



PolyMAT

Remote Learning Policy

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1. Rationale

This policy aims to clarify the arrangements for remote education that PolyMAT schools will implement to support staff and students during situations where in-class learning is not possible for an extended time-period. This will include situations in which the school is closed, but a high proportion of learners and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home, such as in the event of national or local lockdowns for public health reasons or other extended school closures (for instance due to lack of hot water/ heating/ power or other health & safety hazards or due to lack of available staff).

This policy will also be followed should there be infectious disease outbreaks, where learners are self-isolating at home, but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.

This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term school closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term (up to 3 days) individual learner absence.

There is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to learners 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 learners 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.

This remote learning policy aims to:

- Ensure consistency in the approach to remote learning for pupils who are not in school;
- Set out expectations for all members of the PolyMAT community with regards to remote learning;
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection and safeguarding.

2. Curriculum expectations

PolyMAT will ensure that the curriculum expectations outlined by government underpin all remote education plans and delivery.

Our expectations for Remote Education Plans:

- a) Remote Education continues to enable schools to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects, maintaining student choices for further study and employment;
- b) Remote Education responds to the individual needs of students, and is informed by an assessment of pupil’s starting points and addresses gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills;
- c) Remote Education will enable teaching of new content, support pupils to master the curriculum, and so make good progress;
- d) Remote Education will be high-quality and safe, and align as closely as possible with in-school provision;

- e) Remote Education will make effective use of regular formative assessment, while avoiding the introduction of unnecessary tracking systems.

When teaching pupils remotely, PolyMAT expects its schools to::

- Set tasks/ assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects;
- Teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally;
- Provide frequent, clear explanations of new content;
- Gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using questions and other suitable tasks;
- Set clear expectations on how regularly teachers will check work;
- Enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding;
- Ensure pupils receive a programme of learning that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, ideally including daily contact with teachers;
- Enable pupils to receive feedback on how to progress.

3. Individual Remote Learning

This section of this policy applies in situations where a school remains open and working as normal, but an individual student is unable to attend lessons as normal for a significant period (e.g. the guidance to local authorities is that this will apply for absences of 15 or more days whether consecutive or cumulative), yet is otherwise well and able to work, e.g. recovering from injuries where attendance might inhibit recovery, recovering from short-term infectious illnesses, or preparing for or recovering from some operations. In some exceptional cases, these circumstances might also include pupils whose attendance has been affected by a special educational need or disability (SEND) or a mental health issue.

Note: Students who are isolating due to contracting an infectious disease are considered to be unwell, and this section of the policy will not apply. It is therefore expected that there will be few if any situations in which Individual Remote Learning will be required.

Should a school become aware of a qualifying period of planned absence, school leaders will make a judgement on the support to be provided.

In most circumstances, the school should provide remote education for the student to access from home immediately or no later than the following working day, however remote education should not be

viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school, and providing remote education during a pupil's absence does not reduce the importance of bringing that absence to an end as soon as possible.

The decision to provide remote education for an individual pupil will be taken by the school on a case-by-case basis, and will form part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, and only when it is judged that providing remote education would not adversely affect the pupil's return to school. The decision to provide remote education should also be by mutual agreement with relevant stakeholders, such as parents or carers, medical professionals, social workers, the local authority and the student themselves.

The provision of remote education should allow absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers. Where pupils have access to appropriate devices, remote education might include recorded and/ or live direct teaching time, as well as time for pupils to complete tasks, reading and assignments independently, depending on their age and stage of development. Where students are unable to access remote education due to lack of access to technology at home or where students may have difficulty successfully accessing remote education in this way (perhaps due to SEND), schools should seek to provide access in the first instance, or if this is not feasible, then should provide alternative home learning resources and support measures, such as paper-based tasks and telephone check-ins.

When a school is satisfied there is a qualifying period of absence, they will need to put in place workable plans to enable staff to teach those students in the classroom and at home concurrently, or other arrangements which do not create unnecessary additional workload for teachers.

4. Partial or Full Closures

This section of this policy applies in situations where a school is fully closed or where a school remains partially open, with one or more year groups working from home.

From the first day of planned absence for one or more year groups, each school should provide remote education that fully meets the curriculum expectations outlined above.

Where students are unable to access remote education due to lack of access to technology at home or where students may have difficulty successfully accessing remote education in this way (perhaps due to SEND), schools should make a judgement on whether these students can continue to attend the school during the partial closure as part of the Trust's commitment to "Vulnerable Students". Alternatively, schools may seek to provide access, or if this is not feasible, then should provide alternative home learning resources and support measures.

Each school will need to have in place workable plans to enable staff to teach those vulnerable students who are on site and those students at home concurrently, or other arrangements which do not create unnecessary additional workload for teachers.

5. Remote Teaching

This section of this policy applies in situations where one or more members of teaching staff are required to work from home, perhaps due to a partial or full school closure.

PolyMAT is committed to seeking ways in which teachers can be provided with more flexibility for working from home as a matter of routine, however this section of this policy is not intended to be used in this way, and is only for use in the situations indicated above.

