

Senior School Blended Learning

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

2020 – 2021

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL
LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY



SENIOR SCHOOL BLENDED LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

November 2020

Whilst the aim is to maintain maximum face-to-face teaching and learning, this policy outlines what has been put in place at St Christopher School in case of a Covid-related incident affecting the normal school attendance of students or staff.

We have reflected on how technology might help us to achieve our educational goals. We have learnt from the period of fully Remote Learning (RL) during lockdown and gathered feedback from our students, staff, parents and carers to create a Blended Learning approach that will ensure students remain engaged no matter their whereabouts or circumstances in the current situation.

Blended Learning (BL) means different things to different institutions, so to clarify: At St Chris Blended Learning means a two-way process of teaching: the first is face-to-face in school, whilst the second involves simultaneously teaching or learning remotely through a video-conferencing platform (at St Chris we use Microsoft Teams).

The model allows us to continue to maximize the educational impact of what we do when pupils are both at home for a Covid-related reason or still in school. The model also accommodates staff being able to teach from home.

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

At St Chris we are mindful of the need for schools to make learning in the current environment both a stimulating and engaging experience, but to also ensure the conditions we create (both in the classroom and remotely) are supportive and safe.

We recognise that personal contact with our students 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 BL, variety is key. The research is clear that pupils should be facilitated to engage in a variety of learning activities, including direct instruction, real time lessons, recorded sequences, quizzes, formal assessments, discussion forums, break out rooms and online material (including those set on Satchel One / Show My Homework).

We also consider ongoing pastoral support to be central to ensuring our pupils remain linked to the St Chris community. There is more detail about the pastoral support available for students in the section below Pastoral Support During Blended Learning.

BLENDED LEARNING: KEY INFORMATION

Blended Learning (BL) will be provided to students who must remain at home/self-isolate for a Covid-related reason. BL will not, as a matter of course, be provided to those who are at home for other reasons – but the School will consider all cases on an individual basis.

To access a BL lesson the student will need video and audio facility on either a laptop, desktop, tablet or (though not ideal) a mobile phone.

If a student is at home for a Covid-related reason (as detailed in the Government guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>) this information must be communicated to the School as soon as possible.

The name of the student will be added to the Blended Learning list ('the list') by the Pastoral Assistant.

At the end of each day, the Pastoral Assistant will send an email to all teachers with 'the list' of which bubbles and/or individual students are absent the following school day (for a Covid-related reason) and therefore eligible to access Blended Learning (BL) provision.

Students will receive a schedule which tells them what each of their teachers are offering as a 'remote' experience. In the case of most subjects, this is the option to join their lesson via Microsoft Teams. Some subjects (such as the creative arts) may take a different approach and further details on this are below.

Resources for lessons should be uploaded to Teams or Show My Homework (SMH) prior to the lesson so the remote/blended learners can access them in good time

Work completed by the student should be submitted at the end of the lesson using SMH, email or Teams, as per the teacher's preference.

Students have access to short, clear videos guiding them on use of Teams, SMH and how to access their school email. These can be accessed on our website here:

<https://www.stchris.co.uk/covid19/>

If a student is having technical difficulties this should not disrupt the lesson; the student may need to work independently on that occasion until they are able to resolve the problem.

Sometimes it may not be possible for a teacher to plan, organise and resource a BL lesson for the following day if a student on 'the list' is the only student in the class who is absent. However, with one weekday's notice, teachers with students on the list will plan for and provide BL access to their lessons. Of course, if the teacher *can* organise a BL lesson at shorter notice then that is clearly beneficial.

Students required to be at home who are in classes where BL is already being provided (for example for another student who is already off) can of course join in the BL lesson via Teams straight away.

Creative and Practical Subjects

A particular note on the creative and practical subjects where joining in remotely would offer a limited experience:

For KS3 (Years 7 to 9) art and creative subjects there will be a series of enrichment activities that will be posted on SMH. They will focus on building drawing skills, analysis of artworks/design, ways of seeing etc. These activities are for students to engage with through choice if they are isolating and are fit to work. All activities are relevant and useful for the development of key skills for their phase. If we go into full lockdown or bubble lockdown we will revert to teaching the entire group live on Teams.

For KS4 (Years 10 and 11) and KS5 (Sixth Form) all work is individual and the most appropriate approach for support is via tutorials and individual feedback via Teams and/or email. The teachers for the creative subjects will set designated time aside to be available for students to log into Teams for this.

For art, Sixth Formers log in during the timetabled lessons. This is not practical for GCSE Art lessons due to the size of groups and nature of the work so for these lessons, and for 3D design where it is not possible to offer Teams support during the timetabled lessons because physical lessons are taking place in the workshop, teachers will set aside designated time and will contact the student about this.

One to One Lessons

If a student has any one-to-one lessons during the day such as music lessons, LAMDA or individual tutoring their teacher will contact parents directly to arrange this.

The lessons must take place on MS Teams and be part of the normal St Chris day, as if the lesson were taking place in person.

There must be a parent or carer supervising the child (in addition to the 'remote' teacher) when a session is taking place.

All one to one sessions must be recorded.

Morning Registration and Company Time

- Students working at home need to Register each morning
- Students need to be online, contactable by school email and ready to start the school day at **8.30am**
- To register, pupils should contact their Adviser or Personal Tutor via Microsoft Teams during the normal Company Time (8.30am – 9.10am) – this can be by message rather than by video call.

