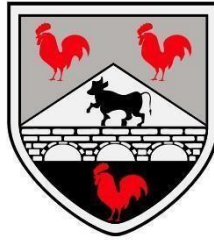# Ysgol Y Bont Faen

Cowbridge Comprehensive School January 2021

Blended and Distance Learning Policy

Formulated by: Mr Fowles, Deputy Headteacher,
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Approved by: **MBG 11.02.21**

Review: Every 2 years or bi-monthly during a pandemic and subject to changes in statutory guidelines or legislation

Next Review: 2 months

Date of any amendments made to policy and brief points:

Date	Section
25/1/21	3 Guidance - c ii) Synchronous learning updated for current practice 4 Responsibilities - Response to requests for assistance amended 5 General Guidelines and Expectations - Inserted features of strong live lessons 6 Content and Timing - inserted details of the 3 approaches and removed apportionment tables

1.   **Purpose and Introduction**

Background:

The 2020 pandemic, unprecedented and unplanned for, brought about challenges for secondary school teaching and learning which previously and predominantly took place in large classrooms, under the instruction of teachers, within a highly structured day. The sudden need to adapt to distance learning allowed limited time for teachers to implement detailed procedures; however, as schools reopened to more pupils from the 29 June 2020, there was a requirement to ensure a more consistent, formalised and structured approach to blended and distance learning.

Welsh Government guidance (https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-guidance-learning-over-summer-term) stated that as we begin to think about learning and teaching for the next school year, schools should consider, "a blend of 'in school' and 'out of school' learning driven by a single curriculum: learners should not expect or experience two parallel curriculums, but practitioners will need to think how learning outside the classroom supports the valuable and limited contact time."

Statement of Intent:

This policy will outline the types and methods of blended learning; provide guidance on the approach to blended learning that should be taken by staff, pupils and parents; and, aim to ensure consistency of approach across all departments in the school. Consequently, Cowbridge Comprehensive School (CCS) will continue to provide engaging, exciting and challenging learning opportunities, both in school and at home, which result in ambitious, capable learners, committed to lifelong learning. Additionally, the well-being of pupils and staff is a significant consideration; it is recognised that learning can give a sense of purpose and achievement which is good for mental well-being. This policy encompasses and adheres to the guidance provided by:

- Welsh Government Live Streaming and Video Conferencing: Safeguarding Principles and Practice (Jan 2021)
- Video Conferencing and Live Streaming Homeschool Agreement (CCS)

The policy aims to ensure a seamless and efficient blend of in-school and at-home learning, as well as high quality distance learning provision during Government enforced closures, thus allowing pupils to make progress while staff workload remains manageable.

Definition of Blended Learning:

"At its simplest, blended learning is the *thoughtful* integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences." [Garrison and Kanuka, 2004]. At CCS, this means that time spent learning in the classroom will introduce key concepts, new content and skills; address misconceptions; answer questions; and, set clear expectations and guidelines for the work to be completed at home. However, it should be noted that the learning that takes place at home will take a variety of forms and will not be restricted to online provision.

2.   Scope

This policy applies to all teaching, learning support and achievement staff at Cowbridge Comprehensive School.

3.   Guidance

Types of Blended Learning:

A. Face-to-Face Time with Pupils

This is the most traditional form of teaching and learning. It is a 'teacher-centred' method of education and takes place in school, in person. Pupils benefit from increased levels of interaction with their peers, as well as with their teacher, and are allowed the opportunity to bond with fellow pupils. In face-to-face learning, students are held accountable for their progress at the specific time the lesson is taking place, for example, through the use of AfL techniques.

B. Flipped Learning

In the traditional approach to teaching and learning the teacher is the primary source of information. By contrast, the flipped learning model deliberately shifts instruction to a pupil centred approach, where **in class time** is dedicated to: exploring topics in greater depth; introducing complex concepts; answering questions; addressing misconceptions; setting clear expectations around work to be completed at home (online or paper based); and, creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, pupils are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.

C. Online Learning

The School's platform for sharing online resources and setting work is Google Classroom. Pupils are also able to return/submit completed tasks through this platform. It is recognised that a considerable amount of engaging and effective work has been set through platforms such as YouTube. The continued use of these platforms is consistent with this policy and to be encouraged. However, for consistency (and to minimise the number of emails pupils receive) resources and links associated with the work on alternative platforms should be posted on Google Classroom instead of being emailed.

I.   **Asynchronous Learning**
    Asynchronous learning is learning that doesn't necessarily happen at the same time for the teacher and the pupils. There is no real-time interaction; the learning resources are created and made available for pupils to use later on. The main features of asynchronous learning are:
    ● resources and activities delivered online, e.g. through Google Classroom;
    ● recorded lessons/video instruction/podcasts;
    ● flipped learning - pupils engage with material before discussions in class.

II. Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is teaching and learning that happens where the teacher is present at the same time as the pupils, meaning that there is real-time interaction between them. At CCS, the main features of synchronous learning are:
- live, streamed lessons;
- live check-in sessions to support asynchronous learning;
- live online/ telephone pastoral/achievement team check in sessions.

D. Hard Copy Physical Resources

Feedback from pupils, parents and teachers, following the provision of paper packs, in June 2020, to Years 7, 8 and 9, indicates that engagement in work increased. This is likely due to the fact that using paper, in their learning at home, most closely replicates what the learning process is like in school. At CCS, hard copy physical resources include:
- paper packs and work booklets;
- textbooks;
- resources needed for projects, games and activities, for example, music, art, D&T, etc.

Methods of Blended Learning:

The Education Endowment Foundation recommends the following metacognitive methods to enhance learning:

Activate	Prompting pupils to think about what they have learnt previously, that will help them with their next steps
Explain	Explicitly teaching strategies to pupils and helping them decide when to use them.
Practise	Pupils practising strategies and skills repeatedly, to develop independence.
Reflect	Pupils reflecting on what they have learnt after they have completed a piece of work.
Review	Revisiting previous learning after a gap.

A planning framework is available here:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-forschools/#closeSignup

4. Responsibilities

Individuals	Responsibilities

Leadership	The role of the Senior Leadership Team is to: ● develop, monitor and evaluate the whole school strategy for blended and distance learning; ● communicate with, and provide support to, departments, staff, pupils and parents, to ensure effective implementation of blended and distance learning; ● provide opportunities for appropriate CPD training to ensure that staff are able to deliver blended and distance learning effectively; ● ensure accountability of the blended and distance learning process, through departmental self evaluation. The role of the Subject Leader is to: ● lead and support the department in the design and development of high-quality blended and distance learning experiences for pupils, by ensuring that departmental plans are fit for purpose and audience; ● monitor and evaluate the provision of blended and distance learning through departmental self evaluation; ● communicate with pupils and parents, as appropriate, as per the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, to ensure engagement and progress with the blended and distance learning experience; ● disseminate excellent practice amongst colleagues, both formally and informally.

Teaching and Learning Steering Committee	The role of the Teaching and Learning Steering Committee is to: ● research, trial and develop excellent practice and new innovation, using varied strategies for blended and distance learning; and informally; ● provide a forum for colleagues to discuss, trial and implement strategies to: improve the quality of blended and distance learning; share good practice; develop ideas; and, reflect on teaching and learning; ● work towards helping to create a proactive school culture where the quality of blended and distance learning is openly observed, discussed, challenged and enhanced within a supportive and non-judgemental environment; ● promote high quality blended and distance learning, using the elements of the DR ICE principles.

Teachers	The role of the teacher is to: • continue to strive to deliver consistently excellent lessons in accordance with the Teaching & Learning policy and Live Synchronous Lessons - Standard Operating Procedures; • engage with CPD training to ensure proficiency in delivering effective blended and distance learning; • collaborate with colleagues to design and develop high-quality blended and distance learning experiences for pupils, in accordance with departmental plans; • plan and deliver blended and distance learning experiences for all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, taking into account Individual Development Plans and ensuring that pupils' needs are fully catered for; • communicate with, and provide timely feedback to, pupils in line with the School's Marking and Feedback Policy; • carefully monitor pupils' work completion and deadline compliance; • communicate with pupils and parents, as appropriate, as per the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, to ensure engagement and progress with the blended and distance learning experience. *Teachers will not be able to respond to multiple requests for assistance outside of timetabled lesson times. Questions can be asked at the next scheduled session with the teacher. If unsure about what to do with a task, pupils should: read questions and instructions carefully; research the answer to the question; or, collaborate with a friend/another pupil/classmate. If, while learning at home during a period of isolation, a pupil has a problem that cannot be solved, then the relevant Achievement Assistant at school should be contacted in the first instance.*
Learning Support Staff	The role of learning support staff is to: • provide support and assistance to departments and teachers, in accordance with the Additional Learning Needs Policy; • assist with implementation of pupils' Individual Development Plans so that their needs are fully catered for through blended and distance learning.
Support Staff	The role of support staff is to: • (CircleIT) provide timely responses and support to pupils, parents/carers, and departmental requests regarding technology issues;
	• (Achievement Team) provide timely responses and support to pupils, parents/carers, and departmental requests regarding achievement and wellbeing issues.

