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Remote Learning Policy for parents

January 2021

Full policy available to include Safeguarding procedures, online safety and data protection

At Good Shepherd Nursery School, we understand the need to continually deliver high quality education, including during periods of remote working – whether for an individual pupil or whole class. We recognise the importance of maintaining high expectations in all areas of nursery life and ensuring that all children have access to the learning resources and support they need to succeed.

In this policy we are mindful of the mental health and wellbeing of our children, but also the mental health and wellbeing of parents/carers and our teaching and ancillary workforce. Key to managing this is maintaining strong community links and relationships to plan additional and multi-agency support for children, their families and our staff. Therefore, we see it of utmost importance to continue to signpost potential sources of help to support our community.

**Mission and aims**

* To outline expectations of home learning from January 2021 onwards
* To address the key concerns associated with remote working, such as online safety, access to educational resources, data protection, and safeguarding.
* Minimise the disruption to children’s education and the delivery of the curriculum.
* Ensure provision is in place so that all children have access to high quality learning resources.
* Protect children from the risks associated with using devices connected to the internet.
* Ensure staff, parent, and pupil data remains secure and is not lost or misused.
* Ensure robust safeguarding measures continue to be in effect during the period of remote learning.
* Ensure all children have the provision they need to complete their work to the best of their ability, and to remain happy, healthy, and supported during periods of remote learning

**Home learning for pupils that are not able to attend school due to the current lockdown**

As nursery school is non statutory and teaching strategies in nursery are practical and hands-on play, a full teaching programme cannot be delivered to individual children who are learning remotely. Where possible, staff will share aspects of the day (photos, story, links etc) and this will provide starting points for parents to encourage discussion and to provide learning opportunities at home. Home links in this way are to continue the social and pastoral links for the child to maintain connections with nursery school which will help them to settle back in on their return. We are fully aware that these are exceptional times and would like to make it clear that the completion of work is not compulsory and that this document seeks to inform and guide families and not impose expectations. Each family is unique and because of this, should approach home learning in a way which suits their individual needs.

**Family (pupil/parent/guardian) Role**

It is a recommendation that where possible, families and children engage with the learning opportunities set as it provides a basis for continuation of learning and language development. We also recommend that each ‘school day’ maintains a small amount of structure and routine. In addition to this, we encourage parents to

* Use the activity packs -GTRL and story bags to provide opportunities to build upon and support their child to increase learning experiences in the home. The GTRL packs can be kept by the child and minimize risk of spread of germs and the story bags can be collected and returned in a safe manner.
* Allow their child to engage in quality periods of uninterrupted play.
* Offer a mix of independent play and adult engagement as this is a quality way to develop speech, language and conversation.
* Read a daily story or reading time before bedtime
* Encourage children to engage in daily routines such as tidying, helping to set the table, help to put shopping away, gardening, feeding and caring for pets and sorting laundry (pairing and matching socks, folding, pegging washing etc)
* Allow children time to develop independence skills such as dressing, putting on and taking off shoes, learning how to do zips and buttons, and lots of practice with independent hand washing and toileting.
* Create opportunities for counting in a real context for example, 2 scoops of food into a bowl, 4 spoons on the table for breakfast.
* Allow children to write, draw or mark-make, notebooks, drawing books, chalk boards, pens, pencils and crayons available are a valuable part of learning. No formal letter writing is a requirement but allowing children to make marks freely during their play is recommended.
* Keep in touch with the nursery with regards to sickness
* Please share anything you have from websites, links, ideas that you have found proved to be a success with your child and indeed if you would like to post any videos of any special talent you have check in with your childs’ teacher and we can help to facilitate this!
* Parents are reminded that there is no pressure surrounding the packs, our main concern is for the child’s happiness and wellbeing.
* Children will be required to use their own or family-owned equipment to access remote learning resources and nursery will supply hard copies of activities for any family who can’t access daily challenges/other

