



Oldbury Wells

**Oldbury Wells School**  
**Distance Learning Policy**  
**September 2026**

|                             |                                                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:</b> | Annually                                                |
| <b>RATIFIED BY:</b>         | OWS Local Governing Body                                |
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| <b>AUTHOR:</b>              | Deputy Headteacher                                      |

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## Rationale

This policy is to ensure the ongoing education of Oldbury Wells pupils under unusual circumstances. This policy will future-proof against closures that could happen at any time due to school closure from illness epidemic, extreme weather, power-loss, etc.

### 1. Aims & Use of Remote Learning

This distance learning policy for staff aims to:

- Ensure consistency in the approach to distance learning for pupils who aren't in school
- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to distance learning
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection.

All pupils should attend school, in line with our attendance policy. Remote education is not viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school.

Pupils receiving remote education will be marked absent in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

We will consider providing remote education to pupils in circumstances when in-person attendance is either not possible or contrary to government guidance.

This might include:

- Occasions when we decide that opening our school is either:
  - Not possible to do safely
  - Contradictory to guidance from local or central government.
- Occasions when individual pupils, for a limited duration, are unable to physically attend school but are able to continue learning, for example because:
  - They have 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.

The school will consider providing pupils with remote education on a case-by-case basis.

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 pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil returns to in-person education with appropriate support.

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 pupil is asked to access online education while suspended.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

Distance learning in school is the responsibility of the Deputy Headteacher, who will be assisted by the wider Senior Leaders Team (SLT) who have responsibility for Quality of Education/Teaching and Learning.

### 2.1 Teachers

When providing distance learning, teachers must be available during their normal school hours.

If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness they should report this using the normal absence procedure.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health and any access issues students may have.

When providing distance learning, teachers are responsible for:

#### Setting Work (School Closure)

- This will be done in line with the teachers' and students' normal school timetable; therefore, ensuring a broad and ambitious sequenced curriculum is delivered.
- Where possible the normal scheme of work should be adhered to as much as possible; therefore, ensuring that the delivery remains of a high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision. Therefore, ensuring a well-planned and sequenced curriculum is offered.
- The amount of work set should reflect the normal lesson time of one hour. The school acknowledges that the pace of remote learning can be different, but as per the DFE guidance all Key stages should receive 5 hours of work per day.
- All distance learning work should be uploaded onto Satchel One. This is the school's main method for sharing distance learning work with both parents and students. It will be set as classwork so that any work is distinguishable from normal homework set tasks.
- Students who are out of school will follow their normal timetable and work will be set through Satchel One and teachers will offer a **live element through Microsoft Teams** where possible. This will likely take the format of a live introduction and the chance to discuss and ask questions about the work that has been set. Staff must ensure that they use a background or blurred background when using MS Teams.
- All work that is uploaded to Satchel One must be set as an individual lesson. No large projects should be blocked in as these are too hard for students to manage their time. If project work is used the components of this must be broken down into individual lessons and tasks must be clearly defined.
- All distance learning work must be added onto the system before 5pm the day before. This allows both pupils and parents to plan their time and manage workload.

- Where distance learning is being used due to an emergency closure, suitable adjustments to the timing of setting work and the role of a live element will be communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

### Setting Work – Individual Cases

- Plans for remote or distance learning for individual cases will be jointly devised between stakeholders and formally agreed. This will not necessarily reflect the setting of work arrangements as outlined above for whole school closures.

### Completion & Submission of Work

- Teachers will specify clearly which tasks are required to be submitted and how they would like this to be done.
- For extended periods of distance learning/school closures assessment & feedback should continue in line with the school's marking & assessment policy. This includes the frequency and format of feedback. Any feedback will be provided through Satchel One.

### Communication with Pupils who aren't in School and their Parents

#### • **Pupils**

- The main tool for communicating with students is the messaging function within Satchel One.
- Teachers are expected to be on call during a normal, timetabled lesson and to respond to any queries students may have regarding any tasks. However best practice would suggest that any live teaching through Microsoft Teams is more effective in terms of managing workload and providing effective support.

#### • **Parents**

- If a member of staff needs to contact a parent, the main method of communication for distance learning should be firstly through email. If this is not effective, then a phone call home should be made. Teachers must be mindful of any personal circumstances that may impact on the completion of distance learning tasks.
- Likewise, if a parent needs to contact a member of staff they should predominately use email to make initial contact. Key contact email addresses are available on the website.
- As per the school's social media and communication policy; parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.
- We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. (Please note that these time scales may alter due to personal circumstances of all involved).
- If you need to contact a member of staff regarding any emerging issues, please contact the head of year in the first instance. If your concern is more urgent and relates to safeguarding or emergencies, please email the schools designated safeguarding lead ([sarah.barlow@oldburywells.com](mailto:sarah.barlow@oldburywells.com) or [becky.lawson@oldburywells.com](mailto:becky.lawson@oldburywells.com) ).
- If a member of staff needs to phone home, please be aware that the number may appear as withheld. Staff will rarely use their own personal devices to contact parents. In the rare event that this does happen staff will ensure that any personal numbers are withheld.
- Teachers may organise contact through Microsoft Teams.

