REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

Governance	Governing Body
Policy Officer	Headteacher
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Version History Log

Version	Description of Change	Date/Author
1	New	October 2020
2	Readopted	October 2021
3	Readopted	March 2024

Rationale in the event of a school closure, the school is committed to providing continuity of education to its learners and will do so through a process of remote (online) learning. Extensive remote learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the school is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of learners and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home. This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term school closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term learner absence.

Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when learners, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as a long term illness, assuming learners are able to complete school work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, learners are self- isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.

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

Remote learning for individual learners

Assuming an absence has been agreed with the school, and the learner in question is healthy enough to work from home, the school will provide work for learners who are unable to attend in person. If this occurs for an individual learner, the collation of work and communication with the parent/carer will be coordinated by the learner's teacher, the Achievement Support Co-Ordinator for that year group or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The student will be sent work to complete at the start of their period of absence. They should contact their class teachers with any questions or to request feedback as appropriate. Work will only be provided to learners in this way if there is a likelihood of a long absence.

If a significant number of learners are absent from school, but the school remains open, the Head will decide whether the method of remote learning operated will take the form outlined here, or as outlined below.

Remote learning in the event of extended school closure

In the event of an extended school closure, the school will provide continuity of education in the following ways:

a)   Regular direct instruction from teaching teachers, with the ability of learners to ask questions online (via Teams)

b)   The setting of work that learners complete, written responses (if relevant) completed electronically

c)   The assessment of specific assignments that are submitted to teachers electronically and on which feedback is provided Learners and teachers are expected to have access to the internet whilst at home; the school recognises that many families may not have home printers and will therefore not require the printing of material.

The primary platforms the school will use to deliver continuity of education will be Microsoft Teams: accessed via the relevant app or desktop application, or via https://teams.microsoft.com

Live sessions

Academic subject areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner. Where 6th form students are self-isolating, but their lessons are still taking place in school, they will be able to join their class electronically via Microsoft Teams. Teachers will liaise with students to organise this.

Depending on the nature of the school closure, teachers may also interact with students in a live manner using Microsoft Teams. This platform allows for resources to be shared, teachers to provide exposition, and learners to ask questions in 'realtime'. Learners will be provided with details of sessions, and will be expected to participate in them if they are asked and able to. Live sessions can be particularly helpful as they can help communication, with learners able to respond to teachers' questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in teams and meet.

Learners will be provided with a school email address to avoid any issues regarding GDPR, there will be no expectation for parents/carers or learners to provide their own email addresses for use.

Assessment

Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with remote learning, teachers will endeavour to provide regular feedback to learners on pieces of work that they are required to 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 remote learning.

Given the nature of the tasks, the type of feedback teachers can provide may not have the same format as marking an exercise book. Teachers are encouraged to ensure, when they set assessed work, that it is designed in such a way that meaningful feedback may be provided.

Possible methods may include:

- Providing whole class feedback rather than feedback on individual pieces of work – this is an effective way of providing feedback, supported by findings from educational research

- Using the "Comments" function on online documents

- Sending a direct message to learners with specific feedback / targets using Microsoft Teams

- Feedback via another website / piece of software e.g. Kahoot or GCSE Pod

Expectations of learners

Assuming that a learner is healthy and well enough to work, learners will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability. At times, students will be expected to be available in the mornings to contact their tutors. They will be notified in advance when they are to be available.

Learners should ensure that, in addition to completing the tasks promptly, they should complete any administrative tasks that allow the school to monitor their progress. If learners or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the relevant subject area. If there are questions about a learner's overall workload (e.g. a learner feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the learner's Guidance Manager.

Teachers must work on the assumption that learners will not necessarily have the full range of books and equipment that they would usually have in school. However, if advance notice is possible, teachers will instruct learners to take relevant equipment home, or for parents to ensure they have duplicates. The school does not expect learners to have access to any specialist equipment that would usually be provided by the school (e.g. science or art). Teachers should ensure they are able to scan or upload photos of important resources in case learners do not have access to them at home. Online textbooks are helpful in this regard, though some subjects will prefer to share their own resources. https://www.educationplatform.co.uk/?dm_i=567F,9HWH,3AH1M4,126Q0,1

The school expects that parents have internet access at home to access remote learning resources, but teachers will make no presumption of the learner's ability to print at home.

Expectations of teachers

Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home.

The setting and assessment of remote learning tasks will take place in accordance with school and subject area policies. Under normal circumstances, subject areas take different approaches to the setting and assessment of learners' work – for example, the frequency of tasks set, and the regularity of written assessment provided – and subject area policies are in place in the event of remote learning.