**Recommendations for what items to post**

* Good Shepherd Nursery School consulted with parents in times of closures with regard to an awareness parental preference of what would work best for them in terms of remote learning.
* Videos of stories, rhymes and singing made by the staff are pre-recorded and can be downloaded at a suitable time by the parent.
* Weekly stories for teaching concepts/topics (staff to take turns to produce these videos)
* children’s work collated in a pic collage to share and file as evidence Samples of something a child has done that shows that he/she has, “Gone Above and Beyond,”
* Work posted onto website including videos to address the area of Personal Social and Emotional development e.g. videos celebrating a child's Birthday when it comes up and talking about feelings and how they miss them but are thinking about them all the time.
* Video, voice messages from staff to talk about key times in child’s life-birthday celebrations
* Photos of children engaged and involved in activities
* Weekly Newsletters
* Photos of the star pupils/birthday certificates./lockdown legends
* Each normal school day, staff will post at least 1 activity. For example: completing a simple activity linked to 1 of the nursery curricular areas, all topical to our themes of the month, a picture to talk about or learning a new rhyme or song. These can be shared with your child and completed at your convenience. Should you be working from home, please fit these around yours and your child’s schedule and do not feel pressured to complete these whilst you are working also. The involvement of other siblings and family members is also encouraged and can actually help to enhance a learning experience. Our children will want to copy their older siblings and will feel important when they are completing their own tasks.
* Work can be shared via the ‘check’ icon on the seesaw family app or via school email [goodshepherdns@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:goodshepherdns@yahoo.co.uk)
* We would encourage parents to photograph children’s work or play experiences and provide a message to outline how the children enjoyed it or their experience. The staff will then approve or comment on the work submitted. In some cases, the staff may ask for permission to share examples of good practice with the wider school community on our school website. This can be really valuable in sharing the learning but also keeping strong connections between the children. They love to see what their friends are doing. We shall encourage the children to record a short message to share with their friends.
* Should accessing work or Seesaw be an issue, parents should contact school promptly by email and alternative can be discussed.

In addition:

* Staff will maintain the social contact with the children through their parents and feel that the contacts by phone or private message are meeting the needs to support families who may simply want to talk about something is impacting in the home.
* Teachers will keep written records of weekly visits and continue to maintain links with supporting professionals such as health visitors, speech therapists, integrated services support staff, social services etc
* The nursery principal will email the Social Worker of Looked After/vulnerable children for any updates/concerns/care planning meetings that she may need to attend remotely. (safeguarding procedures)
* Through the school app the principal will signposts parents to Parenting NI and other agencies in relation to emotional and mental wellbeing also including links to any community food banks.
* Teachers will review the Departments’ list of online guidance and utilise these tools as necessary, in addition to existing resources.

**Staff members are responsible for:**

* Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
* Reporting any health and safety incidents to the principal and asking for guidance as appropriate.
* Reporting any safeguarding incidents to the principal and asking for guidance as appropriate.
* Taking part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy, including training on how to use the necessary electronic equipment and software-I movie/zoom
* Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have about remote learning, to the principal
* Reporting any defects on school-owned equipment used for remote learning to the principal
* Adhering to the staff code of conduct at all times.

**Teacher Expectations**

* Teachers will plan learning opportunities and prompts that are relevant to the curriculum focus for nursery and will support this through photos or video clips and tasks for home learners. Videos may include an explanation of what to do, a link to a learning activity or a link to an example.
* Any resources used, including websites and worksheets, where possible, will be shared with home learners via Seesaw. In most cases these will be accessible and practical activities using resources that most families will have available at home. Home Learning packs were distributed to each child, though our Getting Ready to Learn initiative, we encourage their use. Story bags are available to collect and return on a weekly basis.

