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| https://www.aladdin.ie/file/custom_logo?39870769 | **Presentation Primary School**  **Sexton Street, Limerick**  **Tel:** 061-412494  **E-mail:** info@preslimerick.ie  **Roll No.:** 20018H |

**Remote Teaching and Distance Learning Policy in a Covid-19 Context**

**Rationale**

The Board of Management of the Presentation Primary School appreciates that times of partial or full school closures is a challenging period as school staff strive to support the learning and wellbeing of pupils while out of the school environment and where teaching and learning approaches have had to change. It is particularly difficult for students who are homeless or marginalised, students with special educational needs and students whose families are experiencing stress and uncertainty. As per DES guidelines Returning to School Curriculum guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers: ‘As a contingency for any such reoccurrence of closures, whether localised or on a bigger scale, to ensure compliance with any public health restrictions, it is vital that schools are prepared.’

**Introduction**

The Returning to School Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers also states:

In circumstances where there is clear public health advice from HSE Public Health that a school should close, schools will be supported to:

* Make best use of guidance materials which were already provided to all schools during the period of school closures and will be further updated to reflect learning during the emergency period
* Alert parents/guardians to where pupils are at in their learning
* Develop lesson activities to be carried out at home
* Contact parents regularly to offer support and feedback
* Have a system in place to engage with pupils regularly
* Make best use of digital technologies to allow continued engagement with pupils and their learning

**Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

* To inform all members of our school community what will be in place during a partial or full school closure as a result of Covid-19
* To outline the procedures and processes of this policy

**Procedures**

Presentation Primary School will provide for continuity of education for all pupils through the assignment of independent work depending on the scenario. These scenarios go from one pupil in a class restricting their movements or self-isolating to a full school closure.

**One pupil from the class restricting movements/self-isolating**

The class teacher continues to teach pupils who are in attendance as normal. The class teacher and SET will work together to provide for the teaching and learning for the pupil restricting movements or self-isolating. This may mean the SET releasing the pupil’s allocated time from their timetable to provide remote teaching and learning in line with their needs if the child has additional or special educational needs. The SET may have to pause other aspects of their timetable to support the pupil during this time. The method of support for individual pupils will be decided by the class teacher and SET considering the particular needs of the pupil and how best the needs can be met. If the pupil has access to an SNA, the SNA will also liaise with the class teacher, SET and parents/guardians while the pupil is absent.

**Pupils in a number of pods in a classroom are advised to restrict their movements or self-isolate**

The class teacher continues to teach pupils who are in attendance as normal. The class teacher and the SET will work together to provide for the teaching and learning for the pupils restricting movements or self-isolating. This may mean the SET pausing other aspects of their timetable to support the pupils during this time as in classroom support may not be possible due to large numbers of the class being absent. The class teacher may ask the pupils to work on a project and the SET may provide assistance to the children remotely. If any pupil(s) has access to an SNA, the SNA will also liaise with the class teacher, SET and parents/guardians while the pupil(s) is absent.

**All pupils in one or more classes are advised to or restrict their movements or self-isolate staff member is required to self-isolate or restrict movements**

If a teacher is required to self-isolate**,** they will avail of special leave with pay, in line with Circular 0049/2020. If a teacher is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict their movements they are available to work remotely from home as per Circular 0049/2020.

If the teachers class group is still attending school a substitute teacher will be arranged to cover the teacher’s teaching responsibilities in the school for this period and the teacher restricting movements should support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning as per section 12 Circular 0049/2020.

If the teacher’s class is also restricting movements or self-isolating the class teacher and SET if applicable will provide remote/distance teaching to all pupils in the class using the home learning documents page of the Presentation Primary School Website. This applies if school staff are restricting their movements. If the class teacher or SET is required to self-isolate, a substitute teacher will be hired to cover the absence and the staff member will avail of special leave with pay.

Work will be provided daily and a daily text message with a link to the home learning documents page will be sent to parents. Please see the section on digital platforms for more information. If any pupil(s) has access to an SNA, the SNA will also liaise with the class teacher, SET and parents/guardians while the pupil(s) is absent and while the SNA is restricting their movements.

**Full School Closure**

All teachers who are medically fit for work, including SET’s, are available to work remotely and will provide remote teaching and learning to all pupils in their class or caseload. Substitute teachers will be arranged to provide remote teaching for pupils in classes where the teacher has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and is medically unfit for work. Substitute teachers will have access to teacher plans and access to the website. All SNA’s who are medically fit for work are available to work remotely and will provide assistance to parents/guardians and pupils on their caseload.

