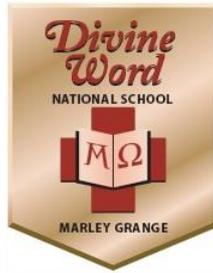


# **Divine Word National School Distance Learning Policy**

**March 2021**



## **Divine Word NS Distance Learning Policy**

### **Rationale**

This document is designed to provide guidance for staff and families of Divine Word NS of a partial or full school closure is advised by Public Health (HSE).

It is also intended to advise schools on how individual pupils or groups of pupils who may have to self-isolate or restrict their movements can be supported in continuing their learning remotely.

### **Identify appropriate digital communication platforms.**

- Digital communication with and between staff – Emails, Zoom, WhatsApp for sharing of ideas, Share Point.
- Digital communication between staff and pupils – Aladdin, SeeSaw, Emails and Zoom video conferencing, as required.
- Digital communication between schools and parents/guardians, Aladdin, Emails, Texts Seesaw.
- Designated email address for contact during school closures - [secretary@divnewordns.ie](mailto:secretary@divnewordns.ie)

Where pupils do not have access to a digital device to access SeeSaw, or for any reason cannot access digital communication from the school, alternative arrangements will be explored including using An Post and/or phone calls.

### **Developing the skills set of teachers and support staff, as needed.**

The IT committee will offer to help all staff set up Seesaw accounts in their classroom and will be available to answer questions and help to solve problems, insofar as is possible.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Digital Technologies team has developed a comprehensive range of blended learning professional development programs for teachers and school leaders; these are available at [www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning](http://www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning). Schools can also apply to [www.pdst.ie/schoolsupport](http://www.pdst.ie/schoolsupport) for the assistance of a PDST advisor with specific queries about remote teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Information related to digital technology courses being offered by the local Education Centre will be shared with all school staff.

### **Enabling pupils to develop the necessary skills set.**

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Pupils will be given opportunities at the start of the school year to use the selected digital platform, SeeSaw. Children will have appropriate opportunities to practice:

- Accessing and navigating the platform
- Engaging with teaching and learning materials
- Uploading their own work

### **Equity of access to digital resources**

Availability of appropriate digital devices and/ or Internet connection may be a challenge for some families.

It will be necessary to establish a clear picture of the relevant supports needed by our pupils to engage in remote learning and steps will be taken to address any gaps or issues insofar as is practicable.

It will be necessary to ensure that all staff have appropriate access to the necessary digital technology to support pupils' remote learning when required.

### **Sharing preparation for teaching and learning**

All teachers should share their short-term preparation documents, including preparation for pupils with SEN, with substitute teachers and other relevant teachers as required.

### **Relevant available contact details**

A document has been created containing access to up-to-date contact details for all members of staff by the school secretaries.

### **Collaborating and communicating with parents/ guardians:**

Parents/ guardians will be informed of the platforms being used for communication and for teaching and learning in the event of a partial or full closure as advised by Public Health HSE. Good whole school systems for two-way communication will be essential to ensure that we can be ready to engage in remote teaching and learning in an effective way. Feedback from parents/ guardians on how their child is engaging with learning in a remote/ distance environment will also be important. Parents will be informed how pupils work will be monitored and how teachers' feedback will be provided. Guidance for parents on how to use digital platforms will be provided by the school, where it is required.

### **Communication with external agencies:**

During partial or full school closures, it will be important that our school will maintain appropriate contact, relevant to the needs of the pupils affected by the closure, with any necessary external agencies, including HSE, NEPS, NCSE and Tulsa.

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## **Relevant policies**

All policies relevant to supporting pupils remote learning will be reviewed as required i.e., Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection and Child Protection policies. Teachers, parents and the whole school community should be involved in the review and updating of these policies as appropriate.

## **Personnel to support continuity of schooling.**

The class teacher should provide for continuity of schooling to the greatest extent possible for those peoples who are advised to restrict their movements. However, this may not always be a practical option. Therefore, all teachers are expected to be flexible in their approach to supporting pupils who are asked to restrict their movements. The non-exhaustive list below outlines the variety of alternative personnel who could be considered when arranging for continuity of schooling.

