Guidance for Remote Learning in Highland
January 2021

Please note the advice contained in this document is for the limited and sole purpose of responding to the challenges of teaching and learning in the COVID-context. The advice will be updated to reflect changing circumstances and pertinent departmental developments and best practice when appropriate.

Device Access in Highland & Background

All learners and educators in Highland are able to benefit from the digital infrastructure in Highland and the dedicated support for technology in education. The ICTiLearning strategy, part of the Education Improvement Plan for 2021-22 is structured around 4 key themes:

- Develop the skills and confidence of educators in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology to support learning and teaching.
- Improve access to digital technology for all learners.
- Ensure that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery.
- Empower leaders of change to drive innovation and investment in digital technology for teaching and learning.

Before Christmas 2020 the First Minister announced that most school pupils would learn remotely, rather than in school, until Monday 18 January 2021. On 4 January 2021 the First Minister confirmed that the Scottish Government had decided to extend this date and keep school buildings closed to the majority of pupils until 1 February 2021. This will be reviewed in mid-January. This change applies to all pupils, except vulnerable children, and children of key workers. It includes nursery provision, as well as primary and secondary schools.

The advice in this document is based on guidance from Education Scotland and also the Highland ICTiLearning Strategy. This document should support practitioners over the coming weeks, and supports practitioners to apply this understanding to their own specific context and professional practice.

The Curriculum in Highland

The core principles of Scotland's curriculum and the four fundamental capacities at its centre remain critical in putting learners at the heart of education.

In the last year, wellbeing has been a strong focus of all aspects of our learning and teaching and remains a key priority for the Highland Council. Given the diverse location, size and uniqueness of Highland Council schools, autonomy of curriculum delivery has been a key aspect of our empowerment agenda.

During this period of remote learning, the curriculum should continue to build on the recovery work that has been done in schools and should include a focus on promoting and developing skills, that will support independent learning, as part of our online curriculum. However, expectations must be reasonable and manageable, for both pupils, the school community and

staff.The Skills Development Framework, developed in partnership with Moray Council, is very relevant to online learning at all stages of the curriculum. The link to this document is provided as a link in Appendix 1.

Delivery of Remote Learning in Highland

Remote learning can be delivered in a variety of ways: some high-tech, some low-tech and sometimes requiring no technological solutions. In the current context, digital and online approaches will be commonly used. Teachers may be interacting in a 'live' way with pupils using the Highland Tools e.g. Google Meet, equally independent tasks and skill based learning could be utilised with a variety of approaches to encourage or reduce screen time. The number of 'live' interactions must be carefully managed taking in to full consideration the needs of all

Local context in Highland is of greater importance than many other authorities, so the school staff will know their learners best. However, there is an expectation that schools utilise the Google for Education tools, as the safeguarding aspects of the way this has been set up are fundamental. Zoom or Teams should **not** be used with pupils, unless there are specific and appropriate circumstances (and accepted approval).

It is also important that screen time is limited for both pupils and staff and it is not expected that learners engage online for the whole school day. The school timetable therefore should not be replicated online in any circumstance, as this is not an effective delivery method for the curriculum. While a timetable can be used to structure the pupil day, there is no expectation that staff would be online for a 'normal' school day. Delivery must be sustainable for both students and staff alike, and must not harm the well-being of either.

Remote learning involves a combination of 'live' interactions between teacher and learners, and also learning which takes place away from the direct presence of the class teacher. It may involve a range of learning experiences which take place in a variety of learning spaces, including outdoors. Live' interaction does not just refer to live streaming of direct teaching but can cover many types of face-to-face engagement such as assemblies, check ins etc

Learners should also be encouraged to engage in practical tasks, skill-based tasks, research tasks, project work, practical opportunities, discussion and other activities that can be carried out away from a digital device. There should be an emphasis on active learning and children working independently. Please use the skills framework in the appendix to support skills for life, learning & work. There are also resources in the DYW folder / curriculum / schools hub to support learning and teaching e.g. Education Scotland GLOW resources, Click View.

It is expected that learning at home activities will include provision of opportunities to consolidate learning and extend and enhance learning to take account of and meet the needs of learners and their families. This may be accommodated by providing access to pre-recorded lessons, presentations, lesson notes, diagrams or links to useful websites.

