



DUNCLUG COLLEGE
AD VITAM PARAMUS



Blended Learning Policy

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1.0 Development & Monitoring of this Policy

This **Blended Learning Policy** has been developed by the **E-Learning Group, monitored by the School Development Group** and should be used in conjunction with the **Online Safety Policy**.

Schedule for Development/Monitoring/Review

Version	<i>Version 1</i>
This Blended Learning Policy was approved by the BOG	<i>June 2021</i>
The implementation of this Policy will be monitored by the:	<i>School Development Group</i>
Monitoring will take place at regular intervals:	<i>Annually - June</i>
The SLT will receive a report on the implementation of the Blended Learning Policy	<i>Biannually</i>
The Blended Learning policy will be reviewed annually, or in the light of any significant new developments in the use of the technologies and/or new threats to online safety	<i>Biennially in June</i>

The SDG will monitor the impact of the policy using a combination of Departmental & SDG & SLT Minutes, monitoring of Google Classroom & online activity, departmental & SDG Evaluations as well as surveys/questionnaires of pupils, parents/carers and staff.

2.0 Blended Learning Rationale

The COVID pandemic catapulted the college into remote learning in March 2020. The sudden switching on classes and courses from school to home, from face to face to remote learning was a difficult period which was overcome quickly with staff training prior to the first period of lockdown and extensive remote support through the period March until May. The initial face to face sessions focused on Fronter and Google Classroom VLEs; whilst Fronter had been used in school for several years by some departments the move to school wide use of Google Classroom was a more significant move for some more than others. The admirable willingness of teaching and non-teaching staff to upskill, adapt and move quickly to remote learning through a combination of hard work, teamwork and determination allowed us to move almost seamlessly and immediately into the period of remote learning minimising the disruption to pupil progress.

2.1 E-Learning

Dunclug College recognises the ever increasing importance of **e-learning** in the modern world. The ability to study and work remotely, has become more commonplace as electronic communications and related possibilities are being identified by society. The ability of young people to use IT hardware and systems has been recognised by the college and curricular steps were taken in recent years to seize these opportunities as well as address the changing demands of the workplaces for which we prepare our young people.

The college, through the managed C2K network, have identified **Google Classroom** as the **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)** which best allows us to educate, prepare and communicate with pupils remotely. The nature of this remote working can vary from extended periods of time (such as lockdown), intermediate time periods caused by pupil illness or isolation and indeed immediate periods supporting the learning taking place in classes.

Dunclug College recognises that e-Learning **provides opportunities** for different pupils to come to the fore, to express themselves in different ways than with traditional classroom teaching and indeed allows learning to take place with different methodology. The college recognises that our pastoral umbrella will have to incorporate this learning as relationships, encouragement, guidance, challenge, reward and constructive criticism will still be crucial in the world of blended learning. The terminology of **“blended learning”** hints at the marrying of face to face and online learning and the success of this synergistic interaction could arguably be more important to schools of our type than in any other sector. Our pupils are nurtured and thrive through positive relationships with staff and this must not be diluted by the addition of technology Dunclug College recognises that even from a distance, with less direct interaction our pastoral strengths must remain, maintaining warmth and support; it could be argued that this, more than curriculum and learning, will provide the biggest challenge going forward.

2.2 Sustainability

The use of electronic rather than hardcopy material reduces the carbon footprint of each pupil and the school as an organisation. The ability to link directly from a Google Classroom page to a specification, to reduce the possibility of misplacement and/or loss of work which subsequently requires replacing, the ability of pupils to view an article, image or diagram in real time rather on their phone rather than print out multiple copies all help towards this end.

2.3 Catch Up

Pupils who are off school ill can easily catch up where blended learning has taken place and the work has been recorded in a chronological order, pupils isolating or unable to attend school because of broken limbs or unwilling to attend school for social emotional reasons can access material. Where a member of staff has a planned absence it is easy to leave work which is a

continuation of what has preceded it rather than discrete stand alone work to get through the period of absence. Pupils receiving support from outside agencies or being tutored at home can easily access information and work being completed by their peers.

2.4 Opportunities

Blended Learning affords us *new opportunities and levels of access*; A whole virtual world has opened in recent years with virtual school trips, access to free teaching resources, live streaming of events from all corners of the earth, Google Earth, conference calls with industry, social media allowing increased interaction with the previously unreachable experts, champions of industry and so on. Through *BYOD* almost every child has access to the world wide web, a calendar, planner, digital camera, email access, video conferencing access in their pocket in every class.

Dunclug College is committed to using e-learning, and indeed blended learning, *to increase individual support for all pupils through differentiation*, especially supporting the full range of SEN pupils including EAL, ASD and Gifted & Talented pupils.

Opportunities for Staff development is one of the biggest advantages of the period of remote learning and the subsequent move into blended learning going forward. The use of e-technology by staff, level and extent of training completed and thus staff development has leaped forward and continues to do so.

2.5 Overcoming Challenges

Despite these opportunities and the advantages taken in this period it should be recognised that many difficulties and challenges had to be overcome. From a *leadership perspective* SLT recognised that staff had to be brought from various starting points across different elements including pedagogical, technical and mindset. Encouragement, direction and reassurance was required to facilitate progress at the required level. *The establishment of an E-Learning Group*, from within the fold of the SDG, rather than the planned E-Technology Working Group reflected the change in climate and the addition of the meetings of this group to the school calendar required a time commitment. Timetabling encountered the new challenges of “bubbles” and minimising pupil movement, staff being asked to move around the college more than ever before and departments becoming solely a curricular identity rather than a geographical location.

