Ryhope Infant School Academy
Remote Learning Policy

Updated:	**February 2025**
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Ratified by:	**Governing Body –**
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Aims

In response to the 'Providing remote education: Non statutory guidance for schools' DfE document dated January 2023 we have updated our Remote Learning Policy accordingly.

This remote learning policy is for school leaders and school staff. The guidance may also be useful for parents and carers and student. It aims to:
- Ensure consistency in the school's approach to remote learning.
- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to what remote learning looks like since National lockdowns.
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection.

Introduction

This document provides non-statutory guidance on providing high-quality remote education when it is not possible, or is contrary to government guidance, for some or all pupils to attend school.

Remote education should only ever be considered as a last resort where a decision has already been made that attendance at school is not possible, but pupils are able to continue learning.

Prioritising attendance

Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including for their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school. For this reason, we would consider it only as a last resort when the alternative would be no education, and only after it has been established that the pupil is, or will be, absent from school. In such cases, remote education can have the benefit of allowing absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers.

We consider the approaches set out in this guidance while also working closely with pupils, parents, carers, and any other relevant partners such as the local authority, to remove any barriers to attendance as detailed in the Working together to improve school attendance guidance.

Pupils absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent in the register. We will continue to record pupil absence in the register in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and attendance guidance, using the most appropriate code.

Scenarios where remote education should be considered

Circumstances where it might not be possible for pupils to receive in person education fit into two broad categories:

- School closures or restrictions on attendance, where school access for pupils is restricted
- Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn.

School closures or restrictions on attendance

Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open or to reopen as soon as possible. Every effort should be made to ensure pupils can be taught in person by attending their school or if appropriate and possible, attending a safe alternative site. After exploring all options to ensure the school remains open to all pupils, there may still be some exceptional occasions when school leaders or TfC decide that it is not possible to open safely, or where opening would contradict guidance from local or central government. If restricting attendance for pupils is the only viable option, schools should consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive.

This policy provides a plan that outlines any remote education procedures for teachers, parents, carers and pupils.

There should only be limited circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able and well enough to continue their education remotely. These circumstances should only involve a short-term absence and might include: pupils recovering from short-term infectious illnesses, pupils preparing for or recovering from some operations, or pupils recovering from injuries where attendance might inhibit recovery.
In some exceptional cases, these circumstances might also include pupils whose attendance has been affected by a special educational need or disability (SEND) or a mental health issue. In these circumstances, and after the pupil's absence from school has been established, schools should consider providing pupils with remote education on a case-by-case basis. This should be part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, and only when it is judged that providing remote education would not adversely affect the pupil's return to school.

Provision of remote education should be made as a short-term solution allowing absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers. Pupils with long-term medical conditions or any other physical or mental health needs affecting attendance may require additional support to continue their education.

What we consider when providing remote education to individual pupils

When a pupil is absent, the school should always seek to overcome the barriers to attendance and provide support for the pupil to attend, regularly reviewing any barriers in conjunction with the pupil, parents or carers, and if appropriate, a relevant medical professional.

Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school, and providing remote education during a pupil's absence does not reduce the importance of bringing that absence to an end as soon as possible.

In the limited circumstances when the school decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following should be considered:

- Ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the school, parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision.
- Where remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity.
- Setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

Free school meals and remote education

Where pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals are receiving remote education, we will work with their school catering team to provide good quality lunch parcels or to issue a food voucher if available. This will ensure that eligible pupils continue to be supported for the period they are unable to attend school.

Remote education during a suspension or permanent exclusion

As outlined in the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, headteachers should take steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

Remote education should not be used as a justification for sending pupils home due to their misbehaviour. Any time a pupil is sent home due to disciplinary reasons, this is a suspension and must be done in line with the law on disciplinary suspensions. This is the case even if they have been asked to log on or access online education while suspended. After a period of off-site direction or suspension, a pupil is expected to attend fulltime. The school's legal duties to pupils with SEND remain in force: see 'Provision for pupils with SEND' for more information.

Provision for pupils with SEND

If pupils with SEND are not able to attend school and require remote education, their teachers are best placed to know how their needs can most effectively be met to ensure that they continue to access the curriculum. The school needs to put in place an appropriate curriculum, teaching and support that will enable the pupil to continue learning effectively.

Some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support. Schools should work collaboratively with families and put arrangements in place that allow pupils with SEND to access remote education successfully. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including the support families will require and types of services that the pupil can access remotely.

The duty under the Children and Families Act 2014 for mainstream schools to use their 'best endeavours' to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's special educational needs continues to apply when remote education is in place. In addition, if a pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan, whether they are in a mainstream or special school, the school must work with the local authority to ensure that all the relevant duties under the 2014 Act continue to be met.

The duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to disability (and more broadly) also continue to apply, such as to make reasonable adjustments, not to discriminate and to have due regard to the statutory objectives in the public sector equality duty.

