

**KING'S NORTON BOYS' SCHOOL**  
**REMOTE LEARNING POLICY**



**The purposes of this policy:**

- To share our principles and approach to remote learning
- To outline remote learning practices and procedures for staff and/or students who are self-isolating due to COVID-19
- To outline remote learning practices and procedures for staff and students who are advised by Public Health Birmingham to self-isolate to reduce the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 (or when the staffing levels enforce a school closure)

**1.0 The principles behind our approach to remote learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

When forming this policy, careful consideration has been given to the most recent reviews of the research and evidence around remote learning. The Education Endowment Foundation has suggested that there are five key implementation strategies to support students and parents when education has to become remote:

1. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered
2. Ensuring access to technology is key, especially for disadvantaged students
3. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes
4. Supporting students to work independently can improve learning outcomes
5. Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and students.

It is these implementation strategies that have formed the basis of our approach to remote learning.

## **1.1 Our approach to remote learning considering these five key implementation strategies**

### **1.11 Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered**

Remote learning reviews have concluded that it is more important that the elements of effective teaching are present, for example, clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback, than how or when they are provided. Reviews suggest that there was no clear difference between teaching in real time ('synchronous teaching') and alternatives ('asynchronous teaching'). For example, it doesn't matter if a teacher could explain a new idea live or in a pre-recorded video, what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on students' prior learning or how students' understanding is subsequently assessed.

KNBS teachers have an excellent understanding of their subjects and their curriculum plans. They will call upon this skill set when deciding on the support or resources that they are providing for our students and the methods they choose to assess their classes. It is a core principle that explanations from teachers are invaluable to their students, and we have developed our chosen platform, Microsoft Teams, so explanations can be shared, accompanied by appropriate resources and opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding.

Teachers may choose to also explain certain content over time in video form or written form. However, they may select other forms of support, for example, YouTube or other videos, as this may have worked well in the past when explaining certain concepts.

### **1.12 Ensuring access to technology is key (especially for disadvantaged students)**

Almost all remote learning uses digital technology, typically requiring access to both computers and the Internet. Many reviews identify a lack of technology as a barrier to successful remote instruction. It is, therefore, important that support is provided to ensure that all our students have access to the remote learning that KNBS offers.

Some of us are very lucky - we have reliable Internet connectivity and plenty of hardware devices to go around; this makes remote learning access very straightforward. However, many of us do not experience such perfect conditions for learning. Often families or siblings are sharing devices, and sometimes Internet access and hardware is simply not available. Therefore, it is our principle to provide video explanations rather than live teaching. This supports students by allowing access to their learning at the time of their normal lesson or when it is convenient for the family.

We have chosen Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Teams as our chosen platform for remote learning. It enables classwork to be set easily, explanation videos to be uploaded efficiently and provides a clear record of learning for students and staff to review. As it is part of the 365 suite it also supports all students to be able to access the appropriate

software and offer synchronisation between work completed in school and work completed at home.

### **1.13 Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes**

Multiple reviews highlight the importance of some peer interaction during remote learning, as a way to motivate students and improve outcomes. Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for discussions of the content.

The value of collaborative approaches was emphasised in many reviews, although notably many studies involved older learners. Different approaches to peer interaction are likely to be better suited to different age groups. By establishing Microsoft Teams groups for each class, students have more of an opportunity to work more collaboratively. This also allows students to engage in their learning by posting questions, queries or comments to their teacher.

The value of collaborative tasks, as part of a varied range of activities, is clear, and we encourage the use of them within our remote provision. Our staff are skilled in establishing collaborative tasks and our students are skilled in social media. This mix should lead to the successful incorporation of collaborative tasks in the learning opportunities provided by teachers.

### **1.14 Supporting students to work independently can improve learning outcomes**

Students learning at home will often need to work independently. Multiple reviews identify the value of strategies that help students work independently with success. For example, prompting students to reflect on their work or to consider the strategies they will use if they get stuck have been highlighted as valuable.

Wider evidence related to metacognition and self-regulation suggests the checklists and success criteria that KNBS teachers share with their students are extremely beneficial. This will continue to form part of the resources available to students.

### **1.15 Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and students**

Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Recent research suggests that teachers should be supported to consider which approaches are best suited to the content they are teaching and the age of their students. For example, games for learning were found to have a high impact on vocabulary learning in foreign languages, but there is less evidence related to their use in other subjects.

