



Remote Education Strategy

Context

During the Covid-19 global pandemic, schools in the UK were closed to most children for a number of weeks. Schools quickly had to ensure as many children as possible, and then all children, could access learning. As a result of this, Hillstone School have creating a Remote Education Strategy – setting out our expectations for remote learning for differing circumstances.

As the situation, demand and technology change constantly, so will our strategy. This will be a 'live' document – reflecting new developments.

When the DFE guidance was released on October 1st 2020 – many of the aspects of remote learning suggested as good practice were already present in our Hillstone Virtual School. For example, assemblies were held weekly, PE and music lessons were held, SEN and welfare pages were created and children and parents could interact with teachers through Twitter and MS Forms. Children could also still see and hear their teachers through several daily video lessons on their virtual classrooms – we felt this was extremely important for the welfare of children of this age.

Hillstone Virtual School

The strategy is built around the Hillstone Virtual School. This was instigated and created immediately after the school closures for most pupils were announced. Parents' thoughts were canvassed and although the initial reviews were very good, we reflected and improvements were made. The virtual school received high praise from parents and professionals alike.

Daily videos for maths and English, coupled with topic videos were available for all children and featured their own teachers delivering the learning. (This will be discussed further in later in this document).

The DFE (Remote Education Good Practice 1st October 2020) state; *'Where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there are local restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, we expect schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education.'*

This is met by our Virtual School: Hillstone's Virtual School is now constantly online and updated weekly. How this actually looks and is used will differ, depending on circumstances:

Stage 1: General Use

The virtual school is accessible on the web site all of the time. This can be accessed as a tool for assigned pre-tutoring and homework or on a voluntary basis for families wishing to use the resources.

- Teachers' pages contain links to current learning in maths, English and topic. This may be from videos created by other educational sources (White Rose Maths, Oak Academy etc) but they are checked for relevance and quality and guaranteed by the source. There is also a comments section, which is monitored for appropriate comments before posting – this gives communication with the teachers should it be required.
- A well-being page and SEN page are available – they both have ideas and sign posting for pupils and parents.
- In future there will be PE challenges and virtual cooking lessons.
- Whilst we are unable to meet in large groups, we will also add special celebration assemblies – for example Remembrance Day and Christmas Nativity.

Stage 2: Individual pupils self-isolating

The virtual school will be as in Stage 1 but personalised aspects for the child in question.

- Should a child/family have to self-isolate, their teacher will call parents to discuss the Virtual School, how they can access it and how best to use it in a bespoke manner for their child.
- Teacher will check comments box daily and access will be made for feedback. There will be a follow up call should the isolation go into a second week and access made should parents wish to ask questions whilst their child is at home.

Stage 3: A bubble being instructed to self-isolate

- If a bubble is closed, then the teachers whose bubble is closed will be delivering daily lessons in their virtual classroom.
- The lessons will be delivered as described in Stage 4 (for that bubble only).
- The lessons will be timetabled, so pupils can 'sign in' on the comments box and the teacher is aware who is learning.
- In the first instance feedback will be via a Twitter link and comments box, but we are investigating the use of office 365 to improve this.

Stage 4: School closure for most or all pupils

If the whole school goes into lockdown, the likelihood is we will only have a few vulnerable and key children in school (if any). Although, staffing will change depending on which pupils/teachers are required in school, the virtual school will be fully operational:

Virtual Classrooms:

- Daily welcome videos from teachers
- Maths and English lessons delivered by video and featuring their own teachers
- Additional topic lessons
- Feedback
- All lessons to start at stated times, with a sign in from the pupils. They can then ask questions 'live' via the comments all the way through the lessons and for an allotted time at the end.
- Comments box to contact teacher is available for pupils and parents.
- The planned curriculum will continue to be delivered.

In addition:

- PE activities page
- SEN page
- Well-being page
- Music page
- Weekly assemblies

At Hillstone, we agree with the DFE document, which shares;

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has found that the effectiveness of remote teaching is determined by many of the same factors as determine the effectiveness of live classroom teaching. For example:

- *ensuring pupils receive clear explanations*
- *supporting growth in confidence with new material through scaffolded practice*
- *application of new knowledge or skills*
- *enabling pupils to receive feedback on how to progress*

These are met through not only our videos, be it bespoke and created by the teachers, or by education providers, but also phone calls to ascertain need and disseminate information as required.

We aim, in future, to replicate 'live' classrooms interactions between Hillstone staff and pupils as closely as possible.

