

## REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

### Purpose of Policy

Whitgift School is committed to the continued provision of a varied and engaging education in the event of full or partial school closure. This policy summarises how this provision will take place, so that there are consistent and well-understood expectations of the level of support that will be provided for all concerned. The intended outcome is to maximise student learning, following the curriculum but also take advantage of opportunities to develop independent and digital learning.

The policy is for the whole Whitgift community: teachers, parents, and students. This is an evolving policy that we will regularly review.

### Teaching and Learning

The quality of learning is at the heart of our policy and should always take precedence over the method or delivery platform. Learning needs to come from both individual and group effort, with enough opportunity for a teacher to assess and give feedback to each student.

For a short or partial school closure, our aim is to maintain business as usual, following routine and rhythm as far as possible. This will include:

- Lessons to be delivered according to the school timetable
- Normal homework timetable to be followed
- Normal expectations apply for submission of work
- Assessments of student work and feedback to be given as usual

For extended periods of full school closure, we will use the 'Interactive Lessons Timetable' (see below) for Lower First to Third Form and follow the school timetable for Fourth Form and above.

### Increased Absence due to Quarantine

- **Students**

Where the majority of a class is in School and a minority are isolating at home, the lesson will primarily be aimed at those students in the classroom. Students who have been asked by the school or NHS to isolate because they or a close contact has symptoms are invited to join lessons in real time.

- Students who are well enough to study should have their class Team open (either on a computer or phone app) and be ready to join a call
- Teams will be used for sharing important subject content, introducing new ideas, providing opportunities for discussion and interaction and setting work
- Live Teams calls may last for all or part of the lesson
- The chat function on Teams may be used as an alternative to audio or video calls to communicate with students working from home

- Students at home may not be able to follow class discussion or take part in groupwork
  - Some tasks or activities may be better sent before, during or after the lesson and during the lesson students at home may simply be asked to get on with appropriate subject work
  - If students do not join live, they should check both Teams and Firefly for missed work
  - Staff will ensure that those working at home receive all necessary subject materials and course content
  - Students who are unwell or absent for reasons not related to Covid are not expected to join the lessons in real time
- **Staff**

Teachers who are self-isolating but well enough to work should discuss with their HOD which lessons can be delivered via Teams, which require a cover teacher, and which need to be taught by a member of the department. Lessons delivered from home may be of various formats:

    - Delivered live via Teams to classes through laptops, with students wearing headphones and cover teacher enforcing positive behaviour
    - The same could work for other year groups, if all students have Teams app on their phones and headphones. Cover teacher to monitor phone use.
    - Short introductory section, either pre-recorded or delivered live via Teams to other year groups, which cover teacher projects on board at front, followed by normal cover work.
    - Whole or part of lesson delivered live, with absent teacher projected on board, and cover teacher's laptop used as webcam to enable absent teacher to see class. This requires a large amount of facilitation from the cover teacher and use of their device.
    - Teachers should make themselves available throughout the lesson for questions via Teams or email (students could be given permission to use mobilephones)

### **Partial School Closure and short periods of school closure**

As part of its Coronavirus response, the Government has asked schools to prepare for different levels of restrictions.

#### *Rota system*

This would see Year Groups being sent home according to a rota for one or two weeks at a time, although all vulnerable and key worker children still remain in school. Teachers would deliver their lessons from the empty classroom.

#### *Selected year groups only*

Only selected year groups plus vulnerable and key worker children remain in school. Teachers deliver lessons as above.

#### *Full Closure*

Full Closure, except vulnerable and key worker children. Most teachers working from home.

## Live Interactive Lessons

During short periods of school closure (e.g. 2 weeks), it is important that students do not lose academic momentum, and therefore the school timetable will be followed as closely as possible. Routines such as punctual starts, regular face-to-face contact with teachers and peers, engagement in lessons, and evening prep/homework should not be abandoned. For short periods of school closure or partial school closure, lessons should therefore, wherever possible, be delivered in real time with cameras and microphones on. Lessons should be varied in content and format; however, the points below set out some of the principles of a good interactive lesson, whether delivered from home or from an empty classroom:

- Students should be actively learning, rather than just passively listening.
- Some form of open question or challenge near the start of the lesson should require all students to contribute, either orally, in the chat window, or via an alternative application.
- Targeted questioning throughout the lesson should deter students from zoning out.
- The lesson should contain the opportunity for higher thinking and should be designed to challenge even the most-able students.
- There may be opportunities for students to collaborate or work in pairs/groups, for example using channels within Teams or OneNote.
- Students could be asked to present their own work to the class and engage in debate about this work with other students for extended oracy.
- Assessment for Learning (AfL) at the end of the lesson allows the teacher to ascertain the extent of student learning and engagement and will inform future lessons to maintain academic momentum.
- AfL should seek to assess both skills development and student metacognition of those skills.
- Lessons may also be spent writing or doing independent work, which can be submitted at the end of lesson. In this scenario the teacher must be on hand to answer questions in real time or check in with students individually.
- Homework should be set on Firefly and in accordance with the homework timetable.

