Remote Learning Policy

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Contents

1. Changes to this edition

10th January 2021 – updated Section 6 in line with Government guidance released on 8.1.21

2. Introduction

The aims of this guidance is to:

- Outline expectations for online learning in a range of scenarios (such as a pandemic, extreme weather, power loss etc)
- Ensure that staff are aware of the procedures designed to safeguard staff and students
- Provide support and advice for teachers to enable them to develop confidence with the required skills and knowledge to conduct live lessons during a partial or full school closure.

3. Background

In March 2020 schools across the UK had to move their teaching 'online' for the vast majority of students at very short notice in response to the coronavirus pandemic. At that time there were many barriers to schools doing this successfully:

- Significant numbers of staff were isolating with young children in their household. This made any attempt at more interactive or 'live' learning impractical and unrealistic.
- A lack of available evidence, research or experience, on remote learning to know what might work best.
- A lack of IT infrastructure within some schools to allow more interactive remote learning to take place safely.
- The gap in available IT resources in many houses (both hardware and internet access) put some students at an unacceptable disadvantage which made a move to a full online remote provision difficult.
- A lack of staff knowledge and skills in order to implement effective remote learning.

4. Current situation

More recently, research conducted by the EEF, published in "Rapid Evidence Assessment – Distance Learning" has shown that clear explanation, scaffolding, assessment and feedback are the most important factors when considering the effectiveness of online learning. While explanation can be delivered via pre-recorded video (asynchronous teaching), assessing students' understanding and adapting the teaching to meet the immediate requirements of students cannot. For this reason, schools within Minerva Learning Trust have revisited the earlier barriers, working to remove them to allow as much 'live' and responsive teaching as possible.

- Schools within Minerva Learning Trust have purchased additional laptops in addition to the DfE provided devices and 4G dongles to ensure that staff and students that need to access online learning can do so.
- All schools within Minerva Learning Trust have started the move towards Microsoft Teams or Show My Homework as a remote platform. This has many benefits. For example: classes are created automatically for each teacher saving workload; only those

students and staff within the organisation can access the lesson; and group policies mean that students cannot control the camera or microphone which are set to off.
- Any misuse is recorded by the student/student account and therefore the normal school sanctions can be applied if necessary and lessons can be recorded for those students who cannot access the lesson live or, wish to refer to it again at a later time. Where asynchronous teaching is taking place, video links can be saved into Teams, ensuring all work is one place and making it easier for parents and students. As well as this, the 'Assignments' feature allows parents and teachers to see who has completed work and the appropriate follow ups can be put in place.

Schools have statutory obligations and expectations with regard to remote education as set out in the Department for Education's remote Education Expectations (2020). These are listed below and are statutory for all school effective from 22nd October 2020:

- Set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- Set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum: primary: 3 hours a day, on average, across the school cohort; secondary: 4 hours a day, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year
- Provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- Have systems for checking, at least weekly, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and inform parents immediately where engagement is a concern
- Gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and provide feedback, at least weekly, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
- 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

5. The way ahead

As a consequence of the above, schools within Minerva Learning Trust are expected to be in a position to offer a much more interactive remote learning experience:

- Schools should offer immediate remote education to a class, small number or larger group of students in situations where it is deemed necessary and appropriate, using high quality online and offline resources which are linked to school's curriculum plans. Staff can interact with students, assess work and give feedback to students on their work.
- Teachers are expected to teach new content, which is well planned and sequenced to allow knowledge and skills to be built and delivered by the teacher.
- Schools should plan delivery of a remote programme of equivalent length to the core teaching that students would usually get in school.
- Schools should provide IT equipment or printed resources for those who do not have suitable online resources.
- In the event that an individual student/student is isolating at home, if they are well enough to do schoolwork, students will be asked to work remotely from

home. Students should have access to work that the rest of the class have been doing through the use of live streaming or through MS Teams/Show My Homework. Each school will ensure that students have the appropriate technology to access this.

