



Belmont School

School Closure Policy

1 Policy Scope

- 1.1 In the event of a school closure, the School is committed to providing continuity of education to its pupils and will do so through a process of remote 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 pupils and staff 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 pupil absence.
- 1.2 Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when pupils, 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 pupils are able to complete school work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, pupils are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms. For specific information about remote learning for individual pupils, please see “Remote Learning for Individual Pupils” below.
- 1.3 There is no obligation for the School to provide continuity of education to pupils 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 pupils on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the School, to absent their children from school “as a precaution”, against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.
- 1.4 This policy is regularly reviewed and may be revised as necessary in light of further experience of remote learning and the circumstances around its necessity. For example, 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 pupils and staff to participate in remote learning, owing to widespread illness, for example. Though the policy does not outline the details specifically, we are aware that school closures may be accompanied by a range of other related concerns. These include, but are not limited to: childcare issues at home for parents and staff, the care of family members who are unwell or isolating, and the feasibility of operating a “normal working day” with staff and pupils at home.

2 Remote Learning for Individual Pupils

- 2.1 Assuming an absence has been agreed with the School, and the pupil in question is healthy enough to work from home, the School will provide work for pupils who are unable to attend school in person. If this occurs for an individual pupil, the collation of work and communication with the parent will be coordinated by the pupil’s Form Tutor.

- 2.2 All relevant teachers will be informed if a pupil they teach is unable to attend school. Subject specialist teachers will then send the work to the Form Tutor, who will collate it and send it to the parents.
- 2.3 Though every case will have its own specifics, a rough guideline for the frequency of communication between Form Tutor and parent would be a minimum of once per week. Work will only be provided in this way if there is an agreed absence lasting more than three working days.
- 2.4 If a significant number of pupils are absent from school, but the school remains open, the Headmistress will decide whether the method of remote learning operated will take the form outlined here or outlined in the section Remote Learning in the Event of School Closure below.

3. Remote Learning in the Event of School Closure

- 3.1 In the event of an extended school closure, the School will provide continuity of education predominantly through its virtual learning environment (VLE): My Learning, using the URL: <https://vle.belmont-school.org> although, for pupils in Years 2 and below, much of the work will be sent home with the child or emailed directly to the parent.
- 3.2 The School's approach to online safety remains the same, as do our expectations for all pupils to adhere to the Acceptable Use agreement when using iPads. While the internet is required for the setting of work and the collection of completed work, the type of tasks set will not necessarily result in pupils spending extended periods of time in front of a screen.
- 3.3 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 pupils and staff to participate in remote learning. The School reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide remote learning tasks, feedback and interaction, based on the particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience.

4 The Setting of Classwork

- 4.1 Teachers will, unless they have special dispensation (e.g. they are unwell), provide work that broadly reflects the range of subjects covered per week in accordance with the timetable. In the event of a teacher being unable to provide work (e.g. they are unwell), the Senior Leadership Team will assist wherever possible. The School does not expect pupils to have access to any specialist equipment that would usually be provided by the School (e.g. Science, DT, Art) and it is understood that pupils may not necessarily be able to print any resources at home. Teachers should be mindful of promoting online safety in their setting of work.
- 4.2 Teachers will set tasks in the Learning Spaces or Task List spaces of the VLE. Teachers will set tasks in the subjects for which they have planning responsibility, as closely aligned to existing schemes of work as possible. Subject specialist teachers are responsible for ensuring that tasks are easily located.
- 4.3 Naturally, remote learning will require pupils and teachers to take a different approach, with limited opportunities for direct instruction from the teacher. As such, tasks should be achievable independently or with minimal adult supervision. However, as and when appropriate, teachers will include clear instructions, worked examples, PowerPoint presentations, videos or online links etc.

5 Assessment and Feedback

- 5.1 Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and while this may be more challenging with remote learning, teachers will endeavour to provide feedback to pupils where possible.
- 5.2 Work will be set with clear due dates given to pupils for completion. Pupils or their parents can submit work to the teacher using the teacher's school email address. Staff should keep accurate records of all work set, completed and submitted.
- 5.3 Possible methods of feedback may include:
- • Providing whole class feedback and posting this onto the VLE
 - • Using the 'Feedback' function on a word document
 - • A photograph of annotated work emailed to the pupil's parent
 - • Sending a direct VLE message with specific feedback / targets
 - • Recording oral feedback and sharing an audio file with the pupil

6 Expectations of Staff

- 6.1 The setting and assessment of remote learning tasks will take place in accordance with school and departmental policies, as far as possible within the parameters of the situation. Teaching staff are expected to deliver content that is as closely aligned to existing schemes of work as possible. In order that we are providing a consistent approach. The Deputy Head Academic, the Senior Tutor and Headmistress will oversee the nature and frequency of tasks set by subject specialist teachers. All teaching staff should pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that pupils have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen.
- 6.2 All teaching staff teaching Years 3 to 8 are expected to plan and input via the VLE or in hard copy, assuming that they are fit and able to work.
- 6.3 In order to ensure teachers are able to perform, the School has undergone specialist training for staff in the event of any planned school closure. Staff should ensure that they have looked through specific instructions, and attended staff training sessions.
- 6.4 If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult the Senior Tutor, or the Academic Deputy Head but should also consult with other colleagues who are able to assist.
- 6.5 Teachers are encouraged to experiment with the software available, especially if the School is closed for a lengthy period of time. Parents should understand that occasionally some applications may be troublesome especially if being used for the first time.
- 6.6 Unless there are extenuating circumstances, staff will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, pupils and parents by email. Staff also should ensure their communication with pupils does not encourage unhelpful work habits. As a guideline, the School would expect staff to respond to any electronic communication within 24 hours unless the member of staff is unwell. All communication should take place during usual "office hours", with no expectation for

colleagues to read or respond to emails after 4.30pm. For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work.

- 6.7 Teachers are permitted to communicate with pupils only by Email using school email addresses only to the parent email address.
- 6.8 Communication must always occur via official school channels, and not through personal accounts or other websites or by telephone.
- 6.9 Parents, staff and pupils are reminded of the need for courteous exchange in all email communications.

7 Pastoral Care during a School Closure

In the event of a school closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a pupil rests with their parents / guardians. However, Form Tutors will check-in regularly with their pupils (via school email to the pupil or parent) to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Form Tutors will be expected to pass on feedback to the Senior Management Team, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.

8 Safeguarding during a School Closure

- 8.1 In the event of a school closure, pupils, parents and staff are reminded of the School's Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, which encompasses many of the principles and practices set out in the Safeguarding Policy.
- 8.2 Any questions or concerns about safeguarding should continue to be raised to the Designated Safeguarding team led by Mrs Rachel Eastment reastment@belmont-school.org and her Deputy DSLs:
Mrs Kate Ward kward@belmont-school.org,
Mrs Carol-Anne Drage cdrage@belmont-school.org, and
Mr John Stevens jstevens@belmont-school.org who is in charge of online safety.

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