

EIS Guidance to Instrumental Music Teachers ('IMTs') Working at Home During School Closure

With schools closed for the foreseeable future, IMTs across the country are engaged in delivering as effectively as possible remote learning opportunities for pupils. The following guidelines are intended to support this process, striking a balance between what is desirable, achievable and sustainable and acknowledging that tuition in some circumstances will by its nature be conducted on an individual basis.

Managing Expectations

1. Whilst there is a shared commitment to ensure a continuity of instrumental music tuition as part of educational provision during the period of school closure, there should be no expectation that the contingency measures being put in place can replicate the normal programme of delivery.
2. Local Authorities, all school staff, pupils and their parents should understand that while all efforts are being made to offer instrumental music tuition to young people while they are at home, it is unrealistic to expect normal service to continue and be maintained at this time.
3. Focusing on what can be delivered effectively is likely to be a more productive approach than over-stretched ambitions.

Looking After Your Health and Wellbeing

4. Taking care of our physical and mental health is crucial at this time, when there are many social, emotional, health and practical challenges facing all of us: children, parents, teachers and IMTs. Keeping minds active and happy, ready to return to school when the time comes is an important factor.
5. Whilst music will play an important part in this, IMTs should be mindful of their own health and well-being and are advised to ensure that a healthy work-life balance is achieved and maintained during what is likely to be an extended period of homeworking for many. The danger is that in the absence of physical boundaries between home and school, IMTs will find themselves working in excess of 35 hours per week. It is important that steps are taken to ensure that this does not happen. A healthy amount of time should be spent on rest and relaxation, with others in the home, and with friends and family by digital means in the context of current social distancing measures.
6. The working day should be punctuated by regular breaks during which some physical activity and time outdoors, within the limits of current national guidance on social distancing, is recommended.
7. Where home circumstances allow, IMTs should seek to create an in-house work-zone that is separated in some way from the other areas of the home where family and domestic life occurs. Where it is not possible to work in an entirely separate space, this will have a bearing on what IMTs can provide in the way of remote instrumental music tuition for young people. For example, video lessons may present a particular difficulty. Any such issues should be raised in the first instance with the relevant line manager. If the matter is not resolved, it should be raised with the base school representative or their LA Secretary to seek EIS advice and support at a local level.

8. Social isolation arising from the current social distancing context is likely to be felt by many IMTs over what is likely to be a lengthy period of school closure. Employers retain a duty of care towards staff at this time. To help counteract the mental and emotional health impact of isolation, IMTs are advised to stay in touch with colleagues and school line managers during the working week, for example, through virtual coffee and lunch-breaks; virtual informal meetings with other IMTs in the Local Authority as appropriate. (It may also be helpful for such meetings to occur on a more formal basis for the distinct purpose of collegiate professional dialogue in relation to the provision of remote learning; however, such meetings should be scheduled on the basis of agreement among all staff involved.)

Homeworking and Equality

9. Employers should be live to the equality impact of homeworking arrangements in light of the particular difficulties that will be faced by IMTs with caring responsibilities, the majority of whom are likely to be women; and those who are disabled, including those with disabilities related to mental health, who may require further or altered reasonable adjustments that take account of the new arrangements for learning and teaching at home; and those who live with an abusive partner or family member.
10. Additionally, IMTs are likely to have variable access to and experience in using ICT devices and associated software. IMTs should advise their school-based line manager of any support and professional learning needs that they may have in this regard with a view to provision being made or alternative arrangements for homeworking put in place.
11. In the absence of timely application of Equality Impact Assessments, IMTs should advise their Instrumental Music Service line manager of any difficulties that they may be experiencing in relation to childcare at home and/or caring responsibilities for elderly or vulnerable relatives/friends; and/or in managing individual tasks and/or general workload; in living and working in the home environment in the context of an abusive relationship, with a view to the necessary adjustments and accommodation being made.
12. The equality impact of learning at home in the context of instrumental music provision for children and young people should also be a consideration to minimise disadvantage to those living in poverty; and/or with a disability; and/or who have English as an additional language; and/or who are Looked After or young carers.

Managing Workload

13. Workload control measures are still operable in the context of working at home. Management of IMTs' working time should be within the parameters of the 35-hour working week, and collegiate discussion and agreement around the use of collegiate time in the current new circumstances. A common-sense approach should prevail and should take account of the highly exceptional and very challenging conditions in which all are working.
14. Adjustments to the balance of normal pupil-contact time are recommended for digital learning contexts – no IMT should be engaged for 5.5 hours per day (daily average of 27.5 hours pupil contact time per week) in online teaching. (These calculations have been made on the basis of a 35 hour working week and should be adjusted on a pro rata basis for part time members of staff.) This level of engagement is not conducive to maintaining good health and wellbeing among IMTs, working in relatively restricted conditions at home and without the usual supports from colleagues being in place.

