



# THE WESTGATE SCHOOL

## Hampshire's First 4-16 'All Through' School

*"The Westgate School is a community of learners where partnerships inspire success for all:  
learning together – achieving excellence"*

Headteacher: Mrs F A Dean, MA (Ed)

<b>Initial Policy date</b>	June 2020	<b>Next scheduled review</b>	January 2026
<b>Governor approved</b>	January 2025	Key person/people	DHT
<b>Model Policy</b>		Model localised	Yes
<b>Pupil leadership team review</b>		N/A	

### **ONLINE LEARNING POLICY FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS** (to be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy)

#### **Principles:**

The Westgate School recognises the significant benefits of face-to-face interaction in the learning process. It is important for the school employee who is leading the learning or activity to be able to respond to non-verbal cues that are important to our understanding of how each individual is feeling or understanding the content.

This policy is in alignment with the DfE's non-statutory guidance for schools on 'Providing Remote Education' (DfE, August, 2024) in which it states that; "Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school" and having the ability to offer some remote learning "does not reduce the importance of bringing that absence to an end as soon as possible" (p. 6, DfE, 2024). Remote education is only available in the most exceptional of circumstances and within specific parameters outlined in this policy. In line with DfE guidance, a form of remote learning for individual pupils will only be available in the case of short-term absence and as part of a plan to reintegrate a child/pupil back into school and "only when it is judged that providing remote education would not adversely affect the pupil's return to school" (p. 5, DfE, 'Providing Remote Education', 2024); this means that the school only use remote education as part of its Return to Learn approach in order to ensure that remote learning does not have the unintended consequence of enabling absence.

The School believes that whilst there is no substitute for being in the classroom, a blended approach to learning is beneficial in some very limited circumstances where reasonably practicable and where the adults leading the provision deem it to be of benefit. In writing this policy, the School acknowledges a number of parameters that need to be in place in order to take all possible steps to mitigate any potential GDPR and safeguarding issues for pupils and employees alike – as well as taking into account pupils' and employees' rights to privacy. This policy should be read in the context of the School's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy and, those associated with the safe use of IT.

#### **Practice:**

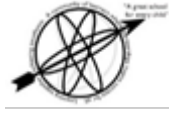
- Pupils and parents/carers are not permitted to film or record lessons in any way unless the school employee leading the session has given express permission for them to do so.

- Serious misuse of online learning opportunities (such as making recordings without permission or, sharing images of adults or other pupils) will be treated under the School's Behaviour Policy and may result in permanent exclusion.
- Recorded lessons remain the property of the school and must not be shared outside of the school community.
- Online lessons will only take place using the platforms agreed by the school e.g. Microsoft Teams.
- Where possible, the school employee leading the learning or activity may choose to record the lesson so that it can be accessed by pupils at different times.
- Links to access the lesson will be sent only to pupils in a teacher's class or specified group and will always be in line with the School's policies for Safeguarding and safe use of IT.
- In relation to mentoring or emotional support for pupils, the school will advise the parent/carer about the conversation before it takes place unless the School is undertaking contact with a pupil as part of its Child Protection and/or Safeguarding policies.
- When presenting live video lessons or recordings blurred backgrounds are advisable particularly if done in the home or in school where confidential data may be visible.
- If a school employee chooses to record a lesson or conversation, they will ensure that only pupils' first names are used and that the recording is deleted after one month.
- Pre-recorded lessons do not need to be deleted.
- Live lessons will usually be supplemented by documents in Sharepoint or similar platform.
- All of the School's expectations for behaviour and partnership working with pupils and families are transferrable to online learning platforms.
- Any pupil who misuses the opportunity to engage with online lessons will be excluded from the group for a fixed period of time until reassurance can be gained that misuse will not occur in the future.
- Live or recorded lessons must not be shared outside of the school community and certainly not using social media.
- Employees of the School reserve the right to seek legal action where a breach of this policy or, an act causing harm or potential defamation, takes place.

