The Bridge School

Remote Education Policy

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Signed by: Andrew Seager – Headteacher

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In line with best practice and following the DfE guidance The Bridge School has a 'Remote Education' policy to be applied in case children cannot come into school, this may be as a result of medical needs, self-isolation or local/national lockdowns.

1 Purpose and principles

The Bridge School provides personalised education for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. This policy explains how we will support learning, wellbeing and safeguarding when a pupil cannot attend school but is well enough to learn, or when an exceptional closure prevents attendance.

Attendance in school remains the priority. Remote education is a last resort, considered after absence has been established and barriers to attendance explored. It supports continuity of learning and connection with school while arrangements are made for a supported return wherever possible.

Remote education will reflect each pupil's needs, curriculum pathway, EHCP, health and family circumstances. It may involve practical resources, communication activities, printed materials, telephone support and digital learning. It does not depend on a pupil being able to use a screen or work independently.

2 When remote education may be used

The Headteacher or designated senior leader will consider remote education where:

- An emergency means that school cannot open safely, after options for remaining open or using a safe alternative site have been explored.
- An individual pupil cannot attend for a limited period because of health needs, recovery from surgery or injury, but is able to learn.
- In exceptional circumstances, SEND or mental health needs prevent attendance and remote education forms part of an agreed, regularly reviewed plan.

Pupils who are too unwell to learn are not expected to complete remote activities. Families should keep school informed so that expectations can be adjusted.

3 Agreeing and reviewing individual arrangements

For an individual pupil, the designated senior leader and class teacher will agree proportionate arrangements with parents or carers, involving the pupil through their preferred communication methods. Relevant health professionals, the SENCO, safeguarding staff and other agencies will contribute where appropriate. The local authority will be involved where the pupil has an EHCP or social worker.

A brief written plan will record:

- The reason for remote education, start date, named school contact and agreed review date.
- The pupil's learning priorities, resources, communication access and support needed at home.
- How contact, safeguarding checks, feedback and assessment will take place.
- Barriers to attendance, support to address them and the steps towards returning to school.
- Any EHCP provision that cannot be delivered remotely and the action being taken with the local authority to address this.

Arrangements will be reviewed at least fortnightly while an individual remote education plan is in place, or sooner if needs or circumstances change. Each review will consider learning, wellbeing, family capacity, access to provision and progress towards attendance. Remote education will not continue indefinitely without active review and appropriate multi-agency involvement.

4 Longer health related absences and EHCP provision

Where it becomes clear that health needs are likely to prevent attendance for 15 school days or more in a school year, consecutively or cumulatively, the designated senior leader will liaise promptly with the local authority about suitable education under section 19 of the Education Act 1996. School will not wait until day 15 to begin this liaison when the likely duration is already known.

School will work with the local authority, family and relevant professionals to coordinate provision, share relevant information securely and support continuity during hospital education, alternative provision or intermittent attendance.

EHCP and equality duties continue during remote education. The school will work with the local authority to ensure that relevant duties are met, including consideration of how provision specified in Section F will be secured. Where provision cannot be delivered remotely, this will be escalated and alternative arrangements explored; an activity pack alone will not be treated as resolving unmet provision.

5 Attendance and reporting absence

Participation in remote education does not count as attendance at school. The attendance team will record the appropriate absence code in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current attendance guidance. Learning engagement will be recorded separately.

Parents and carers must telephone the school office to report absence, forthcoming absence or medical appointments, following the attendance policy. ClassDojo is used for learning and routine class communication and must not replace absence reporting.

Remote education will not be used to justify informal exclusions or sending pupils home because of behaviour. Any suspension must follow the relevant legal process and policy. Work will be set and marked during the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, with subsequent education arranged in accordance with the applicable duties.

6 Curriculum and accessible learning

Teachers will provide meaningful, appropriately ambitious learning linked to the pupil's curriculum pathway, current teaching and individual priorities. Where possible, the overall offer will reflect core teaching time in school, with adjustments for health, developmental stage, attention, access and family circumstances. This does not mean continuous screen time or prolonged adult-led sessions.

As a usual starting point, teachers will offer three to four manageable activities per school day, adapted by professional judgement. Activities may be repeated, shortened or integrated into everyday routines. The number and duration will be agreed flexibly; completing a fixed number of tasks is not the measure of successful engagement.

