

Remote Learning and Teaching Policy

Document Control

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Related Policies:	<p>Meridian Trust Teaching and Learning Policy</p> <p>Meridian Trust Code of Conduct</p> <p>Meridian Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Covid-19 addendum)</p> <p>Meridian Trust GDPR Policy</p> <p>Meridian Trust IT Acceptable Use Policy</p>

Revisions

Version	Page/Para No.	Description of Change	Approved On
2	Addendum	Addition of safeguarding Addendum	21 January 2021
3	Throughout	Replaced all references to "CMAT" with "Meridian Trust"	March 2023

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1.0 Aims

This remote learning policy for staff aims to:

- Ensure consistency in the approach to remote learning for pupils who are not in the academy
- Set out expectations for all members of the academy community with regards to remote learning
- Provide appropriate guidelines for data protection.

2.0 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Teachers

When providing remote learning, teachers must be available during normal working hours as set out in the directed time budget and the academy calendar.

If they're unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal absence procedure and liaise with line managers.

When providing remote learning, teachers are responsible for:

- Setting and/or delivering learning activities for their scheduled classes:
 - Each academy will have their own protocols and arrangements for the storage and delivery of work set by teachers working remotely. These should be followed. This will generally require the use of an online platform.
 - Some teachers will aim to deliver instruction, or some lesson content live from a remote setting (usually from home). This may be achievable by arrangement with colleagues in the academy, and dependent upon suitable access arrangements being possible in the academy.
 - Whether the teacher is setting work to be completed in the academy, or delivering content synchronously online, learning activities should be set commensurate with the normal duration of the lesson.
- Providing feedback on work:
 - Teachers are expected to provide feedback of a frequency and style in line with the academy feedback protocols when working remotely. In some cases (for example in primary academies), academies will issue amended guidance to parents outlining how feedback will be provided when working remotely/online.
 - Pupils will submit assignments remotely and feedback should be provided on any work that is set as an assignment. That feedback may take any form outlined in the academy feedback protocols but will be delivered through online means when teachers are working remotely.
 - Teachers are expected to make themselves available to answer questions from pupils and respond to email enquiries as they normally would when working in the academy. Various online platforms may be used to support them in doing this.
- Keeping in touch with pupils who are not in the academy and their parents:
 - Teachers should take every reasonable step to ensure that they maintain contact with pupils who are working online/remotely, and they remain responsible for monitoring the progress of the pupils in their class during such periods.
 - Individual academies will set out their expectations for maintaining regular contact with pupils and families when they are not in the academy. Teachers should follow those protocols when working remotely themselves.

- There should be no expectation that teachers respond to emails or online requests/questions outside of the normal working hours when working remotely/online.
- Academies will amend their behaviour protocols to address any examples of poor or inappropriate behaviour online. Teachers have a responsibility to manage the conduct of pupils when teaching remotely, and for applying the academy systems to report poor behaviour.

➤ Managing the behaviour of pupils working remotely

- Academies will amend their behaviour protocols to address any examples of poor or inappropriate behaviour online. Teachers have a responsibility to manage the conduct of pupils when teaching remotely, and for applying the academy systems to report poor behaviour.

➤ Attending virtual meetings with staff, parents and pupils

- It is expected that, wherever possible, teachers working remotely will join or attend scheduled meetings as usual.
- Where academies determine that parents' evenings should be arranged remotely, teachers are expected to make themselves available for consultation in line with the agreed schedule in the directed time budget and academy calendar.
- When meetings with colleagues, parents or pupils online, there is an expectation that the code of conduct in relation to staff dress is adhered to, and that staff make themselves visible on screen.
- It is recommended that staff blur their background when meeting online, or that they adopt a background view.

2.2 Teaching assistants

When assisting with remote learning, teaching assistants must be available during their normal contractual and agreed working hours.

If they're unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal absence procedure and liaise with line managers.