Pupils	Pupils should:
	- adhere to the expectations of the Video Conferencing and Live Streaming Agreement; - record tasks set at the end of each lesson, noting the due date for completion; - dedicate appropriate time to distance learning, in order to complete the tasks set by the due date; - check Google Classroom for information on tasks, assignments and resources daily, throughout the school week; - identify a comfortable and quiet space to study/learn; - engage in all learning set with academic honesty; - submit all tasks and assignments in accordance with provided timelines and/or due dates; - appreciate that when working at home, teachers will be delivering lessons every day at school. *Teachers will not be able to respond to multiple requests for assistance outside of timetabled lesson times. Questions can be asked at the next scheduled session with the teacher. If unsure about what to do with a task, pupils should: read questions and instructions carefully; research the answer to the question; or, collaborate with a friend/another pupil/classmate. If, while learning at home during a period of isolation, a pupil has a problem that cannot be solved, then the relevant Achievement Assistant at school should be contacted in the first instance.*
Parents/Carers	Parents/Carers should support their child/ren in their learning by: - consenting to and supporting their child in adhering to the expectations of the Video Conferencing and Live Streaming Agreement; - providing an environment conducive to learning; - engaging in conversations about resources, tasks and assignments provided/posted; - monitoring time spent engaging in online and offline learning; - helping to provide emotional balance through ensuring ample room and time for reflection, physical activity, conversation, rest and play.

5. General Guidelines and Expectations

The Education Endowment Foundation, in its report on distance learning during school closure, highlights the following:

1. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered; 2. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils; 3. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes; 4. Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes.

Therefore, it is important that everything put in place meets the four guidelines referenced above and that we have clear expectations for blended learning.

Expectations:

- At the start of each academic year, establish a Google Classroom for each individual class and ensure it is used in the most effective and efficient way, for example, using the 'Classwork' tab to set tasks, rather than the 'Stream' tab. It is important that each individual class has their own Google Classroom, rather than being part of a 'Subject Year Group' classroom, so that the class teacher can monitor his/her own pupils' engagement and progress. The establishment of the Google Classroom and its effective use is the **responsibility of the class teacher;**
- Ensure that the title/label of the Google Classroom clearly identifies the **class, subject and teacher** so that pupils can easily identify and quickly access classrooms;
- Recognise the need for one 'work stream' - the work completed during face-to-face learning will complement and consolidate the work completed by pupils remotely, and vice versa;
- Consider and plan for the 'work stream' to be completed, anticipating likely questions and problems that pupils may encounter;
- Ensure face-to-face learning incorporates: -   the introduction of new concepts;
  - the explanation of difficult concepts;
  - problem solving;
  - explicit teaching of new skills;
  - tasks that complement and consolidate the learning that takes place at home; -   interactive discussion;
  - practicals (as/when appropriate);
  - the use of class time to personalise learning.
- Ensure at-home learning incorporates:
  - tasks that complement and consolidate the learning that takes place in the classroom;
  - tasks that pupils can complete to enhance learning that takes place in the classroom, for example, research of/reading about a new topic to be introduced;
  - tasks that allow pupils to practise new skills learnt during face-to-face time in school;
  - note-taking, summarising and formation of questions in preparation for face-to-face time in school.
- Ensure synchronous lessons incorporate 'the features of strong live lessons' (below);
- 'Chunk' work that is to be completed. Masses of content should not simply be 'dropped' into Google Classroom with a completion date. Teachers should consider learning objectives for a sequence of lessons and ensure that all tasks to be completed (both in school and at home) allow pupils to meet these objectives;
- Clearly communicate learning objectives to pupils so that they know exactly what is expected of them and what they will be doing in school and at home;
- Make deadlines for work completion clear to pupils. Make explicit the method of how pupils can submit completed written work (e.g. during face to face lessons on paper/ books, by uploading to Google Classroom etc.);
- Provide clear instructions for how the work set can be completed. These instructions can be delivered during the face-to-face time with pupils; during a synchronous online session; but, should also be available for pupils to access at home, either by uploading them to Google Classroom or by including them in the paper resources provided;
- Consider how videos/podcasts can be used effectively to supplement, complement, and assist with the completion of, work set.

Features of strong live lessons:

The principles of good teaching apply whether in a classroom or online, however, it is recognised that online learning is subject to specific constraints and parameters that do not exist in a classroom environment. The following features (which will be subject to updates as research continues), should be evident:

- A sequence of lessons is planned which incorporates the delivery of live lessons alongside asynchronous and self study sessions;
- Consistent standard operating procedures will be implemented, for example, admitting pupils into the live classroom; the use of host controls; adherence to safeguarding principles;
- Using tools of the software to encourage active engagement, for example, chat function, hands up; ● Get the most out of the live lesson - interaction, communication and checking for understanding; ● Less is more - strip back tasks and applications.

A practical application of the above could be:

- Teacher delivery/ exposition/ introduction;
- Q and A session - ask for hands up or focus questions on individual pupils - ask to unmute mic to answer;
- Short exposition/ demonstration to support set task;
- Live teacher support for pupils as they work through a task;
- Periodic check ins - make sure all engaged;
- Sum up/plenary/next steps/ instructions for next lesson.

