

# Remote Learning Policy

September 2024 – September 2026



Thorpe Primary School welcomes our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **Summary**

The school follows the non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education on providing high quality remote education in cases where it is not possible, or is contrary to government guidance, for some or all pupils to attend school.

Remote education should only ever be considered as a last resort where a decision has already been made that attendance at school is not possible, but pupils are able to continue learning.

### **Prioritising attendance**

Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including for their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school. For this reason, school will only consider it as a last resort when the alternative would be no education, and only after it has been established that the pupil is, or will be, absent from school. Pupils absent from school for unauthorised leave, such as a holiday, will not be issued remote work.

Remote education can have the benefit of allowing absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers. Schools should consider the approaches set out in this guidance while also working closely with pupils, parents, carers, and any other relevant partners such as the local authority, to remove any barriers to attendance as detailed in the Working together to improve school attendance guidance.

Pupils absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent in the register. Schools should continue to record pupil absence in the register in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and attendance guidance, using the most appropriate code.

### **Scenarios where remote education should be considered**

Circumstances where it might not be possible for pupils to receive in person education fit into two broad categories:

- School closures or restrictions on attendance, where school access for pupils is restricted
- Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn

### **School closures or restrictions on attendance**

Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open or to reopen as soon as possible. At Thorpe, every effort will be made to ensure pupils can be taught in person by attending their school or if appropriate and possible, attending a safe alternative site.

After exploring all options to ensure the school remains open to all pupils, there may still be some exceptional occasions when school leaders decide that it is not possible to open safely, or where opening would contradict guidance from local or central government. If restricting attendance for pupils is the only viable option, the school will consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive.

### **Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn**

There should only be limited circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able and well enough to continue their education remotely. These circumstances should only involve a short-term absence and might include: pupils recovering from short term infectious illnesses, pupils preparing for or recovering from some operations, or pupils recovering from injuries where attendance might inhibit recovery.

School will consider providing pupils with remote education on a case-by-case basis, including referring to the DfE publication 'Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools'.

### **What we will consider when providing remote education to individual pupils**

When a pupil is absent, we will always seek to overcome the barriers to attendance and provide support for the pupil to attend, regularly reviewing any barriers in conjunction with the pupil, parents or carers, and if appropriate, a relevant medical professional. Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school, and providing remote education during a pupil's absence does not reduce the importance of bringing that absence to an end as soon as possible.

In the limited circumstances when the school decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following should be considered:

- Ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the school, parents or carers, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision.
- Where remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity.
- Setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

### **Good practice**

We aim to ensure that work provided during periods of remote education will be high quality, meaningful, ambitious, and cover an appropriate range of subjects to enable pupils to keep on track with their education.

Where pupils have access to appropriate devices, remote education might include recorded teaching, as well as time for pupils to complete tasks, reading, and assignments independently, depending on their age and stage of development.

Online video lessons may not be recorded by teaching staff at the school; we may direct to high quality lessons developed by external providers such as Oak National Academy.

We always try to be mindful of the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil and their families. These include, but are not limited to:

- Consideration of age, stage of development, and independent study skills.
- Any SEND or other additional needs the pupils might have.
- The pupils' home environment, which includes having a suitable place and opportunity to study.
- Screen time, making reasonable allowances for adequate breaks for pupils and staff during digital remote education.

If required, we will try to ensure equal access through the provision of printed resources.

### **Free school meals and remote education**

Where pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals are receiving remote education, we will work with our school catering team to either provide lunch parcels or to issue a food voucher if available. This will ensure that eligible pupils continue to be supported for the period they are unable to attend school.

### **Provision for pupils with SEND**

If pupils with SEND are not able to attend school and require remote education, their teachers are best placed to know how their needs can most effectively be met to ensure that they continue to access the curriculum.

The duty under the Children and Families Act 2014 for mainstream schools to use their 'best endeavours' to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's special educational needs continues to apply when remote education is in place, and we will work with families to facilitate this.

In addition, if a pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan, the school must work with the local authority to ensure that all the relevant duties under the 2014 Act continue to be met. The duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to disability (and more broadly) also continue to apply, such as to make reasonable adjustments, not to discriminate and to have due regard to the statutory objectives in the public sector equality duty. It may be challenging or impossible for the school to deliver remotely the kind of approach that it does in the classroom, for example the provision of certain differentiated resources and the support of a Teaching Assistant. If this is the case, the school will instead consider, in cooperation with the local authority (if the child has an EHC plan), other ways in which it and the local authority can meet its statutory duties, working closely with the parents or carers.

### **Delivering remote education safely**

Keeping children safe online is essential. The school will follow the guidance on safeguarding and remote education, to ensure we protect pupils online during any period of remote education.

The guidance includes a collection of resources which includes support for:

- safe remote education
- virtual lessons
- live streaming
- information to share with parents and carers to support them in keeping their children safe online

*This policy will be reviewed September 2026, unless new guidance is introduced*