Remote / Blended Learning Policy

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain the college's approach to remote or blended learning and the key principles guiding the delivery of the curriculum, pastoral care and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Set out expectations for members of the college community with regard to remote learning.
- Ensure consistency in the approach to remote learning for learners who are not in college
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection and securing devices.

Introduction

When delivering learning via videoconferencing technology, such as Microsoft Teams, it is important that appropriate rules and standards are put in place. Please find in this document, guidance to ensure that everyone can benefit from learning using these technologies in a safe and effective manner. This guidance should be interpreted in the context of other relevant college policies, in particular the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The phrases 'remote learning' or 'blended learning' refer to the teaching, learning and assessment of students where full face-to-face learning is not possible. The focus is to ensure a continuity of education to our students when conventional onsite lessons are not possible. This could be as the result of a local or national lockdown, when individual students cannot access college due to COVID-19 or if teachers themselves are not able to teach from college. It is important that all students are able to access the same quality of teaching, learning and assessment whether they are receiving face-to-face learning or they are being educated remotely. If college were to go into partial or full lock down then teaching, learning and assessment would continue and remote learning would be the only means of curriculum and pastoral delivery.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the implementation, review and oversight of college remote learning.

Moving to a Remote Learning Platform

To ensure a rapid move to remote learning provision and to ensure no learning time is lost, the following will be in place:

- All staff have been issued with the correct IT equipment required to continue teaching and learning remotely. It may be the case that this remote learning has to be delivered from home.
- Staff have access to Microsoft Teams for classes.
- Staff are familiar with the main functions of Microsoft Teams and instructional sessions will have been provided.

- Teachers and front facing support staff have the ability to host a Teams meeting with their classes both from home and from classrooms.
- Students in each class have access to the relevant Microsoft Teams platforms via laptop computers or mobile devices.
- Parents, carers and learners will be made aware in advance of the arrangements in place for the continuity of education if the college were to go into lock down and remote learning became necessary. This would be communicated through email and the college social media feeds.

Curriculum Delivery

Where the college moves to adopt a remote learning model, we would seek to ensure that that the following groups of students remain in college wherever possible:

- Pathways students
- Foundation students
- Vocational courses with a significant practical course content
- Vulnerable students, for whom being in college is the most appropriate place for them

Remote learning would take place for the vast majority of students on Microsoft Teams and students would participate in what is being delivered via their computer or their mobile devices from home. The college recognises that it is not always possible for students, or teaching staff to be in front of a computer/camera for the full period of all sessions. This may be because they are carers, have limited access to IT or their broadband is not reliable, for example. Delivery of class content via remote learning will therefore be a combination of:

- Live Teams sessions, where the teacher delivers course content and can see, and be seen by students. The teacher is able to discuss and question students.
- Work set for students which is undertaken independently at a time that is convenient for them but within the period set by the teacher.
- Where necessary, one to one Teams sessions between teacher and student (always recorded), to support learning.
- Teams chat/email correspondence, to support the delivery of the curriculum.

The college will continue to assess student progress in the usual way through informal assessments, tasks and homework. Students undertaking vocational courses will continue to have summative assessments, for unit completion, as necessary. Students can submit electronic work for assessment via Teams.

Students self-isolating

Whilst the college remains open with face to face learning taking place and certain individuals or classes are unable to attend college, then their work for each day will be set by their class teachers via Microsoft Teams. Students should follow their full lesson timetable if they are able. If this is not possible, an amended timetable may be provided to staff, learners and parents/carers.

Pastoral

The tutorial programme will follow the same pattern as that outlined for the Curriculum. Where students are in college, their Tutorial session will run as normal. Where students are working remotely, they will attend a Teams session, for their tutorial, and the programme will be delivered

on line. In addition, Professional Tutors will monitor those students in their groups that are vulnerable, at risk or safeguarded, in co-ordination with Student Services. All students will receive regular 1 to 1 meeting via MS Teams with their Tutor. Vulnerable students will be contacted weekly and any information regarding students of concern will be shared with the Senior Tutor and/or Student Services (including the Designated Safeguarding Officer).

Safeguarding:

Standard Safeguarding practice and procedures will continue to apply during any period of remote learning. This includes the sharing and referral of any concern that comes to a member of staff's attention via the safeguarding type options on the Portal.

