

Remote Learning Policy

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Governor Committee: T & L

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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body no less than annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 28/06/2022.
It is due for review in 12 months from the above date.

Signature _____

Date _____

Head Teacher

Signature _____

Date _____

Chair of Governors

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Statement of intent

At Hitchin Boys' School, we understand the need to continually deliver high quality education, including during periods of remote learning – whether for an individual student or many. We recognise the importance of maintaining high expectations in all areas of school life and ensuring that all students have access to the learning resources and support they need to succeed.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to address the key concerns associated with remote learning, such as online safety, access to educational resources, data protection, and safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the disruption to students' education and the delivery of the curriculum.
- Ensure provision is in place so that all students have access to high quality learning resources.
- Protect students from the risks associated with using devices connected to the internet.
- Ensure staff, parent, and student data remains secure and is not lost or misused.
- Ensure robust safeguarding measures continue to be in effect during the period of remote learning.
- Ensure all students have the provision they need to complete their work to the best of their ability, and to remain happy, healthy, and supported during periods of remote learning.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2004
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

1.2. This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2019) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety for school children'
- DfE (2017) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Help with accessing and buying resources for remote education'
- DfE (2020) 'Get help with remote education'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour, Discipline, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Homework, Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Home School Agreement Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy (Students)
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has robust risk management procedures in place.
- Ensuring that the school has a business continuity plan in place, where required.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's remote learning arrangements.

2.2. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff, parents and students adhere to the relevant policies at all times.

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks associated with remote learning.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring incidents associated with remote learning.
- Overseeing that the school has the resources necessary to action the procedures in this policy.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis and communicating any changes to staff, parents, and students.
- Arranging any additional training staff may require to support students during the period of remote learning.
- Conducting reviews on a regular basis of the remote learning arrangements to ensure students' education does not suffer.

2.3. The DPO is responsible for:

- Overseeing that all school-owned electronic devices used for remote learning have adequate anti-virus software and malware protection.
- Ensuring all staff, parents, and students are aware of the data protection principles outlined in the GDPR.
- Ensuring that all computer programs used for remote learning are compliant with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Overseeing that any ICT equipment used for remote learning is resilient and can efficiently recover lost data.

2.4. The DSL is responsible for:

- Attending and arranging, where necessary, any safeguarding meetings that occur during the remote learning period.
- Liaising with the ICT technicians to ensure that all technology used for remote learning is suitable for its purpose and will protect students online.
- Identifying vulnerable students who may be at risk if they are learning remotely.
- Ensuring that child protection plans are enforced while the student is learning remotely, and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make alternate arrangements for students who are at a high risk, where required.
- Identifying the level of support or intervention required while students learn remotely and ensuring appropriate measures are in place.
- Liaising with relevant individuals to ensure vulnerable students receive the support required during the period of remote working. Ensuring all safeguarding incidents are adequately recorded and reported.

2.5. The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Liaising with the ICT technicians to ensure that the technology used for remote learning is accessible to all students and that reasonable adjustments are made where required.
- Ensuring that students with EHC plans continue to have their needs met while learning remotely, and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make any alternate arrangements for students with EHC plans and IHPs.

- Identifying the level of support or intervention that is required while students with SEND learn remotely.
- Ensuring that the provision put in place for students with SEND is monitored for effectiveness throughout the duration of the remote learning period.

2.6. The SBM is responsible for:

- Arranging the procurement of any equipment or technology required for staff to teach remotely and for students to learn from home.
- Ensuring value for money when arranging the procurement of equipment or technology.
- Ensuring that the school has adequate insurance to cover all remote working arrangements.

2.7. The ICT technicians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all school-owned devices used for remote learning have suitable anti-virus software installed, have a secure connection, can recover lost work, and allow for audio and visual material to be recorded, where required.
- Ensuring that any programs or networks used for remote learning can effectively support a large number of users at one time, where required, e.g. undertaking 'stress' testing.
- Working with the SENDCO to ensure that the equipment and technology used for learning remotely is accessible to all students and staff.

2.8. Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Reporting any safeguarding incidents to the DSL and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Taking part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy, including training on how to use the necessary electronic equipment and software.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have about remote learning, to the headteacher.
- Reporting any defects on school-owned equipment used for remote learning to an ICT technician.
- Adhering to the Staff Code of Conduct at all times.

2.9. Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Ensuring their child is available to learn remotely at the times set out in paragraphs [9.1](#) and [9.2](#) of this policy, and that the schoolwork set is completed on time and to the best of their child's ability.
- Reporting any technical issues to the school as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that their child always has access to remote learning material during the times set out in paragraphs [9.1](#) and [9.2](#).
- Reporting any absence in line with the terms set out in paragraph [9.6](#).

