Liberty School Trust

Remote and Blended Learning Policy

Date	March 2024
Written By	Director of Education
Review Date	March 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Liberty Academy Trust recognises the importance of prioritising attendance in our schools. All staff should know that there are clear links between attendance and attainment, wellbeing and future life opportunities. This is described clearly in DFE (2022) guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

1.2. To ensure that learning can continue when attendance is not possible our schools will ensure that they have established systems for remote and blended learning.

1.3. DFE guidance on Providing Remote education (2023) states that the circumstances where it might not be possible for pupils receive in person education falls into two broad categories:

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

1.4. Remote learning is not always digital and can consist of printed materials supplied by the school, various curriculum resources supplied by the school, online learning through various platforms, staff instructions via email, video link, email and / or telephone or recordings of lessons. Teaching staff will consider the needs of the pupils in selecting the most appropriate approach. The teacher / keyworker will work with parents / carers to look at the most appropriate way to deliver the method of supported home learning.

1.5. We recognise that due to their autism, some of our pupils will find homework, attempting work from home difficult and may find the whole process extremely challenging. This could result in behaviours at home so each school will need to work closely with parents / carers to decide on the most suitable approach. Being clear with pupils about why home learning is necessary currently, allowing them to create a 'school' space at home, and following a clear, consistent timetable (between agreed hours) are likely to be important.

1.6. There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to pupils who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention to school or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents / carers choose to take the pupil on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents / carers made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent the pupil from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

1.7. The type and level of supported home learning is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both pupils and staff to participate in supported home learning, owing to widespread illness, for example.

2. Definitions

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

Digital remote learning often known as online learning; this is remote learning delivered through digital technologies.

Blended learning: a mix of face-to-face and remote methods. An example would be the 'flipped classroom', where main input happens remotely (for example through video), while practice and tutoring happen in a classroom.

Synchronous education: this is live learning with a teacher present at the same time as the learners. This is beneficial where there is a need for teaching presence such as live discussion and interaction. Whereas Asynchronous education is when the material is prepared by the teacher and accessed by the learner at a later date. This can be useful where pupils miss out on lessons or parts of their education for reasons such as health appointments or illness and can enable them to catch up at a later date.

3. Aims

3.1. The aims of this policy are in line with on [Providing Remote Education: Guidance for Schools](#) (January 2023)

3.2. The specific aims are:

- to plan and outline how and when the remote learning or blended learning will be implemented in LAT schools.
- to support all learners in their access to high-quality remote teaching and learning;
- to provide a clear remote learning strategy, including how and when learning should be assigned remotely and how schools will communicate with parents.
- to anticipate, identify and address any concerns associated with remote learning, relating to safeguarding, data protection, and health and safety;
- to make staff roles and responsibilities clear in relation to remote and blended learning;

4. Circumstances in which remote learning may be implemented:

4.2. Remote learning's primary function is to ensure continuity of learning in situations where the school is not able to deliver in school face to face teaching. This should only be considered as a last resort and where a decision has been made it is not possible for the pupil or pupils to attend school. Possible reasons include:

Pandemics or Health Emergencies: Situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate remote learning to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and staff while maintaining continuity in education.

Inclement Weather: Extreme weather conditions, such as snowstorms or hurricanes, may disrupt regular school operations, prompting the use of remote learning to ensure that students can continue their studies from home.

Individual Circumstances: Students with medical conditions or disabilities that make attending traditional classes difficult may benefit from remote learning tailored to their needs. Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn are likely to be in a limited number of circumstances and may include pupils recovering form short term infectious diseases, preparing for or recovering from some operations or pupils recovering form injuries were attendance might inhibit recovery. In some

exceptional cases this may also be where attendance has been affected by their Special Educational Needs / Disability and as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school. Further support on dealing with mental health and attendance challenges can be found in: Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Emergency Situations: In the event of emergencies such as school closures due to safety concerns or natural disasters, remote learning ensures that students can continue their education without disruption.

5. Circumstances in which blended learning may be implemented:

5.1. Blended Learning offers schools and pupils a learning model that provides opportunities for enhanced access, reinforcement of classroom learning, and flexibility. Examples include:

Resource Optimisation: Blended learning can be implemented to optimize resources by combining traditional classroom instruction with online learning, allowing teachers to personalize learning experiences and cater to individual student needs.

