SAINTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Blended Learning Policy

2021

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Introduction

The Blended Learning Policy at Saintfield High School is our response to the unprecedented challenges faced over the past two academic years to provide quality learning and teaching. It is a formal approach to education that creates an integrated learning environment where physical 'face-to-face' and online learning and teaching become complementary, with the purpose of giving our students a more diverse and engaging learning experience. The policy has been developed as a response to a specific need, the Covid-19 pandemic, and has been developed and refined to reflect the changes in circumstance and requirements of the pandemic. The principles highlighted in this policy have been successfully delivered by all staff both in school and online, and the experiences learned will continue to inform and direct future delivery.

As students and teachers in Saintfield High School continue to familiarise themselves with digital ways of learning and teaching - both in and outside the classroom – it is clear that these pedagogies are opening up new and exciting opportunities for the future of education. While this shift towards tech-enabled learning presents great opportunities for education, the challenges associated with safety and security in the classroom are growing increasingly complex and will be foremost in planning and developing policies and practices.

This policy also outlines the types and methods of blended learning we will offer and provides guidance on the approach to blended learning that should be taken by staff, students and parents/carers to ensure consistency of approach across all parts of the school. Consequently, we will continue to provide engaging, exciting and challenging learning opportunities, both in school and at home. Additionally, the well-being of students and staff is a significant consideration as we recognise that learning can give a sense of purpose and achievement, which is essential for mental well-being. The policy aims to ensure a seamless and efficient blend of in school and at home learning, allowing students to make progress while staff workload remains manageable and realistic.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that blended learning, teaching and assessment meets the guidelines set out in each qualification awarding organisations through internal and external quality assurance processes;
- To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual students;
- To build and grow knowledge that may be additional to the main study programme;
- Enhance learning by blending the approach, providing a range of learning opportunities for all, embracing new technologies to support this learning;
- Increase accessibility to equipment and technology so that all students can access the full range of learning activities.

How to achieve these Aims:

Staff will continually be informed on current Blended Learning pedagogy and new technologies and applications to facilitate Blended Learning;

The Blended Learning Coordinator will communicate with students and their parents/carers on the mode of delivery for their programme of study and any changes in approach to maximise learning potential;

Teaching, delivery, assessment and support staff are time-tabled effectively to support blended learning when students are working remotely and have access to the technology to facilitate face to face and online teaching concurrently;

There is a platform in place to manage the effective delivery of lessons, coordinate materials and provide effective feedback on assignments, namely Google Classroom, which is adopted as a whole school approach. This includes questions answered constructively, and feedback provided in a timely manner using the platform, so that wherever possible, assignments are set during face-to-face sessions, and ensuring deadlines are clear and understood by all students;

Measures are in place to verify that work submitted by the student is authentic and completed by the student, such as the plagiarism tool within Google Classroom;

Qualification and unit specification requirements for delivery and assessment for each specification at KS4 are met, as prescribed by the awarding organisation;

Ensure safeguarding measures considered during blended learning delivery, including the use of video and audio, used simultaneously in school and at home to ensure both teacher and student safety at all times;

That all blended learning materials are accessible to students and are kept up to date and in line with specific requirements;

That student progress will be tracked and monitored using Google Classroom as principle the tool in monitoring and evaluating pupil progress;

Communication with parents/carers is frequent and includes comments on student progress and schedules of assessments and assignments, including weekly pupil progress summaries in Google Classroom;

Identification of individual student needs and the required support and allocation of appropriate technology and/or hardware to ensure all students can access online learning, including the allocation and delivery of ipads;

Students will have access to a Saintfield High School email account as part of their enrolment, and in their first ICT classes, will learn about the functionality of Google Classroom and be provided with Google Classroom codes. Additionally, all students will be provided with a digital guide to explain how Google Classroom works.

Potential Formats of Curriculum Delivery moving forward:

Outlined below are the various formats of curriculum delivery that Saintfield High School have already delivered and continue to deliver, and may adopt at any given point during the academic year in response to changes in circumstances.

- Face-to-Face Lessons - The vast majority of students attending Saintfield High School for their timetabled lessons receive face-to-face teaching.

- Hybrid Approach - There will be a need to synchronously stream in class lessons for students studying at home, for example, for students that are self-isolating. This is achieved through using camera and audio technology in class, and in home environments, with safeguarding a key priority.

- Blended Approach - Students receive face-to-face lessons for a proportion of their timetabled classes and the remainder are delivered online. This may include the school week divided as per subjects, or year groups.

- Remote - In the event of a full or partial school closure, all curriculum delivery converts to online learning via Google Classroom at the scheduled timetabled time. There will be dedicated provision for vulnerable students and/or students with a Statement of Educational Need.

Key Principles

1. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered;

2. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils;

3. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes;

4. Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes.

Therefore, it is important that everything put in place meets the four guidelines referenced above and that we as a school have clear expectations for blended learning.