- Ensuring their child uses the equipment and technology used for remote learning as intended.
- Adhering to the Home School Agreement at all times.

2.10. Students are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Ensuring they are available to learn remotely at the times set out in paragraphs [9.1](#) and [9.2](#) of this policy, and that their schoolwork is completed on time and to the best of their ability.
- Reporting any technical issues to their teacher or form tutor as soon as possible.
- Ensuring they have access to remote learning material and notifying a responsible adult if they do not have access.
- Notifying a responsible adult if they are feeling unwell or are unable to complete the schoolwork they have been set.
- Ensuring they use any equipment and technology for remote learning as intended.
- Adhering to the Behavioural Policy at all times.

3. Resources

Learning materials

- 3.1. The school will accept a range of different teaching methods during remote learning to help explain concepts and address misconceptions easily. For the purpose of providing remote learning, the school may make use of:
 - Work booklets
 - Email
 - Past and mock exam papers
 - Current online learning portals
 - Educational websites
 - Reading tasks
 - Live lessons
 - Pre-recorded video or audio lessons
- 3.2. The school makes use of Google's GSuite for Education as the core learning platform for all students. Work will be set via Google Classroom for each lesson, as far as possible. Students will use their Google email account (@hitchinboys.co.uk) and the Google Meet platform if live video or audio lessons are undertaken.
- 3.3. HBS utilises the [research of the Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#) when designing remote and blended learning. A key finding in this research is that the quality of lesson is far more important than if it is 'live' (synchronous) or asynchronous. There may be a number of reasons when a member of staff is unable to provide a 'live lesson' (e.g. illness, childcare) so we ask parents to respect that educational and operational decisions on what can be offered via remote learning will be made by the school.
- 3.4. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that all students have access to the resources needed for effective remote learning.

- 3.5. Teachers will ensure the programmes chosen for online learning have a range of accessibility features, e.g. voice-to-text conversion, to support students with SEND.
- 3.6. The school recognises that interactive lessons can be effective in aiding students' motivation and academic progression and, to this effect, teachers will ensure they regularly recreate aspects of in-person interactivity, e.g. live classes with questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion, when this is possible. However, circumstances may dictate that 'asynchronous' work may be posted on Google Classroom as a staff member may not be available to undertake a live lesson (e.g. illness, supervising small children who are self-isolating etc.) There can be no expectation from parents of a full timetable of 'live' lessons as operational factors may preclude this (and we are not a full-time distance learning institution with the facilities and resources available to them.)
- 3.7. For remote learning that is 'hybrid' (in other words, some students are physically in lessons in a classroom and others are learning remotely), the teacher will try to have lesson resources and activities that engage both groups. However, practical difficulties of teaching across two domains are real, so it may be that a teacher needs to plan different materials or directs remote learners to an alternative resource (e.g. use Oak National Academy or Seneca Learning) as a judgement in what will produce a more effective learning experience.
- 3.8. Lesson plans will be adapted to ensure that the curriculum remains accessible and inclusive via remote learning.
- 3.9. The school will review the resources students have access to and adapt learning to account for all students needs by using a range of different formats
- 3.10. Teaching staff will liaise with the SENDCO and other relevant members of staff to ensure all students remain supported as far as is practicable for the duration of the remote learning period.
- 3.11. The SENDCO will arrange additional support for students with SEND which will be unique to the individual's needs, e.g. via weekly phone calls or individual email/video contact
- 3.12. Any issues with remote learning resources will be reported as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.
- 3.13. Students will be required to use their own or family-owned equipment to access remote learning resources, unless the school agrees to provide or loan equipment, e.g. laptops.
- 3.14. For students who cannot access digital devices at home, the school will, where possible, apply for technology support through the DfE. This support is limited and finite, but parents should approach the school if access to either the Internet or to devices is a problem.
- 3.15. Students and parents will be required to maintain the upkeep of any equipment they use to access remote learning resources.

- 3.16. Teaching staff will oversee academic progression for the duration of the remote learning period and will mark and provide feedback on work in line with [section 7](#) of this policy.
- 3.17. The arrangements for any 'live' classes will be communicated via Google Classroom/email and will exclusively use the Google Meet platform. This has been integrated into school systems to ensure that only members of HBS classes can join video and audio lessons and so safety is enhanced.
- 3.18. The ICT technicians are not responsible for providing technical support for equipment that is not owned by the school.

Costs and expenses

- 3.19. The school will not contribute to any household expenses incurred while students learn remotely, e.g. heating, lighting, or council tax.
- 3.20. The school will not reimburse any costs for travel between students' homes and the school premises.
- 3.21. The school will not reimburse any costs for childcare.
- 3.22. If a student is provided with school-owned equipment, the student and their parent will sign and adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement prior to commencing remote learning.

