



Thornhill College – Remote Learning Guide for Students, Parents & Staff

We would like to share with you the contingency plans that have been put in place by Thornhill College in the event of a long-term school closure as a result of protective measures against the spread of Covid-19. During any such period, the School will make sure that education is provided remotely (online) to support students with their continued learning journey. This policy summarises the provision of remote learning for pupils so that there are consistent and well understood expectations of the level of support that will be provided for all concerned.

General Advice and Guidance

- All students and staff have a **school email address** which we would advise our students to check on a regular basis as it may be used as a means of remote communication by their teachers.
- Our school community has been making effective use of **Google Classroom** as an e-Learning platform which we have continued to develop in the light of the current situation.
- Many students / classes will already have access to these online learning hubs or classrooms which have been actively used in teaching since the start of this school year to host a plethora of learning resources.
- However, we have attached a document with additional **access codes** for specific subjects and classes of teachers, to further roll this form of remote learning out to ensure continued learning support for our students.
 - We would ask all students to either access Google Classroom by signing in to their 'My School' account on a PC / laptop or by downloading the Google Classroom app to their smartphone or mobile device. An instruction guide will be provided to all students and parents.
 - To access Google Classroom students will need to provide an email address. We advise **students to use their school email address** to keep the all communication through your school C2K account rather than through any personal email address. This is to the **ensure online safety** of our students.
 - Please ask your daughter about Google Classroom and she will be able to show you how she can access Google Classroom using the access codes.
 - In the interest of student and staff welfare and well-being we are asking that all communication on learning through email or Google Classroom is restricted to school hours on week days only – essentially that **school hours are respected**. We would kindly ask that this is respected by all involved. **We have a duty of care to work collectively to ensure our students and staff are prevented from being overwhelmed by communication while at home and that their personal down time is protected.**
 - We would also kindly ask for the **continued support of parents / guardians in ensuring the online safety of your daughters** which will be all the more prevalent when we are directing students to the use of the internet for modes of e-Learning. We would encourage you to **check in regularly on your daughters to ensure they are spending their time online appropriately and productively** when they have informed you that they are working on online learning. Your daughters' safety is of paramount importance to us.

Student / Pupil Responsibility

- Pupils should aim to **retain a structure to their working day** starting with logging into Google Classroom in the morning.
- Pupils should **check their notifications or stream** to see the posts / resources for each subject in the morning.
- Pupils should work to **complete all set work** and, if requested, to hand in work on Google Classroom. In these challenging circumstances we are reliant on the maturity of our pupils to be proactive in taking responsibility for their continued learning.
- Pupils should use the **'Stream' on their Google Classroom** forum to **communicate with their teachers and ask questions if they do not understand / require help if their teachers have made this option available**. Alternatively, some teachers may choose to communicate through **email**. **Pupils should remember to be responsible at all times with their online communication ensuring it is respectful and purposeful.**
- Use existing resources wherever you can for example GCSE BBC Bitesize / CCEA etc:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z4kw2hv>
www.ccea.org.uk

Teacher Responsibility

- Teachers will endeavour to **set regular work which is appropriate in the challenge and length of completion** to keep students learning in accordance with specifications / programmes of study on a continual and steady pace during any period of closure.
- Teachers are advised to **set work on a weekly basis** for their students in **realistic, time bound, achievable tasks** bearing in mind the specific context of each subject. This work should either be **outlined at the start of the school week or start of a school day with one clear form of communication outlining the instructions** so as **not to overload students with communication from staff**. However, it is recognised that if students do have specific individual questions staff may wish to respond to these to offer further guidance or check in with students throughout the week.
- Teachers will set tasks on Google Classroom that may include lesson activities and resources, as well as any preparation / homework / revision or extended reading that would normally be set.
- Teachers must bear in mind the **challenges and demands which will be placed on students by relying on remote learning** to continue their studies. As such cognizance should be given to this added pressure on students and teachers should **ensure students are not overloaded with workload for individual subjects**.
- Teachers may choose to make themselves available on the 'Stream' of Google Classroom forums or email to answer any questions pupils may have regarding work.
- **Where possible teachers will aim to mark and provide feedback** regarding the assessment of students' work.
- **Staff must bear in mind that not all pupils will have access to a computer and to the internet at home or if they do several siblings may be sharing the one device throughout the day. Furthermore, some pupils may be ill (or someone in the family may be ill).**

Teacher Guidelines for Setting Work for Homebased Study

Adapted from guidance published by <https://teacherhead.com/2020/03/15/setting-work-for-a-long-haul-shut-down/>

Things to consider:

