



## Lockdown Home – School Strategy

### School Closure due to Covid-19 March – July 2020

Version 1: April 2020

Version 2: June 2020

Version 3: September 2020

### Intention and rationale

At The Cathedral School of St Peter and St John RC Primary we recognise the welfare of all children and families as paramount. During enforced school closure it became even more essential that our relationship and contact with families continued on a regular basis to ensure the wellbeing of our children, that they were safe, well and emotionally supported during this uncertain time.

Our school remained open to the children of key workers and vulnerable families throughout the entire lockdown period, including during the Easter holidays. The number of children attending rose from approximately 15 each day at the start of lockdown to .... by the end of Summer 1 and then further increased to 120 (maximum bubble capacity per classroom) upon wider opening in June.

Not all nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6 returned so we filled the gaps with other pupils from other year groups to allow for this capacity. This was explained to the parents who agreed to allow pupils to enter a different year group and for this to be their bubble for the duration.

As a school, we understand the need to continually deliver high quality education at all times, especially during periods of remote working. We recognised the importance of maintaining high expectations in all areas of school life and ensuring that all pupils had access to the learning resources and support they needed to succeed. During the Covid-19 period of enforced school closure we intended:

- To support children establishing a routine of both supported and independent learning habits by providing opportunities for them to explore and develop understanding and subject knowledge during school closures.
- To provide resources that were accessible for all students regardless of access to technology at home
- To provide high quality resources suitable for distance learning and relevant to each stage of learning.
- To enable children to continue with their learning during periods of enforced school closure.
- To provide effective communication and support for parents/carers to support students whilst at home.

We fully acknowledge that remote learning cannot replace the quality of teaching and learning our children receive at school however, our complete focus was on creating sets of resources and projects that **all** children could access to not only maintain, but maximise their learning at home whilst supporting their health and wellbeing.

# Implementation

## 1. Remote Learning:

### 1.1 Factors considered when deciding on a home learning strategy included:

- Support structuring a timetable for the home learning school day
- Ensuring quality of learning and resources for students
- Ensuring access for all pupils
- Planning for the implementation of the strategy at short notice
- How to ensure safeguarding and welfare of pupils
- Ensuring effective communication with parents and children
- Teacher capacity and workload

### 1.2 Ensuring Quality of Learning and Resources:

Creating high quality resources suitable for home learning was very different to preparing for a face-to-face lesson as children needed to be able to access activities independently.

SLT curated resources appropriate for home learning from existing providers and platforms to compliment resources created by staff. These included (but were not limited to) resources from: Hamilton Trust for Learning, The STEM centre, Oddizzi, Pie Corbett Talk for Writing, The Literacy Trust Headstart materials, BBC Bitesize, PE with Joe Wicks and TenTen religion Resources.

Our underlying principles for home learning were:

- Providing support materials which allowed students to get “unstuck” when they get stuck
- Focused on consolidating prior learning whilst gave opportunities to extend knowledge and skills.
- New topics were presented as research tasks with support material
- Activities created to be easily responded to in order to provide feedback to students
- A varied range of activities were provided to foster student engagement where self-motivation was required.

### 1.3 Ensuring Access for All Pupils:

Based in an area of high deprivation, the assumption could not be made that all students would have access to a laptop / PC at home. Many households were sharing one mobile device between multiple children and parents who would be using them for work. Online platforms alone would not be sufficient to support home learning.

We operated a mixed and comprehensive approach to home learning and encourage families to access in the most suitable form for their circumstances. However accessing all platforms which would be optimal.

- Existing Online Learning Platforms
- Online Weekly Learning Packs uploaded to the class page of the school website

- Paper work packs which could be collected from school at a pre-arranged time.
- Regular exchange opportunities for reading books in the Reception and Year 1 classes.

1.4 Existing Online Learning Platforms: - All pupils were extremely familiar with the following which enabled easy access.

Purple Mash

Education City

Discovery Espresso

Timestables Rockstars

- In order to maximise ability to access activities set via online learning platforms it was essential that they work on all platforms (mobile devices, tablets and computers).
- Purple Mash is available on all platforms.
- We ensured Education City activities set were tablet friendly. However we recognised that some of the activities were more difficult to complete on a small screen.
- Learning routes on Discovery Espresso were shared on the class webpages.
- Timestables Rockstars was used for interclass competitions and for a Year 4 virtual timestables screening.
- Pre-closure time was allocated with each class to re-affirm that children were familiar with each platform and could log on with their own password. Teachers modelled where to find specific tasks and how to submit work completed.
- The Computing team ensured all children/parents received relevant passwords to all platforms within their first paper work pack.
- New activities were set weekly on Purple Mash and Education City and teachers gave prompt constructive feedback to work handed in online.
- When teachers returned to the classroom for wider opening management of the online learning was led by staff who were unable to return to the classroom due to isolating (e.g. those on the clinically vulnerable list)
- A member of the SLT and Computing Team monitored online access to learning platforms on a weekly basis and was on hand to address any issues.
- School engaged with the local authority Laptop scheme for those eligible to support home learning, being granted 3 laptops which arrived in late June but were not assembled until 17<sup>th</sup> July ( last day of school). One was delivered to the child with an EHCP by hand the following week

1.5 Online Weekly Learning Packs

- Online weekly learning packs were prepared by class teachers for each year group and were easily found under the Home Learning Tab at the top of each class's webpage. These were updated on the weekly to provide as much help and support as we could during this period.
- These included daily activities for core subjects English and Maths and engaging activity packs to support other areas of the curriculum.
- Weekly religion resources were uploaded including daily and weekly worship and assemblies.
- Online activities both included links to activities on the learning platforms and stood alone in their own right, enabling families to access in the most suitable way for their circumstances.
- These work packs could either be downloaded and printed or could be viewed on screen and completed in the home learning journal provided in the first paper work pack sent home. Those who couldn't access at home came to school for printed versions.

- Parents were encouraged to send photos/scans of children's work to school for teachers to see and respond to.
- As more resources became available, we continually updated the links to useful interactive tools and websites, games and online books for a range of subjects.
- When teachers returned to the classroom for wider opening management of the online work packs was led by staff who were unable to return to the classroom due to isolating (e.g. those on the clinically vulnerable list)
- Class Home Learning pages were monitored by SLT weekly.
- The teachers engaged regularly with their pupils within the handing in of work to be marked electronically.

#### 1.6 Paper Work packs:

- Many families live in households that either have poor Wifi connectivity, little mobile network coverage, or where there is no family laptop or tablet. In order not to inadvertently discriminate against these staff and pupils, it was important to consider both online resources that could be downloaded by students and used offline at home, and also provide physical resources - work plans, and learning materials that could be distributed to the household.
- Paper work packs were compiled on a regular basis by each class teacher. The first pack contained enough for 4 weeks and was taken home on the last day of school before closure.
- Parents were notified when resulting packs were ready to be collected from the school so that they could arrange a time to socially distance collect.
- Paper work packs were available to all children. Special arrangements were made for families isolating or unable to collect a work pack to ensure they still received one.

Paper work packs included:

- English activities including phonics and GRAPs.
- Maths activities, including problem solving, arithmetic and reasoning.
- Project based activities to support curriculum learning, examples include: geographical topics such as map reading, historical research into a specific era and step by step art tutorials for drawing.
- Religion activities in line with Come and See, CAFOD and TenTen resources.
- Reading books (especially phonetic books to support EYFS and KS1 pupils) will be available to be collected from school and will be quarantined upon return.

Reception and year one reading books. The reception teacher was instrumental in ensuring the pupils of reception and year 1 received reading books weekly. The parents came to school and took away enough books for the week.

They were all given Easter packs of activities to do and an Easter egg included.

#### 1.7 Expectations for the completion of learning:

Those not in school were expected to complete home learning as outlined in our Remote learning policy. Students and parents were expected to ensure they took responsibility for the following:

- Completing home learning in their home learning journal
- Completing set To Do's on online platforms
- Making time each day to complete home learning
- Completing home learning to the best of their ability and within the time frame given
- Seeking additional support if needed
- Through regular checks in by the head teacher to those at home, issues around home learning were identified and dealt with – this eased any growing anxiety by the parent or child

For those children who continued to attend school a “home school agreement” was sent to all parents outlining expectations on behalf of school, parent and pupil.

## **2. Welfare:**

### 2.1 Safeguarding

As a school we saw at least weekly our vulnerable families as they collected their meal packs and vouchers.

In line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our Remote Learning Policy and our Online Safety Policies we endeavoured to ensure our home learning was as safe as possible for all.

- An “online safety during lockdown” letter was sent to all families and is on every class webpage before school closed which outlined ways to keep children safe online, at home especially as accessing the internet and online platforms would be increased.
- Our DSL/headteacher identified vulnerable pupils (pupils who were deemed to be vulnerable or at risk of harm) via risk assessment prior to lockdown starting and kept in contact with vulnerable pupils’ social workers or other care professionals during the period of remote working, as required.
- Vulnerable children were invited to attend school throughout lockdown (along with children of key workers) and as the weeks progressed more were encouraged to return to school in order to support their wellbeing.
- All children who did not attend school received a weekly welfare checks via telephone, and socially distanced home visits were completed if contact was not made by the Headteacher.
- All members of staff reported safeguarding concerns to the DSL immediately, even when working from home.

### 2.2 Wellbeing:

- The wellbeing of our children comes first and foremost to our care, especially at times when we are not able to have daily contact with not only the children themselves but also their families.
  - Our headteacher and SLT made it a priority to contact every family at least once a week if their child was not attending school.
  - Online social stories and digital books with a focus on wellbeing and address the coronavirus were shared on every class webpage and were signposted via text and email for parents to share.
  - Open-ended creative tasks will be encouraged to allow children to express themselves during uncertain times.
  - School felt it important to support families in finding a balance between home-life and accessing school learning. Many of our online resources promoted getting outside and sharing experiences together. For example going on a sound walk or being active in the park.
  - Home learning activities provided offered a range of online and offline tasks and encouraged children to remain active even when unable to leave the house.
  - Children were encouraged to participate in online PE lessons and to use their daily exercise to get outside, be active and get some fresh air.
  - We were aware that for many children, prolonged time at home could mean prolonged access to online gaming and screen time. We stressed the importance of having a balance of online and offline activities each day - we promoted the practical steps to ensure a healthy and balanced digital diet. (Children’s commissioner, Digital 5 a day).
1. Connect
  2. Be active – switch off and get moving

3. Be creative – both online (coding, animating) and offline
  4. Give to others – positive feedback to others on the class blog – make the web a positive place for everyone.
  5. Be mindful – of the amount of time spent online. Encourage children to monitor their own usage.
- Upon wider re-opening (Summer2) social distancing allowed for bubbles of 15 children in each class. In addition to the key worker and vulnerable children already still attending, school invited children in line with government guidance from other year groups.
  - Children transitioned into their next classroom with the teacher they would be having in September giving both the children and teacher time to get to know each other.
  - Year 6 were supported by HLTA and SLT with a focus on transition to high school.
  - A return to a more structured school day and a focus on catch up and interventions during this time has supported a smoother September whole school reopening.