4. Online safety

- 4.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's E-Safety Policy.
- 4.2. All interactions with students will use school systems as far as possible, specifically Google GSuite for Education and associated messaging and video conferencing features. The one exception to this may be when a member of pastoral staff makes a phone call to check on welfare or attendance. This will always be with the knowledge of the parent/carer.
- 4.3. The school may make use of other websites and tools that are freely available or have been purchased by the school. These will have been checked for suitability and online safety by the DPO/Heads of Faculty. They include (but are not limited to): Oak National Academy, Seneca Learning, BBC Bitesize and tools for assessment such as Quizlet, Quizizz, EdPuzzle.
- 4.4. All staff and students using video communication must:
 - Communicate in groups – one-to-one sessions are not permitted.
 - Wear suitable clothing – this includes others in their household.
 - Be situated in a suitable 'public' living area within the home with an appropriate background – 'private' living areas within the home, such as bedrooms, are not permitted during video communication.
 - Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
 - Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
 - Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.

- Not record, store, or distribute video material without permission. For staff to always warn participants if any element of the lesson is being recorded. For students, not to initiate recording under any circumstance.
 - Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
 - Always remain aware that they are visible.
 - For students, to not join classes or other online events such as assemblies where they are not part of that class/year group
 - To be aware that activity when using the system will be logged
- 4.5. All staff and students using audio communication must:
- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
 - Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
 - Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
 - Not record, store, or distribute audio material without permission.
 - Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
 - Always remain aware that they can be heard.
- 4.6. The school will consider whether one-to-one sessions are appropriate in some circumstances, e.g. to provide support for students with SEND. This will be decided and approved by the SLT, in collaboration with the SENDCO.
- 4.7. Students not using devices or software as intended will be disciplined in line with the Behavioural Policy.
- 4.8. The school will risk assess the technology used for remote learning prior to use and ensure that there are no privacy issues or scope for inappropriate use.
- 4.9. The school will ensure that all school-owned equipment and technology used for remote learning has suitable anti-virus software installed, can establish secure connections, can recover lost work, and allows for audio and visual material to be recorded or downloaded, where required.
- 4.10. During the period of remote learning, the school will maintain regular contact with parents to:
- Reinforce the importance of children staying safe online.
 - Ensure parents are aware of what their children are being asked to do, e.g. sites they have been asked to use and staff they will interact with.
 - Encourage them to set age-appropriate parental controls on devices and internet filters to block malicious websites.
 - Direct parents to useful resources to help them keep their children safe online.
- 4.11. The school will not be responsible for providing access to the internet off the school premises and will not be responsible for providing online safety software, e.g. anti-virus software, on devices not owned by the school.

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy.

- 5.2. The DSL and headteacher will identify 'vulnerable' students (students who are deemed to be vulnerable or are at risk of harm) via risk assessment prior to the period of remote learning.
- 5.3. The DSL will arrange for regular contact to be made with vulnerable students, prior to the period of remote learning.
- 5.4. Phone calls made to vulnerable students will be made using school phones where possible.
- 5.5. The DSL will arrange for regular contact with vulnerable students once per week at minimum, with additional contact, including home visits, arranged where required.
- 5.6. All contact with vulnerable students will be recorded on paper and suitably stored in line with the Records Management Policy.
- 5.7. The DSL will keep in contact with vulnerable students' social workers or other care professionals during the period of remote working, as required.
- 5.8. All home visits will:
 - Have at least one suitably trained individual present.
 - Be suitably recorded on paper and the records stored so that the DSL has access to them.
 - Actively involve the student.
- 5.9. Vulnerable students will be provided with a means of contacting the DSL, their deputy, or any other relevant member of staff – this arrangement will be set up by the DSL prior to the period of remote learning.
- 5.10. The DSL will meet (in person or remotely) with the relevant members of staff as needed to discuss new and current safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable students learning remotely.
- 5.11. All members of staff will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or deputies immediately.
- 5.12. Students and their parents will be encouraged to contact their form tutor or Head of Year if they wish to report safeguarding concerns, e.g. regarding harmful or upsetting content or incidents of online bullying. The school will also signpost families to the practical support that is available for reporting these concerns.

6. Data protection

- 6.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- 6.2. Staff members will be responsible for adhering to the GDPR when teaching remotely and will ensure the confidentiality and integrity of their devices at all times.
- 6.3. Sensitive data will only be transferred between devices if it is necessary to do so for the purpose of remote learning and teaching.

