

1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Education, training and skills (<https://www.gov.uk/education>)
3. Remote education good practice
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice>)

Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus
(<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/education-and-childcare>)

- Department
for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>)

Guidance

Remote education good practice

Published 1 October 2020

Contents

Ensuring access to remote provision
What matters most in remote education
Effective remote teaching provision
Finding solutions in remote provision



© Crown copyright 2020

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3>) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remote-education-good-practice>

This good practice guide should be used by staff responsible for the curriculum and its delivery in schools. It offers suggestions to help schools meet the expectations for remote education set out in the guidance for full opening (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>). These suggestions are non-statutory.

We recognise that schools vary significantly in context. This may mean that what works well in one type of school may not be suitable for other kinds of school. However, the principles below apply in many contexts, and some approaches have worked well across a wide variety of schools.

Ensuring access to remote provision

Most pupils returned to school full time at the start of the autumn term 2020. Despite this, there is still a risk of localised outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19) or of small numbers of individual pupils being unable to attend school. So, we are asking schools to plan for any disruption to schooling during the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The period since 23 March 2020 has been one of great innovation in remote education. A wide range of approaches has been developed, tested and refined. Despite the challenges, remote education has made a significant contribution to enabling students to continue to learn and progress, and to mitigating any widening of the attainment gap for the disadvantaged.

Where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there are local restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, we expect schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education. For details of the remote education expectations schools are required to meet, read the guidance for full opening (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>).

What matters most in remote education

This good practice guide for remote education focuses on approaches to the delivery of the curriculum. This presupposes clarity about what is to be taught by teachers and learned by pupils in a carefully sequenced curriculum.

Further support for planning a sequenced curriculum that can be adapted for remote delivery will be published separately during the autumn term.

Replicating the classroom remotely

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has found that the effectiveness of remote teaching is determined by many of the same factors as determine the effectiveness of live classroom teaching. For example:

- ensuring pupils receive clear explanations
- supporting growth in confidence with new material through scaffolded practice
- application of new knowledge or skills
- enabling pupils to receive feedback on how to progress

These characteristics of good teaching are more important than the medium of delivery, be it in the 'live' classroom or through remote provision (whether or not that remote provision is live or pre-recorded). It is important that schools consider how to transfer into remote education what we already know about effective teaching in the live classroom.

Live classrooms enable important interaction between teachers and pupils through, for example, questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion. These complex teacher skills in the live classroom are not always easy to recreate in a remote environment, but where remote education recreates at least some aspects of this interactivity and intentional dialogue, teaching is likely to be more effective, support pupil motivation and lead to better progress.

Pupils in the early stages of their formal education are likely to have particular needs which cannot easily be addressed in the same way as those of other pupils. Likewise, some pupils with SEND will require specific approaches tailored to their circumstances. Some suggestions are given for these cases later in this document.

Access to appropriate devices and connectivity is essential for technology-led approaches to remote education. However, securing access for all pupils is a significant challenge in many contexts. As schools plan for potential future disruption, it may be helpful to:

- maintain an up-to-date record of which pupils and families do not have device or internet access
- consider how school technology resources could be used in future to support pupils without sufficient remote facilities. This could include preparing to provide laptops and chargers to identified families with any usage or loan agreements necessary to help safeguard school property

- ensure that any equipment obtained under the department's Get help with technology programme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) is clearly identified and ready to be re-distributed for a similar purpose

You should also review the Department's guidance about planning for local restrictions including Tier 2 restrictions

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions>).

Effective remote teaching provision

While pupils experienced disruption to their education from 23 March 2020, a number of different approaches were used by schools to continue their education. Many schools also learnt from experience and innovated, took on board pupil and parent feedback and improved their provision as the weeks passed.

While there are a number of ways to implement high-quality remote education, remote-access technology offers many advantages which enable schools to continue a relatively normal programme of teaching across all or most curriculum subjects.

Interactive platforms

Many schools have been able to use a single, interactive platform such as Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom for their remote education provision. By using these and similar systems, it is possible to create virtual classes by drawing information from schools' Management Information Systems, enabling a single point of access for all lessons and resources and allowing teachers to host both live and recorded explanations and lessons.

Schools can apply for government-funded support through The Key for School Leaders (<https://covid19.thekeysupport.com/remote-learning/>) and access one of two free-to-use digital education platforms: G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education. To help applicants make the most appropriate choice for their school, The Key also provides feature comparison and case studies on how schools are making the most of these platforms.