- **Special Education Teacher [SET]:** the principle of allocating the greatest level of support to those pupils with the greatest need remains, in line with the Continuum of Support. However, the SET(s) assigned to a pupil/ class affected can reassign this time to supporting remote teaching and learning. Alternatively, the SET can reassign time normally allocated for whole school and classroom support (for all) on the continuum of support from his/ her normal timetable, by, for example, pausing some team-teaching initiatives for the duration of the closure to release time for remote teaching and learning.
- **Designated Teacher from the Staff:** a teacher on the staff who has been medically certified as being at very high risk and is available to work from home can support remote learning for individual pupils or classes, in line with circular 0049/ 2020.
- **Teacher from the staff who has been advised to Restrict his/ her Movements:** a teacher on the staff who has been advised to restrict his/ her movements but is medically fit for work can support remote learning for individual pupils or classes in line with circular 0049/ 2020.
- **Designated Teacher from a local Education Center:** a teacher from another school who has been medically certified as being at very high risk and is on the assigned list in the local Education Centre can assist in this work in line with circular 0049/ 2020.

## **Remote Teaching and Learning**

Where a partial or full school closure is required, our school will immediately put in place this plan of action to enable continuity of learning for pupils. It should be noted that in situations where pupils are requested to self-isolate or restrict their movements, but the teachers have not been specifically advised to do so, the resources and digital infrastructure in the school building will continue to be used during the school day by these teachers. The class teacher maintains overall responsibility for:

- Sharing his/ her short-term plans with the relevant teacher where necessary to enable the pupil to progress in line with the curriculum and his/ her peers insofar as possible.
- Providing frequent, constructive feedback to all pupils on their work in order to maintain a connection with those pupils who are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements and in order to ensure and monitor progress in learning.

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In addition, SET and SNAs should collaborate with the class teacher in order to provide learning support for pupils on their caseload with special education needs (SEN) who are required to restrict their movements.

### **Support offered:**

*Individual pupil from a class is advised to self-isolate or restrict his/ her movements. No other people in the school are affected. Please note it is unlikely that students will receive work on the day the school is notified as teachers have their class to attend to and need time to prepare and assign work to individual pupils.*

- Individuals isolating for 14 days due to being a close contact– send home books with a broad outline of pages to be covered.
- Child with a doctor’s note to say they should stay home due to an outbreak–class teacher will plan in consultation with parents and support can be provided by the class teacher or SET, assigned to the class. This support may also be facilitated through DWEC panel of teachers available for work.
- If a child is being kept home due to parental concern about the virus in schools – send home books with a broad outline of pages to be covered.
- Absent due to illness– send home books with a broad outline of pages to be covered, if requested by the parent. Focus should be on child’s recovery first and foremost.

*Pupils in a number of pods in a classroom are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements. Some of the pods in the classroom are deemed to be unaffected and can continue to attend schools. The class teacher continues to teach pupils who are in attendance as normal teacher can provide opportunities for all pupils to work together collaboratively insofar as possible, for example, on project work and other areas of learning, using digital technologies.*

- Pod(s) isolating, however teacher is still in school teaching the rest of class – class teacher will plan in consultation with SET/SNAs, where appropriate, and support can be provided by the class teacher or SET, assigned to the class. This support may also be facilitated through DWEC panel of teachers available for work.

*All pupils in one or more classes are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements. The class teacher will be required to provide remote/ distance teaching to all pupils in the class using the school's digital platforms or other agreed methods as needed. this support can be facilitated from the school if the teacher is not required to self-isolate or restrict his/ her movements.*

- Whole class isolating teacher will be available through school hours to communicate with children, using SeeSaw platform. Assembly style check in once in the week, in groups/whole class, if teacher is fit for work –if not SET or sub can do this. This support may also be facilitated through DWEC panel of teachers available for work.

