St Chris

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL
LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

Blended Learning Policy

November 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 The School reopened for all pupils in September 2020 following school closure due to the global pandemic.

1.2 We have produced plans in case of a local or national lockdown, staff absence due to testing, pupil absence due to testing or a breakout of COVID-19 within the school community, including boarding.

1.3 The aim of this policy is to consider the practical implementation of Blended Learning across a number of areas in order to ensure pupils, teachers, parents and other stakeholders are clear about expectations and responsibilities.

1.4 The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research evidence on supporting pupils to learn remotely https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/best-evidence-on-supportingstudents-to-learn-remotely/

1.5 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-localrestrictions/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions

2. What is Blended Learning (BL)?

2.1 To put it simply, BL is a two- way process of teaching. The first is using face-to-face interaction to educate (in school) whilst the second is through electronic platforms to educate online (Remote Learning). The model is used to maximise the educational impact on our pupils, in and out of the classroom.

2.2 Whilst many of us are now familiar with the concept of working from home (Remote Learning), it will be important to consider (as our pupils return to our regular school environment) what the 'new norm' might look like.

2.3 BL allows both school-based and remote learning environments to work hand in hand, helping our pupils continue and achieve. This will ensure that any local or national lockdowns of school premises in the future will be met with effective response.

3. Why Blended Learning is Important?

3.1 With the possibility of future local or national lockdowns, the continuity of education will remain our highest priority. Having already experienced an impactful transition process into remote learning, we are well aware of what to expect when it comes to responsive action.

3.2 Remote Learning (RL) called for a lot of change in how we handled the St Chris day-to-day routine. With new restrictions in place and with so many new things to consider, it is important to ensure nothing slips under the radar.

3.3 Safeguarding in particular is a vital area to get right. The school did this successfully during RL but there were lessons to learn. There is now further guidance regarding online safety and that features at the end of this guidance. BL as a strategy will encourage better use of policy and practice to ensure safeguards are met whilst actively reviewing and responding to new changes and codes of practice towards learning on and offline.

4. **Research Evidence**
The EEF have identified the following key areas to consider for successful BL provision:

4.1 Teaching quality is more important than how teaching is delivered providing that the established principles for introducing new knowledge are adhered to (explanation, scaffolding, and feedback) then there is no difference between the effectiveness of real time remote lessons or pre-recorded material. What matters most is that each learning sequence builds on prior understanding.

4.2 Ensuring access to technology is key.

4.3 Peer interaction provides motivation and improves learning outcomes. Peer marking, modelling and sharing of work, as well as live discussion and the use of shared forum functions for collaborative learning are all useful strategies to motivate and help progress whilst engaging learners.

4.4 Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes using metacognitive approaches to encourage reflection and promote deliberate practice helps learners engage more effectively but also reminds them of key learning and thinking skills.

4.5 Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils. Teachers will be supported to reflect on different approaches to remote learning and what will be most effective to deliver their subject content through ongoing CPD and coaching.

5. **Defining Remote Provision**

5.1 We recognise that personal contact with our pupils is key to maintaining motivation and engagement, as well as sustaining fruitful relationships, both teacher/pupil, peer to peer and with parents.

5.2 We also recognise that when providing RL variety is key. The research is clear that pupils should be facilitated to engage in a variety of remote learning activities, including direct instruction, real time lessons, tests/quizzes, formal assessments, discussion, break out rooms and online material.

5.3 We also consider ongoing pastoral support to be central to ensuring our pupils remain linked to the St Chris community.

5.4 This occurs through a variety of contact with Form Tutors/Heads of Year and remote assemblies.

5.5 The government has specified minimum expectations for remote provision;
    5.5.1 set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects, including new material - planning a

programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school

    5.5.2   teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject

    5.5.3   gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work

    5.5.4   enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding.

6. Safeguarding

6.1   Safeguarding and Child Protection is everyone's responsibility during a Blended Learning approach. Keeping pupils and teachers safe during remote education is essential.

6.2   St Chris will continue to follow the Department for Education statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

6.3   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.

6.4   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.

6.5   Copies of all of these policies are available on our website https://www.stchris.co.uk/about-us/policies/ or by contacting the Head's PA.

6.6   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.

6.7   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.

6.8   All academic lessons should be recorded and all classes can be accessed by the DSL team.

6.9   For further information on safeguarding, please refer to the government guidance on safeguarding and remote education here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-educationduring-coronavirus-covid-19#safeguarding-pupils-and-teachers-online

7. Further Information

7.1   Further information regarding Blended Learning guidelines for staff, pupils and parents can be found published on our website here: https://www.stchris.co.uk/covid19/