



Coola Post Primary School Blended Learning Policy

Introduction

Coola PPS have developed a blended learning policy to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19. This is a challenging period as we strive to support the learning and wellbeing of students where teaching and learning approaches have had to change.

Blended learning refers to a mixture of in-person teaching in the classroom, live online teaching, pre-recording or self-directed online teaching.

This document was developed based on our experiences of remote and blended teaching & learning during the period March-December 2020.

The student-teacher relationship is central to effective learning, the aim behind an increased use of digital technology in our school is to allow us to maintain this connection as much as possible in situations where people are physically distant from each other. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place without considering the social and emotional wellbeing of both staff and students. Our aim as a school is to provide the best possible learning environment in these challenging circumstances while safeguarding the wellbeing of both students and staff.

Software

Coola PPS is one of 19 schools in Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim Education Training Board, and it is our policy to prioritise the use of Microsoft Office365 software when providing remote learning to our students.

Scenarios

This policy aims to address the following scenarios that may occur due to COVID-19:

- 1. Student working from home due to restricted movements.**
- 2. Teacher working from home due to restricted movements.**
- 3. A whole school closure.**

1 - Student working from home due to restricted movements.

Maintaining the wellbeing of students, supported by their families, is of the utmost importance at these exceptional times. Some students may be coping well with staying at home, social/physical distancing and completing schoolwork at home whereas others may be struggling with these changes. We aim to provide as much access to the class learning environment and school support structures as possible.

- Students should follow class timetables from home including support classes.
- Teachers should communicate classwork at the beginning of the lesson.
- Teacher should communicate what happened in the lesson or support class, through Microsoft Teams.
- Homework should be available on Teams by the end of the school day.
- Students are responsible for checking and completing this work.
- Student queries will be answered during school hours. After school queries will be answered the following day.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.
- Teachers should share resources from the class such as slides, links, attachments, or a photograph of work from the board where possible. This can be posted in Teams.
- Parent(s)/guardians should provide the student with an appropriate learning environment at home.
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2 - Teacher working from home due to restricted movements (fit for work)

The wellbeing of teachers is important as they navigate a challenging situation while trying to support their students from home. Teachers should engage with their colleagues and school management to ensure collegiate support during this time. It is essential that teachers develop strategies and access support as necessary to safeguard their own wellbeing. The school support structure will be available to all staff working from home.

- Teachers should schedule work for each of their timetabled classes including SEN lessons on Teams. This work should be available at the beginning of the class.
- Further details on SEN classes are available in the SEN guidelines.
- Online live classes, pre-recorded lessons and self-directed assignments with appropriate differentiation is the recommended combination.
- Where possible the teacher should be available at the scheduled time to respond to students via email or Team classroom comments
- Students are responsible for checking and completing this work.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is acknowledged and relevant feedback is provided when appropriate.
- Student queries will be answered during school hours. After school queries will be answered the following day.
- It is advised that a student should hear their teachers voice at least once a week.
- It is essential that students have earphones in their bag for recorded lessons.

3 - Full school closure

Remote learning may be experienced differently by each student and member of school staff. Encouraging communication and supporting students and staff to voice their needs is important in preventing feelings of isolation, frustration, and disengagement.

In the routines of school life, students can feel a sense of community, structure, and culture that help them sense belonging and direction. To preserve this, the structure of the school day will be followed as much as possible during a school closure.

- Work should be scheduled by teachers at the beginning of the day for all classes via Teams.
- A variety of activities is very beneficial such as pre-recorded lessons, self-directed learning, live video lessons, project work. Online live classes, pre-recorded lesson and self-directed assignment, or any combination of these, is the recommended combination for a mainstream class.
- If teachers are scheduling a video call with students, it needs to adhere to the timetable for that class.
- Where possible the teacher should be available at the scheduled time to respond to students via email or Team classroom comments
- Due dates for assignments and homework should be set for the next class period.
- Students are responsible for completing their work.
- Student queries will be answered during school hours. After school queries will be answered the following day.
- Teachers should ensure that work received is acknowledged and relevant feedback is provided when appropriate.

4 – Acceptable Behaviour on Teams

Microsoft Teams is for educational use only and any inappropriate use of the email or chat facility may warrant severe sanction. Any inappropriate messaging through school email or the chat facility will be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Student accounts are for use by that student alone; any hacking into or use of that account by another student will be regarded as a serious misdemeanour.

Unacceptable behaviour also includes, but is not limited to, the misappropriation of other students' online identity, the use of inappropriate memes, avatars, and hand gestures.

Such behaviour will result in the following sanctions:

- The subject teacher will liaise with the offending student/s on Teams advising them to cease this inappropriate behaviour.

- Management may liaise with offending students and parents/guardians to ensure that all online participation on Teams is conducted in a respectful and appropriate manner.
- Repeated offences may result in the student's removal from a particular Subject Team.
- Repeated inappropriate offences may result in the student's temporary suspension from Teams.

We would like to acknowledge that the majority of our school will not engage in the above inappropriate behaviour. Good behaviour will be acknowledged in line with the positive merits contained in our school behaviour plan.