Expanded Course Offerings: Remote learning can facilitate access to a broader range of courses, including advanced or specialized subjects, which may not be available locally.

Flexible Scheduling: Blended learning allows for flexibility in scheduling, enabling students to balance academic requirements with extracurricular activities or part-time work.

At Thames Valley School, we offer all offerings listed above.

6. Remote learning for groups

6.1. Where groups of pupils require home learning the school may be able to provide live or recorded teaching. Academies may utilise and online platform such as TEAMS or google classroom for this purpose. The online platforms the school will use to deliver remote learning will be determined by each school.

6.2. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has found that the effectiveness of remote teaching is determined by many of the same factors as determine the effectiveness of live classroom teaching. For example:

- ensuring pupils receive clear explanations.
- supporting growth in confidence with new material through scaffolded practice
- application of new knowledge or skills
- enabling pupils to receive feedback on how to progress.

6.3. These characteristics of good teaching are more important than the medium of delivery, be it in the 'live' classroom or through remote provision (whether that remote provision is Synchronous or Asynchronous as described in the definition section).
It is important that academies consider how to transfer into remote education what we already know about effective teaching in the live classroom.

6.4. Live classrooms enable important interaction between teachers and pupils through, for example, questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion. These complex teacher skills in the live classroom are not always easy to recreate in a remote environment, but where remote education recreates at least some aspects of this interactivity and intentional dialogue, teaching is likely to be more effective, support pupil motivation and lead to better progress.

6.5. Ofsted's review What's working well in remote education (January 2021) advocates that works well in classroom face to face teaching and supports effective learning also applies to remote learning. Particular consideration should be given to the following:
- Clarity of expectations and explanations.
- 'Split attention' effect. Concentration can be more difficult, so words and pictures are important.
- Chunking lessons is particularly helpful.
- Use short presentations and modelling.
- Feedback, retrieval practice and assessment are extremely important. (Immediate feedback can be given through chatroom discussions, 1:1 interaction tool, touch screen questioning in live lessons, adaptive learning software).

7. Remote learning for individual pupils

7.1. Sometimes supported home learning will be required for individual circumstances. If this occurs, the collation of work and communication with the parent / carer and the frequency or those will be coordinated by the pupil's class teacher or as determined by the school Principal.

7.2. In the event of an extended pupil absence or school closure, the school will provide continuity of learning in the following ways:
- Regular direct instruction from school staff, with the ability of pupils to ask questions given their specific needs and preferences.
- The setting of work that pupils complete at home.
- The assessment of pupil work that is submitted to teaching staff and on which feedback is provided on a basis determined by the school's assessment procedures.
- Where possible the option to join a live class being taught in school via Teams or google classroom.

7.3. Pupils, parents / carers will have been given instruction and guidelines by the school on how to access the platform where necessary.

8. Resources

8.1. Schools will work with the family to understand WIFI connectivity and availability of hardware in the home. Where there is a need to lend a device to a family the school should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure these are managed and returned appropriately.

9. The setting of work

9.1. Work will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work / curriculum documentation. As far as possible, pupils are taught the same curriculum remotely as they would be in school. Tasks will be designed to allow pupils to progress through schemes of work at a similar pace as if they were in school, where possible. There will be

some aspects of the practical curriculum that cannot be delivered during periods of remote learning such as practical work in Science, Art, D&T and PE. Naturally, supported home learning will require pupils and teaching staff to take a different approach to working through content but tasks should ensure the pace of content coverage is as close as possible to in-school teaching and endeavour to ensure pupils do not fall behind.

9.2. The type of task set will vary between subjects, but examples of appropriate tasks might include:

- Reading and noting new material from a common subject area textbook or electronic resource.
- Working through subject-specific presentations or worksheets provided by the subject area.
- Watching a relevant video resource - and making notes on it depending on pupil need
- Completing a listening exercise (e.g. in languages)
- Written responses to prompt questions, essay plans etc.
- Completion of practice questions or past papers, particularly for those in examination years
- Working through relevant exercises offered by external providers (e.g. Seneca Learning, Hegarty Maths, GCSE pod, BBC Bitesize, Oak National School)

9.3. Priority will be given to pupils' personal development including social learning, mathematical skill, linguistic development (including phonics, language acquisition, literacy and reading), scientific & technical skills and creative skills that can be achieved remotely.