- 6.4. Any data that is transferred between devices will be suitably encrypted or have other data protection measures in place so that if the data is lost, stolen, or subject to unauthorised access, it remains safe until recovered.
- 6.5. Parents' and students' up-to-date contact details will be collected prior to the period of remote learning.
- 6.6. All contact details will be stored in line with the Data Protection Policy
- 6.7. The school will not permit paper copies of contact details to be taken off the school premises.
- 6.8. Students are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school-owned equipment which contains personal data.
- 6.9. Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- 6.10. Any intentional breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behavioural Policy or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7. Marking and feedback

- 7.1. All schoolwork completed through remote learning must be:
 - Finished when returned to the relevant member of teaching staff.
 - Returned on or before the deadline set by the relevant member of teaching staff.
 - Completed to the best of the student's ability.
 - The student's own work.
 - Returned to the student, once marked, by an agreed date.
- 7.2. Each faculty will decide the most appropriate means of collecting and giving feedback upon work. This depends upon the nature of the work and the year group of the child, amongst other factors. Staff are encouraged to use Assignments on Google Classroom as a way of collecting in work and providing feedback in a structured way. However, some circumstances may require a photograph to be taken and sent to the teacher (e.g. a practical Art assignment) or a picture of a handwritten essay or exam paper if this is appropriate.
- 7.3. The school expects students and staff to maintain a good work ethic during the period of remote learning.
- 7.4. Students are accountable for the completion of their own schoolwork – teaching staff will contact parents via email if their child is not completing their schoolwork or their standard of work has noticeably decreased.
- 7.5. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of students with and without access to the online learning resources and discuss additional support or provision with the headteacher as soon as possible.

- 7.6. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of students with SEND and discuss additional support or provision with the SENDCO as soon as possible.
- 7.7. The school accepts a variety of formative assessment and feedback methods, e.g. through quizzes and other digital tools from teachers, and will support them with implementing these measures for remote learning where possible.
- 7.8. The school will log participation and student engagement with remote education, as well as motivation levels and progress, and this will be reported to parents via the normal reporting mechanisms (formal reports, virtual parents' evenings or, if there is a concern, individually via telephone.)
- 7.9. The school will consider ways to use feedback to secure consistent engagement with remote material, e.g. introducing a newsletter sent to parents and students which displays exemplary work and rewards engagement or outcomes.

8. School day and absence

- 8.1. Students will be present for remote learning by 8:45am and cease their remote learning at 3:30pm from Monday to Friday, with the exception of breaks and lunchtimes
- 8.2. Breaks and lunchtimes will take place at the following times each day:
 - Morning break will take place at 11:10 until 11:30am.
 - Lunchtime will take place between 12:30pm and 1:30pm.
- 8.3. Students are not expected to do schoolwork during the times outlined in paragraph 8.2, although there may be extra-curricular or support sessions for exam classes offered during lunchtime.
- 8.4. Students with SEND or additional medical conditions who require more regular breaks, e.g. sensory breaks, are not expected to do schoolwork during their breaks.
- 8.5. Students who are unwell are not expected to be present for remote working until they are well enough to do so.
- 8.6. Parents will inform the school absence line no later than 8:30am if their child is unwell.
- 8.7. The school will monitor absence and lateness in line with the Attendance and Absence Policy.

9. Communication

- 9.1. The school will ensure adequate channels of communication are arranged in the event of an emergency.
- 9.2. The school will communicate with parents via email, letter and the school website about remote learning arrangements as soon as possible.
- 9.3. The headteacher will communicate with staff as soon as possible via email about any remote learning arrangements.

- 9.4. Members of staff involved in remote teaching will ensure they have a working mobile device that is available to take phone calls during their agreed working hours.
- 9.5. The school understands that students learning remotely have the right to privacy out-of-hours and should be able to separate their school and home lives – communication is only permitted during school hours.
- 9.6. Members of staff will have contact with their line manager once per week.
- 9.7. As much as possible, all communication with students and their parents will take place within the school hours outlined in [section 8](#).
- 9.8. Students will have verbal contact with a member of teaching staff at least once per week via form time group meeting.
- 9.9. Parents and students will inform the relevant member of staff as soon as possible if schoolwork cannot be completed.
- 9.10. Issues with remote learning or data protection will be communicated to the students' teacher as soon as possible so they can investigate and resolve the issue.
- 9.11. The students' teacher will keep parents and students informed of any changes to the remote learning arrangements or the schoolwork set.
- 9.12. The headteacher will review the effectiveness of communication on a regular basis and ensure measures are put in place to address gaps or weaknesses in communication.
- 9.13. Parents with concerns about provision of remote education should communicate with their child's form tutor in the first instance or the Head of Faculty if a specific subject is a concern. This can then be escalated to Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team if required.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the SLT.
- 10.2. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and other stakeholders.
- 10.3. The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2023.