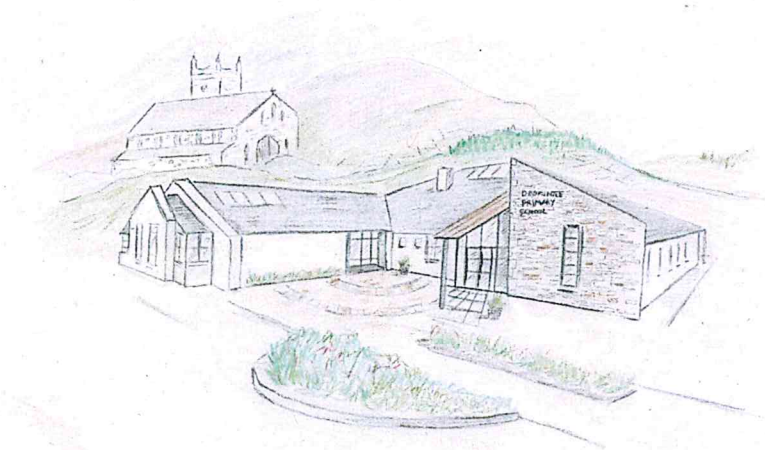# Dromintee Primary School
Remote Learning Policy

Modified May 2021. Approved by Governors 15th June 2021

RATIONALE:

Maintaining high levels of wellbeing and high-quality learning provides additional complexities when children 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 activity and meeting learning and engagement goals.

Remote learning is where the pupil and teacher are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment for a specified period. Remote learning for younger children and those who may have additional learning needs will typically need more involvement from parents, whilst some older children may be able to learn more independently. Online learning can include asynchronous approaches (which occur more independently at different points in time, based on the pupil's home circumstances) and synchronous approaches (that occur with a number of other children at the same time, usually online.)

PURPOSE:

- ➢ To uphold pupil wellbeing and provide learning which aligns with the learning aspirations of Dromintee 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. In events where staff and children engage in teaching and learning from home in isolated environments, guidelines are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and uphold the values of Dromintee Primary School.
- ➢ This policy outlines guidelines which support staff to uphold the behavioural expectations of children in Dromintee Primary School, and is aligned with our Positive Behaviour Policy and associated pastoral care and safeguarding policies.

GUIDELINES:

1. *Children will be supported pastorally while online learning.* Teachers and school leadership teams will gather information on issues their children are facing and help delineate a plan to provide support. Teachers will need to gather information 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 children may be isolated (such as during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown). In these situations, it may be impossible for a pupil without a device to receive one and engage meaningfully in class. Support needs to take into account the unique situations in which children find themselves and ensure that it is tailored to their contexts.

Not all children have the same level of home support nor do all households have the same level of access to resources, particularly internet connection and devices such as tablets and laptops. The staff at Dromintee Primary School will endeavour to find out which families need additional support – the loan of a device, or a supervised learning place in school or in *exceptional circumstances* (where SEN issues exist and also where families are failing to engage digitally) hard copies of work will be provided retrospectively for the week.
Circular Number 2021/01 para 15, 'The Department recommend that all schools aim to engage with children on an ongoing basis through the wide range of e-learning platforms available rather than provide hard copy or emailed resources alone, if at all possible'.

Children facing wellbeing issues, such as those living in homes where there is significant disruption may need support through other staff or external agencies to ensure that they are emotionally supported while they learn from home.

2. *Staff will have the knowledge and skills to engage in online teaching and learning practices.* Where there are gaps in knowledge or practice, these are addressed through individualised support and staff-wide professional learning. As with the e-Learning policy, staff should be familiar with technologies which facilitate learning. Teacher stress may be minimised by providing ample technical support provision and digital literacy facilitation. Staff should feel that their skills to teach online are supported and should be consulted in how this best occurs, in a realistic timescale. The rationale needs to be made very clear to staff 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. Each teacher will complete a risk assessment before they engage in Zoom and may revisit the assessment as required.