In Highland we have a number of partners who have been supporting through the COVID period. This includes Eden Court, Feis Rois, Highlife Highland, Skills Development Scotland and many more third sector agencies. Learners can benefit significantly from a range of opportunities.

Effective remote learning can offer learners:

- significant autonomy over their learning

- a degree of flexibility for learners in where and when they learn

- potential for high quality consolidation of learning

- opportunities to develop and improve their skills in working independently

- increased opportunities for personalisation in learning

- opportunities for improved engagement

- enhanced parental engagement in their child's learning away from school .

Please note, the secondary timetable offers structure and routine which will restart upon return to physical attendance in school, so can be used as a framework during this period, however it should remain flexible.

Period-by-period registration must be discouraged. Interaction with learning would be best monitored over the course of a whole day or week. Daily registration point aside of course, as this is a legal requirement.

However, challenges remain and below is guidance of how to manage some of these challenges.

Key principles for remote learning (Based on Education Scotland Guidance):

- ❏ Remote learning **will not** replicate face to face in school teaching – in style, approach or hours of delivery
- ❏ The Class teacher retains responsibility for planning and organising children's and young people's learning, not the Pupil Support Assistant
- ❏ It should provide opportunities for learners to progress and extend their learning. This must be manageable within the context of staff and pupil capability
- ❏ Includes approaches to assessment of learning and providing feedback that support and capture children's and young people's achievements in school and at home. In Highland we have access to a number of applications that can support feedback, including 'Mote' via Google Classroom and Google Docs. Feedback must be manageable and should not become 'essay-like' and there should not become an over-burdensome requirement for it.
- ❏ Provision of learning activities to ensure engagement for all by considering the age and stage of development of learners, introducing increasing opportunities for independent study as appropriate. Please use the Skills for Learning Framework for Life, Learning & Skills
- ❏ **Learning activities for any learners who may be particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged due to COVID. Please use the online referral system for Highland Virtual Academy if you require individual support for a pupil**
- ❏ This is especially important in ensuring the new attainment gap does not widen. The pupils who are now struggling to engage due to COVID related issues, could be supported through individual referrals to HVA.
- ❏ **A shared understanding between home and school of the remote learning approach and the respective roles and responsibilities of all involved.**
- ❏ Partnership working with community providers and third sector organisations to support beyond school provision.

In line with these key principles, children and young people are entitled to (as per Education Scotland Guidance):

- Regular high quality face-to-face learning and teaching over the course of a week, with a daily registration available for every learner
- Learning opportunities which reflect the principles of Curriculum for Excellence allowing learners to develop their knowledge, skills and attributes in a variety of relevant contexts.
- A balance of live learning and independent activity, with regular live engagement each week for every learner. Please note,'live' interactions do not mean just live streaming teaching content, they cover many engagements which involve online face to face contact with all staff, including assemblies, check ins etc. Equally important, staff should not be expected to be 'online' over the course of every period during the day. For all settings, length of each interaction being age-appropriate
- Access to key learning which is available for learners to revisit as often as necessary.
- Ongoing dialogue, reflection and feedback with teachers in relation to their own learning. This may be in person verbally, or via email/message board/comment on work handed in

Guidance for Remote Learning

➔ Continue to observe the highest professional standards

➔ Only use Google video meets if you are confident that this is the best way to deliver content and feel comfortable doing so. Other options include pre-recording lessons using Google Meet, Loom or Screencastify. You do not have to record Google Meets in Highland. Please ensure that if sharing the recording, this is done appropriately.

➔ Ensure that you use only approved digital services such as Google G Suite for Education including Classroom, Meet, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drive and other services identified here. **Do not use ZOOM** for any interaction with pupils

➔ Useful resources from Google are available on our [Highland Digital Schools Hub](), Education Scotland GLOW DigiLearn site & resources provided by the Northern Alliance on GLOW.