Planning, delivery and follow up of staff training in August¹, aligned with blended learning induction for every pupil required time. A wide selection of staff, including the entire Computing Department and others, involved in the delivery of this student induction required planning time in August. An earlier than planned start date for teaching and non-teaching staff allowed for this work to occur. Teaching staff were given time to begin the process of preparing resources for a blended approach, Heads of Department had to distribute tasks such as the development of existing schemes and units of work. Departmental evaluations had to incorporate a section on remote learning for the first time and the subsequent departmental development plans had to incorporate plans for blended learning.

Lessons have moved to a blended approach, as detailed in this policy, but day to day lesson delivery challenges were overcome such as the wiping down desks and keyboards, tools and apparatus being cleaned between sessions, minimal sharing of equipment, seating plans being recorded and collated for every class sometimes for multiple rooms, hardcopies of books can only be collected for marking if appropriate time periods permitted to allow safe handling.

Alongside the curricular and technical challenges the college had to overcome pastoral issues² of increased requirements for health and safety, introducing additional staff duties, designated

¹ See August Training 2020

² See COVID Appendix to Pastoral Policy

routes around the college, increased signage, temperature checks for everyone entering the school building and despite best efforts increased numbers of pupils working from home. Parental consultations, return to school meetings, meetings with outside agencies moved to video conferencing and phone calls. Heads of Year and form teachers were accessed by pupil requests as pupils could not make direct contact during the school day. The mental health of pupils in isolation and working in difficult situations was addressed by supportive action by the pastoral staff through the taught pastoral curriculum. Whole school and year assemblies moved to video conferencing with messages being delivered by senior staff and the Student Leadership Team. All of this trying to maintain a normality in an unprecedented situation under our adopted slogan of "standing together whilst staying apart."

All of this work has a *direct or indirect financial cost*. The appointment of a second ICT technician in November 2020, purchase of new hardware in the forms of laptops, IWBs, promethean boards and peripheral equipment reflects the commitment of the school and Board of Governors.

3.0 The Vision of Blended Learning

3.1 Forms of Blended Learning

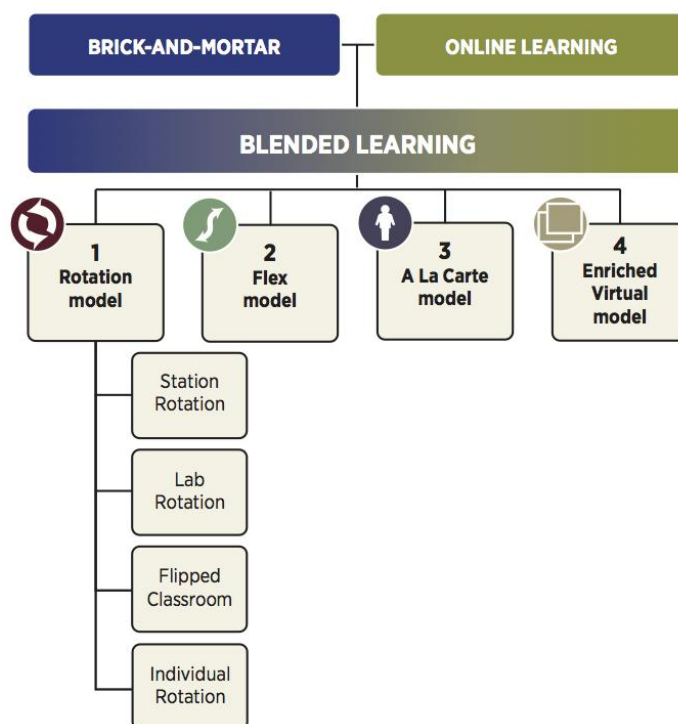
Blended Learning exists in various forms) which develop as the technology and pedagogical expertise in this area progresses. The diagram³ indicates the four main models which become increasingly online biased from left to right.

Rotation Model - A model in which the students rotate through "stations" at least one of which is online learning. Within this model four sub-divisions have been recognised where the rotation varies from within one room (station), rotation from a classroom to a computer suite (lab), rotation between school and home where pupils complete "homework" as online practice or the learning in class (flipped) and finally fully individualised rotation which refers to tailoring for each pupil (individual rotation).

Flex Model - This model requires the majority of learning being online and then pupils can flow through various learning models. The degree of face-to-face interaction varies.

A la Carte Model - An entirely online course which a pupil completes alongside other face to face subjects in their school.

Enriched Virtual Model - Compulsory face to face online sessions are completed by the student before they complete the rest of their course remotely and largely unsupported.



³ Courtesy of The Christensen Institute

At Dunclug College we have made use of Rotation Models, particularly lab rotation, in many subjects including ICT and Technology for several years. As a secondary school we recognise the possibilities which exist through the use of blended learning of various types and will continue to develop various rotation models.

3.2 Asynchronous and Synchronous Learning

At Dunclug College we are prepared for both asynchronous and synchronous learning. Asynchronous will account for the majority of learning with pupils being able to access resources 24/7 and indeed learn at their own pace on occasions where re-visiting a piece of work from class or indeed rewatching a video clip helps reinforce the learning.

If multiple pupils are isolating or working remotely for different reasons synchronous “live” lessons can be conducted through Microsoft Teams or Google Meet. This is possible, both for external access with pupils accessing from home or indeed internally where multiple classes can watch a single presenter from multiple locations. This can allow a subject specialist to address multiple classes, a guest careers speaker to address full year groups in rooms, the Principal to speak to the whole school on occasion now that increased pupil numbers have rendered full assemblies impossible.

3.3. Hybrid and Blended Learning

The key differentiator between blended learning and hybrid learning is the relationship between face to face and online learning. **In a blended learning environment**, online learning is meant to complement face to face classes with additional resources such as videos, powerpoints, podcasts, etc creating an enriched learning experience. On the other hand, **in a hybrid learning environment**, online learning is meant to replace an element of face to face class. Material shared asynchronously is considered part of the main lesson plan which can include the flipped approach where pupils prepare for lessons and new topics in advance of this being explained in class. The online material is an alternative to face to face material and is meant to create a flexible learning experience. At Dunclug we appreciate the possibilities of recording what is happening in class, having elements of lessons recorded in the corresponding Google Classroom and then pupils can access the information at a later time or indeed access it from home synchronously - the flexibility and possibilities are there.

4.0 Our Blended Learning Picture

At Dunclug College⁴ we are committed to “Preparing for Life”, to learning and encouraging pupils to learn. Learning can be defined as “*acquiring knowledge and skills and having them readily available from memory so you can make sense of future problems and opportunities*”⁵. The distribution of information, access to a plethora of resources and easier communication, especially from distance, can all benefit teachers and pupils but will not in themselves create an environment for learning or directly lead to learning. As a school we have adopted Google Classroom as our virtual learning environment but we recognise from experience a new acquisition such as a set of the latest textbooks, pupil planners, interactive white boards do not in themselves lead to learning. A coordinated approach within a supportive environment where

⁴ See Dunclug College Teaching and Learning Policy

⁵ Brown, Roediger III & McDaniel “How to Make it Stick;The Science of Successful Learning”

relationships and trust are key is required for pupil progress and learning to take place. Appendix 8.5 sets out the details of our approach. (See Appendix 8.5 for Guidance on the use of Google Classroom)

4.1 Learning focused planning

Whether aiming for synchronous or asynchronous learning the focus should be on the learning window, or “lessons” in a traditional model, that period of time where a pupil focuses on the work of a specific subject. The success of these lessons is crucial and success will never occur repeatedly without high quality planning and delivery.

4.2 Coordinated Setting of Work

Pupils can access more information faster than at any point in history. Access to data, facts, written and indeed visual explanations of concepts has never been more readily available but none of these in isolation will lead to learning. Schemes of work, units of work, lesson planning and links to required resources is a cascade with which staff are familiar and whilst the schemes should now be digital with hyperlinks to units and then links to, lessons which contain links resources, video clips and so on the coordinated approach is possibly more important than ever. Digital material can be created in collaboration, shared at the click of a button, accessed immediately which can all ease the burden on staff and improve the quality of product delivered to pupils.

Schemes of work must evidence blended learning. In the same way as Google Classrooms mirror timetabled classes the planning for lessons should mirror traditional planning with each department having an accessible, available, regularly used digital Scheme of Work linked to lessons.

Blended lessons should be planned, organised and challenge pupils to think and allow them to do. Google classroom lessons should be structured and cannot be treated as simply an online repository, which has been available to pupils and staff for years already. Guidance is required for pupils working from home, whether during a period of isolation or convalescence or indeed at a later point in the same day as they try to work independently or later in the year as they try to prepare for formative assessment.

Using various types of remote learning assignments such as submission of created documents, completion of template documents, scanned images of written work etc. helps pupils to improve their ability to work independently online but the focus must always be on the learning. Work being set in class should be recorded in pupil planners but also available online as not all work being completed at home requires access to the internet and this single point of recording facilitates parental support and enables staff to monitor work set more easily.

4.3 Pastoral Issues & Supporting the E-Learner

Schools are hubs of learning but they are also relationship nurseries where pupils learn how to interact with each other, have fun, how to cooperate, the joy of teamwork, the enjoyment of healthy competition and the opportunity to find successes through the delivery of a myriad of subjects.

At Dunclug College we strive to ensure that blended learning will not diminish these and staff will be given guidance and encouragement on how to provide e-learning which allows for this pupil-to-pupil interaction in class, small group and pairs. Some strategies being used include guided teamwork through Microsoft 365, large group work with Microsoft teams or Google Meet and individual work through Google Classroom. Assemblies, messages from Heads of Year, addresses by the Student Leadership Team or talks by visiting speakers can be conveyed through online methods. In periods of lockdown and going forward conference calls with support services allow case conferences to take place and facilitate online parent meetings if required.

4.3.1 E-Safety⁶

Pupils, parents and staff need to be confident that e-learning is safe. This requires confidence in the technology; but as with all elements of education a high level of trust emerges from quality relationships which makes success possible. We access almost all of our software, and indeed hardware, through C2k which provides a managed system, including remote support, and it is vital that we work within this umbrella. As a Google and an Office 365 school we do access software outside the C2k network but use of C2k passwords protects pupils and staff. It is crucial that we insist on working within the parameters of C2k for the safety of all concerned. Traceable email communication, Securus monitoring, protection from inappropriate material, safe online searches are all available to us and must be maximised.

The education of pupils in online safety & digital literacy is an essential part of the Dunclug College's online safety provision. Pupils need the help and support of the school to recognise and avoid online safety risks and build their resilience. Online safety should be a focus in all areas of the curriculum (See Taught Pastoral Curriculum) and staff should reinforce online safety messages across the curriculum. The online safety curriculum should be broad, relevant and provide progression, with opportunities for creative activities.

