

Ballinrobe Community School

Pobalscoil Bhaile an Róba
Bóthar an Chlochair, Baile an Róba, Co. Mhaigh Eo.



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Online Learning Guidelines and Expectations during School Closure

Rationale

To support efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19, Ballinrobe Community School will strive to ensure that the impact of any future school closure on teaching and learning is minimised, by providing tuition, subject material and assignments online for all our students. We have therefore compiled a list of guidelines and expectations for members of our school community to support us all in engaging in high quality, effective and safe distance learning using Microsoft Office 365. They are compiled in conjunction with the Acceptable Use Policy of the school, and with 'Guidance on Continuity of Schooling' documents issued by the Department of Education and Skills in April 2020.

Guidelines and Expectations

Students

- Students should develop a routine that allows them to engage with schoolwork in a way that suits them and their home circumstances
- Students should engage with work and with teachers online during the school day and keep evenings free for creative and physical activities
- Any schoolwork should not take up extra time above and beyond the time it would normally take whilst in school. For example, if they normally have 3 hours of Maths classes and 1.5hrs of Maths homework per week, then they should not spend any more than 4.5hours per week doing online lessons and assignments. If students feel they are overloaded with work, it is important that they let their teachers know
- Students are not expected to follow the usual timetable of the school day
- Students should either check their Microsoft 365 account in a timely manner each weekday or have notifications for Teams and Outlook turned on to stay informed of work being assigned, online lessons and other information that is shared with the students
- Students should be aware that comments posted on the 'Chat' function of Microsoft 365 are public and can be viewed by all students in that class. Inappropriate use of Teams Chat will be dealt with according to the School's Code of Discipline

- Students should complete and upload work/assignments by the deadline set by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to complete the work or communicate to the teacher why it is not completed
- Students must download the Microsoft Teams, Office Lens and OneNote apps if they are using a mobile phone or tablet device to return assignments.
- Students should only submit work in the Assignment section of Microsoft Teams or to the Class Notebook unless instructed to do otherwise by their teacher.
- Students should only submit work relevant to a particular assignment and not attach extra work set from a previous assignment
- If unable to complete work / if unwell / any other reason, students or their parent should contact the teacher via private message on Microsoft Teams or by email to inform of the reason
- Students may request additional support/guidance from their teachers, Learning Support teacher, Guidance Counsellor team. If required, students should contact the relevant staff member through Microsoft Teams or by email
- Microsoft Teams will facilitate live online classes or video conferencing-style classes and will be used as additional tools to facilitate greater engagement between students and teachers, and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning during the school closure
- Invitations / information about scheduled classes will be shared with students in the normal way on Microsoft Teams (e.g. the time of online class, materials required by students etc.)
- All 'live' online classes will take place during school time and students should attend these in accordance with notification from teachers
- If a student is invited to attend a 'live' class online the student must join the class at the agreed time and should have all relevant material to hand (e.g. pens, copybook, other resources). Teachers will have overall authority over who is permitted to join or be removed from the class
- In 'live' online classes, students must follow agreed protocols, and must not interrupt the teacher and learning in compliance with the school's code of behaviour. Questions should be sent to the teacher via the messaging/chat function on the App or when invited to ask any questions during the lesson
- Students must adhere to the settings that the teacher has in place and must keep their microphone muted throughout the lesson, must ensure their camera function stays off when directed, and should minimise any movement/distraction during the lesson
- Students may use the messaging/chat functions for questions / discussions about the work and not for any other purpose. Only the teacher may turn on a student's microphone when they are invited to contribute, and the student's microphone will be turned off again once the student's contribution to the discussion is finished
- Recording of a live lesson (audio / video / photographs etc.) by students is strictly prohibited
- The recording and posting of any video/live lessons on any social media platform is strictly prohibited in accordance with the school's code of behaviour, Electronic Equipment Policy and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

- Students should keep themselves safe, healthy, and well by following all the guidelines while engaging in distance learning
- The nature of online lessons is significantly different from that of normal classroom-based lessons that involve a mixture of teacher input, student input, student work etc. This interaction does not work as effectively online. Teachers will not provide long lectures online as this does not make for effective learning. Instead, more intense instruction may take place, and consequently, the duration of the lessons may vary. Teachers may give input, use resources such as PowerPoint, videos etc., address student queries and questions and assess learning. They may then end the online session to enable the students to engage in lesson-related work
- Due to the difference between online learning and school-based learning, the number of online sessions may vary due to topic, subject and year group.

Parents/guardians

- The school recognises the challenges and difficulties of students working from home and the pressures of home life
- Any school work should not take up extra time above and beyond the time it would normally take whilst in school. For example if they normally have 3 hours of Maths classes and 1.5hrs of homework per week, then they should not spend any more than 4.5hours per week doing online lessons and assignments. If you feel that they are overloaded with work, it is important that you let their teachers know
- Parents/guardians should become familiar with the online timetable in helping their son/daughter to develop a routine that allows them to engage with schoolwork effectively
- If possible, parents/guardians should support students to engage with schoolwork and with teachers online during the school day and keep evenings free for creative and physical activities
- Parents/guardians should monitor and be mindful of students' engagement with Microsoft 365 and encourage students to try and complete any online schoolwork to the best of their abilities where possible
- Parents/guardians should encourage students to communicate with their subject teacher through the appropriate channels if they are having any challenges or have questions during the school closure
- Parents/guardians may contact the Year Head or the class teacher by email if they would like to bring anything to the school's attention that relates to difficulties experienced in completing online work
- Parents/guardians should contact the school office and their teachers by email if their child is ill or otherwise unavailable for school / engage in learning.
- By facilitating your child's 'live' online lessons at home, your child's lessons may feel different, but the same rules of communication apply as if this were a regularly taught lesson in school. This means that the interaction during these lessons is to be between the teacher and students only
- Parents/guardians of students with additional learning needs should contact the SEN coordinators with any issues or concerns regarding online learning by emailing abrowne@ballinrobecks.ie or kquinn@ballinrobecks.ie

