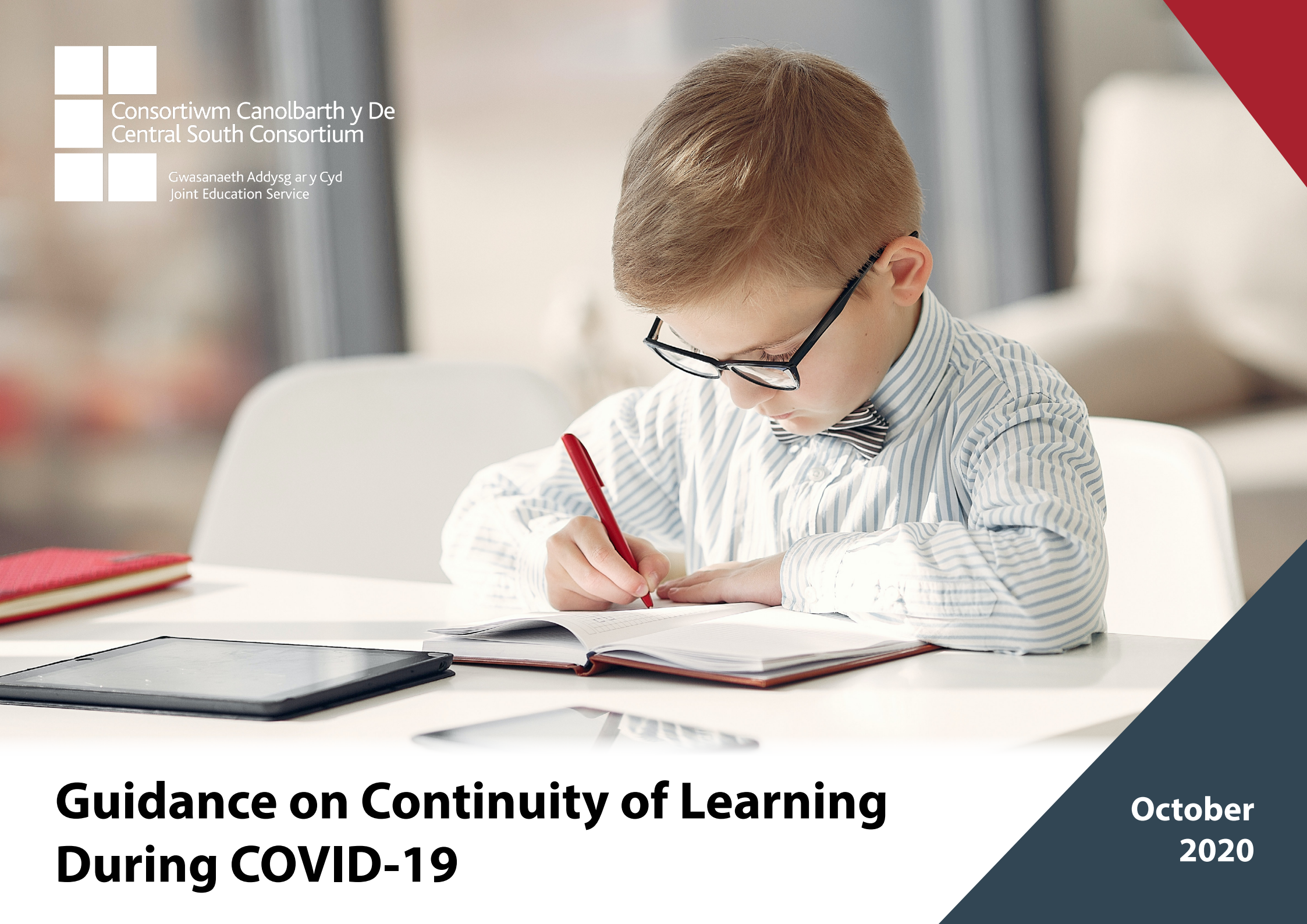




Consortiwm Canolbarth y De
Central South Consortium

Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd
Joint Education Service



Guidance on Continuity of Learning During COVID-19

October
2020



CSC Guidance on Continuity of Learning During COVID-19

Introduction

All schools are working in challenging and changing times as a result of COVID-19. There are a wide range of considerations for schools in planning for the continuity of learning. Schools need to develop a hybrid approach to learning that enables equitable learning for all learners in all scenarios, including when they are in school but also at home due to self-isolating. This approach will need to be reviewed and refined as informed by feedback from the whole school community and its stakeholders, and also with regard to research and learning from the wider education system.

“A school’s or setting’s approach to learning will need to adapt to the changing circumstances that we may face during the response to COVID-19. Schools should therefore develop an approach to learning that is flexible enough to adapt to different scenarios as well as differing amounts of in-school learning and learning at home or elsewhere.”
(Welsh Government, p.4, 2020)

This guidance has been developed to support schools in planning for the continuity of learning for all learners in those changing circumstances and different scenarios. It is informed by the most current research and practices from schools across the region and beyond.

This guidance should be considered alongside the following documents:

- [Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term](#)
- [Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term](#)
- [Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners](#)
- [Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: the accelerated learning programme](#)
- [CSC Blended Learning Road Map](#)
- [CSC Blended Learning Guidance](#)
- [Distance Learning Considerations for Schools](#)
- [Models of Blended Learning](#)
- [Distance learning tools through Hwb for senior leaders - How to guides](#)

Further research, information and examples from schools in the region and beyond will be shared on the [CSC website](#) as they become available.

Priorities and expectations for learning

The [Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term](#) sets out the expectations and priorities for learning from the autumn term 2020.

The **priorities** as stated on p. 4:

In summary, when considering their approach to autumn term learning, schools and settings should consider:

