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COVID-19 School Closure 2020: Remote Working Policy

Review Due:	In response to changes in circumstance (annually as a minimum)
Approved:	April 2020
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Review Date:	April 2021

1. Introduction

Schools are closed and their current role is provision of childcare for children and young people of workers who are critical to the Covid-19 national response, and vulnerable children, as set out in the Government Guidance. The numbers attending school are variable day by day and across the Trust. Schools have in place staffing rotas that ensure the safe care of the children while maintaining minimal staffing on the school site, being mindful of the Government's guidance on essential travel, working from home where possible and social distancing.

The aim of this document is to set out guidance on remote working for those on the Trust's payroll during partial school closure as a result of Covid-19. It is written in the knowledge that staff are being asked to carry out an important role in these times and that, the usual formal education as understood in 'ordinary times' has ceased. The Trust retains professional expectations of staff and high expectations of pupils. All schools will have in place a Home Learning Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

This document provides a framework to support staff in remote working and applies to all staff that are not absent due to illness/rota'd 'lieu time' or are not working directly with children/fulfilling duties within the school according to the school's staff rota system. It includes staff that are well and self-isolating due to symptoms within the household, as well as those who are shielding having been identified as extremely vulnerable.

2. Conduct:

The Staff Code of Conduct should be followed whilst remote working and staff are expected to conduct themselves professionally both in school and online, and to continue to carry out tasks within a reasonable interpretation of their job description.

Trust HR Policies continue to apply, including staff Code of Conduct, Disciplinary and Staff Sickness. Copies of all policies can be found on the Trust website.

3. Working Hours

The expectation is that staff will follow their usual working patterns where possible. However, we recognise the circumstances leading to staff home working at this current time are unprecedented and there may need to be some adaptations to allow for:

- Domestic arrangements: for some staff their usual patterns of work will not be able to be followed due to their home circumstances (for example responsibilities for dependants).

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- Safe opening of the schools as directed by the Government to enable the care of children of key workers and vulnerable children, including during the school holidays, bank holidays and weekends where directed. It may require staff being redeployed to another school or asked to work outside of their usual working days/hour. Staff will be given time in lieu.

Headteachers should ensure that:

- Individual needs are considered, e.g. childcare, disabilities and take sensible and sensitive decisions to home working routines
- Staff are supported to adjust to the new working routines
- Staff are encouraged to give feedback about how working arrangements from home may be improved
- The plans for which tasks can be carried out from home are regularly reviewed
- Flexibility about deadlines is considered.

We appreciate that staff teams will want to support each other during this period. However no staff member should feel that they are carrying an unreasonable burden of responsibility and should speak to their Headteacher should this be the case. Headteachers who find themselves in a similar position should speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will be making regular contact with them.

Staff should ensure that they keep their Headteacher appraised, in advance where possible, of any difficulties they may have in their working routines. Any changes to working routines must be approved by the Headteacher.

4. Staff attendance and absence

Staff should report absence in the usual way whether they are on rota to be in school or not.

Staff leave during the rota period will be either paid or unpaid, according to policy and principles set out by The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust in the existing suite of HR Policies available on the Trust website. <https://thebathandmendippartnershiptrust.co.uk/about-the-trust/trust-policies/>

5. Staff welfare and well-being

We appreciate that during this national emergency staff may feel a higher level of stress and anxiety; they may be managing difficult and upsetting circumstances in their own lives or may find it difficult to adapt to the changes in their work and personal routines.

Staff have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety. To support staff in achieving this aim, it is important that Headteachers ensure that there are opportunities for school staff to:

- Receive regular updates from the school leadership team
- Keep in touch with their school leadership team
- Keep in touch with their school staff team
- Be encouraged to maintain a healthy work/life balance, taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of their working day (we would suggest that if your working hours have changed, you mark this on your email signature).

Keeping in touch will involve adapting to new ways of communicating, such as video or conference calls.

If staff are concerned about their work life balance/well-being they should speak with their Headteacher/ SLT. Likewise, Headteachers should speak to their Chair of Governors, Trust Leadership Partner and/or the CEO.

6. School equipment and resources

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All staff who take equipment off-site, including school laptops, are required to follow the guidance in the Equipment Loan Agreement (see Appendix 1). If you require resources whilst remote working, please contact your school's headteacher/office manager. It may be possible for you to receive these through the post, collect them from school or for you to be reimbursed for any purchase if agreed in writing and in advance by the Headteacher. To ensure compliance with social distancing it is important that you do not arrive at school to collect any resources without the prior agreement of your headteacher/senior leader.

7. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Staff will be expected to continue with CPD during the period of closure but there will likely be changes to what this will look like. Staff will be directed to CPD that is required to be completed as part of their working hours. Staff should ensure that CPD that is completed during this period of school closure is kept in their usual CPD log.

8. Ensuring confidentiality and compliance with GDPR

Use of IT: It is important that staff are aware of and follow Trust IT processes and procedures in order to ensure that personal and confidential information is protected appropriately. The Trust's ICT and Acceptable Use of Internet Agreement (Appendix 2) has been signed by all staff and applies whether staff are working in school or remotely.

Confidentiality: All Data Protection and GDPR Policies apply throughout the period of school closure.

9. Keeping in touch: Video and telephone conference calls - safeguarding staff and pupils

It is important that systems used are confidential and secure and direction should be provided by the Headteacher for the methods that staff should use. We would remind staff of the Code of Conduct when taking part in conference calls. We appreciate that it may be difficult for a number of reasons for staff to take part in video conference calls, for example a space in the home that enables confidential discussions to take place. Headteachers should take this into account when planning the appropriateness of group calls.

Communication within the staff team: Headteachers should provide guidance on the most appropriate platforms for communication between colleagues. It is important that when making decisions about the platform, no staff member should be excluded from taking part in a 'team discussion' due to not having either the technology or technical ability to access the platform. Staff should be remotely supported to have in place any IT that is required.

Telephone Communication with Parents: Staff should not contact parents/carers or pupils from their own telephone. Any telephone calls to parents/carers should be made from telephones on site (on rota). The telephone handset should be wiped with a suitable sanitizing/cleaning fluid after each caller has finished using the device.

Where this is not possible e.g. the school is not open, then the following guidance should be followed:

- Calls should be made in school hours on the parent's telephone.
- Ensure that someone else at school is aware that the call is taking place and keep a record of the time and date.
- Use an app e.g. 3cx that will route calls through the school number or block your own number.
- If it is absolutely necessary to speak with a child, the parent should be present and the call should be on loudspeaker.

Staff Video Calls to parents/carers or pupils:

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It is not appropriate for staff to hold one-to-one video calls with children or their parents/carers in any circumstances except where it is specifically necessary to support the pupil's pastoral care and arrangements and where the detailed arrangements have been agreed in advance by the Headteacher.

Some schools may deliver 'on line' sessions for pupils. We refer you to the school's Home Learning Policy for guidance on how to deliver such sessions in a manner that protects both children and staff.

Staff should refer to their school's Home Learning Policy and Safeguarding Policy for further guidance, in addition to taking account of the following protocols:

- Always follow the protocols in Trust's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Always use devices supplied by your school and/or ensure that you are logged into your school/work account.
- One-to-one calling (telephone or video) between a teacher and one pupil should never take place.
- If a pupil raises a concern during an online lesson the protocol set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy must be followed.
- Ensure that the camera is straight ahead and focussed on head and shoulders, that there is a clear background with no inappropriate or unwanted imagery and that you are set up in an appropriate area of the house e.g. not a bedroom.
- Ensure that you will not be inappropriately interrupted by other household members during transmission.
- Wear suitable clothing.

There is useful guidance on The Key, which supports safeguarding pupils and staff on various platforms.

<https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/covid-19/safeguard-and-support-pupils/safeguarding-while-teaching/remote-teaching-safeguarding-pupils-and-staff/?marker=visited-articles>

10. Expectations of staff

Where appropriate, further information regarding the expectations of staff in different roles at individual schools is set out below at Appendix 3.

11. Review

This guidance will remain under review as these are new ways of working in an environment of changing circumstances.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Equipment Loan Agreement

Appendix 2: ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

Appendix 3: Expectations of staff at individual schools (to be completed by school)

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Appendix 1: Equipment Loan Policy/Agreement

Schools to insert their own arrangements here

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Appendix 2: The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust ICT Acceptable Use Agreement



The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust Acceptable Use of Internet and ICT Policy

New technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people in today's society, both within schools and in their lives outside school. The internet and other digital information and communications technologies are powerful tools, which open up new opportunities for everyone. These technologies can stimulate discussion, promote creativity and stimulate awareness of context to promote effective learning. They also bring opportunities for staff to be more creative, efficient and productive in their work. All users should have an entitlement to safe internet access at all times.

This Acceptable Use Policy is intended to ensure:

- That staff and volunteers will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other communications technologies for educational, personal and recreational use.
- That school ICT systems and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk.
- That staff are protected from potential risk in their use of ICT in their everyday work.

The school will try to ensure that staff and volunteers will have good access to ICT to enhance their work, to enhance learning opportunities for students learning and will, in return, expect staff and volunteers to agree to be responsible users.

Staff Acceptable Use of Internet & ICT Policy Agreement

I understand that I must use school ICT systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the ICT systems and other users. I recognise the value of the use of ICT for enhancing learning and will ensure that students receive opportunities to gain from the use of ICT. I will, where possible, educate the young people in my care in the safe use of ICT and embed e-safety in my work with young people.

