Remote Learning Policy & Procedure

Introduction

This information is intended to provide clarity to students and parents/carers about what to expect from Footsteps regarding online learning.

Online learning may be required when national or local restrictions require cohorts of students to remain at home. However, unless we are experiencing truly unforeseeable and/or very exceptional circumstances, those who are vulnerable or from key worker families will be expected to attend.

Such examples are when Footsteps is seriously snowed under, a utility service has failed, or when there are health concerns related to incidents such as a pandemic, for example. Footsteps will always endeavour to continue to operate an onsite learning provision and/or virtual learning, and/or independent curriculum work being sent home via email. This work should be completed and emailed back to Footsteps.

During such challenging times as are listed above, Footsteps students are expected to attend whenever possible. In such circumstances, any students who are unable to attend in person are required to access the scheduled online learning. If students do not attend, parents/carers are required to inform Footsteps in writing as to the reason for their child being unable to attend.

Please see below for further information.

Firstly, parent/carers and students should be aware that Footsteps remains open throughout the school term, unless you are informed otherwise. Footsteps is open every school day and is a safe and secure environment for onsite teaching and learning.

During issues such as a pandemic or issues with the Footsteps building, online lessons will be available for all students who are not able to attend, are shielding, are advised to self-isolate or, during a pandemic, are being kept home by their parents as a precaution. Please note, online lessons are not optional for those at home. Additionally, subject work is also sent out via email everyday for home learning and is expected to be completed by all students and returned by end of week.

Students are able to access a range of online learning platforms and resources, as outlined in this policy. Footsteps recognises that this does not replicate the experience of being in a classroom - face to face learning is the optimal learning format. However, online learning is available when required to ensure that the disruption to students learning is minimised during difficult times. This document aims to ensure that learning during any period of disruption is clearly articulated and that online learning is effective, impactful, safe, and accessible.

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PRINCIPLES

Footsteps aim to teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in Footsteps wherever possible and as appropriate. However, we do sometimes need to make some adaptations in some subjects. For example, class discussions will be limited, and practical elements of subjects are adapted as required.

Students and parent/carers must be aware that:

- Attendance and engagement are not optional.
- Live sessions can be recorded for Footsteps safeguarding purposes
- Students are expected to engage with online lessons and activities every school day
- If a pupil is unable to engage in learning through sickness or because of a medical appointment, Footsteps should be informed in writing.

During full or partial closure, parents/carers/students will be provided with:

- Updates via email/website/Call/Text.
- Learning content emailed out to all students directly by subject teachers.
- Directed online learning tasks will be delivered via Microsoft Teams
- A variety of activities, i.e., using technology and not using technology

Length of Footsteps day

We would expect students to engage in academic work for approximately the same amount of time remotely and independently as they do in Footsteps. To support parents in this circumstance we devise timetables with short breaks between lessons to allow for logging off / on and refreshments etc.

Access to online remote education

Footsteps uses Microsoft Teams for remote online learning. Students are required to log in via their footsteps email. MS Teams can be accessed via laptop, PC or mobile phone. Additional learning tasks are varied and down to the subject leader.

Footsteps recognise that some students may not have suitable online access at home. We take the following approaches to support those students to access remote education:

We liaise with their referring agencies to provide laptops and remote learning devices to students.

Footsteps ensures work can be accessed and sent from a mobile phone if necessary.