Morning Talks

- Students working at home will be emailed the link to the Teams broadcast Morning Talk by their Adviser/Personal Tutor
- Morning Talks take place three times a week
 - Monday – All pupils
 - Tuesday – Years 7 – 9
 - Wednesday – Years 10 and 11
 - Thursday – Years 12 and 13 (Sixth Form)
 - Friday – All pupils
- Those Companies preparing their own Morning Talk will make sure that all members of the Company are involved

Lesson Registration

Teachers will register students at the start of each lesson.

Use of Video and Recording

Lessons will be recorded as this represents a useful resource for any student who is not well enough to attend the BL lesson 'live'. It is also helpful from a safeguarding point of view.

If a teacher is streaming a lesson on Teams neither they, nor their class, have to appear on video. (However teachers will of course have audio enabled.)

If the teacher needs to illustrate something visually they will use the video function to allow those at home to see.

Behaviour Expectations for those Learning at Home

Running a productive Blended Learning lesson is not straightforward and relies on positive engagement and co-operation. Expectations about good behavior when participating in Blended Learning are very important. Students causing disruption or preventing the smooth flow of the lesson through either video, audio or the chat facility will be warned and if they do not respond they will have the privilege to participate removed.

Staff Illness

However, if a member of staff is absent and ill/unable to teach remotely, the School will inform remote learners and parents. The member of staff, or their Head of Department, will set cover work for their lessons, which will be sent to students.

Staff Self-Isolating: When Staff Need to Teach from Home

If a member of staff is teaching remotely from home, the Blended Learning model will not be impacted.

The teacher's screen will be projected onto the whiteboard in the classroom and the sound connected

to the speakers for students to be taught remotely.

There will be a camera and microphone facility in lessons so that the teacher will have an overview of the classroom whilst a cover teacher will physically be in the class to ensure safety, monitor behavior, answer questions and generally facilitate.

PASTORAL SUPPORT DURING BLENDED LEARNING

St Chris is committed to excellent pastoral care, which we recognise is more important than ever at the moment. It is something that parents and families have always chosen St Chris for, and the School is committed to delivering excellent pastoral care no matter where a child is based during Blended Learning.

There will be a number of ways for students to remain connected to school from home, but to properly support our children during Blended Learning we will ensure that there is direct contact with each child each week.

Company Time

- Advisers / Personal Tutors will contact those students who are at home, and contact parents, if needed, using Microsoft Teams during Company Time at least once a week to check on wellbeing.
- Advisers / Personal Tutors will also use this period to establish peer contact with children who are at home.
- Each year group will have “Teams Buddies” for their own year, who will contact children working at home.

Peer Mentors

- Sixth Form will form a group of “Online Peer Mentors” allocated to each year group and supervised by the Head of Year/ Deputy Head Sixth Form
- Peer Mentors can be contacted by email (peer.mentors@stchris.co.uk)
- Peer Mentors will also host Teams drop-in meetings, which they will publicise
- Students will be able to attend these by emailing Peer Mentors

PSHE

- Lessons will run as per the normal timetable, with adaptations for Blended Learning
- PSHE content will be flexible, and altered to meet the children’s needs and the wider Covid context to support students.

Counselling Service

- The Counselling Service operates remotely at the moment, and can continue to do so through blended learning.
- Any new referrals should go via the Nurse / Head of Year

Book Club

- The School Librarian has established a book club /reading group, where pupils will be able to share books / recommendations with peers, and discuss these with the Librarians

SAFEGUARDING

- Safeguarding and Child Protection is everyone's responsibility during a Blended Learning approach. Keeping pupils and teachers safe during remote education is essential.
- St Chris will continue to follow the Department for Education statutory guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- In addition we have developed an *Online Teaching and Learning Policy (April 2020)* to reflect the changes that are in place due to the pandemic.
- Our Blended Learning guidance takes into account other St Chris policies and procedures, including Code of Conduct, Curriculum, Behaviour and Online Safety to incorporate Blended Learning.
- Copies of all of these policies are available on our website (<https://www.stchris.co.uk/about-us/policies/>) or by contacting toni.warner@stchris.co.uk
- There are appropriate pathways for children and their families to report safeguarding concerns arising through work with teachers, Advisers, and support staff during Blended Learning. The primary pathway is through the pastoral system for Blended Learning.
- There are systems in place for staff and tutors to report safeguarding concerns arising through work with children and their families. The most direct route is via the Heads of Year, the DSL team and MyConcern.
- All academic lessons should be recorded and all classes can be accessed by the DSL team.
- For further information, please refer to the government guidance on safeguarding and remote education here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19#safeguarding-pupils-and-teachers-online>

KEY STAFF & CONTACT DETAILS

- **Andy Selkirk** is responsible for the Senior School's Blended Learning approach to ensure consistency in the implementation. Andy can be contacted at andy.selkirk@stchris.co.uk
- **Rich Jones**, as Designated Safeguarding Lead, reviews (with the 'DSL team') all policies and procedures relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection. Rich can be contacted at rich.jones@stchris.co.uk
- **Gavin Fraser-Williams** is responsible for pastoral care in the Senior School – gavin.fraser-williams@stchris.co.uk

APPENDIX:

These guidelines draw on:

- Recommendations made in the NASUWT 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-supporting-students-to-learn-remotely/>
- The government guidelines to secondary schools on planning for tier 2 local restrictions
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions>