



Policy for Remote Teaching and Learning during COVID-19 School Closure

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

Last Reviewed: May 2020

Next Review: May 2021

Staff Lead: Mrs C Pretty

Policy for Remote Teaching and Learning during the COVID-19 School Closure Period

This policy is a response to the current COVID-19 situation and related national school closures.

It is based on these principles:

1. We will continue to provide engaging, meaningful learning experiences for all of our students.
2. We will recognise the challenges that many of our students and their families face with regards to home learning.
3. We will recognise the challenges that our staff face in terms of working from home.

We will continue to provide engaging, meaningful learning experiences for all of our students.

What does this mean?

- Students will receive work that has clearly defined objectives.
- At appropriate points, students will receive feedback on specific aspects of their work to which they should be expected to respond.
- To be engaging, the work will draw on a variety of resources, including video, where appropriate. An increasing range of online resources are becoming available; *see Appendix for more details.*
- Work will be accessible to all students and appropriate stretch, challenge and enrichment will be provided. The growing selection of online resources provides ample opportunity for the latter.
- We will recognise that completing work independently may take students longer than it would in class with the help of a teacher, support staff member or their peers. In the home environment, students are having to process and apply content on their own.
- The current main platforms through which work will be delivered to students are: Show My Homework, Frog Os, Hegarty Maths and Seneca as well as via the academy's internal email account. All of these allow staff to upload additional resources, however, we are increasing the amount of pre-recorded lessons staff are making and posting on some of these platforms. We are also developing our live learning provision with a view to all year groups (7, 8, 9, 10 and 12) being in a position to be provided with some kind of offer by 1 June 2020 using Microsoft Teams.
- High quality work should be formally acknowledged and if at all possible, celebrated via newsletters, email or the academy's verified Twitter accounts.
- Where students consistently do not engage with the work set, we will continue setting it but also refer the matter to the respective pastoral team. Staff members know that if they feel concerned enough to do so, they will also log their concern via the academy's safeguarding referral platform, MyConcern.

What does this not mean?

- There remains no direct expectation that all staff members will provide interactive video lessons in place of or to accompany any work set for our students. However, as the academy potentially moves towards providing such an additional learning platform, specific and clear guidance on this can be found later in this policy document.
- Feedback is not required on all work set as this would not be the case in normal teaching circumstances. However, staff should try and be explicitly clear with our students as well as their parents and carers in terms of what work will be marked and/or fed back on.

We will recognise the challenges that many of our students and their families face with remote learning.

- We will ensure, as far as possible, that work set is provided in a format that the vast majority of students will be able to work on at home and via the secure and established platforms already alluded to.
- Where families indicate there is a specific IT or work related problem, we will endeavour to address it as quickly and as professionally as possible.
- We will avoid setting work that requires students to print out documents; many families have no access to a printer and we must all remain acutely aware of the pressure any associated cost could bring at a time when many are now struggling financially due to the impact of the ongoing lockdown.
- Where work is consistently not being accessed and any email reminders or prompts are also not being responded to, we should make the respective pastoral team aware. However, where subsequent engagement from the respective parents or carer is also not forthcoming, or there are extenuating issues or additional pastoral concerns, this must be referred to the safeguarding team via MyConcern or alternatively if MyConcern cannot be accessed, via a direct email.

We will recognise the challenges that teachers face in working from home.

Working remotely presents difficulties for all of us and we simply cannot replicate the academy's normal learning environment. Staff members have differing home circumstances meaning it is difficult to have exact expectations about how they will work, however, there are some basics we must all try and adhere to:

- Unless individual circumstances dictate otherwise, staff will set work each week for our respective classes. This should not be the same amount as we would if we were in the academy due to the challenges already alluded to earlier in this policy document and that independent working poses to our students.
- Staff will provide timely feedback to our students on specific pieces of work. This should be via the various established platforms we are currently using and can be in the form of brief positive comments, whole class feedback or specific targets as appropriate.
- Staff will endeavour to stay in touch with our colleagues and the academy via email, phone or video call as appropriate, when politely requested in a timely manner or when deemed necessary.
- Staff will follow up lack of engagement from students in terms of work set in the ways clearly set out in this policy.
- It would be appreciated if staff who are part-time, again, if circumstances allow, were able to offer some flexibility in their working patterns across the week to support colleagues, both in terms of subject classes and administrative tasks.

Video Lesson Protocols

Whilst there is no direct expectation that any staff member will conduct live video lessons with students, there will be occasions when this is both possible as well as desirable. However, for those who do not wish to conduct these or are not comfortable in accessing and using the technology to do so, they can do things short of live lessons that go some way to approaching a more typical classroom environment for students such as:

- The use of a growing amount of online lessons (see *Appendix* for resources).
- The creation of our own pre-recorded lessons such as PowerPoints with teacher narration and/or video. The creation of such resources can be organised at a faculty/subject level to facilitate the sharing of good practice.

