REMOTE TEACHING GUIDELINES

ISSU

IRISH SECOND-LEVEL
STUDENTS' UNION

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

The document that has been summarised below is intended to outline the guidelines and plans for when schools are told to close by the HSE because of COVID-19.

This document sets out plans for a number of scenarios that could happen throughout the school year.

It's important that all schools make every effort to enable teachers to support students' learning during each possible scenario, especially for students at risk of early school leaving, students with special educational needs and students at risk of educational disadvantage.

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Practical consideration for supporting continuity of Schooling

The restrictions that led to schools closing in May 2020 show everyone the need for schools to be able to continue school in any circumstance. Schools are advised to have a simple and to the point plan for when a teacher or a student has been advised to self-isolate or restrict their movement. This plan must include a method for the provision of remote learning and being able to support the continuation of schools using digital technology. This should outline the necessary actions and relevant people to:

Research and find an appropriate digital communication platform(s)
All schools must have arrangements to facilitate:
- Digital communication between staff/students/parents/guardians, including an email address or a school phone number to contact during school closure
- Emergency remote Teaching and LearningSchools must choose an appropriate approach(es) for consultation with, and agreement by staff (and students).
- In some schools these platforms may not be appropriate or possible for some students. In these situations, alternative arrangements should be used, including using the postal service, emails, or phone calls.

Identify and develop the skill set of staff as needed:
- when selecting a digital platform(s) for the school, the school must make sure the level of capability of teachers is suitable. Arrangements should be put in place to improve teachers efficiency.
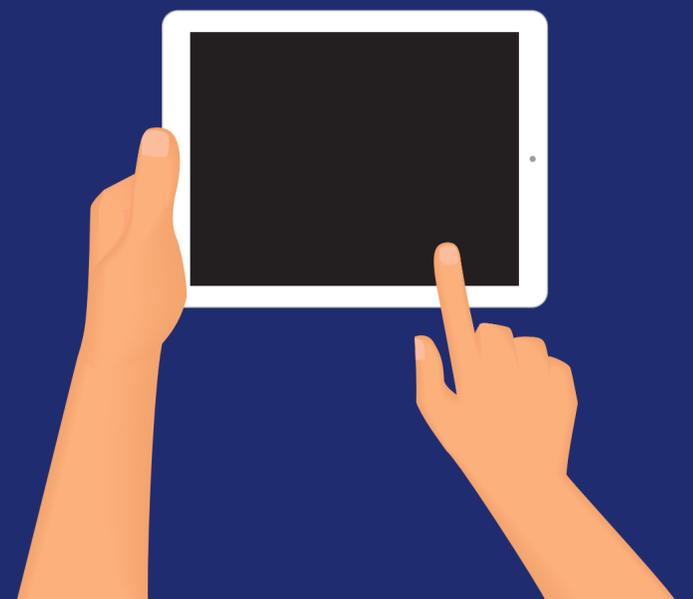
Give students the chance to develop the necessary skills to use the schools digital platform(s):
this will give students the opportunity to both improve their use of technology in school, but it will help if they need to self isolate or if there's another lockdown.
It's important that students have opportunities to practise:

- Use and get around their schools platform(s)
- Engaging with teaching and learning materials
- Upload their own work independently

Support access to digital resources for all students:

- If some students are unable to access high quality internet and required devices for socio-economic or geographical reasons, their schools are obligated to identify and address these issues to the best of their ability. If necessary, schools should consider utilizing postal services, phone calls, and email to communicate with students.

Sharing subject plans:

- Schools should ensure that there is a framework for teachers to share subject and teaching plans so that learning can continue seamlessly when a teacher is unable to provide classes and a substitute teacher must provide them instead. Plans for SEN students should be communicated as well.

Schools have been provided with funding for digital resources:

- This funding can be used to provide staff and students with the required resources they need in order to support remote learning.

Collaborate and communicate with parents/guardians:
- Schools should inform parents and guardians of the school's approach to online learning and should make sure that there is an efficient system of two-way communication between parents and the school.

Communication with external agencies:
- It is important that schools maintain contact with any necessary external agencies including the HSE, NEPS and NCSE.

Ensure relevant policies are up to date:
- Schools should review and revise relevant policies such as acceptable usage policies, data protection policies, child safeguarding statements, etc. in order to accomodate the online learning environment.

