

EDINBURGH LEARNS

EdinburghLearns@Home: Schools Guidance *January 2021*

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Introduction

Edinburgh's schools, and their staff teams, have coped admirably with the challenges of previous lockdown measures put in place in the UK to limit the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), together with implementing blended (connected) learning approaches to support children and young people who have been required to self-isolate since returning to school in August. Throughout, there has been an absolute commitment to delivering the best possible education for our children and young people, always bearing in mind the reality of the situation in which families are living and the context in which our schools are operating.

Following the First Minister's Announcement on Monday 4th January, 2021, Scotland's schools are required to close temporarily to restrict the transmission of the virus. As you are aware, the exceptions are the children of key workers and those children who are vulnerable, who will attend their own school to access childcare and support to engage in the learning set remotely for their peers.

The next step of the challenge for our schools is to support young people as they continue with this next stage of their learning throughout the month of January. We are all mindful that the initial lockdown, and subsequent periods of self-isolation for some, has created and widened gaps in learning for a significant number of our young people. We know that every attempt will be made to ensure that any gaps do not widen further during the forthcoming weeks.

Schools now need to implement their Remote Learning Contingency Plans which we asked you to consider in Renewal Plans. It is obvious that there is a need for a consistent approach which undoubtedly involves the use of digital technology. However, we need to safeguard against learners, who do not have digital access, being disadvantaged.

Below we set out the way in which we think this can be achieved. We are mindful that every school is unique and faces its own particular set of challenges, and we will continue to work with schools to find the best solutions for them. We will also look to reduce unnecessary workload, recognising the pressures that this brings to bear and that our staff need time to attend to their own health and wellbeing.

To provide further practical support, this guidance includes:-

- Links to Edinburgh Learns Guidance :- Blended Learning, Assessing Learners' Progress & Digital Responsible Use Protocol and Quick Start Guides, Digital Professional Learning Offer
- Practical examples, across all sectors, of Remote Learning Contingency Plans from within our own CEC schools. Please note that there is no expectation that you implement these models but you may find these helpful for your own context.
- References to a range of Local and National remote learning resources.

The QICS and Edinburgh Learns Team will provide ongoing support as we move into this phase of delivering remote learning. Please do not hesitate to contact the team should you have any questions or concerns.

Teaching and Learning at Home

For all staff, the provision of teaching and learning experiences will continue to be part of their working day. This will take the form of setting remote learning tasks and/or working in their school to provide essential childcare and support for learning for vulnerable children and those of key workers.

General Principles

Schools have taken different approaches to providing learners with a framework, or suggested plan, for remote learning during the initial lockdown and to support cohorts of self-isolating pupils since August. To support the need for a consistent approach, the following principles should apply:-

- Learning activities should be provided, including those which can be undertaken at a time to suit learners and their families in the current context.
- Every child has regular access to a teacher. This should include contact to provide opportunities for learning conversations to take place. Feedback on tasks set and submitted should be provided, together with Health & Wellbeing check-ins undertaken. No teacher is expected to respond to pupils outwith normal working hours.
- Additional check-ins may be necessary for children and young people, not attending school, who are considered vulnerable or in need of additional support with their learning. These can be taken via an agreed platform such as email or other agreed platform.
- Digital provision should be used to maximum effect to support the delivery of remote learning, ensuring adherence to Responsible User Protocols to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.
- Young people who do not have digital access should be provided with alternative learning activities.
- Live learning may be offered but this could also be recorded to support flexibility of access. This will be delivered in line with school planning taking into account pupils' needs.
- Learning activities should allow for 15-25 hours of pupil engagement per week, arranged in blocks of 3-5 hours daily (see below for guidance on the breakdown between BGE and the Senior Phase).
- Also allow some time for learners to engage in wider activities which will benefit their health and wellbeing such as physical and outdoor learning, creative learning experiences and life skills.
- Provide learners & parents/carers with guidance to ensure that they can manage their learning to maximise engagement.

