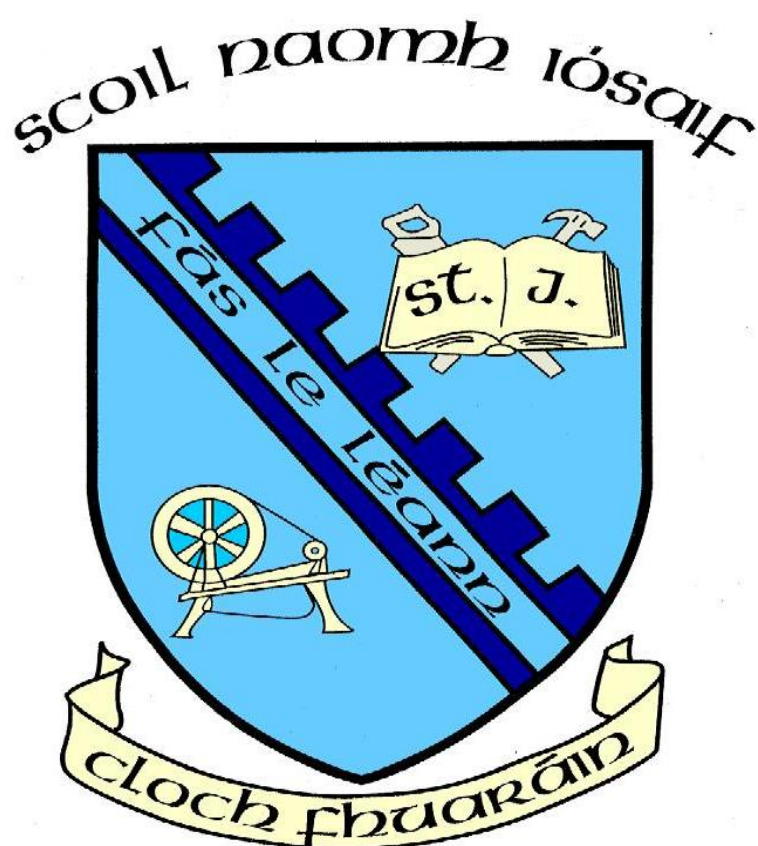# St. Joseph's Primary School
Remote Learning Policy

Draft
December 2020

RATIONALE:

Maintaining high levels of wellbeing and high-quality learning provides additional complexities when pupils and teachers are working in online environments, particularly at a distance. Teaching and learning which operates in isolation using innovative technologies comes with inherent difficulties in managing pupil behaviour and meeting learning and engagement goals.

PURPOSE:

➢ To uphold pupil wellbeing and provide learning which aligns with the learning aspirations of St. Joseph's Primary School when teaching and learning online.

➢ Learning online may be necessitated by events which make physical school attendance impossible. This includes events such as the COVID-19 global pandemic and the associated lockdown (see appendices 1-3 for further information). In events where teachers and pupils engage in teaching and learning from home in isolated environments, guidelines are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils and uphold the values of St. Joseph's Primary School (see appendices 1-3 for further information).

➢ In an online learning environment, the rules of engagement can be unclear, and pupils and teachers may have difficulty engaging meaningfully and respectfully. This policy outlines guidelines which support teachers to uphold the behavioural expectations of St. Joseph's Primary School, and is aligned with our Positive Behaviour Policy and associated pastoral care and safeguarding policies.

➢ Direct comparison is made with the pupil behaviour management and e-Learning policies to apply these to an isolated online learning environment.

GUIDELINES:

1. ***Pupils will be supported pastorally while online learning*** because online learning poses significant risks to social connectivity and enjoyment. Teachers (or other school representatives) should gather information on issues their pupils are facing and help delineate a plan to provide support. Teachers will need to gather intelligence on the type(s) of issues being faced, the type of support needed, the learning context of the pupil, and their accessibility to learning.

Teachers may need to mobilise support from colleagues or leaders to help provide support. In some scenarios, family may need to be contacted to determine how best support can be provided.