- In the event that a whole class is at home, each school must continue to offer the best teaching possible through the provision of synchronous and asynchronous (live or pre-recorded) lesson content which, must be delivered as closely as possible to the school's planned timetable and curriculum plans. All live lessons should be recorded so it can be made available to any students who were not able to access it 'live'.
- The teacher should advise students to turn their microphone off and to respond only through the chat function, or to unmute themselves if they are asked a question. Students should also be advised to turn their camera off if it is not required to be on for the purpose of the lesson.
- Teachers will use a variety of remote teaching techniques in addition to 'live teaching'. This could include the use of asynchronous pre-recorded lessons, talking over PowerPoint and other programmes, independent learning tasks, providing further explanation of a concept, correcting misconceptions using a visualiser or providing feedback to students. This may include delivery of new content, application of knowledge/skills or revisiting of previously taught material.

6. Remote learning responsibility

All teachers have a responsibility for overseeing the education of their assigned students. Subjects Leaders and Progress Leaders/Heads of Year will support by coordinating and monitoring the quality and engagement of work set and completed by students.

In order to teach remotely in an effective, and more importantly safe manner, Senior Leadership Teams in schools will ensure that:

- Delivery of the school's timetable and curriculum continues in line with curriculum plans
- Appropriate training is in place for all staff and students
- Appropriate systems are put in place to check the quality of provision
- Opportunities are provided for feedback to students
- Engagement of students is monitored an acted upon

In developing their remote education, all schools are expected to:

- Set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects
- Provide teaching that is equivalent length to the core teaching students would receive in schools. This will include both recorded and live teaching and time for students to complete work independently
- 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
- Select a digital platform for remote provision that will be used consistently across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained and confident in its use

- 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
- 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 - for pupils with SEND, their teachers are best placed to know how to meet their needs
- Overcome barriers to digital access by: distributing laptops accompanied by a user agreement or contract and providing printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, to structure learning
- Publish information for pupils, parents and carers about their remote education provision on their website by 25 January 2021 – an [template](#) is available to support schools with this expectation

When teaching pupils remotely, all schools are expected to:

- Set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- Set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum:
    - Secondary/Post 16: 5 hours a day, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year
- Provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- Have systems for checking, daily, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and inform parents immediately where engagement is a concern
- Gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and provide feedback, at least weekly, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
- 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
- Identify a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education, including provision meets expectations for remote learning

All schools are expected to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents' help or support. Schools should avoid an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

7. Safeguarding guidance

When teaching via live video, teachers will ensure that:

- Office 365 will be the single hub for all remote learning interactions. Only Microsoft Teams should be used for running live lessons.
- Students' cameras should be switched off when not needed as part of the lesson.
- All live lessons are recorded and are made available for students to revisit/access at a later time.
- Students only use their school account to join live lessons. Teachers should not admit students into lessons with any other account.
- No 1:1s take place. Teaching must be in groups only.
- Any computers used are in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- Language is professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- The lesson is hosted on Microsoft Teams or other agreed platform so only students, students and staff within the organisation can access this. Microsoft Teams has a lobby function, which prevents students and students from accessing the lesson before a member of staff is present.

Staff should:

- Maintain their usual professional relationship with students and continue to communicate and act in a professional manner as if they are in school.
- Use professional and 'safe' language at all times. Be mindful that family members of students and students may be within earshot of the live lesson.
- Only use platforms provided by the school to communicate with students.
- Maintain normal expectations for students, as you would in school lessons.
- Ensure students are aware of these expectations when delivering live video lessons.
- Wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Ensure that whichever method of remote learning is being used, ensure that appropriate privacy settings are in place and GDPR compliance is maintained. For example, don't share your screen with the class if it shows confidential information (e.g., SIMs).
- When delivering a live lesson, ensure that:
  o Only relevant students can access the lesson.
  o Students are not sharing personal information via the chat function.
  o Students have their microphone and camera turned off (this should be set by default)
  o Students use the "hands up" and "chat" function in a live lesson to ask questions.
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour from students and report it as you would in school. For serious concerns it may be necessary to remove students from the online learning activity to ensure the learning of other students can progress.
- Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to the relevant safeguarding leads using the usual channels.

- Ensure that if there is a need to send an individual email to a student, another member of staff is copied into the emails. Language in emails to students and parents must always remain professional.
- Staff should only use school-based accounts and apps to communicate with students. Under no circumstances should they use their personal accounts for this work.

