



Action Plan for Communication & Supporting Pupils' Remote Learning 2020-21

Introduction:

Following the publication of the *'Guidance on Remote Learning in a Covid-19 Context: September – December 2020,'* the In-School Management Team met on the 9th October 2020 to discuss, develop and implement an Action Plan to support children's learning in the event of absences for individual children/Pods/class or full school closures.

This Action Plan should inform parents of different approaches the school would implement to different scenarios regarding supporting children's learning remotely from home.

The Role of Chairperson of the BOM:

The Chairperson has access to Aladdin, the school's database system where he can contact the staff via email or phone should the Principal and the Senior Management Team fall ill. The Chairperson of the BOM also has the telephone numbers of the ISM Team and the school inspector Catherine Treacy who can be contacted at catherine_treacy@education.gov.ie

The Role of the Principal:

The school Principal should maintain an oversight of the procedures put in place to support pupils' learning from home to ensure that the learning experiences provided are appropriate to the pupil's needs.

The Principal should support the staff by communicating with them regularly and keeping all staff abreast with any new circulars from the DES. The Principal should check-in with the staff who may be struggling whilst working remotely. This can be achieved successfully using Zoom calls, emails and telephone.

The Principal should communicate regularly with the parents via email keeping them up to date with revised practices. The Principal can alert parents and staff to the fact that a positive case has been identified in a certain class without divulging the identity of said case.

Digital Communication Methods:

Staff will communicate to each other using:

- WhatsApp level groups
- Zoom
- Email
- Phone

Staff will Communicate to Parents:

Due to the young age of our pupils, Staff will communicate directly with parents to support pupils' learning using:

- Telephone calls
- Zoom calls
- Designated school email addresses where the same procedures are adhered to as if the school was open:
 - Teachers always read emails each morning before the children arrive to note any absences
 - Teachers cannot respond to emails within the school working day whilst teaching
 - Teachers will respond to a parent's email Monday to Friday by scheduling a response within 24 hours of receiving it
 - Teachers will not respond to general queries by parents outside of these hours other than to answer an urgent email
 - Emails will not be answered at the weekend
 - Parents should contact the school office Monday-Friday if there is an urgent matter that needs sharing at stsylvesters@gmail.com or 01-8450061

Staff will communicate to colleagues:

In accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.

Remote Teaching and Learning:

Following the enforced school closure from March - June 2020, the digital platform 'SeeSaw' was successfully used in an age appropriate manner for our pupils. It allowed for our pupils to engage in two way communication with teachers in meaningful learning activities. 'SeeSaw' is a secure, online pupil portfolio that allows teachers to share lessons, teach content and allow for feedback between teachers and pupils. Families are only able to access or view the SeeSaw account of their own child.

For the school year 2020/21, it has been decided by staff that in a situation where the school is required to close again, 'SeeSaw' will be used for remote teaching and learning. SeeSaw may also be used for homework activities throughout the year while the school remains open.

Teachers will always provide feedback to children and correct the work set on Seesaw by the teacher. This is quite time consuming and therefore teachers cannot provide feedback to extra work parents themselves decide to upload of their child's work.

Starting in September 2020, class teachers will send consent forms using Google Forms to parents. This is to allow staff to set pupils up on the class Seesaw account. Once a teacher has obtained consent, they will send an email to the parents with the pupil's home code for accessing SeeSaw.

In the case of a whole/partial school closure, staff will begin to use a combination of emailing educational content and devising lessons accompanied where necessary by a voice-over of the teacher to be uploaded to SeeSaw as soon as possible.

