



Remote Learning 2020-2021



Contingency planning

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, government guidance confirms that effective remote education plans should be in place. These should meet the same expectations as those for any pupils who cannot yet attend school at all due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

In the event of a local outbreak, the PHE health protection team or local authority may advise a school or number of schools to close temporarily to help control transmission. Schools will also need a contingency plan for this eventuality. This may involve a return to remaining open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, and providing remote education for all other pupils.

Remote education support

Where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring pupils to remain at home, we expect all WeST schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education.

Schools are expected to consider how to continue to improve the quality of their existing offer and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September. This planning will be particularly important to support a scenario in which the logistical challenges of remote provision are greatest, for example where large numbers of pupils are required to remain at home.

In developing these contingency plans, all WeST schools should:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to high-quality online and offline resources and teaching videos, and that is linked to the school's curriculum expectations
- give access to high quality remote education resources
- select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback, and make sure staff are trained in their use. The WeST preferred platform for online delivery is Microsoft Teams
- provide printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable online access
- recognise that younger pupils and some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support, and so schools should work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum.

When teaching pupils remotely, all WeST schools should:

- set activities that pupils are meaningful and ambitious each day in a number of different subjects
- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher in the school or through high quality curriculum resources and/or videos
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using questions and other suitable tasks and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding
- plan a programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, ideally including daily contact with teachers.

We expect schools to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development and/or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents' help or support.

We expect schools to avoid an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

What does the research say about remote education?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) examined the existing research on distance learning (from 60 systematic reviews and meta-analyses) for approaches that schools could use, or are already using, to support the learning of pupils while schools are closed due to Covid-19.

When implementing strategies to support pupils' remote learning, or supporting parents to do this, key things to consider include:

1: Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered.

- Pupils can learn through remote teaching.
- Ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present – for example clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback – is more important than how or when they are provided. There was no clear
- Difference between teaching in real time (“synchronous teaching”) and alternatives (“asynchronous teaching”).
- For example, teachers might explain a new idea live or in a pre-recorded video. But what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on pupils' prior learning or how pupils' understanding is subsequently assessed.

2: Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

- Almost all remote learning uses digital technology, typically requiring access to both computers and the internet.
- Many reviews identify lack of technology as a barrier to successful remote instruction. It is important that support is provided to ensure that disadvantaged pupils – who are more likely to face these barriers – have access to technology.
- In addition to providing access to technology, ensuring that teachers and pupils are provided with support and guidance to use specific platforms is essential, particularly if new forms of technology are being implemented.

3: Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes

- Multiple reviews highlight the importance of peer interaction during remote learning, as a way to motivate pupils and improve outcomes.
- Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for live discussions of content.
- The value of collaborative approaches was emphasised in many reviews, although notably many studies involved older learners. Different approaches to peer interaction are likely to be better suited to different age groups.

4: Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes

- Pupils learning at home will often need to work independently. Multiple reviews identify the value of strategies that help pupils work independently with success.
- For example, prompting pupils to reflect on their work or to consider the strategies they will use if they get stuck have been highlighted as valuable.
- Wider evidence related to metacognition and self-regulation suggests that disadvantaged pupils are likely to particularly benefit from explicit support to help them work independently, for example, by providing checklists or daily plans.

5: Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils

- Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should be supported to consider which approaches are best suited to the content they are teaching and the age of their pupils.
- For example, games for learning were found to have a high impact on vocabulary learning in foreign languages, but there is less evidence related to their use in other subjects.
- Likewise, using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can help pupils retain key ideas and knowledge, but is not a replacement for other forms of assessment.