## Digital Platforms

- Students should have their cameras on wherever possible, with the expectation they are sitting in a well-lit room at a desk or table (although this may not be possible for all), appropriately dressed, with relevant books and writing material to hand.
- Backgrounds for both students and teachers should be blurred.
- Teachers may well choose to share their screens rather than use camera.
- Lessons should all be recorded.
- Insights can be used to monitor student engagement.
- Teachers do not need to set up Teams lessons in advance as students should expect each lesson to be live.
- Homework to be set and submitted on Firefly.

## Full School Closure

For extended periods of school closure, the **Lower First Form to the Third Form** will follow the Interactive Lessons Timetable in order to help the students focus on 4-5 subjects per day, in which they will be expected to take part in lessons in real-time. This allows for flexibility for

teachers to set tasks of varying lengths, as appropriate to the subject, and for students to organise their days as befits their personal circumstances and learning styles.

**Fourth Form and above will continue to follow the school timetable to ensure they maintain sufficient academic rigour to prepare them for public exams.**

### **Principles of 'Interactive Lessons Timetable'**

- Each day students will still have some real-time or 'live' lessons with their teachers to provide structure and interaction during the day.
- Work will be set for the remaining non-live lessons which will offer more flexibility in extended periods of lockdown where juggling family life can be difficult for both teachers and students.
- Additional homework will not be set for Lower First to Third Forms, although there will be opportunities for extended learning, independent projects, and academic enrichment.

### **Examples of an 'interactive lesson'**

Whether in a full or partial school closure, the same principles of a good live interactive lesson (outlined above) apply. However, in full school closure lessons can take various forms including:

- An introduction from the teacher (either live or viewed from a recording) followed by the teacher supporting the students' work through live messaging on Teams.
- A pre-recorded lecture with quiz-style questions on Firefly.
- A series of student presentations chaired by the teacher.
- Online assessment through quizzing tools such as Kahoot!
- Flipped learning where the students record answers to topics and share their recordings with the rest of the group.
- Pair work or group work (e.g. through Teams channels, whiteboards, or shared documents).
- Teacher and students engaged in discussion or debate, sharing a screen, and using livemessaging/chat function (live lesson).

### ***Digital Platforms***

- Tasks will continue to be set on Firefly, often on a weekly basis, and parents can monitor the tasks being set for their son through the parent dashboard.
- There will be clear instructions on how to approach each task, and how and when this work should be submitted for marking.
- Students must remember to click "Mark as Done" once the task is completed. Regular feedback will be given, usually weekly.
- Teams will be used for interaction and delivery of 'live' lessons. Class teachers should try to respond to requests for help or information from students during the working day where practicable.
- Teachers are not expected to respond to emails and messages after 5pm or at weekends. Students should ensure they have read all instructions carefully before asking for help, and they are submitting their work in the correct way.

Guides to the technology being used can be found [here](#), including instructions for parents to monitor the tasks being set for their son.

Families who encounter IT problems can access support from Mr Joubert's team by contacting [whitgiftITsupport@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:whitgiftITsupport@whitgift.co.uk)

The online conferencing policy can be found as an appendix to this document.

### **Enrichment Activities**

For periods of prolonged school closure, Whitgift will also roll out a programme of enrichment activities, including talks by Whitgift staff, competitions and puzzles, thought-provoking videos, e-books, cross-curricular tasks, PE workouts, free theatre and recommended audio-books.

A Firefly page with age-appropriate activities will be available for Junior Years, Middle Years and Sixth Form.

All students are encouraged to use the time to read for an hour a day. This has many benefits, including a break from screens and a personal space to unwind when cooped up indoors.

Students may record additional achievements in diaries which they share with Tutors.

### **Pastoral Care of Students**

Working at home can be challenging for a variety of reasons, especially when coupled with social or lifestyle limitations, and possible illness in the family. We appreciate the huge role that parents will be playing and encourage families to structure the day to give balance, variety, and a sense of purpose. Parents can play a key role in helping students adhere to a routine, and the amount of support will vary depending on the age and personality of the child, and the parents' own work commitments. Time should be made for regular breaks, exercise, pursuing co-curricular interests and connecting virtually with friends and relatives.

Whitgift will also continue to provide a strong sense of pastoral support during periods of closure. Guidance will be offered to parents on supporting their children with remote learning. The School's pastoral support system will also provide a sense of mental and emotional wellness, in addition to ensuring our most vulnerable students will continue to receive focused pastoral support.

### **Registration, Form periods and Assemblies**

- All students should log in to Firefly each morning.
- If a student does not log in, parents will be contacted.
- Each Tutor will hold a weekly 10-15-minute form period on Teams, principally aimed at giving the students some interaction with their Tutor and others in their form.
- Pastoral staff, including the Chaplain, Heads of Year and Heads of Section will deliver wellbeing-themed messages and reflective assemblies.
- Students should update Tutors about any issues preventing them from completing work as expected.