## **2.2 Teaching Assistants**

When providing distance learning, teaching assistants must be available during their normal school hours.

If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.

When providing distance learning, teaching assistants/pastoral workers will be allocated students to work with by the SENCo. They will be responsible for:

- Communicating with assigned students/parents on a weekly basis to ensure they are accessing work and feeding back to teachers with any concerns.
- Supporting pupils who aren't in school with learning remotely this may include discussing schoolwork and or helping to differentiate materials.
- Supporting pupils/parents with any pastoral issues and if needed to refer these to the Head of year or relevant senior leader.
- Where possible teaching assistants/pastoral workers may continue to offer support sessions through Microsoft Teams.

## **2.3 Subject / Cluster Leads**

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, subject leads are responsible for:

- Ensuring high-quality teaching by their teachers to meet pupil needs.
- Considering whether any aspects of the subject curriculum need to change to accommodate distance learning.
- Working with teachers teaching their subject remotely to make sure all work set is appropriate and consistent.
- Working with other subject leads and senior leaders to make sure work set remotely across all subjects is appropriate and consistent, and deadlines are being set an appropriate distance away from each other.
- Monitoring the remote work/ frequency and quality of marking/ feedback and quality of teaching set by teachers in their subject – via reports in Satchel One and work sampling. The review of distance learning should be ongoing through regular departmental/ cluster meetings.
- Alerting teachers to resources they can use to teach their subject remotely and to consider the impact of these on workload.

## **2.4 Heads of Year & Pastoral Managers**

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, pastoral leads are responsible for:

- Ensuring engagement and learning of their year group.
- Monitoring the remote work of pupils within the year group by using the reports generated in Satchel One and creating interventions for students who may be struggling.
- Issuing praise for those who have consistently met deadlines or produced high-quality work.
- Working with teachers to provide any feedback on the quality/accessibility of distance learning.

- Liaising with teaching assistants/pastoral workers to ensure pupils are supported in both pastoral and academic matters.
- Contacting home and acting as a point of communication for parents.
- Co-ordinate the work of the form tutors. *(There should be the opportunity for one Teams meeting per week where pupils can drop in to give an update to their form tutor).*
- Showcasing any work/achievements completed through the school's website and social media feeds.

## **2.5 Senior Leaders**

The senior leader with responsibility for distance learning is Tom Williams (Deputy Headteacher).

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring distance learning is effective and all staff and students are engaged in high-quality teaching and learning.
- Co-ordinating the distance learning approach across the school.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of distance learning; through regular meetings with teachers and subject leaders, reviewing work set, carrying out surveys with key stakeholders; feedback from pupils and parents.
- Monitoring the security of distance learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations.
- Ensuring staff and pupils are sufficiently trained in the use of distance learning systems (Satchel One and Microsoft Teams).
- Monitoring the welfare and workload of staff.

## **2.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding is Becky Lawson (Assistant Headteacher).

All matters in relation to safeguarding are as laid out in the schools safeguarding policy available on the website.

As well as the duties outlined in the safeguarding policy the DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding is effective.
- Co-ordinating the work with external agencies to support pupil welfare during any periods of distance learning.
- Co-ordinating the schools work in the delivery of strategies to promote good mental health.
- Monitoring the progress and welfare of identified pupils.
- Co-ordinating the allocation of any in-school provision for key worker or vulnerable pupils.

## **2.7 IT Staff**

IT staff are responsible for:

- Fixing issues with systems used to set and collect work.

- Helping staff and parents with any technical issues they are experiencing.
- Reviewing the security of distance learning systems and flagging any data protection breaches to the data protection officer.
- Assisting pupils and parents with accessing the internet or devices – this includes passwords.
- Updating the schools learning zone on the website to support distance learning.

## **2.8 Pupils and Parents**

Staff can expect pupils learning remotely to:

- Be contactable during the school day, although they should acknowledge that pupils may not always be in front of a device the entire time.
- Complete work to the deadline set by teachers.
- Seek help if they need it, from teachers or teaching assistants.
- Alert teachers if they're not able to complete work.
- Be respectful and polite when communicating with staff.

