

# Whitestone Primary School

## Continuity of Learning Policy

### Introduction

#### *Foreword by the Local Authority*

While the disruption to education is challenging for staff and pupils, Swansea's schools have used the Council's blended learning guidance to help prepare staff and pupils for alternative ways to keep learning going. We commend our schools on their work so far in supporting all of our learners, however we recognise that future support will depend on school staff capacity to deliver blended learning. It is not the sole responsibility of schools to support learners and families at any time, especially during disruption as a result of a public health crisis. Effectively supporting our learners, families, schools and staff requires a Council-wide, coordinated effort and clear communication between all involved in providing this support.

Our priorities are to support:

- the safety of all our learners and our staff
- the physical and mental health and well-being of all our learners and our staff
- the ability of all our learners and staff to keep learning
- learners' transition back into school or setting and onto the next phase of their learning when the time comes.

Schools will build on their experiences of the closure and subsequent phased re-opening of schools as providers of education in the late spring and summer terms 2020. From the start of this term, they have been preparing pupils, families and teachers to be ready for more blended learning. Approaches that have been focused on are:

- Using online platforms to send and receive work between school and home
- Training staff and pupils to use live and/or recorded sessions or lessons to support pupils' wellbeing and learning, where beneficial
- Making the best use of paper-pack or other hard-copy resources to consolidate learning in key aspects such as literacy and numeracy

It is anticipated that the work undertaken by schools during this time will reduce the disruption to learners' learning and well-being and will maintain regular communication with those pupils and families who are unable to attend school during any full or partial closures.

This policy provides a high level set of expectations for Portmead Primary School in our approach to continuity of learning. When creating this policy, we considered the prompts and questions in 'Annex A'.

The United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and consideration of our well-being goals have highlighted the vital role that our schools and settings have in addressing the needs of every learner. No one can be left behind.

#### *School Introduction*

In Whitestone Primary School, our approach to learning is flexible enough to adapt to different scenarios and differing amounts of in-school learning and learning at home or elsewhere. **This policy outlines what will happen in the event of a full or partial school closure (also see Annex B – scenarios). Please**

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**note, if staff are unable to work due to illness, some of the elements outlined in this policy may be disrupted.**

**Priorities for learning**

- **health and well-being:** learning will support learners' mental, emotional, physical and social well-being as well as recognising the importance of outdoor learning and play
- **purpose:** all learning will have a clear purpose in mind, focused around what is important for learners now and in the longer-term
- **literacy, numeracy and digital competence:** learners will have opportunities to develop and apply these skills across the curriculum
- **broad and balanced:** learners will have learning experiences which span a broad curriculum and which includes opportunities to develop a breadth of understanding and a range of knowledge and skills
- **progression and assessment:** learners will make meaningful progress throughout this period. Learning will be designed to consolidate existing knowledge and skills, and support increasing depth and sophistication of learning over time. We encourage the use of assessments to help learners move to the next steps in their learning
- **partnership with parents, carers and learners:** We will develop a common understanding and language with parents, carers and learners, this can help underpin learning and support learning experiences.

**Health & well-being**

The ongoing pandemic means that learners may continue to spend varying amounts of time learning remotely. Learners who are not content, safe and secure will not learn effectively.

We will support our pupils' mental and emotional well-being that is appropriate to the age and stage of the learners.

We will support our pupils' physical well-being that is appropriate to the age and stage of the learners.

**Literacy, numeracy and digital competence**

*Purpose:*

We understand the needs of our learners. We know what knowledge, skills and dispositions we want our learners to develop. Learning will focus on raising standards in literacy, numeracy and digital competence. These skills form the foundations of learning and are essential for learners to be able to unlock knowledge.

An adapted approach to learning in Whitestone Primary School will provide authentic opportunities to develop and apply literacy, numeracy and digital skills, embedded in all learning across a broad and balanced curriculum. We will use a wide range of topics, activities and resources to develop knowledge and skills. It is important that these skills are embedded within other broader learning rather than seeking to apply them in isolation to wider learning. We will use Hwb as the means to communicate the children's home learning with them and to also communicate directly with the children through emails.

This will include opportunities across learning time to:

- develop listening, reading, speaking and writing skills
- apply numeracy and solve problems in real-life situations
- use a range of technologies to function, communicate and make sense of the world.

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### **Progression and assessment**

Over the course of the disruption caused by a full or partial school closure, our expectation is that all learners should continue to make meaningful progress.

Our staff will determine what the steps of progression are for our learners. The purpose of assessment is to support each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, ensuring that they are challenged and supported appropriately.

