**Learning from Home – Parental Guidance**

In St. Ailbe’s parents have always played a vital role in supporting our students to achieve their full potential. The present, “Living with Covid Strategy”, has had a huge effect on how schools manage teaching and learning and have posed many challenges for students, parents and teachers. Now, more than ever, we ask parents to be actively engaged in their children’s learning. It is crucial that we all work together to maintain the high standards of education that have always been part of St. Ailbe’s.

We are very proud of our students’ positive interactions with remote learning during the lockdown period. Their engagement and commitment was commendable. Their resilience in the face of these challenges has been incredibly strong. We want to continue to do our best for them.

**How Parents can Help**

Provide support for your children by:

1. Establishing routines and expectations.

2. Setting aside a space for your child to work in.

3. Monitoring communications from your child’s teachers. Additionally, if you have any concerns or queries, please email the subject teacher at their email address during school hours.

4. Beginning and ending each day by asking about your child’s learning.

5. Taking an active role in helping your children with their learning.

6. Encouraging physical activity and/or exercise.

7. Remembering that your child might be stressed or worried during this time.

8. Monitoring how much time your child is spending online.

To improve the effectiveness of online teaching and learning we have developed a clear set of rules and expectations for students. Please see below. Please bring these to the attention of your child.

We thank you for your continued support. We are all working and learning together at this time and by so doing we will get through this crisis. We will continue to communicate with you regularly and are here to provide support in any way we can.

Take care and stay safe.

Principal and Deputy Principal(s)

**Online Teaching and Learning –**

**Rules and Expectations for Students**

**When learning online, it is important that you realise all the normal school protocols around respect apply.  Behave as if you are physically in class. This means:**

1. **Be Prepared:**

* Virtual Classes take place from 09:30 to 14:30 (Monday – Friday).
* Have a suitable workspace away from distractions.
* Make sure that your device is fully charged and that you have all necessary materials. We would recommend the use of a PC, laptop or tablet rather than a mobile phone. They have larger screens, so are therefore they are easier to read and have less operational issues.
* Make sure you have any assigned work / learning / reading complete and submitted on time.
* Use your school journal to keep track of the work assigned & the work done.

1. **Be Punctual:**

* Be sitting at your workstation and logged in at the designated time. Waiting for late students can take a significant amount of time.
* Attend all classes.
* Respond to all emails sent to you by your teachers.
* Complete all assigned work on time.

1. **Be Respectful:** of your teacher and fellow students.

* Be presentable - dress appropriately.
* We advise that video cameras be switched off.
* Have mics muted unless you need to ask a question
  + Background noise can be very disruptive.
  + You can also use the “Hands Up” or Chat feature to ask questions.
* Be positive & support others in their learning.
* Only appropriate comments - written or spoken.
* Please & thank you are always appreciated!
* Please try to keep communication with Teachers within normal school hours.

1. **Be Engaged:**

* Do your best.
* The work and assignments you post must be your own work.
* Do not copy work from other students or any other source and pretend that it is your own.
* Take part in class tests and assessments honestly, and don’t share the answers with your classmates.

5.  **Be Secure:**

* St Ailbe’s has assigned all students a school email account.
* The school email is to be used for school communication only.
* The use of personal email accounts is acceptable only in agreed circumstances.
* Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details or class codes with any other student.

**Code of Conduct**

We expect students to do their best, to respect others and to behave in class:

* Inappropriate behaviour associated with online teaching and learning (e.g. See Guidelines below) will be dealt with on an individual basis, as per our Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy & Acceptable Use Policy apply - All on our website.
* Sanctions can range from contacting students’ parents to exclusion from online classes for a period of time.
* Disciplinary consequence for a breach of the Code of Behaviour/Acceptable Use Policy still apply as per normal.