A teacher/number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements. Any teacher who is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict his /her movements is available to work remotely. If the teachers class group is still attending school a substitute teacher should be arranged to cover this teacher's teaching responsibilities in the school for this. The work assigned to the teacher restricting his/ her movements should support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programs of teaching and learning for pupils as per section 12 of circular 0049/ 2020. If the teacher's class is also self-isolating or restricting their movements the

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class teacher will be required to provide remote/ distance teaching to all pupils in the class, using the school's digital platform or other agreed method as needed.

Where the school is required to close on foot of public health advice, all teachers who are medically fit to work including SET's are available to work remotely and should provide remote teaching and learning to all pupils in their class or on their caseload. Substitute teachers should be arranged to provide remote teaching for pupils in classes where the teacher has been diagnosed with an illness and is medically unfit to work. Schools should ensure substitute teachers have access to appropriate digital technology.

### **Required features of provision.**

- Regular engagement with pupils
- A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/ experiences
- Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities
- Two-way feedback between home and school

### **Regular engagement with pupils**

The teacher assigned responsibility for supporting pupils learning remotely should communicate with pupils on a daily basis using the schools agreed communication methods. Special education teachers, SET(s), should continue to engage with pupils on their caseload as frequently as they would under normal circumstances.

### **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/ experiences**

Teacher- pupil engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils. Teachers should ensure, as far as practicable, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches which may include prerecorded video, audio, presentation software and written instructions.

### **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities**

Teachers should ensure that chosen learning tasks give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way.

- learning tasks which are aligned to the needs of the pupil, including learners with SEN, should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- Skills development: pupils need to be supported to develop age-appropriate self-management and organizational skills so they can engage in remote learning.
- Transitions for pupils with additional and/ or special educational needs who are being supported in their transition back to school. The work being carried out should be continued

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remotely to ensure progress is not lost and to enable successful reintegration back to school after the period of the partial or full closure.

- Infant and junior classes: parents/ guardians will require specific guidance on how best to support their children at home, when in a position to do so.

**Two-way feedback between home and school:** teachers will provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all peoples to regularly share samples of their work with the class teacher throughout each week. Teachers will also ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided, insofar as is practicable.

### **What books go home?**

This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and depending on the length or remote learning if known. Teachers will keep note of all books that have been given out and to what child. Parents will be reminded that some books belong to the schoolbook rental scheme and must be returned through the book rental scheme and must be returned in the condition that they were sent out in.

A period of intense revision of all work covered during lockdown in the core subjects will be prioritised by all teachers on our return to the classroom.

### **How many recorded lessons a week?**

- There should be a minimum of 5 lessons recorded online. Recorded lessons should have the teacher voice but do not need to show the teacher. A variety of approaches can be used including prerecorded video, audio, presentation software, Zoom and written instructions.

### **How often should Seesaw be updated?**

Everyday. If the teacher is unable to attend to their See Saw, and there is no Sub available, the SET who is co-host on See Saw will update activities and respond to children's work.

### **How does Special Education Teacher, SET, set work for children?**

SET is given access to their pupils' class Seesaw.

SET differentiates work for children in the subject that they are receiving support in.

### **How much work are teachers expected to check on a daily basis?**

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Teachers and SET must check a minimum of 1 piece of work a day. It is recommended that audio feedback is used where possible especially in younger classes where children cannot read their teachers comments.

### **How many one-to-one online sessions via Zoom should a SET teacher do a week?**

There is no set amount as each situation is different. It should be discussed in consultation with the parents.

### **Zoom**

***Currently we are using Zoom as a method of communication to check in with our pupils twice a week.***

#### **Guidelines for Parents/Students for online conference calls.**

- Students are expected to uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline.
- When using these communication forums, parental permission for the child is implied, as the links are being communicated through parents. Essentially, by virtue of the children logging in to the resource, permission is assumed.
- Divine Word N.S. cannot accept responsibility for the security of such online platforms in the event they are hacked.
- Under no circumstances, can videos be recorded, or pictures taken of video chat by students or families. (No mobile phones should be visible)
- Please note that teachers will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account. (Please use child's full name as display name when joining the meeting).
- Participants in the meeting should be dressed appropriately.
- Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- Finally, please be advised that this is completely optional, and you do not have to use Zoom. Communication will still occur through our school email and designated teacher emails.

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication.