



Blended Learning at Braes High School

As outlined by the First Minister, our young people are expected to return to learning on Monday 11th January 2021 within a Blended Learning model. At present, we have been advised that this approach will take place until at least 1st February 2021, with a review taking place before that point.

Our hope and priority has always been to ensure our pupils continue to learn in school, however, in anticipation of such a scenario, we have been working and planning as a school and authority to ensure that our young people continue to have the best possible learning experience, regardless of setting.

To assist with any queries you may have, I have outlined below a list of most commonly asked questions, which will provide you with clarity about what you and your young people can expect during this period of blended learning.

What is Blended Learning?

There are three main contexts for Blended Learning: self-isolation, e.g. as a result of awaiting a test result or being contact traced; partial closure, whereby a percentage of our young people attend school at varying times, and finally, a full school closure, in which all young people learn from home. In this instance, we are working within context three, whereby all young people will work from home, with course tasks set and supported by their class teachers.

Blended Learning is exactly as it sounds – it's a blend of learning that comprises face-to-face teaching in school with your class teachers as well as online learning from home. Blended Learning uses a virtual learning environment (VLE) to provide information, instructions and work for learners. What is important to remember is that blended learning can still include paper based and practical work. The learning itself does not have to be solely online but using the VLE to provide detailed instruction for learners on how to complete tasks (e.g. worksheets, practical tasks etc.)

How have we prepared for this scenario?

As part of our commitment towards growing Digital Literacy within Braes High, we have worked hard to raise staff capacity, pupil confidence and access to resources, all of which has prepared us for this announcement. As a school we have:

- ensured our young people have consistently engaged with Microsoft Teams for all current courses. This has resulted in improved confidence and familiarity when accessing work via this platform at home
- enhanced staff capacity with digital technology through increased CPD sessions
- increased staff and pupils resources and hardware
- been successful in our bid to Connected Scotland to grant devices and connectivity for families in need
- worked in collegiality with Connected Falkirk to plan for the deployment of one-to-one devices for all young people in 2021.

What will this look like for my child?

As a result of the previous lockdown in spring, our young people have both an experience and understanding of what it means to work from home. Whilst Blended Learning is no replacement for what happens in the classroom, we expect our young people to approach their studies with the same dedication and work ethic they so clearly demonstrate whilst in school. Our young people should aim to:

- **actively participate** in all planned home learning activities
- access stage appropriate learning and resources through their Microsoft Teams
- engage with any live interaction scheduled by their teachers
- submit work to their teachers for marking and feedback to measure, assess and communicate progress and development needs
- **respond and act upon teacher feedback** to ensure continued progress

How can I help as a parent and/or carer?

Parents can support their young person with learning from home by:

- working in partnership with the school to encourage their child to actively participate in their online learning activities
- supporting their young people to engage in any scheduled interactions by their teachers
- communicating any concerns with their child's learning at home to an identified member of staff in the school
- supporting their child to access online learning platforms and learning tasks
- accessing technical help and resources to support their child with online learning

How will the school help?

As a school, please be assured that our priority is to fully support all families during this time. Our aim is to:

- support parental engagement and understanding of what the blended learning model will look like for their child in their school
- manage and support staff planning and delivery of all learning to all classes at all levels and stages
- have an established a way of communicating with parents/carers to support pupil wellbeing and engagement with online learning
- ensure all online learning platforms are accurate and accessed regularly by staff and pupils
- ensure all young people have access to lesson content and resources whether online or as a paper copy
- offer and provide relevant staff CPD to continue to support staff with online learning platforms to maximise pupil engagement with their learning

What is a live interaction?

The term 'live interaction' refers to a variety of ways in which a teacher will connect with your child to support them with their learning. Live interaction experiences will vary dependent upon the course and staff member. A few examples of how this could look has been listed below:

- Live Interactions video meetings – teaching and meetings
- Live feed – where the teacher is live on camera or sharing lesson activity seen on camera

- Narrating live over shared online presentation or screen-sharing activity
- Helpdesk type facility – live chat or messaging for support at timetabled/specified times, perhaps as follow-up to teacher sessions and independent learning tasks
- Group work making use of channels or groups spaces in digital platform (such as in Microsoft Teams) to facilitate collaborative or group work
- Pre-recorded lessons including such things as narrated presentations and live feature (such as PowerPoint, Live Present or similar tools) with follow-up live interaction online such as in conversations in online platform or online activity
- Use of live digital polls/quizzes or feedback tools in order to generate discussion or provide later feedback (e.g. Polls in Microsoft Teams, Kahoot, Socrative, Mentimeter or other tools)
- Use of demonstrations such as using visualiser or second camera/device
- Use of photographs such as worked examples/key moments in lesson and shared online
- Check-in chat, introduction to later independent task

What resources are there to support my child?

There are a variety of resources available to support our young people. Falkirk Council recently launched their own dedicated Blended Learning website which offers links to support and resources for families and young people and can be accessed using the link below. You will find tutorials on accessing Microsoft Teams and a written guide for families.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/connectedfalkirk/blended-learning/>