

Blackfen School for Girls



Remote Learning Policy

Headteacher: Ms C Senior
Chair of Governors: Mr W Stone

	Date	Name	Signature
Policy Date	September 2025		
Review Date	September 2026		
Review Period	Annually		
Lead Person	DHT, Curriculum	Fiona Minnis	
Prepared by	DHT	Fiona Minnis	
Verified by	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
Approved by	Chair of Governors	William Stone	

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1. Purpose

This policy aims to set out Blackfen School for Girls' approach to educating pupils who cannot be educated on site. There are occasions where the school may need to close due to events such as (but not limited to) a pandemic, power loss or extreme weather. The policy also covers the ongoing education of students who cannot be on site when the school is open but are able to continue with their education offsite. Additionally, this policy outlines the practices and procedures in place for staff in self-isolation, who are otherwise healthy and able to continue with teaching, setting, marking and providing feedback on students' work as part of their usual duties.

2. Legal framework and national guidance

This Policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the Equality Act 2010; Education Act 2004; the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This Policy also takes account of the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and any subsequent statutory changes affecting data sharing and information-access arrangements. The school will follow current ICO guidance on data protection and remote use of student and staff data and will update procedures when ICO guidance is revised.

This Policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following documents:

DfE (2025) Keeping children safe in education (statutory).

DfE (2024, updated Aug 2024) Providing remote education: guidance for schools (remote learning practice).

DfE (2015; updated Sept 2024) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.

DfE (2022) Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools and related H&S guidance. DfE (2022, updated 2024) *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*

DfE (2022) *Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools*

Current ICO data-protection guidance

3. Use of remote learning

3.1 The priority of Blackfen School is to deliver high-quality face-to-face education to all students. Remote education will only ever be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort where in-person attendance is not possible because it is not viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school. Students receiving remote education will be marked absent in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

3.2 Attendance is mandatory for all students of compulsory school age. Circumstances when in-person attendance is either not possible or contrary to government guidance might include:

- Occasions when school leaders decide that it is not possible for their setting to open safely, or that opening would contradict guidance from local or central government
- Occasions when individual students, for a limited duration, are unable to physically attend the school but are able to continue learning, for example, students with an infectious illness, they are preparing for or recovering from some types of operation, they are recovering from injury and attendance in school may inhibit such recovery; their attendance has been affected by a special educational need or disability (SEND) or a mental health issue.

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3.3 In the limited circumstances when remote learning is used, we will:

- Gain mutual agreement of remote education by the school, parents/carers, pupils, and if appropriate, a relevant medical professional. If the student has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or social worker, the local authority (LA) will also be involved in the decision.
- Put formal arrangements in place to regularly review it and identify how to reintegrate the student back into school. Identify what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help reintegrate the pupil back into school at the earliest opportunity
- Set a time limit with an aim that the student returns to in-person education with appropriate support

3.3 Remote education will not be used as a justification for sending pupils home due to misbehaviour. This would count as a suspension, even if the student is asked to access online education while suspended.

3.4 The Remote Learning Policy does not apply in the event of a short-term student absence or for short-term school closures (e.g., as a result of inclement weather). Likewise, there is no obligation for the school to provide continuity of education to students who absent themselves from school with or without parental permission, in contravention to school or government guidance. This point also applies if parents/carers choose to take students on holiday during term time or if parents/carers made the decision, without prior agreement with the school, to absent their young person from school 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

3.5 The decision to offer students remote learning will be made on a case-by-case basis by school leaders and based on our experience. Students will be offered access to remote learning as soon as is reasonably practicable, though in proportion to the length of absence and disruption to their learning.

3.6 Agreed absence from school (not infectious disease): Remote learning on an individual basis may be appropriate in situations when students, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home to some extent. This may apply in cases such as suspension from school or long-term illness.

3.7 Agreed absence from school (infectious disease): Remote learning on an individual basis may be appropriate if, following an infectious disease outbreak such as Covid-19, individual students are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms. In these circumstances, the individual student's Student Support Officer (Year 7 – Year 11) or the Sixth Form Administrator (Year 12 – Year 13) will coordinate the collation of work and communication with parents/and carers.

3.8 During a period of remote learning, students can access the school website as normal, using their network login followed by '@blackfen.org'. They can then access their school email Outlook, their Calendar, OneDrive, SharePoint and Microsoft Teams, as well as other tools. They can also download Microsoft Office software including Word, Excel and PowerPoint for free on up to five devices, if they have not done so already. If students have difficulty with logging in, they should inform the school by contacting their Student Support Officer, (Year 7 – Year 11) or the Sixth Form Administrator (Year 12 – Year 13) who will contact a member of the school's IT support team.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 DHT/AHTs: Culture/Inclusion/Behaviour, Student Welfare team, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy DSL:

To attend and arrange, where necessary, any safeguarding meetings that occur during the remote learning period; to identify vulnerable students who may be at risk if they are learning remotely; to ensure that child protection plans are enforced while students are learning remotely, and liaising with the Headteacher

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and other organisations, to make alternate arrangements for students who are at a high risk, where required; to ensure that students identified as being at risk are provided with necessary information and instruction; to identify the level of support or intervention required while students learn remotely and ensure appropriate measures are in place; to liaise with relevant individuals to ensure vulnerable students receive the support required for remote working; to ensure all safeguarding incidents are adequately recorded and reported; to deploy the Student Support Officer team and School Attendance Officer, as required.

4.2 DHT/AHTs: Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

To work with Faculty and Subject Leaders to ensure that teachers know how to plan and provide appropriate remote learning; to provide training to enable all staff to plan, deliver and sustain effective remote learning; to provide training and support for effective staff and student use of Microsoft Teams and arrange additional training for staff, as required; to liaise and manage IT support technicians to ensure that all technology used for remote learning is suitable for its purpose and will protect students online; to liaise and manage IT support technicians to address IT hardware and software queries promptly; to put procedures and safe systems of learning into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with remote learning; to ensure effective communication between the IT support provider, the Leadership Team, and SENCO - to ensure that students with SEND are able to use appropriate devices to support their individual learning needs.

4.3 SENCO and Teaching Assistants

To deploy the TA team to support remote and on-site learning, as required; to liaise with the LT line manager for IT support to ensure that the technology used for remote learning is accessible to all students with SEND and that reasonable adjustments are made where required; to identify the level of support or intervention that is required while students with SEND learn remotely; to ensure that the provision put in place for students with SEND is monitored for effectiveness throughout the duration of the remote learning period; to ensure that students 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 students with EHC plans and IPPs.

4.4 Student Support Officers and Sixth Form Administrator

To communicate promptly with line managers following communication from parents/carers requesting the provision of remote learning; to communicate with teachers and the SENCO, as directed, in order for remote learning to be planned and set, and to be accessible to all students.

4.5 Faculty and Subject Leaders

To be knowledgeable about subject pedagogy and able to support specialist and non-specialist teachers in planning remote learning that is suitable for all groups of students, including students with high prior attainment; students with low prior attainment; students from disadvantaged backgrounds; students with SEND; students with English as an additional language (EAL); to track delivery of and monitor the quality of remote learning where this continues over time; to contact students' parents/carers, as necessary. To continue to ensure that feedback is being given to students for agreed key pieces of work and, in conjunction with class teachers, respond to individual concerns of students and families to help support the continuity of education. To support staff in their subject area with the technologies required to support online learning and report via the normal school procedures incidents of misconduct, challenging in an appropriate way examples of poor effort or attitude towards work. Contact with parents should occur as under normal circumstances where this is viewed as necessary.

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4.6 Teachers

To respond as soon as is reasonably practicable to requests for remote learning; to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards' (updated June 2013) and the Staff Code of Conduct at all times; to follow guidance in planning, designing and delivering remote teaching, so that all students in the class continue to make good progress; to make reasonable adjustments for students with SEND to access remote education, where required, informed by relevant considerations including the support families will require and the types of services that students can access remotely; to maintain effective communication with parents/carers, as necessary; to provide feedback on students' work according to the school's Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Policy and following guidance from the Subject Leader; to report student progress and concerns about student progress according to the reporting and tracking protocols set up for the period of remote learning; to maintain effective communication with parents, students, colleagues and school leaders, as requested and set out in the protocols in this Policy; to report any safeguarding incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and ask for guidance as appropriate; to take part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this Policy, including training on how to use the necessary electronic equipment and software.

4.7 IT support technicians

To ensure that all school-owned devices used for remote learning have suitable anti-virus software installed, have a secure connection and can recover lost work; to work with the SENCO to ensure that the equipment and technology used for learning remotely is accessible to students with SEND and that reasonable adjustments are made, where required.

4.8 Parents/Carers

To support the completion of remote learning by making their child's education a priority in household arrangements and a focus of interest and support during the day; to support their child in adopting a good work ethic at home. This means managing and quality assuring their child's work time, work space and attitude to home learning. This involves making practical arrangements in the household, so that their child is focused, quiet and disciplined in completing the tasks set; to know the scope of learning for their child during the period of remote learning. This means knowing the instructions and deadlines provided by teachers for the completion of work at home.

4.9 Students

To respect their education when it takes place as remote learning. This means students understand that remote learning is not holiday work or optional study: remote learning is the delivery of their education that would normally take place in school and it must be taken seriously. Students are accountable for the completion of their own remote learning, to the best of their ability, as is the case when they are working in school. Students do not have the option *not* to complete the remote learning set by their teachers. They must carefully read the instructions for remote learning provided by teachers and log onto Microsoft Teams to complete remote learning if directed to do so by their teachers. Students must complete work fully, to their best level of their effort and ability and by the deadlines set.

5 Remote learning and teaching materials

5.1 School leaders are mindful of the challenges for parents and carers, students and teachers of operating in an unfamiliar and remote learning environment. Student-managed and on-line learning operates in a dynamic that is different to teacher-managed learning in school. Some subjects and activities do not lend themselves well to remote learning and the online experience is not always good at replicating direct teacher intervention or the resources of the classroom or learning space in school. Given these issues, the

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school expects teachers to decide the best mode of delivering their subject curriculum, based on the class, subject and student needs. The school endorses the view of the Department for Education in its guidance document to schools, 'Remote education good practice (1.10.20) that the *'characteristics of good teaching are more important than the medium of delivery, be it in the 'live' classroom or through remote provision (whether or not that remote provision is live or pre-recorded)'*. This is the reason why the school expects teachers to use their professional judgement to decide the mode of subject delivery for each of their classes and why there is no expectation of teachers to carry out live teaching sessions, unless it is deemed to be the most appropriate mode of learning, in the subject, for the particular task in hand. In planning remote learning, teachers will assume that students have access to the internet and can navigate Microsoft Teams but will not expect students to print work.

5.2 The school reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide remote learning tasks, feedback and interaction, based on the particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience. In the case of individual or group or 'bubble' short-term absence from school, for example, while students are self-isolating or public health boards or local authorities are deciding the extent of self-isolation required for students, teachers will set interim work requiring the continuation of homework or current lesson activities. In the case of group or 'bubble' long-term absence from school, teachers will set work differently, following the principles outlined below. Parents, carers and students are expected to adhere to the same guidance, so that teaching, learning and progress continue in the context of remote education.

5.3 The school will use a range of remote teaching methods to help explain concepts and address misconceptions easily in this context. Teachers may make use of the materials listed below, but will vary these materials and add other materials in the light of developing situations surrounding the reasons behind any closure: Work booklets / Email / Past examination papers / Current online learning portals / Educational websites / Reading tasks / Live webinars / Pre-recorded video or audio lessons. They may also use resources from the Department for Education's list of [online education resources](#); the Oak National Academy [<https://www.thenational.academy/>] and BBC Bitesize [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/secondary/>], as well as subject-specific digital materials.

5.4 Students experiencing difficulties with using subject-specific resources at home should report their problem, as soon as possible, to the subject teacher, via Microsoft Teams. As a short-term solution, a smart phone can be used to photograph work completed in exercise books which can be uploaded into the subject area in Microsoft Teams. General problems with remote learning should be reported to the student's Student Support Officer (Year 7 – Year 11) or to the Sixth Form Administrator (Year 12 – Year 13). Students 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 and it is feasible to do so. Students and parents will be required to maintain the upkeep of any equipment borrowed from the school to access remote learning resources. The school's IT support team is not responsible for providing technical support for equipment that is not owned by the school.

6 – Assessment of remote learning

6.1 This section of the Policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Policy. Providing timely and helpful feedback is the cornerstone of good teaching and learning and whilst this may be more challenging with remote learning, teachers will endeavour to provide regular feedback to students on pieces of work that they are required to submit. Under normal circumstances, not all pieces of work are formally assessed by teachers and this would continue to be the case in the context of remote learning. Teachers use a variety of assessment and feedback methods in school and will

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try to implement these measures for remote learning where this is possible or to adapt them.

Department policies for teaching, learning, assessment and recording progress will continue to be applied in the event of remote learning.

6.2 In order for teachers to offer effective feedback, all remote work completed by students must be:

- Finished when returned to the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Returned on or before the deadline set by the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Completed to the best of the student's ability.
- The student's own work and not copied from other sources.

Possible feedback methods may include but are not limited to:

- Using the "Comments" function on online documents on Microsoft Teams.
- Providing feedback directly in the 'Posts' function.
- Sending a direct email to students with specific feedback / targets
- Feedback via another website / piece of software, e.g. "Sparks Maths or Educake"

Teachers will continue to monitor the academic progress of students and provide feedback to senior staff, in the normal manner. They will continue to monitor the academic progress of students with SEND and discuss additional support or provision with the SENCO as required.

7 – Online safety

7.1 This section of the Remote Learning Policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's "Acceptable User Policy for School's ICT Network, School email and Internet Policy". Interactions between staff and students will be text based and public, via Microsoft Teams. In an extended period of absence, the school may instigate a pre-arranged telephone calling system as part of its pastoral care system and staff may contact students to discuss work in pre-arranged, one-to-one sessions that are appropriate in some circumstances, e.g. to provide support for students with SEND or to run a scheduled counselling or mentoring session. The school will, where known, inform parents and carers of incidents of inappropriate e-safety behaviour that take place out of school.

7.2 During the period of remote learning, the school will maintain contact with parents to reinforce the importance of children staying safe online; to ensure parents are aware of what their children are being asked to do, e.g. sites they have been asked to use and staff they will interact with; to encourage them to set age-appropriate parental controls on devices and internet filters to block malicious websites and direct parents to useful resources to help them keep their children safe online. The school is not responsible for providing access to the internet off the school premises, nor for providing online safety software, e.g. anti-virus software, on devices not owned by the school.

8 – Video communication

8.1 Where 'live' teaching or video communication is selected as the best mode of subject delivery to a specific class, all staff and students using video communication must:

- Communicate in groups – one-to-one sessions are not permitted unless directed by a senior leader.
- Wear suitable daytime clothing – this also includes others in their household.
- Be situated in a quiet area within the home with a plain background which is blurred or neutral and with no personal information on display.

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- Use appropriate language – this also 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, edit in any way or distribute video material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they are visible in ‘live’ teaching sessions.
- Students should always switch off their cameras in any recorded session.

8.2 All staff and students using audio communication must:

- Use appropriate language – this also 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, edit in any way 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.

8.3 The school will consider whether students not using devices or software as intended will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour Policy. 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. 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 and can recover lost work.

9 – Data protection

9.1 This section of the Remote Learning Policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school’s ‘Data Protection Policy’. 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. On the very rare occasions that sensitive data is required to be transferred between devices for the purpose of remote learning and teaching, staff must ensure it is 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. Permission should be sought from the line manager for the transfer of encrypted data between devices and advice should be taken from the IT support team on the best method of encryption to be used.

9.2 Students are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school-owned equipment which contains personal data. Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Data Protection Policy. Any intentional breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Behaviour Charter.

10 – Safeguarding

This section of the Remote Learning Policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school’s ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy’.

10.1 Application of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2025) to a remote learning context.

The principles and duties set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2025) apply equally to all aspects of remote learning. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remain paramount whether education

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takes place on-site or online. All staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures, remain vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect, and report any concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

10.2 Annex D of KCSIE specifically highlights staff responsibilities regarding online safety. In a remote learning context, this means staff must use only approved school platforms and accounts, maintain professional boundaries, ensure communications are transparent and appropriately recorded, and be alert to risks such as online abuse or inappropriate content. Staff are expected to model safe and responsible use of technology while supporting pupils' learning, engagement, and wellbeing. The same safeguarding procedures that operate in the classroom apply fully in virtual environments, ensuring that pupils are protected and supported wherever they access school education. Students and their parents will be encouraged to contact the DSL if they wish to report safeguarding concerns, e.g. regarding harmful or upsetting content or incidents of online bullying. The school will also signpost families to the practical support that is available for reporting these concerns via the school website.

10.3 Our safeguarding team and contacts

The designated senior leadership team member for child protection and safeguarding is Clare Glen, the welfare manager. She can be contacted at school via main reception 0208 303 1887 or via email CGL@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

The Designated Prevent Lead is Clare Glen. She can be contacted as above.

The Headteacher, Carrie Senior; Deputy Headteacher, Ruth Makepeace and Assistant Headteacher, Kim Brewer are all trained to designated safeguarding lead level (DSLs)

All student support officers are trained as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, as is Miss Woodhouse on the Leadership Team. The Student Support Officers are the staff who deal with the majority of welfare concerns across the school. They are available daily to support students.

The deputy designated safeguarding contacts (student support) are:

Year 7: Ms Osborne AOS@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Year 8: Mr Pidwell LPI@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Year 9: Ms George SGR@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk (Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri)

Year 10: Mr Loughlin (Mon-Thurs) KLO@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk and Mrs Smith (Fri) KSM@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Year 11: Ms Pascoe VPA@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Sixth Form: Ms Brewer KBR@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

11 - Communication

The school will communicate with parents and carers via text, letter and the school website about arrangements for remote learning as soon as possible after the decision has been taken to operate remote learning. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that the school holds accurate and up-to-date contact details for them and that they are able to access the school website and receive texts, emails and attachments on smartphones or other electronic devices.

- Problems with subject learning: Contact the subject teacher via the school's email address - admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk. Parents must not use Microsoft Teams to contact teachers, as their communication will not remain private.
- Problems accessing the internet at home or with use of IT equipment; general problems with completion of work; concerns about emotional and mental well-being: Contact the child's Student

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- Support Officer (Year 7 –Year 11) - studentwelfare@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk or the Sixth Form administrator (Year 12 –Year 13) - NEI@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk
- Safeguarding concerns: Contact the safeguarding team – See Section 10

12. Links with other policies

Curriculum Policy

Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Policy

Teaching and Learning Charter

The Teachers' Standards (updated June 2013)

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Equalities Duties for Schools policy

Acceptable User Policy for School's ICT Network, School email and Internet Policy