- **health and well-being:** learning should support learners' mental, emotional, physical and social well-being, as well as recognise the importance of outdoor learning and play
- **purpose:** all learning should have a clear purpose in mind, focused around what is important for learners now and in the longer term
- **literacy, numeracy and digital competence:** learners should have opportunities to develop and apply these skills across the curriculum
- **broad and balanced learning experiences:** learners should have learning experiences that span a broad curriculum and that include opportunities to develop a breadth of understanding and a range of knowledge and skills
- **progression and assessment:** learners should make meaningful progress throughout this period. Learning should be designed to support increasing depth and sophistication of learning over time. We encourage the use of assessments to help learners move to the next steps in their learning
- **partnership with parents, carers and learners:** schools should develop a common understanding and language with parents, carers and learners; this can help underpin learning and support learning experiences.

The expectations for **contact and duration** of learning as stated on p. 13:

- All learners should **be contacted regularly to 'check in'** – this would provide an opportunity to check on the safety and well-being of the learner as well as to explore their learning experience and consider possible additional support.
- All learners should be provided with the **duration of learning time they would receive were they in their school or setting**, regardless of whether or not some of their learning is taking place at home or elsewhere. There will be exceptions to the implementation of this expectation; however, it should be the starting position for all learners.



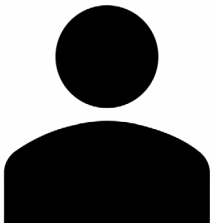
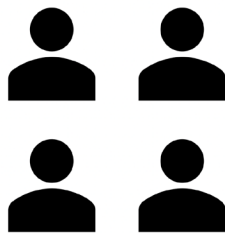


The [Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners](#) states (p.15):

All learners who face barriers to learning benefit from approaches, both teaching and support, which are based on a secure understanding of the needs of the learner. This has not changed.



Continuity of learning in changing circumstances and different scenarios

In order to provide continuity of learning for all in the changing circumstances and different scenarios at the present time, schools will need to develop a hybrid approach to learning. The different scenarios schools could face are shown in the matrix below.

