Coronavirus crisis

What you need to know:
Distance teaching and learning

national education union

Guidance for secondary teachers:

1 Teachers and schools have been engaged in distance teaching and learning since schools closed to most pupils on 23 March, providing resources, communicating with pupils and families, and teaching in all sorts of innovative ways. School staff are working harder than ever to ensure pupils access education during this crisis.

2 In a survey of our secondary members in May:

- more than 97% said they were setting work for their class online.
- 10% said they were presenting recorded lessons online.
- 20% said they were sending work to students' homes.

3 The NEU's guidance on distance learning is informed by safeguarding and equality of provision for pupils.

4 Pre-recorded lessons or segments allow the teacher to explain key ideas and methods, model work and so on, are a great way of engaging pupils. They can also be paused where necessary and watched, or repeated, at a time that suits the pupil and their family.

5 Not all lessons need to be full-length lessons as in school. An explanation session with follow-up work might be more effective at times, with a recap in the next lesson.

6 Not all pupils will have a quiet place to work, and some will be expected to take care of younger siblings or perform household chores.

7 Providing plenty of tasks that do not need the internet or a device such as a laptop or tablet to access them are preferable, as some children and families will not have internet access or will be sharing devices.

8 Spending hours in front of a screen each day is not healthy for young people, whether it is for educational or recreational purposes, and this should be taken into account as schools plan timetables.

9 Try to set tasks that can be completed to varying degrees of success, with more complex and additional tasks for the most able pupils. A number of tasks that require little or no access to technology are needed in order to cater for everyone.

10 Live-streaming lessons from home should be handled very carefully. This is due mainly to safeguarding concerns, for the pupils and the teacher. Lessons on live video platforms such as Zoom give access into all pupils' (and the teacher's) homes for all participants on the call. Were there to be a safeguarding incident, this could place the teacher and the school in a very difficult position.

11 Additionally, not all pupils will be able to access the lessons when they are live and will therefore lose out on that interaction and instruction.

» Lots of resources are available for schools and teachers **HERE.**

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12 Where schools expect teachers to provide some live lessons, these should be arranged in consultation with the teacher and not necessarily expected at the same time and day as on the normal school timetable. Teachers who have caring responsibilities at home may find certain times impossible, depending on their other commitments.

13 Any school that carries out online lessons must have protocols and behaviour policies in place to protect staff and safeguard pupils, and no teacher should be expected to carry out any online teaching with which they feel uncomfortable, or in the absence of agreed protocols.

14 Some teachers have found that a safer way of delivering live lessons is to not appear in person on screen, but to give the lesson in the form of a narrated presentation. This method allows the teacher more privacy. Pupils should turn off their own cameras to avoid invasion of privacy.

15 Questions and discussion can take place via audio, under the control of the teacher. These measures can also help with virtual classroom management.

16 Schools should suggest activities that children can complete on their own, regardless of ability level. We must recognise that many parents are also trying to work from home. In some instances, pupils are at home alone or caring for younger siblings while parents go out to work. Parents cannot be expected to become teachers.

17 Variety is key. Bite-sized chunks of work are more likely to be completed and could be part of a bigger project. We cannot expect pupils or parents to replicate the classroom at home.

18 A list of flexible tasks that cover different areas of the curriculum allows pupils to choose the tasks that interest them and makes it more likely that they will complete them. Post-16 learners might be able to carry out more open-ended, independent work, but structure and guidance is still needed for them.

19 At this time, teachers should not be expected to carry out routine grading of pupils' work. To do so would be to disadvantage those who do not have the resources and support available at home.

20 Taking care of your own physical and mental health is crucial at this time: this goes for children, parents and teachers. Keeping minds active and happy, ready to return to school when the time comes, is most important.

21 Teachers working at home, especially those with caring responsibilities, can only carry out a reasonable workload, and this must be negotiated with staff.

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