The suggestions made by DFE are covered in our 'infrastructure' outlined below:

- *maintain an up-to-date record of which pupils and families do not have device or internet access*
- *consider how school technology resources could be used in future to support pupils without sufficient remote facilities. This could include preparing to provide laptops and chargers to identified families with any usage or loan agreements necessary to help safeguard school property*
- *ensure that any equipment obtained under the department's Get help with technology programme is clearly identified and ready to be re-distributed for a similar purpose*

Infrastructure

In order to ensure that all children have access to remote learning, we have undertaken an audit. This has provided us with information about how many devices a family has and whether this is adequate, and whether they have access to the internet and enough data in order to access remote learning effectively. It means, in most cases, we are aware which children are able to access learning immediately and how. It also takes into consideration any difficulties they may have and if they have Internet access or devices for their whole family. The initial telephone contact will also ascertain who needs to stay off school, for what reason and between which dates. We will also use this opportunity to find out about access to our virtual learning and arrange a call between the parent and teacher to discuss best use of the virtual school. Jason will monitor and record this – it will be constantly updated, including logging teachers contact with the family and if the pupils returned on the intended date.

We recognise that not all families and pupils require the same level of support – but we have and will continue to, ascertain the required support for each family in every situation. When a small number of pupils are required to self-isolate, they will be contacted at least weekly by telephone calls. Through any major school closure all parents will have a chance to call the school or respond to Microsoft Forms to give feedback and ask questions. Phone calls will also be made as required by DFE guidance and the school's knowledge of our community.

School will purchase ten notebooks and a provide internet access if required, these will be available for children in the event are instructed to isolate. This will be on a loan basis and will be signed out and returned and the end of the required period. The audit results inform us of the ability of our families to access the Virtual School – but this will be followed up by a phone call in the instance of a smaller number of pupils needing to isolate. In the event of a bubble/whole school closure – pupils not 'signing in' will be contacted and offered relevant support.

Disadvantaged children in certain year groups when schools are affected by disruption to face-to-face education due to coronavirus (COVID-19) will have access to a loan of a laptop. Details can be found here: <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/devices/how-to-order>

Vulnerable children

Following the results of the audit, the pastoral manager will speak to the children and parents of our vulnerable children to ensure that they understand and can access the virtual classroom in the event of them needed to self-isolate or a lockdown.

The DFE state - Pupils in the early stages of their formal education are likely to have particular needs which cannot easily be addressed in the same way as those of other pupils. Likewise, some pupils with SEND will require specific approaches tailored to their circumstances.

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Motivation

One of the biggest barriers that we found during lockdown was not access but a lack of motivation. In order to address this we will be asking teachers to make much more use of the web site generally so children are familiar with it. Teachers will encourage children to use the current virtual classrooms for pre-tutoring. We will post content in virtual classrooms such as well-being, SEN sports, cooking and assemblies. This will help children be familiar with using the web site regularly. Teachers will also every two or three weeks draw attention to the virtual school and explain how this will work in the event of them self-isolating or a lockdown.

Off-line Learning

We would rather ensure that all children use the virtual classroom as this will be able to provide new teaching in a way that a paper pack cannot do so. However, we must be aware that for some parents it can feel intimidating and they feel more comfortable with giving them a paper pack. The answer to this is for children and families to be familiar with the virtual classroom. Teachers will plan to show pupils the content of their virtual classroom on a weekly basis. It will be used in the classroom and for homework, meaning if a situation should arise where it is required for remote learning – pupils are more familiar with the concept.

Additional Resources

We intend to make it possible for our entire community to access our Virtual School – but we understand that this may not be possible. In the instance that a family are simply unable to access online learning, despite all of our best efforts – paper packs and writing resources will be made available. Dependant on circumstances they can be collected, delivered by school staff or posted.

Monitoring

Phase leaders will monitor the content of the virtual school and Jason and Gill will have an overview. Chris will ensure that we are compliant with GDPR and safeguarding laws.

Safeguarding

We will follow the rules set out by GDPR. The comments boxes and Twitter comments are monitored. We currently are not offering Zoom/Live Video-Conferencing due to some safeguarding concerns, but this will be re-evaluated. Calls will be made by relevant staff to safeguard the full Hillstone community as our families are not attending school. Some families may be identified as requiring further support during this time and this will be undertaken when necessary.

22nd October 2020

Updated 9th November 2020