Some scenarios may be difficult to support, particularly in situations where pupils may be isolated (such as during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown). In these situations, it may be impossible for a pupil without a computer to receive one and engage meaningfully in class. Support needs to take into account the unique situations in which pupils find themselves and ensure that it is tailored to their contexts. For example, pupils may need to receive hard copies of activities so that they may work from home without a device or internet access. Pupils facing wellbeing issues, such as those living in homes where there is significant disruption or animosity, may need support through other staff or external agencies to ensure that they are emotionally supported while they learn from home.

2. ***Teachers have control over the online learning environment.*** When real time online interaction is happening, this includes control over who is present, who is able to speak, what is being shown etc. Teachers must, therefore, have the knowledge to be able to:

> ➢ Add pupils to a call;
> ➢ Remove pupils from a call;
> ➢ Mute pupils in a call;
> ➢ Control what is shared from the teachers' screen; and
> ➢ Limit pupils' privileges in a call, such as sharing their screens.

Where any pieces of knowledge are missing or there are gaps in practice, then this must be addressed promptly through teacher training. This knowledge allows for problem behaviours to be managed in online learning environments and allows for emergencies to be quickly averted where they arise.

3. ***Teachers will have the knowledge to engage in online teaching and learning practices.*** Where there are gaps in knowledge or practice, these are quickly addressed through individualised support and staff-wide professional learning.

As with the e-Learning policy, teachers should be familiar with technologies which facilitate learning.

Teacher stress may be minimised by providing ample technical support provision and digital literacy facilitation. Teachers should feel like their ability to teach online is supported and should have some say in how this best occurs, in a realistic timescale. The rationale needs to be made very clear to teachers so that they feel some control over online learning, even when other aspects of life feel out of control, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. ***All pupils are to have the behavioural expectations of online learning made clear to them.*** This means that pupils know how to behave in ways that uphold the values of St. Joseph's Primary School, summarised in our four pillars, 'Hardworking, well mannered, caring and respectful.' Pupils should know about what they need to do online to follow the behaviour code, understanding the differences in behaviour online and behaviour in classroom settings.

The following shows how the St. Joseph's Primary School's Positive Behaviour Policy is translated into online learning specific environments such as that experienced during COVID-19.

At St. Joseph's School we all do our best to:

Physical setting	Online setting
Respect each other's right to learn;	Respect each other's right to learn in online settings by taking turns and listening to others;
Speak positively and politely to one another;	Speaking positively and politely to one another over the Internet through the chat function or verbally;
Play and work co-operatively and peacefully;	Work-cooperatively and peacefully in online settings;
Follow the directions of those whose job it is to help us;	Following directions of those whose job it is to help us while we learn online;
Look after school equipment, personal belongings and those of others;	Respect online work of my own and that of others;
Help each other follow this code.	Help each other follow this code.

5. **Online rules** will be made to help teachers and pupils navigate behaviours and determine what is appropriate and what is inappropriate for a successful online learning environment. Teachers and parents should ensure their pupils/children are aware of the 'Online Code of Conduct' (please see appendix 4).

The online rules will reflect the class rules in a physical setting. Small adjustments will need to be made. For example, if there is a rule that pupils must not interrupt others and raise their hand if they want to speak, then in an online learning environment, the rule would be that pupils are expected to raise their hand on camera or raise a hand icon if one is available on the platform, and that pupils are expected to mute their microphones when not answering a question or participating in the discussion.

6. ***All pupils are to have an opportunity to participate.*** This means that classroom online rules should delineate who may speak and when, and how pupils are given a chance to contribute in an online setting where social cues may be absent or more difficult to interpret. Where a class activity involves a discussion, rules should be in place to ensure everyone has a chance to participate, such as taking turns.

In a video call setting, this may be achieved through physically raising a hand to the screen. If video is not used (or not available on a laptop without a webcam) then a certain word or a hand icon may be used to signal that a pupil would like to speak. This is to maintain the rules of engagement and ensure that teachers have control over who is speaking and when under different learning activities.

Pupils learning from home may face frequent disruptions such as a baby crying or a sibling entering the room. These are events which may largely be out of the control of the pupils. Because of this, it is recommended that teachers enforce a 'muted unless speaking policy' to avoid the potential for constant disruptions.

7. ***Positive behaviour is to be emphasised and reinforced.*** As occurs in physical classroom settings, teachers should use a range of strategies appropriate to various ages of pupils to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behaviour, but in the context of an online learning environment. This needs to

ensure that whole class rewards or privileges are available for all pupils who meet behavioural expectations under the class online rules.

Positive reinforcement may be delivered through fun activities for the class, publicly recognising a pupil's efforts (e.g. "It's great to see you focusing on your work Sean", "Thanks for raising your hand Molly, what would you like to say?"), or achieving points on Class Dojo.

These reinforcing actions maintain and strengthen positive learning behaviours and motivate pupils to act as online citizens.

8. **Consequences:** Where behavioural expectations are not met or the behavioural code is broken, consequences need to be made clear to pupils. Consequences should be agreed upon by the class and formed into progressive steps as non-compliance continues. These consequential steps should follow the same progression as those in physical settings and consequences should be matched to the severity of the ongoing problem behaviours.

Pupils need to be made aware of consequences before they happen and make efforts to decelerate any situations where problem behaviour arises before consequences are introduced.

Effort needs to be directed at ensuring that consequences are fair based on the behaviour. There needs to be an awareness that some consequences can be embarrassing or overly exclusive, which may lead to worse learning outcomes, disengagement, and further problem behaviour.

Consequences need to be tailored to the online learning environment. They may follow this progression:
   ➢ The pupils' microphone being centrally muted;
   ➢ The pupils' video being centrally switched off;
   ➢ The pupil being blocked from posting material in the online space;
   ➢ The pupil being removed from the video call;
   ➢ The pupil being removed from the platform.

In each of these scenarios, parents may be contacted by Class Dojo Messenger or by phone and informed of the incident(s). Removing a pupil from a platform is similar to the physical school consequence of **suspension**. In physical settings, this requires pupils to work under the supervision of a teacher or other staff members. In an online setting, this is difficult as pupils can't be physically in the presence of a school adult, and particularly severe situations may have pupils remove themselves from communications (not answering calls, not replying to e-mails, not engaging with the school in any way). It is possible for pupils to be connected to a school adult to help them keep learning and deal with their behavioural issues, however, it is important to note that removing pupils from platforms should be a last resort to minimise this possibility.

9. The **Positive Behaviour Policy** will be adapted for online learning environments. As above, this means tailoring disciplinary actions for online learning.

10. **Withdrawing pupils:** Removing pupils from video calls should only be used as a last resort and only temporarily. Muting a pupil for ongoing misbehaviour may be an option before they need to be removed from the call. Removing pupils from an online call runs the risk of them disengaging and not coming back as they are not physically present. Blocking them from a service means they will not have access to the same learning as their peers.

In the event of an emergency, such as a pupil showing inappropriate material or posing a security risk, they should be removed immediately and disciplinary action should be swift to ensure the safety of the class. Parents will be contacted to inform them of the misconduct and actions being taken by the school.

11. A **behaviour notebook/contract** should be encouraged to be used when learning online. This will help pupils with SEBD manage their own behaviour online and promote positive behaviour.

12. **Role of the Principal or Vice-Principal:** The Principal or Vice Principal should assist in the behavioural issues where regular online disciplinary approaches are not working. They should be made aware of parent and guardian

contacts and referrals to external agencies will occur via the Principal or Vice Principal.

13. Digital etiquette is to be maintained through teachers' proactive monitoring of and responsibility for the online learning environment. This means that teachers use virus protection software, do not share usernames or passwords, and carefully monitor the exchange of documents and viewing/editing privileges.

CONCLUSION:

Online learning may be necessitated by unforeseen issues, such as the global situation of COVID-19 (see appendices 1-3 for further information), or may become an ongoing part of teaching and learning at St. Joseph's School. When learning occurs exclusively online without physical proximity to a teacher, there are potential psychological and behavioural issues. This is due to pupils needing to work in an environment that is different than usual.

This policy outlines ways in which online learning can be facilitated and positive behaviour can be maintained. This means that a positive environment for learning, self-discipline and responsibility is upheld much like it would in a physical classroom.

This policy recognises that problematic behaviour can be dealt with in ways similar to a physical learning space, and thus requires forward-thinking and planning in terms of creating expectations of behaviour, setting boundaries, outlining disciplinary actions, and carefully managing online learning environments to be as safe as possible.

Parental Guidelines

Online learning poses significant challenges for pupils. Research has shown that when school/learning environments are mixed with personal/home environments, learning and behaviour are harder to control. Research also suggests that learning through online calls is more mentally exhausting, and this means that pupils may be more likely to get distracted, disengage, or start to behave in ways that they would not normally do in a classroom.

When pupils are engaging with online learning, they are not physically present with their teacher, but are still connected to them via video calls and the expectation of their behaviour is the same as that of the physical classroom. Pupils abide by a behaviour code which they co-design with their teacher, and rule breaking will result in warnings and consequences. Where online behaviour is believed to put pupils at risk, pupils will be immediately removed from a call and disciplinary action may be taken.

Pupils are also likely under higher levels of stress. While being at home often seems and feels like a holiday or break, the stress associated with working in unfamiliar conditions, engaging with teachers in new contexts, and balancing their school and home life can put pupils under stress and result in increased emotional outbursts. In order to help pupils integrate into this new style of learning, we ask that parents and caregivers offer some support to help make learning online a little easier for them.

1. Set up the learning environment

Help pupils adjust to the online classroom by having them seated, connected, and ready to go 5-10 minutes early. This means that when the call happens, pupils are seated and attentive, and don't need to leave their workstation.
In order to help with attention and motivation, it is recommended that pupils have a workstation. This means a table or desk from which they can sit and concentrate and have their resources nearby or within reaching distance. This is not always possible, and in those cases, it is recommended that pupils have an area where they consistently do their work. This is because, for the duration of online learning, they have an area they can mentally associate with work. It is

recommended that this is not the same place that they sleep, so pupils should not work from bed as this can lead to issues "switching off" at bed time.

The space should ideally be quiet although we understand that during extraordinary circumstances such as COVID-19, it is difficult to control the environment within the bubble. Where possible, pupils should be able to work without noise or significant distraction.

2. Help pupils get connected

Online learning will require that pupils are able to use their microphone (computers will have this built in, however many will choose to use wireless headphones etc.), web camera (if their computer has one), e-mail, and the Internet as basics.

Make sure your child knows how to answer a call, how to mute their microphone, how to turn off their video, and how to leave a call. If possible, be nearby in case a technical issue is faced and you need to intervene and help. However, once connected, provide some distances so that your child may work in peace as they would in a physical environment.

3. Be prepared for things not going to plan

Please don't interrupt a call or ask questions unrelated to the learning in the call. If there is something doesn't make sense, it is fine to ask. However, if the question pertains to something that can be sorted via e-mail or a private phone call while the class is not occurring, it is best to leave this until later. Teachers will be navigating a difficult space during online learning and it is inevitable that there will be false starts and things not going to plan as we all get up to speed.
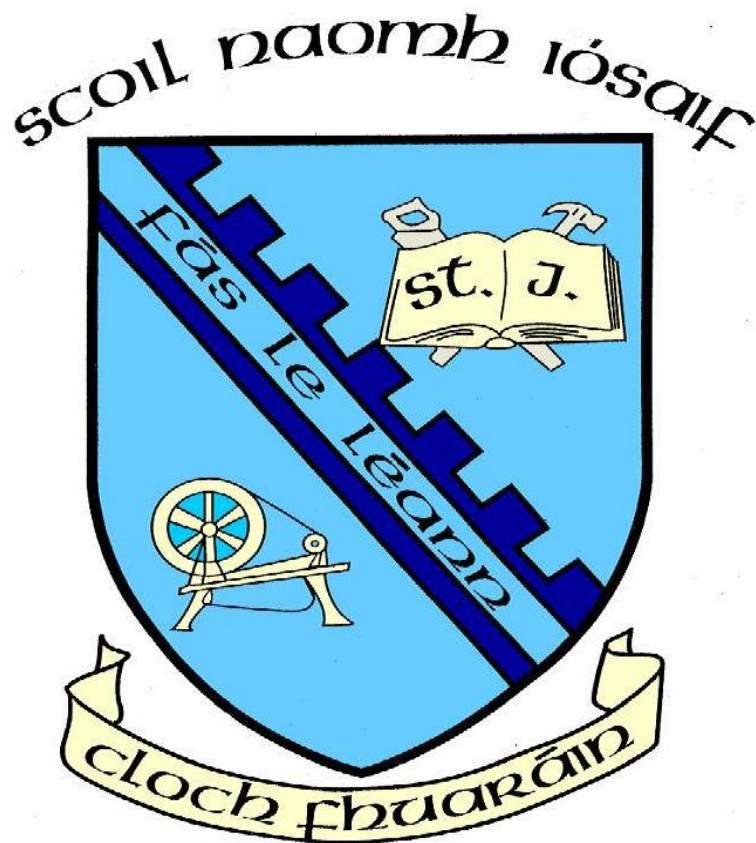
ASSOCIATED POLICIES:
This policy operates alongside all of the school's relevant safeguarding and behaviour policies.

Date Ratified by Board of Governors:	
Principal's Signature:	
Chairperson's Signature:	

St. Joseph's Primary School
Remote Learning Policy Appendices

Draft December 21

Appendix 1 - Arrangements in the Event of an Individual Child Isolating

It may happen that your child will be identified as a close contact of someone at home, or in the community, who has tested positive. In this event, your child will have to isolate at home for 14 days.

The majority of your child's class will be at school and will continue being taught by their class teacher.

It is not possible for the class teacher to deliver lessons in school and online to your child, so our only option is to provide a hard pack of activities which will reflect what is being taught at school.

It is essential that you have downloaded the 'Class Dojo' app and that you have access to our school website www.stjosephsbessbrook.com and 'Microsoft Teams'.

➢ A remote learning pack of activities and worksheets will be made available as soon as possible and can be sent home with siblings or can be collected from the school.
➢ The activities will be broken into days and subject areas – the focus will be on Numeracy and Literacy
➢ The activities, based on these lessons, will be in the pack or will be posted on your child's individual Class Dojo portfolio. Your child should complete the activities and return (via Class Dojo) to their teacher. Student portfolios can only be accessed by your child, you (the parent) and your child's teacher once the post has been approved. At times, answers will be included for parents to ensure you can correct your child's work before sending it back, via Class Dojo, to the teacher. This saves valuable time.
➢ Parents must ensure that all images uploaded to DOJO are appropriate

We appreciate your support and patience as we continue to develop our provision during these isolation periods. Please make your child's teacher aware of any difficulties your child experienced with their work via Class Dojo.

Appendix 2 - Arrangements in the Event of a Class Bubble Isolating

It may happen that the school will have to contact you to let you know that your child's class must isolate for 14 days. This will happen if someone in that class has tested positive and your child has been identified as a close contact. In these circumstances, the school will put in motion a set of arrangements to help continue your child's education during this period.

It is essential that you have downloaded the 'Class Dojo' app and that you have access to our school website www.stjosephsbessbrook.com and 'Microsoft Teams'.