For my professional and personal safety:

- I understand that the school will monitor my use of the ICT systems, email and other digital communications.
- I understand that the rules set out in this agreement also apply to the professional use of any School or Personal ICT Devices.
- I understand that the school ICT systems are primarily intended for educational use and that I will only use the systems for personal or recreational use within the policies and rules set down by the school.
- I will not disclose my username or password to anyone else, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password.
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incident I become aware of, to the Headteacher.

I will be professional in my communications and actions when using school ICT systems:

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- I will not access, copy, remove or otherwise alter any other user's files, without their express permission
- I will communicate with others in a professional manner, I will not use aggressive or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions
- I will ensure that when I take and / or publish images of others I will do so with their permission and in accordance with the school's policy on the use of digital media.
- I will not use my personal equipment to record images or video, unless an agreement has previously been made with the ICT Co-ordinator or Network Manager. If this is the case I will make sure the media is deleted before the device is removed from the school site
- Where data is published it will not be possible to identify by name, or other personal information, those who are featured.
- I will only use chat and social networking sites in school in accordance with the school's policy.
- I will only communicate with students and parents / carers using official school systems. Any such communication will be professional in tone and manner.
- I will not engage in any on-line activity that may compromise my professional responsibilities.

The school and the local authority have the responsibility to provide safe and secure access to technologies and ensure the smooth running of the school:

- When I use my personal hand held / external devices (PDAs / laptops / mobile phones / USB devices etc. in school, I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment. I will also follow any additional rules set by the school about such use. I will ensure that any such devices are protected by up to date anti-virus software and are free from viruses.
- I will not take any confidential data offsite using an external device, or cloud based storage, unless the data or device has been encrypted by the network manager.
- I will not use personal email addresses for school communications.
- I will not open any attachments to emails, unless the source is known and trusted, due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes.
- I will ensure that my data is regularly backed up, in accordance with relevant school policies.
- I will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others. I will not try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering / security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.
- I will not install or attempt to install programmes of any type on a machine, or store programmes on a computer.
- I will not disable or cause any damage to school equipment, or the equipment belonging to others.
- I will only transport, hold, disclose or share personal information about myself or others, as outlined in the School Data Protection Policy. Where personal data is transferred outside the secure school network, it must be encrypted.
- I understand that data protection policy requires that any staff or student data to which I have access, will be kept private and confidential, except when it is deemed necessary that I am required by law or by school policy to disclose such information to an appropriate authority.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.

When using the internet in my professional capacity or for school sanctioned personal use:

- I will ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work.
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not download or distribute copies (including music and videos).

I understand that I am responsible for my actions in and out of school:

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- I understand that this Acceptable Use Policy applies not only to my work and use of school ICT equipment in school, but also applies to my use of school ICT systems and equipment out of school and my use of personal equipment in school or in situations related to my employment by the school.
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement, I could be subject to disciplinary action. This could include normal disciplinary procedures and in the event of illegal activities the involvement of the police.

I have read and understand the above and agree to use the school ICT systems and my own devices within these guidelines.

Staff / Volunteer Name

Signed

Date

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Appendix 3: Expectations of staff at INSERT SCHOOL NAME and completed at school level. This could include detail from the below:

Headteacher:

Expectations as for the SLT plus:

- Keep up-to-date with latest developments in respect of the reasons for school closure/partial closure and the need for staff to work remotely.
- Disseminate key information to the workforce in a timely manner.
- Monitor the well-being of staff and address needs as they arise.
- Take active steps to ensure that the school is compliant with statutory guidance and that policy is in place to support this.
- Ensure that safeguarding practices remain fully operational and respond to the change in circumstances.

SLT:

- Attend weekly virtual SLT meetings. Agendas for these meetings should include an update on staffing levels and staff welfare and wellbeing; safeguarding; health and safety; staff CPD activities; review of home learning.
- Provide all staff with a weekly 'briefing' update via email.
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher.
- CPD as agreed with the Headteacher (weekly).

Teachers:

- Plan and deliver home learning for pupils.
- Communication with parents/carers and pupils as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader.
- Mark/provide feedback to pupils on learning completed at home.
- Monitor pupils' engagement in home learning and feed this feedback to SLT.
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader.
- Complete CPD as directed by the SLT (weekly).

Teaching Assistants:

- Provide support for home learning – work under the direction of the class teacher to prepare and plan home learning
- Engage in preparation for school reopening – as agreed with the headteacher/senior leader
- Complete CPD as directed by the SLT (weekly).

Administrative Staff:

As directed by headteacher/line manager to include:

- Management of mailboxes
- CPD
- Preparation in readiness for school reopening
- Kitchen staff – Staff should be prepared to step in for colleagues if they are unwell, or to come in to carry out kitchen cleaning tasks at different times of the day from those in which the rest of the team are in to cook.
- Complete CPD including online learning with certification e.g. food hygiene related
- Site management - When off-site, site management staff should continue to respond to emails and contact contractors and complete paperwork as required. On-site, the schedule of maintenance will be adhered to.