When assisting with remote learning, or when working remotely themselves, teaching assistants are responsible for:

➤ Supporting pupils who aren't in the academy with learning remotely

- Wherever possible, the work teaching assistants undertake when they are working remotely will reflect closely their normal patterns of working. Often, however, there will be a need to support pupils with whom they are less familiar, especially when those pupils are working remotely.
- Teaching assistants will be directed by the SENDCO or other line manager to support identified pupils. This may involve (but is not limited to): meeting with them online, calling them at home, liaising with teachers and parents/carers on how to support, adapting or modifying tasks or providing guidance/support with work set by the teacher.
- In some circumstances, teaching assistants may be directed to work with small groups of pupils online. Such activity will reflect their normal and contractual responsibilities but may include small group interventions, group learning activities, or group work in support of activities covered in a lesson.

- Attending virtual meetings with teachers, parents and pupils – cover details like:
 - It is expected that, wherever possible, teaching assistants working remotely will join or attend scheduled meetings in working hours as usual.
 - When meetings with colleagues, parents or pupils online, there is an expectation that the code of conduct in relation to staff dress is adhered to, and that staff make themselves visible on screen.
 - It is recommended that staff blur their background when meeting online, or that they adopt a background view.

2.3 Teachers with TLR responsibilities

Alongside their teaching responsibilities, teachers with TLR responsibilities must:

- Work with relevant teachers, non-teaching staff and trust colleagues remotely to make sure all work set is appropriate and consistent.
- Work with academy and trust colleagues and senior leaders to make sure work set remotely is appropriate, consistent and in line with the usual curriculum sequence and experience as possible.
- Ensure that their own workload and that of colleagues they are responsible for is monitored and protected by seeking every opportunity to collaborate and share resources and expertise, both in the academy and at wider trust-level.
- Monitor the remote work set by teachers in their areas of responsibility using a variety of means such as through regular meetings with teachers, or by reviewing work set.
- Alert teachers to resources and materials (whether internal to the academy, the trust, or produced externally) that they can use to teach or tutor pupils remotely.
- Make every effort to maintain regular contact with trust and academy colleagues and senior leaders when working remotely themselves to ensure continuity of communication and pupil experience.

2.4 Senior Leaders and all those paid on the Leadership Scale

Alongside any teaching responsibilities, senior leaders are responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the remote learning approach across the academy and ensuring the quality and consistency of its delivery.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of remote learning through regular meetings with teachers and subject leaders, reviewing work set or gathering and evaluating feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure that their own workload and that of colleagues they are responsible for is monitored and protected by seeking every opportunity to collaborate and share resources and expertise, both in the academy and at wider trust-level.
- Monitoring the security of remote learning systems, including data protection and safeguarding considerations.
- Ensuring that the behaviour and conduct expectations of the academy are maintained and followed by pupils learning remotely.
- Reporting to trust colleagues and academy councils on the implementation and effectiveness of remote learning provision for pupils.

2.5 Designated safeguarding leads

The DSL are responsible for:

- > Ensuring that the safeguarding and protection of children online is maintained for all those pupils learning remotely.
- > Ensuring that pupils learning remotely can disclose any concerns or access support and advice in the same way as they would in the academy.

2.6 IT staff and Non-teaching Support Staff

IT and non-teaching support staff are responsible for:

- Handling questions from pupils, parents and staff relating to issues with the systems used to teach and learn remotely, providing support and fixes wherever possible.
- Answering directly or directing queries from pupils or parents to the appropriate teacher or leader.
- Reviewing the security of remote learning systems and flagging any data protection breaches to the data protection officer.
- Assisting pupils and parents with accessing the internet or devices.

2.7 Pupils and parents

We expect pupils to:

- Be contactable (where possible) during the academy day – although consider they 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, teaching assistants or House staff.
- Alert teachers or tutors if they're not able to complete work.

Staff can expect parents with children learning remotely to:

- Make the academy aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work.
- Make the academy aware if they do not have (either long-term or temporarily) access to the internet or remote learning systems.
- Come forward to the relevant teacher, House staff or academy leader with concerns about their child's remote learning.
- Seek help from the academy if they need it – make use of the guidance and information that is sent home or published on the academy website or other online platforms.
- Be respectful when making any complaints or concerns known to staff.

2.8 Academy Councils (local governance) and Trustees

The academy council and Meridian Trust trustees (through the Curriculum & Standards Policy & Scrutiny committee) are responsible for:

- Monitoring the academy's approach to providing remote learning to ensure education remains as high quality as possible.
- Ensuring that staff are certain that remote learning systems are appropriately secure, for both data protection and safeguarding reasons.