In most cases, the referrals should be directed to the relevant Senior Tutor. However, if the concern leads a staff member to believe that the welfare of a young person is at immediate and serious risk, the staff member should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

As communicated in the amendment to the College Safeguarding Policy during the first lockdown, staff who interact with students online should continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Where concerns are identified immediate communication should be made as described above. In addition, there are important guidelines for staff and students to follow on acceptable practice that are contained in this policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is responsible for managing and dealing with all safeguarding concerns. For further information, please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Learning Support

Professional Tutors and Student Services will liaise with the IT department to ensure that the technology used for remote learning is accessible to all students and that reasonable adjustments are made where required.

All students with an EHCP plan will continue to have their needs met while learning remotely. Student Services will liaise with SLT (the Senior Leadership Team), Curriculum Leaders and external agencies/ organisations to make any alternate arrangements for pupils with EHCP plans.

Expectations of students and staff:

Online learning should be considered an extension of classroom learning, and as such the college expects students to adhere to the college behavioural contract and code of conduct at all times.

Students should:

- Ensure that they have the appropriate resources for completing their learning and complete the remote learning each day in line with requirements
- Arrive on time and be ready for learning
- Be dressed appropriately and ensure they are in a place suitable for learning, free from external noise and distractions as much as possible
- Ensure that there is nothing offensive in nature that might be seen from the webcam. Students should blur their background or use a stock Teams virtual background if their actual background is not sufficiently neutral (e.g. inappropriate posters on the wall or in a bedroom setting).

- Have microphones off by default to allow everyone to learn without the risk of distracting background noise. These can be switched on when needing to ask a question or interact with others
- Ensure they are using appropriate language and behaviour as they would in a normal classroom
- Submit completed work as requested and alert staff if they are not able to attend a session or complete work.

Staff should:

- Double check that any other tabs they have open in their browser would be appropriate for a child to see, if they're sharing their screen.
- Consider the location of the broadcast (e.g. avoid areas with background noise, nothing inappropriate in the background).
- Avoid broadcasting from an area such as a bedroom if they can (if that is not possible, use a neutral background such as a stock teams virtual background).
- Dress as they would for college and use professional language.
- Ensure that no other adults are to visible on the call.

Availability of staff:

- College staff will be available during normal working college hours
- If staff are not available for work due to sickness or for any other reason, then normal absence procedures and requests must be followed according to HR policy and in line with the Covid-19 guidance as necessary.
- College staff should expect to be contacted remotely by colleagues.
- College staff are not expected to be responding to telephone calls or emails from colleagues, students or parents / carers outside of their normal working hours, although responses should ideally be made within one working day as normal practice.

One to One Meetings

There will be times when it is appropriate for a student and a member of staff to have a 1:1 conference call. An example of this might be a progress review with the tutor, teacher, a member of student services or learning support. In such cases, the following applies:

- All members of staff must ensure their Line Manager is aware in advance.
- It is advised that parents/carers are informed in advance that 1:1 support will be taking place.
- The call must be recorded and the student informed of this. This is to ensure the safety of both student and staff member. The recording will not be shared or used in any other way.
- It is advised that the parent/carer should be present or nearby during the call.
- The student should be in an open area whilst the call is taking place. They should not be alone in their bedroom, for example.

Personal Data

Accessing Personal Data

When accessing personal data for remote learning purposes, all staff members will:

- Use remote log in to College server.
- Lock screens when at home.
- Use college devices.

Processing Personal Data

Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as phone numbers and email addresses as part of the remote learning system. As long as this processing is necessary for the College's official functions, individuals won't need to give permission for this to happen.

However, staff are reminded to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online.

Keeping Devices Secure

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping devices password protected
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- The IT team will ensure that anti - malware software is up to date
- Where there is a suspected data loss, or the loss of the College device, reporting to the Director of Finance in the first instance
- Logging out of College systems when finished working
- Using only the College email for College work, not personal accounts
- Storing both hard and soft personal data safely, with no access for others
- If a personal computer is used, avoiding saving personal data to it. If this is not possible, it must be securely deleted when they have finished with it.

Monitoring arrangements

These guidelines will be reviewed during any lockdown and afterwards by the Senior Leadership Team.