

Thornton Primary School

Blended Learning Policy

2021-22



Approved by the Governing Body on
23rd September 2021

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(Chair of Governors)

Date of next review: September 2022



THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

BLENDED LEARNING POLICY

CONTEXT

The closure of schools in March 2020 due to Covid 19 saw a wide variety of home learning policy and practices implemented over the lockdown period, with a range of different outcomes for pupils. Difficulties included access to IT (staff and families), lack of time to prepare staff, pupils and families for long term home learning and a lack of training for staff on how to undertake and deliver 'virtual' learning.

In September 2020 as schools fully reopened, the issue of further outbreaks of Covid 19 quickly became an issue. However unlike in March, pupils are being sent home either individually or in smaller groups (bubbles) to self-isolate, leading to a need to provide teaching both virtually and face to face. This is an ever-changing situation and the requirements for pupils' isolating at home is likely to continue throughout the coming academic year with little notice. So, this needs careful planning and whole school policy and procedures which are understood and followed by all staff and understood by the school's community. Equally, the issue of access to IT remains a concern for many children and families and so strategies other than online learning continue to need to be provided.

The policy is written with reference to the latest research available from the EEF (September 2020)

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is an opportunity to ensure that homework and home learning is fully embedded into delivery of the school curriculum in a meaningful and sustainable way, whether pupils are self-isolating or not. Its purpose is to provide a structured approach to blended learning which ensures consistency and equity for all pupils. Blended learning will be offered for the period of time a child or children are not in school due to COVID-19 related isolation, e.g. self-isolation for individuals, self-isolation for 'bubbles', full school closure, closure due to inclement weather, pupil long term absence etc. Please see appendix 2 for further details.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010. We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

DEFINITIONS

A *blended learning* approach is where students learn at home via electronic, online media, through paper 'packs' of resources as well as traditional face-to-face teaching to ensure pupils are given equal opportunities to access the curriculum, whether in school or learning at home.

Remote learning builds on and complements what is done at school. The blended learning approach considers how to incorporate:

- *synchronous learning* – where pupils and teachers interact in a specific virtual space, through a specific online medium, at a specific time – video conferencing, live chatting, live streaming lesson.
- *asynchronous learning* – where learning happens on the individual's schedule. Teachers provide the materials and assignments with pupils having the ability to access and satisfy these requirements within a flexible time frame. Materials might include paper-based materials, directed texts, self-guided interactive learning resources, pre-recorded lessons and podcasts.

AIMS

- To ensure equity of learning and curriculum opportunities for pupils in school and at home
- To set out expectations for all members of the staff community with regards to blended learning across the school
- To ensure a consistency of approach to blended learning which is understood by staff, pupils and families
- To provide appropriate guidelines for data protection and safeguarding

PRINCIPLES

- Pupils are inspired, motivated and engaged to learn, through blended learning approaches that vary according to their appropriateness to the particular learning context.
- Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners
- Staff are encouraged and supported to adopt fit-for-purpose and innovative blended learning approaches. These approaches are enabled by academic and professional partnerships and appropriate institutional investment in learning technologies.
- Digital literacy is recognised as an important graduate attribute and a core skill for academic staff.
- Flexible delivery options are offered to reflect the needs of pupils, the intended learning outcomes and the availability of resources.
- Blended learning will not always include flexible delivery and so will not always provide pupils a choice of where and when they can study.
- Blended learning and flexible delivery are chosen to enhance pupil engagement and learning outcomes.
- It is recognised that blended learning and flexible delivery may require increased investment of resources to ensure sustainable delivery of high-quality learning and teaching.
- Technology is considered an opportunity to capture data regarding patterns of pupil participation (learning analytics) to inform monitoring for at-risk pupils, to promote just-in-time learner support and to provide information to pupils
- Teacher workload has been taken into account when deciding on the blended learning offer

1. Roles and Responsibilities:

1.1 See Appendices for different roles you may want to include

2. Data protection

2.1 Accessing personal data

➤ When accessing personal data for remote learning purposes, all staff members will:

Explain:

- Use Google Classroom when setting work online
- Use school devices when accessing online platforms
- Use the school email addresses to communicate with parents if required to do so.
- The school number is used for calls home to families where DSL's are present.