Monitoring engagement and feeding back to parents

The primary method of monitoring engagement will be through registration. Staff will register attendance on site and attendance to remote learning facilities as well as work completed and returned. Parents will be contacted via call and where required email/letter, if there is a concern with a child's engagement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Footsteps Management are:

- To formulate timetables appropriate to the situation
- To be available to respond to the concerns and questions of parents and staff.
- To monitor the content of set learning across the Footsteps.
- To arrange for the training of staff and students in the use of technology to support online learning.
- To keep parents and staff informed of updates and official communication
- All online safety guidelines are reiterated to parents, students and staff
- Teachers are well versed in online learning best practices

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- Expectations are clear to all stakeholders
- There is clarity for learning expectations during the virtual learning periods
- Where possible, resources are prepared in advance of any closure.
- The safeguarding of both students and staff must be maintained.
- All the same policies, rules and guidelines remain in place, and adherence to all statutory guidance is required, these include the additions to the safeguarding policy.
- Online Safety incidents are dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Online Safety Policy.
- Online conduct and behavioural incidents are dealt with in line with Footsteps policies

The Pupil is responsible for ensuring that they:

- Set aside the scheduled time each day for attending Footsteps or the online learning identified as part of their timetable.
- Read the directions of MS Teams use carefully and follow the teachers' instructions
- Aim to complete all work as prescribed within the set timescale
- Do the work provided to the best of their ability and as independently as possible.
- Understand their specific learning expectations
- Follow the Pupil Acceptable Use Procedures and the Footsteps Pupil Remote Learning Agreement (see Appendix 1), making responsible choices.
- Are equipped to use Microsoft Teams
- Are ready and register for lessons on time.
- Are sat in a suitable learning environment and have the correct equipment with them
- Complete work to a high standard.
- Turn camera on/off as required
- Mute microphone except when required to contribute
- Only make comments in the Chat facility as directed by the teacher; these must be responsible and relevant.
- Chatting about unrelated issues and disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Students are set work that is accessible, engaging, curriculum based, and relevant to their course of study.
- Work is set in accordance with their remote learning timetable.
- Assignments are set in a way that allows creativity and differentiation by the students
- They inform the IT Network Manager if they experience technical issues or have feedback to improve the process
- They prepare live lessons to be presented on MS Teams
- Students know how to access online platforms and have their usernames and passwords
- They respond to pupil and parent questions (there is no expectation out of Footsteps hours)
- They assess and provide feedback on work, when appropriate.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Ensure that their child(ren) has a suitable workplace and are not interrupted by others at home.
- Are not visible on the screen during live lessons and do not communicate with the teacher during these sessions.
- Ensure that their child(ren) have appropriate internet access to participate in online learning.
- Know where to look to see if work has been set by the teacher.
- As far as possible, play an active role in their child's learning.

Refer to Appendix 2 –Footsteps Parent Consent for Live Pupil Online Sessions. What students will need for learning:

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- Access to the internet and a remote device
- Work booklet, paper or notebook and writing materials
- A reading book or knowledge of how to access the digital reading platforms
- A regular schedule and routines to support good learning habits. E.g. wake up time, breakfast time, start work time, breaks.

Appendix 1

Footsteps Pupil Remote Learning Agreement

RULES

- I will only use technology for Footsteps educational purposes as directed by my teacher.
- I will turn off my camera and microphone on entering a live lesson and will not unmute my microphone without the permission of the teacher
- I will only use technology with parental permission, and when they know I am using it.
- I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.
- I will be responsible for my behaviour and actions when using technology such as Microsoft Teams and other interactive applications, this includes the resources I access and the language I use.
- I will make sure that all my communication with students, teachers or others using technology is responsible and sensible.
- I will not deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report it immediately to my teacher or my parent/carer.
- I will not record or take photos of my classmates or teachers during a Remote Learning session.
- I understand that when using applications provided by Footsteps that my use can be monitored and logged and can be made available to my teachers.
- I understand that these rules are designed to help keep me safe and that if they are not followed, Footsteps sanctions will be applied, and my parent may be contacted.

GUIDELINES

When using Microsoft Teams, remember that this is an extension of the classroom and you should conduct yourself as you would in a classroom.

This includes:
- Working in an environment that is quiet, safe and free from distractions.
- Being on time for your interactive session.
- Being dressed appropriately for learning.
- Remaining attentive during sessions; no multitasking i.e. on another device or phone
- Interacting patiently and respectfully with teachers and peers
- Providing feedback to teachers about your experiences and any relevant suggestions
- NOT recording or taking photos of online interactions.
- Ending the session as and when the teacher indicates to do so.