4.3.2 Relationships

Our pupils trust our staff and our pupils are known to our staff which is a sound foundation going forward. It will be crucial that Year 8 pupils and other incoming pupils are given the opportunity to quickly build relationships so trust can build. It is crucial that communication is professional and the policy will provide guidance on "netiquette" for pupils whilst staff will be expected to model this in their own interactions.

4.4 Pupil E-Learning Induction at Dunclug College

All pupils are given induction to e-learning soon after joining Dunclug College. This initial induction is followed up by instruction in class until a successful pattern of work is established. See appendix for details.

5.0 SEND Focus⁷

Blended Learning, and the use of educational technology in general whether fixed or mobile, hardware and/or software can help engage our SEN students in deeper thinking and increase engagement within the classroom. It is noted that technology alone does not bring about improvements for SEND pupils but how the pedagogy changes to reflect new technology that real beneficial differences can be seen.

We have many Interactive whiteboards (IWB) in our classrooms and Promethean boards available in the Belfort Suite which can be an ideal resource for supporting whole-class teaching; their different functions allowing every student to participate. Research has shown that teachers who have used IWBs with students, especially in smaller groups, as an instrumental part of their numeracy and literacy classroom activities for more than two years, have made exceptional progress in attainment tests (Lewin, C., Somekh B., Steadman S., 2008). For SEN pupils, it is this greater ability to participate in the class or indeed the Google Classroom that allows them to experience a richer learning environment.

Specialist software can play a crucial role in special needs education as there is a range of programmes to assist students who need learning support. **Immersive Reading** with Microsoft 365 allows passages to be read to pupils, whether they are fictional novel extracts, online articles

⁶ See Dunclug College Online Safety Policy

⁷ See Dunclug College SEN Policy

or indeed the pupil's own work. Programmes such as **Lexia** and **Read&Write Gold** are designed for students to develop reading and allows them to work independently, at school or at home, developing their foundation reading skills at a pace which suits them. Blended Learning allows staff to set similar differentiated tasks with a range of sources which can be matched to the ability of the child. For numeracy skills, **Mathletics** instructs students through problems with animated guides breaking down the solutions into easy steps. The crucial thing about these apps is that a scaffolded approach is taken to ensure pupils understand how to use them for best results. The likes of Immersive Reader is a very powerful tool is not intuitive in the way an online quiz or educational game may be.

The **use of audio** allows students to listen to a text being read as they follow it in a book, allow students to listen to the voice of their own teacher explaining a concept, describing an experiment or indeed reading a drama script with feeling, tone and pace. For students who find it difficult to read, the tablets are able to cut out “noise” on websites via the reader function, drawing the student's attention to the key points.

Tablets and electronic access to written text allows SEN students to interact with their education materials in a similar capacity to their fellow students, normalising learning difficulties. For instance, a student can simply **enlarge text on screen** without physically having to sit in front of a large print textbook.

Newcomers and EAL pupils can be supported in the development of their English Language through technology and the use of Google Translate can quickly change text into their home language whilst their confidence improves.

Some students, who have additional needs, may **struggle to concentrate** for the full hour of a traditional classroom lesson. One of the advantages of blended learning is that the content of the lesson can be more engaging through the use of technology.

By working in a virtual learning environment, the **nervousness around speaking up in lessons** can be diminished for students, as they can instead send their teacher a private message for further explanation.

A Blended Learning model in schools helps to **celebrate the individuality of students** and how they would prefer to learn. When educating students with SEN, there can be a 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to education and this can be damaging and reductive. Using a learning model which understands the differences in how people learn best, and enables learning to take place in smaller groups means that students can take the most benefit from the time spent with their teachers and classmates. One of the biggest challenges with teaching SEN pupils is finding ways to support them without making them feel 'different' or somewhat marginalised. Pulling SEN pupils to the peripheries of the classroom for additional support can be counterproductive by decreasing pupils' self-esteem and planting a seed for a disconnection with their desire to learn.

Many **dyslexic pupils** struggle with interpreting black text on a white background, which by default tends to be the standard colour format for most materials and resources. Where possible online work should be posted with a light coloured non-white background (light blue or yellow) and dark text. Light coloured text on dark backgrounds should not be used. One advantage of e-learning is that many programmes allow the user to adjust the background colour, font size and font to their own preferences and pupils should be encouraged to do this. Another challenge for lots of dyslexic pupils is distinguishing and writing the letters p, b, g and d and font choice

impacts on this. When work is presented to pupils, a simple uncluttered font should be used. **Individualisation of resources to suit preferences** can be an invaluable tool for SEN pupils, Google Translate for EAL pupils is a prime example, but the ability to do this needs to be taught. Minimising clutter using layout and dual coding rather than large amounts of text in presentations and online documents for pupils can help them all, especially those with dyslexic tendencies.

Multiple device access to Microsoft 365 and Google Suite is one of the largest advantages of e-learning. With the use of BYOD and pupils accessing work from laptops, iPads and other tablets it is easier than ever to complete work online but it must be noted that work can appear in slightly different forms and indeed the submission of work on Google Classroom for example can require different steps depending on the device used.

