

DSL Remote Learning Guidelines: Secondary School

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1. Development of Microsoft Teams

1.1 Organisation of Year Teams

In the German School London's Remote Learning Programme, all of the year teams are formed in the same way. Each team consists of a General Channel, a 'Tech-Nick' Channel, Subject Chats (*Fachchats*), Form Channels (*Klassen-Kanäle*) and a Teachers-Only Channel.

On the General Channel specific discussion of academic topics and questions is discouraged. Instead students should be trained to use this channel to raise more general concerns, for example, those related to basic organisational procedures. It is further recommended that this channel be monitored primarily by the Year Team Speaker or Deputy Speaker (see 2.4 below). Each year group's General Channel further provides tabs to relevant files, to their Class Notebook and to the assignments which have been set for the students.

The Tech-Nick Channel is administered by the DSL Remote Learning Administration Team, which addresses all the technical questions or problems that students might have.

The Subject Chats facilitate communication between students, as well as between students and their subject teachers (see 2.5 below). Here students can share amongst themselves and with their teachers any questions that they might have about specific assignments, as well as about general academic content and methodologies. The solutions to specific assignments can be uploaded by subject teachers onto the relevant Subject Chat. No new assignments will be posted during the week.

A Year Group Channel is private and accessible only to the students of a given year group and their subject teachers. Also found on the Year Group Channel between 8:30 and 10:00 is the daily 'Kick Off', when registration to check student attendance takes place. In addition, the Kick Off gives Form Tutors a chance to keep in touch with and get individual feedback from the students in their form.

The Teachers-Only Channel is a platform that facilitates communication between the teachers of a given year group (see 2.5).

Finally, if a year team speaker wishes to, an additional channel can be set up to provide a virtual schoolyard where students can take a break together and informally share their responses to the day's lessons.

1.2 Chats

Across the various teams and channels are chats, where teachers can write to individual students or groups of students.

1.3 Responsibilities of Year Teams

All the information concerning students in the forms of a particular year group will be published on the General Channel.

The Tech-Nick Channel is run by the DSL Remote Learning Administration Team to give technical support to students across the year groups.

The subject teachers of each year group are required to lead Subject Chats (see 2.5). Each department can decide internally about who will take primary responsibility for their subject's chat within a particular year. Often this role will be assumed by the year's subject coordinator.

Teachers must keep their messaging function turned on. Contributions which are meant to be read by all faculty members should begin with '@teachers only'. This will ensure that every teacher receives the message. Teachers are asked to check daily for messages.

1.4 DSL Remote Learning Community

This team is a communications platform on which teachers can and should contact each other. Furthermore, there is a corresponding General Channel on which all organisational information should be shared. In addition, there are tabs to files with guidelines for the Remote Learning Programme. Further tabs in Microsoft Teams can be used for general technical support.

A special channel 'Technical Issues and Solutions' is also available. Through this channel, specific technical problems can be sent directly to the Remote Learning Administration Team, who will work on appropriate solutions.

2. Members of the Remote Learning Community

2.1 Headmaster and School Management Group

The school administration leads the organisation and coordination of the DSL Remote Learning Programme, gathering feedback, deciding on necessary changes and working on the further development of the programme in close cooperation with all the active members of the remote learning community.

Proposals for conceptual and procedural changes to the programme are presented to the headmaster and school management group, who, in conjunction with appropriate school committees, decide on whether to approve them.

2.2 School Coordinators

The coordinators for the lower school (years 5 to 7), the middle school (years 8 to 10) and the upper school (years 11-12), who are members of year teams (including the Teachers-Only channels), must maintain consistency across the year groups which they coordinate. They are the line managers and first point of contact for the Year Team Speakers, as well the contact for parents once they have first communicated with relevant subject teachers. The school coordinators are also responsible for monitoring the assignments set in the year groups that they oversee.

2.3 Department Heads

The department heads and their teams are responsible for the quality of the tasks assigned in their subjects. These tasks should follow the Remote Learning Guidelines, the criteria set internally by the department and accepted pedagogical principles.

It is important that all departments are represented to an appropriate extent in the DSL Remote Learning Programme. The department heads ensure that, in each year group, their subject is coordinated by one of the teachers in that year, or, if that is not possible, by another member of their department.