Where staff do decide to undertake live video lessons with students, they will need to be guided by two fundamental principles:

1. Safeguarding **both** you as well as our students.
2. Ensuring access for **all** students as much as we possibly can.

Some basic guidance will now be referred to, however, further details on Video lesson protocols can be found in the *Appendix*.

Safeguarding both the teacher and students

- Live lessons will take place through the secure platform, Microsoft Teams. When using this platform, logging in through your academy only email provides the security offered by our internal servers and associated systems.
- You will **always** initiate the session and will **not** join sessions led by a student.
- You will choose a blank/blurred background for the video to ensure privacy; students will be instructed as well as expected to do the same should they be asked to turn their camera on. Student cameras should be **off** unless otherwise directed.
- You will **always** be the last person to leave the session. This ensures all communication between students in the session is supervised by you only.
- You will control comments in the session and where/if necessary, mute any student who comments/contributes in an unacceptable manner.
- You will **not** invite any of our parents/carers to any live lessons.
- Live lessons **must** be recorded and best practice is to have 2 adults in each lesson
- **All contact/use of such applications should be via your academy-related account only, NOT any form of private or non-academy verified platform or app.**

Ensuring access for all students

Video lessons will not be accessible to all students for a variety of reasons including a lack of appropriate technology. Therefore:

- Video lessons should be recorded so that if they are being taught fundamentally important information students can access this at a different time through the recording.
- Alternative avenues of communication should, if at all possible, be provided such as the post-session recording of the session on Show My Homework or sent out to the whole class via the academy's internal email system.
- Video lessons should try and take place according to the timetabled slot to avoid clashes with any other planned activities as well as to assist students and their parents/carers to plan out their respective daily schedules.

Appendix

Online teaching resources

1. The Oak National Academy has produced lesson plans, content and video lessons to complement our own teaching. All are free to use by any teacher and/or parents/carers and is well worth a look if you have not already done so:

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

2. **BBC Bitesize**

This already had a wealth of resources but has now been further enhanced with daily programmes, podcasts etc.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

3. There are also many virtual tours of zoos, museums, galleries, online courses plus other ideas here:

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

Video Lesson Protocols

Which platforms can we use for video conferencing?

Microsoft Teams (**only**) has been approved by the academy's SLT for the delivery of live video lessons.

Are chat sessions (video or audio) with students allowed?

Only whole class or group sessions are allowed. You should **never** conduct 1:1 video, audio or chat sessions with a student.

If we are audio chatting with a group of students does a parent/carer or other adult need to be present?

No. Parents/carers can help their child set up devices, but should not join any group/class chats you lead. When the live online session is finished, you should wait for **all** students to exit the meeting before leaving. This ensures that students do not continue chatting after the lesson has finished without you being present.

How is teacher and student privacy protected?

Microsoft Teams has the ability to customise the screen settings by either blurring the background or loading a static picture.

If you are using Microsoft Teams, all students should have their cameras turned off unless you specifically ask them to turn them on, in which case they should blur or set their background to an appropriate static picture.

How long should a live online session be?

Live lessons can last for up to one hour, however, they should not exceed this and due to the nature of the delivery, many will of course be much shorter than this.

Do we have to upload videos to reach teaching and learning requirements? Is it compulsory?

Pre-recorded lessons and live sessions can be helpful, but they remain **non-compulsory**. Teachers communicate with students in many ways, including uploading worksheets and other work-related tasks via the previously mentioned approved and embedded learning platforms.

Setting up the technology and surrounding environment

- Provide clear instructions to students on how they can access the video lesson and if there is any form of password needed to access the online classroom.
- To avoid annoying feedback loops, teachers and students should, if at all possible, test their audio, webcam and speakers in advance. Most applications have built-in testing tools anyway.
- Where possible, students and teachers should be in a quiet space with a simple background behind them. The background where possible should not include thoroughfares or active spaces that might inadvertently lead to inappropriate vision or distractions.
- **The teacher(s) and all participating students should be in a neutral area (not in their bedrooms) and all parties should be appropriately dressed.**

Preparing for a video conference class

- As part of your lesson preparation, if deemed necessary, we recommend that students download learning materials to be used in the classroom before the lesson.
- If at all possible, prepare an agenda or plan for each class that you can share at the beginning of the lesson. This gives participating students a clear idea as to how the class will progress, what will be covered and the activities they will engage in.

Running a video conference classroom

- The video conference room is a classroom and the same standards and expectations in terms of behaviour, attitude and respect apply to this alternative environment.
- Do not allow any unauthorised access to the video conference room. This includes parents/carers or any other family members.
- Microsoft Teams will allow you to remove participants if deemed necessary.
- You should enter the room before the start time. Students should **not** be in the online room without a teacher who is the host or co-host for the lesson.
- Students **must turn off their cameras** unless they need to demonstrate their learning to the class.
- Be careful when using screen sharing – it can be easy to accidentally share confidential information. **We also strongly recommend that you shut down any email programmes during the lesson.**
- The chat facility within Teams should be solely for the asking and answering of questions during a lesson.