Digital audio/video submissions for all pupils becomes a more viable option for pupils through e-learning. The recording of an oral description of an activity or a concept may allow a pupil to provide a much fuller submission than writing alone. Whilst traditional literacy skills are crucial at Dunclug College (See Dunclug College Literacy Policy) we are committed to their development we recognise that digital literacy does offer some additional options especially for SEND pupils. *The ability to communicate orally, as evidenced by the testing of this skill through GCSE English, is crucial and the development of these skills in an educational setting can be eased by blended learning.* Many pupils submit videos to social media platforms and are more familiar with seeing and hearing themselves than adults would have been at school which is something schools can use. For example a pupil could easily submit a thirty second video talking about their pet, hobby or favourite player as a precursor to a piece of extended writing or simply to encourage discussion. *Again these skills are used by many pupils but need to be honed for school submissions through direction rather than the assumption that the ability to complete such tasks already exists.*

Organisation and structure is important for every pupil, but especially for those with **autistic tendencies or who have challenges with memory**. Blended learning can be used to help these pupils to stay engaged and on task if structured appropriately.

Technology is an enabler in our classrooms and blended learning can allow pupils to access an array of tools and resources which helps their learning. Blended learning gives us the opportunity to integrate more elements into our lessons and assignments more than ever before as we recognise the differences in pupils and also our ability to truly tailor work allowing every pupil, including SEN pupils, the opportunity to meet their full potential with increased confidence.

6.0 Netiquette

At Dunclug College we are committed to developing the whole child which includes behaving appropriately in different situations including the online environment. The ability to communicate effectively and politely online will be important to pupils during their time in the college and beyond. Pupils are expected to communicate respectfully with staff and to expect the same courtesy in return. (See Appendix 8.8)

7.0 Communication Protocols

As per the netiquette guidelines communication at all times should be a manner befitting of an educational environment. All online staff-pupil communication must be within the school system (C2K) and according to the [Dunclug College Online Safety Policy](#).

7.1 Email

Staff should use C2k email for all work related emails including communicating with pupils and parents as appropriate. Our email protocol allows for emails to be sent at any time but staff communication window is between 0800 and 1700 in term time. Expected response time for a query from a pupil may be 48hrs.

7.2 Google Classroom

The “**stream**” and “**private message**” facilities within Google Classroom can be used to communicate with pupils online. The stream should be used to provide narrative and direction for pupils and parents, bookmarking work to be completed.

On request, parents/carers can be linked to Google Classroom as **guardians** allowing them to receive notifications and view assignments.

7.3 ParentApp

All pupils should have one parent/carer linked to ParentApp allowing the receipt of announcements, news, tracking reports, timetabling and pastoral information.

7.4 Social Media

The school will not respond to individual queries or posts on social media platforms. All electronic communication with the college should be to staff email accounts or directed to the school email account info@dunclugcollege.ballymena.ni.sch.uk.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 G Suite For Education

G Suite for Education



As a G Suite school Dunclug College makes use of many applications available through this platform. With Google Classroom used as our main online learning tool the ability of staff and pupils to use Google applications is crucial.

Google Application	Use at Dunclug College
Google Classroom	Blended Learning Vehicle
Drive	Electronic Storage (accessible)
Docs	Document creation
Slides	Presentations
Sheets	Spreadsheet, data handling
Forms	Questionnaire, survey production

8.2 Microsoft 365 at Dunclug College



To best prepare pupils for the world of work we also make use of the Office 365 suite and their familiar programmes of Word, Excel, Powerpoint etc. Like the GSuite tools these all allow for collaborative work, sharing of documents and email.

8.3 Blended Learning with Google Classroom

Blended learning is the marrying of face to face learning with online learning⁸ or to express it slightly differently the marrying of face to face teaching with online teaching. The successful synergy of this arrangement relies on maximising the impact of both elements and in the same way as the successful teacher creates lessons with purpose, organisation and flair which allow for learning a successful blended learning teacher must do exactly the same. In the same way as “teaching and learning” can only be judged successful if the learning proves to be evident, “blended learning” requires actual learning to happen.

8.3.1 Planning & Schemes of Work

Departments should plan to weave online learning into existing schemes and units of work where appropriate. As a rule of thumb a task/lesson should be included if it may be completed by a pupil at home, or online within school and it improves the current pedagogy. This does not require a rewrite of existing documents, hardcopies can be annotated or electronic copies updated. It is important that departments plan for the e-technology which is available to them realising that variety may occur in the level of access to IT between different subjects, classes or indeed pupils. This should not be a limiting factor but planning may need to consider variety in Smartphone technology, access to device at home, access to PC suites/laptops trolleys, IWB, BYOD possibilities, visualisers etc. The changes to schemes can be made prior to lessons being delivered but feedback from lessons may also allow for updates and adjustments. These “living” documents should be discussed by department colleagues and evident in the working life of a department, referenced in departmental meeting minutes and evaluations.

8.3.2 Lesson Planning

When planning blended lessons staff should consider the following rule of thumb “Can the child sitting in class and the child sitting at home both learn?”. The majority of blended learning will be asynchronously hybrid in nature with e-learning supporting the lessons in class, a pupil working at home in preparation for a face-to-face lesson or completing an independent study exercise after a lesson but at times whole lessons may need to be accessed by a pupil or indeed synchronous lessons may occur at times.