### 2.3 Meal Support

- School worked closely with Dolce, our school meal provider, to provide for children on FSM. Initially daily grab bags with a packed lunch was provided daily. These evolved into weekly food parcels with the fresh ingredients to make healthy lunches for a week. These could be collected from school at the start of each week and were delivered to families shielding or unable to collect.
- School continued to provide weekly food packages alongside engaging with the EdenRed voucher scheme to support families. The business manager downloaded all the vouchers for our families to ensure they got them in a timely manner. This took an extremely long time – even into the night but it ensured our families didn't go without
- The Cathedral of St John also provided weekly food parcels, which were open to all families, with supporting video instructions showing how to create healthy family favourite meals with the ingredients provided.
- The Headteacher and office staff ensured all received who wanted to receive (parents who could come to the school twice a week to collect enough meals or ingredients) by arranging the collection physically taking the allocated meals/bags of ingredients to the gate as parents arrived. Those who could not attend – this was then delivered by the Headteacher or office staff.

### **3. Communicating with Parents:**

- The majority of students were already familiar with online learning platforms through use in class and homework tasks. This made accessing home learning easier as it was already familiar. Barriers still remained for those that did not use it as frequently so we need to ensure that appropriate steps are in place.
- To ensure that students and parents became familiar with our home learning strategy we:
  - Communicated home through letters, emails and text messages to keep parents up-to-date and reassured them that we had put appropriate support in place
  - A specific Covid-19 webpage was set up on the school website regularly updating parents with key messages.
  - School provided support accessing online material via the telephone/email where required.
  - Each class had a specific home learning section at the top of their webpage where weekly activities were set and supporting resources could easily be found. Regular texts and emails were sent informing parents of updates.
  - Parents were encouraged to contact their child's teacher through the central school email address.
  - School contacted each family weekly to ensure wellbeing and address any concerns they might have.
- Class teachers wrote personalised letters to all children asking about what they have been doing and checking on wellbeing, how to keep mind and body healthy, as well as sharing learning updates. Children were encouraged to respond with letters, emails and photos in return.

## **4. Supporting Staff:**

### 4.1 Supporting staff in implementation

At the time of lock down school had one teacher ( NQT ) long term absent – one teacher maternity - 3 teachers shielding ( pregnant) 2 support staff shielding. This left 5 teachers in school and 10 support staff. During the lock down period 4 members of staff were extremely ill and was absent for up to 5 weeks – all other members of staff were self- isolating for 2 weeks at some point. In essence school worked and worked well with a skeleton staff.

- School began to prepare work packs in advance of lockdown.
- SLT supported staff by sourcing appropriate materials and providers of home learning packs and provided cover/additional PPA where needed
- Staff actively taught in school on a rota basis initially, working from home on the other days. ( online course were completed.)
- Staff were required to ensure home learning for each week was uploaded in a timely manner and is updated as needed throughout the week – but were not expected to do this on the days when they were on rota.
- Staff ensured that marking and feedback was given online where possible. Staff were only expected to respond to children’s work during school hours on the days they were not on rota to be with the children attending school.
- All class teachers wrote their children a keep in touch letter.
- Children and parents were encouraged to email the main school email address with work completed so that SLT could appropriately share this with relevant staff members.
- Once school opened wider (Summer 2) online learning was managed by members of staff who were still isolating to allow the rest of the staff to concentrate on teaching the children in school.

### 4.2 Teacher Capacity and Workload:

- During school closure school remained open to children of Key Workers and Vulnerable families. Staff worked on a rota basis.
- Any staff members who classed as extremely vulnerable was shielding until further notice.
- Any staff members who fell into the vulnerable categories worked from home and was not be including in the staffing rota.
- As school opening widened to invite pupils from all year groups back, staff who were able to be in school returned on a full time basis.
- All home learning systems continued to be provided for all year groups despite children being offered a return place as school opening widens beyond that of just the Key Worker and Vulnerable children.
- Responsibility for setting, responding to and monitoring home learning moved from the class teachers to staff members who were unable to return to school due to personal circumstances (those within the vulnerable categories). This could be safely completed by working from home.
- In turn, this allowed returning staff to fully concentrate on the education provided to those who children who returned to the classroom.

### 4.3 Staff Wellbeing

- Regular contact was kept with all members of staff throughout lockdown both on a formal and informal basis.
- The headteacher made regular phone calls and emails to members of staff who were isolating to check in.