We will use a range of means of assessment and feedback to help our learners make progress.

### **Partnership with parents, carers and learners**

#### *Learners*

Active engagement between the learner and staff regularly is at the heart of the learning process and is especially important as learners continue to learn in different places and take more ownership of their learning as a result.

Learners will be supported to develop self-regulation skills and to take responsibility for their learning, engaging in dialogue and communicating with staff regarding what they are learning, how they are learning and their progression in learning.

We will support all learners appropriately and communicate with them regularly through Hwb.

#### *Parents and Carers*

The participation of parents and carers in learning is essential for developing learning experiences that involves learning inside and outside school. Parents and carers engaging with learners at all ages will help consolidate school-based learning. We will communicate with parents, carers and learners to understand their roles in this process.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### *Governors*

- The governors' first concern is staff and pupil wellbeing
- Governors support the headteacher to articulate that vision of all staff and be clear about expectations
- Governors support the headteacher to communicate expectations of '*Stay Safe. Stay Learning*' to parents/carers. In doing this, school remains mindful of the unprecedented circumstances and the wide range of issues that families may be dealing with
- Governors clearly communicate what support is available from the school and signpost to other relevant organisations or support
- Governors support the headteacher in being clear about the support that is available to staff in the school
- Governors support the headteacher to consider the school policies to be reviewed during this period. These can include home and flexible working, use of digital technology, safeguarding and continuity of learning

#### *The Headteacher will:*

- be mindful that teachers' workload should not be increased during this period and for all communication and workload to be negotiated and agreed with staff. It is not necessary for

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teachers to have daily interaction with pupils and parents. Teachers who are able to work will be focusing on the children in their care and/or working from home on resources

- ensure plans are in place to deal with pupil queries when teachers are ill or otherwise unable to work
- ensure plans pay regard to all safeguarding elements of Local Authority (LA) guidance on blended learning
- ensure there are clear systems and protocol for communication with parents and teachers
- agree platforms for staff to use and share information and resources, for example, Google Drive if the school is familiar with this. Whitestone Primary will use Hwb as their communication platform
- ensure the quality of work being provided is monitored
- ensure any contact between pupils and teachers will only be through Hwb and not through personalised accounts open to public viewing, comments or sharing
- ensure staff respond to pupils' queries, ensuring parents/carers and pupils have reasonable expectations of the speed with which staff respond
- instruct staff not to exchange personal email addresses or phone numbers with pupils (again, paying regard to safeguarding guidance issued by the LA)
- ensure any equipment provided by the school is for work purposes only and there are shared agreements in place for pupils and parents on what behaviour and contact is appropriate, with clear sanctions for misuse
- encourage teachers to set some activities that pupils can complete on their own in recognition that many parents are also trying to work from home and might struggle to assist with schoolwork for a number of reasons. Parents are not expected to become teachers.

#### **Staff will:**

- Only be expected to work from school/home if well
- take care of their physical and mental health
- carry out a reasonable workload when working at home
- contact pupils and families according to school protocol
- provide a variety of tasks across all areas of learning recognising that a maximum of two to three hours of 'work' per day keeps minds active but enthusiastic. It is educational to help with household activities such as washing, cooking and gardening; as is watching some informative television programmes or online streams, such as documentaries and drama
- consider what learning is appropriate to their learners based on:
  - time for maintaining and developing literacy, numeracy and digital skills
  - building resilience, reflection and independence
  - opportunities to communicate with staff
- ensure blended learning includes physical activities that learners could undertake at home or in line with health and social distancing guidance at that time
- engage in professional learning opportunities to improve subject knowledge or aspects of pedagogy, and engage in discussions with colleagues

#### *Parents and Carers should*

- understand there is no expectation on them to 'home school'. The parent's role is to support home learning, help their child build resilience and develop self-regulation skills, promote independence and encourage a 'have a go' attitude. For example, helping their child to devise a timetable that includes regular breaks and is mindful of their child's mental and physical well-being. The aim is to work with the school to help the child develop as a lifelong learner.

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- understand that if staff are unwell, they cannot provide work or communicate with pupils and families
- realise that many of the learning opportunities provided will be about consolidating what children already know and practising skills. Developing language and literacy skills takes time so realise you don't feel you have to do it all
- review resources made available on the Swansea Virtual School site and Hwb, available as links and downloadable documents
- recognise this is not normal schooling and not to expect their child to be completing long days of work, for example, a maximum of two to three hours of "work" per day to keep minds active but enthusiastic
- recognise that getting children to help with household activities such as washing, cooking and gardening are educational; as is watching some appropriate, beneficial television programmes or online streams, such as documentaries and drama

**Useful Links**

A range of docs such as blended/distance learning & live-streaming. These are all held on SVS in the T&L guidance here <https://swanseavirtualschool.org/cpd-3/how-to/>

WG guidance <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/developing-approaches-to-support-distance-learning/>

[Online form](#) to duplicate to help survey pupils' IT skill requirements.