Staff can expect parents with children learning remotely to:

- Make the school aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work.
- To help support students in engaging with work.
- Seek help from the school if they need it.
- Be respectful and polite when raising any concerns known with staff.

## **2.9 Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the schools approach is effective and fit for purpose.
- Monitoring the school's approach to providing distance learning to ensure education remains as high quality as possible.
- Ensuring that staff are certain that distance learning systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons.

## **3. Who to Contact**

If parents have any questions or concerns, they should use the contact sheet to identify key individuals. We would recommend that any initial concerns or questions in relation to distance learning should always be directed towards the pupil's teacher in the first instance.

## **4. Data Protection**

### **4.1 Accessing Personal Data**

When accessing personal data for remote learning purposes, all staff members will follow the main guidance set out in the main data protection policy.

- All school information can be accessed through secure systems remotely – all have password access.

- When accessing this information school devices should be used rather than personal devices.
- Staff who may require a laptop to undertake their duties as part of any school closure will be issued with a school owned device.
- Staff are reminded that any school device is for their sole use in line with their professional duties.
- When working remotely staff must be aware of their work area and ensure that any device is locked if they leave their work area.

## **4.2 Processing Personal Data**

Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as email addresses to support distance learning. If this processing is necessary for the school's official functions, individuals won't need to give permission for this to happen.

Staff are reminded, however, that best practice is to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online.

If in doubt staff should contact the school's data protection officer (Nicole Carter – School Business Manager) for any advice.

Likewise, in the event of a data breach please make immediate contact with the school's data protection officer.

## **4.3 Keeping Devices Secure**

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol). This is essential as all distance learning systems are password protected.
- Ensuring that any information is not stored on the hard drive but is uploaded to the school's cloud-based system (One drive). If a hard drive must be used it will need to be encrypted (using Bitlocker). This means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device.
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time.
- Not sharing the device among family or friends.
- Installing antivirus and anti-spyware software.
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates.
- Not installing any software without consulting the network manager.
- Being vigilant about email (spam) and informing the network manager.

## **5. Safeguarding All Children**

Staff are aware that any distance learning is a difficult time and potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line

with the schools safeguarding policy. The school will maintain contact with children who are not yet returning to school. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls.
- Pupil welfare surveys will also be used to support.

## **6. Online Safety**

The use of IT based distance learning packages also puts students at a greater risk as more time is spent on line.

As a school all pupils are issued with a school-based email account along with a Microsoft account. This should be used by students to access distance learning systems and communicate with teachers.

All users, including students, have signed up to an acceptable user agreement to support the safe use of these systems.

As always, we will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place when students use school-based software. Any school equipment is always filtered and monitored.

We recommend, however, that parents also check their home broadband settings as many come with filtering options. The school does not have control over a household's personal internet access or a student's personal device.

The school also subscribes to the National On-line safety resources which are used to support all members of the community and is working towards accreditation.

## **7. Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed yearly and at every review it will be approved by the local governing body. It may, however, need to be reviewed with any significant national instructions from the DFE.

## **8. Links to Other Policies**

This policy is linked to our:

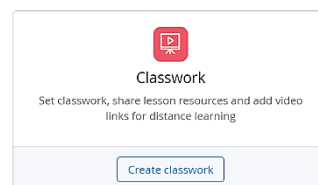
- Behaviour policy
- Assessment and Feedback Statement
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices (GDPR)
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Digital Technology & E-Safety Policy.

## Appendix A: Teacher Format for Setting Distance Learning Work

All distance learning work should be set through Show My Homework.

Distance learning Work must be set as **classwork** so that any work is distinguishable from normal set tasks.

A recommended format is outlined below:



**TITLE:** Must include the date and period of the lesson

*Explain the context of the task i.e. what you would do if you were stood in front of the class. Explain what resources/links have been attached. How does this work fit into a sequence of learning? (Last lesson/future lesson)*

**TASKS:**

**Core Tasks: (Completed By All)**

- Set out clearly what tasks you need all students to do and how you would like them completed - these should be the fundamentals that students need to know ie. key terms/ideas etc.

**Support Tasks:**

- Set out what support activities/resources you have included to support students.

**Challenge Tasks:**

- Set out tasks that you would expect some students to complete - these might be a bit more difficult and challenging.

**Is there a live element via Microsoft Teams?**

*(You can include a link here to any live sessions)*

**Say whether you would like students to submit work or not**

**Give students options for submission:**

Online via Satchel:One: <https://help.teamsatchel.com/en/articles/2912000-submitting-my-work-online>

1. Upload a document that you have completed electronically
2. Take a picture of your handwritten work and upload that
3. E-mail to your teacher directly