HSD Remote Learning Statement

All pupils at Harbour School are classed as 'Vulnerable' by the Department for Education (DfE). As such, Harbour School is open during 'Lockdown 3' for all of our pupils and education in school is our primary educational offer.

We understand at this anxious time, for some pupils it is too much for them to attend school and where this is the case, Harbour School offers a range of blended learning. It is recognised that remote learning comes in various formats and through individual risk assessment and dialogue with parents, the best way for each pupil is agreed on an individual basis.

This approach is in line with DfE recommendations, please see their advice below:

What is remote education?

- Remote education: a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils.
- Digital remote education: often known as online learning, this is remote learning delivered through digital technologies.
- Blended learning: a mix of face-to-face and remote methods. An example would be the 'flipped classroom', where main input happens remotely (for example through video), while practice and tutoring happen in class.
- Synchronous education: this is live; asynchronous education is when the material is prepared by the teacher and accessed by the pupil at a later date.

Some common myths about remote education

Some unhelpful myths exist about remote education, which are not based on evidence.

These include that:

- remote education is fundamentally different to other forms of teaching/learning
- remote education is a different curriculum/offer to the content that would be delivered normally- 'Harbour School will do it's best to offer work based upon your child's curriculum where this is possible'.
- the best forms of remote education are digital
- the best way to deliver remote education is always through live lessons
- the most important thing is pupils' engagement

None of these things are necessarily true. Below, we counter them with evidence-based pointers.

Here are 7 things we hold in our minds when offering our blended learning.

1: Remote education is a way of delivering the curriculum

Remote education is a means, not an end. The aim of education is to deliver a high-quality curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more. Remote education is one way of doing so.

This means that everything we know about what a quality curriculum looks like still applies. The remote education curriculum needs to be aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible. And, just like the classroom curriculum, it needs to be carefully sequenced and ensure that pupils obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step. Curricular goals should be made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom.

Remote education is not the same as digital education. Sometimes, it may be more effective to deliver remote education through worksheets or a textbook. All schools/colleges should have access to a digital platform so they can provide online education where that is the most appropriate method.

A good textbook can provide the curriculum content and sequencing pupils need. It can also be easier to access for some pupils. However, when using textbooks or worksheets it is still important to make sure that teachers can provide feedback and assess learning. Any worksheets should be aligned with the curriculum and provide meaningful work.

2: Keep it simple

Our brains don't learn differently using remote education, so everything we know about cognitive science and learning still applies. However, we know that your children would not be with us if they were independent learners, indeed, this is true for most children nationally. Our pupils rely heavily upon teacher input.

We also don't need to overcomplicate resources with too many graphics and illustrations that don't add to content. When using digital remote education, the platform we use shouldn't be too complicated to use. Just as we don't need 'all-singing, all-dancing' lessons in the classroom, remote education often benefits from a straightforward and easy-to-use interface. Simple graphics that highlight the key concepts and features we want to teach can be most effective.

More important is attention to the key elements of effective teaching. For example, it's useful to provide pupils with an overview of the bigger picture and where a specific lesson or activity sits within a sequence of lessons or activities. It's also vital to have clear and high expectations and to communicate these to pupils. Just as in the classroom, most pupils will be novices in what we are teaching them. We can't expect them to be able to discover new content for themselves through tasks, projects and internet searching.

There are of course some things that need more careful consideration when teaching remotely. For example, when using recorded lessons, clarity of explanations becomes even more important as we can't as easily correct misunderstandings or misconceptions.

Another example is the 'split attention' effect. Pupils can find it harder to concentrate, so the way we integrate words and pictures or graphs is important. Text can be integrated with images where that is appropriate and doesn't just encourage guessing. This can be shown in chunks in the appropriate place. This makes the words into a description of the images and allows pupils to focus on what is most important.

As it's harder for pupils to concentrate when being taught remotely, it's often a good idea to divide content into smaller chunks. Short presentations or modelling of new content can be followed by exercises or retrieval practice.

3: When adapting the curriculum, focus on the basics

We will often need to adapt our subject curriculum when moving to remote education, for example because some topics are hard to teach remotely. When we do this, we need to focus on the basics:

- Beware of offering too much new subject matter at once. Make sure key building blocks have been understood fully first. We need to assess pupils' knowledge to determine this.
- Consider the most important knowledge or concepts pupils need to know. Focus on those.
- Consider what alternatives exist for traditional practical activities. What can be done at home, or using simulations, for example? Worked examples and modelling can work very well in remote digital education.
- In many cases, practising and a focus on developing existing knowledge and skills, such as handwriting or simple arithmetic, may be useful.

4: Feedback, retrieval practice and assessment are more important than ever

Learning isn't fundamentally different when done remotely. Feedback and assessment are still as important as in the classroom. It can be harder to deliver immediate feedback to pupils remotely than in the classroom, but teachers have found some clever ways to do this.

This immediate feedback can be given through:

- chatroom discussions,
- 1-to-1 interaction tools
- interactive touch-screen questioning in live recorded lessons
- adaptive learning software

Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes. It's therefore worth considering enabling these through, for example, chat groups or video-linking functions. They will also help pupils maintain their social skills.

It is important for teachers to stay in regular contact with pupils. If necessary, they can even do this by using technology to automate communication.

5: The medium matters (a bit)

Quality of teaching is far more important than how lessons are delivered. But there is some evidence that the medium does matter, especially in digital remote education. Pupils tend to spend longer accessing a remote lesson when they are using a laptop/desktop than when using a phone (tablets are in between).

HSD will audit technology at home for our pupils and will possibly be able to lend technology where needed. HSD is awaiting delivery of a few devices ordered. Where appropriate, HSD may also be able to support internet access for pupils unable to come into school.

6: Live lessons aren't always best

Some think that a live lesson is the 'gold standard' of remote education. This isn't necessarily the case. Live lessons have a lot of advantages. They can make curriculum alignment easier, and can keep pupils' attention, not least as the teacher has more control over the learning environment. But live lessons are not always more effective than asynchronous approaches. Whilst teacher's are delivering lessons at school, the capacity to offer live lessons is very minimal.

Using recorded lessons produced externally can allow you to easily draw on high-quality lessons taught by expert subject teachers. The challenge here can be to make sure they are integrated with the curriculum.

Because evidence suggests that concentration online is shorter than the length of a typical lesson, filming a classroom lesson may be ineffective an produces GDPR concerns.

7: Engagement matters, but is only the start

It's harder to engage and motivate pupils remotely than when they are in the classroom. There are more distractions, and as a teacher you're not physically present to manage the situation. Communicating and working with parents, without putting an unreasonable burden on them, can help support home learning.

While it is important to engage pupils, this is only a precondition for learning, not the thing itself. There is only so much a teacher can do to engage pupils remotely. We therefore need to make sure that efforts to engage don't distract us from teaching the curriculum. We also need to check whether pupils have actually learned the content we want them to through assessment.

Engagement increases when pupils feel part of the school or college community. Whole-school digital assemblies and feedback, for example through newsletters to pupils and parents, can help them feel part of the community even when learning remotely.

Advice to teachers for Live learning sessions

Please consider the below additional safeguarding measures alongside your settings IT/online learning policies.

If using live links to pupils at home

Within School

•   All live lessons must be carried out using school equipment only.
•   Ensure all live lessons are recorded. (If possible)
•   Ensure a clear timetable of each online session is completed, detailing:

> 1. Each pupil and the teacher they interacted with,
> 2. The content of the live lesson
> 3. The time it started and finished
> 4. Details of the parent/carer spoken to
> 5. Where in the home the child was when receiving the learning lesson
> 6. Any issues that arose during this session

•   The room used to deliver these learning sessions should be accessible, i.e. the teacher should be able to be heard and seen.
•   The senior Leadership team should ensure online lessons are appropriate by;

> 1. Being aware of the content
> 2. Dropping into the classes throughout the day (unannounced)
> 3. Viewing a cross section of recordings

Pupils at Home

The pupils parent/Carer should be spoken to at the start of each live lesson to confirm the following:
•   The child is in a public area of the house

•   The child should be appropriately dressed
•   The child is not alone in a bedroom, if this is not the case the child must be asked to move to another part of the home
or if the parent is staying with their child they can remain where they are for the duration of the live lesson

If you have teachers working at home and offering lessons can we advise that they do so via school websites as this will allow you to ensure the lessons are appropriate.

Emails to parents should be sent out asking them to agree to live sessions which includes a safeguarding sentence regarding safe working at home and who to report any concerns to.

DfES supplied laptops for school.

The Department for Education have made several devices available for school to loan to those families that the school believe to be in need of this service.

The number of devices is decided by the DfE and is based on school numbers. In the case of Harbour School this numbers 4 devises. We are awaiting the delivery of these devises so that we can check their suitability and once this has been done parents will receive a questionnaire to help us gauge who we can best support.