In order that we are providing a consistent approach, curriculum leaders are responsible for overseeing the nature and frequency of tasks set and assessed within their subject areas. All teachers should pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that learners have a range of activities to complete at home. Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their learners, in line with the department policy and in a timely manner.

In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the line manager to ensure work is set to her/his classes using Teams.

Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (when phoning from personal devices, they will use the phone's settings to block the identity of outgoing calls or dial 141 before the number to ensure the teacher's own number is kept anonymous). If contact is deemed excessive the line manager will be able to support and, if necessary, escalate to SLT.

If parents ask for additional work beyond that set as part of the requirements above, subject areas should have a bank of general resources available such as Oak Academy, Bitesize and GCSE Pod, and can point pupils and parents in that direction.

In order to ensure teachers are able to perform the minimum expectations outlined above; the school will provide training opportunities that teachers should access before any planned school closure. Teachers should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions, familiarized themselves with Teams and made use of CPL time to prepare. If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult their line managers or Assistant Head for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, learners and parents. Teachers also should ensure their communication with learners does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during usual office hours. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work.

Communication must always occur via official school channels, and not through personal accounts or other websites. These are email using school email addresses and Microsoft Teams.

Support for pupils with SEND, EAL and other specific learning enhancement needs

Teachers should ensure that work is differentiated as required for all learners when setting online tasks. Profiles are available for SEND pupils and advice can be sought from the SENDco. In addition, the SENDCo and their team will maintain contact with pupils on their lists requiring regular support, by email or phone with parents/learners and feed back to teachers by email.

Pastoral care during a school closure

In event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a learner rests with their parents / carers. However, tutors (under the guidance of the Senior Leadership Team) should check in regularly to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Tutors will be expected to pass on feedback to Guidance Managers, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.

Safeguarding during a school closure

In the event of a school closure, pupils, parents, carers and teachers are reminded that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school.

Appendix 1 – Remote Learning Agreement

1. I will only use ICT systems in school/home, including the internet, e-mail, digital video, mobile technologies, for school purposes.

2. I will only use my school e-mail address for school related things.

3. I will not attempt to bypass any computer or user account restrictions to access confidential or otherwise restricted information on the school network.

4. I will not try to bypass the internet filtering system.

5. I will make sure that all electronic communications with students, teachers or others are responsible and sensible.

6. I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the Internet. This includes resources I access and the language I use.

7. I will not deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report it immediately to my teacher.

8. I will ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not cause my school, the staff, pupils or others distress or bring them into disrepute.

9. I will follow the school approach to online safety and not deliberately record/video upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset or offend any member of the school community.

10. I will respect the privacy and ownership of others' work on-line at all times.

11. I understand that all my use of the Internet and other related technologies will be filtered, and can be monitored, logged and made available to teachers, to protect me and others and the integrity of school systems.

12. I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if they are not followed, school sanctions will be applied and my parent/carer will be contacted.

Student Name:	
Signed Pupil	
Signed Parent/Carer	
Signed Staff member:	

<u>Appendix 2</u>

Parental Consent Form for the use of Microsoft Teams for live lessons and/or conference call with students in Year 12 and 13.

Dear Parent/Carer.

When KS5 students are required to self-isolate, the school is providing a service that allows our teachers to communicate with students using Microsoft Teams. This allows the option of a video conference call between these staff members and students as well as streaming live content from the lesson.

We need parental consent to allow this to happen.

Please read through the following and provide your consent below.

When making calls from home, all student should be aware of material that may be visible in the background and use the "blur background" tool to cover everything behind them.

All participants should avoid revealing sensitive data to one another.

Students should be aware that if they raise a safeguarding issue, staff have a duty of care and must follow the normal school safeguarding procedures and policy and cannot promise confidentiality.

All pupils and teachers that can be seen during a the virtual appointment should also be properly dressed and in a suitable, public location (such as a kitchen or living room) and not in a bedroom.

Video calls to pupil should only be made with parent/guardian consent and the parent is present or is aware of the call.

Photographs of individuals (staff or other pupils) are personal data, therefore screenshots of other members of the online learning environment cannot be taken.

Calls should not be recorded.

All staff delivering virtual appointments should log out at the end of the session

Pupils can choose not to open their camera and should not be made to use video.

Parental Consent
By agreeing to the below, you are giving consent to your child to participate in video conferencing with staff from GSHS via Microsoft Teams and understand and agree to ensure my child follows the following safeguarding guidelines outlined above.