## Teacher wellbeing

- It is recognised that this will be a stressful time for teachers, who may well be looking after children at home, and worried about their personal circumstances, friends, and family.
- Teachers should check in regularly with Heads of Department, and alert them promptly of any significant changes in circumstances, including living arrangements, health, and anxiety.
- Careful consideration should be given to teachers with health problems, dependents or caring duties, and other members of the department may be asked to support them.
- Whitgift is proud to have trained a number of staff to be Coaches and Mental-Health First Aiders over the last two years. These staff will be happy to speak to any colleague who would like support. Click here for a list of [Coaches](#) and here for [Mental Health First Aiders](#).
- The usual rules around confidentiality will apply; if a colleague believes that another member of staff may be at risk, it is their responsibility to share this with an appropriate member of senior staff.
- Use of Teams or equivalent for meetings and maintaining morale is encouraged.
- Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development, online courses and curriculum development or coaching may be discussed with the Assistant Head (Learning and Innovation) and/or the Head of Department.

Reviewed by Assistant Head (Learning and Innovation): September 2021

Next review: September 2022

## Appendix A

### Guidance for Online Meetings

#### Aims

The purpose of this guidance is to support effective remote pastoral care, and remote teaching and learning at Whitgift School, during an extended period of school closure. It aims to set out the expectations of staff and students, with attention to the important considerations of safeguarding and the maintaining of professional standards. In developing this guidance, the School has referred to the following:

The Acceptable Use Policy (Staff)

The Acceptable Use Policy (Students)

The Online Safety Policy

The Safeguarding Children Policy

This guidance **does not** cover the use of online meetings by the School counsellors, which is subject to separate conditions, as detailed by their professional body.

Any departure from this guidance may have safeguarding implications and must be agreed in advance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Microsoft Teams is the platform that we will use for online meetings, either for pastoral care, or for lessons.

When planning and participating in an online meeting the following steps must be taken:

- The owner of the meeting, usually a teacher or Form Tutor, will invite participants via Firefly, Outlook or Teams, to confirm the date and time.
- For Form Periods, the Tutor and the Assistant Tutor (if there is one) should ideally be included.
- One-to-one online meetings may be necessary for certain areas of school life, such as maintaining contact with the Form Tutor or other pastoral staff, language practice, or working with the Learning Support Department.
- All online meetings should be conducted in a professional manner, observing the usual expectations of behaviour. For video meetings, casual dress is appropriate for staff and students while at home, but clothing should not be revealing, and it should not feature political or offensive slogans.
- All meetings should take place within extended school hours (8.45am to 5pm).
- Students should access the meetings in a public area of their house wherever possible. If this is not possible, other rooms such as a bedroom can be used but participants should be seated on a chair and/or at a desk.
- All participants are expected to blur their background during video meetings as

common practice.

- Meetings within Microsoft Teams will be recorded by the owner of the meeting.
- Recordings may be used to support any students who were absent. **These should be deleted once the course content becomes obsolete.**

If any safeguarding concerns arise, the School Safeguarding Children Policy must be followed and the Designated Safeguarding Lead informed using [dmk@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:dmk@whitgift.co.uk) or by calling 07593 132362.



## Appendix B

### Online Remote Learning Responsible User Agreement

Remote learning requires access to online platforms and services maintained by Whitgift School and will require you to communicate with teachers and fellow students in a mature and considerate manner. This user agreement is to be used in conjunction with the general Acceptable Use Policy. By logging in to the School's systems you agree to the terms of this Policy.

The below rules will help to ensure that all members of the school community are able to be supported academically and pastorally when working remotely.

1. I will consider the content (text, images, audio and video) that I post to a school-maintained platform before I submit the content.
2. I will not use any school-maintained platform for non-school related activity.
3. I will be polite and courteous when communicating with other users and will use the same language as if I were talking to that person face-to-face.
4. I will adhere to the requirements of any work and not submit work in a format or on a platform not specified by my teacher or Form Tutor.
5. Wherever possible I will undertake remote working in a public location in my house (e.g. the kitchen or living room). If this is not possible, I will try to be seated on a chair and/or at a desk.
6. I will login to Firefly by 9am Monday to Friday during term time.
7. If I encounter technical problems (e.g. not being able to log in to a system), I will contact IT support ([whitgiftITsupport@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:whitgiftITsupport@whitgift.co.uk)) and provide them with a detailed explanation of the problem along with screenshots so they can diagnose the issue.
8. I will not try to access the accounts of any other user.
9. I understand that cyberbullying is unacceptable and will not use any of the remote working platforms to undertake such activity. If I do, I will be sanctioned.
10. I understand that posting immature or offensive content to teachers and fellow students is unacceptable and I may be sanctioned if I undertake such action.
11. If I receive any communication or content that I am unhappy with (e.g. cyber-bullying, extreme or offensive content), I will immediately report it to my Form Tutor.
12. I understand that all activity that I undertake on a school-maintained platform or a school device is monitored and logged for safeguarding and recording keeping purposes.