BLENDED LEARNING POLICY

Version control	
Aspirations Blended Learning Policy [2020-12-17]	New policy

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1. General Policy

The aim of this policy is to consider the practical implementation of blended learning across a number of eventualities in order to ensure pupils, teachers, parents and other stakeholders are clear about expectations and responsibilities.

This policy draws on recommendations made in the:

- NEU: https://neu.org.uk/advice/coronavirus-blended-learning-guidance
- NASWT report on blended learning: https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/in-the-classroom/remote-and-blended-learning.html
- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research evidence on supporting pupils to learn remotely: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/best-evidence-on-supportingstudents-to-learn-remotely/
- Government guidelines on remote learning included in its guidance to schools on wider opening: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools

2. Our Aim

Aspirations Academies Trust aims to provide education and support to our pupils, using in-school teaching, remote learning and/or a combination of both. Flexibility is the key, taking into account the current pandemic circumstances but also working to utilise 'blended learning' as an essential part of the future education provision. Depending on the circumstances and age of pupils, learning will be conducted using in-school teaching and learning, educational packs of resources and remote learning, primarily based around Google Classroom. This will ensure that the needs of all pupils are catered for and will allow staff to keep in daily contact and provide a two-way platform for learning and teaching, in a professional and confidential manner with all pupils. Teaching and learning can be tailored, changed and updated as time progresses, in-line with DfE circular 2020/06, allowing for replication of classroom activity to the best of our ability. As part of this, the Continuum of Remote Learning will be embedded. In all communications we will adhere to our commitment to maintaining pupil wellbeing.

3. Research Evidence

There is an emerging body of research into "blended learning", a style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching. This approach to teaching and learning has grown exponentially due to widespread school closure as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. The EEF have identified the following key areas to consider for successful blended learning provision.

a) **Teaching quality is more important than how teaching is delivered**. Providing that the established principles for introducing new knowledge are adhered to (explanation/self-discovery, scaffolding, feedback) then there is no difference between the effectiveness of real time remote lessons or pre-recorded material. What matters most is that each learning sequence builds on prior understanding.
b) **Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils.** Lack of access to appropriate technology is a barrier to effective participation in remote learning. We need to be aware of pupils who may have less access than others and require extra provision/ support.
c) **Peer interaction provides motivation and improves learning outcomes.** Peer marking, modelling and sharing of work/group work, as well as live discussion and the use of shared forum functions for collaborative learning are all useful strategies to motivate and help progress whilst engaging learners.
d) **Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes:** Using metacognitive approaches to encourage reflection and promote deliberate practice helps learners engage more effectively but also reminds them of key learning and thinking skills.

e) **Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils.** Teachers will be supported to reflect on different approaches to remote learning and what will be most effective to deliver their subject content through ongoing CPD and coaching.

4. Defining Remote Provision

We recognise that personal contact with our pupils is key to maintaining motivation and engagement, as well as sustaining fruitful relationships, both teacher/pupil, peer to peer and with parents. We also recognise that when providing remote learning variety is key. The research is clear that pupils should be facilitated to engage in a variety of remote learning activities, including direct instruction, recorded sequences, quizzes, formal assessments, discussion forums and online material.

We also consider ongoing pastoral support to be central to ensuring our pupils remain linked to their school community. This occurs through a variety of contact with a range of teachers and support staff, both in person whilst at school and remotely.

The government has specified minimum expectations for remote provision:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day, including new material - planning a programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.
- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject.
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work.
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding.

5. Styles of Remote Learning

5.1. Pre-recorded lessons:

Pre-recorded segments are suitable for saving and might be useful for going over key concepts. This is very different to the recording of live lessons, which are live interactions. They can be accessed more flexibly, at times convenient to pupils, and paused and re-watched.

Leaders should:

- Provide space in school or college as a suitable setting for recording materials for lessons. Where possible, any pre-recording should be done in the workplace. If done at home, it should be in a very neutral environment: no bedrooms, no distractions, personal or family pictures in the background, anything that could be a distraction from the lesson focus.

Teachers should:

- Think about the pace of your introductions and explanations, and of the lesson as a whole: give students enough thinking time and encourage them to pause the recording a number of times to think about something or do a particular task. (A videoed lesson relies on pupils being very proactive and works best for revisiting things previously taught in the classroom.)
- Explicitly link the recorded lesson to the term's work, what has come before and after it, e.g. when we are back in school we'll be moving onto X topic, so we will need to know this...

Academies must ensure they have clear safeguarding policies and practises in place. Ideally, the teacher should not be visible on camera. However, in limited cases where the teaching requires a teacher to be visible on camera, clear procedure should be put in place by the school. These include:

- Clear procedures for staff to follow where a child protection issue arises during a live stream (e.g. the staff member witnesses behaviour which suggests a child may be at risk of harm).
- Pupils should not be visible on screen at any time.
- At home, pupils' cameras should be visible to the teacher but not one another.
- Pupils' microphones should not be audible to one another unless the teacher makes it so, for questions, e.g. for Q&A session.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Staff

- To provide new learning as well as reinforcement and consolidation of prior learning.
- To build upon and improve the skills learned during lockdown as appropriate.
- To promote an ethos of inclusion, respect fairness and equality.
- To ensure that cyber resilience and internet safety is central to all digital technology.
- To provide and support guidance for pupils.
- To keep abreast of research and national agenda.
- To engage with effective learning and teaching resources e.g. Oak Academy.
- To foster and open pathway of communication between the school and home where appropriate.
- To adhere to government Safeguarding and Health and Safety guidelines.