2.2 Processing personal data

➤ Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as resetting Google Classroom accounts as part of the remote learning system. As long as this processing is necessary for the school's official functions, individuals won't need to give permission for this to happen.

➤ Pupils will be provided with a school Gmail email address to avoid any issues regarding GDPR, there will be no expectation for parents/carers or learners to provide their own email addresses for use.

➤ However, staff are reminded to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online.

2.3 Keeping devices secure

➤ All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device if a device is stolen, or system corrupted or accessed by unauthorised 3rd party, the staff member should know who to report this to (Data Protection Officer, internal technical support, school leadership)
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Installing antivirus and anti-spyware software
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates
- In accordance with its E-Safety Policy the School will deal with e-safety incidents in accordance with the procedures outlined in both the policy. We will, where known, inform parents of incidents of inappropriate e-safety behaviour that take place out of school.

In accordance with the Thornton E-Safety & Media Policy and Pupil and Parent Acceptable Use Policy (found on our school website) the School will deal with e-safety incidents in accordance with the procedures outlined in both the policy. We will, where known, inform parents of incidents of inappropriate e-safety behaviour that take place out of school. We have highlighted our Thornton Google Meet expectations to all pupils and parents and can also be found on our website.

3. Safeguarding

When pupils are learning remotely at home, during a local lockdown or for those who may need to isolate, the need to be alert to their online safety is even more pressing. Teachers will naturally take ownership and responsibility when seeing any kind of inappropriate online behaviour and sometimes that will mean talking to parents too.

Pupils, parents, carers and teachers are reminded that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school.

4. Monitoring arrangements

➤ This policy will be reviewed by the Acting Headteacher Cathy Grace and the SLT of Thornton each year. At every review, it will be approved by Full Governing Body.

5. Links with other policies (Found on our website)

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection policy and coronavirus addendum to child protection policy
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Home-school agreement
- E – Safety and Media Policy including Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety

Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Senior Leaders

Alongside other responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

IT systems, vision, communications, monitoring. See appendix 2 for further details

B. Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the school's approach to providing blended learning to ensure education remains as high quality and equitable as possible
- Ensuring that staff are certain that remote learning systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons

C. Teachers

Alongside other responsibilities, teachers are responsible for:

- Taking responsibility for keeping up to date on best practice in using the school's technology and digital platform (teacher standard 8)
- Explicitly teaching children how to learn independently if at home - how to organise themselves (providing visual timetables /written timetables), their learning, their day; how to get online to access key resources; expectations for learning each day and how to upload completed work (teacher standard 2)
- Teaching children how to use Google Classrooms virtual platform and identifying any specific provision/resources which individual children will need to access the platform
- Preparing a 'paper pack' of resources which children can pick up and use at home.
- Reading support such as; phonics sessions, Reading Plus and online software such as Phonics Play.
- Making provision for online lessons and for interactions with individual pupils and providing opportunities for interactions between pupils during Google Meet.
- Providing activities that involve consolidating learning
- Making use of formative assessment to accurately identify knowledge and understanding gained using the information to support planning on the child's/children's return to school'.
- Giving pupils working from home regular feedback and encouraging them to respond to the feedback (Teachers' Standards 6)
- Checking in regularly to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Teachers will be expected to pass on feedback to Senior Leadership Team, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication using CPOMS. There are at least 2 DSLs on site every day for support.
- Providing catch-up provision for 'returners' based on the child's engagement with remote learning.

- Where teachers are at home self-isolating but not unwell, they are expected/encouraged to teach lessons remotely, following their usual timetable, using Google Classrooms to instruct and engage with the pupils.