- With Google Classroom it is important that work is presented so that a pupil working remotely can complete the required work. Work should be presented in the form of lessons where work to be viewed, read, completed and submitted is all easily accessible. This can be presented using the Stream and/or as an assignment in the Classwork section BUT sufficient information and guidance to aid completion must be provided.
- The Stream should be used in Google Classroom to provide direction and allow the pupil or parent to easily understand what is required.
- The Classwork section allows the presentation of Assignments (graded or ungraded) or Material (Youtube, documents, presentations, images etc).
- The Classwork section must be organised to allow the reader to identify the order in which the work was presented to pupils. The use of Topics allows for ease of organisation and these can be named using dates or topic headings whilst numbering tasks is recommended. Whichever heading type is used chronological order is vital.
- When using the station rotational model (Section 3.1) or in a face-to-face lesson to be completed later the introduction to the lesson may be pre-recorded, recorded live or if a reading task, Youtube clip is used this must be available to the remote learner as well.
- Sufficient guidance should be given in the assignment to reduce ambiguity for the pupil, and parent, when the task is completed. Supplementary resources should be attached or sufficiently bookmarked e.g. Pupils should complete Exercise 3.0 Questions 1 to 25 using the worked examples copied down in class. (this worked example may also be posted as an image for pupils in isolation or coming to the work at a later date.

⁸ Unlike “remote learning” online learning can take place in the classroom or at home.

8.3.3 How to introduce a topic

Departments should ensure that work on Google classroom never appears in isolation so that pupils working remotely can understand the context and benefit from the introductory setting of the scene used in class. The use of a digital source, youtube clip or indeed a digital recording of the class teacher can set the scene and establish the rationale for the new topic. Google classroom uses “topics” to subdivide work so it is important that the terminology used is clear for pupils and parents.

8.3.4 Types of tasks available through Google Classroom

Creation Tasks - Open ended tasks are set where pupils are asked to create an electronic document such as a document, powerpoint, photographic record and then submit this through Google Classroom.

Template Tasks - These scaffolded tasks make use of pre-prepared electronic tasks which pupils then complete rather than correct. Scaffolding, or guided learning, is something to which we are committed and pupils often find it enabling to work within a structure, no matter how slight, than beginning with a blank sheet.

Quizzes, Tests and Examination Questions - A variation of the template tasks these documents can be prepared as quizzes in GC and presented to pupils for completion testing knowledge and understanding. Regular low stakes testing has been proven to improve knowledge retention and these methods allow this **retrieval practice** to take place (see Appendix 8.4). The “level” of pupil response to this of tasks is not restricted with true/false, multiple choice, short & long answers, open and close questions all available.

Electronic Submission of manual hardcopy tasks - Pupils should be encouraged to improve their handwriting, to sketch, to draw, to compete mathematical calculations, to plan on paper before committing to electronic submissions, to revise using dual coding, produce hard copy notes, to annotate etc and e-learning should not reduce the ability to develop these skills. It is not necessary for all tasks to be completed online (see below) or indeed submitted online but it is possible for pupils to record and submit this type of work easily through Google Classroom (and other electronic methods).

Digital Images, Video and Audio - One of the advantages of e-learning is the ability to submit work in formats other than written. Whilst the submission of drawings, sketches, handwritten is vital Blended Learning allows for audio and video submissions which can benefit SEN, EAL pupils whilst also vital in a range of subjects.

Hardcopy Tasks through Blended Learning (Supported Traditional Practice) - Blended Learning allows for “traditional” homework to be set but offers many advantages to increase the possibilities such as:

- Provides an easily accessible digital record of the work set
- Allows for video or audio record of their teacher explaining a concept
- Increased multi-media possibilities to respond to a source - this can be an extract from a novel, a clip on YouTube, a piece of music, a stock image, a picture of an experiment completed in Science, a video of a cooking skill recently taught in Home Economics and so on. Pupils can access a range of media using their phone and then prepare a written response in a homework book, hardcopy template etc.
- Prompts and reminders can be sent to pupils if required, through Google Classroom, prior to submission deadlines.