It may be challenging or impossible for the school to deliver remotely the kind of approach that it does in the classroom, for example the provision of certain differentiated resources and the support of a Teaching Assistant. If this is the case, the school must instead consider, in cooperation with the local authority (if the child has an EHC plan), other ways in which it and the local authority can meet its statutory duties, working closely with the parents or carers.

Teachers

All teachers must be available during the school working day. If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the absence procedure. If absence is going to affect their ability to set work for their classes, they should contact the HT or, if it prevents them from communicating with their pupils, they should let the HT know.

Prolonged school closure;
- The work should be set within the guidance set out by Ryhope Infant School Academy. Work set should aim to continue the content of the curriculum but should reflect a reduced expectation as the delivery of the entire curriculum is not be feasible.
- Work set should be uploaded onto the school website and/or Dojo with clear guidance from the teacher as to how it is to be completed.
- Prolonged school closure will require teachers to communicate regularly with their children and their parents in order to raise any emerging issues.
- Teachers will be provided with a list of students who are unable to access the work remotely or have limited access. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the teachers to provide work packs for the following week. This will be ready either for collection or to send it out in the post.
- Teachers will be expected to complete CPD tasks in relation to teaching & learning and safeguarding, as directed.
- Teachers will be expected to work on the development of school resources to support students' future learning, through adaptation of work or learning support materials.

Conducting 'Live Lessons'
- Live Lessons will not be compulsory but could be used if they represent an effective means of delivering a particular learning objective
- If Live Lessons are used, teachers will need to be mindful of those students who do not have access to relevant technology
- Live Lessons must be conducted on school accounts not personal accounts.

Providing feedback
We will aim to give effective feedback to pupils in a way that does not overburden teaching staff. Ways in which teachers provide feedback will be reviewed regularly and updated periodically.

Keeping in touch
Teachers are expected to keep in touch with pupils who aren't in school and their parents (note that you should consider pupils' age and stage of development or need here, for example children in KS1 or younger may need more parental involvement than older pupils):
- If the school is closed over an extended period, staff should make regular contact at least once a week, and a phone call for any vulnerable children in addition (so at least 2x weekly contact). Dojo will be used for any interaction from parents/carers but will not be answered outside of normal school working hours
- Complaints or concerns shared by parents and pupils and any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with following usual school policies and practices
- Any behavioural issues, such as failing to complete work, will be dealt with by communication between the class teacher and the parent, involving SLT as appropriate and according to usual school policy and practice.

Support staff

Teaching Assistants must be available during their normal working hours. If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal daily email absence procedure.

Subject leads

The term 'subject lead' here to refer to anyone co-ordinating subject provision including SENDCO. You may also want to cover the role of your SENCO here, for example alongside their teaching responsibilities, subject leads are responsible for:
- Considering whether any aspects of the subject curriculum need to change to accommodate remote learning
- Working with teachers teaching their subject remotely to make sure all work set is appropriate and consistent
- Working with other subject leads and senior leaders to make sure work set remotely across all subjects is appropriate and consistent
- Monitoring the remote work set by teachers in their subject
- Alerting teachers to resources they can use to teach their subject remotely
- SENDCo responsible for co-ordinating remote learning for children with SEND across school.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:
- Keeping and updating accurate records of the most vulnerable students in the school
- Ensuring that staff keep in regular contact with students in their care
- Reviewing and updating the Addendum to safeguarding Policy at regular intervals
- Ensuring all staff are aware of and have access to the DSL or his deputy at all times
- Ensuring students and parents are aware of how and who they should contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

Students and parents

Staff can expect students to:
- Be contactable during the normal school hours times – although consider they may not always be in front of a device the entire time
- Complete work to the deadline set by teachers
- Seek help if they need it, from teachers or Teaching Assistants
- Alert teachers if they're not able to complete work
- Act in accordance with normal behaviour rules / conduct rules of the school (and any specific online behaviour rules).

Staff can expect parents with children learning remotely to:
- Engage with the school and support their children's learning and to establish a routine that reflects the normal school day as far as reasonably possible
- Make the school aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work
- Seek help from the school if they need it
- Be respectful when making any complaints or concerns known to staff.

Governing body

The governing body is responsible for:
- Monitoring the school's approach to providing remote learning to ensure education remains of as high a quality as possible
- Ensuring that staff are certain that remote learning systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons.

Data Protection

When accessing personal data for remote learning purposes, all staff members will:
- Access data on the school server
- Use devices provided, such as laptops, rather than their own personal devices.

Sharing personal data

Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as email addresses as part of the remote learning system. Such collection of personal data applies to our functions as a school and does not require explicit permissions. While this may be necessary, 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 the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Ensuring antivirus and anti-spyware software are installed by Omnicom
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates.

Safeguarding

Please refer to our Safeguarding policy.

Monitoring arrangements

Policies will be reviewed/ amended on a bi-annually basis or as advised from the DfE to meet the needs of the children attending Ryhope Infant School Academy.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection policy (and any addendum to our child protection policy)
- Data protection policy
- Acceptable use policy including Home-school agreement
- E-safety safety policy