Principles of Schools working practices during the COVID-19 Closure of Schools

The principles outlined below have been agreed by members of the Buckinghamshire Small Schools Association, The Primary Executive Board and the Buckinghamshire Association of Secondary Headteachers.

The principles are a guide to how schools could operate during the closure period and are intrinsically linked to the use of digital learning practice by schools at this time.

All of the bodies involved fully appreciate a school's ability to choose their own guiding principles, however, we hope that these key principles are supportive for Headteachers at this time. The principles are also a reflection of the Child Protection guidance sent to schools by Buckinghamshire Council.

Principles

1.Schools can support parents and pupils by keeping in touch with them. It is important to keep in touch with your whole school community. Making phone calls to parents and chatting with your pupils can really enthuse your pupils and their parents at this time. Keeping touch supports social and emotional needs and can encourage pupil's academic engagement.

2. Maintain communication with the vulnerable, Special Educational Needs and hard to reach members of your school community and keep a log of the communications that you have with these particular pupils and parents. Always try to speak to the pupil, especially in child protection and child in need circumstances.

3. Have clear Digital Working Guidelines for staff and pupils to ensure that you are safeguarding both your staff and your pupils. Only use platforms that you feel are safe, reliable and secure.

4. Gaining consent from parents for Digital Lessons is not realistically achievable at this point, if you have not already done so. If possible stick to your digital platforms and tools that you have always used and avoid introducing new software. Existing software such as Microsoft 365 (inc. Teams) Google Education (inc Classroom), Sam Learning, Kaboodle, Senica and Sea Saw for example, may have been used in school and at home by pupils. This forms a normal working practice, and is covered by your GDPR Privacy Policy. Ensure your Digital Working Guidelines reflect this and that staff all use the same tools and do not deviate from the agreed software. The Oak National Academy is a realistic exemption to this principle as it is a Government backed learning tool.

5. If you have made changes or introduced new digital working platforms reissue your GDPR Privacy Policy to parents. This is a key document that demonstrates how you use their children's data. You should gain retrospective consent from parents to use the online platforms

6. Clearly signpost to your community what other support is available for families at this time. A Family's need to reach out when they can't fully reach out to school must not be underestimated.