Remote Education: Information for Parents

What is it?

This information is intended to provide clarity and transparency to parents or carers about what to expect from remote education where national or local restrictions require entire cohorts (or bubbles) to remain at home. Much of this has already been communicated through regular emails, but is included here in one document.

For details of what to expect where individual pupils are self-isolating, please see the final section of this page.

Remote education: a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils.

Digital remote education: often known as online learning, this is remote learning delivered through digital technologies. All remote learning does not need to be digital.

Our philosophy?

At St John's we believe that the principles of good teaching are the same whether it is being delivered in the classroom or remotely. We don't have to make huge changes to the way we teach as remote education is not fundamentally different to other forms of teaching/learning - our brains don't learn differently using remote education, so everything we know about cognitive science and learning still applies. What we do need to do is adapt good practice in the classroom to enable the best possible learning from home.

We understand that parent/carers at home are not teachers and that the home is not a classroom. We also appreciate that everybody's home circumstances are different and whilst we encourage high expectations we are supportive and realistic about the challenges that some families might face.

The Remote Curriculum: What is taught to children at home

Response time

At St John's we will be able to switch quickly to remote learning. On day one of a lockdown, parents/carers will expect to see some relevant tasks and links to websites, you will also be sent a typical timetable and links to the daily Zoom. While it may take us a day to fully switch to our standard approach and curriculum offer, we will aim to have everything operational from day 2.

Will the curriculum broadly match what my child would learn in school?

- We teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in school wherever possible and appropriate.

- A sequenced set of lessons is carefully planned and ensures pupils obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step.

- Curricular goals and purpose are made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom, with children being told the 'bigger picture' & where learning sits within a sequence of lessons.

- We might need to make some adaptations in some subjects. For example, the teaching of RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) is best taught in school as well as aspects of the RE or PSHE curriculum that relies on classroom discussion and careful questioning.

- Teachers might rearrange the term's topics that are being taught, e.g. some junk modelling tasks could be ideal to do at home, whereas cooking or design technology that can need specific resources might be less easy for all families to achieve in the home setting.

Remote Teaching

How much work will be set for my child?

We expect that remote education (including remote teaching and independent work) will take pupils broadly the following minimum number of hours each day:

EYFS and Year 1&2: 3 hours a day

Years 3-6: 4 hours a day

We have arranged staff deployment so that wherever possible, children who are learning from home will be taught and receive feedback from their class teacher.

Accessing remote Education

We use 2 different, age appropriate digital platforms to deliver remote teaching, for children to submit their work and for feedback.

EYFS and Year 1&2: Seesaw

Years 3-6: Google Classroom

We continue to evaluate our approach based on research and through feedback from parents and children. Our carefully considered and informed approach is bespoke to meet the needs of our context and age of the children. We believe that one of the most effective ways to deliver teaching is to use pre-recorded lesson inputs as these are very carefully planned, allow flexibility in when these can be viewed and allow for repeat viewing as needed. However, we are very flexible and will use a combination of the following approaches to teach children remotely:

- Recorded teaching by class teachers, both video and audio, as well as other recordings from reputable sources such as the Oak Academy
- Teachers use worked examples, modelling and scaffolded practice as they would in the classroom
- Powerpoint slides (including Google slides)
- Follow up worksheets for independent practice
- We are aware of the importance of maintaining children's handwritten work and keeping screen time to a minimum, we will therefore expect a number of tasks to be completed 'offline' by hand and then photos to be submitted for marking
- Use of games and quizzes
- Printed paper packs produced by teachers (e.g. workbooks, worksheets)
- Textbooks and reading books pupils have at home
- Links to Spelling Shed and Mathletics
- Other online resources that support the teaching of specific subjects or areas, including video clips or sequences
- Learning is divided into smaller chunks to aid pupils' concentration. Shorter multiple presentations or modelling of new content can be followed by exercises or retrieval practice.
- Elements of teaching may also be picked up in daily live Zooms

Wherever possible we will support all children to use the online teaching that we provide, but we also recognise that some children may have different needs or may not have suitable online access at home. We take the following approaches to support those pupils to access remote education:

- Any parents who are not able to provide a digital device should email their child's class teacher and school is likely to be able to provide one for them. These are allocated on a first come first served basis, but at present, we have a good supply to meet need.

- The school office will then contact the family who will collect the device from school (or deliver if necessary) and a contract and loan agreement is signed.

- Similarly, families who are struggling to access the internet through broadband or are using an expensive pay as you go network, should also contact their child's class teacher. the office will then be in touch to discuss your needs and assist with a solution (preferential network rates, routers, dongle etc.)

- Further advice is also available from the DfE here.

- Often the barrier to accessing online learning is due to unfamiliarity with its use by children or parents. In these instances, we will firstly try to help resolve the issue with extra guidance, video tutorials or over the phone/zoom support.

- Where we are unable to resolve an issue, or if there is mutual agreement that using offline materials would be more effective (most commonly for pupils with additional needs), then staff will provide a range of relevant printed materials, activities, workbooks or resources. These can be collected from the school office or delivered.

- The expectation is that paper copies of work should be delivered back to school for teacher feedback.

Engagement and Feedback

What are your expectations for my child's engagement and the support I should provide?

- We expect children to complete the work set by teachers, particularly the daily Maths and English. However, we also understand that some circumstances at home make this difficult and teachers will work in a supportive and understanding way with families to overcome barriers.

