



CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS AND REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy relates to the use of online audio-visual facilities to conduct lessons (remote learning) as a direct response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.2 It is not mandatory for teachers to use audio-visual facilities to stream classes live to students. However, where the preferred method is to use live streaming, the following guidance must be adhered to.
- 1.3 Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) has a duty of care to deliver the best quality education our schools and colleges can reasonably deliver under these conditions and where it is believed that an online audio-visual communication tool for learning is necessary to deliver high-quality lessons, the highest standards of safeguarding and risk management must be maintained.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers all employees and students/pupils within all the academies within the Nicolas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the definitions below may be referred to:
 - 3.1a **Live streaming** – is when an event (e.g. lesson, storytime) is broadcasted ‘live’ in real time.
 - 3.1b **Video call** – a call made via a mobile phone, tablet or computer with a camera and a screen, allowing the participants to see each other as they talk. This would include 1-2-1 calls and larger group meetings.
 - 3.1c **Pre-recorded/prepared multimedia** – text, image, audio, video and animation that can be combined and shared, often online (this could include pre-recorded lessons or storytime).
- 3.2 The term “the Trust” is used within the policy to refer to the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- 3.3 The term “school” or “schools” is used within this policy to refer to the academies which form part of the Trust.
- 3.4 The term “staff” or “employee” is used throughout this policy to cover anyone who is employed by the Trust at any of its premises.

- 3.5 The term “students” is used throughout this policy to refer to any pupil who is on roll with any of the academies within the Trust.
- 3.6 The term “headteacher” is used throughout this policy to refer to anyone who is employed in the capacity of Headteacher, (i.e. Head of School or Executive Head) with the delegated responsibility as defined within the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.7 The term “Local Governing Body” is used throughout this policy to refer to the group of governors who have delegated powers through the Scheme of Delegation to monitor the work of the school and sit as either a local governing body or interim advisory board.

4 Aims

- 4.1 This policy aims to:
 - 4.1a Ensure consistency in the school’s approach to virtual communication, live streaming and pre-recorded lessons.
 - 4.1b Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to live streaming and pre-recorded lessons.
 - 4.1c Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 The **Trust** must ensure that this policy is implemented across schools and that current employees have access to, and are made aware of, this policy.
- 5.2 The **Local Governing Body (LGB), Headteachers and Line Managers** must be fully aware of this policy and ensure that they, and all employees, are aware of the policy and their own responsibilities. Employees must be accountable for their conduct when using the trust ICT systems and the possible implications to their employment if there is any inappropriate use.
- 5.3 The **Human Resources Team** must provide advice where necessary to support the trust, the local governing body and all staff when required, particularly where any disciplinary procedures may need to be instigated.
- 5.4 **Employees and students** must behave responsibly and professionally at all times in connection with the use of any remote access systems.

6 User Responsibilities and Good Working Practices

6.1 The primary responsibilities of employees of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust and of pupils or any other users that remote into individual school networks are to:

6.1a Know what information they are accessing, using or transferring.

6.1b Understand and adhere to contractual, ethical or other requirements attached to the information and pertinent to Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust policies and procedures.

6.1c During the online session, users are responsible for following the correct procedures from the moment they log in to the moment they log out.

7 Remote Learning Arrangements and video calls

7.1 All live lessons and video calls must be carried out during the normal timetable; there must be no lessons held outside of normal class hours. Consideration must be given to the time of day of the lesson, particularly around parental commitments and the duration of the lesson so as not to cause undue stress to the family situation.

7.2 Live streaming, video calls and pre-recorded lessons must only be conducted using the Google platform including GoogleMeet. Teachers may choose to use a number of additional tools to support students, for example, GoogleDocs.

7.3 Other forms of social media or online technologies must not be used without prior consent of the senior leadership team who will in turn seek approval from Trust officers. This is to protect staff. Google Classroom has been selected due to many considerations, such as being able to use school email accounts, the safeguarding of personal data, privacy questions and policies, and terms of service.