Early Years

- Due to current restrictions for Early Learning and Childcare commencing on 28th December 2020 the majority of children will not be able to access their setting for their funded ELC hours. There is therefore a need to support the continuity of interactions, play and learning for children during this time.
- Building on the experience from the previous lockdown and drawing on our contingency plans within Early Years we are in a positive position to support our children and families.
- You will know best how to reach out and engage with the families within your Nursery class and how you will provide the resources to support them. You will have identified families who do not have access to digital resources and so will need alternative packs for their children.
- To meet the needs of the ELC sector an Early Years pack will be sent out to all schools.

Primary Schools

- There is no expectation that schools replicate the entirety of the primary school day remotely. Schools should identify the best model for learner engagement to reflect their context and needs.
- A minimum of 3 Literacy tasks and 3 Numeracy tasks should be set each week which provide opportunities for pupils to engage with experiences and outcomes which ensure appropriate progression in their learning.

- Additional rich learning tasks should be set which require pupils to apply core skills across a range of learning contexts. This may also include physical and outdoor learning, creative tasks and tasks which focus on the development of life skills.
- The combination of learning tasks set should allow for the recommended hours of pupil engagement i.e. 15-20 hours weekly.

Secondary Schools

- There is no expectation that schools replicate the entirety of the school timetable remotely. Schools should identify the best model for learner engagement to reflect their situation and needs.
- It is important that Senior Phase learners experience progression in learning during lockdown, given that course content must still be covered in time for grades to be agreed by the end of May.
- We are engaging with SQA to seek advice regarding the implications of lockdown on assessing learner progress. Any planned, timed assessments for January should be delayed, either until February (assuming schools reopen) or until such time as SQA give clarity regarding the undertaking of timed assessments remotely.
We understand that SQA are working on contingency models should lockdown extend beyond January.
The current SQA advice regarding the production of estimates, including reference to various approaches to assessment, can be found at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95258.html>
- Class teachers will support the continuity of learning in the BGE. This will include the setting of learning tasks at appropriate levels and the provision of feedback.
- The combination of learning tasks set should allow for recommended hours of pupil engagement as follows:
BGE 15-20 hours weekly;
Senior Phase 20-25 hours weekly.
- We are working on identifying and sharing materials with schools which can be used to help support Senior Phase learners with their study skills. More information will be shared as soon as possible.

Special Schools

Special schools will be open for children and young people whose parents are Key Workers, along with other identified learners as agreed with parents/carers and professionals. This will be reviewed throughout the period of remote or blended learning. Some schools will augment this with additional activities including, for example, community walks. There will be close partnership working with our third-sector partners to ensure continuity for those children and young people who access these supports.

Remote or blended learning will be offered for all learners who are able to access this, and home learning packs will also be available for learners. There will be regular virtual contact with parents and carers to help them to deliver home learning.

Digital Provision

We are aware that schools are at different stages with regard to the use of digital technology to support remote. It is important that we move, as far as possible, to a more consistent offer. Learners will be supported by their teachers, key workers, other staff or other responsible adult to develop and enhance their understanding as is age and stage appropriate. This extends to learning

in school and at home. We are working towards all learners across City of Edinburgh having access to, and making use of, digital technologies to support their learning.

The safety of our pupils and staff in the use of Digital technology is paramount. Therefore, it is essential that the Digital Responsible User Protocol is shared, and fully understood, by all engaging in the use of Digital platforms. This Protocol provides guidance on the appropriate and effective use of digital technology, within learning and teaching, to give all City of Edinburgh learners the opportunity to further engage in learning, maintain and develop relationships, and to develop digital skills vital for learning, life and work. This Protocol has been created in collaboration with Head Teacher colleagues and members of the Teachers' Panel to ensure all staff and pupils are safe and secure, operating within a respectful learning context at all times.

Digital learning includes:-

- Providing learning tasks and resources on-line e.g. through Teams, Learning Journals and School websites.
- Check-ins between teachers and pupils. This may be to provide support with learning, provide feedback or check-in with pupils (classes, groups or individuals) regarding their Health & Wellbeing.
- Recorded (asynchronous) learning which learners can access flexibly. There is a great deal of research which suggests that this approach is one of the most effective that can be taken for remote learning.
- Live (synchronous) learning. It is not expected that an entire in-school class lesson should be replicated. Research supports approaches which aim to "chunk" learning into more manageable amounts.