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**Annex A**

**Planning for further full or partial school closures**

**Teaching & Learning**

Research findings from the first lockdown that area associated with higher levels of pupil engagement include:

- Having an effective platform for sharing work with pupils and receiving submitted work, such as a virtual learning environment (VLE)
- Making provision for online lessons, and for interactions between pupils and teachers and between pupils and other pupils
- Ensuring that instructions/expectations are clear so that pupils (and parents) know what is to be done.
- Providing activities that involve consolidating learning
  - A number of parents found it easier to support learning with hard-copy resources.
  - Paper-pack resources were helpful in supporting some ALN pupils
- Using strategies that focus on helping pupils to become independent learners
  - Metacognitive approaches (understanding the process – how and why) – teachers can support pupils’ metacognition by “thinking aloud” when modelling and solving problems. Short video demonstrations can be useful.
  - Self-regulation (encouraging pupils to take responsibility to organise their learning – good routines/habits, when to learn, taking breaks, completing assessments & meeting deadlines, daily exercise & reading for pleasure, regulating screen time, going to bed on time etc.)
- Engaging and communicating with parents effectively

**Planning/questions for schools**

- How well prepared are our pupils for work at home again?
  - Are they familiar enough with how to access and submit work through our digital systems (VLEs, email, websites etc.)
  - If we intend to use live sessions/lessons, are pupils and staff trained well enough to use MS Teams.
- Do staff have the equipment to teach effectively from home? What training do they need?
- Will pupils have sufficient digital equipment to support their learning while at home?
  - Do we know which pupils/families will need support with accessing work through digital means?
  - How will we make equipment available when needed?
- Can we make effective use of hard-copy resources to support pupils learning at home?
  - For example, could pre-prepared paper packs be used to allow for retrieval practice and consolidation in key areas such as language and mathematics?
  - Are we able to provide other resources such as textbooks, reading books, or revision guides etc.?
- What extra support can we provide for the most disadvantaged pupils that are most likely to have been impacted by the initial lockdown and are likely to suffer the most from future disruptions?
- How can we support ALN/EAL/AS pupils with any specific needs – digital or otherwise?
- In the event of a partial closure, how will we manage the balance of in-school and remote learning?

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- How will we deliver a good balance (mixed diet approach) of interactive learning, consolidation activities and supporting pupil metacognitive/self-regulation?
- If live streaming, can we make effective use of TAs, or other ancillary staff, to support pupils in sessions, by, for example, responding to question in the chat function?
- How well are we communicating with parents?
  - Do we communicate clearly with parents so that they know what is expected during lockdowns?
  - Can we support parents to help pupils maintain good learning habits/routines (self-regulation)?

#### Thinking about teaching

- Building on previous knowledge & skills
  - Do pupils have the prerequisite knowledge and skills ready to support their learning in this topic? If not, what do I need to do to prepare pupils for this area of work? What consideration do I need to give to differentiating work for learners with ALN and EAL?
- Providing clear instructions
  - Are pupils clear about what they are being asked to do?
  - What equipment and resources do they need; have they got access to them?
- Modelling and scaffolding
  - Am I explaining, demonstrating and scaffolding the work to pupils well enough?
  - Are my examples and explanations chosen well to uncover key learning points and to identify common misconceptions and pitfalls?
- Activities & Resources
  - Are my activities well designed to allow for consolidation and progression in pupils' learning?
  - Am I using a multimodal approach that supports access for different learners e.g. those with EAL or ALN?
  - Do pupils have sufficient opportunities for well-planned retrieval practice (spacing and retrieval strategies deployed to strengthen learning over time and to prevent forgetting)?
  - Do I ask pupils to demonstrate what they have learnt, done, made?

#### Thinking about assessment

- Assessment & Feedback
  - Do I provide pupils with opportunities to check their work, see different solutions and view exemplar work?
  - I am monitoring pupils' engagement and progress in their learning well enough? How do I know they know – use of show-me/questions/assessments/quizzes etc.?

