



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Updated September 2020
Approved by the Principal

This policy refers to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Rationale

- 1.1 In the event of a closure, Big Creative Academy is committed to providing continuity of education to its learners and will do so through a process of remote (online) learning.
- 1.2 Extensive remote learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the Academy is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of learners and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home.
- 1.3 This policy does not normally apply in the event of short-term Academy closures (e.g. as a result of inclement weather) or a short-term learner absence.
- 1.4 Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when learners, in agreement with the Academy, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from the Academy, or longer term illness, assuming learners are able to complete course work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, learners are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms.
- 1.5 There is no obligation for Big Creative Academy to provide continuity of education to learners who absent themselves from school, with or without parental permission, in contravention to Academy or government guidance. This may apply, for example, if parents choose to take learners on holiday during term time. Similarly, this would apply if parents made the decision, without prior agreement with the Academy, to absent their daughters from education 'as a precaution', against official guidance, in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

2. Remote learning for individual learners

- 2.1 Assuming an absence has been agreed with the Academy, and the learner in question is healthy enough to work from home, the Academy will provide work for learners who are unable to attend in person.
- 2.2 If this occurs for an individual learner, the collation of work and communication with the parent/carer will be coordinated by the learner's teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team. Though every case will have its own specifics, a rough guideline for the frequency of communication between the Academy and parent/carer would be once per week.

- 2.3 Work will only be provided to learners in this way if there is an agreed absence lasting more than three working days.
- 2.4 If a significant number of learners are absent from the Academy, but the Academy remains open, the Principal will decide whether the method of remote learning operated will take the form outlined here, or as outlined below.

3. Remote learning in the event of extended closure

- 3.1 In the event of an extended closure, Big Creative Academy will provide continuity of education in the following ways:
 - a) Regular direct instruction from teaching teachers, with the ability of learners to ask questions online (via email)
 - b) The setting of work that learners complete, written responses (if relevant) completed electronically
 - c) The assessment of specific assignments that are submitted to teachers electronically and on which feedback is provided. Learners and teachers are expected to have access to the internet whilst at home; the Academy recognises that many families may not have home printers and will therefore not require the printing of material.
- 3.2 The primary platforms the Academy will use to deliver continuity of education are, Microsoft Teams and Frog Education.
- 3.3 The extent to which different methods of instruction are employed is likely to be determined by the length of any closure and the ability of both learners and teachers to participate in remote learning. Big Creative Academy reserves the right to vary the range of methods used to provide remote learning tasks, feedback and interaction, based on the particular circumstances of any closure and based on our experience.
- 3.4 Teachers should ensure that work is differentiated as required for all learners when setting online tasks. Profiles are available for SEND pupils and advice can be sought from the SENDco. In addition, the SENDCo will maintain contact with pupils on their lists requiring regular support, by email or phone with parents/learners and feed back to teachers using CPOMS if required.

4. Live sessions

- 4.1 Academic subject areas may also arrange for teaching teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner.
- 4.2 There is no expectation of teachers to carry out live sessions. Microsoft Teams are platforms that allows for resources to be shared, teachers to provide exposition, and learners to ask questions in 'real-time'. Learners will be provided with details sessions, and will be expected to participate in them if they are asked and able to. Live sessions can be particularly helpful as they can help communication, with learners able to respond to teachers' questions (and ask them) via the conversation functionality in teams and meet.

5. Communication with Students

- 5.1 Learners will be provided with a Academy email address to avoid any issues regarding GDPR, there will be no expectation for parents/carers or learners to provide their own email addresses for use.

