

Drumnamoe Nursery School

Where All Children Are Made To Feel Special

*Drumnamoe Nursery School - Remote & Blended Learning Policy*

**Introduction**

Following a period of school closure in March-June 2020 Drumnamoe Nursery School has developed a contingency plan , in line with The Department of Education’s Guidance for Restart, and in response to a second lockdown in January 2021. Our children will continue to be educated remotely with a home- learning curriculum , which is of a high quality , and aligns as closely as possible to the pre- school curriculum provided in school. The learning will be based on our planning , taking into account the age, stage and interests of our current classes .

 Whilst in March we concentrated our Home Learning activities on Drumnamoe’s facebook page and on the Homeroom app , we have now moved to the majority of it being on our new website, which was launched in January and is still being developed. Through these mediums the staff will be able to keep in daily contact with their class in a confidential way , as the Home Learning section is password protected . Teachers are working together to provide activities, which are carefully scheduled so that neither parents or children are over-whelmed . Teaching and learning can be tailored , amended and updated as time progresses , allowing for replication of classroom activity to the best of our ability . In all communications between school and home, our focus will be the wellbeing of our children , being mindful too of the home learning environment , and the impact that school closures have on parents and families.

**Specific Aims**

* To outline Drumnamoe Nursery School’s approach for pupils , from January 2021, who will not be attending school through enforced school closure, or where a class bubble is directed to self- isolate due to a positive case in school, or close- contact .
* To provide parents with home- learning support in order to ensure continuity of learning for our children, based on their age and stage of development.
* To outline Drumnamoe Nursery School’s expectations for staff that, from January 2021, school may be closed but our responsibility to support our parents and children will continue with teaching, assessment and planning for pupils .
* School will continue to support key workers children 5 days a week , on a rota basis, and therefore the duties for remote learning will also be delegated to ensure equality and fairness , as staff too have responsibilities and caring duties to fulfil. Teachers will be required to schedule activities including stories and rhymes in advance to ensure consistency of approach.

**Who is the policy applicable to?**

In line with government guidance, pupils, staff and families should self-isolate if they display any of the following symptoms

* A continuous, dry cough
* A high temperature above 37.8℃
* A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste
* Have had access to a test and this has returned a positive result for Covid-19

 If a child has to self- isolate for more than a week , then the school should liaise with parent re home schooling, but this will be optional .

It is also applicable when the school is instructed to close by D.E. or the managing body .

**Remote learning for pupils that are not able to attend school due to self-isolation or in line with government guidelines**

As nursery education is non -statutory and teaching strategies in nursery are of a practical nature, based on play- experiences , a full teaching programme cannot be delivered to individual children ,who are isolating at home. Staff will have limited time to provide this due to face- to- face teaching, and a rigorous cleaning routine due to Covid19. If possible , staff should continue to share aspects of the teaching day ( eg through photographs, books , any suitable links etc,) and this will provide starting points for parents to encourage discussion and to provide learning opportunities at home. Such home/school links will ensure that the child stays connected with an emphasis on the social and pastoral links for the child ,which we feel will help them to settle back into school on their return.

As a staff we are aware that these are exceptional times and would like to make it clear that the completion of work is not compulsory, and that this document seeks to inform and guide families and not impose expectations. Each family is unique and because of this, should approach home learning in a way which suits their individual needs.

In addition to pupil absence due to self-isolation, the New School Day guidance from DE had limited the provision for some areas of early years curriculum. For example, limits on singing, sensory[ sand/dough ] play and dress-up within role play has been limited due to hygiene and the increased risk of spreading germs. By introducing weekly information sharing for parents with resource lists and the learning opportunities to build on, parents can support their child to increase these experiences in the home. Each child will be provided with a home- learning toolkit through The Getting Ready To Learn Initiative containing items to develop a range of fine and gross motor skills and a recipe to make their own dough .

 **The Roles of The Parent/Guardian and Pupil**

It is a recommendation that where possible, families and children should engage with the suggested activities for learning provided by teachers ,as it provides a basis for continuation of learning and language development. We also intend to set up activities in the classroom so that each ‘school day’ maintains structure and routine for key workers children . Our expectation is that parents afford their child [ren ] the opportunity to :