### **Use of Technology for Remote Learning**

- In exceptional circumstances, the School will facilitate limited use of Teams (or similar technology if provided by the Local Authority) to enable small group activities or contact between a school employee and a child/pupil who is long-term absent as part of a way of enabling reintegration back into attendance at school (Return to Learn).
- Participation in such activities that may (in exceptional and limited circumstances) involve a person accessing the lesson off-site using technology will always be through "opt-in" where parents of all children/pupils involved complete consent forms and, it has the agreement of the employee/s;
- Access to participation in lessons/group activities for a pupil off-site will only happen where the participation of the child/pupil outside of school is within an agreed setting (eg hospital) and the school is satisfied that there are no other alternatives (eg providing work to be sent home, visit from a welfare officer/colleague, online learning or alternatives provided by the Local Authority as a result of a referral to ISS)

- Technology such as AV1 robots and other such devices will not be facilitated for children to access classrooms (from off the school site) during whole class teaching because:
  - it will potentially breach GDPR;
  - the school has a responsibility to protect the rights of all children to privacy, including those who are more vulnerable in their learning, those who have SEND presentation, those who are adopted or post-adopted, children who may be part of witness protection and those whose parents choose for them not to participate in filming or photography;
  - the school respects the fact that some parents choose not to allow filming or photography of their child and takes an “opt-in” approach to such activities;
  - the school would not allow adults who have not completed safer recruitment or volunteer processes to have access to children in the school (eg by being able to observe lessons remotely);
  - adults in school participate in a programme of quality assurance and lesson observation including drop-ins; the school does not require adults to be filmed or observed as part of their daily practice;
  - children/pupils can only be marked as present if they are physically in school.



## Return to Learn

### **Aim**

To support in their return to full-time education, pupils who are unable to access face-to-face teaching, due to medical reasons or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). This approach is based on the Hampshire County Council Inclusion Support Service policy (November, 2019) which states that: "HCC believe school is the best environment in which to educate a child/young person (CYP); schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum alongside opportunities for social and emotional development" (point 2.1). In line with these principles, the Westgate School's 'Return to Learn' programme is a temporary measure based on a "recovery focused-model that embraces inclusive principles with a clear focus on an appropriate and timely return to school based learning" (point 2.4, HHC, 2019).

### **Principles**

- All pupils have the right to **fulltime face-to-face** education.
- The best outcomes for pupils occur as a result of being in the classroom; therefore, **reintegration back into the classroom is a priority**.
- We aspire for all pupils to have a **strong sense of belonging**, as a result of maintaining strong links with teachers, classes and pupil support.
- Return to Learn is a **stepping stone on our continuum of support** for pupils when other support is exhausted - it is not a separate infinite provision.
- **Parents are responsible** for making sure that their children of compulsory school age attends school.

### **Implementation**

If a child is unable to attend school on a full-time basis due to medical reasons, a referral to Hampshire's Educational Inclusion Support Service will be made in order to seek advice and where appropriate and in consultation with parents, gain approval for part-time on-site provision. This will be time-limited and linked to a plan for the CYP's return to school on a full-time basis. In all cases, any approach taken will be with safeguarding as the highest priority – which includes the Department for Education expectation that all children must attend school.

Attendance coding will be as follows:

- Even in circumstances where a child is accessing remote learning, attendance will not be coded as 'present in school'; instead, pupils will be recorded as 'authorised absence' (c code) agreed with HCC and EIS/ISS team.
- Attendance can only be coded as 'present at school' if a child is physically in school.
- If a pupil does not attend an online lesson, attendance will be coded 'unauthorised' (unless they are unwell).

According to the policy (point 7.3), if it is believed that a child or young person is unable to be in school for health reasons, this where possible should be supported by medical evidence "verified in writing by a consultant community pediatrician or specialist consultant psychiatrist from Child and Mental Health Adolescent Services" unless this is not reasonably available; if this exceeds 10 days, the School will make a medical referral to the Inclusion Support Service at Hampshire County Council. As a mainstream school, The Westgate School does not offer full-time blended learning or distance learning however, in some exceptional and temporary circumstances, adjustments can be made to support pupils who for medical reasons, are unable to attend school in person.

Pupils who hold an EHCP or assessment pending, will have access to support according to the Code of Practice and Hampshire County Council Local Offer in partnership with the School and parents.

**Return to learn protocol:**



**How will we measure impact?**

- Attendance at Higher Level Teaching Assistant sessions.
- Engagement monitored through HLTA reviews and CPOMs notes.
- Attainment & progress – assessed by subject teachers.
- Progress of reintegration into classroom.