3.0 Who to contact

If you are working at home and need some help to login, please contact our IT team.

Normal office hours apply: 8am-5pm

By e-mail: itservicedesk@meridiantrust.co.uk

By telephone: 0300 666 0300

Parents and Pupils – Questions about remote learning should be directed to the class teacher or relevant senior leader. Individual academies will publish contact details on their website.

Staff - If staff have any questions or concerns about remote learning, they should contact the following individuals:

- Issues in setting work – talk to the relevant subject/phase lead or SENCO.
- Issues with behaviour – talk to the relevant leader, whether of a phase, House or curriculum area.
- Issues with their own workload or wellbeing – talk to their line manager.
- Concerns about data protection – talk to the data protection officer.
- Concerns about safeguarding – talk to the DSL or the principal/headteacher.

4.0 Data protection

In all matters relating to remote/online learning, the trust's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy should be followed and which can be found on our website:

[GDPR - Meridian Trust](#)

Any data gathered within this process will be retained in line with our records retention policy which can be found on our website.

All requests for the disclosure of personal data to a Third Party (such as an external online learning platform) must be sent to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at DPO@meridiantrust.co.uk who will review and decide whether to make the disclosure, ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to verify the identity of that third party before making any disclosure. Specific and pertinent guidance related to remote/online learning is set out below:

4.1 Accessing personal data and communicating

When accessing personal data for remote learning purposes, all staff members will:

- Only use the information management systems used by the academy they work in.
- Only store personal information on platforms or devices supported by the academy.
- Personal devices may be used to view information stored on academy managed systems, but personal data should never be stored or saved on personal devices.
- Only communicate using academy email addresses or information systems.
- Not communicate with (or respond to) pupils or parents using social media platforms or personal email addresses.

4.2 Processing personal data

Staff members may need to collect and/or share personal data such as email addresses, contact details or achievement information part of the remote learning system. As long as this processing is necessary for the academy's official functions, individuals won't need to give permission for this to happen.

However, staff are reminded to collect and/or share as little personal data as possible online.

4.3 Keeping devices secure - Staff

All staff are reminded to only use Meridian Trust/Academy provided equipment to process personal data regarding pupils.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping your password secure, not sharing it with anyone and ensuring all passwords are strong – 8 char, etc...
- Pupil personal data should not be extracted or downloaded from the trust's Office 365 system.
- At no point should any pupil data be stored on any portable storage devices (e.g: USB sticks/hard disks) or on any personal equipment not owned and encrypted by the Trust.
- Devices should be locked when not in use or left for a period of time.
- Devices should not be shared with family or friends.
- Beware of phishing e-mails that might look convincing. Never type in or try to login to something using username/password unless you are sure you know what you are logging in to.

4.4 Keeping devices secure and protecting data – Pupils and Parents

All pupils and parents are reminded about importance of protecting your own data.

This includes but not limited to:

- Keeping your password secure, not sharing it with anyone and ensuring all passwords are strong – 8 char, etc...
- Don't share your password with anyone. Your work should remain your work.
- Use the latest operating system – Windows 10 (not XP, 7, 8, etc..), iOS 14.
- Keep your operating system patched with the latest security fixes – I.e.: Windows Updates, iOS updates.
- Ensure you have an antivirus system that is updated regularly. Windows Defender comes with Windows 10 and there are plenty of other free alternatives.
- Beware of phishing e-mails that might look convincing. Never type in or try to login to something using username/password unless you are sure you know what you are logging in to.

5.0 Safeguarding

All staff must follow the procedures set out in the Meridian Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including the Covid-19 addendum). This can be viewed on the Meridian Trust website.

6.0 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually. At every review, it will be approved by the Curriculum & Standards Policy & Scrutiny committee of Meridian Trust and then shared with academy councils for their information.

ADDENDUM – January 2021

Safeguarding procedures for effective remote teaching and learning.

Guidance for staff, students and families.