Staff will

- Select an appropriate teaching and learning approach with learning tasks that are complementary and coherent across learning environments.
- Provide broad, general education remote learning tasks.
- Provide targeted support to learners with particular needs.
- Provide appropriate literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing tasks for the days the pupil is not attending school.
- Direct children to sites which can support learning activities.
- Feedback to pupils in response to questions or requests through learning platforms either individually or as a whole class.
- Consider the most important elements of teaching and learning that are needed and which elements will be more difficult to explain remotely.
- Focus classroom work on key areas and modelling.
- Make use of remote sessions to check knowledge, independent practice, extended writing pieces to consolidate what they have learned.
- Be mindful that extra support may be required where parents and guardians are less able to support for a variety of reasons.

Please give teachers time to respond to questions or queries – please remember the majority of children will still be in school and will require the teacher's immediate presence

The Role of Pupils

- To help ensure that everyone feels valued, respected and included
- To contribute their views during remote learning
- To engage in learning through digital platforms
- To offer peer support and guidance through shared learning where appropriate
- To complete remote learning tasks whether technology or paper based
- To approach remote learning tasks in the same way that they would approach classroom activities, abiding by the same high expectations
- To follow the school's online safety guidelines.

The Role of Parents

- To support the school values.
- To foster an open pathway of communication between the school and home where appropriate.
- Utilise remote learning platforms to access remote learning materials which support, complement and consolidate school learning.
- Ensure your child completes remote learning tasks whether technology or paper based.
- Communicate when work is unable to be completed or if there are any technical issues we may be able to help with.

6. Safeguarding

Keeping children and teachers safe when providing remote education is essential. Remote education is a new experience for both staff and pupils, so it is important that schools understand how to approach safeguarding procedures online. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of a safe online environment and encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on.

If you have any concerns phone the academy office on 01202 606888 or use the contact details on the contacts page of the academy website. All information will be treated in confidence and where necessary reported to the appropriate agencies.

In order to make sure that your child stays safe online, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that access to the platform is made through the parent/carers account unless your child meets the age restrictions for the platform.
- For primary age children a parent or carer will remain near enough to monitor, whilst allowing enough privacy for them to concentrate on their work.
- Students/parents/carers should ensure that there are no distractions
- It is not appropriate for parents or carers to take part unless invited to do so.
- Where possible your child must take part in video calls in a suitable communal environment. We appreciate that this is not always possible and some of the video calling software has a built-in option to 'blur' the background - you may feel this is an appropriate feature to turn on. All members of the household must be aware that the call is taking place and make sure they use appropriate language and behaviour when nearby or in the background.
- Your child must be appropriately dressed (uniform is not necessary, but they should not be dressed in sleepwear and should be fully dressed in clothing that covers the top and bottom half of the body).
- You will make sure your child has 'logged off' the call correctly and signed out before turning off any devices.
- You and your child will not try to contact any teachers or school staff using these online tools outside of the pre-arranged calls. If you need to contact a teacher or

member of school staff for any reason, you will do so following your normal contact procedures.
- Students must listen to instructions and enable or disable their microphone when requested.
- The same rules of conduct and behaviour will apply as apply in the classroom.
- Students/parents/carers should not take photos, screenshots, record and video or audio from sessions or attempt to live stream it from their mobile phones.
- Any breaches of the points above will result in students being immediately removed from the session, potentially being banned from all future sessions and further sanctions may be implemented in accordance with the academy's behaviour policy.

In order to protect your child, we will follow these guidelines:

- No teacher or member of school staff will contact you or your child outside of any pre-arranged meetings using these online tools and if they do need to contact you will do so following their normal contact procedures.
- Teachers will check any links or videos they may direct your child to and make sure everything they use is age appropriate.
- Teachers and other adults on the call will use appropriate language/behaviour throughout the call.
- If not in school, teachers will ensure they are in a communal living space throughout the call. Where possible they will blur the background in any video calls and any members of their household will use appropriate language/behaviour throughout the call.
- We may record and store sessions on school systems for safeguarding purposes.
- Ensure that online learning tools are in line with data protection and GDPR policies.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your child's use of online tools, please contact us. We appreciate your continued support during this challenging time.

7. Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND)

Some of our children who have a high level of special needs may require a mixture of technology and paper copies to access learning. This can be discussed with the class teacher and appropriate resources could be provided should the activity require it to support their learning.

8. Workload

The Aspirations Academies Trust acknowledges that application of blended learning can have implications for the workload of those delivering the curriculum. To a large extent this will be driven by contextual circumstances, e.g. where remote learning has to be delivered in conjunction with ongoing learning in the classroom. Principals will keep this under careful consideration, consulting with the workforce and trade unions as appropriate with a view to identifying where workload pressures are a concern and addressing these, as appropriate.

9. Monitoring arrangements

Application of the Policy will be monitored by Principals and Regional CEOs and others as directed by the Managing Director. The policy will be reviewed at least on an annual basis under the authority of the Managing Director. Any amendment will be subject to consideration of the Executive Operational Board.