3 Staff have control over the online learning environment. The Dromintee Primary School's Positive Behaviour Policy is translated into online learning specific environments such as that experienced during COVID-19. It is compliant with DE requirements, and takes account of the Child Protection policy and E-safety policy and acceptable use agreement. Staff and parents should ensure their children/children are aware of the 'Online Code of Conduct' (appendix 4) and 'Online safety at home' (appendix 5).

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 children must not interrupt others and raise their hand if they want to speak, then in an online learning environment, the rule would be that children are expected to raise their hand on camera or raise a hand icon if one is available on the platform, and that children are expected to mute their microphones when not answering a question or participating in the discussion.

4. *All children are to have an opportunity to participate.* 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 staff have control over who is speaking and when under different learning activities.

Children 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 children. Because of this, it is recommended that staff enforce a 'muted unless speaking policy' to avoid the potential for constant disruptions.

5. *Positive behaviour is to be emphasised and reinforced.* 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?"). These reinforcing actions maintain and strengthen positive learning behaviours and motivate children to act as responsible online citizens.

6. **Role of the Principal or Vice-Principal:** The Principal and Vice-Principal will liaise with all staff to assess the levels of engagement from each pupil in each class on a weekly basis. If concern is expressed about the lack of participation from certain children, a pastoral phone call will be made to the family home to lend support.

The Principal or Vice Principal should also 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.

7. **Digital etiquette** is to be maintained through staff' proactive monitoring of and responsibility for the online learning environment. This means that staff 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), and may become an ongoing part of teaching and learning at Dromintee Primary School. When learning occurs exclusively online without physical proximity to a teacher. We will endeavour to ensure that children's learning continues.

The revised attendance guidance from the Department of Education 'recommends a minimum of one registration per day and this needs to be supported by evidence of work by the pupil'. In order to be marked present children have to evidence their learning through completion and submission of work. At Dromintee PS, we would prefer to look at alternatives and to offer as much support to the family as possible.

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.

In Dromintee Primary School where teachers and classroom assistants are asked to supervise the key workers' children on a rota system, greater flexibility will be shown to those with caring responsibilities and with young children. Parents of babies and toddlers, who may have to supervise the home learning of their own children in addition to remote teaching their class will be asked for minimal physical presence in the school.

Parental Guidelines

Online learning poses significant challenges for children. Research has shown that when school/learning environments are mixed with personal/home environments, learning and behaviour are harder to control. When children are engaging with online learning, they are not physically present with their teacher. Children 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 children under stress. In order to help children 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

In order to help with attention and motivation, it is recommended that children 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 children 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 children 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, children should be able to work without noise or significant distraction.

2. Help children get connected

Make sure your child knows how to operate the See-Saw or Google Classroom apps. 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

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.
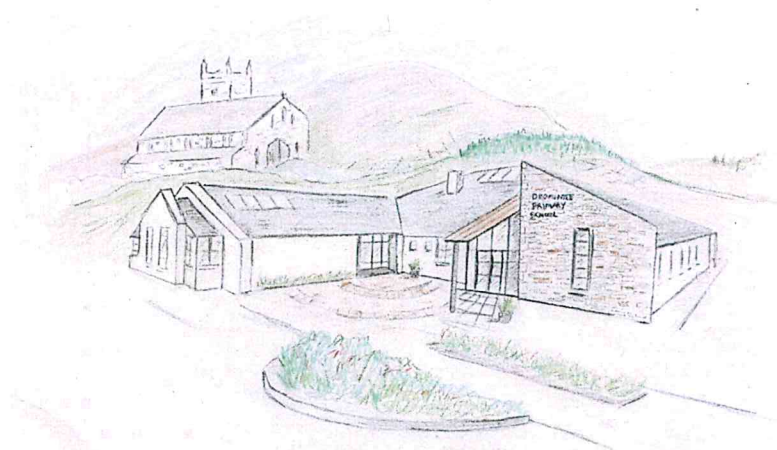
ASSOCIATED POLICIES:

This policy operates alongside all of the school's relevant safeguarding and behaviour policies.

