



مدرسة جيمس متروبول
GEMS Metropole School
MOTOR CITY

Distance Learning Policy



Reviewed by: Mr. Naveed Iqbal
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Digital Home Learning in the event of complete school closure

In the event of an unforeseen school closure (e.g., due to natural disasters or health crises), GEMS Metropole School (MTS) will transition to online learning via **Microsoft Teams**. This platform will be used by all year groups to ensure the continuation of education. The guidelines below outline the roles, expectations, and procedures for staff, students, and parents during the online learning period. It also highlights specific provisions for the Infant, Junior, Prep, and Senior Schools.

School Timings

School timings remain unchanged during online learning. Students in years 3-13 must log in to Microsoft Teams between 7:45am-8:05 for registration with their lead teacher, and lessons will proceed as scheduled. For students from FS1-Y2, an online call link will be emailed to the parents for students to join.

How to log in to Microsoft Teams

Login Requirements: Students in years 3-13 must log in to Teams using their GEMS e-learning email and password (ending in @gemsed.com) Personal emails must not be used. Forgotten passwords can be reset by the Head of Year or via the GEMS Password Reset Portal.

Safeguarding

Students should only join lessons using their GEMS e-learning accounts; personal emails will not be accepted.

Attendance

Attendance will be recorded as **DL (Digital Learning)** for students who are present in online lessons. Students who fail to attend or notify the school of their absence will be marked as absent.

Breaks

Students should not spend the entire lesson in front of their screen. Teachers should design lessons that incorporate screen breaks, allowing students time away from devices. Students do not need to ask to use the rest room, however they should be present during the live calls with their teacher.

Microphone Use

To maintain a smooth lesson flow, teachers may mute all students at certain points to ensure clear communication. Students should only unmute when prompted by the teacher.

Camera Use

Students should have their cameras turned on when the teacher is delivering the live introductions. Please be mindful of background distractions.

Asking Questions

Students are encouraged to use the 'raise hand' function in Microsoft Teams if they have a question during the lesson. Teachers will do their best to engage with all students, but online learning presents unique challenges in managing large groups.

Internet Connection

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child has a stable internet connection during online lessons. If there are connectivity issues, either the student or parent should inform the teacher.

Tips for improving connection:

- Restart devices daily.
- Disconnect unnecessary devices.
- Avoid streaming/downloading during lessons.
- Turn off VPNs.
- Perform updates outside school hours.
- Keep devices near the router and fully charged.

E-Safety

E-safety protections will remain in place for students learning from home. These protections are mandatory for all students from Years 2-11.

IT Troubleshooting

- **Contact IT Support:** For technical issues, email itsupport_mts@gemsedu.com with "IT Support" in the subject line.
- **Supported Issues:** IT can assist with login issues related to Office 365 (Microsoft Teams, OneNote) and provide guidance on other technical concerns.

Staff Absenteeism

- **Forest School:** In case of staff absence, lesson materials will be emailed to parents by the Head of Year by 7:45am.
- **Values School:** Lesson materials will be uploaded to Microsoft Teams by the Head of Year by 7:45am.
- **Active and Future Schools:** Absent teachers/Heads of Department will upload work to the 'Assignments' section on Teams for students to complete independently.

Extra-Curricular Activities (ECAs)

All ECAs will be cancelled during periods of school closure.

Paid Afterschool Activities (ESM)

For enquiries regarding cancellation policies, please contact ESM directly.

Afterschool Interventions

For students who attend after-school interventions, teachers will upload independent work for students to complete.

Complaint Procedure

For any concerns, parents must follow the proper escalation process. This will ensure questions are handled efficiently. The escalation policy/process can be found [here](#).

Teacher Expectations by School Stage**Forest School (FS1-Y2):**

Teachers will use Teams for live calls for all lessons. Infant School teachers will be available online at 7.45am to welcome students and to take the register. Teachers will provide an overview of the day and take questions from students until 8.05am. For lessons, a 10-20 minute live introduction will be given, followed by task explanations; teachers will remain online for the lesson duration to address student questions. Verbal feedback will be provided for the duration of the online learning.

