

Manchester Communication Academy

Remote Learning Policy



with you, for you, about you.

This document has been approved for operation within	
Date of last review	
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Review Period	
Date of Trustee Approval	
Status	
Person Responsible for Policy	
Owner	Manchester Communication Academy
Signature of Approval	

Rationale

In the event of a school closure, the school is committed to providing continuity of education to its students and will do so through a process of remote (online) learning. Extensive remote learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the school is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of students and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home. This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term school closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term student absence.

Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when students, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from school, or longer term illness, assuming students are able to complete school work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, students are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.

There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to students who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention to school or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take students on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their daughters from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

At the time of writing, the school has not experienced an example of an extended school closure and so this policy is under review and may be revised as necessary in light of further experience of remote learning and the circumstances around its necessity. For example, the extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both students and teachers to participate in remote learning, owing to widespread illness, for example.

Remote learning for individual students

Assuming an absence has been agreed with the school, and the student in question is healthy enough to work from home, the school will provide work for students who are unable to attend in person. If this occurs for an individual student, the collation of work and communication with the parent will be coordinated by the student's head of year and progress leader.

The student's subject teachers will use a specially set up google classroom to make work available to the student.

Though every case will have its own specifics, a rough guideline for the frequency of communication between school and parent would be once per week. Work will only be provided to students in this way if there is an agreed absence lasting more than three working days.

If a significant number of students are absent from school, but the school remains open, the Headteacher will decide whether the method of remote learning operated will take the form outlined here, or as outlined below.

Remote learning in the event of extended school closure

In the event of an extended school closure, the school will provide continuity of education in the following ways:

- a) Regular direct instruction from teaching teachers, with the ability of students to ask questions online (via firefly or other cloud-based systems)
- b) The setting of work that students complete, written responses (if relevant) completed electronically
- c) The assessment of specific assignments that are submitted to teachers electronically and on which feedback is provided

Students and teachers are expected to have access to the internet whilst at home; the school recognises that many families may not have home printers and will therefore not require the printing of material.

The primary platforms the school will use to deliver continuity of education are:

google classroom accessed via the relevant app or the 'waffle' (9 dots) on any google search page

Access to this platforms is via a student's normal school login; if students have difficulty with logging in, they should contact the school's IT support.

The extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both students and teachers to participate in remote learning. For shorter closures, for example, teachers may set work on the classroom for submission in person once the school has reopened. For longer closures, teachers would make more use of live sessions (see specific guidance below and appendix) and electronic assessment. The school reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide remote learning tasks, feedback and interaction, based on the particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience.

The setting of tasks

Subject areas will provide work broadly in line with students' timetables through google classroom. Tasks will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work, and tasks will be designed to allow students to progress through schemes of work at the same pace as if they were in school, where possible. Naturally, remote learning will require students and teachers to take a different approach to working through content, but tasks should ensure the pace of content coverage is as close as possible to in-school teaching, and ensure students do not fall behind. The nature of tasks set should allow students to learn independently, without the specific support of an adult at home.

Unless there is a good reason not to, tasks will be set for individual classes. The type of task set will vary between subjects, but examples of appropriate tasks might include:

- Reading and noting new material from a common subject area textbook or electronic resource
- Working through subject-specific presentations or worksheets provided by the subject area
- Watching a relevant video resource and making notes on it
- Completing a listening exercise (e.g. in languages)
- Written responses to prompt questions, essay plans etc.
- Completion of practice questions or past papers, particularly for those in examination years
- Working through relevant exercises offered by external providers (e.g. SenecaLearning, HegartyMaths, GCSEpod)

Teachers will set tasks through google classroom and it is the responsibility of teachers and students to ensure they know how to use this functionality effectively (instructions are made available separately). Teachers should include line managers as co-owners of tasks to allow them to monitor and support as required.

Live sessions

Academic subject areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner (either by text or audio and/or visual means). There is no expectation of teachers to carry out live sessions.

Google meet/ classroom are platforms that allows for resources to be shared, teachers to provide exposition, and students to ask questions in 'real-time'. Students will be provided with details sessions, and will be expected to participate in them if they are asked and able to. Live sessions can be particularly helpful as they can facilitate contemporaneous communication, with students able to respond to teachers' questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in meet.

Assessment

Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with remote learning, teachers will endeavour to provide regular feedback to students on pieces of work that they are required to submit. Under normal circumstances, not all pieces of work are formally assessed by teachers and this would continue to be the case should the school employ remote learning.

Assessed work will be set using via the firefly tasks function, regardless of how students' work is eventually submitted (e.g. by google classroom), with clear due dates given to students for completion, thereby helping students to organise their time. The tasks function on google also

allows students to submit work to the teacher before a task can be signed off. Students and teachers should keep accurate records of all work completed, submitted and assessed.

Given the nature of the tasks, the type of feedback teachers can provide may not have the same format as marking an exercise book. Teachers are encouraged to ensure, when they set assessed work, that it is designed in such a way that meaningful feedback may be provided.

Possible methods may include:

- Providing whole class feedback rather than feedback on individual pieces of work – this is an effective way of providing feedback, supported by findings from educational research
- Using the “Comments” function on online documents on google or Microsoft
- Providing feedback directly in the tasks function on classroom
- Sending a direct email to students with specific feedback / targets
- Recording oral feedback and sharing an audio file with the student

Additional functionality is available in google classroom, if teachers want to create assignments for students to complete. These might include, for example, the creation of a tailor-made quiz (containing either multiple choice or extended answers) and teachers are able to use assignments to give feedback.