Weekly Remote Lesson Plans:

Teachers will schedule emails to be sent to parents:

- Each Friday with an overview of the weekly plan for the following week. This may include, but is not limited to, workbook page numbers; digital links to support lessons; poems; prayers and mindfulness activities
- There will be one day allotted for the revision of previous completed learning activities in each weekly plan
- A daily menu of learning activities with the focus on Literacy, Numeracy, SPHE (Well-being) and P.E.
- Four days of homework activities
- Teachers will attempt to limit where possible any need for families to print off resources. Workbooks, copies and resources will be bagged and sent home with pupils if directed by the Department of Education to enforce a school closure. Bagged books/copies should not be opened by children during a school holiday and should be returned to school intact after the holiday
- New literacy and numeracy content/concepts will be taught over Seesaw using pictures/video with a teacher voiceover
- Other subject areas to be covered (e.g. PE, Art, SPHE) will be sent by email
- It is preferable that each teacher would create their own SPHE lessons. However, year groups may jointly develop generic well-being and mindfulness SPHE lessons using the voice-over of one of the teachers in the year group to share with other classes
- In the case whereby the whole school is closed for an extended period of time, teachers will work together to create a bank of SeeSaw lessons/resources that can be shared and used by the entire year group
- Some lessons may have a voiceover of one of the teachers in the year group. Class teachers can then choose to use which lessons would be of most benefit to their class, and when.
- Teachers will check SeeSaw daily and give pupils feedback on their work within 24 hours Monday to Friday. i.e. if it suits a parent to complete school work with their child on a Tuesday, the teacher will respond on Wednesday. If the work was to be completed on Friday/the weekend, the teacher will respond on the next working day, ie Monday

Children with SEN:

Children with SEN and their parents may require further support from the school. This may take the form of extra contact, to maintain a good relationship between the child and their SNA/SET. Children with SEN should be supported daily using some of the following supports, as deemed appropriate to their needs and specific circumstances:

SNAs:

SNAs will make contact once or twice a day as it deems appropriate with the children they support. This can be achieved by:

- Facetime: SNAs may support their child using video calls
- Videos: SNAs may support their child by sending a video or voice recording of themselves reading a story to their child using Seesaw

Special Education Teacher (SET):

SET can teach the children they are assigned to through:

- Emails: Class teacher and SET may send the parents of a child with SEN personalised emails in order to differentiate work, set work separate to the class work, or to offer support and feedback
- Seesaw: Class teacher and SET may send the parents of a child with SEN personalised Seesaw activities with voice-overs or messages in order to differentiate work separate to the class work
- Phone calls; to offer support and feedback

How to Share Short Term Plans with Substitute Teachers?

Class teachers are asked to put a copy of their monthly planning in their Sub Pack at the beginning of each month. This means that if a class teacher is absent at short notice, there is always an up to date plan of work to hand for the sub. Fiona Kirby (post-holder in charge of sub packs) has put a clearly labelled container with the Sub Packs in a prominent position on a shelf in the Comms Room. Class teachers are asked to return their Sub Pack to this container when they return to work, having checked that all the relevant information is in place, including labels with pupils' names, etc. If any teacher is absent unexpectedly on uncertified leave and a set of worksheets was used by their class, they are asked to replace them in readiness for use by other teachers in their year group.

Teachers who are absent from work as a result of having to restrict their movements but are in good health, can also share weekly and monthly plans with a substitute teacher directly via email, phone, desktop of the laptop, or through the year group.

Teachers in the relevant year group can also identify for the substitute teacher what aspects of the plan have already been covered/ to prioritise.

What to do when an individual child/Pod and/or a class or SET is advised by the HSE to restrict their movement?

Teachers will never be expected to teach or support children's work if they themselves are sick.

School work is never sent home to:

- any pupils who are unwell
- parents who choose not to send their child to school (e.g. holidays during term time/self isolation in advance of a festive event)

In the event of an individual child/Pod/Class/full school closure, the following procedures will be adopted:

In general, children will adopt the guidelines of the 'Weekly Lesson Plans' as per the section above.

Individual Child:

- Where a child is at home for 5-14 days (close contact/restricting movement) but feeling well, the child's parent should request work to be completed at home. The reasoning behind this is if a parent is ill, they may not be in a position to complete work with their child
- The class teacher will email school work to the parents as soon as possible (within 48 hours of notification)
- The teacher will then send an outline of suitable activities that can be completed at home for this time. The focus will be on Literacy, Numeracy, PE and SPHE/Well-being Activities (as recommended by the Department of Education & Skills)
- The child should bring their completed work back to school on their return, and following a period of quarantine of the work (minimum of 72 hours), will receive feedback on it from their class teacher
- New content will always be taught using voice-over recorded lessons on Seesaw

Pod:

