Distance Learning Policy

This policy has been formulated by Harold's Cross Educate Together National School to assist school staff, pupils and parents in making an informed decision in relation to the safe and practical use of technology during distance learning in education.

Aim

The aim of this Distance Learning Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities provided by the school if Harold's Cross Educate Together National School must close as a result of Covid 19.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the Distance Learning Policy regularly in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. This Distance Learning Policy should be read carefully by parents/guardians to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the Distance Learning Policy unless the school is specifically notified.

This version of the Distance Learning Policy was created by staff in consultation with the parent body in October 2020 and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th October 2020. It will be reviewed again in October 2021.

School's Strategy:

This policy has been drawn up in order to protect the children from the risks associated with the internet while they are at school or engaging in online distance learning. Parents and Guardians are advised however that while the children may be given internet-based homework assignments from time to time, the school take no responsibility for the internet usage of the students while they are outside school. It is important that all parents and guardians monitor their own child's internet usage at home and ensure that their children are aware and respectful of the risks involved.

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet while pupils are engaging in schoolwork. These strategies are as follows:

Distance Learning Plan

In an exceptional school closure in Harold's Cross ETNS,

The School will:
- Communicate the school closure with all members of the school community
- Provide support for families who do not have access to electronic devices
- Monitor the online platform to ensure safety of all pupils, teachers and parents
- Be available to assist with online learning queries via email

The Staff will:
- Send home Student Code and Password for Seesaw (school's chosen online platform)
- Upload three - four lessons each school day to Seesaw

- o Core subjects will be prioritised (English, Irish and Maths)
  - o Videos will be no longer than 5 minutes in length
- Send home resource packs in the event of a school closure
  - o Resources and equipment such as pencils, whiteboards, maths manipulatives etc will be included in this resource pack.
  - o In so far as possible, the lessons will not require anything the pupil would not have at home
- Correct pupil's work on Tuesdays and Thursdays during school hours
  - o Feedback will be provided virtually. Teachers may choose to like, comment and/or leave an audio response as feedback on pupil's work

The Students will:
- Watch teaching videos each day and engage in learning activity associated with the video
- Share their work with the teacher via Seesaw
  - o With the help of an adult, pupil's can respond to virtual lessons with a photograph of their work, an audio clip explain their photograph or a short video of with their response to a learning activity (this list is not exhaustive and does not intend to be)

The Parents will:
- Assist pupil's in accessing learning videos and uploading responses to learning activities
- Contact the school if there are any issues or queries in relation to Seesaw or learning activities
- Support their pupil if necessary when completing learning activities
  - o Learning activities will be designed for pupil's to work independently, however in some cases, pupil's may require extra support or assistance when completing a task

Online Safety Plan

All members of the school community will engage respectfully on the online learning platform Seesaw. This means:
- Videos will not be recorded, shared across different online platforms eg Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook etc or saved to personal devices
- Pupil's work will only be accessible to teachers and will not be shared with anyone else
- Pupil's will only have access to their own Seesaw login and will not be able to view anyone else's work
- Any issue that may arise will be communicated with the school as soon as possible via email or phone to ensure the safety of all members of the school community online.

We need the support of the staff and parents to ensure distance learning is successful for the pupil's in Harold's Cross ETNS. Feedback is appreciated via regular online surveys and any issues that arise, please contact the school directly.

Legislation:

- Students, parents and staff are directed to the following legislation with which they should familiarise themselves:
  - o Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
  - o Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
  - o Interception Act 1993
  - o Video Recordings Act 1989
  - o Data Protection Act 1998
  - o Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools 2013

Support Structures:

- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the internet. Please see HXETNS Acceptable Usage Policy for more information.

Sanctions:

- Misuse of the online platform used (Seesaw) may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Ratification and Review:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th October 2020 and will be reviewed in October 2021.

Signed: _____(Chairperson Board of Management)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: 14th October 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

During this time of school closures, we are working on ways to maintain the link between school and home. We miss our pupils, and we hope to continue to communicate with them through various means. We recognise that online safety is of huge importance and we hope that this document helps to protect both school staff and pupils, while online.

The development of our distance learning methods comes in response to our parent survey. Up to 29% of respondents said that it would be possible for their child(ren) to join live, interactive sessions with teachers. 51% of respondents were in favour of both Zoom video calls and video recordings of short lessons on Seesaw. We aim to engage in daily live Zoom lessons and Seesaw video recordings.

This is a working document. As we try out new ways of supporting distance learning, the document will be updated.

Guidelines for good online communication in Harold's Cross ETNS:

1. Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
3. It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure any content which they are submitting to their teacher is appropriate.
4. Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families via Aladdin or through an established app (eg. Seesaw).
5. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
6. Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (Seesaw, Zoom)
7. For video/Zoom calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
8. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
9. Harold's Cross ETNS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.
10. Communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods:

1. Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 8.30am - 3pm, where possible.
3. Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.

4. Staff members will seek to become familiar with apps before using them with pupils.
5. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.
6. Staff are encouraged to generate a new meeting ID and password for each Zoom meeting being held.
7. Staff members will notify parents/guardians of the date, time and password for a video call via email.
8. Staff members will only admit participants to video conferences, if they recognise the email address/username as being connected to a pupil.

Rules for pupils using online communication methods:

For submitting learning:
1. Submit work and pictures that are appropriate - have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.
2. Use kind and friendly words.

For video calls/Zoom:
1. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
2. Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
3. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
4. Join the video with your microphone muted.
5. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
6. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
7. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
8. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
9. Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.
10. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join!

Guidelines for parents and guardians:

For learning
1. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
2. Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
3. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

For video calls/Zoom
1. Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
2. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
3. The main purpose of a video call is to maintain a social connection between the school staff and pupils at this difficult time. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
5. You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom call has been entered. Please note that school staff will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account.

6. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the Zoom call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
7. Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
8. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
9. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.
10. For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit https://zoom.us/privacy

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or in a meeting being immediately terminated. In this case, the child's parent will receive a report on the incident.

During this time, unfortunately school events that families would normally be invited to, such as winter concerts, school Céilí etc, are not possible in person. However, we may plan virtual events from time to time. Please see the guideline for virtual events in Harold's Cross ETNS.

This is a working document. As we try out new ways of supporting distance learning, the document will be updated.

Guidelines for good online communication in Harold's Cross ETNS:

- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of videos of virtual events
- Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
- Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
- Students and staff will communicate with families in advance of any virtual events
- Virtual events will only be shared with families on Seesaw. If another platform will be used, the school will make this clear beforehand.
- Harold's Cross ETNS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.
- Harold's Cross ETNS cannot accept responsibility if a video is shared across other online platforms. The school trusts that the school community will not record or share this video from Seesaw.

Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods:

- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
- Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.
- Staff members will notify parents/guardians of the date, time and password (if applicable) for a virtual event via email.

Rules for pupils using online communication methods:
For submitting learning:
- Submit work and pictures that are appropriate - have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.
- Use kind and friendly words.

For virtual events:
- Pictures or recordings of the virtual event are not allowed.
- Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.

Guidelines for parents and guardians:
For learning
- It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
- Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
- Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

For virtual events
- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of virtual events.
- The main purpose of a video call is to maintain a social connection between the school staff and pupils at this difficult time. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
- Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
- Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance.
- Contact the class teacher if you do not have access or a login for Seesaw or the online platform that will be used

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from the online platform. In this case, the child's parent will receive a report on the incident.