Students:

- Should behave as if they were in school and in the classroom – they should be reminded of this at the beginning of the lesson.
- Students should only use school email to communicate with staff.
- Students should only access their school accounts, not personal accounts. They must not share or access any inappropriate material.
- Students should ensure conversations using the chat function are appropriate and related to the lesson.

8. Remote learning commitment

This section outlines the remote learning commitment for all schools within Minerva Learning Trust during the three possible scenarios described below:

(a)   When schools are open to all students

- Staff should upload lesson resources to each Team or Show My Homework in line with the policy set out by each individual school. This will allow students to re-visit previous lessons and students who are self-isolating to access content from home. Lesson resources should be in clearly labelled folders, allowing easy access for students.
- Homework should continue to be set in line with each school's individual policy.
- Each school within Minerva Learning Trust is encouraged to ensure that Insights is activated on all class Teams, where appropriate. This allows staff to track the amount of time students are spending completing work.
- Insights also provides useful information such as the average grade or mark over a series of assignments, the percentage of tasks handed in on time and the percentage of students actively completing your assignment, reducing workload for teachers.

(b)   When students are isolating or there is a partial school closure

- When students are not in school, work will be set using Microsoft Teams or Show My Homework.
- If teachers are teaching students in a class, but have members of the class working from home, students working from home should be set work via the Teams or Show My Homework before the end of the school day. Where possible and appropriate, the work should include video content such as PowerPoint Narration, Stream Video, Loom Video or resources from the Oak National Academy. However, regular lesson resources such as those that are uploaded when schools are open to all students are sufficient.

- Should any member of staff "livestream" any lesson or part of a lesson where some students are present and some are at home in any year group, up to and including Year 11, they must a) inform and seek guidance from a line manager and b) ensure the camera is focused upon the teacher and that no other students in the class are visible.
- If an entire class is working from home, a live lesson should be scheduled at the time the teacher would normally teach that class or group.
- Live lessons must adhere to the protocols as set out in the "Safeguarding Guidance" section of this document.
- Following government guidance, students working from home should be set assignments with staff giving regular feedback. The frequency of feedback need be no different to that of each school's policy on marking and feedback.

(c)   In the event of a full school closure

- Work will be set on Microsoft Teams or Show My Homework.
- Where staff can, live lessons should be used with students. Reasons for not holding live lessons include childcare issues or illness.
- Live lessons must adhere to the protocols as set out in the "Safeguarding Guidance" section of this document.
- If live lessons are not possible, work set in line with each school's Remote Learning Commitment and may include asynchronous video content such as Power Point Narration, Stream Video, Loom Video or resources from the Oak National Academy.
- Students will be set regular assignments by staff, (including the use of self-marking assignments), on the assignments section of Teams or Show My Homework. Staff will give regular feedback on these assignments. The frequency of feedback should be in line with each school's policy on marking and feedback.

(d)   Staff having to self-isolate

- Teachers who are too unwell to attend school should telephone in and set work via colleagues in the usual way.
- Where staff are self-isolating, with a symptomatic family member (and not showing any symptoms), and not directly looking after young children, high quality work should be planned and set for classes. This should not fall to the subject leader and should mirror the curriculum as explained earlier. Wherever possible, teachers should be readily available to teach/have some input into all classes. This might come in a variety of formats:
- Staff may choose to teach the lesson into the classroom via Teams.
- Alternatively, colleagues can make and leave pre-recorded lessons (via Stream/voice over PPT) which Cover Teams could use to deliver. However, as above, teachers should also be available at the end of every lesson to check understanding and to give feedback.
- Staff can set up a live chat through Teams with the cover supervisor that can be displayed on the IWB so that students can interact with the teacher - receiving instructions, asking/answering questions.

- The location of any resources needed (or links/resources to be displayed on IWB) and instructions for your class for the cover supervisor (with or without live streaming or live chat), should be left on the school cover templates.
- Staff should continue to attend any training/meetings as per school calendar.
- Support staff should be directed to work at home by their line manager and should continue to meet with line managers/attend meetings remotely.

9. Exceptions to curriculum journey

Wherever students are working from home, there may be some exceptions to the planned curriculum delivery. For example, SMSC would have to be carefully planned and delivered to ensure it is appropriate to students' needs. Another example might be that students accessing Alternative Learning Pathways may will have a bespoke remote learning plan, which will offer even more personalised support. Individual schools will offer guidance about this.