* St. Ailbe’s reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

**Guidelines Specific to Online Behaviour:**

* **Do not use words or share content that is offensive or inflammatory** (this includes, but is not limited to, language, names or content that is sexist, racist, homophobic, sexually explicit, abusive, contains swearing or is otherwise likely to cause offence).  If you would not say it to someone’s face, do not say it online either.
* Do not “spam” other learners by posting the same comment multiple times or by adding comments that are unrelated to the class
* **Be aware of strong language, all caps and exclamation points:** It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood.Yes, grammar and spelling matter. In an educational setting, keep communication formal.
* **Be careful with humor and sarcasm:** You should not avoid being funny, (humor is always appreciated), just make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude.

**Staff Guidelines for Online Teaching**

There will be continuing challenges in the weeks ahead as students miss their friends, school, extra-curricular and social activities. ***Schools and teachers will continue to play a pivotal role in supporting normality and routine for the students.*** The challenge for us all will be to create conditions that enable all students to continue their Education over this period.

***With regard to teaching online, teachers should protect themselves at all times. Consider your personal and professional safeguarding obligations. You need to realise that you are projecting your class from your own private home into somebody else’s private home. And that you really do not know who is or is not at the other end. With that in mind please see the advice below.***

* Students and their parents will be notified as to the rules and expectations regarding students’ online behaviour.  (See attached). Sanctions laid out in our Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy will apply in cases where they are deemed appropriate.
* The Principal and Deputy Principal are here to support your online teaching. Any misbehaviours which occur online or otherwise and causes concerns should be referred on as normal.
* Teachers engaging in video based online classrooms need to safeguard their own privacy and professionalism. We advise students that their video cameras be switched off.
* Be mindful of your background displays or locations, dress and online discussions.
* The following link is recommended by the DES and provides further links and tutorials:- [www.pdst.ie/distancelearning](http:// www.pdst.ie/distancelearning).
* Our approved platform is Microsoft Office365. Using social media platforms to engage with students where personal phone numbers or non-school based email addresses are used are not deemed safe or appropriate due to GDPR non-compliance.
* When crafting responses to assignments and other submissions use simple, clear, constructive and appropriate language. Leave nothing open to interpretation.

**Student Engagement and Connection:**

Online teaching success reflects classroom based teaching success.

* Connect with every class regularly, depending on the number of periods you are timetabled with them per week.  (e.g. through live teaching, video tutorials, PowerPoints, providing work for each class).
* We have advised students and parents that the school day is 9 to 4.  If assigning work in the evening, please advise students not to do the work until the following day or if possible, set your assignments to send the next day.
* Make sure content is accessible and a plan is provided.
* Clearly indicate submission dates for assignments.
* The online classroom can prove isolating for teachers and students alike and at times the silence can feel very strange. Therefore, engaging in class activities which invite discussion at varying times can help support this engagement and connectedness.

**Assessment and Providing Feedback:**

The importance of teachers’ feedback on assignments and exams to students as a group and individually is very important. This ensures continuity and progression in learning, affirms students’ work and ensures that students stay motivated and focused while working at home.

* Set assignments
* Give feedback

**Set Expectations and Give Explicit Instructions:**

These expectations should include everything from what they can expect from you as their teacher to what will be required of them. The expectations can outline due dates for assignments, the length of time that they should be spending on tasks, etc.

**Ask For Feedback:**

Ask for [honest feedback](https://elearningindustry.com/meaningful-feedback-online-learning) as to how things are going. This can help particularly with regard to establishing pacing and workload for students. Sometimes the middle ground student is best used as a source for feedback.  Remember that the student who struggles in your class will more than likely struggle even more now.

**Teacher’s reassurances:** Providing reassurances and messages of guidance and support helps sustain students at this difficult time.

***Remember: Your contribution in providing routine, support and structure for students has never been more important and appreciated.***

\***Note:**

*Having an online learning and teaching policy will work for many schools but it is important to remember, when devising such procedures, that schools work in very different circumstances and that the expectations for students cannot always be the same. There are students who for a myriad of reasons cannot follow the usual school day when working from home. These include (list is not exhaustive) babysitting siblings, cooking meals, only one device available in the family (or no device being available!), no suitable space available for every child so sharing a space, unsuitable Wi-Fi, family members dealing with Covid-19, family isolating, additional or new mental health problems that were not present while in school, etc, etc).*