Appendix 2

Footsteps Parent Consent for Remote Learning

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Footsteps approach to teaching and learning for students who are not attending on site (e.g. due to utility issues, exceptional snow levels, lockdown or isolating) is primarily through the delivery of lessons on Microsoft Teams.

We will also provide some live staff/pupil online sessions, to further enhance our provision, which is a very safe and secure platform.

Footsteps have the Pupil Remote Learning Agreement, which provides additional rules and guidelines for remote learning. The document outlines the parameters which all students are expected to adhere to, to engage safely in the sessions. Parents are expected to read through and discuss the Remote Learning Agreement with their child and ensure that their child follows the terms of the agreement. Any concerns or queries can be discussed with the child's Head of Year. To facilitate these sessions during school closure, parents should support their child/children by:

- Providing them with a workspace that is quiet, safe and free from distraction with an adult nearby.
- Making sure that they are dressed appropriately for live lessons
- Ensuring that communication in lessons is only between the teacher, pupil, and their classmates. Parents should not contact the teacher during a live lesson (any parent to teacher communication should be in the usual manner, via email).
- Ensure students are not recording, sharing, or commenting on public forums about individual teachers.
- Acknowledging that they have shared and discussed Remote Learning with their child. It is vital that the child agrees to the rules.
- Celebrating remote learning successes with their child and discussing any remote learning referrals. During a 'lockdown', teachers will be sharing achievements and issues e.g. missing work via call, email and text messages. Username and password arrangements are emailed out and texted out to parent/carers.

PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR DFE GUIDANCE

What you can do to prepare for the next harmful online challenge and online hoax
Keeping Children Safe in Education sets out that an effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate incidents where appropriate.

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You should consider embedding an effective approach to planning for, and responding to, online challenges and online hoaxes in relevant policies such as:

- child protection
- behaviour
- staff behaviour
- mobile devices

You should help children and young people, parents, carers and staff be clear, in advance, what your institution is likely to do when a harmful online challenge or online hoax begins to circulate.

Keeping children safe in education sets out that schools and colleges should have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. It is important to understand the limitations of filtering with regard to harmful online challenges and online hoaxes. Talk to your filtering provider on a regular basis.

Most children and young people enjoy unrestricted online access via 3G, 4G and 5G on phones, tablets and smart devices. Your mobile devices policy should reflect this risk, and it should be recognised when considering how best to teach your children and young people about online safety and how you will respond to harmful online challenges and online hoaxes.

Consider how best to teach your children and young people about online safety, in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Among other things, the relationships, sex and health education resources and Education for a Connected World will be useful. Further information on these resources is available in the Teaching children and young people about online safety section.

Children and young people should have the opportunity to learn to critically identify and respond to dangerous or harmful content. Schools and colleges should always be aware that some children, young people (and adults) will struggle to identify harmful online challenges and online hoaxes. It is therefore important that institutions provide safe and open spaces for children and young people to ask questions and share concerns about what they experience online without being made to feel foolish or blamed.

This should form part of your safeguarding approach (in line with Keeping children safe in education). You should make clear the avenues that children and young people have to access support if they are curious, worried or upset.

Posters setting out who to go to with a concern (be it online or offline) within and outside your establishment can help. It is important that if children and young people do report something, they feel confident it will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. The best interests of the child or young person must always come first.

It is important to encourage parents and carers to discuss online safety at home and to talk to their child about what they do online.

What you should do when a harmful online challenge or online hoax might be circulating between children and young people

As the safeguarding lead in your institution, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be involved in, and is probably best placed to lead, the pre-planning and provide any formal responses, if deemed necessary.

You should undertake a case-by-case assessment, establishing the scale and nature of the possible risk to your children and young people, including considering (where the evidence allows) if the risk is a national one or is it localised to your area, or even just your institution. Quick local action may prevent a local online hoax or local harmful online challenge going viral (quickly and widely spread).