Likewise, using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can help students retain key ideas and knowledge, but is not a replacement for other forms of assessment.

Therefore, our principle is to vary the type of tasks, resources and assessment that we will use, just like we vary it within the classroom. We also hold as a principle that assessment is best used to impact on future planning and developing future remote learning tasks and resources. It is a widely held view within education that grading and formalising feedback is not always productive. To this end, any formal assessment activity will be labelled as such and explanations will make this clear.

## **2.0 Circumstances to commence Remote Learning**

### **2.1 Enforced Self-Isolation**

It is a reality that individuals, bubbles or even the whole school may be instructed to stay at home and self-isolate to reduce the risk of transmission and reduce the R rate.

If this is the case, we will engage the protocols set out in section 3, 4 and 5.

### **2.2 Inadequate Staffing**

It is possible that, due to staff being instructed to self-isolate, the school will be unable to function safely. In this circumstance, one or more bubbles may have to work from home for some or all of the time until staffing numbers increase and allow normal teaching to recommence. In these circumstances remote learning will be initiated.

### **2.3 Reasons we may not set work:**

We want to provide easily accessible work to our students if they are unable to come to school. However, there is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to students who absent themselves from school against official guidance or educational legislation. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take students on holiday during term time or if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their sons from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

### **3 Remote learning for students who are self-isolating whilst KNBS remains open to students within the same bubble**

There will be occasion when the majority of students are in school as normal, however, some students will be self-isolating, for example, due to household symptoms or contact with someone who has tested positive. In these circumstances, we have the following procedures and expectations:

#### **3.1 Teacher expectations:**

- it is recognised that teachers will have to cover their normal timetabled lessons and may be teaching classes for most of the day
- teachers will upload teaching materials and lesson resources to Microsoft Teams to support individuals off school due to COVID-19
- teachers will endeavour to set work equivalent in length to the lessons on their timetable. It is recognised that it is not easy to estimate the time it takes for students to complete work and some students will work faster than others; an element of differentiation by outcome is to be expected
- teachers will review, assess and mark submitted work in line with the school written feedback policy
- staff can answer Microsoft Teams chats during school hours and their working day but not beyond normal working hours or at the weekend (students may email teachers via their school account, if they need to contact staff. These may be answered at the weekend if staff deem it essential to reply)
- staff can respond to students via Microsoft Teams messaging
- it is recognised that some lessons are discussion based, and it is more difficult for students at home to benefit from this kind of activity. Alternative tasks should be set by the teacher if time allows.

#### **3.2 Student expectations:**

- students have been provided with log on details for their Microsoft Teams account. This will enable them to have access to emails, the Microsoft 365 suite of software and Microsoft Teams.
- students should, where possible, maintain structure by logging on at their usual lesson time; they should be mindful that their teacher is likely to be teaching their peers so it could be difficult to respond to questions
- students should check Microsoft Teams to see the posts/resources for each subject
- students should complete all set work and, if requested, upload work to Microsoft Teams

- students should use Microsoft Teams to communicate with their teachers and ask questions if they do not understand/require help.

### **3.3 Parent expectations:**

- parents will encourage and support their son's learning, including finding an appropriate place to work, checking that set work is completed and ensuring they have some structure to the working day, such as start and finish times and appropriate breaks
- parents will inform school if their son does not have access to the Internet or lacks the hardware to be able to access the online provision, or if they are having difficulties accessing work
- parents will encourage their son to ask their teacher questions about the work if they are unsure
- parents will contact their son's Head of Year if there are any concerns.

#### **4. Remote teaching for staff who are self-isolating**

Teaching staff may be required to self-isolate for several reasons (Government guidance on this may change). KNBS will ensure that staff have clear information about the changing advice and guidance.

##### **4.1 If a member of staff is required to self-isolate and is NOT fit for work, they are expected to:**

- follow the normal guidelines for planned absence, informing the school and their line manager, who will be responsible for setting work. However, this work may not be as interactive as it would have been if their normal teacher was available to set work
- on their return, they should review the work that had been set to ensure that the curriculum is fully covered, review the quality of students work and set follow up tasks as appropriate.

##### **4.2 If a member of staff is required to self-isolate, but they are fit for work and their class is in school as normal, they are expected to:**

- set work through Microsoft Teams, in line with their timetable, sending a link to your line manager to enable them to facilitate this if needed
- review, assess and mark submitted work in line with the KNBS written feedback policy.