10. Assessment

10.1. Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with supported home learning, teaching staff will endeavour to provide regular feedback to pupils on pieces of work that they are required to complete and submit. Under normal circumstances, not all pieces of work are formally assessed by teachers, and this would continue to be the case should the school employ supported home learning.

10.2. Teaching staff should keep accurate records of all work completed, submitted and assessed.

11. Reasonable adaptations for pupils

11.1. In Line with the Equalities Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice (2014) reasonable adaptations are made for autistic pupils while learning at school. These also need to be considered when learning at home. In particular, teaching staff will need to be stay aware that due to their condition autistic pupils may need:

- Clear structure to successfully engage in work (which may include a clear timetable of work, with clear expectations that is sent home), with clear suggested time frames;
- Information to be provided in a low arousal way (i.e. screens and worksheets that are plain and clear rather than 'busy');
- Tasks to be broken down and presented in 'chunks' (rather than long and/or open questions requiring lengthy answers that the pupil needs to structure);

- Support to organise themselves due to executive functioning difficulties. This may include needing reminders for online lessons, or of what work they should be completing, when.

11.2. It will also be important for staff to communicate to parents and carers and understand:
- How long their child is normally able to focus on a task before they need a break.
- How to keep them on task (if this is a problem).
- How frequently movement breaks are needed (if at all) and what form they should take.
- When and how timers should be used with their child.
- What a good learning (e.g. sensory) environment typically looks like for their child.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1. **Responsibility of Pupils:** Assuming that a pupil is able to access work given their specific needs, is healthy and well enough to work, pupils will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the supported home learning process.

12.2. **Responsibilities of the Principal:** The Principal is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

12.3. The remote learning arrangements for each Liberty School Trust School will be overseen by the Principal.

12.4. **Responsibilities of Teaching Staff:** Ensure work is provided for pupils and groups working from home in line with this policy and the school schemes of work.

12.5. Ensure work provided is suitable for the specific needs and ability of the pupil(s).

12.6. If working from home Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home. If this is not available for any reason, teachers can request a school device, which may be provided if available.

12.7. If there are IT related issues while remote working, teaching staff can contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

12.8. Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (avoid phoning from personal devices, but if necessary, dialling 141 before the number will ensure the teacher's own number is kept anonymous). If contact from a parent is deemed excessive then a member of SLT will support.

12.9. Teaching staff should ensure their communication with pupils does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during usual office hours, with no expectation for colleagues to read or respond to emails after 5pm, although responses should be made to electronic messages within one working day in normal practice. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work. The only exception is where a message is received and read that contains matters of an urgent safeguarding matter. If this is the case, then staff should follow the Liberty School Trust Safeguarding Policy.

12.10. Communication must always occur via official school email/communications routes and not through personal accounts or other websites/social media.

13. Safeguarding during remote learning

13.1. Pupils, parents and teaching staff are reminded that the Trust Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teaching staff. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teaching staff must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at the school.

13.2. Any concerns or questions regarding safeguarding and remote learning should be referred to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead.

13.3. Schools should ensure that all devices (including any that are on loan to families) are set up in line with the DFE Guidance on Safeguarding Devices have appropriate content filtering and mobile device management settings.

14. Data protection

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

- Use secure school approved platforms (Microsoft TEAMS, Google Suite, CPOMS, Bromcom)
- Use a school device.
- Use school email address.
- Keep passwords secure.
- Log out of secure platforms when not in use.

14.2. Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as email addresses as part of the remote learning system. As long as this processing is necessary for the school'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.

14.3. 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, making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time, not sharing the device among family or friends and using Trust devices.

15. Online safety

15.1. Parents / carers are advised to spend some time speaking with their child(ren) about online safety and reminding them of the importance of reporting to an adult anything that makes them feel uncomfortable online. While we will be doing our best to ensure links shared are appropriate, there may be tailored advertising which displays differently in your household or other changes beyond our control.

15.2. The following websites offer useful support:

Childline - for support

UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content.

CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse.

In addition, the following sites are an excellent source of advice and information:

Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.

London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.

Net-aware - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC

Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.

Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online.

UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

16. References

DFE 2014 SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years

DFE 2020 Safeguarding Devices

DFE 2022 Working Together to Improve School Attendance

DFE 2023 Providing Remote Education: Guidance for Schools

DFE 2023 Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Ofsted 2021 What's working well in remote education

Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)