



Policy in the event of school closures due to Covid 19 and others

Background:

This plan was created by the staff of St. Patrick's De La Salle BNS to organise support for pupils and parents in the event of school closures arising as a result of incidents of Covid-19 or others. St. Patrick's de la Salle BNS recognises that the closure of schools is an exceptional measure, taken on public health advice, needed to safeguard the lives of people in our community.

In these exceptional times, employees will be asked to work from home where possible and to communicate with parents using the authorised school platforms. St. Patrick's de la Salle BNS acknowledges the co-operation and goodwill of staff in adopting flexible work practices during any such closures.

Rationale:

St. Patrick's de la Salle BNS recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators of the children in their care. The school also plays a significant part in the education of children. The impact of the closures of schools for a prolonged period of time can have a negative impact on the development of children. This negative impact can be mitigated by supporting parents in providing an education for their children.

While a range of resources is available to support home based learning, the school acknowledges that not all parents have access to on-line and offline activities.

Aims:

- ◆ To ensure continuity of teaching and learning for pupils in the school.
- ◆ To provide support and guidance for parents/guardians in organising educational activities for their children.
- ◆ To provide continued support and interaction with pupils
- ◆ To identify resources that can support home based learning.
- ◆ To facilitate communication with parents during the period of the crisis.
- ◆ To minimise the impact of the school closures on pupils' social, emotional and educational development.

Communication:

In general, teacher will communicate with parents via Aladdin Connect. Teachers will ensure that two-way communication is facilitated via Aladdin Connect. While every effort is made by the school to contact parents/guardians, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the school has the correct contact details.

Coote's Lane, Kilkenny, R95DX80

Laura Brennan - Acting Principal

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Reg. Charity No. 20206147

School Roll No. 17854D





Teachers may also contact parents by phone. Contact between teachers and parents should only take place during school hours and on school days. Any direct contact between the staff and pupils will be in accordance with appropriate Child Safeguarding regulations.

At the beginning of each school week/daily, teachers will send parents a suggested outline of activities for the week ahead. Teachers will ensure that there is an appropriate mix of on-line and offline activities. Teachers will ensure that the activities address the strands units in the Primary Curriculum. A suggested daily breakdown of activities will be given to parents. Teachers will ensure that arrangements are in place to provide feedback to pupils regarding completed tasks. Teachers will also ensure to provide a minimum of one interactive, live lesson daily. Pre-recorded lessons are also advisable in certain circumstances.

Digital Platforms

During school closures, the school uses Seesaw/Zoom and Aladdin as their main platforms for distributing materials to families. Staff have evaluated the effectiveness of other platforms and have decided to use Seesaw throughout the school. Teachers will also use Seesaw with pupils and parents during the period when the school is open.

In September 2020 the school surveyed the parents to establish the extent of accessibility to on-line supports in the school community. 95% of parents have access to high quality broadband. 96% of pupils have access to a digital device. 72% of pupils have access to an iPad or tablet.

Off-line support


St. Patrick's BNS recognises that some families do not have access to on-line technology. Even where digital devices are present they are not always available for use by children during the day. In some families a number of people may require access to one advice. Access to efficient and reliable broadband services is also a problem for a small number of families.


St. Patrick's De La Salle BNS will, subject to Public Health advice, provide opportunities for parents to collect and drop work to and from school at designated times each week during the period of school closures. Physical distancing and other Covid 19 prevention measures will be followed.

In some circumstances resources will be delivered to families by post.

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Planning and Recording

Teachers shall continue to prepare short term plans and monthly reports. These plans will differ from the usual plans in some respects and monitoring outcomes may not always be possible.

Teaching and learning

Where possible, teachers will engage with their pupils on a daily basis or at least a number of times each week. This engagement will vary between the work that the teacher will ask pupils to do independently and direct teaching by the teacher and includes a balance of:

- ◆ Assigned tasks such as written, practical activities and project work
- ◆ Where suitable facilities are available and appropriate, online learning such as videos of lessons, presentations or use of online learning resources by the pupils as advised by the teacher

Where there is less frequent engagement throughout the week, a clear daily and manageable allocation of work will be provided for pupils. In all cases, engagement with pupils should take account of the following:

- ◆ **Teacher Input:** Teachers will ensure, to the extent that this is practicable in the new environment, that direct instruction is provided for all pupils, including pupils with SEN, frequently throughout the week for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches including video, audio, presentation software and written instructions
- ◆ **Learning opportunities:** Teachers will ensure that the learning tasks chosen give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise manner. It may be necessary to adjust the number of tasks usually given in the school setting to take account of the fact that pupils are doing this work from home. Workbooks and textbooks tasks may be reduced, supplemented or replaced with other alternative learning tasks. There will be a balance of guided and independent learning tasks assigned across the curriculum. The tasks chosen will be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil(s) including pupils with SEN, and will enable the teacher to monitor pupils' learning and give feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- ◆ **Continuity and Progression:** Teaching and learning should ensure that pupils are given opportunities to make real progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.

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Pupils with Special Needs

Pupils in ASD classes and pupils in receipt of SET support will continue to receive support from teachers in those settings. SET teachers will collaborate with the relevant class teachers and may send appropriately differentiated work to the class teacher for distribution to parents/guardians.

SET teachers will make direct contact with parents at least once a week.

Teachers in ASD settings will communicate directly with parents/guardians via Aladdin Connect.

Special Needs Assistants will continue to liaise with families under the guidance of the class teacher.

Conclusion

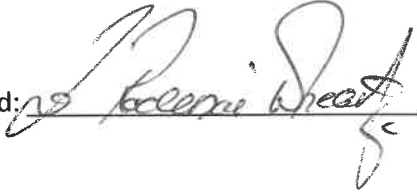
St Patrick's de la Salle BNS is mindful of the stresses in many homes at present. Many parents working in frontline services or, in thousands of cases, have lost their jobs because of the closure of places of employment as a result of the COVID-19 virus. In many homes, older brothers and sisters will be stressed because of Leaving Cert or Junior Cycle issues compounded by the current crisis. Many are also catering for elderly parents, relatives or neighbours.

For all students, especially younger students, we will encourage play with toys as part of any work schedule. For senior classes, we will encourage project work in history, geography, SPHE or science.

Caring for the mental health of our pupils will be a central part of our activities during any closures.


Review


This plan will be reviewed in September 2022


Signed:  (Chairperson)

Date: 29/11/21

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