



Distance Learning Guidelines and Expectations during the School Closure: Students and Parents/Guardians

January 11th 2021

Rationale

To support national efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 Scoil Dara, along with all schools in Ireland, has been directed by the Department of Education and Skills to take all measures practicable to support optimal student learning in circumstances where schools are directed to close - by providing subject material, quality learning opportunities, assignments, feedback and assessment in an online or remote format for all our students.

Undoubtedly the current pandemic and its impact upon society have presented significant challenges for us all and we are face with complex demands as individuals and families. As a school community we are also keenly aware that this may be a confusing and stressful time for students and their families and that engaging in school work online may prove challenging in terms of online access, organisation, time management, management of self and sustaining engagement.

Aware of the challenges inherent in this remote circumstance we have endeavored to develop guidelines to support engagement in high quality, effective and sustained distance learning. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with all our school policies, including the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, etc.

We have also referred to the 'Guidance on Continuity of Schooling' documents (in relation to teaching and learning online, SEN, Guidance Counselling etc.) issued by the Department of Education and Skills in recent weeks in the development of this document.

We take this opportunity to commend the positive engagement and learning endeavors of our students and the continued and very tangible support of our community of parents and guardians.

Guidelines and Expectations Students

In general we would recommend that students should:

- adhere to a routine that allows them to engage with school-work in a way that supports their learning progress.
- engage with work and with teachers online during the school day and keep late afternoons and evenings free for creative and physical activities as well as manageable, focused revision for exam students.
- refer to the established timetable as a guide to engagement with work shared and scheduled with them by subject teachers/ to attend "live" classes/to access recorded material/to access relevant support resources/to up-load and submit assignments.

- recognise that their learning will be supported through a variety of teaching strategies including live-classes, recorded lessons and demonstrations, presentations, resource and support material up-loads, links to on-line resources/tutorials, class check-in and feedback sessions, etc.
- check their MS Teams and e-mail accounts regularly and in a timely manner, managing their engagement and learning and corresponding with subject teachers regarding any issues that may arise.
- complete and upload work/assignments by the deadline set by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to complete the work.
- correspond with teachers/tutors/ the relevant Year Head if unable to / if unwell / for any other reason that prevents engagement and the submission of assignment(s).

Please note the following -

- Students experiencing particular difficulties - access difficulties / difficulties in relation to work / needing additional time for assignments/ with questions regarding assignments - please contact your subject teacher, as you would do in a normal classroom-based lesson.
- The preferred online platform "MS Teams" offers a comprehensive suite of educational applications and resources. Every student has access to MS Teams as part of their Office365 platform accessed by log-in, using their @sdk.ie e-mail address and password. From the Office365 platform the application can be downloaded to the desktop of a device and easily accessed from there. MS Teams supports live classes, recorded up-loads, document sharing and is compatible with all MS applications – Word, PowerPoint, Forms etc.
- All 'live' online classes will take place during school time and students will be notified in a timely manner by their teachers using the calendar application in MS Teams as to when those classes will take place. hours in advance by the teacher.
- "live" lessons require a shared regard for the community of learners gathered. There is a responsibility on the part of all students to support and contribute to this learning opportunity positively.
- If a student is invited to attend a 'live' class online the student should attend the class punctually with the relevant materials to hand (e.g. pens, copybook, other resources). Teachers will have overall control over who is permitted to join or be removed from the class.
- For all on-line interaction, correspondence and engagement the Scoil Dara policy documents apply. In particular that Code of Behaviour, Acceptable User Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy have relevance and authority in this space. Our community of learning is predicated on the expectation and sharing of respect and regard for and with others.
- In 'live' online classes, students must follow agreed protocols, and must not interrupt the teacher during the lesson. Questions should be sent to the teacher via the messaging/chat function on the MS Teams platform.
- Students must adhere to the settings that the teacher has in place and must keep their microphone muted throughout the lesson or as requested, (must ensure their camera function stays off - as requested) and should minimise any movement/distraction during the lesson.
- Correspondence with school staff should take place within the normal working hours (9am-4pm).
- Students may use the chat functions for questions / discussions about the work /sharing relevant and focused information/ answering a query from the teacher and not for any other purpose. Only the teacher may turn on a student's microphone when they are invited to contribute and the student's microphone will be turned off again, once the student's contribution to the discussion is finished.
- Recording of a live lesson (audio / video / photographs /using any other devices etc.) by students is strictly prohibited and will be addressed with reference to the agreed Code of Behaviour

- The recording and posting of any video/live lessons on any social media platform is strictly prohibited and will be addressed with reference to the agreed Code of Behaviour.

Support from Parents/Guardians

- Parents/Guardians could support their son/daughter in the development of a positive learning routine, one that allows them to engage with learning participation and school-work in a way that suits them and the family group.

Parents/Guardians should check-in regularly with students regarding the schedule of work and student organisation for it/ Assignments and deadlines and student address of these/ on-line classes and recorded material. Helping students to manage their learning and time efficiency is key.

- Parents/guardians should encourage students to try and complete any online schoolwork to the best of their abilities.
- Parents/guardians should encourage students to communicate with their subject teacher, tutor, Year Head, SE teachers, Guidance teachers regarding issues that may arise.
- Parents/guardians could contact the relevant Year Head by email if you would like to bring anything to our attention or have specific concerns regarding student engagement, student wellbeing, illness, etc.
- By facilitating your child's 'live' online lessons in your home, your child's lessons may feel very different but the same rules of communication apply as if this were a regularly taught lesson in school. This means that the interaction during these lessons is to be between the teacher and students only.
- Parents/guardians will be able to keep a track of your child's engagement through checking in with them, supporting them with their work and looking at their e-portal records and accompanying submissions.
- Teachers are providing meaningful and appropriate differentiated assignments/home learning for their specific subject and class groups. This material will be posted by the teacher in advance of the timetabled class and any task/activities assigned can be completed according to the teacher's guidelines/deadlines.
- Subject teachers, tutors, Year Heads, the SEN team, SNAs, Guidance Counselling team and school management are available to support student engagement and wellbeing throughout the school closure. Please do not hesitate to contact a relevant staff member should you wish to share information and/or address a query.