- We know that every home environment is different so we have kept Friday as a catch-up day. No work will be set for English and Maths on a Friday to enable children (and parents) to keep on top of the expectations and ensure all work is turned in.

- As we will regularly signpost to additional activities and resources, there is usually more work available for your child to do but unless stated otherwise, these are optional.

- During this time, it is important that children continue to interact with their peers so we do expect children to attend (at least some of) the daily Zooms; these are becoming increasingly used for feedback and highlighting teaching points.

- In some rare cases, teachers will work with parents to support their child with a bespoke programme of work tailored to meet their needs.

- We aim to make the work set as accessible as possible so that children can complete it independently, but this is a challenge, particularly for younger pupils. We know many parents will have capacity and will enjoy supporting their child (not doing it for them) with their learning, but for many this will be difficult. We would recommend parents talk through a task to ensure your child understands what is expected and then let them have a go, but check-in regularly.

- St. John's has provided families with guidance on how to support children at home with their learning see the Home Learning Guide.

- What we continue to emphasise is that doing something is better than doing nothing and that the wellbeing and happiness of your child (and yourself) is critical to sustaining any form of home learning.

How will you check whether my child is engaging with their work?

- There are systems within Seesaw and Google Classroom that make it very easy to monitor which children are engaging with the work set and submitting work. Teachers continually monitor this.

- In addition, a register is kept of children's attendance in the daily Zoom.

- For a limited few who are working on a more bespoke programme, staff have regular contact with families and work is still submitted regularly, even if it is on paper delivered to school.

- Where class teachers have concerns about a lack of engagement and participation in learning, these are recorded on a central record.

- The first step would be to email to find out what the barrier might be (IT access, technical support needed, reluctance to work etc.) Following this, we would determine the best course of action. this may be a phone call home to support and would work with the family so that children are able to re-engage with learning. Non-participation in any learning is not an option as all children are entitled to an education.

- Any actions are recorded on the central record and these are monitored by senior leaders to ensure all children are receiving some learning and to monitor their welfare.

How will you assess and feedback on my child's work and progress?

Just as it would in the classroom, assessment and feedback can take many forms (see our Feedback Policy). We recognise the particular importance of feedback for remote education, not only for educational advancement, but also for pupil motivation. We believe that feedback should be timely and ideally be provided by an adult (preferably the class teacher) who knows the child as a learner and also has a relationship with them. Our approach to assessing and feeding back on pupil work is as follows:

- Staff will set tasks and activities to develop children's learning, these will then be reviewed and fed back on. They may involve quizzes, online activities, tasks to complete or a range of other learning opportunities. Wherever possible, it is valuable for your child to complete these independently. This is valuable in its own right, but it also enables the teacher to gauge how well your child is learning, address any misconceptions and provide feedback to them (rather than to you as a parent!).

- Teachers will provide daily individual feedback on the work that is submitted, with a particular focus on more detailed feedback for Maths and English. On Seesaw this is most likely to be recorded verbal comments and on Google Classroom is more likely to be written feedback, although we are trialling verbal option. For some other subjects, feedback is likely to be less detailed and may take the form of a simple emoji.

- Staff will respond to children's learning as soon as possible, but it might be that they are delivering face-to-face learning in school so may not able to respond as quickly as when at home (we will send home a weekly rota on a Friday so you will know if your child's teacher will be in school).

- As engagement and concentration with learning can be an issue at home, teachers will focus and give feedback on this.

- Daily class Zooms are increasingly being used to provide an opportunity for feedback on learning for the whole class.

Additional Support for Pupils with Particular Needs

How will you work with me to help my child who needs additional support?

We recognise that some pupils, for example those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), may not be able to access remote education without support from adults at home. We acknowledge the difficulties this may place on families, and we will work with parents and carers to support those pupils in the following ways:

- Children with EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) or described as vulnerable will be offered a place in school.

- Support for pupils with SEND depends on the level of need and individual circumstances.

- Some children will receive a bespoke curriculum individually tailored to their needs.

- Teachers are expected to set work that is differentiated to encompass all levels of abilities. If this is not appropriate separate arrangements will be made.

- Additional resources or equipment can be sent home where appropriate.

- There is an agreed level of contact between home and school e.g. weekly zoom, fortnightly phone calls, or doorstep visits.

- Where necessary and possible, external agencies will continue to work with the pupil, in school or remotely e.g. play therapy, speech and language or specialist teachers.

Remote Education for Children Self-isolating

If individual pupils need to self-isolate but the majority of their class or 'pod' remain in school, this presents a significant challenge as it is likely that all the adults will also be in school teaching the majority of children. We simply do not have the capacity to run a full alternative home learning system, such as that detailed above, in parallel with face-to-face learning in school.

- For absence of a few days, we have decided that teachers will upload the lessons that are undertaken in school to the relevant platform for children (and parents) to view and complete where this is feasible. This should allow children to pick up the learning from when they left school and complete work to enable them to more easily slot back in again when they return.

- If it becomes clear that a child may be off for a longer period (10+ days) then we will most likely also signpost parents to other resources, such as the Oak Academy, a national Covid-19 resource which has units aligned to the whole curriculum with video inputs and activities. Obviously if children are ill, there is no expectation to complete any work, but if they are well and isolating it is important that children try to keep pace with their peers.