Linking platforms to applications

It is possible to enhance these platforms by using applications which allow for easy video recording of teachers teaching, explaining and questioning. Loom (<https://www.loom.com/>) is a popular video recording application which many teachers find straightforward to use and can easily be linked to platforms such as Microsoft Teams.

Tests and quizzes are an important part of effective teaching and can be easily created to precede or follow teaching sequences. When teaching live, it is possible for teachers to question individual pupils and for pupils to pose questions to teachers or peers, for example using the 'Chat' function. Google forms, Kahoot, Classkick, Socrative, Edpuzzle are just some other examples of other software which work well for rapid feedback and allow live marking.

Schools can use these media to continue to deliver most of their normal planned curriculum, and, where available and relevant, textbooks (both 'hard copy' and electronic) could be issued for pupils to use at home to complement and support lessons.

Where lessons are recorded, they can be accessed later by pupils, making flexible use possible in the context of limited or shared device access. These and similar platforms can make it easier for teachers to monitor pupils' progress because work can be viewed or submitted through a single system. This in turn may make it easier for teachers to adapt work in the light of pupils' progress.

Other resources, including other good quality online resources (both free-to-use and subscription-based) can be linked or embedded.

Because these platforms enable the creation of simulated or virtual classrooms, it is easier to carry over what we know about effective teaching from the live to the virtual environment. This can include clear teacher explanations of new content which are sequenced to build on previous learning, targeted questioning, and scaffolded practice.

Maintaining aspects of school life online

These platforms can also be used beyond the individual lesson context for other events such as whole staff briefings and professional development sessions, and for teachers to lead events such as year or whole school assemblies. It is important that these aspects of school life are maintained during any period of disruption.

In some cases it is possible to expect a normal school day to be worked remotely by both pupils and teachers. Recognising that this will not always be practical, where it is possible the routine can prove beneficial to pupils and

support them in the management of their work and time.

Often, it is necessary to operate more flexibly, for example to accommodate contexts where pupils are having to share a single device within the home, meaning that access to recorded lessons is also needed. However, frequent contact between pupils and teachers is crucial. This contact may, for example, be through presence in a remotely delivered lesson, questioning, feedback, or some other form of on or offline exchange about schoolwork.

Continuing the planned curriculum

Continuing to teach all or most of the normal planned curriculum in the remote environment is important. Subjects where this is more challenging are those that would normally include significant elements of practical work in the live classroom, for example sciences, music or technology. However, in these and other cases, video demonstrations (and there are many ready-to-use examples linked to the curriculum available on platforms such as YouTube) can substitute well for practical work, particularly if accompanied by teacher explanation, commentary and a text book or electronic resource.

Physical education

Physical education is a difficult subject to teach remotely. Some aspects may be able to be delivered using video demonstrations. At the same time, taking account of any restrictions in force and pupils' age and living circumstances, pupils should be encouraged to take regular physical exercise to maintain fitness.

It is important to ensure that teachers are familiar with the practical aspects of the technology used, and know how to use the essential functionality of the programmes and systems in place.

Technology training

An important part of contingency planning is ensuring that training is regularly refreshed with teachers, and that appropriate trouble-shooting support is available where needed, so that transfer to the remote environment can happen seamlessly when needed. Schools may consider prioritising this aspect of professional development, where necessary, in the early autumn term.

Integrating all remote provision into a single multi-functional platform may be difficult for some schools to achieve, although it should be noted that many resources are free to use (Google Classroom and YouTube for example).

It is possible in these circumstances to provide good remote provision by using a range of online resources (for example, commercially-produced or subscription packages for subjects such as mathematics) and referencing a number of materials, which guide pupils in their delivery of the curriculum using other forms of communication, such as email or telephone.

Schools can spend their catch-up premium on contingency planning for remote education, for example purchasing additional devices or textbooks. The EEF Covid-19 support guide (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/>) includes support for schools in how to support effective remote education and access to technology.

Communication

It is essential for staff, and preferable for pupils, to use school email addresses. Groups can be set up to streamline communication for example with a whole class. Existing online resources and packages with school or teacher-created resources, can be used, for example: worksheets, tests and quizzes, as well as video or sound recordings of explanations hosted on platforms such as YouTube - or available on a school, remote-access area.

It is important to note that high quality remote teaching is far more than setting work for pupils to complete, although setting tasks to complement sequences of teaching plays an important role. Evidence shows that lengthy or open-ended projects or research activities are in most cases less likely to lead to strong progress or outcomes.¹ Such approaches should generally be avoided in favour of the more interactive, teacher-led approaches to delivering the school's planned curriculum described above.