◉ I agree   ○ I do not agree

Microsoft Teams, or simply 'Teams', is a platform that allows for collaborative working, either as students or as professionals, using communication capabilities through audio, video and instant messaging. The software is available both online through a web browser and to download from microsoft.com. Users can have 1:1 online meetings or set up live events to host up to 10,000 people. Groups can be set up to include only relevant users and almost all file-types can be uploaded and shared, from PDFs and Word documents to audio and video files.

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

What parents need to know about
MICROSOFT TEAMS

DISCLOSING PERSONAL DETAILS

Like any messaging service or social network, children can be targeted by others to share their private or personal information ranging from their phone number, birthday and home address to their social media accounts or even their personal login details and passwords. Oversharing their private information can lead to any manner of risks including online fraud, bullying or even grooming activity.

CYBERBULLYING

#BULLY

The risk of cyberbullying can be increased online when using chat facilities. Microsoft Teams provides the ability for users to chat to each other via its instant messaging service, both as part of a group or privately. Children could find themselves the target of negative or hurtful comments directed from other users who might find it easier to say things they maybe otherwise wouldn't in person.

INAPPROPRIATE CHAT

The chance to have private conversations in Teams can also mean that children feel as though they can share messages and communication between each other that are hidden away from others. Whilst children are most likely to use Teams in a school setting, the ability to chat privately may provide an opportunity to be less formal which could lead to sharing inappropriate messages, files or content which is unsuitable in a school environment.

HACKING RISK

Teams, like any software application, may be a target for hackers to illicit personal data. A 'man-in-the-middle attack' could occur, whereby the attacker reroutes communication between two users through the attacker's computer without the knowledge of the other users. This means that online communications could possibly be intercepted and be read or listened to, exposing both parties to the possibility of identity fraud or other criminal behaviour.

VIRUS INFECTION

Viruses and other harmful programs are among the risks of using online platforms like Microsoft Teams. Wherever you can share files or links, there is a risk that the content could be malicious. This could lead to slow computer performance, deletion of data, the theft of private or personal information and even hackers taking control of your PC.

LIVE STREAMING RISKS

Microsoft Teams, like other video-conferencing software platforms, facilitates live streaming. That means it inevitably carries some of the associated risks. These are likely to be minimal within a controlled environment (for instance in a classroom setting / remote learning). However, live streaming means that content isn't always moderated and children may inadvertently view or hear inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material that they otherwise wouldn't.

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Safety Tips for Parents & Carers

BLOCK USERS

If your child is receiving inappropriate messages or finds themselves being harassed or abused on Teams, they can block these contacts from the privacy control in the settings menu. To add an extra layer of protection, you can also block contacts whom hide their ID to protect children from communicating with people they don't know.

PROTECT PERSONAL INFO

It's a good idea to talk to your child about the importance of keeping their personal information private and secure. Children should only give out the minimum information they need to when creating an account and understand that if other people request their personal details from them, they should avoid providing it and report any concerns to a trusted adult.

ENABLE BACKGROUND BLUR

To help protect your privacy during a video call or live stream, it may be a good idea to blur the background or even add a background effect. This can easily be done by clicking 'Background effects' before joining a meeting after which you'll have the option to blur your background, replace your background with one of the images provided or upload and use an image of your own.

UPDATE COMPUTER SECURITY

It's important to ensure you perform regular computer and software updates, as these patches often improve security flaws and minimise your vulnerability to cyberattacks. Having your own computer security or anti-malware software is another level of defence in minimising the chances of an attack from viruses, malware and other harmful programs. Ensure this is updated everyday so that it is able to protect you against the very latest threats.

TALK ABOUT RISKS

As a parent, talking to your child and making them aware of the risks of working and communicating online can help them to be more digitally resilient. Perhaps outline a set of agreed do's and don'ts and try to ensure young people know what to do if they are made to feel uncomfortable or experience any negative behaviour or activity.

AVOID VIDEO/AUDIO

It's always a good idea to turn off your audio during live group calls when not in use. This can easily be done by muting the mic and will avoid others hearing anything personal in the background at home or at school. Similarly, if possible, try to encourage children to avoid using video call to help guard against any privacy concerns and limit the risks of viewing anything inappropriate or unsettling.

SOURCES:
https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software
https://www.microsoft.com
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Meet our expert

Emma Davis is a cyber security expert and former ICT teacher. She delivers cyber awareness training to organisations nationally and has extensive knowledge and experience of managing how children access services and apps online.

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10 TOP TIPS
REMOTE LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For school staff and teachers, there is a lot to consider and planning is key to ensuring a smooth transition from classroom to home. That's why we've created these top tips to help school staff ensure they deliver the most secure and safest remote learning experience they can, both for themselves and their students.