1. Students

- Students should attend all scheduled online classes punctually and participate actively in all classes as directed by the teacher.
- Students should establish consistent working patterns at home wherever possible. This means identifying a space to work in where interruption and background noise is at a minimum and concentration and focus can be maintained.
- Students should follow instructions given by the teacher or teaching assistant in the lesson. Turn on microphone (and camera when enabled) when requested and contribute to discussion or chat when prompted.
- Students should dress appropriately when working with cameras on. This means you should be fully dressed and should avoid any clothing that would not be acceptable in school.
- When working with cameras on, students should either blur their background, or use an (suitable) illustrated background. Teachers may request you change your background if they deem it inappropriate or distracting.
- Students must follow the usual expectations for behaviour and conduct and will be advised of any changes the school has made to behaviour expectations online.
- Working online can be enjoyable and rewarding, but it can also be tiring and isolated at times. It is important that regular screen breaks are taken, and that students build time into the day for physical activity (at least 30 minutes a day is recommended).
- Students should remember that the staff they value and know well are still available to them and can provide help when working online/remotely. They should report any concerns to a teacher or trusted adult in the usual way. Students can also report a general concern or anxiety using the 'worried@---' email address for a rapid response. Advice about well-being and mental health is also available on all school websites.

2. Staff

- Expectations of staff are set out in this policy broadly. Staff should follow specific guidance and direction from academy leaders in line with the principles set out here.
- Staff must ensure that they continue to follow all safeguarding procedures and protocols when working remotely. All concerns must continue to be reported in line with local protocols and the CMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- Staff must have read and be familiar with the additional Safeguarding guidance set out in the 'Covid-19 Addendum'.
- Meridian Trust will follow the advice and guidance on supporting home workers set out by the HSE. This will help us ensure that staff are working in a safe and conducive environment while taking care of their well-being.
- There should be no need for staff to lose any sense of privacy when working online. When working online with 'cameras on' staff should ensure that they use a blurred background or a suitable background effect. They should take care to minimize any background activity or noise which may be a distraction to them or others.
- Staff must ensure that they follow the appropriate dress guidance as set out in the Code of Conduct and the Meridian Trust Acceptable Use (IT) Policy when working online.
- Staff should take special care to ensure that they only share information on their screen that is relevant to the lesson or meeting they are conducting. This may include disabling email notifications while presenting and/or avoiding sharing any student information that may remain on screen.

3. Parents and carers

- We recognize that your home is a private space and encourage parents to ensure that students are working in a quiet, conducive environment wherever possible, and that blurred screens or background effects are used to protect your privacy.
- Child protection considerations mean that parents and carers should not attend or participate in any online lessons or 1:1 sessions without the prior written permission of the member of staff (this could be obtained via email).
- Due to child protection and safeguarding considerations, your written consent must be gained for 1:1 sessions with students because these sessions will be recorded and saved for at least seven days on the trust operating system. If you do not give your consent, such sessions cannot proceed.
- It is unacceptable for parents to record staff or students engaged in online teaching and learning without their consent.
- Online teaching means that parents and carers may hear and see more of the process of teaching and learning than they are used to. We encourage you to contact the individual teacher or the school with any questions or concerns and ask that you avoid commenting or critiquing what you have seen publicly (i.e. on social media) until you have raised such concerns with the school.

4. Protocols for 'camera-on' lessons, meetings or consultations.

- Student cameras are disabled on trust managed platforms as the default position.
- Academy senior leaders can request cameras be enabled by IT support for specific purposes.
- Activities relating to student guidance or support such as pastoral care/counselling, SEND support, consultations should, where possible, continue online and will often require cameras to be enabled.
- Academies may deem it necessary to enable cameras for certain teaching groups (16-19 lessons, for example), or for small group tutoring, coaching sessions or peripatetic lessons.
- Permission to enable cameras for such purposes must be given by a senior leader and recorded in writing.
- Written permission is not required for the use of cameras on trust managed platforms, but participants have the right to object to the recording of sessions.
- Any 1:1 sessions (whether camera on or otherwise) must be recorded and securely saved for at least seven days on the trust operating system.
- If students would prefer a parent or another adult present for 1:1 meetings, students should advise the teacher or organiser by email of the name of the adult present. 1:1 meetings with counsellors or social workers do not require other adults to be present
- When cameras are enabled for online activities, the guidance around safe practice above should be followed by all participants, alongside any academy-specific behavior protocols and instructions for acceptable use.
- Academy leaders may withdraw permission for camera-on working at their discretion.