Multiple-choice assessments, when designed well, can be a helpful online mode of assessment. Evidence Based Education provides a helpful checklist to assist teachers with designing multiple-choice assessments. The checklist includes:

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1. Each question assesses one clear learning objective
2. Questions are phrased in the simplest way – no difficult vocabulary (unless testing it) or irrelevant information and avoid negatives
3. Easier questions are placed at the start of the test
4. No opinion questions
5. Letters are used to list answers and arrange vertically, i.e.
  - a. Answer 1
  - b. Answer 2
  - c. Answer 3
  - d. Answer 4
6. Answers are distinct (i.e. do not overlap)
7. All answers are presented in a similar manner
8. All answers are plausible and are based on common misconceptions/mistakes

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### Annex B

#### Blended Learning – Scenario based effective practice

##### What is blended Learning

*“Blended learning is an approach to learning that combines face-to-face and online learning experiences. Ideally, each (online and off) will complement the other by using its particular strengths.” TeachThought*

##### What pedagogy considerations should be made before implementing blended learning?

- Building on previous knowledge & skills
  - Do learner have the prerequisite knowledge and skills ready to support their learning in this topic?  
If not, what do I need to do to prepare learners for this area of work? What consideration do I need to give to differentiating work for learners with ALN and EAL?
- Providing clear instructions
  - Are learners clear about what they are being asked to do?
  - What equipment and resources do they need; have they got access to them?
- Modelling and scaffolding
  - Am I explaining, demonstrating and scaffolding the work to learners well enough?
  - Are my examples and explanations chosen well to uncover key learning points and to identify common misconceptions and pitfalls?
- Activities & Resources
  - Are my activities well designed to allow for consolidation and progression in pupils’ learning?
  - Am I using a multimodal approach that supports access for different learners e.g. those with EAL or ALN?
  - Do learners have sufficient opportunities for well-planned retrieval practice (spacing and retrieval strategies deployed to strengthen learning over time and to prevent forgetting)
  - Do I ask learners to demonstrate what they have learnt, done, made?
- Assessment & Feedback
  - Do I provide learners with opportunities to check their work, see different solutions, view exemplar work and test themselves?
  - I am monitoring pupils’ engagement and progress in their learning well enough? How do I know they know – use of show-me/questions/assessments/quizzes etc?
  - Do I provide learners with helpful feedback to support their learning?

##### Self-regulation & Metacognition

These approaches can help pupils to become more independent in their learning.

- Self-regulation (encouraging pupils to take responsibility to organise their learning)
  - good routines/habits, when to learn, taking breaks, completing assessments & meeting deadlines, daily exercise & reading for pleasure, regulating screen time, keeping hydrated, going to bed on time etc.)
- Metacognitive approaches (understanding the process – how and why)
  - teachers can support pupils’ metacognition by “thinking aloud” when modelling and solving problems. Short video demonstrations can be useful.

The following scenarios may help with the decisions on the most effective blended learning approached depending on situations.

##### Scenario 1 – Majority, if not all, learners attending school / Teacher in school as normal

- Face-to-face teaching taking place
- Learners should be using a suitable digital platform (Hwb - TEAMS, Google Classroom, J2E) to complete some tasks when possible to get used to the system

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- Learners at home directed to online resources such as [www.swanseavirtualschool.org](http://www.swanseavirtualschool.org), Oak National Academy

### Scenario 2 – Majority of learners at home / Teacher in school

- Face-to-face teaching can take place for learners in the class
- Learners at home should be able to access work via Hwb platform or alternative paper packs. This should be asynchronous with use of consolidation exercises, recorded sessions and/or research activities
- Flipped learning approach
- Learners at home also directed to online resources such as [www.swanseavirtualschool.org](http://www.swanseavirtualschool.org), Oak National Academy

### Scenario 3 – Class at home / Teacher in school

- Learners should be able to access work via Hwb platform or alternative paper packs.
- Asynchronous approaches – Recorded Sessions, Differentiated Activities
- Synchronous approaches – Live sessions (TEAMs /G-Suite) for pastoral/learning check-ins (One member of staff and recorded)
- Flipped learning approach

### Scenario 4 – Class at home / Teacher at home (either partial or full lockdown)

- Learners should be able to access work via Hwb platform or alternative paper packs.
- Asynchronous approaches – Recorded Sessions, Differentiated Activities
- Synchronous approaches – Live sessions (TEAMs /G-Suite) for pastoral/learning check-ins (Two members of staff and recorded)
- Flipped learning approach

### Scenario 5 – Learners at home / Teacher ill

- Learners should be able access work via Hwb platform or alternative paper packs.
- Learners at home directed to online resources such as [www.swanseavirtualschool.org](http://www.swanseavirtualschool.org), Oak National Academy, BBC Bitesize

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