SCHOOL LEARNING	BLENDED LEARNING	SUSTAINING LEARNING			DISTANCE (REMOTE) LEARNING
		INDIVIDUALS AT HOME	CLASS AT HOME	YEAR GROUPS AT HOME	
					
<p>The learning that takes place in school.</p> <p><i>The following may support schools in developing their learning and teaching approaches:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC Strategy for Equity and Excellence • CSC Models for Teaching 	<p>An approach to learning that combines face-to-face, distance, digital and online learning experiences.</p> <p>n.b. Blended learning can take place while all pupils are in school.</p> <p><i>The following may support schools in developing blended learning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hwb - Blended Learning • CSC - Blended Learning • CSC Blended Learning Playlist 	<p>Individuals self-isolating at home.</p> <p><i>Further guidance on what schools are trialling are available p9.</i></p>	<p>The school contact bubble is a class self-isolating at home</p> <p><i>Further guidance on what schools are trialling are available p11.</i></p>	<p>The school contact bubble is an entire year group self-isolating at home.</p> <p><i>Further guidance on what schools are trialling are available p11.</i></p>	<p>Allows learning experiences to happen from just about anywhere and may or may not involve a digital device and internet connection. This supports the well-being of all learners, including a choice of learning opportunities for social, physical, emotional development and tasks to promote their resilience. It allows individuals to learn when and where it is more convenient for them. Equitable distance learning does not have to mirror learning as it normally does in school.</p>

Key considerations

Schools need to plan for the continuity of learning in each of these scenarios so that all learners have equitable learning whatever their circumstance. There is no one size fits all strategy for these different scenarios. The plans must be suitable to the context of the school and have due regard for the Welsh Government expectations and priorities.

In order to support the planning and implementation of a flexible, hybrid approach for the continuity of learning for all, there are a number of key considerations that should support a school's decision-making.

Curriculum planning and sequencing

Curriculum includes, "all the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of the agreed purposes of education," (Welsh Government, 2020). Curriculum planning and sequencing is essential to ensure that experiences, knowledge and skills build on previous learning and enable learners to make progress.

Consider the what, the why, and the how to ensure the curriculum is:

- Broad and balanced
- Coherent and progressive
- Rich in literacy, numeracy and digital competence
- Supporting learner health and well-being.

"Learners need to acquire both breadth and depth of knowledge and experience in order to be fully engaged but also to help them to develop and to widen the opportunities available to them."
(Welsh Government, p.8, 2020)

Wiggins G & McTighe J (2005) describes the three stages of curriculum 'backward design':

Stage 1 – Identify desired results – what should students know, understand and be able to do?

Stage 2 – Determine acceptable evidence – how will we know students have achieved the desired results?

Stage 3 – Planning learning experiences and instruction – what sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to engage with, develop and demonstrate the desired learning?



Planning for learning

Teaching and learning activities must have a clear purpose and planned outcome. When planning for learning in both the short and longer term, practitioners need to be aware that circumstances can change rapidly and could be required to transition to distance learning for one, many or all learners at any point.

The [Rapid Evidence Assessment on Remote Learning](#) from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (2020) states:

- *Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered*
- *Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils*
- *Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes*
- *Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes*
- *Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils*

“Learning time at home can include practising skills and deepening knowledge that has been introduced during contact time but also could include acquiring new knowledge and understanding. Time at home can also allow older learners to research, prepare and think before exploring and consolidating concepts, knowledge and skills during contact time.”
(Welsh Government, p.12, 2020)

Learning management system (LMS)

The learning management system or LMS chosen by the school, e.g. Google classroom, Microsoft teams, etc, needs to be integral to learning. In order that learning is successful the school needs agreed systems and processes for the LMS and should consider:

- Has the use of the LMS been communicated clearly and understood by all staff, parents and learners?
- Do all teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to use the LMS competently to plan and deliver high quality learning and teaching?
- Can all learners independently access and use the chosen LMS system?
- What are the protocols and expectations of learners in engaging with the LMS?
- How and when can learners interact with teachers in the LMS?