- Parents/guardians may request additional support from the Guidance Counselling team if required by initially contacting the school office and appropriate follow up and supports will be agreed
- Parents/guardians will be able to keep a track of their child's engagement through checking in with them, supporting them with their work and looking at their Microsoft 365 activities and accompanying submissions
- Keep your family healthy, stay well and remind students to follow all the guidelines to help contain the spread of Covid-19

Teachers

- Teachers will provide meaningful and appropriate work for their specific subject and class groups
- The activities assigned should be explained using clear teacher guidelines and a deadline for assignments should be set
- All classwork should be filed by teachers under relevant topic headings to help with organisation on Microsoft 365
- Teachers will assign work for the entire class and will assign tasks/activities for a variety of abilities, differentiating as appropriate for students with additional educational needs as would be the case if students were in class
- Teachers should add SNAs to their Microsoft 365 Teams so that the SNA can support students by guiding them through assignments
- For children with additional needs, teachers should be flexible with timelines and deadlines where appropriate
- A varied approach should be used by teachers and can involve:
 - Video classes including teacher input, discussion, display of resources/PowerPoints etc. as appropriate
 - Recordings such as LOOM/YouTube recordings where materials can be viewed on screen later or watched again as desired
 - Podcasts, as students often want to listen in their own time
 - Assignments to include attachments, video clips, YouTube links etc. where possible
- Teachers may use a variety of other online applications to share work and will follow correct policies and procedures at all times, whilst being mindful of GDPR
- The online platform Microsoft Teams facilitates live online classes or video conferencing style classes that should be used as an additional tool to facilitate greater engagement between students and teachers and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning during the school closure
- Microsoft Teams is the only video conferencing platform which will be used by our school during this time
- The nature of online lessons is significantly different from that of normal classroom-based lessons which involve a mixture of teacher input, student input, student work etc. This interaction does not work as effectively online. Teachers should carefully consider the best approach to take for teaching their particular lesson
- Teachers will notify students of scheduled 'live' classes on Microsoft Teams and will also inform students of the materials required by student (e.g. pens, copybook, other resources) and how long the online class will take

- Teachers should ensure that all other windows are closed on their desktop during live classes, and that they are logged out of their personal/school accounts
- Teachers will explain class protocols at the start of each 'live' class, e.g. students must mute microphones, turn off cameras, use chat function to ask a relevant question etc.
- Teachers may record classes/presentation where necessary. This will be done in accordance with the school's GDPR policy and student privacy will be protected. Students recording of a live lesson (audio /video / photographs etc.) is strictly prohibited
- In most instances, there is no need for any cameras (teacher or student) to be switched on for the entirety of the lesson. Most teachers will share a PowerPoint presentation or other visuals on screen, talk about and explain this content and respond verbally to questions raised by students in chat/messaging function or verbally when invited to do so by the teacher
- Teachers will provide whole class or individual feedback as appropriate on Microsoft 365
- Teachers will report any students not actively engaging in online learning to parents through Compass and to the relevant Year Head if necessary
- All teachers will follow normal referral and communication systems of reporting issues of concern to the relevant Year Head about a student's engagement, wellbeing, welfare etc.
- Teachers should try to manage their day so that schoolwork and school communication does not overly disrupt evenings, and avail of the 'schedule' option in Teams to assign work at specific times of the day when helpful to do so
- Teachers will endeavour to follow all guidelines to help contain the spread of Covid-19

Learning Support Teachers

- Teachers timetabled to support students with additional learning needs should support the curricular material assigned to the child rather than adding more work to their day/ week
- Learning Support teachers can decide on appropriate tasks and levels when supporting students with additional needs ensuring that this be done on a case-by-case basis, as every child has their own unique learning profile with their own strengths and needs
- SNAs will work with and liaise with students of additional educational needs online as deemed necessary by the coordinator
- SNAs should keep in contact with the students in their group to confirm that they are clear on what is required of them in each subject and that they continue to feel connected and supported
- Students with additional needs can be directed to accessible websites or other sources that will make the curricular content easier to understand and learn
- Assign small chunks of manageable curricular material and collate together in one email/ sheet/communication to help the student to organise and manage the workload
- Parents/guardians of students with additional learning needs should contact the coordinator with any issues or concerns regarding online learning by emailing abrowne@ballinrobecks.ie or kquinn@ballinrobecks.ie

School Management

- Year Heads to continue to monitor and collate information about student progress in the event of school closure
- Principal and Deputy Principal to ensure all students and staff are adequately equipped with computers and other resources to readily engage with online teaching and learning
- Management will endeavour to fully support students and staff in the event of a school closure, and will recognise the need for flexibility in online teaching and learning
- Management will meet with the care team weekly on teams to discuss any issues or concerns brought to their attention