1) Familiarise yourself with the relevant policies
Whilst remote learning might be unchartered territory for you and your school, ensure you still adhere with the relevant policies around safeguarding, acceptable use, data protection, student behaviour and online conduct, for example.

2) Consider your surroundings
The use of webcams, video and live streaming must be done with careful thought. Ensure the positioning of any camera is in an open space with a plain background if possible and with no personal information on display. Avoid bedrooms.

3) Create and disseminate a clear distance learning policy and guidance
This is important so that parents and pupils are clear as to what is expected of you, including around behaviour and conduct. It will also provide them with a level of confidence and reassurance.

4) Only use school approved platforms and communication channels
Make sure that you keep to communicating through official outlets, such as your school online portals or assigned email addresses. Never communicate using personal emails or numbers and refrain from communicating outside of school hours.
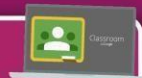
5) Maintain professional dress at all times
Treat any online lesson the same as delivering a lesson in the classroom. Maintain a professional image and never wear anything inappropriate or revealing. Encourage your students to also wear their school uniform.

6) Distribute a class timetable/schedule for remote learning
This will help to maintain a structure and lesson plan to classes. Include the frequency of lessons, duration, how they will be delivered, times for online and offline learning and any links. This will give parents a sense of structure and reassurance around lesson delivery.

7) Ensure you use the correct/ appropriate technology
Remote learning will mean that you will need to employ the right technology and software to ensure that students are able to access learning in the safest and most secure way. Look to distribute a list of safe apps and software that are secure and won't raise any safeguarding concerns.

8) Protect personal data
Only use appropriate systems and software that require email and password login. It's always best-practice to only use school-provided email addresses.

9) Consider the needs of SEND pupils and vulnerable learners
It's important to try and accommodate all students, including children with SEND or those who are more vulnerable, and take into account different levels of learning.

10) Try to make lessons fun and engaging and encourage regular feedback
Remote learning is a fantastic way to be imaginative with teaching and learning and a great way to encourage independent thinking. Try to encourage a two-way flow of communication with parents and students to help maintain transparency and confidence in the learning process.

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10 TOP TIPS
REMOTE LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For students, it's the perfect way to ensure they still get the education they need, despite not being at school. However it also requires a level of discipline and careful planning. That's why we've created this guide to help pupils understand different aspects of remote learning and to support them in ensuring their experience is as safe and secure as it can be.

1) Treat remote learning the same as classroom learning

Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.

2) Use classroom language

If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid positing negative comments or spamming the chat.

3) Take regular screen breaks

Whilst remote learning might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices.

4) Always conduct video learning in an open space at home

To get the best experience from remote learning, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate.

5) Only communicate through approved school portals and platforms

It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as internal learning portals or approved platforms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure.

6) Stick to teacher rules and guidelines around online learning

Your school should issue you with guidance around remote learning and the rules to follow. Always maintain classroom behaviour and try to remember that you are in a learning environment and not a social setting.

7) Dress in school uniform

As part of your learning environment, try to maintain school uniform/dress. This will help as part of replicating classroom learning in the home. Try to avoid wearing anything too casual as this could be deemed inappropriate for school.

8) Don't share passwords or other sensitive information

In order begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others.

9) Don't use school platforms to discuss personal matters

It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning.
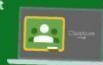
10) Look after your mental health and wellbeing

Remote learning ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up.

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10 TOP TIPS
REMOTE LEARNING FOR PARENTS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For parents and carers, the idea of remote learning isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote learning experience.

1) Take an active interest in your child's learning

As a parent or carer, remote learning will be a new concept for your child and there are bound to be a few teething problems to start with. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.

2) Monitor your child's communication and online activity

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.

3) Establish a daily schedule and routine

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.

4) Encourage screen breaks away from devices

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teacher's will invariably advise on screen breaks however it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.

5) Ensure your learning device is in a public space in the home

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.

6) Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software

Dependant on how your school implements remote learning, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.

7) Ensure your child only uses official school communication channels

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.

8) Familiarise yourself with relevant school policies

Schools should have a policy on remote learning and direction that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.

9) Maintain feedback with teachers

Engage in communication with teachers where possible and try to feedback progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.

10) Monitor your child's wellbeing and mental health

Remote learning will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as you can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends everyday might take its toll.

A GUIDE TO SAFER LIVE LESSONS

An online lesson occurs when teachers use video conferencing software to 'live stream' lessons to their pupils. Some of the most popular apps and websites that support this include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype and Microsoft Teams. Online lessons can be a great way to replicate classroom interaction, ask immediate questions and gather instant feedback. It's also convenient and allows learning to take place anywhere with an internet connection. However, live lessons aren't always accessible to everyone and younger children will need a lot of parental supervision, which isn't always practical.

