

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL



REMOTE LEARNING

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR LEADERS

JANUARY 2021

In response to the steeply rising number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and concern about increased transmission as a result of the new variant, the First Minister announced on 4 January 2021 a legal requirement to stay at home except for essential purposes. For our schools and early years establishments, this means an extension to the period of home learning that was announced before Christmas. This will now run until 1 February – subject to review on 18th January 2021.

Renfrewshire Council remains committed to ensuring continuity of high-quality education provision for its children and young people during this further period of school closure. Schools and early years establishments have prepared comprehensive, bespoke continuity plans to ensure that, as far as possible, learning and teaching will continue for all pupils, whether at home or in an establishment.

Equity

Heads and senior management teams should consider their engagement data from March 2020 lockdown to inform planning. For example, it would be valuable to identify pupils/families who may not have engaged well during the last period of remote learning and ensure there are no barriers to participation for these pupils/families.

Establishments should have made attempts to address previous barriers through, for example, the provision of IT devices to pupils and families. However, there may be more that can be done to support e.g. allocating members of staff as key contacts to support with any IT issues or ensuring planned, regular check-ins for these pupils and families with appropriate staff.

Schools who have any additional staffing should ensure these staff members are utilised as effectively as possible to support learners affected by poverty. This may mean that some pupils will have a more bespoke learning offer, based on needs, to ensure the poverty-related attainment gap continues to close.

Establishments should continue to consider the types of tasks they ask of pupils. No child should be disadvantaged because they don't have the materials or equipment to undertake the task.

Remote Learning

It is vital that we rise to the challenge of providing the highest quality, progressive learning experiences during this period. Schools should continue to deliver their agreed model that meets the needs of learners in their context.

Key principles:

- All establishments should have agreed procedures for the daily registration/check in for every learner, using formats which are age and stage appropriate
- Practitioners know their learners best and should continue to plan learning which progresses and extends and is appropriate to individual learner needs and circumstances. Practitioners should also ensure continued, ongoing dialogue, reflection and feedback to pupils in relation to individual progress
- All establishments should have agreed with their staff team the principles of a robust and well considered remote learning offer ready to be delivered as soon as possible week commencing 11 January 2021
- All staff should have access to support materials to enhance the learning and teaching offer appropriate to pupils' needs and circumstances – those identified within the Scottish Government document *Arrangements for the phased reopening of schools in January 2021 – supplementary guidance* (updated 6 January 2021) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-re-opening-arrangements-for-january-2021/pages/schools-opening-timeline/>, Education Scotland guidance [COVID-19 Education Recovery Group \(CERG\)](#) and those developed by the central team (see below).
- Learning should be interactive, commonly using digital and online approaches. However, learning can be delivered using a variety of other options to **ensure maximum pupil engagement**. It could also include:
 - play activities and games

- written work (including the use of paper learning packs)
- online tasks using Glow or Google Classroom
- access to live lessons through Glow (for example, by communicating through the chat function or through live video links with learners)
- access to recorded lessons
- access to teachers and key support staff to discuss learning alongside peers (this request came through clearly from parents following our last home learning survey)
- access to weekly communication from key workers to individual children and families should be supported in the early years
- where private Facebook groups are used to communicate with children and families in early years, these should allow opportunities for activities and games in smaller key worker groups, stories with personalised questioning, comments and extension opportunities from their key worker and continued dialogue to support families to feel included

Staff support for pupil entitlement to live learning and engagement through Digital Platforms

A comprehensive training programme, with supporting documentation, has already been offered this session. The Digital Learning Team have created a range of “how to” videos which can be used for professional learning and can be accessed via the [DigiLearnRen You Tube Channel here](#). Additional support for establishment staff can be found on the [Digital Learning Support document here](#). Any further support required can be requested via Pam McDowall pam.mcdowall@renfrewshire.school. Heads should ensure that all staff who require training have access to it. Education Scotland have provided information on supporting home learning within early years through digital learning platforms, webinar sign-up can be found: <https://sway.office.com/A41A0Trqb7bM1C3n?ref=Link>

Supporting learners with ASN

Where appropriate, staff should plan learning linked to any individual pupil’s previously set targets e.g within their Child’s Plan.

There are a range of online tools which can be used to support learners with additional support needs and to make online learning more accessible. Our CLPL session on accessibility can be found here:

1. Some of the basic tools within Microsoft and Google: <https://youtu.be/RBZPyIYy9DQ>
2. Some suggested ideas on using the tools from the session: <https://youtu.be/UV7GnW2L1H4>

In addition, we have created 2 Wakelets on using accessibility features. This one focuses mainly on the tools available within Microsoft <https://wke.lt/w/s/w4bJF7> whilst this one looks at the available tools within Google and the Chromebooks <https://wke.lt/w/s/pQSjrb>. These include ‘how to’ guides, articles and video clips to help you best support your learners.

Monitoring the quality of and engagement with the remote learning offer

Heads should continue to ensure quality and consistency in line with the principles of the local authority policy ‘Sharing Good Practice through the Evaluation of Learning Experiences’ within the context of the use of online platforms.

Heads must also ensure maximum engagement of all pupils in the learning being offered. Where there are concerns in relation to this, a supportive approach should always be taken to encourage increased engagement of pupils and families.

Communication and engagement with parents/carers and pupils

Heads must continue to oversee communication with parents, and pupils as appropriate, and be in regular contact to ensure the principles of each establishment’s learning offer is clear and that concerns are dealt with promptly. Parents and pupils need to know what is expected of them.

The use of social media to engage with families and pupils should be actively used in order to keep the establishment's community informed. Where this is not possible, communication should be via telephone to families on a regular basis.

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