* engage in *quality* periods of uninterrupted play.
* have a mix of independent play and engagement with an adult in their play , as a means of developing their speech, language and conversation, through role- modelling .
* listen to a daily story or rhyme before bedtime[ by video, provided by teacher or by parent themselves ], and chat about them , which will aid their development, in various areas depending on the content .
* engage in daily routines[ life-skills] such as tidying up , helping to set the table, put the shopping away, gardening, baking . feeding and caring for pets ,and sorting laundry (pairing and matching socks etc]
* develop their own independence through dressing themselves , putting on and taking off shoes, learning how to do zips and buttons, and lots of practice with independent hand washing and toileting.
* count in a real context for example four spoons on the table for breakfast, four cups etc .
* write, draw or mark-make throughout the day .eg using notebooks, drawing books, chalk boards, pens, pencils and crayons to make lists , take notes, express their views, giving them the sense of “ writing for a purpose “ . ***No formal letter writing is a requirement, but allowing children to make marks freely during their play is recommended.***

During the periods of blended learning, the staff will enhance these ongoing activities with topic or subject/skill specific ideas.

Over a period of one week , staff will set approximately 2 activities per day [ 9/10 per week ] for completion. These can be shared with your child and completed at your convenience, and when your own commitments allow it . We understand that many parents are working from home, and therefore we are happy for you to fit these around yours and your child’s schedule. We ***do not*** want you to feel pressured to complete these, whilst you are working also. The involvement of other siblings and family members is also encouraged and will help to enhance a learning experience for your child.

Work can be shared via our website in the form of comments or photographs .

 We encourage parents to take photograph of their child’s work /play experiences and provide a message to outline how the children enjoyed it. The staff will offer feedback where possible , and collate the work, to be shared with the individual classes in an attempt to let children stay connected to their friends . This can be really valuable in sharing the learning/ ideas with others. If the photo has been shared on the website already we will assume that it ok for us as a staff to share it further , possibly in a pic collage or video format .

Should accessing work on our website or Homeroom be an issue, parents should contact the school promptly by email and an alternative can be discussed. Due to the fact that staff are more than likely isolating along with children***, printed work or paper copies will not be provided unless specifically requested in writing by a parent.***

**Teacher Expectations**

* Teachers should plan learning opportunities and prompts/ ideas / questions that are relevant to the curriculum focus for the children and may support this through photos or video clips and tasks for home learners. Videos may include an explanation of what to do, a link to a learning activity or a link to an example completed by staff.
* Any resources used, including websites and equipment should, where possible, be shared with home learners via our website or Homeroom . In most cases these will be accessible and practical activities using resources that most families will have available at home. We will not recommend colouring sheets as a drawing or child’s representation is much more valuable in developing their creativity than a colouring sheet.

**Remote teaching for staff who are self-isolating**

* Teaching staff are required to self-isolate if they show symptoms outlined at the start of this policy or they have been told to shield via PHA Track and Trace and/or have received a letter to confirm this.
* If a member of staff is required to self-isolate, they are expected to:
* Follow normal reporting procedure for planned absence.
* School will ask staff about their intention to get tested should they be displaying symptoms. Should a staff member be tested, it is expected, as per guidance, that they will share the result of this test with the school so that appropriate plans can be made.
* Whilst self-isolating, and if able to do so, staff will contribute to planning and assessment and may also be given an individual project to work on which is in line with whole school improvement priorities. These projects will be communicated by the Principal and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Staff may also be asked to support the online learning provision.

**Guidance on using Home room / Schools Website**

The main forum for communication between school and home during the pandemic will be our new school website , with the Home Room app and Face book , as additional tools to supplement . The principal and other teachers will be expected to post updates or important information as the need arises.

Staff will monitor the website to :

* Ensure that each child has at least one parent signed up to the website and Homeroom app and is accessing it at least weekly if not daily.
* Note the engagement of pupils with the activities, save or print off work if necessary , and respond to the photos etc if they can .
* Respond, within reason, promptly to requests for support from families at home during normal daytime school hours.

It should be noted that parents should not be using this forum outside of normal teaching hours and that communication re child protection issues and or family emergencies which require communication with the principal , should be through e- mail or telephone call . Staff have the right to switch off devices after working hours and are advised to avoid checking the web site or Homeroom in the evenings and or weekends;

**Areas of Learning Supported**

All work and learning prompts provided will support our Curricular Guidance for Pre School Education set out by DE and CCEA. The areas of learning are as follows;

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Early Language Development

Early Mathematical Experiences

Physical Development

The Arts

The World Around Us

Work provided will also take into account children with additional needs and Special Educational Needs where a child has a Personal Learning Plan.

Drumnamoe Nursery School may share links and learning ideas from outside agencies and other professionals ,where they feel they are beneficial and developmentally appropriate and will enhance learning opportunities for the child. We may also include useful links telephone numbers etc. for the more vulnerable children/ families .

Policy Developed January 2021