What teachers need to consider

CONDUCT

If you decide to host an online lesson, it's important that you maintain a level of professionalism and treat any online lesson in the same way you would treat a classroom lesson. Dress appropriately and find a setting which has a plain background and has no personal information on display. Remind pupils of acceptable behaviour and their conduct during class. It's worth remembering that live streaming means screenshots and video recordings of your lesson could occur so you should always observe professional conduct at all times.

COMMUNICATION

Hosting a live lesson means that you will have to think about how you communicate and through what channels. Children will need access to the internet, have the appropriate technology and will need to download the relevant software or application. Some, or all, of these may not be widely available to everyone. It's also important to consider that the software that you choose to use is secure and has the relevant privacy and security settings in place. Any contact should only be through a platform provided by the school and not through personalised accounts open to public viewing, comments or sharing.

CONTENT

Planning your content will be a key factor to consider prior to hosting an online lesson. It's important to ensure that all content is age-appropriate and that any tasks that you set which require use of the internet won't lead children towards anything offensive or inappropriate. Always try to ensure that live lessons take place with the whole class but bear in mind that some pupils may work slower than others depending on the type of tasks you set.

What parents need to consider

CONDUCT

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite and remember their manners. Position your computer or webcam in an open environment where you can monitor their activity, preferably not in a bedroom. Try to keep the background neutral with good quality lighting and sound.

COMMUNICATION

If your child is part of an online lesson, they may need support in setting up the relevant software and communication platforms in order to take part. Your school will usually provide the relevant details on how to do this however it's worth ensuring that you have some awareness of the privacy and security settings so that you know that all communication is secure. It's important to raise any concerns that you have with the school if you are unable to accommodate an online lesson for any reason.

CONTENT

Try to take an interest in your child's live lesson if you can and stay close so that you can aid them if necessary. Try to find out who is hosting the lesson, what the lesson is about and what tasks they will be set. If they are required to conduct internet searches, ensure parental controls are in place. If you're using Zoom, make sure that screen sharing is only shared with the host. This will avoid 'Zoombombing' whereby uninvited guests use the screen-sharing feature to broadcast porn or other inappropriate content.

SOURCES:
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https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115000538083-Attendee-attention-tracking
https://hangouts.google.com/
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https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/security-compliance-overview

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Some commonly used platforms

ZOOM

Zoom is one of the most popular video conferencing apps at the moment. Schools using Zoom can monitor attendee's activity while screen-sharing, track real-time activity, record live lessons and recall video, audio, transcript and chat files. Admins can also see the IP address and admin information of all attendees.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- ✅ Change privacy controls so that screen sharing is limited to the host only.
- ✅ Turn file transfers off to reduce any risk of hacking or installing a virus/malware.
- ✅ Create a strong password for your account incorporating letters, numbers and symbols.
- ✅ Keep the software as up to date as possible with the latest security patches.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts allows communication through video, audio or messaging, although isn't end-to-end encrypted. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Google has been making the advanced features in Hangouts Meet available to all schools around the globe using G Suite for Education.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- ✅ Ensure that any call made via the app is private or by invite only.
- ✅ Customise who you can receive invites from through the privacy settings to block unwanted contact.
- ✅ Keep all anti-virus software up-to-date and instate a firewall.
- ✅ Always sign out after use to prevent anyone else from accessing your account.

Skype

Microsoft owned Skype is a well-known communication tool that specialises in providing video chat and voice calls. It is one of the biggest apps in the world, providing end-to-end encryption between Skype users, as well as facilitating screen sharing and the ability to record calls.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- ✅ Ensure you have the latest anti-virus software installed on your computer and set up a personal firewall.
- ✅ Keep profiles hidden and don't share any unnecessary personal information on your profile.
- ✅ Don't download anything from profiles you don't know and block any suspicious contacts.
- ✅ Always adjust privacy settings, including only allowing children to communicate with approved contacts.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams describes itself as a 'group chat software and collaboration tool'. Its provides the ability to chat, meet, call and collaborate from anywhere and is popular given it's ability to seamlessly integrate with other Microsoft applications like Word and Excel.

⚠ Safety Tips ⚠

- ✅ Turn off guest access so only school issued email addresses communicate.
- ✅ If linked to an Office 365, enable Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) to help prevent against threats via emails, links, and attachments.
- ✅ Make sure your operating system has the latest updates and security patches.
- ✅ Beware of phishing emails asking for your password – Microsoft will never ask you it.