Fort Hill Integrated College

Blended Learning Policy for Staff and Pupils

Contents:

Educate Integrate Inspire

Statement of intent

At Fort Hill Integrated College, we understand the need to continually deliver high quality education, whether that is in school or through blended learning. We recognise the importance of maintaining high expectations in all areas of school life and ensuring that all pupils have access to the learning resources and support they need to succeed.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to address the key concerns associated with blended working, such as online safety, access to educational resources, data protection, and safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the disruption to pupils' education and the delivery of the curriculum.
- Ensure provision is in place so that all pupils have access to high quality learning resources.
- Protect pupils from the risks associated with using devices connected to the internet.
- Ensure staff, parent, and pupil data remains secure and is not lost or misused.
- Ensure robust safeguarding measures continue to be in effect during the period of blended learning.
- Ensure all pupils have the provision they need to complete their work to the best of their ability, and to remain happy, healthy, and supported during periods of blended learning.

Signed by:

Principal   Date:

_____   _____

Chair of Board of
Governors   Date:

_____   _____

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2004
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Data Protection Act 2018

1.2. This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DE Circular 2020/5 'Blended learning'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**
- **Positive Behaviour Policy**
- **Accessibility Policy**
- **Marking and Feedback Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Attendance Policy**
- **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan**

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The BOG's are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has robust risk management procedures in place. Ensuring that the school has a business continuity plan in place, where required.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's blended learning arrangements.

2.2. The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff, parents and pupils adhere to the relevant policies at all times.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks associated with blended learning.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring incidents associated with blended learning.
- Overseeing that the school has the resources necessary to action the procedures in this policy.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis and communicating any changes to staff, parents, and pupils.
- Arranging any additional training staff may require to support pupils during the period of blended learning.

2.3. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Liaising with the **ICT technicians** to ensure that the technology used for blended learning is accessible to all pupils and that reasonable adjustments are made where required.
- Ensuring that pupils with EHC plans continue to have their needs met while learning on an online learning platform, and liaising with the principal and other organisations to make any alternate arrangements for pupils with EHC plans and IHPs.
- Identifying the level of support or intervention that is required while pupils with SEND learn on an online learning platform.
- Ensuring that the provision put in place for pupils with SEND is monitored for effectiveness throughout the duration of the blended learning period.

2.4. The **ICT technicians** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all school-owned devices used for blended learning have suitable anti-virus software installed, have a secure connection, can recover lost work, and allow for audio and visual material to be recorded, where required.
- Ensuring that any programs or networks used for blended learning can effectively support a large number of users at one time, where required, e.g. undertaking 'stress' testing.

- Working with the **SENCO** to ensure that the equipment and technology used for learning is accessible to all pupils and staff.

2.5. Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times when using blended learning.
- Setting all homework through online learning platforms.
- Ensuring that all online learning platforms are regularly updated.
- Reporting any safeguarding incidents to the pastoral leader/designated teacher and asking for guidance as appropriate.

- Taking part in any training conducted to meet the requirements of this policy, including training on how to use the necessary electronic equipment and software.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, as well as any concerns they may have about blended learning, to the principal.
- Reporting any defects on school-owned equipment used for blended learning to an ICT Technician.
- Adhering to the Staff Code of Conduct at all times.

2.6.   Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of blended learning.
- Supporting their child to complete all homework via their online learning platforms.
- Ensuring their child is available to learn on the learning platform at the times set out in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 of this policy, and that the schoolwork set is completed on time and to the best of their child's ability.
- Reporting any technical issues to the school as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that their child always has access to blended learning material during the times set out in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2.
- Reporting any absence in line with the terms set out in paragraph 9.6.
- Ensuring their child uses the equipment and technology used for blended learning as intended.

2.7.   Pupils are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy at all times during periods of blended learning.
- Completing all homework via their online learning platforms.
- During periods of absence, ensuring they are available to learn on an online learning platform at the times set out in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 of this policy, and that their schoolwork is completed on time and to the best of their ability.
- Reporting any technical issues to their teacher as soon as possible.
- Ensuring they have access to blended learning material and notifying a responsible adult if they do not have access.
- Notifying a responsible adult if they are feeling unwell or are unable to complete the schoolwork they have been set.
- Ensuring they use any equipment and technology for blended learning as intended.
- Adhering to the Positive Behaviour Policy at all times.

3. Resources

Learning materials

3.1. For the purpose of providing blended learning, Years 8-10 will use Google Classrooms. Years 11-14 will use a mixture of Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. Individual teachers will notify pupils which platform they will be using for blended learning. Teachers may make use of:

- Work booklets
- Past and mock exam papers
- Educational websites
- Reading tasks
- Live webinars using Collaborate Ultra
- Pre-recorded video or audio lessons
- Other appropriate resources

3.2. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that all pupils have access to the resources needed for effective blended learning.

3.3. Lesson plans will be adapted to ensure that the curriculum remains fully accessible via blended learning, where practical – where this is not practical, the school will ensure pupils can catch up on these areas of the curriculum when they return to school.

3.4. Teaching staff will liaise with the SENCO and other relevant members of staff to ensure all pupils remain fully supported for the duration of the blended learning period.

3.5. Any defects or issues with blended learning resources will be reported as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

3.6. Pupils will be required to use their own or family-owned equipment to access blended learning resources, unless the school agrees to provide or loan equipment, e.g. laptops.

3.7. Pupils and parents will be required to maintain the upkeep of any equipment they use to access blended learning resources.

3.8. Teaching staff will oversee academic progression for the duration of the blended learning period and will mark and provide feedback on work in line with section 7 of this policy.

3.9. The arrangements for any 'live' classes, e.g. Collaborate Ultra, will be communicated via google classroom or Microsoft Teams no later than one day before the allotted time and kept to a reasonable length of no more than one hour per session.

3.10. The ICT technicians are not responsible for providing technical support for equipment that is not owned by the school.

4. Online safety

4.1.   This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Online Safety Policy.

4.2.   Where possible, all interactions will be textual and public.

4.3.   All staff and pupils using video communication must:

- Communicate in groups – one-to-one sessions are not permitted.
- Wear suitable clothing – this includes others in their household.
- Be situated in a suitable 'public' living area within the home with an appropriate background – 'private' living areas within the home, such as bedrooms, are not permitted during video communication.
- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
- Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
- Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
- Not record, store, or distribute video material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they are visible.

4.4.   All staff and pupils using audio communication must:

- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
- Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
- Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
- Not record, store, or distribute audio material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they can be heard.

4.5.   Pupils not using devices or software as intended will be disciplined in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

4.6.   The school will risk assess the technology used for blended learning prior to use and ensure that there are no privacy issues or scope for inappropriate use.

4.7.   The school will ensure that all school-owned equipment and technology used for blended learning has suitable anti-virus software installed, can establish secure connections, can recover lost work, and allows for audio and visual material to be recorded or downloaded, where required.

4.8.   During the period of blended learning, the school will maintain regular contact with parents to:

- Reinforce the importance of children staying safe online.

- Ensure parents are aware of what their children are being asked to do, e.g. sites they have been asked to use and staff they will interact with.

- Encourage them to set age-appropriate parental controls on devices and internet filters to block malicious websites.
- Direct parents to useful resources to help them keep their children safe online.

4.9. The school will not be responsible for providing access to the internet off the school premises and will not be responsible for providing online safety software, e.g. anti-virus software, on devices not owned by the school.

5. Safeguarding

5.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which has been updated to include safeguarding procedures in relation to blended working.

5.2. The designated teacher and the principal will identify 'vulnerable' pupils (pupils who are deemed to be vulnerable or are at risk of harm) via risk assessment prior to the period of blended learning.

5.3. The designated teacher will arrange for regular contact to be made with vulnerable pupils, prior to the period of blended learning.

5.4. Phone calls made to vulnerable pupils will be made using school phones where possible.

5.5. The designated staff member will arrange for regular contact with vulnerable pupils.

5.6. The designated staff member will keep in contact with vulnerable pupils' social workers or other care professionals during the period of blended working, as required.

5.7. Vulnerable pupils will be provided with a means of contacting the designated teacher, their deputy, or any other relevant member of staff.

5.8. The designated staff member will meet (in person or on the online learning platform) with the relevant members of staff as required to discuss new and current safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable pupils.

5.9. All members of staff will report any safeguarding concerns to the designated teacher immediately.

5.10. Pupils and their parents will be encouraged to contact the designated teacher if they wish to report safeguarding concerns, e.g. regarding harmful or upsetting content or incidents of online bullying. The school will also signpost families to the practical support that is available for reporting these concerns.