Note: Staff who are isolating due to contracting an infectious disease, recovering from a medical procedure or other similar situations are considered to be unwell, and this section of the policy will not apply. It is therefore expected that there will be few if any situations in which teachers will be required to teach remotely from home under this policy.

PolyMAT is committed to providing teachers with the necessary access and to enable them to continue to teach their lessons from home where this is required. Where this is not possible, teachers may be required to provide cover materials as per standard practice, or may be required to undertake alternative duties for the closure or lockdown period.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Each school's own remote learning plans should outline roles and responsibilities that are specific to the school's procedures for remote learning. These will expand upon the roles and responsibilities outlined in this policy, which are focussed on the leadership of remote learning within each school.

School Leaders

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

- Developing school-specific Remote Education plans, to include the school's approach to remote teaching and learning, assessment, pastoral care and safeguarding, and ensuring this meets PolyMAT's expectations;
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of which pupils and families do not have device or internet access;
- Purchasing additional devices or textbooks (if needed) so all students have access to high quality remote learning;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of and engagement with remote education;
- Seeking feedback from pupils and parents on the quality of remote education;
- Monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations;
- Checking if vulnerable children are able to access remote education support, to support them to access it (as far as possible) and to regularly check if they are doing so;
- Ensuring that sufficient training and development time has been provided to enable teachers and students to make effective use of Remote Education platforms;
- Collating and sharing best practice of the use of Remote Education within the school to share with the wider family of schools within PolyMAT in order to help shape and refine this policy and related plans.

Teachers

Each school's plans should set out the expectations for teachers drawing on the curriculum expectations contained in this policy. This should include expectations for the delivery of remote education in the event of individual remote learning being required, year group or full school

closures, and in situations where teachers are required to teach from home. This should cover expectations for delivery, assessment, communication and pastoral care.

Subject/ Pastoral Leads

Each school's plans will set out the expectations for subject and pastoral leaders. This will include expectations for curriculum design, monitoring and communication. For pastoral leaders in particular, this includes details of how the school will deliver assemblies, tutor times and parental meetings.

SENCO

Each school's plans will set out the school's approach to providing remote education to students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). They will also make clear the role of the SENCO and the wider SEN team in the event of remote education being required for these students. This will include details of how SEND students who may be unable to access remote education will be supported, and the curriculum support, monitoring and communication activities of those staff involved in their care.

IT Support

Each school's IT Support teams, supported by the Trust Network Manager, are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the agreed systems for the delivery of remote education are fully operational;
- Providing IT support to staff/ students/ parents/carers with any technical issues they are experiencing when working remotely;
- Ensuring the security of remote learning systems and flagging any data protection breaches to the school's data protection lead;
- On request, preparing devices for students or staff who have no access to a computer and/or internet access at home and keeping track of these devices in line with asset management procedures.

Pupils/ Parents/ Carers

Each school's plans should set out expectations for pupils, and their parents/ carers. This will include details of how students will be expected to engage in remote education and how this will be monitored. It should also provide advice/ guidance for how to learn effectively from home.

Trust Board

The Trust Board of PolyMAT are responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the Trust's remote learning policy ensuring it enables the continued provision of high quality education across all schools in the Trust in the event it is required;

CEO/ Trust Executives

- Reviewing and approving any decision to temporarily or partially close one or more academies in the Trust due to inclement weather, public health incidents, health & safety issues or lack of available staff.

Academy Committee Members

The Academy Committees for each school are responsible for:

- Monitoring the school's approach to providing remote learning to ensure education remains as high quality as possible and is in line with DfE guidance;
- Ensuring that staff are certain that remote learning systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons.

7. Safeguarding & Data Protection arrangements

During any period of remote education, the Trust or school policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Data Protection, and E-Safety continue to apply. In these policies, there is specific guidance to which staff must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at school, including specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations.

Each school's plans will reference and re-enforce these policies, and any addendums to them, which include matters of online safety and how students are effectively safeguarded when they are educated from home, and staff use of personal devices when handling personal or sensitive data.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, it will be approved by the Trustees.

Each school within the Trust will have their own arrangements for monitoring remote education, and will seek to share emerging best practice with the Trust, and contribute to the ongoing review of this policy.

9. Links to other Policies

- PolyMAT Data Protection (GDPR) and Data Breach policies
- PolyMAT Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- PolyMAT Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy
- PolyMAT E-Safety policy
- PolyMAT Freedom of Information policy
- PolyMAT SEN policy
- PolyMAT Whistleblowing policy
- School Safeguarding & Child Protection policies

Appendix One – Template Remote Education Plans for PolyMAT schools

Definition

This plan will be implemented in the event that one or more year groups are required to stay at home due to lack of staffing or where the school is fully or partially closed due to other circumstances.