Date Ratified by Board of Governors:	15/6/21.
Principal's Signature:	_Wendy McKee_
Chairperson's Signature:	_Iain Gray._

Dromintee Primary School
Remote Learning Policy Appendices

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

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

Appendix 3 - Arrangements in the Event of an Extended Lockdown

Appendix 4 - Dromintee Primary School Online Code of Conduct

Appendix 5 - Features of Effective Practice in Remote Learning – Department of Education

Appendix 6 - Online safety at home: parents and carers newsletter

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 10 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 we will endeavour to provide a hard pack of activities which will reflect what is being taught at school.

> ➢ 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 may be submitted through See-Saw or Google Classroom or emailed directly to the teacher

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 email, See-Saw or Google Classroom.

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 10 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. These arrangements will be similar to the term 2 lockdown in January/February 2021.

Appendix 3 - Arrangements in the Event of an Extended Lockdown

It may happen that schools will be informed of an extended lockdown or a future lockdown (as we are at the time of writing). 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.

- ➤ Your child's teacher will post a schedule for the day/week on the relevant 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.
- ➤ The activities will be broken into days, weeks and subject areas.
- ➤ 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.

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 will 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.
- ➤ 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 the app or email if any difficulties arise.

Dromintee 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, children 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) Recording of any part of the online session is strictly prohibited.

Appendix 5
FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN REMOTE LEARNING

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

A **remote learning policy** which provides guidance to parents and children on the school's approach to remote learning.

Engagement with children through appropriate **digital platforms** to allow for regular contact and ensure ongoing interaction, assessment and timely feedback.

At pre-school and primary, a **brief daily explanation** of the work to be undertaken each day is provided to parents/carers and/or children giving a breakdown of daily activities, suggested timings and information on the resources needed.

A **flexible, indicative weekly timetable** for parents and/or children detailing what areas of learning will be taught each day, with the areas which will involve online engagement identified clearly.

Activities/work presented in a manner and pace that is manageable in the home context.

When possible, opportunities for children to **talk to or work with others** in paired or group work.

PLANNING, LEARNING AND FEEDBACK

A well-sequenced **curriculum** which enables good progression, prioritising key knowledge, understanding and skills in each area of learning and where the intended learning outcomes and success criteria are clear and shared with children and parents. For pre-school and foundation stage children, activities should be play-based.

Children have **meaningful work and activities** each day in a number of different areas of learning for curriculum breadth and balance.

Children are provided with clear, frequent explanations of **new learning** and curriculum content through the use of explanation by the class teacher supported with high quality curriculum resources and/or videos.

Resources are available for children without ready online access, including through distribution of **hard-copy materials** which include guidance on completion of the activities, model explanations and answers to assist children and also parents in supporting their child's learning.

Lessons, activities and resources are **differentiated appropriately** to reflect children' ability and needs in order to support positive and rewarding learning experiences.

Mechanisms for providing timely, frequent and specific (oral or written) **feedback** to children on their work, as well as for supporting children should they need help in progressing their work.

A wide range of **formative assessment** practices to check for knowledge, understanding and skills progression.

Learning experiences **for those children in attendance during the remote learning period** which follow the curriculum programme of those undertaking remote learning at home.

SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

A **named senior leader** with overarching responsibility for overseeing the Remote Learning programme, with subject heads or co-ordinators monitoring the quality and delivery of remote education.

Systems for **checking daily** that children are engaging with their work.

Procedures for **monitoring work completion and engagement** across the curriculum and to make contact with the parent or carer by email or telephone if a lack of engagement is highlighted.

Policies such as safeguarding/child protection and use of ICT reviewed to reflect any changes in practice, and updates provided to staff and parents as necessary.