6. Data protection

6.1.   This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Data Protection Policy.

6.2.   Staff members will be responsible for adhering to the GDPR when teaching using online learning platforms and will ensure the confidentiality and integrity of their devices at all times.

6.3.   Sensitive data will only be transferred between devices if it is necessary to do so for the purpose of blended learning and teaching.

6.4.   Any data that is transferred between devices will be suitably encrypted or have other data protection measures in place so that if the data is lost, stolen, or subject to unauthorised access, it remains safe until recovered.

6.5.   Parents' and pupils' up-to-date contact details will be collected prior to the period of blended learning.

6.6.   All contact details will be stored in line with the Data Protection Policy.

6.7.   The school will not permit paper copies of contact details to be taken off the school premises.

6.8.   Pupils are not permitted to let their family members or friends use any school-owned equipment which contains personal data.

6.9.   Any intentional breach of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

7. Marking and feedback

7.1.   All schoolwork set through blended learning must be:

- Complete when returned to the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Returned before the deadline set by the relevant member of teaching staff.
- Completed to the best of the pupil's ability.
- The pupil's own work.
- Marked in line with the subject's marking policy.
- Returned to the pupil, once marked, by an agreed date.

7.2.   The school expects pupils and staff to maintain a good work ethic and a high quality of work during the period of blended learning.

7.3.   Pupils are accountable for the completion of their own schoolwork –parents who accept the Google Classroom invitation will receive a weekly summary of their child's engagement with set online learning tasks.

7.4.   Work that cannot be completed for genuine reasons will be completed when the pupil returns to school.

7.5. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of pupils with and without access to the online learning resources and discuss additional support or provision with the principal as soon as possible.

7.6. Teaching staff will monitor the academic progress of pupils with SEND and discuss additional support or provision with the SENCO as soon as possible.

8. Health and safety

8.1. This section of the policy will be enacted in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

8.2. Teaching staff and ICT technicians will ensure pupils are shown how to use the necessary equipment and technology safely and correctly prior to the period of blended learning.

8.3. If using electronic devices during blended learning, pupils will be encouraged to take a five minute screen break every two hours.

8.4. Screen break frequency will be adjusted to five minutes every hour for younger pupils or pupils with medical conditions who require more frequent screen breaks.

8.5. If any incidents or near-misses occur in a pupil's home, they or their parents are required to report these to the health and safety officer or other relevant member of staff immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

9. School day and absence

9.1. During periods of absence, pupils should be completing set work between the hours of 9:00am and 3:05pm from Monday to Friday, with the exception of breaks and lunchtimes, as outlined in paragraph 9.2.

9.2. Breaks and lunchtimes will take place at the following times each day:

- Morning break will take place at 11:25am until 11:45am.
- Lunchtime will take place between 1:10pm and 1:45pm.

9.3. Pupils are not expected to do schoolwork during the times outlined in paragraph 9.2.

9.4. Pupils with SEND or additional medical conditions who require more regular breaks, e.g. sensory breaks, are not expected to do schoolwork during their breaks.

9.5. Pupils who are unwell are not expected to complete blended learning activities until they are well enough to do so.

9.6. Parents will inform the school office no later than 9.00 am if their child is unwell.

9.7. The school will monitor absence and lateness in line with the Attendance Policy.

10. Communication

10.1. The school will ensure adequate channels of communication are arranged in the event of an emergency.

10.2. The school will communicate with parents via Parentmail and the school website about blended learning arrangements as soon as possible.

10.3. The principal will communicate with staff as soon as possible via email about any blended learning arrangements.

10.4. The school understands that pupils using online learning platforms have the right to privacy out-of-hours and should be able to separate their school and home lives – communication is only permitted during school hours.

10.5. Members of staff will have contact with their line manager once per week.

10.6. As much as possible, all communication with pupils and their parents will take place within the school hours outlined in section 9.

10.7. Parents and pupils will inform the relevant member of staff as soon as possible if schoolwork cannot be completed.

10.8. Issues with blended learning or data protection will be communicated to the pupils' teacher as soon as possible so they can investigate and resolve the issue.

10.9. The pupils' teacher will keep parents and pupils informed of any changes to the blended learning arrangements or the schoolwork set.

10.10. The principal will review the effectiveness of communication on a weekly basis and ensure measures are put in place to address gaps or weaknesses in communication.

11. Monitoring and review

11.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the principal.

11.2. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and other stakeholders.

11.3. The next scheduled review date for this policy is date 5th January 2021.