We ask that you take a few moments to take a look at the resources and information within this area.

Weekly Assemblies and Collective Worship Tutor Time tasks can be accessed on the well-being page.

Development and Use of Microsoft Teams to supplement the Remote Learning Platform at SGSE

As SGSE looks to expand and develop our online provision whilst we are away from school site, we wanted to ensure we could supplement the remote learning platform by offering an increasingly flexible, engaging curriculum which included increased communication between staff and students, interactive learning and collaboration, whilst ensuring all remained safeguarded and secure. Microsoft Teams offered the best all round package to help us deliver our aims as it comes with a reputation as a product with high reliability and with few if any known breaches of security.

Schools are understandably worried about keeping children safe while teaching in an unusual setting and as such, we believe that Teams best allows us to facilitate and develop remote teaching and online learning for our students to best meet their learning and potentially emotional needs. However, with all online platforms, there are great benefits to their use but also a degree of risk and all using the Teams platform must follow the guidance and clear expectations to ensure the best learning and emotional experiences for everyone in our community.

The following information is based upon best practice and government guidance where available. As a school we have been forced into changing the way in which we work very quickly, but we simultaneously appreciate our responsibility to ensure that students, staff and all of our community remain safeguarded effectively during this unprecedented time.

Remote learning

Should staff intend to either record videos or interact with students via an online platform they will understandably need to undertake any necessary risks assessments/take appropriate actions to minimize harm:

- Videos should be recorded in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background. Although the teaching environment may be unconventional, staff should continue to conform to the professional standards of behaviour requisite in the normal classroom setting.
- Platforms utilized for interacting with students should be age appropriate and setup using school accounts (rather than personal accounts).
- Terms of service/privacy settings of any platform should be checked to ensure they are appropriate (e.g. minimum age requirements) and any online learning tools/systems should comply with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.
- When planning activities, staff should be aware that the internet content filtering systems within a school are unlikely to be replicated in a home setting.
- If organizing student participation in virtual classrooms, students should ideally be located in a common space in their house within earshot of parents.

Staff should be fully conversant with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and as such, should a staff member have any concerns about a child (e.g. as a result of them seeing or hearing something worrying during an online lesson or if a child discloses something concerning during a phone call/email), they should contact School's DSLs via DSL@sgse.co.uk or via their mobiles.

If students are to participate in a virtual classroom they should be made aware that a 'classroom standard' of behaviour is expected from all students, regardless of the environment/setting.

Parents have already been made fully aware (through email/letter) of the reporting routes in place for children so they can raise any concerns whilst online, and have been made aware of age appropriate practical support (e.g. Childline, CEOP, etc).

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out on page 1 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school including for Teams classes
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

We at SGSE continue to emphasise the importance of a safe online environment and encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on their digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on.

Parents and carers can use the following resources to assist them in keeping their children safe online:

- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [London Grid for Learning](#) has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games

- [Let's Talk About It](#) has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

With specific reference to Teams classes, there is clear guidance and expectations set out for staff, students, parents and carers that must be followed during all sessions. These expectations and guidance should be read alongside this policy and we urge that this policy also be read in conjunction with the following school policies that can be found on the school website:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- ICT Acceptable use policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

If these clear expectations are not adhered to, student access to Teams remote learning classes may be blocked and follow up procedures and measures put in place. To assist the school in making sure everybody using the platform is protected and safeguarded, all Teams classes will be pre-arranged by a member of staff, invites sent through school e-mail channels and scheduled within normal school hours with consent from parents gained prior to any session. All Teams classes will be recorded and stored for school use only for a maximum of 180 days in line with DfE guidance.

Reporting Concerns

Should you as a staff member, student or parent/carer have any safeguarding concerns, the school's pastoral and safeguarding systems continue to operate through the duration of the school closure and you can contact DSL@sgse.co.uk or call the school direct on 0121 625 0398 to report these concerns. Should you as a member of staff, parent/carer or student have a concern regarding a breach of data, please contact the school's Data Protection Officer on DPO@sgse.co.uk.