REMOTE EDUCATION POLICY

OHC&AT Trustees have agreed this Policy – 26th January 2024.

Jay Mercer
Chair of OHCAT Board

Peter Lauener
Chair of OHC Board

Remote Education Policy

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is a 'family' of providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works for mutual benefit. OHC&AT is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. Part of this commitment is ensuring that every pupil and student has access to high quality teaching and learning when they are unable to access school or College premises.

This policy sets out OHC&AT's approach to delivering remote education. It is written with regard to government guidance including 'Providing remote education' (DfE, 2023), "What's working well in remote education" (Ofsted, 2021) and "Safeguarding and remote education" (DfE, 2022), as well as evidence-informed guidance including "Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely" (EEF, April 2020) and "Remote education: Expectations, evidence and experience" (CST, 2021).

PRINCIPLES

OHC&AT is committed to ensuring that every pupil and student has access to high quality educational provision that supports and enables them to reach their full potential. Our schools and College centres deliver curricular and therapeutic provision that is differentiated according to need and informed by the ambitions of each individual young person.

OHC&AT recognises that onsite attendance at school or College is optimal for pupils and students. Every OHC&AT provision works in partnership with families, local authorities and other key stakeholders (e.g. healthcare professionals) to support consistent attendance for every pupil and student. Please refer to each provision's Attendance Policy for further details.

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

- School/College closures or restrictions on attendance.
- Individual cases where a pupil/student is unable to attend but is able to learn, for example where they are recovering from illness or injury, or where there is an escalation of complex need (e.g. physical health, mental health or SEND) that temporarily affects their ability to attend.

OHC&AT's position is that we have a duty to all our pupils and students to ensure that educational access is not compromised by periods of absence from school or College sites. When a pupil/student cannot attend onsite but is well enough to learn, OHC&AT provisions will always seek to overcome the barriers to attendance and provide support for the pupil/student to attend before offering remote education. We recognise that our pupils/students may experience disrupted onsite attendance as a result of their additional needs; it is our place as educators to support their continued access

to high quality education wherever possible, and to use remote education as part of a plan to support a return to onsite attendance.

This policy sets out the guiding principles for remote education at OHC&AT provisions. Details of each provision's remote education offer can be found on the school or College website.

DEFINITIONS

OHC&AT adheres to the definition of remote education as laid out in DfE guidance, which is "a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils." This may be delivered digitally (e.g. livestreamed or pre-recorded lessons, work set and assessed through online platforms such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams) or via analogue methods (e.g. printed home learning packs, textbooks). A blended learning approach may be deployed, where pupils/students access a mix of face-to-face and remote methods.

The Education Endowment Foundation's rapid evidence assessment of remote education finds that "*When implementing strategies to support pupils' remote learning, or supporting parents to do this, key things to consider include:*

- *Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered*
- *Ensuring access to technology is key, especially for disadvantaged pupils*
- *Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes*
- *Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes*
- *Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils"*

Accordingly, OHC&AT provisions will ensure that any required remote education provision is:

- Informed by, and responsive to, the needs and abilities of the school or College cohort;
- Aligned to the school or College curriculum and built on the principles of good teaching as onsite delivery would be;
- Appropriately differentiated, both in terms of the work that is set and the method of delivery (for example, delivering physical home learning packs where that is the preferred method of learning, or where there are known barriers to accessing online learning such as a lack of suitable devices);
- Clearly communicated to pupils/students and families, including when and how the pupil/student will be supported back into onsite attendance;
- Delivered and assessed in line with stringent safeguarding and data protection processes.

KEY POINTS

Where it is not possible for individuals or groups of pupils/students to attend onsite, the school or College will work with families to ensure that pupils/students can access the remote education offer. Any planned remote education provision will include clear

information on content, resources and assessment methods, including any websites and online platforms pupils/students are expected to access, and which members of school or College staff they will be interacting with. Remote education plans will also include clear plans for how and when the pupil/student will be supported to return to onsite attendance.

OHC&AT provisions operate clear procedures around delivering remote learning, including the following key points:

- Staff must adhere to the OHC&AT Staff Code of Conduct **at all times**, including when delivering remote learning.
- All delivery must take place from OHC&AT premises, via OHC&AT systems and using OHC&AT devices.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time and must take place during normal school/College hours.
- Ideally virtual sessions should be delivered to groups only, and at least two members of staff should attend.
- When planning delivery of live sessions, staff should consider the needs and profiles of each pupil/student intended to receive the session and risk assess accordingly.
- Live sessions should not be recorded unless they are 1:1 (see below) and images should not be made during live sessions. For example, if staff need to take a screenshot of content produced during a session, they must ensure that pupils'/students' faces and names are not in view.
- Staff should check whether pupils/students are happy to keep their cameras on during live classes, once pupil/student identities have been established at the start of the session. Use of cameras may be encouraged but not compelled.
- Staff and children/young people must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be neutral or blurred.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by the IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils/students.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Where remote access is used to deliver 1:1 sessions, for example counselling sessions, these must be recorded and the recordings safely stored in accordance with OHC&AT policies on IT acceptable use and records retention. Accordingly, the following stipulations have been made:

- 1:1 sessions must only be delivered from OHC&AT premises.
- 1:1 sessions must only be recorded on OHC&AT devices.
- Pupils/students and parents/carers must be made aware that sessions are being recorded and that recordings will be safely stored.

This is to ensure that pupils/students and staff are protected, both in terms of safeguarding and information security.