Finding solutions in remote provision

Schools identified some common challenges in the provision of remote education during the summer term of 2020. Here are some suggested solutions to those common challenges.

A lack of devices

Schools can distribute school-owned laptops accompanied by a user agreement or contract. They can also remind pupils that access is also possible through large-screen smartphones. Affected pupils can be supported to come into school to use school resources within any rules in force at the time.

Additionally, textbooks can be used at home to provide a structure to learning, supplemented with other forms of communication to keep pupils on track or answer questions about work.

Where mobile phones are being used by pupils to access content (and where pupils are having to rely on mobile phone connectivity) there may be limits to the amount of data they can access without incurring significant expense. Schools can get technology support (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) from DfE for issues with devices and internet access.

Pupils having difficulties submitting work

Multi-functional remote platforms allow for the submission of most kinds of work. Email can also be used to send work to teachers for review and feedback and screenshots can be taken and emailed as attachments. Additionally, smartphones can be used to photograph work which is difficult to submit in other ways. Post or school drop-off points can also be considered.

Keeping pupils motivated and engaged

As set out in the guidance for full opening (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#res>), schools should monitor pupil engagement with remote education provision. Schools can log participation and motivation levels and feedback to parents, either individually or formally through regular reports. They can also contact pupils or parents by telephone to explore ways to secure re-engagement.

Schools can create whole-class or whole-school feedback loops. For example, a weekly newsletter which pulls together examples of excellent work and awards points and rewards for excellent engagement or outcomes. This could be emailed to all parents and pupils, or posted to those without digital access.

Assessing pupils' progress

Teachers can use quizzes or tests on core content as a regular feature, asking pupils to complete these in a specified time and email them back. Using the features of a multi-functional platform, teachers can create regular, pre and post-lesson quizzes. Consideration should be given to ensuring availability for pupils without ready online access, including through distribution of hard-copy versions.

Organising structured remote teaching suitable for very young pupils

It is recognised that very young pupils are likely to have particular needs which cannot easily be met in some of the ways described above. For such pupils, it is likely that the priority will be progress in early reading. Ensuring continued access to appropriate reading books and resources for early readers should be considered as part of contingency planning.

Helping parents, carers or other adults at home to continue to support children in their early reading, where appropriate and practical through structured practice of phonics content, is another important part of contingency planning for children at this stage. Other content for these pupils is likely to include providing guidance for supervising adults to ensure that time is used as productively and developmentally as possible.

Supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

For many pupils with SEND, the teaching envisaged by this guidance would need to be adapted. SEND pupils have a wide range of specific needs. Their teachers and schools are likely to know these needs best, and how they can be most effectively met to ensure pupils continue to make progress wherever possible if they are not able to be in school.

It is likely that more individualised planning may need to happen in many cases, and that the support of adults in the home will be a significant advantage where that is possible. However, in some cases, the suggestions in this guidance may also be useful for pupils with SEND and so should be considered on their merit.

Teachers having difficulties creating online content

While many schools will want to retain the tried-and-tested education resources they already use, some may find it helpful to use resources such as Oak National Academy (<http://www.thenational.academy/>) to offer lessons in most school subjects. Oak delivers a sequenced curriculum, with some elements of choice, which can be used flexibly by schools as their main remote provision - or to complement other parts of remote provision.

The curriculum is published on the Oak National Academy website, so schools can consider how it aligns with and complements their own curriculum. Oak lessons are available from reception to year 11, are free to use, and can be

integrated with platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom.

Teachers can easily collect results of online quizzes and tests to monitor progress. Oak represents a good option for many schools when they are contingency planning, but headteachers should also be aware of other commercial, educational resources available. The British Educational Suppliers Association's LendED platform (<https://www.lended.org.uk/>), for instance, provides a searchable list of resources for remote education.

If parents are not able to effectively support remote education

Good communication between schools and parents (about the approach the school is taking) can help. This could include, where appropriate, group seminars, briefings using platforms such as Zoom, or one-to-one telephone calls where necessary, to inform parents and elicit their support.

-
1. See: Kroesbergen, E.H., Van Luit, J.E.H. & Maas, C.J.M., Effectiveness of Explicit and Constructivist Mathematics Instruction for Low-Achieving Students in the Netherlands (2004); Khlar, D. & Nigam, M., The Equivalence of Learning Paths in Early Science Instruction. (2004); and OECD (2016), PISA 2015 Results (Volume II): Policies and Practices for Successful Schools, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en> (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en>) ↩