Explorers

Learning may focus on engagement, sensory exploration, anticipation, interaction, communication, movement and familiar routines. Staff will help families recognise small responses and meaningful participation.

Adventurers

Learning may include practical exploration, play, communication, early literacy and numeracy, independence and applying skills in familiar contexts.

Discoverers

Learning may include sequenced subject activities, reading, writing and mathematics alongside communication, independence and individual EHCP priorities.

These examples guide planning and do not restrict any pupil's entitlement or access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Activities will be selected according to individual needs rather than pathway labels alone.

Teachers will consider familiar symbols, objects of reference, signing, AAC systems, core and fringe vocabulary, visual timetables, accessible formats and appropriate adaptations for sensory or physical needs. Familiar songs, stories and routines may support continuity.

Where appropriate, school will seek advice from therapists and specialist services. Families will only be asked to support physical, sensory or therapeutic activities that are suitable for home use and consistent with agreed professional advice, training and risk assessments.

7 Starting provision and supporting access

Remote education will be available as soon as reasonably practicable, proportionate to the length of absence and disruption. The class teacher or designated lead will tell the family when and how provision will begin. Following an unexpected closure, school will communicate arrangements promptly and provide initial activities while personalised provision is prepared.

ClassDojo is the main platform for sharing activities. General class resources may be shared on Class Story; personalised resources and feedback will use an appropriate private route. Individual targets, health information and safeguarding information must not be posted in shared class areas.

School will check access to suitable devices, connectivity, communication resources and adult support. Where possible, school will offer a device loan under an agreed loan arrangement, help with connectivity, or provide printed and practical resources through agreed collection or delivery. Alternatives will include teaching contact and feedback rather than resources alone.

8 Contact feedback and engagement

The class teacher will agree a manageable routine for sharing activities and feedback. Resources may be shared daily or as a weekly sequence, with clear guidance on how families can use them. Teachers will provide feedback on learning shared with school and use family observations to adapt subsequent activities.

A member of the class team will telephone each family receiving remote education at least weekly to discuss learning, access and wellbeing, with additional contact where needed. Appropriate opportunities to remain connected with familiar adults and peers will be offered where this benefits the pupil.

Families may share learning through a brief conversation, a comment, photographs or short videos using approved channels. They are not expected to photograph every activity or provide extensive evidence. Lack of uploads will not automatically be treated as lack of engagement.

If a pupil is not engaging, staff will first explore health, communication, resource and family barriers and offer support. Ongoing concerns will be discussed with the designated senior leader and, where relevant, the DSL. Safeguarding concerns must not be left until a routine review.

9 Safeguarding and welfare

The safeguarding and child protection policy applies throughout remote education. Staff must report concerns immediately to the DSL or a deputy and record them on CPOMS. An urgent concern requires direct contact as well as a written record. Staff will follow emergency procedures where a child is at immediate risk.

The designated senior leader and DSL will ensure there is a daily school-day system for checking whether pupils receiving remote education are safe and engaging. Information may come from agreed family

contact, learning exchanges and relevant professionals. An upload alone will not be assumed to establish welfare where concerns exist.

Contact arrangements will reflect risk and need. The DSL will specify any additional direct contact, safe and well checks or multi-agency liaison required, including for pupils with a social worker or existing safeguarding concerns. Weekly learning calls do not replace these checks.

If planned contact is missed or staff cannot establish a pupil's welfare, they will notify the office and DSL on the same school day. The DSL will direct further attempts, contact with agreed emergency contacts, liaison with relevant professionals or a home visit as appropriate, following school procedures. Unexplained loss of contact will not be treated solely as a learning issue.

10 Safe online education

Staff will use school-approved platforms and accounts. Links and resources will be checked for suitability, and families will receive clear information about safe use, adult supervision appropriate to the pupil and reporting concerns.

Live sessions, including any individual sessions, must be agreed through school arrangements and follow staff conduct and safeguarding procedures. Families will know the purpose, timing, expected adult support and who will attend. Staff will use suitable professional backgrounds, protect confidentiality and follow school dress expectations.

Sessions must not be recorded unless specifically authorised through school data protection and safeguarding procedures, with a clear purpose, lawful basis, access controls and retention arrangements communicated in advance. Families must not record or share images of other pupils or staff without school authorisation.

