

## ONLINE TEACHING & LEARNING

### ***School has closed but the learning continues***

The school buildings may be closed, but a new approach to teaching and learning is keeping us all connected and progressing.

Around the world, the media is talking about an online learning “revolution” as hundreds of millions of students from Nursery to Sixth Form now learn virtually.

The World Economic Forum sees a silver lining in the dark COVID-19 cloud, citing it as a “catalyst” that could finally change “centuries-old, lecture-based approaches to teaching, and outmoded classrooms” and commenting further that “Covid-19 has literally dragged us into the 21st century and education as we knew it will never be the same again. This is an opportunity to rapidly change the way we engage with our students and innovate our teaching practice.”



### ***Same learning outcomes but a different learning experience***

- While schools have moved into your homes, teachers are still expected to set clear, shared learning outcomes, deliver content, facilitate conceptual understanding, scaffold learning for students and of course monitor progress carefully and give effective feedback.
- Teachers have had to rethink assessment by encouraging research and increasingly independent critical thinking opportunities which are later shared during synchronous sessions, small group sessions or 1:1 tutorials.

It can feel like a big change from our familiar routines, but online teaching is still teaching although naturally the structure of the day has been adapted to give students time to engage, learn, think, reflect and analyse new learning.

It is important to learn the “language” or pedagogy that sits behind our home-schooling programme.

For our younger students successful learning does **not** mean replicating the traditional school day as it would not be advisable to expect a young child to spend endless hours in front of a screen. The chief objective is that the school provides learning opportunities which are tailored to the students’ and their family’s needs whilst fully reflecting both their developmental stages and their attention span.

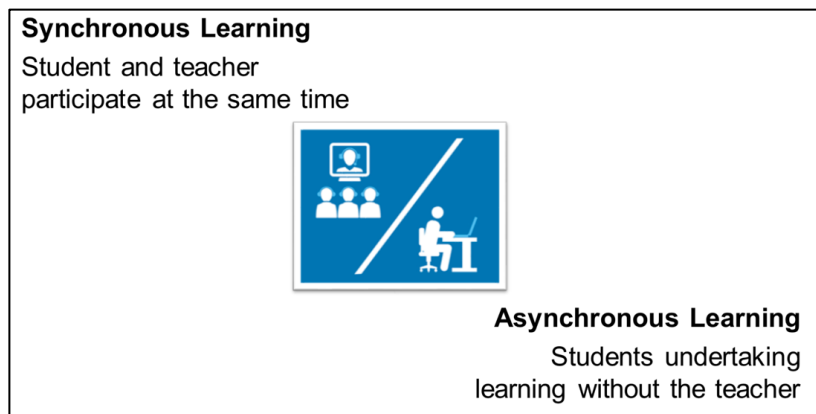
Learning programmes have been designed to ensure progress in the following key areas of learning:

- ✓ Communication & language
- ✓ Physical development
- ✓ Personal, social and emotional development
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Understanding the world
- ✓ Expressive arts & design

Our teachers have carefully prepared online resources to ensure children continue to make progress in all areas. Resources can be accessed at any time but with younger children parental support is both vital and indispensable.

We must continue to remember that learning is a conversation; it requires human connection and interaction. In order to preserve the humanity of learning experiences whilst dependent on digital technology, we have incorporated synchronous sessions into our new virtual timetables as a tool for connecting with others when face-to-face human connection just isn't possible or safe. Doing so can preserve some semblance of normality and maintain the dialogue and discourse that we all value in our classrooms.

Synchronous sessions are set up in small groups for short sessions several times a week depending on the age of the students and their ability to engage online.



Even though we must use digital technology for online learning, this is also an excellent time to invite our students to engage in open-ended tasks and allow students to post pictures of their learning activities through Tapestry, Seesaw or Google Drive.

As an example:

Tasks could include a Maths task with multiple solutions for students to solve independently or it might entail reading a story asking students to respond to a variety of prompts in a reader's notebook or thinking journal.

They may encourage free or creative writing, bounded by a genre study or a rubric that still allows the teacher to provide structured feedback and help students progress in their writing.

## ***An opportunity to engage in PBL (Project Based Learning)***

This new era of learning is an excellent opportunity to promote PBL to give children the platform to create their own learning experiences, explore real-world problems and challenges, and simultaneously develop cross-curriculum skills.

Bringing together different cultural experiences adds to the richness and depth encountered by students in conducting their investigations.

