

**MALONE COLLEGE
BELFAST**



Malone College

**BLENDED/DISTANCE
LEARNING POLICY
2020**

1. Purpose and Introduction

Background:

Covid 19 pandemic has brought immense change and challenge to learning and teaching. Malone College understands the urgent and present need to adapt to a blended/distance learning procedure to attempt to provide a more consistent, formalised and structured approach to learning for all. This will involve a mixture of 'in-school' and 'at home' learning in an attempt to cover the requirements of the curriculum. It is therefore essential that teachers will need to develop and maintain a learning programme outside the classroom which will support any future lockdowns scenarios and the resulting limited contact time in school.

Purpose

This policy will outline the following key issues:

- type and method of distance and blended learning
- provide guidance on the approach to blended learning that should be taken by staff, pupils and parents
- aim to ensure consistency of approach across the whole school.
- aim to ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the examination/awarding body/organisation.
- ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

Malone College will continue to provide engaging, exciting and challenging learning opportunities, both in school and at home, which result in ambitious, capable learners, committed to lifelong learning. A key aspect of this will be to ensure the well-being of pupils and staff as an important aspect of all work and learning undertaken.

Definition of Blended/Distance Learning:

*"At its simplest, blended learning is the **thoughtful** integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences, with online learning experiences."*

Garrison and Kanuka, 2004

For us in Malone College this means that during face to face teaching time spent learning in the classroom will introduce key concepts, new content and skills; address any misunderstanding or misconceptions; answer questions; and, set clear expectations and guidelines for the work to be completed at home. However, it is important to remember that the learning that takes place at home will take a variety of forms and will not be restricted to online provision.

'Blended learning is a formal approach to education that creates an integrated learning environment where face-to-face and online teaching and learning become complementary, with the purpose of giving learners a more diverse and engaging learning experience.'

Distance learning is where learners recruited and enrolled online and study independently using virtual learning environments.'

Pearson 2020

Types of Blended/Distance Learning used

- Online Learning – using Google Classroom
- Hard Copy Physical Resources

There are scenarios where distance assessment will not be possible and not appropriate – for example where there are

- practical skills and/or interaction with individuals/equipment that need to be demonstrated and assessed in person
- group work situations/units where collaboration with others is required
- requirements for learners to be invigilated in person by teachers under controlled conditions, including observations of performance in competency-based qualifications or externally set and marked examinations or controlled assessments.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

In the event of lockdown or self-isolation we must remember that a 'blended learning' approach will affect students and families in various ways. It is important that we are flexible and creative with the work we set students. It is also important to remember that many of our families/students may not have the same access to facilities at home that would be needed for necessary learning to take place for a variety of reasons. An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, these difficulties on all sides is essential for success.

Expectations

In the case of long term closure, we believe that it is in the best interests of our students that we continue to provide as much of a structured support as is possible, bearing in mind the need for flexibility. That said, the work that pupils engage in during a period of closure, or as part of the 'blended learning' approach, should be part of the subject teachers current planning and so cannot be considered as optional.

Teaching staff will expect to receive all home assignments by the specific deadline set, as far as it practicable and possible based on individual students/family need and knowledge. Should families encounter any difficulties with this arrangement, they must be discussed with the subject teacher in the first instance via email or telephone.

The College policies, processes and structures that reflect the blended learning and distance assessment models of assessment. Teaching staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely

Malone College have a process to manage feedback on assignments. Questions are constructively supported, and feedback is provided in a timely manner, if not in the classroom environment. The setting of assignments is undertaken in the face-to-face

sessions and that deadlines are clear where possible. Staff have all been trained to implement measures to prevent and detect any instances of malpractice which may arise due to the different delivery/assessment methods. When learners submit work, teaching staff will provide evidence to ensure that the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner. Learners are fully aware of the need to ensure they avoid any forms of malpractice (for example plagiarism) and the consequences should they commit it. All assessments will be maintained and securely stored as required.

Teaching staff will...

- Ensure emphasis on pastoral development within the classroom.
- Ensure work/workbooks/assignment briefs are regularly updated on Google Classroom
- Share teaching and learning activities with their class through Google Classroom.
- Continue providing work and support in line with current, extensive planning that is already in place throughout the school.
- Be aware and mindful that remote learning for many of our students may be more difficult, so tasks must be designed to be completed remotely. Inform head of year each Friday of students not completing or accessing classroom.
- Reply to messages, set work and give feedback on learning/activities in a timely manner.
- Make allowances for asynchronous learning, understanding that the circumstances may affect families in a number of ways.
- Inform the Principal/Vice Principal of cover by another staff member for sharing of activities online. Staff, if able, must upload learning elements on to Google Classroom from home.

Learning support Staff will...

- Support class teacher in preparation of blended learning resources/activities as required.
- Support, where necessary, their assigned pupil(s) by providing tailored activities which can either be used in school or when learning at home.
- Ensure timely communications with the subject teacher and/or SENCO.

Head of department will....

- Ensure that they are a member of each google classroom for their departmental staff
- Ensure and support their departmental staff to regularly update work/workbooks/assignment briefs on Google Classroom
- Share teaching and learning activities with their department through a departmental specific Google Classroom.
- Continue providing work and support in line with current, extensive planning that is already in place throughout the school.
- Ensure continuity of learning in the case of an illness amongst their departmental staff, as per normal routines in school. If a member of the department is self-isolating, then they still need to undertake google classroom work for their classes.

Head of year will....

- Collate and undertake parental contact regarding non completion of assigned google classroom work as notified to them by subject teachers.

Pupils will...

- Adhere to all guidelines as directed by staff and comply with the school's expectations regarding On line learning using google classroom (see summary of pupil friendly guidelines at the end of this document).
- Remember that their well-being is key to all actions we take and that it is important, if working from home, they should take regular breaks, get fresh air, exercise and maintain a reasonable balance between online and offline activities.
- Undertake any and all tasks prepared for home learning.
- Keep up-to-date with daily learning and teaching, either in-school or using Google Classroom.
- Only send messages and queries that are in relation to tasks set by the teacher or in response to questions the teacher may ask them directly.
- Only access the material shared by their teacher and will ask for parental permission to use technology for anything beyond that.

Parents will...

- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability, in-line with the expectations of the school.
- Ensure their child completes the all home assignments set on Google Classroom and submits them to the class teacher by the deadline set.
- Ensure their child engages with Google Classroom activities, set by their teacher.
- Not screenshot or copy any information, messages or posts to share on social media or any other platform outside of Google Classroom.
- Know they can continue to contact their class teacher as normal through Google Classroom or via email/telephone, if they require support of any kind.
- Check their child's completed work each day and encourage the progress that is being made.
- Be mindful of mental well-being of both themselves and their child and encourage their child to take regular breaks, get fresh air and relax when working at home.

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Using the Internet for remote learning



Guideline for pupils

On line learners are not allowed to:

- record images, video or sound without permission
- connect personal devices to school networks without written permission
- install applications or extensions
- retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures;
- use obscene or racist language;
- harass, insult or attack others;
- damage computers, computer systems or computer networks;
- violate copyright laws;
- use another user's password;
- trespass in another user's folders, work or files;
- use school computers for unintended purposes (including gaming, gambling or accessing indecent material)
- bypass network filters