



COVID-19 – Coronavirus

# Distance Learning Guidance for Parents/Carers



**At the start of the summer term, Covid-19 requires that our schools remain closed to most children and young people for now. During this time, schools will provide a programme of Distance Learning so that children can continue to learn and remain connected with their school community.**

Distance Learning does not seek to replicate a normal school day. However, it is designed to provide some structure and opportunities for purposeful learning. While it is important that your child completes the Distance Learning work set by their teacher, we of course recognise that most parents are not teachers and so we do not expect you to step into this role. In fact, the learning that your child's school will send you has been specifically designed to help them work as independently as possible.

It is really important to us that you feel supported. We fully appreciate these are challenging times for parents so if you have any questions about this guidance, or how Distance Learning will work for your child, please contact their school and they will be happy to discuss it with you.



### **What is the expectation on parents during the Distance Learning period?**

Parents are not expected to sit alongside their children while they are working and teach them. You can, however, play an important role by helping your child plan their time and encouraging, motivating and praising their efforts.

Depending on the age of your child, you may need to help them communicate with their teacher about the work they have completed or, in the case of older children, make sure they are following the school's instructions about how to keep in touch. Your child's school will let you know how their teacher will share material and how this should be submitted once complete.



## How will education be delivered?

It would be unrealistic to expect Distance Learning to replicate the timetable and type of activities that are provided when schools are operating under normal circumstances. All children and young people continue to have the right to learning, and we are committed to delivering that, but for understandable reasons this may look quite different for the time being. There is likely to be greater emphasis on re-affirming what students have already learnt, with independent learning pitched at the right level for your child, literacy, numeracy and activities which build core knowledge being the focus. Your child's school will contact you directly to explain how they will operate during this time.



## Will a daily timetable operate as normal?

No, because we recognise that most parents/carers are not teachers and have work and many other things they have to juggle. Children will be able to do the work for that day at a time that best fits in with their household. Schools may provide suggested timetables to help support children in organising their learning but they will all understand that different families have different needs and may choose to structure their child's study in different ways.



## What kind of work will teachers be setting?

It may be helpful to think of the work that your child's teacher sets as similar to high-quality homework. It will give opportunities to revise, consolidate and practise material that has already been learnt, rather than seeking to teach much by the way of new material.



## How much work will my child be expected to do?

This will depend on how old your child is. Please see the table below for an outline of the expectations for different year-groups and the sorts of activities your child's teacher will set:

### Reception Year 1

- short phonics input and opportunity to practise daily
- short maths input and opportunity to practise at least three times a week
- physical activity guidance
- guidance to parents on play
- guidance to parents on stories to read to pupils
- *optional creative activities or projects*

### Year 2 Year 3 Year 4

- phonics and/or spelling input and opportunity to practise daily
- maths input and opportunity to practise daily
- short writing activities at least three times per week
- physical activity guidance
- daily independent reading practice for 20 minutes minimum
- topic-related activity at least once per week
- guidance to parents on stories to read to pupils
- *optional creative activities or projects*

**Year 5  
Year 6**

- grammar and spelling input and opportunity to practise daily
- maths input and opportunity to practise daily
- short writing activities at least three times per week plus one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks
- physical activity guidance
- daily independent reading practice for 30 minutes minimum
- topic-related activity at least twice per week
- guidance to parents on stories to read to pupils
- *optional creative activities or projects*

**Year 7  
Year 8  
Year 9**

**Weekly:**

- English 1½ - 2 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:
- maths: 1½ - 2 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:
- science 1½ - 2 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:
- each other subject: 30 - 45 mins
- *optional creative activities, projects and wider subject reading*

**Daily :**

- physical activity: 30 mins - 1 hour

**Year 10  
Year 11**

**Weekly:**

- English 2-3 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:
- maths: 2-3 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:

**Year 10**  
**Year 11**

- science 2-3 hours including one longer task with feedback at least every two weeks:
- other subjects: 45 mins - 2 hours (as appropriate)
- *optional creative activities, projects and wider subject reading*

**Daily:**

- physical activity: 30 mins - 1 hour per day

**Year 11** individual student transition programmes are planned to begin in May, which will include transition modules for A Levels, IB and vocational/technical courses, English and/or maths, and individual career guidance.

**Year 12**

**Weekly:**

- A Levels: 5-6 hours per subject, with feedback at least once per week per subject
- IB: 2-4 hours per subject, with feedback at least once per week per subject
- *optional creative activities and projects*

**Daily:**

- physical activity
- independent reading around subjects

**Year 13**

- individual student transition programmes, which may include pre-reading for university, individual career guidance or opportunities to work or volunteer
- daily physical activity

Your child's school will be working hard to deliver this new form of education, but please note that some aspects may not be entirely in place during the first few days of the summer term.