7.4 If a school or department already uses other methods of communication and online platforms that the Trust has supported, these may continue to be used for remote learning. However, live streaming of lessons, video calls and pre-recorded lessons must occur via Google Meet. It is important for staff to observe the requirement that unless permission has been granted, other methods of communication must not be used.

7.5 Live streaming, video calls and pre-recorded lessons must only be for pupils on roll at the school and delivered by teachers working at the school. Lessons will be by invitation only and teachers will initiate and close lessons. Pupils will be invited to participate in a lesson by their school email address. Only school-registered email accounts must be used. Personal accounts of either the pupil or teacher must not be used.

7.6 Trust staff are not permitted to use their own personal devices.

- 7.7 Lessons and video calls should be conducted as though they were taking place at the school premises. The teacher must be aware of their surroundings when recording a lesson. This must be in an appropriate place and suitable environment, not in a bedroom or where inappropriate objects or information is visible.
- 7.8 Where teaching is being undertaken remotely from home, it is important that the teacher ensures the security of any devices being used, for example ensure the camera is switched off when not in use, ensure meetings are closed down when finished, ensure microphone is muted when not speaking. Ensure antivirus software is up to date.
- 7.9 The staff member must consider carefully any resources to be used. Use of online webpages in school will be subject to internet content filtering and is unlikely to be replicated in the home environment.
- 7.10 The staff present are expected to maintain professional teaching standards at all times. All staff are expected to exhibit high standards of professional conduct, language, behaviour and attire, in compliance with the Trust Staff Code of Conduct. A Trust lanyard must be worn and be visible.
- 7.11 The NPCAT ICT Systems Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) continue to apply to the pupil and the teacher. Staff must not post or 'broadcast' anything that will bring them, the school or the Trust into disrepute. The staff member leading the session must ensure that the pupil is reminded about the AUP.
- 7.12 The Headteacher or other senior leader/Trust Officer must conduct spot monitoring of remote lessons to check compliance.
- 7.13 In all live audio-visual streaming sessions and video calls, the teacher must notify the parent that the session will be taking place, providing advance notice. The parent must be advised not to join the session, unless it has been agreed in advance with the parent by the person delivering the lesson. This will enable pupils that have special educational needs or younger-aged pupils to be supported by the parent. The parent must have signed to say they have read and understand the school's expectations around live streaming.
- 7.14 Staff must be aware that some students will not enjoy or adapt well to a remote learning method. Those who are already anxious, who have less understanding of technology or who find it hard to concentrate on tasks may struggle to engage or simply find the whole lesson overwhelming.
- 7.15 Before commencing a live learning session, the staff member leading the session must have considered whether some pupils will be excluded from the lesson owing to a lack of resources. They must provide alternative learning where this is the case.

- 7.16 For **pupils subject to safeguarding thresholds**, a risk assessment must be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) before the pupil participates in the session. The class teacher must inform the DSL that a session will take place, whether this is by pre-recorded or by live streaming means.
- 7.17 The member of staff leading the session should ensure that through the Google platform a record of attendance of all pupils attending the live streaming session is available on request.
- 7.18 The teacher must ensure that all resources related to online learning avoid the identification of a student by name or location.
- 7.19 Both the staff member and the pupil must turn off all notifications on their device used for lessons to avoid disruption, unsolicited pop-ups and exposure of personal data, otherwise the lesson cannot take place. It is the staff member's responsibility to remind the pupil to do so.
- 7.20 Where there is disruption to a lesson due to unsolicited pop-ups or exposure of personal data, the lesson must be immediately discontinued and the Headteacher or other senior leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead notified. The Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Strategy, School Child Protection Policy and the Trust General Data Protection Regulations Policy must be applied as required. All incidents and actions must be recorded on CPOMS.
- 7.21 If a pupil account is not working, for example, the pupil has a problem accessing school webmail or they get locked out and no solution can be found, they are to contact the school administration office.
- 7.22 During the live streaming lesson, telephone conversations between pupils and staff should not occur and other technologies, such as school email account, or chat function in google meet should replace this need.
- 7.23 If a parent has concerns about any aspect of a lesson or video call they should contact the school directly to discuss it and not raise issues during the lesson itself. All concerns and complaints are taken very seriously and will be dealt with in line with the Trust Complaints Policy, where appropriate.
- 7.24 If a complaint relates to an Allegation of Abuse Against Staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be notified.
- 7.25 One-to-one live audio-visual streaming or video calls should not take place unless it is recognised there is a need for one-to-one specialist help, particularly with exam classes or tutorials. A one-to-one lesson must be logged in the same way as all remote lessons and must be recorded. In these cases of audio-visual streaming sessions, there must be two members of staff present.