➔ Choose the method of delivery based on the lesson itself

➔ When using Google Meet or recording video, place your device so the camera doesn't show too much of your home (to protect your privacy). Blurred backgrounds now exist within Google Meet so you should consider using this, if you are concerned about your room or house being 'on show'

➔ Always use Google Classroom / Google Meet integration to set up Meets and Google Classroom to assign work for pupils. If your school has SeeSaw or Class Dojo, these can be used but only if parental permissions are in place (paid for version only for Seesaw, due to data sharing policy)

➔ Consider how to structure online learning to provide balance and differentiation. Many resources will have a 'guide' as to age and stage but just as is the case with offline learning, there will be many resources that can be used across multiple stages. For differentiation, workload must be fully considered, and differentiation by 'output' can reduce planning. It may be that in primary schools, staff can be allocated 'level 1 numeracy' and they deliver that to all appropriate pupils, with similar for other levels, and curricular areas. In the Secondary setting where there are multiple teachers at a level e.g. Higher Maths, consideration should be given to sharing of tasks.

Teachers - Planning your lesson
Combining approaches

The best approaches to digital learning are to blend video instruction, demonstration videos, pupil assignments and activities, plenary and assessment. A good format is (all posted in Google Classroom):

1. Recorded video introduction (5 minutes max). Please note the length of lesson may change as per age and stage. There is no expectation that a lesson lasts for the normal period length.

2. Shared learning intentions with activity resources as an assignment

3. Pupils can ask questions for clarification in comments against the assignment task or private message you with them.

4. Pupils complete assigned work. You can review all pupil's work set as assignments with Docs, Sheets or Slides at any time.

5. Pupils submit work for feedback

6. Teacher reviews work / provides feedback – remember you can leave voice feedback using the VoiceNote tool in TextHelp Read and Write – Find out more

7. Google Meet – plenary to review learning and discuss with class/small groups.

8. Google Meet is a great way to keep in touch with pupils, deliver new learning, ask questions and support pupils.

9. What resources are available locally and nationally to support remote learning?

10. Are there activities and learning that can be done prior to face-to-face sessions to help learners become familiar with the topic or concepts, using a flipped classroom approach? Are there activities and learning that can take place after the face-to-sessions to deepen understanding, reinforce and consolidate learning? How can we ensure learners, parents/carers and other professionals know what is expected in learning beyond the school?

11. What resources can be provided that will help learners to revisit, apply and deepen their learning? The use of the Highland Digital Schools Hub, Glow etc are vital here. The BBC now provides lessons etc which are live can be included.

12. Can carefully planned IDL challenges engage learners and enrich learning experiences?

Personalised Learning & Differentiation

Online learning needs to be differentiated for learners. Your pupils will learn more effectively if you differentiate learning so that they can achieve their potential. Google Classroom allows you to assign work to a specific pupil or group of pupils. Given the nature of online learning; you should consider differentiation which relies on less support.

As referenced earlier, this is a key aspect for workload management. Local collegiate decisions are important and team teaching or sharing planning could support personalised learning and differentiation.

Try the following approaches:

Collaborative learning
Set work for small groups of pupils who you know already can collaborate effectively. Small groups provide more opportunities for pupils to participate. Using G Suite Docs, Sheets and Slides your pupils already have the tools they need for collaboration.

Variable outcomes
Rather than setting a task with a single outcome or 'right' answer, take a more interpretive, creative approach to an assignment. Give pupils the flexibility to arrive at a more personalised result. Pupils of different abilities will arrive at outcomes that match their level understanding of the learning.

If you must use short response/multiple choice style questions, create these as self-marking quizzes in Google Forms or free apps like Padlet, Kahoots, Quizz . These can be set up to provide instant feedback to pupils as well as the option for 'self-marking'.

Making the most of Video
It's important to think about whether a live video lesson is the best way to deliver the learning you are planning. Here are some things to think about:

1. Is live feedback important as part of the lesson? If not, perhaps you could use Google Meet to record a video and then post this in Google Classroom for pupils to view on demand.

2. Planning a whole school assembly online? You can schedule a meeting of teaching staff and livestream this online. The live steam will only be visible for users with a Highland Google Account. Please note that during a Livestream, pupils can *watch* but won't be able to interact with the stream. You can also record the Stream just like any other Meet. You could use a shared Jamboard for pupils to respond during the assembly (you can share the link to the Jamboard with pupils).