15. IMTs, as trusted professionals, working to agreed local priorities and on their own CPD, can manage workload adjusting priorities as necessary in the context of homeworking, as they would under normal circumstances when working in school or when working in a place of their choosing when not class-committed. There may be opportunities for IMTs to share knowledge and expertise with other colleagues to enhance professional learning, such as music technology, music software, arranging and composing or producing backing tracks and editing materials.
16. The principles of collegiate working should continue to apply, with IMTs involved in all decision-making which impacts on the remote delivery of instrumental music tuition. The current situation should allow for one of the key principles of the Empowered Schools Agenda – increased professional autonomy – to be enacted. The concomitant of that is professional trust.
17. There is absolutely no requirement for IMTs to submit daily or weekly records of work, or weekly forward plans. Such activity is a generator of unnecessary bureaucracy and workload. The principles of professional trust and professional dialogue should continue to apply in the context of remote working. As in normal circumstances, forward plans are professional tools for IMTs' own use and to provide a basis for professional dialogue. A weekly or fortnightly online or phone discussion/catch up with a line manager colleague (i.e. a collegiate professional dialogue) would be a useful approach to adopt to ensure a level of coordination and continuity in learning.
18. The main priority of IMTs, as when working in school, should be learning and teaching in the context of instrumental music tuition. When working at home, time spent on work-related activities of a bureaucratic nature that contribute little or nothing to the quality of learning and teaching, should be minimal to zero.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries: Online

19. Whilst IMTs may use their own computer devices and smartphones, online communication with pupils as part of the school's agreed approach to continuing education delivery, should be through agreed official channels only- i.e. work email addresses, GLOW or other local authority endorsed digital platforms.
20. Employers' policies, guidance and protocols relating to online learning should be shared with IMTs and strictly adhered to; and the [EIS Social Media Policy](#) and the [GTCS Professional Guidance on Electronic Communication and Social Media](#) should be borne in mind.
21. It may be that other safe platforms will be developed by bodies such as Education Scotland, as the current closure continues – these may prove useful. Members are advised, however, to be mindful of safeguarding private personal details.
22. IMTs should be aware of the risks involved in live-streaming lessons from their homes for pupils. Where it has been agreed that this will be part of a school's approach to the delivery of instrumental music tuition, this should proceed only where secure platforms such as GLOW can be used and according to agreed protocols.

23. Where lessons are being streamed or video recorded for sharing as saved digital files with pupils, IMTs should take all appropriate measures to protect their personal privacy and safeguard their professionalism, for example, by ensuring neutral backgrounds and appropriate dress.
24. IMTs should not share, nor be asked to share personal email addresses or social media IDs with pupils or their parents.
25. Any school which is delivering learning online, particularly where that may involve one to one video lessons, must have protocols in place to protect staff and safeguard pupils. No IMT should be expected to carry out any online teaching with which they feel uncomfortable, or in the absence of agreed protocols, including measures for handling incidences of pupil behaviour which is disrespectful of others, including the IMT, or is disruptive of learning.
26. Where an IMT feels uncomfortable or has concerns about proposals to deliver online instrumental music tuition, those concerns should be raised in the first instance with the Instrumental Music Service line manager. If the matter is not resolved, it should be referred to their base school representative and/or the Local Association Secretary thereafter as necessary.
27. IMTs should be aware that nothing that is shared online is private.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries: Phone Calls

28. Outwith any scheduled online teaching lesson, IMTs should not be in phone contact with children and young people who are learning at home for the purposes of checking progress.

Online and Telephone Communication and Parents/Carers

29. In the event of a parent/carer seeking to engage an IMT in discussion about their child's learning, they should be directed to the Instrumental Music Service Manager. IMTs should not feel pressure to respond to any parent/carer comments, requests or complaints made through online channels which have been set up for the purposes of maintaining learning at home amidst the current public health crisis.
30. IMTs should not engage in any phone or video-calling with parents unless this has been arranged through the school, and with the knowledge and/or participation of the appropriate line manager.

IMTs' Use of ICT

31. As far as possible where digital technology is being used to support learning and teaching at home, this should be familiar and accessible both to IMTs and pupils. IMTs cannot be expected to be adept at using digital learning platforms without the requisite training, nor can they support such learning without access to the necessary devices.
32. Education Scotland is currently providing some training on the use of GLOW for the purposes on remote learning. Where schools/local authorities use other digital platforms, the associated learning should be made available. Where IMTs are unable to access this learning, alternative activities should be agreed. These might include a different means of supporting contingency education delivery at this time; or carrying out manageable curriculum development work; or engaging in additional professional learning.

33. Where IMTs have concerns about the use of particular software, for example, in relation to the capacity of companies to access and harvest personal data, these should be raised with the Instrumental Music Service line manager with a view to alternative possibilities being explored.
34. The classroom environment has extended for many into a virtual space which can be accessed by multiple users. Whilst it may be appropriate in some circumstances for colleagues to work together on providing remote learning, the use of digital platforms for the purposes of quality assurance of learning and teaching in the context of these contingency arrangements, is not appropriate and should be resisted.
35. Where IMTs have no internet access at home or poor connectivity, this should be raised with the Instrumental Music Service line manager, with a view to the local authority exploring the possibility of providing/enhancing internet access for IMTs in that situation, for example, through the provision of mobile hotspots. In the event of the local authority being unable to enable internet access for IMTs who are experiencing difficulty, alternative homeworking priorities should be agreed.

Learning and Teaching

36. The principles of School Empowerment should apply to remote working and digital learning contexts in all aspects of learning and teaching.
37. As would be expected when working in the normal environment of school, IMTs should be involved in all decisions about the delivery of instrumental music tuition and the activities that children and young people will be offered while learning at home. What is provided by IMTs should be by agreement following a collegiate, professional dialogue with the Instrumental Music Service line manager. Collegiality rather than instruction and prescription is key.

Further Advice

38. Should any member be concerned that the principles outlined here are not being sufficiently applied, they should raise the matter in the first instance where possible with the Instrumental Music Service line manager. If the matter is not resolved, it should be referred to their base school representative and/or the Local Association Secretary thereafter as necessary.