Technology

The [CSC Blended Learning Guidance](#) details information on the tools that are available through Hwb (p. 23 – 25) and includes considerations of how the tools may be used to support and enhance learning and teaching (p. 18 – 22). Whilst in school, it is important that technology is used as part of a blended learning approach to support and enhance learning and teaching, thus ensuring that learners have the knowledge and skills to transition to using technology in distance learning as required. Schools should also consider the effective use of technology to facilitate peer collaboration to enhance learning.

If a decision to use live streaming is made, the school needs to have agreed protocols in place in line with the Welsh Government guidance [Live streaming and video-conferencing: safeguarding principles and practice](#).

Pupil contact

During this period of changing circumstances, contact time with learners is particularly valuable and precious. Schools should carefully consider how to maximise learning during this contact time, mindful of the uncertainty of how often this will happen for individuals or cohorts. Schools will need to determine protocols for contact with learners who are self-isolating. This needs to include the when, how, why and who and may be different for individuals or cohorts when sustaining learning at home. These should be communicated clearly to parents/carers and learners.







Direct teaching

Whether learners are accessing the curriculum in school or at home, synchronously or asynchronously, they should receive high quality direct teaching.

In the [CSC Blended Learning Guidance](#), direct teaching is described as: giving carefully considered explanation, questioning, worked examples, modelling, scaffolding, structured discussion and feedback. In the different scenarios, schools should consider how direct teaching can be provided.

As highlighted in the EEF [Rapid Evidence Assessment on Remote Learning](#) (2020), teaching quality is more important than the mode of delivery.

[Distance learning tools and guidance](#) are available on Hwb to support practitioners in live and pre-recorded direct teaching.

			
PRE-RECORDED STIMULUS, EXPLANATIONS AND KEY QUESTIONS	PRE-RECORDED MODELLING AND WORKED EXAMPLES	LIVE INTERACTIVE SESSION: PRACTITIONER WITH SMALL GROUP	LIVE STREAMING: PRACTITIONER TO CLASS
Giving carefully considered explanation, worked examples, modelling, scaffolding and whole class feedback	Worked examples, modelling, scaffolding	Giving carefully considered explanation, individual questioning, worked examples, modelling, scaffolding, structure discussion and individual feedback	Giving carefully considered explanation, questioning, worked examples, modelling, scaffolding and whole class feedback

The [CSC Models for Teaching](#) document shares information on a range of models for teaching. You may also find the following guide useful: [Live streaming and video-conferencing: safeguarding principles and practice](#).



Feedback loops

Assessment is integral to learning and teaching. It is essential to inform planning in order that learners are appropriately supported and challenged in their next steps in learning. Practitioners should ensure that learners receive regular and timely feedback in order to progress their learning. Learners should receive feedback and respond to feedback whether they are learning at home or in school. A wide range of approaches to assessment can be drawn upon and the most appropriate selected.

Engaging learners and parents/carers

Regular and clear communication with learners and parents/carers is essential for engagement in learning in the different scenarios. The presentation of communications should be carefully considered to most effectively meet the needs of the school community. Opportunities should be given for learners and parents/carers to ask questions and give feedback on their experiences of learning in the different scenarios.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUSTAINING LEARNING, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS FROM SCHOOLS

INDIVIDUALS SELF-ISOLATING AT HOME



Strategic questions

- What systems and processes can we put in place to ensure access to equitable learning for individuals self-isolating at home?
- What professional learning needs have been identified for staff to enable this, e.g. technology use, teaching models, cognitive science, metacognition, etc?
- How do we ensure that teacher workload remains manageable?

Curriculum planning and sequencing

- Curriculum planning needs to consider that not all learners will be in school at all times. Depending on the circumstances and frequency of self-isolation, the planning and sequencing of knowledge, skills and experiences will need careful consideration.
- If face-to-face time is limited for a learner, consideration of how that time is used should be based on the individual needs of the learner.