- 1. Have your resources to hand:** It is likely that many teachers will be trying to access files from the C2K shared area remotely. Save files that you think you may need to a pen drive or hard drive before any school closure to allow for easy access at home.
- 2. Organise your email inbox:** It may be worthwhile to set up folders in your email inbox for each class that you teach. This will allow correspondence to be organised.
- 3. Be realistic:** You will be catering for a range of home learning / parenting environments. Set realistic tasks that are accessible and manageable for all students.
- 4. Sustain a manageable student workload:** Strike a balance; do not overwhelm the pupils with too much but ensure all are challenged accordingly. **Work set should reflect what is reasonable to attain** within the weekly time allocation for your subject.
- 5. Keep communication simple and routine: Set work on a weekly basis.**
- 6. Balance on-line and off-line tasks:** Create a sustainable, varied, healthy diet of work. Try to blend a range of delivery strategies such as online resources, internet research, off-line reading, writing tasks and structured questions. This may require some forward planning.
- 7. Balance a core of structured, directed tasks with open-ended tasks:** In the absence of a teacher it is important for most tasks to be **highly structured**. Questions, short tasks, directed reading, reading comprehension, and some structured research tasks may be the mainstay. Include repeatable structured tasks such as questions that are self-marked, a book review; a fact file on a task, person, object, event.
- 8. Keep the need and expectations around teacher feedback to a minimum:** It is important for students to have access to past-paper answers. Students can largely check their own answers against these. However, beyond that, getting too bogged down in students sending in work to and fro for teacher marking creates almighty hassles and demands that are hard to sustain. We would suggest some 'how did you get on' check-ups and perhaps offering to mark just one or two bits of work every few weeks at most, depending how long it goes on.
- 9. Remain contactable: Be online during the school day.** Check emails for whole school developments and to respond to pupil learning queries as required. We must be clear however **you are not expected be on stand-by 24/7.**
- 10. In the event that school closures last for a prolonged period of time, it would be necessary for each pupil to feel supported by their teachers** and for them to receive feedback on work they submit. This requires a balanced approach that is sensible and sustainable for all.

Teacher Guidance on Effective E-Learning

Do This



Asynchronous learning

Teachers create learning experiences for students to work at their own pace and take time to absorb content



Less is more

Assignments likely take twice as long to complete at home because of different factors; prioritize and be realistic



Give explicit instructions

Outline deliberate instructions and specify the length of time to complete the session of learning



Specify expectations

Specify task requirements and length clearly (e.g. 2 minute audio recording with a bulleted checklist)



Be empathetic

Assign a reasonable workload; encourage students to balance online with offline and connect with one another



Communicate consistently

All instructions and assignments **must** be communicated via ManageBac, our online hub



Be online for 'office hours'

Be online during office hours to provide support, answer questions, or clarify confusion via a **system**.



Seek student feedback

Seek student feedback about their workload, emotional state, learning preferences, and learning pace



Boost learning retention

Curate multimedia materials to boost learning retention and use digital tools to create interactive lessons



Identify lesson objectives

Be intentional and identify clear learning objectives and assessment outcomes (formative and summative)

Not That



Synchronous learning

Teachers and students meet online in real time through videoconferencing or live chatting



Being unrealistic

Assign "class work" and "homework" every day and request students to complete according to short timelines



Being unclear and vague

Communicate in lengthy paragraphs with instructions that may be difficult to follow or tasks that are overly vague



Being too open-ended

Assign tasks that are too open ended (e.g. make a video about the moon; write an essay about pollution)



Be overly task-oriented

Assign online classwork followed by extra homework without a clear focus on student wellbeing



Mixed communication

Use multiple platforms inconsistently (e.g. email followed by Google Classroom w/ MB submission)



Stand by at all times

Respond to every email right away and leave no break for yourself (unless it's urgent, it can wait until office hours)



Use the same approach

Teach in a way that does not give students voice and/or choice, leaving them feeling overwhelmed



Try new & unused tools

Trying new tools that you've never used may lead to technological difficulties and increase challenge



Give random activities

Keep students busy doing online activities and do not think about the lesson objectives and assessments



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Parental Responsibility

- **Encourage and support their children's work**, including finding an appropriate place to work, checking that set work is completed and **ensuring they have some structure to the working day**: start and finish times and appropriate breaks.
- **Checking on their daughters regularly to ensure their online safety** and that they are spending their time online appropriately and productively.
- Parents must bear in mind the **challenges and demands which will be placed on teachers** by relying on remote learning to support students with their studies. As such cognizance should be given to this added challenge for teachers who will continue to strive to support our students.
- **Parents must appreciate that teachers may be ill at some point and therefore not able to work remotely with their students or indeed someone in the teacher's family may be ill and they may be caring for them.**

Safeguarding

This guidance document is supported by the Safeguarding Policy and e-Safety Policy in Thornhill College. Specific additions to note:

- **Staff registering for any software / platforms (such as Google Classroom), are advised to do so with their school email address.**
- **Students registering for any software / platforms (such as Google Classroom), are advised to do so with their school email address.**
- **Parents / guardians should be proactive in supporting their daughters with regards to ensuring their online safety.** Online safety is continually addressed through our preventative curriculum within school across all key stages.
- Pupils should remember to be **responsible with their online communication ensuring it is respectful and purposeful at all times.**
- **We are not advocating the use of video conferencing (such as skype etc) at this time in the interests of online safety and child protection.**
- As a collective duty of care – we ask all staff and students **respect normal school hours** during the week to ensure communication is not excessive on any party and to protect personal down time to ensure the well-being of everyone.

We recognise these are very challenging times for everyone and while we must work within the current constraints that face us, rest assured we are committed to working collectively to continue to meet the educational needs of your daughter as best we can. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the safety, health and well-being of our entire community is of paramount importance.