Subjects which are taught only one or two hours per week should not set weekly assignments but should rather alternate weeks with other subjects that offer a similar number of lessons. This arrangement of assignments should be coordinated by the relevant department heads. The assignments should reflect the limited number of weekly lessons; in other words, the homework for two weeks in a subject with two hours of lessons per week should not exceed four hours of remote learning.

2.4 Year Team Speaker and Deputy Speaker

The leader and his/her deputy are responsible for the organisation and support of the year group team. Specific duties can be divided between them.

For example, one possibility would be for one of them to take on required organisational tasks, including the coordination and delegation of jobs within the team, while the other would be in charge of communication between parents and teachers of the year group.

The primary duties of the year team speaker and his /her deputy are:

- a) To communicate with the subject teachers of the year group on the Teachers-Only Channel
- b) To monitor the input of all subjects taught in the year group and to check on assignment sets, with special attention paid to the cumulative amount of work being assigned across the curriculum
- c) To oversee the year group's General Channel
- d) To coordinate communication with the parents, for example, through sending to form tutors emails containing information relevant to all students in the year, so that they can be forwarded to the form's parent representatives.

Communications of the team speaker with colleagues should be sent on the Teachers-Only Channel.

The speaker and his / her deputy should coordinate the work of their team according to the current Remote Learning Guidelines. To adhere to these guidelines, they must work closely both with the subject teachers of the year and with the respective school coordinator. To facilitate this collaboration, weekly meetings with the headmaster and school management group are scheduled, currently on Thursday afternoons.

2.5 Subject Teachers and Year Team Subject Coordinators

In general, those who teach a particular subject within a given year group should work together to create a set of appropriate assignments for the upcoming week (see 3.1). Before the assigned work is passed on to the students, it should first be submitted to other teachers in the team.

In addition, subject teachers are expected to:

- a) Support the students through Subject Chats and offer to hold video conferences in the time slots allocated to the year group
- b) Check and provide feedback on assignments completed by the students in their classes (though not on those done by students in other subject teachers' classes within the year)
- c) Regularly check messages on the Teachers-Only Channel
- d) Keep the *UNTIS* Class Book by recording both daily attendance ('Absences Checked') and set assignments.

Furthermore, for each year and subject, a subject coordinator should be chosen to oversee the students' remote learning programme. It is recommended that this teacher be primarily responsible for leading the Subject Chats within the year group (see point 'a' above).

The duties of the year team subject coordinator are to:

- a) Supervise the Subject Chats in the year group
- b) Coordinate the departmental process of creating assignment sets for the year group.

2.6 Form Tutors

The form tutors and deputy form tutors have a special role to play. They are required to lead the daily Kick Off, which begins every morning at 8:30 on the year group's Form Chat (*Klassenchat*). The Kick Off serves to structure the student's day. All students must respond by 10:00, after which the form's attendance list is recorded on *WebUntis*. To support students in years 5 to 10, a team of teachers can offer, during the Kick Off, organisational and methodological support for the day's remote learning tasks.

2.7 Students

Students will receive a set of assignments made available to them on Sunday at 6 pm, on which they can work during the upcoming school week. These assignments will be due by the following Friday at 6 pm. Assignments are intended to facilitate the learning process of each student and to be done in as much depth as possible, given the individual student's ability. In addition, live online class sessions (*LOU*) will be offered to support and challenge the students accordingly (see 3.6).

Students will be challenged first and foremost by the daunting task of structuring their weekly workload. They can choose to do so by devising their own weekly organisational plan or by following a plan suggested by their year group team.

Students who need special help with time management may also schedule video calls for support. These video calls, which must meet the requirements of the school safeguarding policy, can either involve small groups of students and a teacher or can be one-to-one calls in which a student's individual work plan is devised. These sessions can initially be arranged on a daily basis and then less frequently, encouraging the student to plan his/her day each morning and then to later reflect on the relative success of the plan. The students in greatest need of extra support will be identified by the form tutor or a member of the special educational needs support team (*Beratungsquadrat*).

2.8 Students in the Realschule

As far as possible, students in the *Realschule* will be taught, as up to now, at an appropriate level. Their previous supervisors, teaching assistants and interns will have access to Microsoft Teams in order to continue to support them.