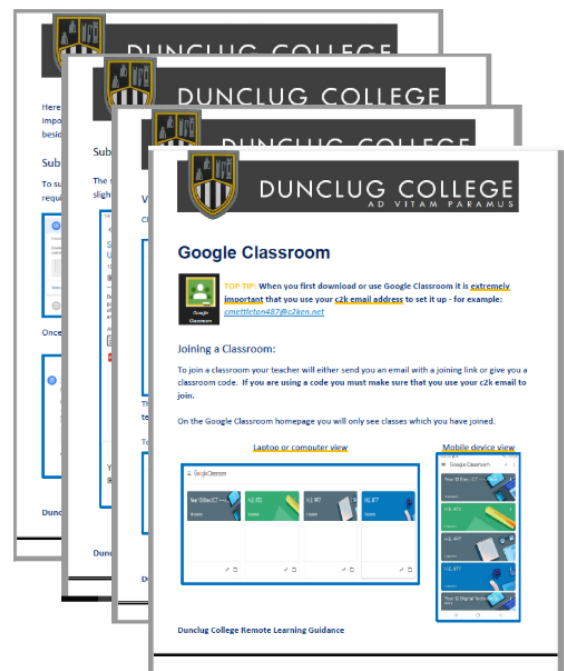
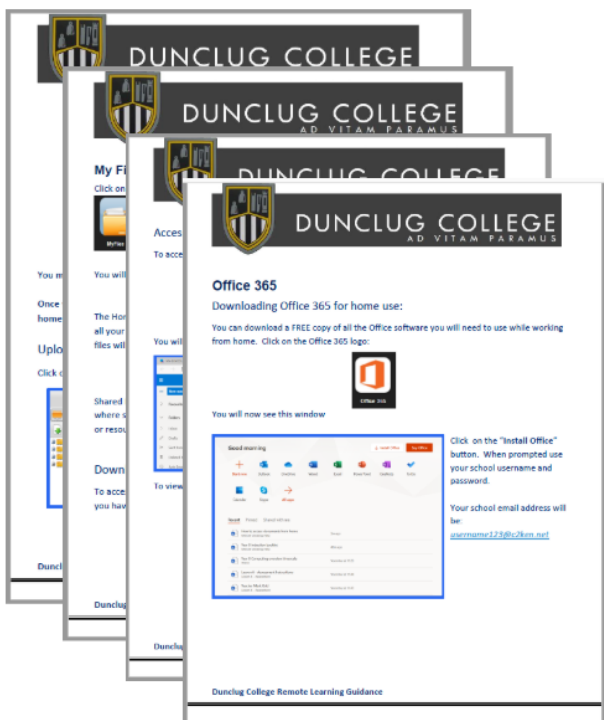
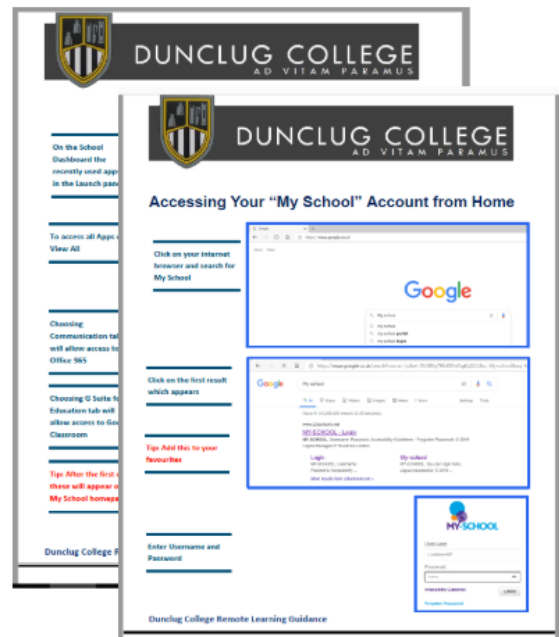
8.4 Remote Access to School

8.4.1 Student and Parent User Guides

Remote Learning Guides

Available to parents on the school website and used for pupil induction.

- 1) **Accessing My School from Home** including instruction about how to access C2K services through various browsers and brief instructions about navigating through the My School homepage.
- 2) **Accessing and Using Google Classroom** including a brief explanation about accessing, completing and uploading work.
- 3) **Office 365 Guide** including downloading of free Microsoft for Education suite, access to Microsoft 365, use of email and uploading and downloading electronic files from My School.



8.4.2 Pupil Induction to Blended Learning

All pupils are given induction to e-learning soon after joining Dunclug College. The following topics are included:

- E-Safety
- Use of Google Classroom
- Netiquette
- Access to, familiarisation and use of the C2k Suite (including email).
- Engagement with “live lessons”
- How to work from home effectively
- Acceptable Use Policy

8.5 Supporting your child with Blended Learning



Supporting Your Child in Blended Learning

At Dunclug College we are committed to your child's learning. As a school committed to blended learning we recognise the importance of work in school and at home, of work at desks and indeed work online. The ability of your child to function and flourish in a digital world will be crucial to their future success and we appreciate that it also offers opportunities not afforded by solely face to face traditional teaching approaches. Our staff are committed to providing your child with a blended learning experience combining written work and activities in class with digital learning in school and at home. We appreciate the importance of partnership between us and you as parents and we want you to draw alongside us in the provision of your child's education.



SIMS Parent App

SIMS Parent App allows you access to an individualised electronic dashboard of timetable, announcements, reports and more directly sent to your phone. It is important that the school has an active email address for you and that you download the app and sign up. See the school website for more details.



Google Classroom

Your child is enrolled in a Google Classroom for all of their timetabled classes. Access to Google Classroom is possible through multiple browsers and across multiple devices. Through this virtual learning environment your child should be able to complete tasks, see work completed in class, link to online resources uploaded by his/her teacher, access video presentations of his/her teacher and much more. There is a facility in Google Classroom for a parent/carer to be added allowing you access to what your child sees and allowing you to maintain a watching brief on their work in school. Teachers can be contacted through Google Classroom but this method of communication should never be used in an emergency or for communications not directly linked to work in class.



Daily debrief

Whilst this guidance material focuses on the digital the power of talk and discussion in your child's development and learning cannot be overemphasised. Talking to your child in the evening about what he/she did in lessons that day, discussing what he/she learned, checking his/her planner, checking work on Google classroom is up to date and helping him/her pack for the following day all contribute significantly to progress.



Purchase of devices

Whilst access through a smartphone is often sufficient the use of a laptop or tablet may facilitate completion of some types of task. Access to school computers after school is permissible should a pupil wish to avail of the opportunity. Please note that your child can download Microsoft Office for free through their educational status – see website for details.



Online Safety

Ensure your child practises good online safety. See our website and Online Safety Policy for more details.

Keep in contact

Should you or your child have a concern regarding school please make contact and let us know. Contact by telephone, email to the school email address info@dunclugcollege.ballymena.ni.sch.uk, direct email to Head of Year, message directly to a member of staff about a subject related query are all viable.

