



DEVELOPING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP | Bulletin – March 2020

EDUCATION WORKING GROUP | COVID 19 – ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION

We have established an ad hoc working group to update school leaders with emerging advice and practice – providing best advice with practical steps to combat the Covid 19 virus and begin to think about the challenges and issues around enabling our students to continue learning should an education institution face closure.

It is essential for schools to initiate sensible conversations about a potential closure situation as soon as possible. Be pragmatic and continue to plan strategically for potential eventualities.

It is important to think through and seek advice on how to maximise learning opportunities for pupils.



Containment, Delay, Research and Mitigate

UK health officials are now trying to delay the spread of coronavirus, rather than simply contain it, in the hope of moving the peak of cases away from the winter pressures on the NHS.



The government's plan is in four stages - Containment, Delay, Research and Mitigate. The Containment phase is now moving into the aim of delaying the disease until the summer, according to Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, Chief Medical Adviser to the UK Government.



EdtechUK



Digital Strategy Group

Department for Education

Coronavirus Helpline: 0800 046 8687

8am - 6pm (Monday to Friday)

DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Also here: <https://www.isc.co.uk/sector-info/coronavirus-information-for-schools/>

In the United States the importance of schools and colleges in stopping the spread of the disease is emphasised:

“ Schools can play an important role in this effort. Through collaboration and coordination with local health departments, schools can take steps to disseminate information about the disease and its potential transmission within their school community. Schools can prepare to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their students and staff should local health officials identify such a need.

Schools should continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community, including those with special health needs.

School plans should be designed to minimize disruption to teaching and learning and protect students and staff from social stigma and discrimination. Plans can build on everyday practices (e.g., encouraging hand hygiene, monitoring absenteeism, communicating routinely) that include strategies for before, during, and after a possible outbreak. ”

Taken from: Centers for Disease Prevention and Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

Coronavirus UK: what schools have closed?

UK health officials are now trying to delay the spread of coronavirus, rather than simply contain it, in the hope of moving the peak of cases away from the winter pressures on the NHS.

There have been around fifteen closures, sometimes pre-cautionary, because of the virus.

The situation is on-going, and we will endeavour to map the evolving situation.

If a school or College closes – how do, we continue teaching and learning?

Clearly technology can be of use in this situation and there is a value in online learning, but you may be able to take some simple steps to think about, prepare and continue to consolidate teaching and learning. Important to note that not all schools or colleges will be able to implement on-line learning at scale.

Have the conversations, be pragmatic and strategic

Your plan should work from where you currently are.

For example, if everyone one uses the school email system and that works consistently and reliably then that would be good enough to allow teachers to dialogue with and monitor student progress.

If the school email isn't used by everyone right now, this is not the time to change culture and embark on an intense training period but you could be publishing accessible Schemes of Work and teaching resources and discussing with departments how they help students continue to make progress.

Kellett School, Hong Kong – emerging tips about closure and online learning

This school leader, Mark Steed, Principal and CEO of Kellett School, the British International School in Hong Kong, a school that is continuing to function whilst closed to students, shares his insights:

- "Home learning is tough – much tougher than school.
- One key factor is whether schools get teachers into school during the period of closure
 - We did M, W, F – it was the right decision because other schools have found that it is very difficult for teachers to sustain prolonged teaching from home without the support and camaraderie of colleagues.
- We ran "live learning" in Secondary running our usual timetable
 - We found that Zoom_us a was much better solution for us.
 - Zoom allows whole class muting, easy to send out link and the visual option allows you to see the whole class tiled. Settings options also allow background blurring which is good.
 - There are a range of issues around Live learning – I have attached the Guidance on Home Learning Senior which covers these.
- It is easier to do live teaching than to make videos for children.
- Videos take a lot of time to make – 4 minutes to shoot for every minute screened minimum.
 - Teachers can be anxious about the quality of videos
 - There needs to be a protocol that parents do not share instruction videos on social media.
- Young children find it very difficult to access home learning even with parental support.
- One important thing is for teachers to have 'live touch points' with younger children (via Zoom) – a virtual Circle Time if you like."

Documentation you can use – to support you and others

Mark Steed has shared his documentation:

[200227 Covid-19 Kellett School Guidance on Home Learning Senior](#)

[200227 Covid-19 Kellett School Home Learning Responsible User Agreement](#)

[200227 Covid-19 Kellett School Parental Consent Form Online Sessions](#)

[200227 Covid-19 Kellett School Protocols for Teachers](#)

[200227 Covid-19 Kellett School Guidance on Home Learning Prep](#)

Advice for schools to continue learning

We all have textbooks and online resources that staff can use to help students to continue to learn. Many schools are already using online platforms for managing student work and providing feedback on progress. How different schools and subjects find most effective will vary.

Be very cautious about trying something wholly new, but if you have Office365 then Teams is a click away, similarly G Suite with premium Hangouts. Companies are offering free access to resources, but you must make sure that anything new will not disrupt or distract students from making progress with their learning

The question will be how we continue to manage student learning and mentor pupils without the face to face interactions that we are used to. Communities of learners are important, and some schools and colleges may find it a challenge to continue the momentum without the structure of the timetable and the support of our colleagues.

We understand that there are schools with a lack of sufficient infrastructure, experience and training for staff to use digital resources to support teaching and learning. But there are steps to start thinking about teaching and learning during a potential closure situation.

Questions to start conversations

1. Think about communications channels to parents, can you use them to maintain the momentum of the learning community and deliver more practical solutions like share worksheets?
2. Do you have a shared online space (OneDrive, Google Drive etc) for staff to share information with each other and with students / parents?
3. Does your institution or your Parent Teacher Association have a Facebook group or similar solution that you can use to have a dialogue with parents?
4. How often would you aim to go online with your learners?
5. How can you best mobilise and explain to parents the continued need to support learning?
6. How can you best support pupils who need extra support from a distance?
7. Should we consider different approaches for EYFS, KS1, KS2, SEN etc?
8. How can we manage students ongoing learning and set realistic expectations for "work" in an evolving situation? Remember that teaching staff may have young children too?
9. Have you tested the IT systems that you will use?
10. Have you assessed staff and student skills to use your systems?
11. Are there any things that could go wrong?
12. Have you asked each department for a plan of action, including resources they will use?
13. Consider the home learning environments for pupils - are they good for study and is on-line access actually available and protected at home?
14. Are there any safeguarding issues for pupil study from home?

[Article: 'Best Practices for Teaching Online' by Andrew Salcido and Jessica Cole](#)

The information collated represents our best efforts to provide advice on what may be facing schools and Colleges. It is shared in the spirit of professional learning. None of what we share is designed to represent medical and legal advice.