2.9 Parents

Parents have an important role to play in the remote learning community by helping their children to cope with the challenge of weekly assignments. The subject teachers will make a concerted effort to design assignment sets that can be completed independently by the students. However, this will not always be possible for every student. Nor can every problem which students encounter be resolved successfully through the video chats, introductory explanations or writing frameworks provided by their teachers. It is therefore essential that parents help their children with the organisation of their school work, for example, through designing weekly plans and daily targets with them. To further aid students, supplementary materials, such as overviews, organizational models and educational videos, will be supplied by the school.

2.10 DSL Remote Learning Administration Team

The current members of the DSL Remote Learning Administration Team are Barbara Johannis, Michael Schnirch, Christoph Kemptner, Frans Hansen and Benjamin Hecht. They can be consulted on all technical matters. Every morning at 10:00 on the Remote Learning Community, the team provides instructional tutorials, as well as video consultations about technical issues.

3. Procedures

3.1 Setting and Checking Assignments

As explained in 2.3 above, the subject teachers in each year create an assignment set so that, as far as possible, the assignments will be suitable for the entire year group. The year team speaker then submits the set to his /her team to check that the cumulative amount of work assigned across the curriculum for the upcoming week is not excessive. School coordinators, who have access to all the teams for which they are responsible, also check that the assigned workload is appropriate for each year group.

In addition, assignments must meet a number of criteria:

- a) The material covered should be more limited in scope than is usual in classes with same number of weekly lessons. Experience has shown that students need more time to do work at home and can be easily overwhelmed by excessive demands
- b) For this reason, assignments should be subdivided into two sections, one with basic required tasks and one with supplementary tasks, thus giving students a bit more leeway. If there is a pedagogical justification, teachers may also require specific students to complete both sections of assignments.
- c) All assignments should be set on Microsoft Teams so that students can become accustomed to a consistent format.
- d) On each assignment, an estimate of the time required to complete it should be noted. In chats with the students afterwards, teachers should get feedback concerning how realistic their time estimates for the previous week's assignments were. In this way, teachers can keep an eye on the student workload and can learn to better estimate the time required for specific tasks.

The next week's assignments should be uploaded by subject teachers by 4 pm on Friday, before they are released for the students on Sunday evening. In this way, year team speakers will have enough time to monitor beforehand the total amount of work being assigned within the year group.

The feedback which students receive on their completed assignments should be sent primarily through Microsoft Teams, where it can be read directly via 'Aufgaben/ Assignments'. Alternatively, evaluations of student work can be communicated on One Note pages or in individual chats. What is most important is that the teacher's feedback be given promptly, generally by the Friday of the following week. As already mentioned in 2.5 above, feedback should be provided by the student's own subject teacher. Appendix 2 of the Remote Learning Guidelines, 'Teacher Feedback on Student Assignments', has been provided by the coordinators to outline the methods used to give students feedback on their work.

3.2 Communication with Students

Communication with students should take place primarily on Microsoft Teams. In addition, Subject Chats or private chats can be used. As described in 2.6, form tutors offer a Kick-off Chat every morning during registration. Every student must respond with a 'like' or must answer a specific question of the day. Form tutors can also use this time to go around the class, for example on a video chat, to check on how everyone is faring. Through this daily contact, form tutors can promptly pass on to relevant subject teachers any questions or concerns their students might have, so that problems can be resolved without delay.

Since marks must be given across the curriculum, all teachers should regularly check the work of their students, even if it is on an assignment that has been set by another member of their department. (This is in compliance with the Ministry of Education's documentation requirements.) Teachers have access to the year teams of their classes and can check all assignments submitted by their students. Within the school week, by Friday afternoon, they should respond to students with comments about their work and should keep a record of students' achievements.

According to our school safeguarding policy, teachers are advised not to have one-to-one video or audio conferences with their students. If, however, this is unavoidable, then explicit permission from the student's parents or guardians is required beforehand. Short, occasional, rather than regular, conversations between teachers and students using the audio mode are possible but should be kept to a minimum.

Teachers can arrange for compulsory chats or telephone and video conferences to take place at specified times. Due to data protection laws, everyone involved must first expressly consent to having their conversation recorded. Violation of this legal requirement could lead to an individual's exclusion from remote learning platforms, as dictated by the DSL's House Rules, 3k, and the current version of the school's E-Safety Policy.