6. Assessment

- 6.1 Providing timely and helpful feedback is a cornerstone of good teaching and learning, and whilst this may be more challenging with remote learning, teachers will endeavour to provide regular feedback to learners on pieces of work that they are required to submit. Under normal circumstances, not all pieces of work are formally assessed by teachers and this would continue to be the case should the Academy employ remote learning.
- 6.2 Given the nature of the tasks, the type of feedback teachers can provide may not have the same format as marking an exercise book. Teachers are encouraged to ensure, when they set assessed work, that it is designed in such a way that meaningful feedback may be provided. Possible methods may include:
- a) Providing whole class feedback rather than feedback on individual pieces of work – this is an effective way of providing feedback, supported by findings from educational research
 - b) Using the “Comments” function on online documents or microsoft
 - c) Sending a direct to learners with specific feedback / targets
 - d) Feedback via another website / piece of software

7. Expectations of learners

- 7.1 Assuming that a learner is healthy and well enough to work, learners will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability.
- 7.2 Learners will also be expected to read and respond to communication from the Academy (e.g. an email from a form tutor) on a regular basis. Learners should ensure that, in addition to completing the tasks promptly, they should complete any administrative tasks that allow the Academy to monitor their progress. If learners or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the relevant subject area. If there are questions about a learner’s overall workload (e.g. a learner feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the learner’s Tutor.
- 7.3 Teachers must work on the assumption that learners will not necessarily have the full range of books and equipment that they would usually have in the Academy. The Academy does not expect learners to have access to any specialist equipment that would usually be provided by the Academy (e.g. Mixing Desks, Digital Video editing equipment, Sewing machines).
- 7.4 Teachers should ensure they are able to scan or upload photos of important resources in case learners do not have access to them at home. Online textbooks are helpful in this regard and many subjects are now moving over to these. The Academy expects that parents have internet access at home to access remote learning resources, but teachers will make no presumption of the learner’s ability to print at home.
- 7.5 Teachers should ensure they have effective internet and a phone connectivity at home. If this is not available for any reason, teachers can request an Academy device. The setting and assessment of remote learning tasks will take place in accordance with the Academy and subject area policies. Under normal circumstances, subject areas take different approaches to the setting and assessment of learners’ work – for example, the frequency of substantive task set, and the regularity of written assessment provided – and subject area policies will be applied in the event of remote learning.

- 7.6 In order that we are providing a consistent approach, heads of faculty and subject leaders are responsible for overseeing the nature and frequency of tasks set and assessed within their subject areas. All teachers should pay due care to the nature of tasks set, so that learners have a range of activities to complete at home and are not exclusively working on a screen.
- 7.7 Teachers are responsible for providing constructive feedback to their learners in a timely manner. In the event a teacher is unwell during a period of remote learning, it becomes the responsibility of the line manager to ensure work is set to her/his classes.
- 7.8 Teachers should be available to contact parents if needed, by email or phone using a work/academy handset.
- 7.9 If teachers require support with any aspects of remote learning, they are encouraged to consult their line managers or the Senior Leadership team.

8. Pastoral care and Safeguarding during a closure

- 8.1 In event of a closure, the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of a learner rests with their parents / carers. However, tutors (under the guidance of the Senior Leadership Team) should check in regularly to monitor both academic progress and their general wellbeing. Tutors will be expected to pass on feedback to Senior Leadership Team, particularly if there are concerns or a lack of communication.
- 8.2 In the event of a closure, pupils, parents, carers and teachers are reminded that the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy still applies to all interactions between pupils and teachers. In that policy, there are specifically prohibited behaviours and reporting obligations to which teachers must adhere, whether they are at home, in the community or at the Academy.

9. Communication with Staff

- 9.1 Unless there are extenuating circumstances, teachers will be expected to be contactable remotely by colleagues, learners and parents. Teachers also should ensure their communication with learners does not encourage unhelpful work habits. All communication should take place during usual office hours, with no expectation for colleagues to read or respond to emails after 5pm, although responses should be made to electronic messages within one working day in normal practice.
- 9.2 For those who are on part-time contracts, communication is expected only on the days on which they would usually work. Communication must always occur via official Academy channels, and not through personal accounts or other websites. Permitted methods are:
 - a) Email using Academy email addresses only
 - b) Microsoft Teams Support for pupils with SEND, EAL and other specific learning enhancement needs
 - c) Frog Education