The DSL should check the factual basis of any harmful online challenge or online hoax with a known, reliable and trustworthy source, such as the Professional Online Safety Helpline from the UK Safer Internet Centre. Where harmful online challenges or online hoaxes appear to be local (rather than large scale national ones) local safeguarding advice, such as from the local authority or local police force, may also be appropriate and helpful.

Should you share information and issue a warning to children, young people, parents, carers and staff?

Forward planning, together with case-by-case research, will allow for a calm and measured response and avoid creating panic or confusion.

Is it an online hoax?

A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful. The internet and social media provide a perfect platform for hoaxes, especially hoaxes about challenges or trends that are said to be harmful to children and young people to be spread quickly.

You should carefully consider if a challenge or scare story is a hoax. Generally speaking, naming an online hoax and providing direct warnings is not helpful. Concerns are often fuelled by unhelpful publicity, usually generated on social media, and may not be based on confirmed or factual occurrences or any real risk to children and young people. There have been examples of hoaxes where much of the content was created by those responding to the story being reported, needlessly increasing children and young people's exposure to distressing content.

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Evidence from Childline shows that, following viral online hoaxes, children and young people often seek support after witnessing harmful and distressing content that has been highlighted, or directly shown to them (often with the best of intentions), by parents, carers, schools and other bodies.

Is it a real online challenge that might cause harm to children and young people?

An online challenge will generally involve users recording themselves taking a challenge and then distributing the resulting video through social media sites, often inspiring or daring others to repeat the challenge. Whilst many will be safe and fun, others can be potentially harmful and even life threatening.

If you are confident children and young people are aware of, and engaged in, a real challenge that may be putting them at risk of harm, then it would be appropriate for this to be directly addressed. Carefully consider how best to do this. It may be appropriate to offer focussed support to a particular age group or individual children at risk. Remember, even with real challenges, many children and young people may not have seen it and may not be aware of it. You must carefully weigh up the benefits of institution-wide highlighting of the potential harms related to a challenge against needlessly increasing children and young people's exposure to it.

Online challenge or online hoax, some principles remain the same

You should avoid sharing upsetting or scary content to show children and young people what they "might" see online. Exposing children and young people (many of whom will not be aware of or have seen the online challenge or hoax) in your institution to upsetting or scary content will be counterproductive and potentially harmful. If you do feel it is necessary to directly address an issue, this can be achieved without exposing children and young people to scary or distressing content.

Whatever the response, ask:

- is it factual?
- is it proportional to the actual (or perceived) risk?
- is it helpful?
- is it age and stage of development appropriate?
- is it supportive?

Helpful messages to share with parents and carers include encouraging them to focus on positive and empowering online behaviours with their children, such as critical thinking, how and where to report concerns about harmful content and how to block content and users.

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When dealing with harmful online challenges and viral online hoaxes, there can be an added pressure from parents and carers for schools and colleges to directly address concerns. DSLs need to consider how best to manage these anxieties, and reassure concerned parents and carers, whilst not making a situation worse. Pre-planning and pre-engagement will help.

It's important that, as an organisation with a duty to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in your care, you only share accurate information

If a child raises concerns about a harmful online challenge or online hoax directly

Consider the best way to speak to individual children or, where appropriate, in classes (but, as above, be mindful of needlessly exposing all children and young people to something they may not even be aware of or concerned about).

While acknowledging it, if it has been raised directly, avoid overly focusing on whatever the latest harmful online challenge or online hoax might be. Focus on what good online behaviour looks like, what to do if you see something upsetting online and who and where to report it. Fact checking by the DSL, may help dispel myths if children and young people are identifying that they are particularly concerned that the latest online challenge or online hoax has put them or their friends at risk.

As per Keeping children safe in education, if you are worried a child or young person has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, you should report it to the local children's social care.

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Date of Review: September 2025