**Continuity of Education**

In scenarios where a pupils is restricting their movements or self-isolating or where a number of pupils from the one class are restricting their movements or self-isolating, the class teacher and the SET will decide on the best approach in relation to remote learning.

The Presentation Primary School website has a home learning documents page for each class level. Pupils and parents access the website nightly to access homework and pupils will be shown how to access the webpage daily by teachers. A text message with a link to the home learning documents page will be sent by the Principal to parents. The home learning page is password protected and the parents will receive a daily reminder of the password also.

Where a full class or full school closure occurs the school website will be used for remote teaching and learning. When using the website for remote teaching and learning, teachers will be required to ensure a balance of provision, where possible, to include opportunities for the pupils to see and hear their teacher through pre-recorded video or audio clips. Staff working remotely should communicate with pupils on a daily basis.

Teacher-pupil engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils. Teachers should ensure, as far as practicable, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches including pre-recorded video, audio, presentation software and written instructions. Regular engagement with pupils will help them to reintegrate when they return to school. Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way. Workbook and textbook tasks will be reduced and supplemented or replaced with other learning tasks. Pupils will be supported to develop age-appropriate organisational skills so they can engage in remote learning.

Home learning packs that contain a range of materials to support engagement with learning will be provided by the school depending on the scenario, length of closure and class level.

For supporting the learning of Irish, pupils will be directed by teachers to resources produced by TG4 and COGG as a support for remote learning or to teacher designed tasks.

Parents of pupils are requested to return course work completed by pupils via the website. This should be done daily by parents. A video tutorial will be sent to parents on how to access the home learning documents and how to return work completed for the teacher to correct. This is how children submit homework at present and it will take the same format as returning written homework during a Covid-19 related absence or closure. Class teachers are requested to offer feedback and support to parents/guardians and pupils by email, phone or website.

Staff will identify pupils who are at risk of not progressing their education and will endeavour to engage with these pupils by using the extent of the school’s resources and by putting in place and monitoring appropriate strategies and interventions. Pupils who are not returning completed work will be targeted by the HSCL co-ordinator, in consultation with the principal and class teacher.

***Continuity of Education for Children with SEN***

Pupils with SEN can be particularly vulnerable as they cope with not being at school, with changes in their daily routine, and with not seeing their friends or teachers. Keeping our pupils connected to learning and to the school through engagement with their teachers is critical for pupils with SEN during school closure. Mainstream class teachers should consult with colleagues and the SEN team to ensure a coordinated whole-school approach to assigning work to pupils with SEN.

Special education teachers may send packages of supports to parents and guardians and engage with their students through e-mail, online video communication apps. Parents will be encouraged to send an email of their work to their class teacher, using the class teacher email provided to the parents or via the website. The SET is pivotal in ensuring that there is continuity in the learning of pupils with SEN. SETs should therefore be regularly communicating and engaging with the pupils on their caseload.

Supporting parents and guardians, where possible and practicable, to use the technology used by the school to support pupils’ engagement in learning is also an important function of the SET. There should be communication with the parents and guardians to ensure that a realistic level of support can be provided without overburdening the parent or the family.

Planning should be pupil focused and aligned with the learning targets as set out in the support file for the pupil. It should be informed by the individual circumstances and needs of parents and guardians and pupils at this time. Pupils will also be supported in their transition back to school.

***Engagement***

All school staff are responsible for engaging with parents of pupils in the school.

Engagement will take the form of:

• Regular engagement of students in lessons, tasks and learning experiences

• Provision of specific and regular supports for pupils with special educational needs

• Provision of specific supports for students at risk of educational disadvantage

• Provision of regular assignments to pupils that are purposeful, manageable and can be carried out independently

• Provision of regular and supportive feedback to pupils on the work submitted

• Adoption of a whole school approach to engagement with pupils and parents to ensure consistency of approach so as not to overburden pupils or their parents and guardians

• Sending messages by text, email or any means that the school sees as appropriate

• Making phone or e-mail contact with parents/guardians just to check that pupils are engaged and to answer queries

Engagement with parents/guardians will take place by phone and/or email. Teachers and school staff will only respond to emails sent from a parents email address or contact parents on their mobile phone. Under no circumstances should a staff member contact a pupil on the pupil’s own mobile phone or respond to an email sent directly from a pupil.