Effective use of Google Classroom

- Establish a Google Classroom for each individual class and ensure it is used in the most effective and efficient way, for example, using the 'Classwork' tab to set tasks, rather than the 'Stream' tab. It is important that each individual class has their own Google Classroom rather than being part of a 'Subject Year Group' classroom, so that the class teacher can monitor his/her own pupils' engagement and progress and individual interaction and feedback between teacher and student. The establishment of the Google Classroom and its effective use is the responsibility of the class teacher:

- Ensure that the title/label of the Google Classroom clearly identifies the class, subject and teacher so that pupils can easily identify and quickly access classrooms;

- Recognise the need for one 'work stream' - the work completed during face-to-face learning will complement and consolidate the work completed by pupils remotely, and vice versa;

• Consider and plan for the 'work stream' to be completed, anticipating likely questions and problems that pupils may encounter.

Effective Classroom Pedagogy

• **<u>Ensure face-to-face learning incorporates:</u>**

- the introduction of new concepts;

- the explanation of difficult concepts;

- problem solving;

- explicit teaching of new skills;

- tasks that complement and consolidate the learning that takes place at home;

- interactive discussion;

- practical lessons (as/when appropriate);

- the use of class time to personalise learning.

• **<u>Ensure at-home learning incorporates:</u>**

- tasks that complement and consolidate the learning that takes place in the classroom;

- tasks that pupils can complete to enhance learning that takes place in the classroom, for example,

research of/reading about a new topic to be introduced;

- tasks that allow pupils to practise new skills learnt during face-to-face time in school;

- note-taking, summarising and formation of questions in preparation for face-to-face time in school.

• **<u>Online Approaches:</u>**

• 'Chunk' work that is to be completed, masses of content should not simply be 'dropped' into Google Classroom with a completion date. Teachers should consider learning objectives for periods of two weeks and ensure that all tasks to be completed (both in school and at home) allow pupils to meet these objectives;

• Clearly communicate learning objectives, for each two week period of work, to pupils so that they know exactly what is expected of them and what they will be doing in school and at home;

• Make deadlines for work completion clear to pupils. Make explicit the method of how pupils can submit completed written work (e.g. during face to face lessons on paper/books, by uploading to Google Classroom etc.);

• Provide clear instructions for how the work set can be completed. These instructions can be delivered during the face-to-face time with pupils but should also

be available for pupils to access at home, either by uploading them to Google Classroom or by including them in the paper resources provided;

• Consider how videos/podcasts can be used effectively to supplement, complement, and assist with the completion of work set.

Marking, Feedback and Assessment

Marking, feedback and assessment of any work completed and/or submitted online will adhere to existing practices within the school. Please note that teaching staff will use a range of strategies to ask for completed student work, for example, work uploaded digitally, work photographed and uploaded digitally, written work submitted in hard copy etc. written feedback remains the same online as it would with face-to-face lessons, however, teachers may make use of audio and video methods online (for example, the use of Mote as an application, and the videoing of practical elements).

Safety and Security

While technology has become crucial for education, the rapid rise of digital learning is intensifying security challenges for schools, teachers and students. In regular surveys, over 80% of parents/carers report feeling concerned about their children's safety online. Comprehensive security protections are vital in ensuring that the continued shift to digital learning doesn't compromise classroom security, and secures the commitment of students and parents/carers to working on line.

With education moving largely online, both in school and for work at home, technology has become even more central to learning and teaching. We are seeing many varied hybrid teaching models emerge and while it's clear that distance learning will play a major role in the future of education, its rapid rise will expose new challenges. From the variety of devices in use by students at home, to the varying dynamics of a virtual classroom, school technology leaders will need to keep pace with a rapidly changing and increasingly complex landscape. As technology in classrooms becomes ever more prevalent, it is vitally important for teachers to upskill and adapt to new classroom tools and technology. The school will hold regular staff training sessions where the Blended Learning Co-ordinator describes, explains and demonstrates advances and developments in new technologies and pedagogies through the prism of safeguarding student and staff privacy and safety.

As hybrid teaching models become more established, multiple devices and education technology solutions are making their way into the classroom. This combination of ad-hoc technologies - some of which might not be designed with an educational audience in mind - will create new privacy and security hurdles. As a school we will be abreast of all best practice regarding safeguarding as well as C2K security.

For students who don't have reliable at-home broadband, leading them to lean on public Wi-Fi or hotspots to attend lessons, Google Classroom will shortly allow students to work off line on assignments, which they can automatically save and then hand in, once a hot spot or Wi-Fi is connected with the built in Google Classroom security settings.

In summary, as a school, we will continue to include a wide range of relevant education technologies in our teaching. It is paramount that the best-practice

principles of security and safety become baked into our learning and teaching practices. We will have a proactive mind-set which supports parents and carers provide the tools to teach children about digital citizenship, or to ensure that students feel empowered to be able to ask the right questions and find the best answers. As technology and pedagogy continue to evolve, there will hopefully be opportunities for teachers, parents/carers to work together to enable safer, more secure learning and teaching environments so that every student - no matter how or where they learn - can be set up to succeed in a safe on-line environment.

Blended Learning as a Whole School Approach

For Blended Learning to be successful, the aims must support the vision and ethos of the school, and be integrated into and inform whole school policies including:

Coordination with the school's Pupil Well-Being Team and Study for Success Team to support each student to engage in the blended learning strategy;

Evaluate targets within Action Planning to scrutinise the success of current practice;

Support the continued progression and improvement of quality learning and teaching and sharing good practice;

SEN, Child Protection and all other relevant and important documentation is considered including external policies such as ISEF and Learning Leaders.