3.3 Communication With Colleagues

The most important communications platforms for teachers are the DSL Remote Learning Community and the Teachers-Only channels within each year group. All teachers are required to regularly check both of these platforms. Important information will be tagged so that all members of a channel will see it.

3.4 Communication with Parents

The advantages of online schooling are closely tied to the challenges of keeping separate one's private and professional spheres, especially when these are taking place at the same location, as is currently the case for many members of our school community. Consequently, everyone is encouraged to limit his / her professional communications to appropriate working hours. Emails or other digital communications should adhere to the requirements of the school's current E-Safety Policy.

3.5 Technical Questions and Problems

Technical questions and problems should be communicated, first and foremost, through the Technical Issues and Solutions Channel. The DSL

Remote Learning Administration Team will address the concerns of members of the community as quickly as possible.

3.6 Forms for Interaction with the Students

In addition to using ‘Aufgaben/Assignments’ and other above-mentioned channels for communicating with the students, it is possible for teachers to offer video conferences and webinars within the framework of their lessons. To do this, they must first refer to the time slots allotted to all year groups, since some families may not have the technical infrastructure required to simultaneously accommodate multiple audio conferences. Subject teachers should guarantee that students can have direct contact with them through a chat or video chat for a minimum of 90 minutes per week. Video conferences held outside the authorised time slot must be entered in the official school calendar.

Zeit /Tag	MO	DI	MI	DO	FR
9.00 – 9.45	5	11	9	5	11
9.45 – 10.30	6	12	10	6	12
10.30 – 11.15	7	5	11	7	5
11.15 – 12.00	8	6	12	8	6
12.00 – 12.45	9	7	5	9	7
12.45 – 13.30	10	8	6	10	8
14.00 – 14.45	11	9	7		9
14.45 – 15.30	12	10	8		10

a) Virtual Classrooms

As shown in the above chart, virtual classrooms are already being offered in all year groups during allocated time slots. These meetings should be used to convey general information to the students and should be organised in the following way:

- The year group’s time slot on a given day should be devoted to a maximum of four subjects
- All of the subject teachers involved in the meeting should be present at its start on the General Channel
- After a short introduction, subject teachers should proceed to their department’s Subject Chat (*Fachchat*) to open simultaneous meetings with students.

b) Video conferences and Live Online Lessons (LOU)

In Subject Chats held during the official time slot for a given year group, teachers can hold video conferences. Should a subject teacher of one form want to offer special activities for his/ her students, a spontaneous video conference can be arranged in their Form Chat (*Klassenchat*). Such conferences cannot, however, be planned in advance due to technical constraints. Subject teachers whose students come from different forms within the year group can meet with their students by setting up a separate Course Chat (*Kurs-Chat*) for a video conference.

Teachers of subjects which meet four or more hours per week, such as Maths, German, English, French and Spanish, should offer one additional video conference (*LOU*) per week, to be scheduled by the year team speaker. When needed, teachers of other subjects may also arrange with the team speaker for an additional conference with their students.

The following rules and procedures apply:

- Live online lessons (*LOU*) are compulsory in every year group
- At the start of scheduled time slots, students should meet on the General Channel, where room will be made for them to share their basic questions and concerns. Thereafter, students should follow individual subject teachers to respective Form Chats (*Klassenchats*), where live class sessions will be held
- Lesson units should not last longer than allowed by the time slot, generally 40 minutes
- The scope of the lesson will be indicated in the week's assignment set
- As part of the lesson, students may be called upon to present prepared materials; however, they must be granted sufficient time in advance to prepare for this
- Further live sessions can be held outside of the official time slot. These must be VOLUNTARY for the students and not required for the week's assignment set. These supplementary lessons can be used to to both support and challenge the students in their learning process
- Team speakers should monitor the year's commitments during a given week and should contact teachers and cancel additional meetings when the students' workload becomes excessive.

3.7 Illnesses and absences

In case of illness, teachers must inform both Herr Nitschke and Frau Noch and must record their absences on Cezanne. The department head should identify a possible cover teacher. In general, this should be a subject teacher working within the same year group (with duties outlined in 3.1). If the department head is ill, his/ her absence should be communicated as above

(to Head, Assistant Head and Cezanne) and a cover teacher should be identified.