Assessing the need for Remote Education

The school or Trust will monitor staff attendance levels in order to forecast likely staffing shortages. Partial or Full closures may be required in the following circumstances:

No. of Absent Staff	Extent of Partial Closure
<15	None – fully open
>= 15	6 year groups in school/ 1 year group at home (on rotation)
>= 21	5 year groups in school/ 2 year groups at home (on rotation)
>= 27	4 year groups in school/ 3 year groups at home (on rotation)
>= 33	3 year groups in school/ 4 year groups at home (on rotation)
>= 39	2 year groups in school/ 5 year groups at home (on rotation)
>= 45	1 year group in school/ 6 year groups at home (on rotation)
>= 51	Full closure – all students working from home, except Vulnerable Students

Alternatively, partial or full closure may be required as a result of other circumstances (e.g. related to student safety) or directed by national or local restrictions.

Timetabling Plans

The normal timetable will be retained where possible, however in situations where a partial or full closure is due to staffing levels, the normal timetable will no longer apply. In that case, a new timetable will take effect which reduces expectations in terms of the number of lessons to be delivered each day with common timings. These timetables will ensure that an entire year group is scheduled to do one subject at any one time, in order to reduce the staffing need. In most cases, each subject will be delivered as a live lesson by one or more subject specialists, however in some cases, students may be provided with independent work or may be supervised by a non-specialist depending on the availability of staff. The specific timetable to be followed will be confirmed as soon as possible, but will include 2-3 sessions/ subjects per day.

Here is an example of a timetable that could be followed:

Year X

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	English	PE	History	Science	Science
2	Maths	Languages	Art	Maths	English

3	Literacy	Maths	Geography	ICT	EBC
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	English	PE	History	Science	Science
2	Maths	Languages	Music	Drama	English
3	Literacy	Maths	Geography	DT	PD

Schools may choose to include timetables for all year groups within their plan, or to state that this will be provided alongside the announcement of any such closure.

Staff Absence & Cover

Absent teachers will need to follow the usual protocols for reporting absence, so that lessons can be covered where possible

Plans for Remote Education

Plan for Teachers

Objective	Measures
Students to be set work each day in a number of different subjects	Each teacher should set an assignment for the student to complete in [Microsoft Teams/ Google Classroom] for each day of absence.
Students should receive clear explanations of new content delivered by a teacher or high-quality video.	The teacher will stream their lesson via [Microsoft Teams/ Zoom] . They will manage the remote classroom using Hands Up, Mute, Screen Sharing and Chat functionality to enable ongoing formative assessment/ Q&A, and to give support to any students who require it. Where possible, an additional teacher will further support this monitoring.
Students work will be checked by teachers.	Students should submit the work they have completed by attaching their work to the assignment and turning in to the teacher, by completing a quiz or similar. Teachers do not have to “mark” this work or provide feedback, unless they would have been expecting to do so in their scheme of learning, however they should check the work has been completed and communicate with the Head of Year/ Form Tutor if it has not been. They should also consider using this work for live marking exercises in the next live lesson.

Note: if the student has SEND which would make remote education difficult, or if they have issues accessing remote education due to lack of devices etc, then teachers will be alerted to this and will be asked to provide paper-based activities that can be posted to the student instead. These should be provided to the School Office in bulk for the period the student will be absent from school. This should be actioned immediately and the printed work available to either post, or to be collected from the front gate, by the end of the day before this action comes into effect at the latest.

Plan for Students

Objective	Measures
Students to be set work each day in a number of different subjects	Students follow the remote learning timetable provided (including in the physical classroom if vulnerable). They should logon to [Microsoft Teams/ Google Classroom] to locate the assignments they have been set for that day, and complete the work set.
Students should receive clear explanations of new content delivered by a teacher or high-quality video.	Students should join any streamed lessons at the scheduled time via [Microsoft Teams/ Zoom] . Students should only turn on their video or microphone if requested by the teacher.

Students work will be checked by teachers.	Students should submit the work they have completed by attaching their work to the assignment and turning in to the teacher, or by completing a quiz or similar.
Students will receive daily contact from the school.	The streaming of lessons will fulfil the requirement for daily contact with the school, however in addition, students should expect to be contacted by their tutor/ HoY or a member of SLT periodically by [Teams/ Zoom/ phonecall] to discuss their progress.

Note: if the student has SEND which would make remote education difficult then the school will post home the work the student should do during their absence. Daily contact will instead take place via telephone. If they have issues accessing remote education due to lack of devices etc, then the student should be in school, unless they are self-isolating or sick.

Pastoral Care

Assemblies and Tutor Times will be streamed via [Microsoft Teams/ Zoom], and students will be provided with the link to be able to join these from home.

Any issues raised when contacting students regarding work not being set/ live lessons not taking place should be escalated to the Headteacher.

Any individual meetings that students should have had during that day, e.g. mentoring, counselling, therapy etc, will be arranged to take place remotely via [Microsoft Teams/ Zoom].

Free School Meals

All students who have been sent home to work remotely for this period remain entitled to free school meals. In this circumstance, we would expect a voucher scheme to be available again for these students. Alternatively, the school may decide to offer parents the option for cold, free school meals to be collected.