- Staff worked on a rota basis to ensure they were only in school when absolutely necessary.
- Staff personal circumstances were individually considered to ensure they could balance their own child care and work.
- Staff in school were encouraged to arrive later and leave immediately at the end of the day to avoid unnecessary contact.
- Staff briefings were arranged via zoom for those not in school.
- Staff were kept up to date with the latest guidance through regular briefing updates and emails
- Support was signposted from HR for those concerned about coronavirus or lockdown.

#### 4.4 Staff Training

- When working from home staff were expected to access online training courses and develop their subject knowledge.
- Specific courses were signposted to members of staff relevant to their age group/subject leadership.
- Teaching assistants and welfare were encouraged to access MyLearning and Open University short courses which would support their role.

## **Impact**

During the initial few weeks of lockdown all children were provided with a 4 week paper home learning pack which were well received and the majority completed. School noted who has no fully engaged and this was picked up on during the weekly welfare phonecalls.

20<sup>th</sup> March/April 18 children/212 (key worker and vulnerable children) attended school – 8%

We had an increase of attendance following the Easter break – which we remained open throughout (Summer 1) due to the update of the invitation from the headteacher to those pupils deemed vulnerable, bringing attendance to 21 children 10%

Through the monitoring of access to home learning, school could identify which parents to follow up with in order to assess the reasons for children not accessing and worked with parents to resolve computing difficulties or alternative provision of work. Of the children not accessing the online platforms the majority were accessing the materials on the school webpage and additional paper packs provided by school.

Regular contact with parents and children provided opportunity to identify needs and children who were becoming more vulnerable so school could prioritise these children to attend when wider opening was possible.

In June – July the number of children not accessing online learning platforms or full time school had decreased to 20% of children. These families were contacted and additional offline work / paper packs were provided including reading books. These were also the pupils invited to attend school after the spring break.

55% of children (120) returned to the classroom on 8<sup>th</sup> June (Summer 2). This was the maximum capacity school could welcome back with the restraints of bubbles of 15 children.

#### September reopening:

Transitioning children into their next year group early (teacher and classroom ) through the use of bubbles, eased the children into their new year group when September came. This also gave teachers an excellent opportunity to get to know the specific needs of 50% of their upcoming class early. Smaller bubble sizes enabled teachers to target

teaching and learning, implementing interventions in order to close the gap prior to starting the new school year (specifically for SEN and LA children) Teacher knowledge of children has meant that they are more prepared for September start and can address learning immediately.

Activities provided for home school learning and within the classroom focused on consolidation of areas of learning already covered. This ensured minimal slippage of learning meaning that areas missed and needing to be built into the curriculum this year are easily identified.

Regular contact throughout lockdown and the Summer holidays with both children and families has ensured that children felt safe and excited to return to school.- In fact the children came back to school as if they had just been home for the weekend.

Before children returned to school each class teacher personally rang to speak to both the parents and children who would be joining their class. This was a chance to introduce themselves and an opportunity for parents to ask questions or voice any concerns they might have had about their children returning to school. These phone calls were very much appreciated by families.

At the start of September the children who had not attended school at all during lockdown were invited for 2 days before being joined by the rest of their class. This gave an opportunity to focus on wellbeing and address what has been happening and any concerns they might have.

Due to the PSHE weekly lessons from the start of September all potential issues were addressed.

From the off all teachers have been using the NCETM progression document to assess against during the initial assessment period at the start of September using key learning statements from previous year group will identify gaps, for both whole class and individual children/groups which will be included in curriculum review.

The first 2 weeks of September, with whole school return have been particularly settled. Children have come in happy to return and ready, eager to begin learning. Children and parents have adjusted to new routines and changes to the school day with little difficulty. This is down to the regular contact and focus on wellbeing during the periods when children did not attend.

We celebrate how The Cathedral School of St Peter and St John RC Community came together. The school had 89% attendance with COVID 19 absences. And to date it is 94%

The children /parents are extremely happy to be back and are eager to learn.