8.6 Netiquette

At Dunclug College we are committed to developing the whole child which includes behaving appropriately in different situations including the online environment. As staff it is important that we model and expect a high level of netiquette including the following:

- Use good manners - say “please” and “thank you” when asking for and receiving assistance.
- Use correct salutations - address pupils by their name in communication and expect that pupils address staff by name or using Sir or Miss.
- In discussion forums ensure that the conversation is polite, respectful language is used even when disagreeing with another person, allow others to respond, acknowledge responses of others and read the responses of others before answering to avoid repetition.
- Streams on Google Classroom should be set so that pupils cannot comment - discussions and questions allow for discussion between pupils and teachers in an open forum.
- Avoid slang, emojis and unsuitable abbreviations such as text speak in online written communications.
- Topics discussed should always be of an educational nature and have a learning purpose.
- Don't write anything that sounds angry or sarcastic even as a joke, because without hearing your tone of voice, your peers might not realize you're joking.
- Brief but sufficiently detailed communications are possible and should be encouraged.
- Punctuation, spelling and grammar should be accurate even in short communications. This should be modelled by the teacher and encouraged from the pupils.
- We cannot expect pupils to use netiquette if we do provide opportunities for them to use it so discussion forums

8.7 Remote Learning - Live Lessons

Whilst blended learning implies a combination of face-to-face and online learning there will be periods of time in the school year where pupils are engaged in remote learning. In the event of lockdowns, pupil illness or other lessons may be conducted online.

Work may be set remotely in various forms asynchronously (see Section 8.3) but at Dunclug College we are committed to providing live synchronous sessions for pupils recognising that contact between pupils and staff during times of lockdown contributes to positive mental health, encourages pupil progress and encourages interaction. In balance, recognising the physical and mental health concerns associated with excessive screen time, the technical difficulties faced by pupils and parents during a period of lockdown, significant ICT requirements and identifying the pedagogical advantages of independent work within a lesson as college we do not expect pupils to be online for a “full school day”.

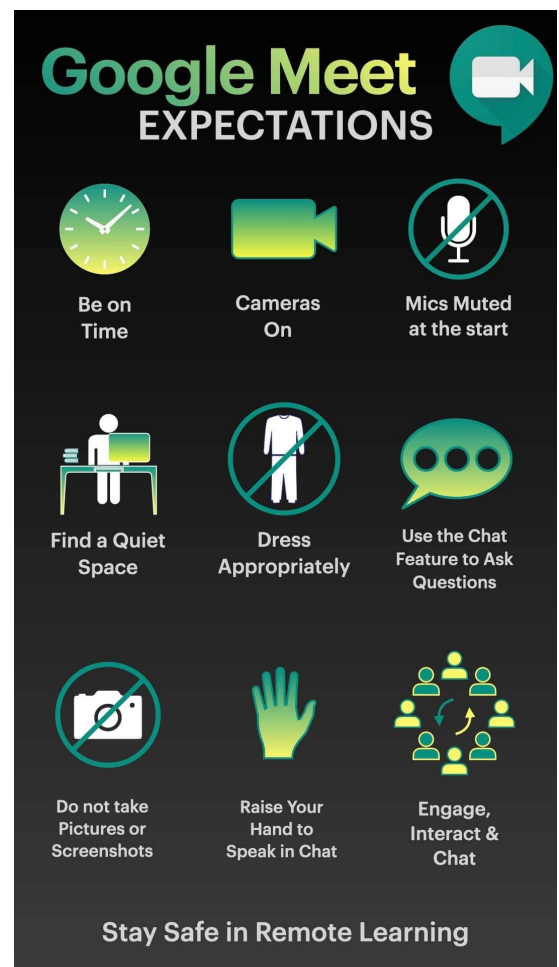
Live Session Provision

- Staff will be expected to provide live sessions within lessons for approximately third to half of timetabled lessons.
- These sessions can be introductory, task based or sub-divided through a lesson.
- When appropriate these segments may be recorded (pupils will be informed before recording occurs) to facilitate absent pupils or for pupils to recap at a later point.

During Live Sessions

At Dunclug College we will use Google Meet or Microsoft Teams for video conferencing with pupils. Pupils will be expected to follow netiquette (see Section 8.6) and act in accordance with the school discipline and online safety policies. Sanctions are available to the college should behaviour be deemed unacceptable and parents/carers will be informed as required.

Pupils will be informed when live sessions are scheduled and are expected to attend all timetabled sessions.



8.8 Retrieval Practice⁹

Retrieval Practice is a proven practice where the act of remembering (retrieving) a memory or learned knowledge strengthens the links in the brain and gradually transfers the memory from short term to long term memory.

The table below has suggestions as to retrieval practice techniques that work well with blended learning and will be used at Dunclug with your child.

• Retrieval Grids	• Brain Dump Activities
• Go and Find Jamboard	• Quizlet
• Low stakes quizzes	• Retrieval Roulette
• Electronic Flashcards	• Interleaving Activities
• Knowledge Organisers	• Question and Answer

8.9 References

<http://www.innovatemy school.com/ideas/ensuring-students-with-send-can-continue-to-access-specialist-support-when-they-are-at-home>

<https://sites.google.com/c2ken.net/teacherprofessionallearning-ea/home>

<https://lovetoteach87.com/2020/09/09/a-collection-of-retrieval-practice-research-and-resources/>

<https://blog.polleverywhere.com/difference-between-blended-and-hybrid-learning/>

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<https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/06/15-essential-netiquette-guidelines-to.html>

⁹ <https://lovetoteach87.com/>