##### **4.3 If a member of staff is required to self-isolate but is fit for work, and their class is also self-isolating, they are expected to:**

- set work through Microsoft Teams (as outlined in section 5)

## **5 Remote teaching and learning in case of enforced school closure**

If the school must undergo enforced temporary closure for one or more bubbles due to Government and/or Public Health guidelines, the following will apply:

### **5.1 Teacher expectations:**

- teachers will set assignments and upload resources to Microsoft Teams, in line with their timetable, so that students can complete their tasks in line with explanations
- teachers should use Microsoft Teams to record a brief explanation of the work, ready for the set lesson time; this will be available to those logging in at normal lesson time or when they can due to hardware availability
- teachers will continue to deliver a well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject
- teachers should provide clear explanations of new content, through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- teachers should review, assess and mark submitted work in line with the KNBS written feedback policy
- teachers will adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure students' understanding
- teachers should remain vigilant about students' well-being and report any safeguarding concerns in line with the school safeguarding policy
- teachers should adhere to the GDPR policy, ensuring that they use their school email account and Microsoft Teams account for all communications with students.

NB: the KNBS Homework Policy will be suspended during times of school closure.

### **5.2 Student expectations:**

- where possible, students should retain structure to their working day, starting with logging in to Microsoft Teams
- students should check Microsoft Teams to see the posts/resources for each lesson, and work through tasks, uploading work where appropriate
- students should use Microsoft Teams to communicate with their teachers, and ask questions if they do not understand or require help
- students should understand the importance of meeting deadlines; please be aware that this will be closely monitored.

**5.3 Parent expectations:**

- parents will encourage and support their son's learning, including finding an appropriate place to work, checking that set work is completed and ensuring they have some structure to the working day, such as start and finish times and appropriate breaks
- parents will inform school if their son does not have access to the Internet or lacks the hardware to be able to access the online provision, or if they are having difficulties accessing work
- parents will encourage their son to ask their teacher questions about the work if they are unsure
- parents will contact their son's Head of Year if there are any concerns.

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## **6 Monitoring**

### **6.1 Heads of Department are expected to:**

- fulfil the expectations of a normal classroom teacher
- regularly check the work being set and monitor levels of student engagement
- regularly check in with their teams, ensuring that staff are consistent in their approach to Microsoft Teams and pick up on any potential concerns early on
- provide support to colleagues in their teams to ensure that work is provided as required
- support and encourage collaboration across the department and promote a shared responsibility for provision
- share any arising concerns around non-completion of work with appropriate pastoral and/or senior staff

### **6.2 A Head of Year is expected to:**

- monitor the engagement of students in their year group and organise contact home for those struggling to engage
- use data from teaching staff to identify underperformance and engage with families to provide appropriate support and improve outcomes
- where needed, liaise with families to remove obstacles to engagement
- communicate with the cohort and their families to maintain positive relationships.

### **6.3 A Senior Leader is expected to:**

- monitor the engagement of students across the school and lead on interventions to improve engagement
- use data from teaching staff to identify underperformance and lead on action to reduce any impact on students
- to monitor the support offered by staff to remove obstacles to engagement
- support staff to ensure that their welfare and workload is managed effectively and that the potential burdens of remote teaching are managed successfully
- share key messages with the school community and ensure that families are up to date through successful communication.

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## **7 Additional Needs**

### **7.1 Support for students with SEND, EAL and other specific learning needs**

Teachers should ensure that work is differentiated appropriately for all students with SEND when setting online tasks. One Page Profiles are available for students with SEND, and advice can be sought from the SENDCo. In addition, the Learning Support Team will maintain contact with students with SEND who may require regular support, either by email or phone with parents/students. They will feed back to teachers as appropriate.

## **8. Safeguarding and Pastoral Care**

### **8.1 Safeguarding**

This guidance document is supported by the Safeguarding and Child Protection policies for King's Norton Boys' School. Specific additions to note:

In the event of a school closure, students, parents and teachers are reminded that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between students and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school.

### **8.2 Pastoral care during a school closure:**

In the event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a student rests with their parents/guardians. However, Form Tutors (under the guidance of Heads of Year) should check in regularly with their tutees to monitor both academic progress and their general well-being. Form Tutors will be expected to pass on feedback to Heads of Year, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication. This includes using My Concern if staff feel there is a safeguarding concern. It is vitally important that parents inform us of any concerns or key information that we need to be aware of.