Planning for learning

- The needs of individual learners who are self-isolating should be known, understood and met.
- If practitioners are able to integrate the virtual classroom and use of technology into their classroom practice, it will be easier for learners to engage in this at home when self-isolating.
- Learners need to be taught the independent learning skills to access the virtual classroom.
- Teaching and learning activities provided for learners in school and at home could be different – equitable is not necessarily identical.
- An agreed timetable for learners self-isolating could be shared. This may mirror the school timetable or be different.
- Learning and teaching should include a blend of on-screen and off-screen activities.
- Provision of hard copies of learning activities may be considered for learners who are self-isolating.

Learning management system (LMS)

- Not all teaching and learning at home should to be accessed via a virtual classroom.
- Accessing teaching and learning on screen can be a more cognitively demanding and tiring experience. Practitioners should consider the length of time working at a screen.
- If a decision to use live streaming is made, the school needs to have agreed protocols in place in line with the Welsh Government guidance.

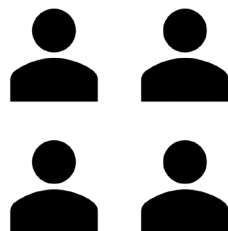


Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing professional learning for staff in the use of technology is essential.• Ensure that self-isolating learners have the technology and skills they needed they need to access and engage with the virtual classroom.
Pupil contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree and communicate the protocols for contacting learners who are self-isolating – who, how, why, when.• Agree and communicate expectations on engagement of self-isolating learners.• Communicate to learners and parents/carers the expectations of the submission of work that is undertaken at home and the feedback loop – how and when.• Practitioners must have agreed ‘quiet hours’ where they are offline and unavailable to self-isolating learners and their parents/carers.
Direct teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct teaching is essential – distance learning must be more than distance provision of activities. This may be synchronous or asynchronous as appropriate.• Managing teacher workload and well-being must be a priority in the provision of direct teaching for learners who are self-isolating.• Adults who are available in the school, such as other teachers and support staff, can be used to provide teaching and support in distance learning for learners who are self-isolating, i.e. this does not have to be the class or subject teacher.
Feedback loops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback on learning should be given in a timely manner to learners.• Technology can be used very effectively for assessment for learning in distance learning, e.g. quizzing apps and forms.• Learners show know and understand assessment techniques used, including marking codes. They should know and understand how to respond to feedback.
Engaging learners and parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision for learners who are self-isolating should be reviewed and refined regularly based on feedback from practitioners, learners and parents/carers.• Parent/carers should be contacted to explore any barriers they have to supporting their child’s learning at home.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUSTAINING LEARNING, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS FROM SCHOOLS

CLASS SELF-ISOLATING AT HOME



YEAR GROUPS SELF-ISOLATING AT HOME



Strategic questions

- How can I best ensure continuity of learning to meet the needs of all learners in the bubble that are self-isolating at home?
- What professional learning needs have been identified for staff to enable this, e.g. technology use, teaching models, cognitive science, metacognition, etc?
- How do we ensure that teacher workload remains manageable?

Curriculum planning and sequencing

- Curriculum planning and sequencing needs to focus on the identified desired results and learner needs – plan for the learners in this class/cohort.
- The curriculum must consider the priorities as set out in the [Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term](#) from Welsh Government.
- The sequencing of knowledge, skills and experiences will need careful consideration to achieve the identified desired results and must be revised and refined as informed by assessment.
- Planning of learning and teaching needs to be flexible and responsive – do not plan and prepare too far forward.
- Consider resources that ensure learners continue to see and hear language role models. These do not have to be recreated by individual practitioners, consider a bank of resources that are shared within and beyond the school, e.g. cluster.