Values (Y3-6), Active (Y7-9), and Future School (Y10-13):

All lessons, including specialist lessons, will be conducted on Teams. If a specialist teacher does not have a Teams classroom set up, the lead teacher would need to add them to their class as a 'teacher'. For example, if the Year 5 music teacher does not have a Teams Classroom set up for 5A, the teacher of 5A should 'add them' as a teacher to their Teams Class for the duration of the school closure. This will ensure continuity of online calls.

Teachers from FS1-Y13 will be available online at 7.45am to welcome students and to take the register.

Teachers will provide an overview of the day and take questions from students until 8.05am.

At the start of lessons, teachers will provide a 10-20 minute live introduction to explain tasks.

Throughout the lesson, teachers will remain on the call but may turn off their camera and microphone. (This is to ensure that students and teachers have time away from their screens).

Verbal feedback will be provided unless online learning exceeds three days, after which feedback will be given via Teams Assignments.

For online learning days only, teachers can lift restrictions on students being able to comment on posts to support communication and lesson engagement. Teachers are responsible for closely monitoring the content of the posts.

Assessing Student Learning Online

Formative assessments will be used to monitor progress during online learning through the following methods:

- Questioning and Polls
- Online Quizzes (via MS Forms)
- Exit Tickets
- Presentations (PPT, Sway)
- Padlet Posts
- Peer and Self-Assessment

Parent Roles and Responsibilities

- **Notification of Absences:** Parents must inform the school of student absences using normal communication channels.
- **Support:** Parents should not join live video calls or interrupt lessons.
- **Communication:** Parents will be notified of school closures and the transition to online learning via text message and email, with as much advance notice as possible.
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Dual Learning- when there are students both in school and at home.

During the Holy Month of Ramadan, parents will receive a Microsoft Form to indicate whether their child will remain at home on Fridays.

Registration:

To further enhance our safeguarding procedures, students who have opted for home study must attend online morning registration for years FS1-6.

FS1-Y2- Dual Learning

Forest School students will join a Teams call with their Head of Year from 8:15-8:30am and 'Distance Learning' will be recorded onto Go4Schools. The link to this online meeting will be emailed to parents who have indicated that their child will be studying at home. During the call, the Head of Year will explain to students the work that they are expected to complete under the supervision of their parents.

At the end of the morning, students are expected to rejoin the same meeting link from 11:30-11:45am to feedback on their progress and to ask any questions that they may have.

Please note: There will be no live lessons for any year group during dual learning; all online learning will be asynchronous.

Years 3-6- Dual Learning

Values School students will join a Teams call with their Head of Year from 8:15-8:30am and 'Distance Learning' will be recorded onto Go4Schools. The link to this online meeting will be posted onto the child's main Teams Classroom by the Class Teacher. Students in Values School are expected to join the meeting link whereby the Head of Year will greet the students and provide a Q&A session for the activities that are to be completed that day for subjects the class teacher has set. Students can then work independently at home on these activities in their usual Teams Classroom.

At the end of the morning, students are expected to rejoin the same meeting link from 11:30-11:45am to feedback on their progress and to ask any questions that they may have.

Please note that online support via a Teams call is offered at these times only; all online learning will be asynchronous.

Years 7-13- Dual Learning

To support students learning from home, classroom-based teachers from years 7-13 will upload presentations and resources onto Microsoft Teams for independent study; students may work through these materials at their own pace.

For Active and Future School students, there will be no online calls, as lead teachers will be in class. Instead, secondary students are expected to demonstrate trust and independence by completing their work at home and discussing any questions with their teachers upon their return to school on Monday. If students have indicated 'online learning' through the Microsoft Form then they will be marked as present, however students who have not indicated 'online learning' will be marked as absent.

Please note: There will be no live lessons for any year group during dual learning; all online learning will be asynchronous.