



VTC Remote Learning Policy

Approved by:	Paul Thompson & The Advisory Board	Date: September 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	September 2025	

This policy must be read and considered in conjunction with VTC Independent School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Marking Policy

Online Safety

Statement of intent

At VTC Independent School, we understand the need to continually deliver high quality education, including during periods of remote working – whether for an individual learner or many. We recognise the importance of maintaining high expectations in all areas of school life and ensuring that all learners have access to the learning resources and support they need to succeed.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to address the key concerns associated with remote working, such as online safety, access to educational resources, data protection, and safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the disruption to learner' education and the delivery of the curriculum.
- Ensure provision is in place so that all learners have access to high quality learning resources.
- Protect learners from the risks associated with using devices connected to the internet.
- Ensure staff, parent, and learner data remains secure and is not lost or misused.
- Ensure robust safeguarding measures continue to be in effect during the period of remote learning.
- Ensure all learners have the provision they need to complete their work to the best of their ability, and to remain happy, healthy, and supported during periods of remote learning.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2004
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Data Protection Act 2018

1.2 This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2019) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2017) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety for school children'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2019
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Online Safety/Acceptable Use Agreement Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The advisory board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has robust risk management procedures in place.
- Ensuring that the school has a business continuity plan in place, where required.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's remote learning arrangements.

2.2. The Headteacher/ Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff, parents, and learners adhere to the relevant policies at all times.

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks associated with remote learning.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring incidents associated with remote learning.
- Overseeing that the school has the resources necessary to action the procedures in this policy.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis and communicating any changes to staff, parents, and learners.
- Arranging any additional training staff may require to support learners during the period of remote learning.
- Conducting reviews on a weekly basis of the remote learning arrangements to ensure learners' education does not suffer.

2.3. The health and safety officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the relevant health and safety risk assessments are carried out within the agreed timeframes, in collaboration with the headteacher.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of learning into practice, which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with remote learning.
- Ensuring that learners identified as being at risk are provided with necessary information and instruction, as required.
- Managing the effectiveness of health and safety measures through a robust system of reporting, investigating, and recording incidents.

2.4. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) is responsible for:

- Overseeing that all school-owned electronic devices used for remote learning have adequate anti-virus software and malware protection. This is done through our IT support (Michael Sims)
- Ensuring all staff, parents, and learners are aware of the data protection principles outlined in the GDPR.
- Ensuring that all computer programs used for remote learning are compliant with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Overseeing that any ICT equipment used for remote learning is resilient and can efficiently recover lost data.

2.5. The DSL is responsible for:

- Attending and arranging, where necessary, any safeguarding meetings that occur during the remote learning period.
- Liaising with the ICT support to ensure that all technology used for remote learning is suitable for its purpose and will protect learners online.
- Identifying vulnerable learners who may be at risk if they are learning remotely.
- Ensuring that child protection plans are enforced while the learner is learning remotely and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make alternate arrangements for learners who are at a high risk, where required.
- Identifying the level of support or intervention required while learners learn remotely and ensuring appropriate measures are in place.

- Liaising with relevant individuals to ensure vulnerable learners receive the support required during the period of remote working
- Ensuring all safeguarding incidents are adequately recorded and reported.

2.6. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Liaising with the ICT technicians to ensure that the technology used for remote learning is accessible to all learners and that reasonable adjustments are made where required.
- Ensuring that learners with EHC plans continue to have their needs met while learning remotely, and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make any alternate arrangements for learners with EHC plans.
- Identifying the level of support or intervention that is required while learners with SEND learn remotely.
- Ensuring that the provision put in place for learners with SEND is monitored for effectiveness throughout the duration of the remote learning period.

2.7. The School Business Manager / Headteacher / Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Arranging the procurement of any equipment or technology required for staff to teach remotely and for learners to learn from home.
- Ensuring value for money when arranging the procurement of equipment or technology.
- Ensuring that the school has adequate insurance to cover all remote working arrangements.

2.8. The IT Support are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all school-owned devices used for remote learning have suitable anti-virus software installed, have a secure connection, can recover lost work, and allow for audio and visual material to be recorded, where required.
- Ensuring that any programs or networks used for remote learning can effectively support a large number of users at one time, where required, e.g., undertaking 'stress' testing.
- Working with the SENCO to ensure that the equipment and technology used for learning remotely is accessible to all learners and staff.

2.9. Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Reporting any health and safety incidents to the health and safety officer and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Reporting any safeguarding incidents to the DSL and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Taking part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy, including training on how to use the necessary electronic equipment and software.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have about remote learning, to the Headteacher/ Head of Centre.
- Reporting any defects on school-owned equipment used for remote learning to an ICT technician.
- Adhering to the Staff Code of Conduct at all times.