**Remote teaching for staff who are self-isolating**

* Teaching staff are required to self-isolate if they show symptoms outlined at the start of this policy or they have been told to shield and/or have received a letter to confirm this.
* If a member of staff is required to self-isolate, they are expected to:
* Follow normal reporting procedure for planned absence.
* staff should seek a test and share the result of this test with school so that appropriate plans can be made.
* Whilst self-isolating, and if able to do so, staff will be given an individual project to work on which is in line with whole school improvement priorities. These projects will be communicated by the Principal and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Staff may also be asked to support with the online learning provision for their class.

**Home Learning**

* Staff will be available on See Saw from 9.00-3.30 each day. Outside of these times, we will try our best to respond as soon as possible to anything urgent but it may be the following day.
* Staff are working a rota system of one-week remote learning, followed by one week in school supervision (for those children of keyworker/vulnerable children) so your query may be answered by any member of staff on home learning duty.
* Remember all staff are working either at home or in school throughout this lockdown. They are not off. They are working hard to support all children in their learning, despite often having to juggle their own child-care, so please be patient and be aware this is a steep learning curve for staff moving onto a digital platform.
* Our parent Support worker will be available to chat on a daily basis, please contact her with any requests or indeed if you are looking for any support. Together we will try and signpost you to the support you may need.
* If you have any specific questions or concerns, please email the Principal

**Guidance on using Seesaw**

This will be the main forum for communication between school and home during the pandemic. Teachers will be expected to post updates or important information as the need arises.

* Staff will respond, within reason, promptly to requests for support from families at home during normal daytime school hours.
* Families must not expect responses to seesaw outside school hours in line with teacher’s working conditions. Any urgent contact, for example, to inform us of a family emergency or child protection issue, please email the school. This will be monitored by the Principal.
* Refer to our Safeguarding addendum that was received at the beginning of the year
* Staff have the right to switch off devices after working hours and are advised to avoid checking seesaw in the evenings and on weekends.
* Aggressive or abusive messages will not be tolerated. If a parent sends an aggressive message or a complaint. Staff should refer this to the Principal. For formal complaints, these should be sent directly via email to the principal.

**Zoom**

We will use Zoom to communicate in real time with children at home during our live sport sessions. Please download Zoom onto your electronic device. This is a free app.

**Areas of Learning Supported**

All work and learning prompts provided will support our Curricular Guidance for Preschool Education set out by DE and CCEA. The areas of learning are as follows.

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development
* Early Language Development
* Early Mathematical Experiences
* Physical Development
* The Arts
* The World Around Us

Work provided will also take into account children with additional needs and Special Educational Needs where a child has a Personal Learning Plan. (Individual education Plan)

Good Shepherd Nursery School may share links and learning ideas from outside agencies and other professionals where they feel they are beneficial and developmentally appropriate.

# **Online safety**

This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school’s E-Safety Policy.

All staff and children using audio communication must:

* Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
* Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
* Always remain aware that they can be heard.

The nursery will risk assess the technology used for remote learning prior to use. The school will consult with parents prior/during the period of remote learning about what methods of delivering remote teaching are most suitable – alternate arrangements will be made where necessary.

The nursery will communicate to parents about any precautionary measures that need to be put in place if their child is learning remotely using their own/family-owned equipment and technology.

During the period of remote learning, the school will maintain regular contact with parents to:

* Reinforce the importance of children staying safe online.
* Ensure parents are aware of what their children are being asked to do
* Encourage them to set age-appropriate parental controls on devices and internet filters to block malicious websites.
* Direct parents to useful resources to help them keep their children safe online.
* Re-issue safeguarding addendum during closure periods

The school will not be responsible for providing access to the internet off the school premises and will not be responsible for providing online safety software, e.g. anti-virus software, on devices not owned by the school.

Good Shepherd Nursery will work with governing bodies to seek advice on how to manage this.

**Conclusion**

When Good Shepherd Nursery re-opens to children, it will be of utmost importance that the re- opening is managed well by ensuring all contact is positive, teaching promotes the development of emotional health and wellbeing and there are multiple opportunities provided for children and families to seek help when they require it.