Home Learning Rationale

St Thomas CE Academy

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Mission Statement

Teach children in the way they should go and when they are older, they will not depart from it

Children are at the heart of everything we do. Through Christian values,
relationships, living and learning together we celebrate the uniqueness and
diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of self belief,
mutual respect and belonging to build the foundations for happy and successful lives

1. Accessibility

At St Thomas, we work to ensure that every child can access their education, we sent out a questionnaire during lockdown 2020-2021 to ascertain what devices children were using; if they had internet access and if the device was their own.

We have also made educational activities available in a range of formats: work packs and online etc, so that they are accessible to all, reducing the risk of pupils being left behind. We teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in school wherever possible and appropriate. However, we have needed to make some adaptations in some subjects. For example, some lessons such as Art, DT and Science certain elements have been adapted and tailored to enable it to be taught remotely.

Due to mobile devices being the most popular device we use formats (like PDFs) that can be viewed on mobile devices, so it is easy to access. We also have identified teaching resources that can be easily printed and posted.

With children spending more time online, as a school we have focused on providing lots of information and help around E-safety.

2. Requirements

Circumstances where it might not be possible for pupils to receive in person education fit into two broad categories:

- School closures or restrictions on attendance, where school access for pupils is restricted
- Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but can learn

Every effort should be made to ensure pupils can be taught in person by attending their school or if appropriate and possible, attending a safe alternative site.

After exploring all options to ensure the school remains open to all pupils, there may still be some exceptional occasions when school leaders or the local authority decide that it is not possible to open safely, or where opening would contradict guidance from local or central government.

If restricting attendance for pupils is the only viable option, schools should consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive. It can be helpful for schools to have a plan in place that outlines any remote education procedures for teachers, parents, carers and pupils. Remote education plans are particularly useful during emergency closures where the decision to close can often be made at short notice. Schools should consult DfE Emergency Planning guidance in the event of school closures or restrictions on attendance. Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but can learn.

There should only be limited circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able and well enough to continue their education remotely.

These circumstances should only involve a short-term absence and might include pupils recovering from short term infectious illnesses, pupils preparing for or recovering from some operations, or pupils recovering from injuries where attendance might inhibit recovery.

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. In these circumstances, and after the pupil's absence from school has been established, schools should consider providing pupils with remote education on a case-by-case basis.

This should be 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. Further support on dealing with mental health and attendance challenges can be found in the Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Provision of remote education should be made as a short-term solution allowing absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers.
Pupils with long-term medical conditions or any other physical or mental health needs affecting attendance may require additional support to continue their education.

3. Classroom Dojo

Our Online learning Platform: Class Dojo is equipped with voice-to-text and text-to-speech conversion, or different viewing formats to support pupils with dyslexia and other special educational needs. Scaffolded lessons and support have been tailored to individual needs to prevent children falling further behind. Using Classroom dojo, we are able to create portfolios of work for the children daily and communicate with both parent/carer and child.

If the school is closed for a longer period (more than 2-3 days) all our pupils will get twice-weekly phone calls from their class teachers, member of SLT or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to support their learning. Weekly meetings are at the core of inclusive practices at St Thomas. The SEN department will have weekly online team meetings to discuss the pupils with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan. Effective communication channels are important to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Here at St Thomas, we use video calls, instant messaging and weekly phone calls to support pupils with their learning needs, if the school requires the child to use home learning.

If offline…
Those families who request or need hard copies have them delivered a week at a time. Pupils using hard copies can then submit work by taking photos on their phones and emailing them to their teachers via their work email. We ask parents to do this on behalf of their younger children. Teachers are then able to make phone calls home to provide formative feedback.

We expect that remote education (including remote teaching and independent work) will take pupils broadly the following number of hours each day:

EYFS (3 hours):
Mathematics – 45 minutes

Literacy – 45 minutes
Phonics – 30 minutes
Wider curriculum – 60 minutes

KS1 (3 hours):
Maths lesson – 45 minutes
English Lesson – 45 minutes Reading / Phonics – 30 minutes
Wider Curriculum lesson – 60 minutes

KS2 (4 hours):
Maths lesson – 60 minutes
English Lesson – 60 minutes Reading
English Lesson – 30 minutes Comprehension
English Lesson 30 minutes SPAG
Wider Curriculum lesson – 60 minutes

4. Feedback and assessment

Feedback will be given on submitted work, in real-time in live lessons and teachers will be building formative assessment and feedback into their teaching approach through a mixture of quizzes, digital tools and modelling of good answers. These will help teachers understand how pupils are achieving. If the children have been set online work (such as classroom dojo) they will receive immediate feedback through the comment section on dojo. This way, pupils can act upon the feedback in real-time or ask questions to their class teacher, should they require some extra guidance.

Each day a log of that day's engagement is sent to SLT from the Class Teacher. Any causes for concern are then followed up by SLT with either a telephone call offering support or a home visit depending on need.

5. Links to other policies

- ECT policy
- ICT and internet acceptable usage policy