In some instances, pupils and parents or guardians may not have responded to the school’s efforts to engage with them. In these cases the HSCL Coordinator will make contact with the parents/guardians, with a view, in turn, to making contact with the pupil(s). Once contact has been established, its frequency will depend on the identified needs of the pupil(s) concerned. Contact should be supportive in nature and affirming of pupils’ efforts to date. The HSCL coordinator should ascertain how parents and guardians and their children are adjusting to new ways of learning and advise parents and guardians on how best to support their child. The importance of regular phone calls and contact by the HSCL coordinator cannot be overstated, especially in the absence of home visits. Daily contact will be undertaken with those most at risk of educational disadvantage.

The school will draw on the existing relationships that the HSCL Coordinators and School Completion Programme (SCP) personnel have established with certain pupils and families and will continue SCP interventions, including mentoring for pupils, where possible and practicable or adjust interventions that pupils availed of prior to the school closure. The school will engage with TESS personnel, including EWO’s, to continue to proactively engage with all pupils at risk and their families.

In certain circumstances the school will identify an adult in the school community, who has or had in the past, a positive working relationship with a disconnected pupil, in order to make contact.

Presentation Primary School will endeavour to adapt approaches to ensure that for those pupils who do not have digital access, their ability to participate in learning is not compromised. Where possible, the school will provide digital devices on loan to parents on condition of an agreement been signed.

Information of a general nature will be updated on the school website.

***Well Being***

Maintaining the wellbeing of students, supported by their families, is of the utmost importance during an absence or closure in a Covid-19 context. Some students may be coping well with staying at home, social/physical distancing and completing school work at home whereas others may be struggling with these changes. There will be continuing challenges as students miss their friends, school and their extra-curricular and social activities. School staff will play an important role in supporting normality and routine for the students and in encouraging healthy behaviours.

The wellbeing of teachers is equally important. Staff are encouraged to engage with their colleagues and school management to ensure collegiate support. It is essential that teachers develop strategies and access support as necessary to safeguard their own wellbeing.

**Teacher planning and records of learning**

Should teachers need to, updated short-term and long-term plans should be changed to the context of the school closure and this should be reflected the in the teacher’s plans. Teacher’s should have their plans easily accessible to be shared with the SET allocated to the class or a substitute teacher where needed.

**Staff Communication**

Regular communication will take place between all school staff will take place by the following:

* Regular phone calls between staff members, emails, text messages and social media communication tools
* Staff meetings using online meeting facilities
* Different groups of teachers in the school such as those teaching particular class levels, student support teams, leadership and management teams, special education teams and members of subject departments working together to plan work and share practice

**Staff responsibilities while Working from Home**

Staff are required to be available to attend to teaching duties from 9am - 2.40 pm Monday to Friday. This includes availability to reply to parental concerns via email and being available to support pupils to keep them motivated, active and feeling well.

Should staff not be available to work from Monday - Friday 9 am – 2.40pm staff must inform the principal in advance as to the reason they are unable to attend for work e.g: Course day, sick day (certified/uncertified), full days CPD training (Name, date, time and topic of webinar to be stated)

Mandatory attendance at all remote staff meetings is expected – should you not be able to attend clear reasons stating why must be outlined: e.g: course day, sick day (certified or uncertified) attendance at a webinar (name, date, time and topic to be stated), attendance at another meeting involving a cluster school, a scheduled phone meeting taking place with a parent, professional from outside agency etc

Staff are also required to be available to be contactable to any staff member from 9am – 2.40 pm Monday to Friday via telephone, text, email or another communication tool

When replying to emails staff are required to use their professional judgement in relation to when an appropriate time line to reply would be. However, staff are not obliged to reply to an email or any school communication sent outside of working hours unless the sender states that they need an immediate response

Job Share teachers are only required to be available for any of the above during their days of work.

**Conclusion**

The school leadership team will have a key role in monitoring and affirming the whole school effort to ensure consistency and promote sharing of practice. This team, comprising the principal and those with assigned management or coordination duties, will also have a role in encouraging and supporting teachers as they develop their practices towards distance learning for all pupils and ensuring support for teachers’ wellbeing.

*This policy was drafted using guidance from the following Department of Education documents:*

* *Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2020*
* *Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools -Supporting Pupils at Risk of Educational Disadvantage 2020*
* *Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary and Special Schools-Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs 2020*
* *Returning to School Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers July 2020*
* *Guidance on Remote Learning in a Coivd-19 Context: September – December 2020*
* *Circular 0049/2020*

**Ratification and Review**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Chairperson Board of Management*

Signed: Date

*Acting Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management*