2.10. Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Ensuring their child is available to learn remotely and that the schoolwork set is completed on time and to the best of their child's ability.
- Reporting any technical issues to the school as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that their child always has access to remote learning material/ access to paper-based learning material.
- Ensuring their child uses the school equipment and technology used for remote learning as intended.

2.11. Learners are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of remote learning.
- Ensuring they are available to learn remotely and that their schoolwork is completed on time and to the best of their ability.
- Reporting any technical issues by emailing paul@vtcindependentschool.co.uk as soon as possible.
- Ensuring they have access to remote learning material and notifying a responsible adult if they do not have access.
- Notifying a responsible adult if they are feeling unwell or are unable to complete the schoolwork they have been set.
- Ensuring they use any school equipment and technology for remote learning as intended.
- Adhering to the Behaviour for Learning Policy at all times.

3. Resources

Learning materials

3.1. For the purpose of providing remote learning, the school may make use of:

- Work booklets
- Email
- Microsoft Teams
- Seneca
- Past and mock exam papers
- Educational websites
- Reading tasks
- Live webinars
- Pre-recorded video or audio lessons

3.2. Teachers will review the DfE's list of [online education resources](#) and utilise these tools as necessary, in addition to existing resources.

3.3. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that all learners have access to the resources needed for effective remote learning.

- 3.4. Lesson plans will be adapted to ensure that the curriculum remains fully accessible via remote learning, where practical – where this is not practical, the school will ensure learners can catch up on these areas of the curriculum when they return to school.
- 3.5. Teaching staff will liaise with the SENCO and other relevant members of staff to ensure all learners remain fully supported for the duration of the remote learning period.
- 3.6. Any defects or issues with remote learning resources will be reported as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.
- 3.7. Learners will be required to use their own or family-owned equipment to access remote learning resources, unless the school agrees to provide or loan equipment, e.g., laptops.
- 3.8. Learners and parents will be required to maintain the upkeep of any school equipment they use to access remote learning resources.
- 3.9. Teaching staff will oversee academic progression for the duration of the remote learning period and will mark and provide feedback on work in line with section 7 of this policy.
- 3.10. The arrangements for any 'live' classes, e.g., webinars, will be communicated via email or Microsoft Teams/ Email
- 3.11. The IT Support are not responsible for providing technical support for equipment that is not owned by the school.

4. Online safety

- 4.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Online Safety Policy.
- 4.2. Where possible, all interactions will be textual and public.
- 4.3. All staff and learners using video communication must:
- Ensure they can be seen on the camera at all times/ switch their cameras off as instructed by the member of staff.
 - Be situated in a suitable 'public' living area within the home with an appropriate background – 'private' living areas within the home, such as bedrooms, are not permitted during video communication.
 - Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
 - Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
 - Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
 - Not record, store, or distribute video material without permission.
 - Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
 - Always remain aware that they are visible even if the cameras are off, they may be asked questions or respond to feedback via a microphone.
- 4.4. All staff and learners using audio communication must:
- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
 - Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
 - Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.

- Not record, store, or distribute audio material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they can be heard.

4.5. Learners not using devices or software as intended will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

4.6. The school will risk assess the technology used for remote learning prior to use and ensure that there are no privacy issues or scope for inappropriate use.

4.7. The school will ensure that all school-owned equipment and technology used for remote learning has suitable anti-virus software installed, can establish secure connections, can recover lost work, and allows for audio and visual material to be recorded or downloaded, where required.

4.8. The school will communicate to parents via letter or email about any precautionary measures that need to be put in place if their child is learning remotely using their own/family-owned equipment and technology, e.g., ensuring that their internet connection is secure.

4.9. In exceptional circumstances the school will be responsible for providing access to the internet off the school premises but will not be responsible for providing online safety software, e.g., anti-virus software, on devices not owned by the school.

5. Safeguarding

5.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which has been updated to include safeguarding procedures in relation to remote working.

5.2. The DSL and headteacher will identify 'vulnerable' learners (learners who are deemed to be vulnerable or are at risk of harm) via risk assessment prior to the period of remote learning.

5.3. The DSL will arrange for regular contact to be made with vulnerable learners, prior to the period of remote learning.

5.4. Phone calls made to vulnerable learners will be made using school phones where possible.

5.5. The DSL will arrange for regular contact with vulnerable learners, with additional contact, including home visits, arranged where required.

5.6. All contact with vulnerable learners will be recorded electronically and suitably stored in line with the Records Management Policy.

5.7. The DSL will keep in contact with vulnerable learners' social workers or other care professionals during the period of remote working, as required.

5.8. All home visits must:

- Have at least one suitably trained individual present.
- Be undertaken by no fewer than two members of staff.
- Be suitably recorded on paper and the records stored so that the DSL has access to them.
- Actively involve the learner.

5.9. Vulnerable learners will be provided with a means of contacting the DSL, their deputy, or any other relevant member of staff – this arrangement will be set up by the DSL prior to the period of remote learning.

5.10. The DSL will meet (in person or remotely) with the relevant members of staff to discuss new and current safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable learners learning remotely.

5.11. All members of staff will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL immediately.

6. Data protection

6.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Data Protection Policy.

6.2. Staff members will be responsible for adhering to the GDPR when teaching remotely and will ensure the confidentiality and integrity of their devices at all times.

6.3. Sensitive data will only be transferred between devices if it is necessary to do so for the purpose of remote learning and teaching.

6.4. Any data that is transferred between devices will be suitably encrypted or have other data protection measures in place so that if the data is lost, stolen, or subject to unauthorised access, it remains safe until recovered.

6.5. Parents' and learners' up-to-date contact details will be collected prior to the period of remote learning.

6.6. All contact details will be stored in line with the Data Protection Policy and retained in line with the Records Management Policy.

6.7. The school will not permit paper copies of contact details to be taken off the school premises.

6.8. Learners are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school owned equipment which contains personal data.

6.9. Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

6.10. Any intentional breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7. Marking and feedback

7.1. All schoolwork set through remote learning must be:

- Complete when returned to the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Returned before the deadline set by the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Completed to the best of the learners's ability.
- The learners's own work.
- Marked in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Returned to the learner, once marked, by an agreed date.

7.2. The school expects learners and staff to maintain a good work ethic and a high quality of work during the period of remote learning.

7.3. Learners are accountable for the completion of their own schoolwork – teaching staff will contact parents via email or Edu link One if their child is not completing their schoolwork or their standard of work has noticeably decreased.

7.4. Work that cannot be completed for genuine reasons will be completed when the learner returns to school.

7.5. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of learners with and without access to the online learning resources and discuss additional support or provision with the headteacher as soon as possible.

7.6. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of learners with SEND and discuss additional support or provision with the SENCO as soon as possible.

8. Health and safety

8.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

8.2. Teaching staff and ICT technicians will ensure learners are shown how to use the necessary equipment and technology safely and correctly prior to the period of remote learning.

8.3. If using electronic devices during remote learning, learners will be encouraged to take a five-minute screen break every two hours.

8.4. Screen break frequency will be adjusted to five minutes every hour for younger learners or learners with medical conditions who require more frequent screen breaks.

8.5. If any incidents or near-misses occur in a learner's home, they or their parents are required to report these to the health and safety officer or other relevant members of staff immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

9. School Day

9.1. Learners will carry out remote learning by following their school timetable so that there are structured lessons and resources in place and teachers will make themselves available during that lesson.

9.2. Learners are encouraged to take regular breaks when completing remote learning.

9.3. Learners with SEND or additional medical conditions who require more regular breaks, e.g., sensory breaks, are not expected to do schoolwork during their breaks.

9.4. Learners who are unwell are not expected to complete remote learning until they are well enough to do so.

10. Communication

- 10.1.** The school will ensure adequate channels of communication are arranged in the event of an emergency.
- 10.2.** The school will communicate with parents via letter, email, Microsoft Teams as soon as possible.
- 10.3.** The Headteacher/ Head of Centre will communicate with staff as soon as possible via email about any remote learning arrangements.
- 10.4.** Members of staff involved in remote teaching will ensure they have a working mobile device that is available to take phone calls during their agreed working hours.
- 10.5.** The school understands that learners learning remotely have the right to privacy out-of-hours and should be able to separate their school and home lives – communication is only permitted during school hours.
- 10.6.** Members of staff will have regular contact with their line manager.
- 10.7.** Parents and learners will inform the relevant member of staff as soon as possible if schoolwork cannot be completed.
- 10.8.** Issues with remote learning or data protection will be communicated to the school as soon as possible so they can investigate and resolve the issue.
- 10.9.** The learners' teacher will keep parents and learners informed of any changes to the remote learning arrangements or the schoolwork set.
- 10.10.** The headteacher will regularly review the effectiveness of communication and ensure measures are put in place to address gaps or weaknesses in communication.

11. Monitoring and review

- 11.1.** This policy will be reviewed on a biyearly basis by the headteacher.
- 11.2.** Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and other stakeholders.
- 11.3.** The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025 or in the event of a local/ national lockdown.