2.2 Personnel to support continuity of schooling

When students or teachers are advised to self isolate or are unable to attend school due to COVID-19, teachers should provide online tuition support. When a teacher is unable to provide such support there are alternative arrangements that can be put in plac:
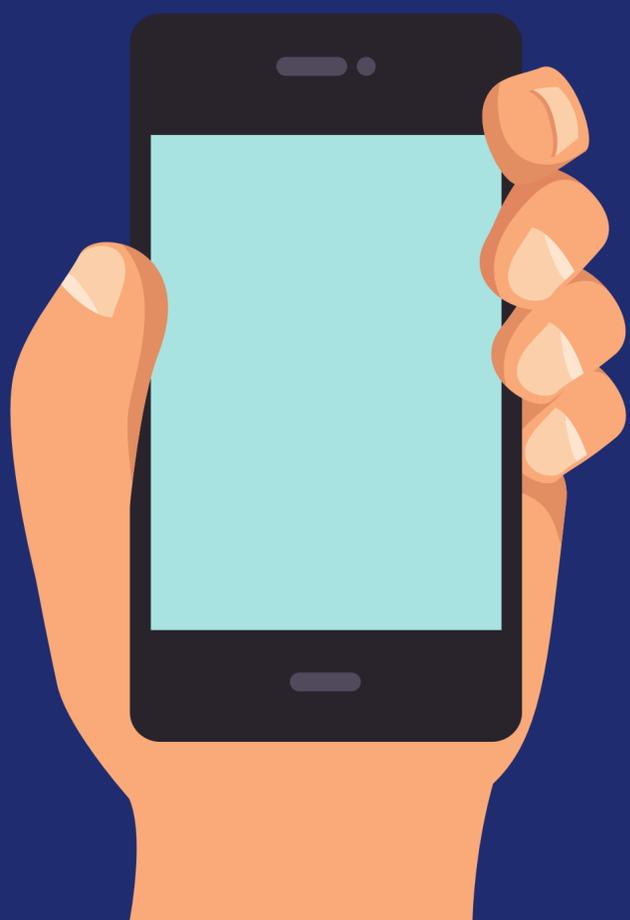
- Special Education Teachers within your school.
- Another teacher within your school
- Another teacher from a different school

No student should be left at a disadvantage due to a teacher being unable to provide online tuition support.

Contact your school or local Education Training Board

REQUIRED FEATURES OF PROVISION

**If students need to learn from home
eg. because they have COVID-19 or are restricting their movements
then teachers must provide it, with these features:**

Regular engagement with students:
- If possible, teachers should engage with students as per their normal timetable. It's not enough for them just to give work
- Students need to be taught directly.

A mix of teaching and independent learning:
- There needs to be both direct teaching and also work for students to complete themselves. There needs to be as much teaching as possible through things like videos, presentations and written instructions.

Teachers can not give you more work than they usually would in an in-person class:
- **Learning tasks:** Teachers should answer questions or give you feedback on the work you are doing
- **Skills development:** You can ask for extra help or advice on anything regarding your online schooling, especially for those with additional/or special needs

There should be a flawless two-way communication between your parents/guardians and teachers, to make sure that you are supported as they would if you were in school.

SAMPLE SITUATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR CONTINUITY IN SCHOOLING

Situation 1:

If a student is absent for a few days with a medically certified Covid-19 reason

- **Peer support:**

They can choose someone in their class for updates on classwork and homework. If they are well enough they can return completed assignments to their teachers via schools learning management or post to the school.

- **Schools digital platform(s):**

Teachers to share the lessons content and provide access to the work during the lesson for the students that are restricting their movements. If teachers already uploaded their lessons content they are encouraged to keep doing so

Situation 2:

If one or a number of students are advised to self isolate or restrict movements (in this case there are remaining students that are not deemed close contact and are still attending school)
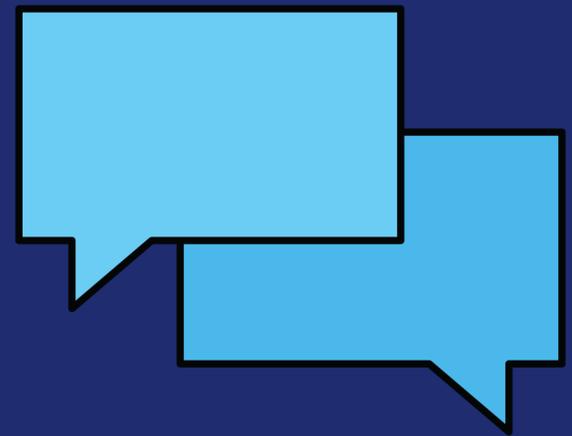
In this situation lessons should continue as normal for the students in attendance. It may be possible for teachers to set up collaborative work (example projects) using digital technology with the students self isolating and in attendance.

- **Live streaming lessons for those who are self isolating**
- **Support from other teachers:**

Other than your subject teacher, other teachers can assist you in providing any educational needs that you may have while in self-isolating.

Situation 3:

All students in a class or year group are advised to self isolate or restrict their movements
- **Subject teachers are required to provide emergency remote learning for all students in the class or year group.**
- **If said teacher is not required to self isolate or restrict their movements they must provide this remote learning from the school.**
- **Some students may be unable to engage with remote learning due to sickness. Another situation in this document outlines the procedure that may be followed.**

Situation 4

A teacher / number of teachers are advised to self isolate or restrict their movements.
- **Teachers in this situation will avail of special leave with pay, this is in line with Circular 0049/2020. Teachers should follow the advice outlined in this Circular.**
- **Any teacher that is medically fit for work should provide remote learning.**
- **A substitute teacher should be assigned to cover this teacher's responsibilities within the school during this time.**
- **The work given by the teacher who is restricting their movements should reflect the work of the school in delivering its programmes of teaching and learning as per Section 12 of the Circular 0049/2020.**

Situation 5:

The school is required to close on foot of public health advice:
- **All teachers, including SETs who are medically fit for work should provide remote learning for their classes.**
- **A substitute teacher should provide remote teaching for a class should their teacher contract Covid 19 or be deemed medically unfit for work.**
- **The school's digital platforms should be used by teachers and students. Students should use the school's digital resources to engage with class material and homework. The teachers should assign work and give feedback using these platforms.**