## **My child attends the College of Further Education. Will they be expected to do the same kind of work as the schools?**

Young people at the College study a wide variety of courses and are often very familiar with blended models of learning which apply specifically to the courses that they are following. However, the principles continue to apply for students at the College:

### **Full time students**

- ✓ use internal communication portal GCFEConnect to keep up to date with activities across the College and touch base with tutors
- ✓ check emails and/or Google classroom daily
- ✓ attend online lecturers/ discussion groups at times agreed with your tutor or complete online activities or assessments
- ✓ check in with tutor at the designated times
- ✓ take a break and get some exercise
- ✓ contact the Learning Support Team if you have any worries

### **Apprentices**

- ✓ check emails from tutors and use GCFEConnect and information on the College website
- ✓ attend online lecturers/ discussion groups at times agreed with your tutor or complete online activities or assessment submissions
- ✓ check in with tutor at the designated times
- ✓ take a break and get some exercise
- ✓ contact the Learning Support Team if you have any worries

## 14-16 students

- ✓ check emails from tutors and use GCFEConnect and information on the College website
- ✓ attend online lecturers/ discussion groups at times agreed with your tutor or complete online activities or assessment submissions
- ✓ check in with tutor at the designated times



### **What about children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those in SEND schools?**

Schools will carefully pitch the work given to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities so that it best fits their needs. Many tasks will focus upon extending and consolidating learning in a flexible way. If your child has SEND and you are concerned about how they are managing, please make contact with your child's teacher or SENCO/Head of Year as they will be happy to help.



### **What about the children of essential workers attending school?**

These children will be following the same Distance Learning programme as their peers. School-based staff will support them in the same way as parents at home are supporting their own children and young people.



### **Will teachers be delivering live video lessons?**

The use of live video lessons assumes that all children in a class can be online at the same time and this will not be possible for many families. Children will not be expected to study specific subjects at specific times. However, the only

exception to this might be in the case of post-16 students or where there are very small groups. If possible, a teacher in these settings may try to deliver a live lesson by video if they are able to do so while ensuring no student is excluded as a result of internet access or other circumstances.



### **My child's school is asking us to use resources produced by other organisations or to watch BBC programmes as part of their Distance Learning. Is this okay?**

The use of high quality online or broadcast learning resources is encouraged and schools will use these alongside other materials that they have produced themselves. There is nothing wrong with schools drawing from some of the excellent materials produced by other organisations.



### **How does this all fit in with the need to focus on children's mental health and well-being at this difficult time?**

Structure, routine and the sustaining of relationships are important elements in maintaining mental health and well-being. For many children, the sudden withdrawal of school will have been challenging and unnerving. Therefore, it is important that we are able to provide all children with structured learning, albeit in a way that is more flexible and adaptable to different families' circumstances. In the next few days we will be sending out some further guidance for parents and carers specifically about how you can support your children's mental health and well-being during this challenging period.



### **Will work be compulsory for children?**

It is important that formal education resumes from the start of the summer term. As such it is expected that students will complete the work their teachers set for them. However there will be flexibility in how that work is completed and your child's teacher will be available to remotely support them and you during this time.



## What will happen if children do not complete the work?

Where a school is aware that a child is not engaging with the work set, the first concern will always be for the well-being of the child and their family members. School staff will get in touch with you and your child to encourage your child to engage with the activities set or to explore with parents any barriers to participating in learning at this time.



## What if my child is ill?

In the same way that children who are ill do not have to attend school under normal circumstances, children do not have to engage with Distance Learning when they are ill. Parents and carers should let schools know that their child is unwell in the way that they usually would.



## How will teachers let me and my child know how they are doing?

Your child's school will tell you which online methods they will be using to provide feedback to your child. Keeping learners motivated will be very important, so schools will continue to recognise and praise the efforts of their children regularly. Schools will use online learning tools to enable children and young people to share the work that they have done and for teachers to respond with encouragement. Children need to understand that, even though they may not be in school all day as usual, their teachers will know if they are completing their work as required.



### **What about children who do not have access to WiFi or an internet enabled device?**

Schools will make a Chromebook available if a child does not have access to an appropriate device at home. Please discuss this with your child's school. Where Chromebooks are being loaned, parents/carers must agree to the loan, and sign a loan/acceptable use agreement. Telecoms providers have offered support for any child who is not able to access WiFi from home. Please speak to your child's Headteacher about this.



### **My child needs to shield for health reasons and so may need to stay off school even if they reopen. What does this mean for them?**

When schools reopen, there may be a number of children with health conditions who will need to continue to shield and therefore will not be able to attend school with their peers. These children will continue to have access to the Distance Learning offer until such time as they can return safely to school.



### **What happens if I am not happy with the work my child is being set or how this is being communicated?**

Please contact your child's school if you have any problems or concerns. The school will want to hear from you and work with you to address these. Please remember that this is a new way of working for your child's school and its teachers too. Your child's school wants to do the very best it can for your child and hearing about what is going well and what could be improved will help them to do that.

## **Thank you**

**We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in helping us deliver a good Distance Learning experience to students. These are challenging times for everyone and the role you play in supporting schools, teachers and students cannot be understated.**