SAFEGUARDING AND ONLINE SAFETY

Any safeguarding concerns that arise in relation to remote education must be notified to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in their absence, another member of the Safeguarding Team) without delay, as set out in the Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy. OHC&AT staff receive regular safeguarding updates and training that covers specific risks around online safety and contextual safeguarding as well as overarching knowledge and safeguarding procedures.

When pupils/students are not able to attend school for a period of time, the risks associated with online activity including remote learning are potentially heightened. When sending work home to pupils/students currently unable to attend, staff include information on staying safe online and sources of support, including reporting pathways, where students have concerns about online activity. This includes details of Safeguarding teams, as well as external agencies including:

- Childline – for support
- UK Safer Internet Centre – to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP – for advice on making a report about online abuse

Academy/College websites are also kept updated with relevant links and other e-safety information for both pupils/students and families.

When setting home learning, OHC&AT provisions ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Staff maintain regular contact with all pupils/students not currently attending, and this provides a further opportunity to discuss online safety with them, their parents and carers. We are aware that when a pupil/student is unable to attend school for any length of time, families may wish to access additional home learning support, for example tutors or other specialists, and staff emphasise the importance of securing online support from reputable organisations/individuals who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children or vulnerable adults.

Please refer to each provision's Online Safety Policy for further information.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Information security, like safeguarding, is everybody's responsibility. All staff have a role to play in keeping sensitive information and personal data safe. Staff must immediately notify their Principal or Head of College of any concerns around potential/actual data breach relating to the delivery of remote education.

OHC&AT's main point of contact for data protection is Rachael Tucker: data.protection@ohcat.org / 020 3897 7002. The ESLT point of contact for data protection is Lynn Barratt. The DPO for OHC&AT is GDPR Sentry Limited.

Staff are required to deliver remote education from OHC&AT premises, using OHC&AT IT systems/devices, in accordance with the IT Acceptable Use Policy. There

are clear safeguarding and data security implications for staff using personal devices to conduct OHC&AT business, and therefore staff should not use personal IT equipment to conduct OHC&AT business, particularly where this extends to storing OHC&AT data e.g. linking personal smart phones to work email etc. In particular, staff **must not** take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils or students on their personal devices.

All remote education must be conducted using OHC&AT systems and devices: this includes the transmission, communication and storage of any digital data.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Within OHC&AT

Trustees will:

- Review this policy on an annual basis
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of educational provision through termly updates from ESLT

The Executive Senior Leadership Team (ESLT) will:

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of remote education within each Academy and the College, through CEO monthly monitoring with Principals of each provision
- Ensure that robust security protocols are maintained across all OHC&AT IT systems and devices
- Review and update this policy and any related policies/procedures at least annually, or as required by updates to legislation and national guidance

Within each OHC&AT provision

Principals will:

- Ensure that consistent onsite attendance is effectively promoted and supported through clear messaging, robust processes and individualised work with pupils/students who are experiencing barriers to attendance.
- Ensure all staff are aware of this policy and related documentation.
- Oversee the development and implementation of a remote education offer that is robust, accessible and fit for purpose.
- Select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school or College in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback, and make sure staff are trained in their use.
- Provide printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils/students who do not have suitable online access or where this is identified as the most suitable method of delivery.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of remote education delivery within their school or College, and act on any concerns or areas for improvement.
- Ensure that staff have access to OHC&AT systems and devices in order to deliver remote education, whether on- or offsite.

- Work collaboratively with families to identify and remedy any barriers to accessing remote education, including lack of access to technology, accessibility of materials, and any specific barriers relating to the pupil/student's individual needs.
- Ensure that staff understand and adhere to all safeguarding and data protection principles when delivering remote education.
- Work with Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure that safeguarding concerns are raised and acted upon in line with the Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Work with multidisciplinary teams to ensure that, as far as is practicable, ongoing therapeutic and medical support remains accessible to pupils/students who cannot attend – for example, this may take the form of online therapy sessions or working with families to transfer therapeutic interventions to the home environment.
- Publish information for pupils/students, parents and carers about remote education provision on the school or College website.

All staff will:

- Understand and adhere to this policy and all related policies and procedures listed at the end of this document
- Maintain high standards of professional behaviour while delivering remote education, in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct
- Ensure that any and all safeguarding concerns are raised and acted upon promptly and in the appropriate manner.
- Ensure that any and all data protection concerns are raised and acted upon promptly and in the appropriate manner.
- Ensure that remote education, and related communication, is delivered via OHC&AT systems. Staff **must not** give their personal contact details to pupils/students including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers.
- Maintain professional relationships with pupils/students **at all times**. No attempt should be made to build or encourage any friendship with pupils/students or their families outside of work. This includes telephone and personal contact and connecting via social media.

POLICY REVIEW DETAILS

Version:	1.2
Reviewer:	Laurie Cornwell, Julia James
Approval body:	Quality, Standards & Safeguarding Committee
Date this version approved:	26th January 2024
Due for review:	Spring 2025

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

Attendance Policy
Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Complaints Policy and Procedure (Academies/OHC)

Data Protection Policy and related documentation
IT Acceptable Use Policy
Online Safety Policy
Relationships and Sex Education Policy
Safeguarding and Wellbeing offers
Staff Code of Conduct

FURTHER RESOURCES

Providing remote education: guidance for schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools

What's working well in remote education (Ofsted)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education

Safeguarding and remote education (DfE)
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education

Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely (EEF)
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/covid-19-resources/best-evidence-on-supporting-students-to-learn-remotely

Safe remote learning hub (UK Safer Internet Centre)
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/safe-remote-learning-hub