3. Want to demonstrate something using your computer? Make a video of a presentation with you presenting it? Use Screencastify, Loom or Read and Write- all are in the Chrome Web Store and can be installed onto a Chromebook or personal device. Loom is FREE for education, Read and Write is available on all pupils and staff devices and Screencastify is free for the basic version. Various tutorial guides to using some of these tools can be found HERE

Child protection
We want everyone to be safe, just like being in school, if you see anything in your Meet with pupils that raises child protection concerns, you should follow our usual child protection

Procedures. Please remember that the approach to Child Protection during remote learning should be exactly the same as when physically in school. If in doubt, please speak to your Child Protection rep or your Head Teacher.

Various resources are available to support online safety during this challenging period including these resources HERE

Setting up

1. Google Meet lessons can be created using the new Google Classroom integration. In the settings cog for each of your Google Classrooms or by scheduling this using Google Calendar. Meet links should only be shared with those pupils who NEED this link for learning purposes.

2. Think about the background behind you and reducing the noise so that you can talk to pupils. Try to find a quiet space in your home and let others in your home know in advance that you will be working and need some quiet.

3. Try to use headphones if you have them, ideally some with a built-in microphone. You will need to select these in the Google Meet setup screen.

4. Make sure you are prepared and understand how to remove pupils, mute microphones and share your screen.   Check your understanding of these with a Meet with colleagues before a Meet with pupils.

Challenges of remote learning (Education Scotland Advice:)

Effective use of remote learning offers both challenges and opportunities for practitioners, learners and parents. Practitioners may only be able to work on a 'live' basis with a proportion of the class at any one time. Given this commitment to 'live' learning, time for practitioners to develop other aspects of remote learning is an important consideration.

We need to be mindful of the impact of COVID-19 on our children and young people, many of whom may have suffered loss and trauma as a result. For all learners a key focus during this period of remote learning needs to be health and wellbeing. It will be essential that remote learning approaches reflect this.

It will also be important that, given the limited time with learners, a didactic teaching model does not become the norm. Practitioners should have access to professional learning opportunities which support them to understand and provide remote learning methodologies to ensure they are well equipped to support children's and young people's learning and achievements.

The move to remote learning may have a detrimental impact on progress in learning for some learners. Attention will need to be given to those learners who face disadvantage. Schools will need to carefully consider any steps which they can take to mitigate barriers to learning and engagement. Please refer to the Highland Virtual Academy referral process here if individual support for a disengaged learner is required.

Practitioners will need to consider how they will plan most effectively for both the 'live' teaching and learning which they will deliver online and the learning that will take place remotely. Learners will need to adapt to these new circumstances which may require them to complete tasks prior to working directly with their teacher as well as following these interactions. Due to 'connectivity' issues, video may not always be possible to either broadcast, receive or both. MiFi devices are available for pupils and also staff if appropriate.

While the nature of collaboration in learning changes with the move to remote learning, it will be important to explore ways in which learners can safely collaborate. Research by Rienties and Toetenel (2016) has suggested that courses that are designed with social elements and communication tasks are significant predictors of academic retention. The task of playing a boardgame with your family is a good example of this as it is both social, and communication based.

When considering the above it will be important to ensure activities are appropriate to the age and stage of learners. Realising the Ambition encourages practitioners to consider learning spaces, interactions and experiences. The same considerations can be helpful when planning learning for older learners.

Parents and carers and remote learning
Parents and carers want the very best for their children. It is important to stress that, in a period of remote learning, parents and carers are not expected to be teachers.   It is crucial that parents and carers are as certain as they can be about what remote learning is, what it means for their children and how they can continue to contribute positively and effectively to their children's learning.

A resource for learners with complex additional support needs, including guidance for parents to support learning has been published by Education Scotland and can be found here.

The Highland Schools Digital Schools Hub provides support for Parents & Carers and pre-recorded videos for learners, that help them utilise the tools for remote learning.

Please also consider if a family needs support with connectivity, as there are still MiFi devices available.

All relevant Local Authority information for Parents & Carers will be available on the main Highland Council Website.

For any further information, please contact the ICT Learning Team directly:

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Appendix 1
Highland Council Framework for Skills, Life & learning