



Our Distance Learning Strategy at Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School

Autumn 2020

The year ahead is likely to be an unsettled one with children having to spend time away from school either because they are unwell, in self isolation following contact with a positive case of Covid-19, or a period of partial or full forced closure. Whatever the situation we are keen for children to continue to learn whilst at home.

Our distance learning philosophy and approach is underpinned by ensuring learners and families' wellbeing is intact. The emotional needs of your child comes first. If your child is feeling worried or anxious, we trust you will make the right decision for your family. If you would benefit cuddling up with a book as a family, exercising the dog or enjoying a film together at home, we would encourage you to do so, family comes first.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have impacted each BHVC family differently. The level in which you will be able to engage in your child's learning from home will differ depending on your own unique situation. We know that many of you will be caring for pre-schoolers, some of you will be working from home and trying to juggle the household learning and working all in close quarters, some will be going out to work and coming home tired and other's work situations may have changed altogether and created uncertainty as a result of COVID-19

During an enforced time away from school we hope for all children to engage in the activities we will continue to design and provide for distance learning. For some an hour a day may be a success, for others a usual school day timespan will be possible. We want to reassure you to trust your judgement, trust that you will make the best decision for your family and engage when possible.

We will aim to provide a range of well-planned sequential learning experiences which inspire and motivate children to engage. Supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and social and emotional needs will be our priorities.

Our distance learning approach requires learning to be shared with you and your child online through safe digital platforms:

- Google Classroom via Welsh Government's Hwb Learning Platform (www.hwb.gov.wales)
- Mathletics (<https://login.mathletics.com>)
- Giglets (<https://giglets.com>)
- School Website (<https://bhvcprimary.com>)

What is provided by the school to support your child's distance learning will depend upon the reason for absence

- Individual pupils' absence due to self-isolation

Daily activities planned and uploaded on Google Classroom by 9:00am. These can be submitted through the Google Classroom platform. Your child's teacher will not be able to answer queries in the day as they will be teaching however will aim to read any comments by 6 o'clock that evening. And respond.

Class/Full School Closure

- Your child's learning week will be outlined and accessible in a weekly plan on their google classroom by 9:00am on the first day of closure. We have carefully considered what a typical week in each phase of the school may look like when children are learning at home based upon the feedback we have received to date from parents/carers and children. We are aware that our provision will continually evolve, and the typical week is likely to change the more we experience

first-hand what is and isn't working as we learn to live with the 'new normal' and a blended approach to learning.

- There will be a planned literacy and numeracy task each day which we suggest is completed in the morning where possible and a topic activity planned which we suggest is completed in the afternoon.
- Teachers will provide a combination of pre-recorded and live lessons for maths and literacy each week along with online learning tasks and links to resources that can be completed away from the computer.
- Teachers will meet classes throughout the week using Google Classroom as their meeting platform for check ins and pastoral support.
- School will provide all children with their login details and passwords during September 2021, and school will ensure the children have joined the classroom and are able to use features of Google Classroom independently. Where possible, please encourage your child in their learning activities and challenges. Try and help them uncover information for themselves, rather than giving them the answers.
- Technical support is on hand between 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday -Friday. Please use the following web address to complete a Tech Support Form, and a member of staff will aim to get back to you the same day. <https://bhvcprimary.com/tech-help/>
- Links to all our learning platform can be found at <https://bhvcprimary.com/learn/>
- We expect children to share at least one activity from the day with their teacher for feedback. This activity will need to be submitted through Google Classroom. Guidance for this can be found using the following link. <https://bhvcprimary.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/How-to-connect-to-Google-Classroom-via-HWB.pdf>

Whilst no one is sure how long a blended approach to learning will continue, we are optimistic that it will not last forever. Children take cues from adult behaviour and attitudes, so it is important to communicate calm, confidence, and optimism that we will pull through the pandemic together. Managing our own emotions will help our children stay focused on learning and looking forward to a time they can be back in school full time and learning face to face with their teachers and friends.

We are fully aware of what the reality of 'distance' means –

- For teachers: The acute awareness that it is impossible to replicate the intricate world of the classroom, the vital social interactions taking place as children learn to part of a wider world, the careful honing of individual programmes for each child, so that their learning matches their personal trajectory.
- For parents: The anxiety of receiving online learning guidance, multiple resources (which although of the highest quality, can never match the detailed responsive learning offer that takes place in the school) managing their children's responses, trying to give feedback, and missing the ongoing dialogue with teachers, not to mention the majority 'working from home' themselves.
- For children: Missing the social aspect of school and the daily interactions with their friends and teachers. Lack of instant communication, guidance and feedback, children can't reach teachers and classmates when they need them most, and video lessons are often not enough to fully understand their learning tasks. Some will struggle with too much independence or lack structure, although some will benefit from self-pacing their learning.

We must manage the expectations we place on ourselves and our children through the complexity of Distance Learning and home learning. None of us could ever have imagined that we would have found ourselves in this position. At this time, life has never, ever, seemed so precious – and the time we have with our children should be, must be, happy and cherished.