Teachers will select from the above as appropriate, to best meet the needs of their learners and their context. There is no expectation that teachers must offer all of these options.

Provision of Feedback to Support Progression in Learning

As you are aware, effective feedback is essential in informing and supporting progress in learning. We appreciate the challenges our teachers face in providing consistent, manageable, feedback to pupils and in gathering evidence of pupils' learning during school closures. This obviously impacts the rigour we are able to build into judgements made about pupils' progress through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels and Senior Phase courses. However, it is important that we offer our learners the opportunity to progress through the relevant CfE Levels and Senior Phase courses, whilst recognising the need to ensure that existing skills and knowledge are consolidated. Approaches to providing feedback should be manageable in terms of frequency of contact with pupils. Senior leadership teams should agree the approach with their staff teams for providing this, at school level, taking full account of their own context.

Assessing Learners' Progress

Schools should aim to set assessment tasks, and gather evidence of learning, which inform professional judgements about pupils' progress. Predictions about pupils' attainment levels, submitted to the Central Team in November, can be used as a valid source of assessment information, together with considering the learning which has taken place since then.

Closing the Gap Workforce (CTG)

Closing the Gap teachers should be deployed in line with the current model in Primary, Secondary and Special sectors. This should include working with identified cohorts of learners who require additional support to prevent gaps in learning emerging/widening, including the delivery of specific Literacy and Numeracy interventions. They may also be deployed to further develop on-line

resources and digital learning approaches. It is entirely appropriate for CTG teachers to backfill for permanent members of staff to allow them to undertake this support. It is important in all planning to remember that Closing the Gap is a key national priority.

Support for Pupils Attending Hubs

Young people attending the Hubs should enjoy a parity of experience with their peers learning at home. They should be supported in accessing remote learning tasks set, engage in learning conversations and be provided with feedback as for the other young people in their class. Particular consideration should be paid to providing additional support to vulnerable young people who have existing gaps in their learning.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Roles and Responsibilities:- (Including non-digital):

The Senior Leadership Team should:

- Identify a Lead for Remote Learning.
- Maintain lines of communication with staff, learners, parents/carers and the wider school community. Ensure that staff are signposted to sources of support.
- Provide learners & parents/carers with guidance to ensure that they can manage their learning (suggested hours as above), balanced with a range of other activities to support Health & Wellbeing, Creativity and Life Skills.
- Work towards equity of access for all learners.
- Prioritise health and wellbeing for all stakeholders, including staff. Ensure that expectations are realistic.
- Consider ways to provide learning, and feedback, to pupils who do not have Digital Access. It may be that, where schools have the capacity, staff deliver/collect learning to these pupils, operating within Infection Control Guidelines.
- Arrange for learners to progress through CfE levels and Senior Phase courses, as appropriate, through arrangements for Planning and Assessment.
- Ensure realistic learning is planned to the end of January.
- Agree with staff suitable timescales for providing feedback to learners on their progress.
- Consider possible mechanisms for capturing learner engagement with home learning, e.g. use of Microsoft Forms (we will provide support with this).
- Liaise with the school QIEO/Edinburgh Learns Team to agree any support.

Class Teachers should:

- Plan and deliver remote learning experiences for learners, in collaboration with colleagues as appropriate OR plan and deliver learning experiences for pupils attending Hub Schools, which ensure parity with pupils learning at home.
- Wherever possible, provide differentiated content and consider support and challenge activities.
- Provide manageable feedback to learners, as agreed with SLT.
- Gather evidence of learning to inform professional judgements about learners' progress.

Support for Learning staff should:

- Provide class teachers with support and advice, as appropriate, to accommodate the remote learning curriculum they are providing to learners requiring extra support.

- Maintain communication with parents & carers of learners with Individual Education Plans and, where relevant, Co-ordinated Support Plans, to discuss any additional support requirements to access the remote learning curriculum.
- Provide information to class teachers to inform professional judgements about learners' progress.

Pupil Support Assistants should:

- Provide support to learners, and staff, as agreed with their Line Manager.