Planning for learning

- Well-being of practitioners and learners must remain a priority and needs to be carefully considered.
- An agreed timetable could be shared – this may mirror the school timetable or be different.
- 'Teach tomorrow today' is a technique to consider managing workload, i.e. practitioners use the timetabled session when the learners would have been face-to-face to plan and prepare the learning for the next timetabled session. This would mean that learners access the learning one day/timetabled session later than they would have in school. A school would need one day/session of learning pre-prepared for a bubble before the usual timetable allows this to be sustained.
- Learning and teaching across a day/week needs to be reasonable and proportionate for both learners to engage with and for practitioners manage. This needs careful consideration across all subjects.
- If schools are operating a system where the virtual classroom is already pre-populated with work for the period of a bubble's self-isolation, e.g. two weeks, the practitioner can be available to learners during timetabled sessions to respond in real time.
- Learning at home should not rely on the support of an adult at home.



Learning management system (LMS)

- Ensure that the virtual classroom is simple and easy to navigate for classwork and homework. Log in as a learner and check how many clicks are needed and how many resources need to be opened to access a task.
- Allow staff time to structure the virtual classroom and ensure that there is a consistent approach to support learners, parents/carers and practitioners.
- Agree and communicate clearly to learners and parents/carers the expectations on engagement with learning and teaching and the submission of assignments.
- Agree whole school consistent approaches to labelling work and assignments.
- Agree expectations and protocols for staff roles and responsibilities, e.g. uploading of work, feedback loops, etc.
- Agree expectations and protocols assessment, feedback and responding to work, e.g. when, how.
- Agree the role of any support staff in the virtual classroom.
- Ensure expectations and protocols are reasonable and do not create an increased or unsustainable workload for practitioners and leaders.

Technology

- Ensure that pedagogy and learning intentions drive decisions around the effective use of technology in learning and teaching.
- Ensure that there is a balance of on-line and off-line activity.
- Ensure staff have the technology, knowledge and skills they need to create high quality learning and teaching to bubbles.
- Ongoing professional learning in the use of technology is essential.

Pupil contact

- Agree and communicate to all the protocols for contacting individual and specific groups of learners – who, how, why, when.
- Agree and communicate expectations of engagement of learners.
- Communicate to learners and parents/carers the expectations of the submission of work that is undertaken at home and the feedback loop – how and when.
- Practitioners must have agreed 'quiet hours' where they are offline and unavailable to learners and their parents/carers.

Direct teaching

- Direct teaching is essential – distance learning must be more than distance provision of activities. This may be synchronous or asynchronous as appropriate.
- Managing teacher workload and well-being has to be a priority in the provision of direct teaching.
- Research shows that learners benefit from contact with their own teacher. However, other adults and other available resources for direct teaching should also be considered.
- Direct teaching should consider the concentration and fatigue of on-screen learning related to a session, a day and a week.



Feedback loops

- Feedback of learning should be given in a timely manner to learners but must be manageable for practitioners.
- Technology can be used very effectively for assessment for learning in distance learning, e.g. Screencastify used for whole class feedback, quizzing apps, polls, collaborative peer and self-assessment.
- All learners show know and understand assessment techniques used, including marking codes. They should know and understand how know to respond to feedback.

Engaging learners and parents/carers

- Online questionnaires for staff, learners and parents/carers can give interesting insights into the experience and the information used to inform the refinement of distance learning.
- Whole school or bubble enrichment activities can be useful to support engagement.
- A variety of approaches should be used to communicate and engage with parents/carers, e.g. 'how to' guides, social media, webinars, digi-desk, etc.
- Communications should be purposeful, positive, regular, clear and concise.

References

Wiggins, G & McTighe, J (2005). Understanding by Design 2nd ed., ASCD, Alexandria, VA, USA

EEF, (2020). [Rapid Evidence Assessment on Remote Learning](#)

Welsh Government, (2020). [Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term](#)

Welsh Government, (2020). [Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners](#)