- 7.26 All live audio-visual streaming and video calls with a pupil present must be recorded. The Google Meets platform allows for this. This is to ensure that there is a record of the lesson to protect the teacher, and also to ensure that the lesson is available as a resource for any pupil that had technology issues during the course of the lesson or who was unable to access it.
- 7.27 Written consent must be obtained from the parent and the pupil (age appropriate) before a live audio-visual streaming session takes place. Consent must be explicit and not implied. A child at or over the age of 13 years must provide consent. Where consent is not provided, the session must not take place for that pupil.

8 Compliance and Data Security/Retention/Breach

- 8.1 The staff member must establish the expectations for the virtual classroom. This must include how the pupil can ask questions and when to speak. Pupil behaviour must be in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. Where there is non-compliance to the policy, the teacher must deal with matters as if the lesson is taking place in the school setting. All incidents must be reported to the Headteacher or senior leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Information must be recorded on CPOMS.
- 8.2 If there is an unauthorised person in the lesson, the teacher must discontinue the lesson, **unless to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child**. The teacher must immediately inform the Headteacher or senior leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Strategy and the school Child Protection Policy must be followed. Information must be recorded on CPOMS.
- 8.3 If the teacher is concerned about the welfare of the pupil during the lesson or video call, this must be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, the teacher must continue with the remote session to allow the DSL to assess the situation, **unless to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child**. The NPCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Strategy and the school Child Protection Policy must be followed. Information must be recorded on CPOMS.
- 8.4 The academy understands that recording images of identifiable individuals constitutes processing personal information and must be done in accordance with data protection principles. Retention of information will be subject to the NPCAT GDPR Policy - Appendix C, in relation to the

guidelines for CCTV and photography, curriculum and any other records created in the course of contact with a pupil.

- 8.5 The Headteacher must act in accordance with the NPCAT GDPR Policy at paragraph 17 where there has been a 'personal data breach'. All **notifiable** breaches will be reported to the relevant supervisory authority within 72 hours of the academy becoming aware of it. For administrative purposes this will be done through the Trust's Safeguarding Lead on behalf of the Trust's Chief Executive Officer, subject to paragraph 17 of the NPCAT GDPR Policy.

9 Equality Statement

- 9.1 Those within NPCAT who have responsibilities defined within this policy will carry out their duties with regards to the Trust's Equality Statement and commitment to abide by the Equality Act 2010:

- accepting our legal duty to ban unfair treatment and achieve equal opportunities in the classroom the workplace and in wider society. We have regard for our duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equal opportunity
 - Foster good relations.

10 Legal Considerations

- 10.1 NPCAT recognises its duty to conduct the business of teaching and learning within the guidelines set out in legislation in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection, and the General Data Protection Regulations.

11 Related Policies

- NPCAT – Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Online Safety/Social Networking
- NPCAT - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff & Volunteers
- NPCAT - ICT Systems Acceptable Use Policies
- NPCAT - ICT Systems Equipment Loan Policy/Agreement
- NPCAT – Staff Disciplinary Policy
- NPCAT - General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy
- NPCAT - Remote Access Policy
- NPCAT - Staff code of Conduct

12 Contacts

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