Expectations of students

Assuming that a student is healthy and well enough to work, students will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability. Students will also be expected to read and respond to communication from the school (e.g. an email from a progress leader) on a regular basis.

In the event of an extended school closure, teachers will continue to deliver content in line with existing schemes of work once the school is reopened; if any student misses significant parts of the content, they will be able to view material posted online and the school will give consideration to the practicalities of helping students to catch up once the school reopens.

Students should ensure that, in addition to completing the tasks promptly, they should complete any administrative tasks that allow the school to monitor their progress. If students or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the relevant subject area. If there are questions about a student’s overall workload (e.g. a student feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the student’s head of year.

Teachers must work on the assumption that students will not necessarily have the full range of books and equipment that they would usually have in school. However, if advance notice is possible, teachers will instruct students to take relevant equipment from school, or for parents to ensure they have duplicates. The school does not expect students to have access to any specialist equipment that would usually be provided by the school (e.g. science or art). Teachers should ensure they are able to scan or upload photos of important resources in case students do not have access to them at home. Online textbooks are helpful in this regard and many subjects are now moving over to these.

The school expects that parents have internet access at home to access remote learning resources, but teachers will make no presumption of the student’s ability to print at home. If parents do not

have internet access or ICT equipment they must contact their child's head of year so that the school can support in providing a possible solution on a loan basis.

Expectations of teachers (and subject areas)

Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home. If this is not available for any reason, teachers can request a school device. If there are IT related issues while remote working, teachers can contact the IT department.

The setting and assessment of remote learning tasks will take place in accordance with school and subject area policies. Under normal circumstances, subject areas take different approaches to the setting and assessment of students' work – for example, the frequency of substantive task set, and the regularity of written assessment provided – and subject area policies will be applied in the event of remote learning.

In order that we are providing a consistent approach, heads of faculty and subject leaders are responsible for overseeing the nature and frequency of tasks set and assessed within their subject areas. All teachers should pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that students have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen. Heads of faculty and subject leaders will monitor this and should be included in the tasks set in google classroom as a co-teacher.

Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their students in a timely manner. Subject leaders are responsible for overseeing the form and regularity of feedback, and will liaise with area leaders to ensure consistency.

In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the line manager to ensure work is set to her/his classes. Note that illness in these cases will be treated as normal.

Subject areas are expected to:

- Plan and deliver 'live sessions' following the normal MCA timetable where appropriate.
- Respond to reasonable amounts of communication from students, parents and teachers
- Plan and set tasks for their students using the tasks functionality in google classroom.
- Be able to set and mark assessed work promptly, in line with school and subject area policies, returning it to students electronically (or after the period of remote working for written and project work)

Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (when phoning from personal devices, dialling 141 before the number will ensure the teacher's own number is kept anonymous).

If parents ask for additional work beyond that set as part of the requirements above, subject areas should have a bank of general resources available in google, such as interactive websites and support activities, and point pupils and parents in that direction.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, students and parents. Teachers also should ensure their communication with students does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during

usual office hours, with no expectation for colleagues to read or respond to emails after 4pm, although responses should be made to electronic messages within one working day in normal practice. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work.

Communication must always occur via official school channels, and not through personal accounts or other websites. Permitted methods are:

- Email using school email addresses only (both teachers and student)
- Google classroom (docs/sheets etc.)
- Sims intouch messaging (which can allow teachers to reply to an entire class)

Support for pupils with SEND, EAL and other specific learning enhancement needs

Teachers should ensure that work is differentiated as required for all learners when setting online tasks. Profiles are available for SEND pupils and advice can be sought from the SEND team or EAL team. In addition, the SEND team and EAL team will maintain contact with pupils on their lists requiring regular support, by email or phone with parents/pupils and feed back to teachers using CPOMS if required.

Pastoral care during a school closure

In event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a student rests with their parents / guardians. However, progress leaders (under the guidance of the Pastoral Deputy and Heads of Year) should check in regularly with their tutees to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Progress leaders will be expected to pass on feedback to Heads of Year, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication. A referral may also be made to DSL if concerns are raised.

Safeguarding during a school closure

In the event of a school closure, pupils, parents and teachers are reminded that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school.

Any questions or concerns about safeguarding should continue to be raised to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Andrea Grant.

Appendix - remote working, flipped classroom, GDPR and safe working practice

Please note that any remote working methods should adhere to GDPR guidelines. In most cases remote working via shared documents and the tasks function on google will give you plenty of flexibility. However, you must use your GMAIL account (google classroom / microsoft teams / Gmail etc.) and if you are using flipped learning techniques, uploading videos to google/ YouTube or video conferencing, please ensure your background is blurred or neutral.

Instructions for setting up video conferencing and live links are available in the remote working folder in the information for staff team. Live video links can be particularly useful for staff meetings or small groups, perhaps A Level, where spoken explanations are better than written ones. It is possible to record meetings in google meet and this is required, both for possible future reuse and to demonstrate safe working practice if needed. Students can also be prevented from recording the sessions and this function must also be selected.

Before attempting any audio/video live links teachers must speak to the Deputy Head Academic. Communicating via live text (e.g. conversations in teams) does not require specific permission, however, and can be a good way to keep in touch with classes.

Teachers must not set up or join social media groups for school use with pupils (such as WhatsApp etc.).