➢ Your child's teacher will post a schedule of arrangements on the website and through the Class Dojo app

➢ Day 1 will be given over to the teacher to allow them to prepare resources and plan for the coming two weeks

➢ A remote learning pack of activities and worksheets will be made available as soon as possible and can be sent home with siblings or can be collected from the school office

➢ The activities will be broken into days and subject areas – the focus will be on Numeracy and Literacy

➢ Your child's teacher will also provide a number of pre-recorded lessons to teach and explain the topics. Feedback from parents has suggested that this is not only extremely helpful to the children but also to them as parents, as it gives crucial guidance when supporting their child

➢ The activities, based on these lessons, will be in the pack or will be posted on your child's individual Class Dojo portfolio. Your child should complete the activities and return (via Class Dojo) to their teacher. Student portfolios can only be accessed by your child, you (the parent) and your child's teacher once the post has been approved. At times, answers will be included for parents to ensure you can correct your child's work before sending it back, via Class Dojo, to the teacher. This saves valuable time. The teacher can check the work, assess what needs reinforcing and plan for that. Hard copy worksheets are not to be returned to your child's teacher.

➢ Parents must ensure that all images uploaded to DOJO are appropriate

<u>Appendix 3 - Arrangements in the Event of an Extended Lockdown</u>
It may happen that schools will be informed of an extended lockdown or a future lockdown. In these circumstances, the school will put in motion a set of arrangements to help continue your child's education during this period of time. These arrangements are very similar to those for a class bubble isolating.

<u>It is essential that you have downloaded the 'Class Dojo' app and that you have access to our school website www.stjosephsbessbrook.com and 'Microsoft Teams'.</u>

- Your child's teacher will post a schedule for the day/week on the Class Dojo app.
- If notice of the lockdown is short, a day may be given over to the teacher, to allow them to prepare resources and plan for the coming weeks.
- A remote learning pack of activities and worksheets will be made available as soon as possible and can be collected from the school. The number of weeks included in the remote learning pack will be dictated by the proposed length of lockdown.
- The activities will be broken into days, weeks and subject areas just as in the previous lockdown.
- To complement the remote learning pack, your child's teacher will provide online lessons/resources to teach and explain the topics. Feedback from parents has suggested that this is not only extremely helpful to the children but also to them as parents, as it gives crucial guidance when supporting their child.
- Parents must ensure that all images uploaded to DOJO are appropriate

The logistics of this arrangement can be more difficult during a full lockdown. Some families will have several children needing to go online for their lessons. In order to cater for all circumstances live lessons may be limited and pre-recorded lessons and links to useful resources will be provided.

➢ This method of teaching is not easy for teachers either, so we are asking you to be patient while we develop our practice. Your help and support is crucial.

➢ Activities, based on these lessons will either be uploaded to your child's individual portfolio on class dojo or in their remote learning pack. No physical copies will be returned to school, instead photographs of work can be uploaded to class dojo in order for teachers to mark and give feedback.

➢ Follow up support will be provided as required, where your child's teacher will iron out any difficulties and consolidate the children's learning. It is your responsibility to contact your child's class teacher via dojo if any difficulties arise.

➢ This cycle will be repeated in the following weeks including the provision of additional remote learning packs if required.

➢ Links to lessons will remain on Class Dojo so children can go back over lessons.

We hope that this scenario does not occur but we know we will continue to work together should it happen.

Thank you again for all your support during these challenging times.

St. Joseph's Primary School
Online Code of Conduct

1) The parent or carer must make sure their child and other members of their household are aware the video call is happening.

2) Staff, children and other members of the household must be wearing suitable clothing.

3) Devices should be in an appropriate and preferably, public area of the home.

4) Please use only one device in a room as multiple devices in use can cause feedback.

5) Language must be appropriate at all times, including any family members in the background.

6) Be aware that normal household activity may be heard and/or on view if the microphone and camera are in use.

7) After the initial log in/greetings, pupils may be asked to turn off their cameras and microphones.

8) The chat facility is available only for asking questions about the session/lesson.

9) Sessions may be held on a one-to-one basis to assist anyone experiencing significant difficulty. A parent must remain with their child throughout a one-to-one.

10) Please ensure your or your child's identity is clear when signing into join an online lesson.

11) Teachers may record their lessons and make them available to pupils who missed the live session. We are asking that these recorded lessons are used appropriately and never shared on any other online or social media platform.