Further notes to support this section can be found in appendix 2

D. Teaching Assistants

Alongside other responsibilities Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Liaising with teachers around content and putting together remote learning packs for children in each year group (including SEND pupils), should they be sent home to self-isolate or learning from home.
- Managing comments on Google Classrooms whilst attending all Google Classroom meets.
- Setting tasks for intervention groups on Google Classrooms
- Setting and monitoring learning on Reading Plus and My Maths
- Setting weekly Spelling Zappers for groups of children in addition to phonics sessions to particular pupils.
- Ensuring sufficient resource- packs are available for any child sent home
- Supporting the teacher with remote learning administration

E. Subject leads

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, subject leads are responsible for:

- Considering whether any aspects of the subject curriculum need to change to accommodate remote learning
- Working with teachers teaching their subject remotely to make sure all work set is appropriate and consistent
- Working with other subject leads and senior leaders to make sure work set remotely across all subjects is appropriate and consistent, and deadlines are being set an appropriate distance away from each other
- Alerting teachers to resources they can use to teach their subject remotely
- Evaluating the value and impact of the introduction of new technologies into subjects on student learning and engagement.
- Ensuring blended learning approaches are embedded in overall curriculum design and are logically linked to learning outcomes.
- Ensuring that for each subject learning technologies are chosen through considered pedagogical design, to support and enhance student learning outcomes.

F. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Thornton Primary School have 6 DSLs including 2 who are qualified as Leads. There are at least 2 DSLs on site every day. Please refer to our school Safeguarding Policy which can be found on our website.

G. Admin Staff

Administrative staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring all parents' phone numbers and emails are up to date
- Tracking self-isolation periods to ensure that individuals and groups of pupils/parents know when they
- are expected to return to school.
- Ensuring children who are entitled to FSM provision receive their entitlement.

H. Data Protection Officer (DPO)

- DPO should be notified of any IT platform used to support remote learning and be used to support risk assessment of that platform (Data Protection Impact Assessment – DPIA).
- Policies should be up to date, including Privacy Notice.
- Retention schedules for stored and deleted data, back-ups, data flow map and asset audit should be updated to reflect new practices.
- Technical security should be assessed to reduce threats of cyber attack.

In light of the above, the DPO should ensure all staff are trained appropriately to account for any changes to school systems as a result of the approaches taken.

I. IT staff

IT staff are responsible for:

- Fixing issues with systems used to set and collect work
- Helping staff and parents with any technical issues they're experiencing
- Reviewing the security of remote learning systems and flagging any data protection breaches to the data protection officer
- Assisting pupils and parents with accessing the internet or devices
- Ensure infrastructure of student feedback systems, learning management system, wireless networks and online student services are maintained in a timely fashion to ensure minimum disruption to learning patterns.

I. Pupils and parents

Assuming that a pupil is healthy and well enough to work, learners will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting tasks promptly and to the best of their ability. Pupils will also be expected to read and respond to communication from the school (e.g. an email from a form tutor/ class teacher) on a regular basis.

Staff can expect PUPILS learning remotely to:

- Be contactable during the school day – although consider they may not always be in front of a device the entire time
- Complete work to the deadline set by teachers
- Seek help if they need it, from teachers or teaching assistants
- Alert teachers if they're not able to complete work

Further details and supporting information can be found in appendix 2

Staff can expect PARENTS with children learning remotely to:

- Make the school aware if their child is unwell or otherwise unable to complete work
- Seek help from the school if they need it – if you know of any resources staff should point parents towards if they're struggling, include those here
- Be respectful when making any complaints or concerns known to staff

Further details and supporting information can be found in appendix 2

Appendix 2

FURTHER NOTES TO SUPPORT POLICY ADDITIONS

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH BLENDED LEARNING WILL BE PROVIDED:

- In the event of an extended school closure, the school is committed to providing continuity of education to its learners and will do so through a process of online learning using Google Classroom and paper-based learning. Extensive remote learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the school is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of learners and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home. This policy does not apply in the event of short-term school closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term learner absence.
- Blended learning may also be appropriate in situations when learners, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from school, or longer-term illness, assuming learners are able to complete school work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, learners are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.
- There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to learners who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention to school or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take learners on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their child/ children from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance.
- The extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any school closure and the ability of both learners and teachers to participate in remote learning. The school reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide blended learning tasks, feedback and interaction, based on the particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

IT SYSTEMS

- Ensuring the school has an effective platform for sharing work with pupils and receiving submitted work which is used by all staff
- Providing immediate training for staff to ensure confidence in using the school's technology and the virtual platform and planning a programme of regular IT CPD including opportunities for staff to share learning, practice and support each other
- Co-ordinating the blended learning approach across the school.
- Setting clear vision and direction.
- Auditing IT resource gaps among staff and pupils including establishing which device(s) children use to access learning at home.
- Considering how to address immediate IT resource gaps for staff and pupils.
- Creating a long-term plan for maintaining up to date IT infrastructure within school, for staff and pupils.
- Deciding on the school's approach to synchronous/asynchronous learning and the data protection/safeguarding issues which impact on this.

COMMUNICATION

- Agree the expectations for remote learning for all year groups.
- Ensure parents know and understand the expectation and provision for blended learning. Communication should avoid complex curriculum content but focus on support for self-regulation, quiet place to work, organisation of equipment, work routines and habits, trying to personalise messages to accommodate literacy levels where possible.
- Create a culture and ethos of openly rewarding and celebrating achievements related to work being done at home by individual pupils both during and after isolation and share with parents
- Monitor the effectiveness and consistency of blended learning through the Google Classroom platform or personal phone calls where if paper-based learning is used.
- Monitor the equity of provision provided for pupils at home and at school
- Monitor which communications systems work best: text messaging, phone calls, School Comms app messages, website, letters and newsletters
- Monitor the security of blended learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations
- Regularly refine and update blended learning practices and procedures based on feedback
- Identifying the barriers for pupils in regard to access and engagement with learning.
- Providing blended and flexible delivery options, to support increased access to learning for diverse pupils, considering the resources available.
- Recommending appropriate intervention and support strategies for pupils to ensure the development of basic digital literacies required for learning.
- Identifying the current digital literacy proficiency of pupils.
- Regularly reviewing blended learning approaches used in subjects across the whole curriculum for applicability, relevance and best practice in relation to pupil needs and desired learning outcomes.

- Ensuring resources are distributed to provide ongoing professional development of staff regarding innovative blended learning approaches and clearly considered pedagogical design.
- In order to ensure teachers are able to perform the minimum expectations outlined above; the school will provide a range of training opportunities that teachers should have access to before any planned school closure. Teachers should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions, watched walkthroughs, and attended teacher training sessions. If teachers require support with any aspects of blended learning, they are encouraged to consult the IT Department or the Senior Leadership team.

TEACHERS

- Ensure learning technologies used in subjects are appropriate and functional.
- Deliver subject content via learning technologies in a timely manner for student engagement and learning.
- Evaluate the value and impact of the introduction of new technologies into subjects on student learning and engagement.

When teaching synchronously or asynchronously, remember what the research says about delivering high quality teaching:

Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning (need to link what pupils are about to learn to what they already know. Having the time to recall things from memory makes them more memorable in the future).

Present material in small steps with student practice after each step and require and monitor independent practice (provide a small amount of input and then a chance to do something with it before moving on. Make sure that there is only a small amount of new information being introduced because I need an opportunity to monitor how they are getting on).

Ask questions and check the responses of all students. Check for student understanding and obtain a high success rate (ask questions to ensure that everyone is following our explanation and to make sure that students aren't starting a task still holding on to misconceptions. If we don't get a high success rate before they start practising, then any misconceptions they hold will end up embedded in their work. E.g. create self-marking quizzes that can be set up to provide feedback on incorrect answers. Pupils can complete these quizzes before beginning a longer task to check they are ready).

Provide models and scaffolds for difficult tasks (make sure they are available on any resources given to pupils. Strategies used could include producing model paragraphs in advance and including scaffolding on the same slide or providing a worksheet containing the task instructions).

Engage students in reviews (Doing so allows teachers to help them make connections between different parts of the topic and to identify personal goals for improvement and give advice on how to achieve them).

- Endeavour to provide regular feedback to learners on pieces of work that they are required to submit.
- Pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that learners have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen.
- Depending on the school's policy about contact with parents and carers, teachers should be available during the school day to contact parents if needed, by email or phone (using the school phone on site where a DSL is present). If contact is deemed excessive the line manager will be able to support and, if necessary, escalate to SLT.

- Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, pupils and parents during the school day (All communication should take place within school hours). Teachers also should ensure their communication with learners does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during usual school hours, with no expectation for colleagues to read or respond to emails after 5pm, although responses should be made to electronic messages by the end of their next working day in normal practice. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work.

PARENTS

Parents should be encouraged to:

Take an active interest in their child's learning (As a parent or carer, remote learning will be a new concept for your child and there are bound to be a few teething problems to start with. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need help).

Monitor their child's communication and online activity (It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer).

Establish a daily schedule and routine (Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning).

Ensure their child's learning device is in a public space in the home (It's important to consider where your PC/laptop/tablet is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate).

Ensure their child only uses official school communication channels (It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through Google Classrooms)

Maintain feedback with teachers (Engage in communication with teachers where possible and try to feedback progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate).

Encourage screen breaks away from devices (Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teacher's will invariably advise on screen breaks however it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise).

Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software (Dependant on how your school implements remote learning, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution).

Familiarise themselves with relevant school policies (Schools should have a policy on remote learning and direction that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline).

Monitor their child's wellbeing and mental health (Remote learning will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as you can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends everyday might take its toll).

During online lessons and any individual video calls with teachers ensure:

- An adult is with the pupil during the individual video call
- Pupils are in either their dining room, living room or kitchen and not their bedroom.
- Pupils are dressed and ready—not in pyjamas.
- School rules still apply!
- They provide reminders about staying safe online – keeping themselves, classmates and teacher safe. Pupils do not record or take pictures of their teacher or classmates during online sessions.

PUPILS

Pupils are expected to:

Treat remote learning the same as classroom learning (Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.)

Take regular screen breaks (Whilst remote learning might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices).

Only communicate through approved school portals and platforms (It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as Google Classrooms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure).

Don't use school platforms to discuss personal matters (It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning).

Use classroom language (If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid posting negative comments or spamming the chat).

Always conduct video learning in an open space at home (To get the best experience from remote learning, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate).

Not share passwords or other sensitive information (In order to begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others).

Look after their mental health and wellbeing (Remote learning ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up).

Appendix 3

LINKS TO EEF RESEARCH, GUIDANCE REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

For schools

[Home learning approaches: Planning framework](#)

[Home learning approaches: Planning framework – blank template](#) [Home learning approaches: Planning framework – worked examples](#) [Supporting parents and carers at home: What schools can do to help](#) [Parents and carers engaging in home learning: A checklist for schools](#) [Linking learning: Home learning support from mainstream schools](#)

[Communicating Effectively with Families - Guide for Schools](#)

For parents

[7 top tips to support reading at home](#)

[7 top tips to support reading at home – for Key Stage 2](#)

[Helping Home Learning: Read with TRUST infographic](#) [Helping Home Learning: Read with TRUST comic](#) [Helping](#)

[Home Learning: Talk with TRUST infographic](#) [Helping Home Learning: Talk with TRUST comic](#) [Supporting home](#)

[learning routines: Planning the day](#) [Supporting daily routines during school closures](#)