11 Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher and designated senior leader

The Headteacher will designate a senior leader to coordinate remote education, communicate arrangements and monitor quality, accessibility, safeguarding and workload. The lead will ensure individual plans are reviewed, liaise with the local authority and relevant agencies, and arrange cover or prioritisation where staff are teaching in school and supporting remote learning simultaneously.

DSL and attendance team

The DSL oversees safeguarding contact, risk assessment and escalation. The attendance team maintains accurate registers, follows absence procedures and shares relevant information with staff. Responsibilities for each daily check will be allocated clearly so that no pupil is overlooked.

SENCO and middle leaders

The SENCO supports EHCP coordination and reasonable adjustments. Middle leaders support accessible curriculum planning, review the suitability of resources and help maintain consistency across pathways. Technical issues will be referred to the appropriate school or Trust IT support.

Teachers

Teachers plan and adapt learning, explain activities, maintain agreed contact, provide feedback and review engagement. They will report access difficulties and safeguarding concerns promptly and keep proportionate records of provision, contact and review. They will use professional judgement to balance individual needs with the learning of pupils attending school.

Teaching assistants

Under the direction of the class teacher and senior leaders, teaching assistants may prepare or adapt resources, support communication and accessibility, make agreed family contact and assist with feedback. They must follow the same safeguarding, confidentiality and professional conduct expectations as teaching staff.

Working arrangements

Staff will be available during their agreed working arrangements on their normal working days, with reasonable response expectations communicated to families. Staff are not expected to monitor ClassDojo or respond outside agreed working times. Absence must be reported using normal staff procedures; if the office cannot be reached, staff should email enquiry@bridge.fet.ac.

Parents carers and pupils

Families are encouraged to establish manageable routines, support activities as far as they can and tell school about illness, access difficulties or changes in circumstances. School recognises that parents and carers have different capacities and responsibilities and are not expected to replicate specialist classroom teaching. Pupils will be supported to participate and express preferences through their usual communication methods.

Governance

The relevant local governance body and Trust will oversee this policy in accordance with the Trust scheme of delegation, seeking assurance about educational quality, accessibility, safeguarding and secure systems.

12 Support for families

Staff will signpost families to appropriate pastoral, welfare and practical support. Where pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals receive remote education, school will work with its catering arrangements to organise suitable support, such as lunch parcels or vouchers where available, in line with current guidance. Arrangements will be communicated directly to eligible families.

13 Data protection and secure working

Staff will follow Trust data protection, acceptable use and information security policies. Personal information will be accessed only where necessary through approved systems, including Bromcom, Microsoft services and CPOMS, using appropriate access permissions.

School-issued devices will be used for accessing and storing pupil information unless an alternative has been expressly authorised under Trust procedures. Devices must be password protected, updated, locked when unattended and kept secure from other household members. Staff must not share passwords or save pupil information to personal storage or unapproved services.

Staff must use approved school communication routes. Personal email accounts and personal social media must not be used to contact families. Parent and carer email correspondence should be routed through enquiry@bridge.fet.ac and the school office in accordance with school arrangements.

School telephones, work phones or approved calling systems should be used wherever possible. If use of a personal telephone is authorised, staff must withhold their number using a method confirmed to work on that device or network and follow school record-keeping procedures. Withholding a number does not authorise storing pupil information on a personal device.

Photographs, videos and work submitted by families will be accessed, stored and retained only through approved systems and for a defined educational purpose. Any suspected data breach, loss of a device or

unauthorised disclosure must be reported promptly through Trust procedures to the relevant senior leader and Data Protection Officer.

14 Monitoring and review

Senior leaders will monitor whether pupils can access suitable learning, whether contact arrangements are effective, and whether provision supports progress, wellbeing and a return to school. Monitoring will include proportionate review of resources, family feedback, staff feedback and individual plans.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following significant changes to guidance, systems or school practice. Approval and governance oversight will follow the Trust scheme of delegation. The approved policy and practical information about remote education will be made available to families in accessible formats where needed.

15 Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school and Trust policies for attendance; safeguarding and child protection; online safety; behaviour and relationships; SEND; supporting pupils with medical conditions; data protection and privacy; ICT acceptable use; staff conduct; emergency planning; and the home-school agreement.

Key reference documents informing this draft are listed below. Current versions should be checked at each policy review.

DfE Providing remote education guidance for schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools

DfE Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

DfE Working together to improve school attendance
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

DfE Keeping children safe in education
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2