- Simple activities will be uploaded onto SeeSaw containing content similar to that being completed by the rest of the class in school, in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, P.E. and SPHE/Well-being
- If there is prior knowledge that the pod will be sent home, the children will also have their books sent home with them
- Lessons/activities will be sent by email, at the start of the period at home. This will be a week's plan of work, broken down into daily lesson plans
- There will be reference to workbooks and copybooks, rather than parents printing worksheets
- SeeSaw will also be utilised in order to directly teach new concepts e.g. a video whereby the teacher models the formation of number one. These videos will be a voiceover of the teacher modelling the completion of a task and may not include the teacher's face

Class/School:

- Only in the event that the school is notified of an impending school closure all workbooks & copies will be bagged and sent home with pupils that day
- Pupils are not to complete pages in their workbooks without being directed to by their teachers
- If the bagged books and copies need to be used during an enforced closure, they will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours on return to the classroom before being used again. If not, books can be carefully removed from the sealed bags by the class teachers/SNA's using protective gloves
- If a child is absent on the day of an enforced closure, the class teacher is required to leave those books on the child's desk, in the event that management needs to distribute the books during closures

Scenarios:

Scenario 1: What to do in the case if a Pod and the class teacher (who is well) is advised by the HSE to restrict their movements?

If the class teacher is fit for work but has been advised by the HSE to restrict their movements, they will support the Pod's learning from home. The substitute teacher will teach the class.

The class teacher will send a plan of work for each week (or part thereof). The work will include Literacy, Numeracy and SPHE activities in keeping with the work being taught by the substitute teacher and it would be reasonable to include one Seesaw activity each day. In such a situation the teacher would engage with the pupils' work on Seesaw on a daily basis.

Scenario 2: What to do in the case of a Pod and the class teacher (who is sick) is advised by the HSE to restrict their movements?

If the teacher is sick, then the SET should support the Pod's learning. The SET should use the time normally allocated to in-class support of the class affected to support the Pod's learning. **The SET using a copy of the fortnightly scheme kept in the Sub Pack in the Comm's Room, will be able to give limited support to the Pod's learning from home.**

The substitute teacher will teach the class.

Scenario 3: What to do if a Pod is sent home and the teacher is not?

The teacher may continue to teach the class and ask the SET to support the Pod's learning. The SET should use the time normally allocated to in-class support to support the Pod's learning guided by the class teacher. Or, the class teacher may decide to support the Pod's learning whilst the SET is asked to teach the class during their in-class support time. Teachers will send a weekly outline of work to be completed at home, which can be uploaded to Seesaw by the parents. The class teacher or the SET will respond to this work once per week, to avoid overload, in a similar manner to how homework operates.

Scenario 4: How will Teachers support the learning of an individual child who has been advised to restrict their movements for 14-17 days by the HSE?

If a child has to restrict their movements because one of their family is being tested for COVID-19 and if they are well, the teacher upon request, will email numeracy and literacy lessons for the child to complete. These will be corrected and feedback given at the end of the week. **The teacher may respond to an email from the parent, midweek looking for clarification or to advise of any up to date information on the child's health.**

Scenario 5: What would happen should a Pod, class teacher and SET all be sick at the same time?

The substitute will teach the class. The Pod's learning will be supported by the class teacher or SET when one of them is well again to teach.

Scenario 6: What would happen if there were a number of teachers absent and the school could not employ a substitute teacher?

The school is fortunate enough to have 6 SET's who can cover 6 classes when substitute teachers are unavailable. However, if a seventh teacher became ill, and if there were no substitute teachers available, the class would be sent home.

Conclusion:

A huge amount of time, planning and resources have been put into the safe reopening of our school. The school does not anticipate or foresee any future closures as we believe it is in the best interest of the pupils to attend school. However, the school will always be directed by advice from the HSE and the Department of Education and Skills.

Ratification:

This Action Plan was ratified by the Board of Management on the 9th November 2020 in compliance with Circular 74/202. The Plan is available for viewing on our website www.stsylvestersinfantschool.com

The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this Plan from time to time as deemed necessary.

Signed:



Mr. Michael McKenna,
Chairperson,
Board of Management.

Date: 9th November, 2020