1. A driving question anchored in a real-world problem (e.g., “How can we reduce the use of plastic?”).
2. An opportunity to make active investigations to learn concepts, apply information, and represent knowledge in a variety of ways.
3. The possibility of working in collaboration, both within and between classrooms, so that learning could be constructed and shared across groups.

When students have had time to work independently, they can join a discussion online on TEAMS or Google meet so they can share their work and have an opportunity to connect just as they would in their regular classroom.

Teachers then build in time for self-reflection:

- What went well for you with this task?
- What will you do differently next time?
- How has your thinking changed?

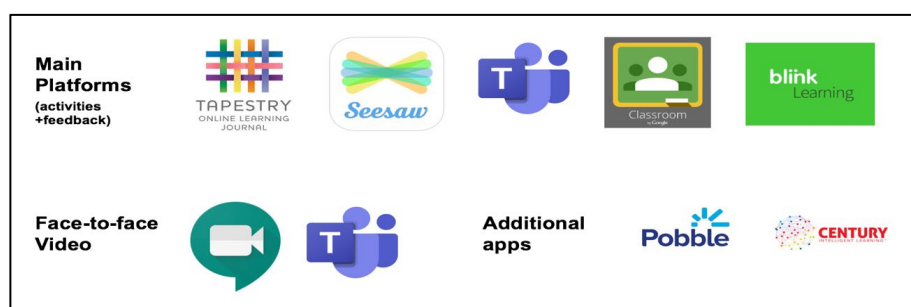
All of these remind students that learning neither starts nor ends with the activity they’ve completed. It can—and will—be connected to future activities, and by taking them through the process of reflecting on the task, you create the expectation that they will need to apply new learnings to future tasks.

Learning is a process not a product. Children need to be given the opportunity to continue their learning by achieving a balance between being connected and having the time to reflect on their learning.

## ***Staying connected***

At a time where social distancing is mandatory, children crave the opportunity to connect with their friends and the extended school community. The importance of social connection cannot be underestimated. As a school we have an obligation to fulfil both meaningful and structured academic requirements but also maintain the sense of community.

The majority of our students will be with us for 15 years. School is an essential part of their lives and we have to ensure that our online programmes maintain that sense of community.



## ***The new normal in education systems***

As students become more independent learning online reflects that level of autonomy and approaches to teaching & learning online adapt accordingly. Our senior students continue to learn both independently and with the support of their teachers. Teachers continue to collect evidence of learning and produce internal assessment to allow students complete each stage of learning successfully.

Personalised learning paths are co-created to ensure students are developing skills to help them prepare for the next stage in life.

## ***Wellbeing & Pastoral Care***

Schools play a key role in supporting students emotionally. During this period this role is even more important as students continue to need to know that the teams at schools are there for them if needed. Our Wellbeing leads, SEND leads & DSLs are available for 1:1 sessions in the presence of a parent to ensure that the school continues to cater for their needs.

## ***Our Essential Agreements***

Interacting appropriately in this new environment is crucial to success. As at school, communities decide on essential agreements which will ensure students adapt to their new learning environments.

We call this our “Netiquette”.

<p><b>Be Patient</b> It's harder when offline to know what others are thinking and how they are feeling. So remember to assume your peers (and teachers!) have positive intentions and give them the benefit of the doubt.</p>	
<p><b>Be Supportive</b> Many of us are understandably anxious and a bit worried at the moment! Reach out to your friends. Reach out to those students who aren't your friends and say hi!</p>	
<p><b>Be Respectful</b> Apply the same standards you have in real life to your online community. Treat people how you want to be treated.</p>	
<p><b>Be Collaborative</b> Online learning is not easy for everyone! Share your knowledge, share your skills. The more you connect, the more you will learn. The more you will cope with the current isolation.</p>	
<p><b>Be Safe</b> This is a long list but important! Only go to websites you trust. Only speak to people you know. Only say words you are happy to be out there. Only post images that are appropriate. Remember that everything you do online lasts forever!</p>	
<p><b>Be Appropriately Dressed</b> This seems obvious but maybe not when you are comfortable in your home! In online meetings and classes with friends, teachers, whoever, always be appropriately dressed even if the camera is off because accidents happen!</p>	

## ***The Privilege of Learning Online***

We should not take this opportunity for granted. So many students around the country are unable to access rich learning experiences online for many reasons. As an organisation we have been able to maintain our teams of teachers, provide them with training and ensure we stay connected with our students.

Education as we know it has changed forever. Let's embrace this opportunity to become a much stronger learning community!

Kindest regards,

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