Marking, feedback and assessment

In line with the School's Marking and Feedback Policy, not all submitted written work needs to be quality marked in detail by the teacher; however, it is important that work completion is tracked so that pupils who are not engaging with the work set can be appropriately supported. It is important to remember that feedback is considered so that learning, rather than simply provision, is taking place. The nature of marking and feedback given will depend on the type of work completed and the method of submission.
The School's Marking and Feedback Policy should be followed as the overall framework on which to base our approach.

Staff should consider how pupils can be formally assessed so that progress can be effectively monitored and intervention can be put in place where necessary.
Self assessment may be an integral part of a blended learning approach; however, in order for this to be effective, pupils must be able to accurately and confidently self assess their work and progress. Therefore, clear guidance and expectations relating to this will need to be provided by subject teachers.

Engagement

For a blended learning approach to be effective, it is of critical importance that all pupils engage with the process. Therefore, pupils must have a secure understanding of what they have to do and by when. Differentiation, a comprehensive overview and clear instruction will be of critical importance, to enable pupils to balance work completed in school and at home.

We expect that all pupils will engage with this approach to teaching and learning and exceptional levels of engagement can be celebrated by departments in already established ways. It needs to be made clear to pupils that work is not "optional" and we expect tasks to be completed. Clear deadlines should be set to give pupils an explicit understanding of what is required, by when.

If pupils do not engage appropriately, our normal procedures, as outlined in the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy, will apply. However, we must recognise that pupils may be having difficulty in adapting to the new way of working or are struggling with barriers to learning, e.g. lack of space to work at home; unreliable broadband or limited ICT provision; etc. Therefore, it is important to try and establish what these

barriers are and how we might help to remove them. Established lines of referral (Class Teacher - Subject Leader - Achievement Team - SLT) should be used as necessary. Communication with pupils in school and with parents at home will be an important way of addressing these issues.

If a pupil still fails to engage, then the usual procedures within the Behaviour Policy will be followed.

Training

To ensure that pupils can make the most of blended and distance learning, they may require training and support on:
- the effective use of Google Classroom:
    - how to navigate the Classroom;
    - how to submit work;
    - how to keep track of tasks/assignments.
- the effective use of self-assessment grids/templates.

To ensure that teachers can proficiently deliver blended and distance learning experiences, they may require training and support on:
- how to ensure the Classroom is the main source of setting and receiving work;
- how to efficiently use marking software, e.g. 'DocHub' or similar (when pupils have to photograph their work rather than upload a 'Word' document) within Google Classroom;
- how to organise Google Classroom and, in particular, classwork into categories;
- how to create a quiz/assignment on Google forms;
- the effective use of PowerPoint including;
- creating and embedding podcasts and video clips into PP;
- use of hyperlinks to bring pupils from PP to necessary documents.
- how to use Google Meet to deliver synchronous lessons.

Teachers may use time not spent teaching to:
- source/create podcasts/videos relevant to SoWs for use when pupils are working at home;
- create prescriptive self-assessment templates for use with pupils, especially for tasks that will be completed at home that would not otherwise be teacher assessed.

6. <u>Content and Timing</u>

With 100% in-school capacity, home learning should comply with the Homework Policy, contained within the Teaching and Learning Policy.

If in-school capacity is less than 100%, pupils isolating should follow the CCS Pupil Absence and Learning Continuity Plan

In the instance of Government directed suspension of normal school operations, CCS will operate the following 3 approaches or types of lessons:
- live synchronous teaching
- asynchronous teaching/ check in where the teacher has set work and is available on line; ● self study sessions.

1. Live or synchronous lessons/ sessions

- This will involve a live lesson, session, seminar or tutorial delivered by the teacher using Google Meet through Google Classroom.
- The structure and approach taken for the lesson will be determined by the relevant department and class teacher.

2. Asynchronous teaching/ check in where the teacher has set work and is available on line

- During each timetabled lesson, subject teachers will be available online for the duration of the lesson. During this time teachers will be able to offer written help, instruction, guidance, clarification and feedback related to the work set.

3. Self study sessions

- Pupils to catch up on work already set or new work set on Google Classroom.
- Opportunity for pupils to consolidate, organise their work, read or work on longer term project work. Teachers will not be available for communication with pupils during self-study sessions.

The document 'Allocation of timing - three approaches' outlines the suggested number of hours for each lesson type for each subject and year group. As far as possible this should be followed. However, it is recognised that the nature, complexity and content of work set may require some flexibility in terms of the schedule.

7.   Monitoring and review

Subject leaders will monitor and evaluate the provision of blended and distance learning in their areas through established monitoring and quality assurance procedures.

As the current position relating to pupil attendance in the autumn term remains uncertain, members of the Teaching and Learning Steering Committee will monitor, evaluate and review the policy, initially on a monthly basis.