Spalding High School

Remote education provision: information for parents

This information is intended to provide clarity and transparency to students, parents and carers about what to expect from remote education where national or local restrictions require entire cohorts (or bubbles) to remain at home.

For details of what to expect where individual students are self-isolating, please see the final section of this document.

Introduction and background

Our remote education provision has been guided by recent research published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) entitled 'Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely'. This research was funded by The EdTech Hub – as part of the partnership between the EdTech Hub and the Education Endowment Foundation and has been published as a global public good – to support the global response to the education impacts of COVID-19.

In terms of key findings and implications, the evidence found that teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered. Ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present - for example clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback - is more important than how or when they are provided. There was no discernible difference between teaching in real time ('synchronous teaching') and alternatives ('asynchronous teaching'). For example, teachers might explain a new idea live or in a pre-recorded video or narrated PowerPoint. But what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on students' prior learning or how students' understanding is subsequently assessed.

Having said this, multiple reviews also highlight the importance of peer interaction during remote learning, as a way of fostering a sense of community and as a way to motivate students and improve outcomes.

Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer marking and feedback, questioning, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for live discussions of content.

In an article entitled 'Teaching synchronously? Asynchronously? Which is really better?' educationalist, Erika Sanborne, writes:

"Synchronous teaching allows students to see and interact with one another and with you, to give and receive real-time feedback on their ideas, to brainstorm and collaborate with peers, to ask questions of you as a lesson is being shared, and to be reminded that we are community members, separated physically but not in spirit. With real solidarity, synchronous classes can remind all of us that we are not alone even as we negotiate our changed landscape amidst the novelty that is physical isolation."

What should my child expect from immediate remote education in the first day or two of students being sent home?

Where national or local restrictions require entire cohorts (or bubbles) to remain at home, we will attempt to replicate, in as far as is possible, the timetable that students follow through the course of a normal school day. Students should access the work when lessons would take place.

How will my child be taught remotely?

We use a combination of the following approaches to teach students remotely:

- Synchronous teaching (online lessons)
- Asynchronous teaching (recorded teaching e.g. Oak National Academy Lessons, video/ audio recordings made by teachers)
- Printed paper packs produced by teachers (e.g. workbooks, worksheets)
- Textbooks and reading books students have at home
- Commercially available websites supporting the teaching of specific subjects or areas, including video clips or sequences.

There will be a balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning. For example, a teacher may deliver 30 minutes of synchronous teaching in which they explain a topic or concept and prepare students for independent practice which is then completed asynchronously in the remaining lesson time. Alternatively, a teacher may deliver a whole live lesson followed by a non-synchronous lesson where students work independently.

Zhao et al. (2005) found evidence that a combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning was most beneficial to outcomes. A balanced approach also helps to minimise the fatigue that results from too much continuous video conferencing.

Regardless of the method of delivery, all work set by staff will be consistent with the principles identified by the EEF; namely:

- Ensuring students receive clear explanations;
- Supporting growth in confidence with new material through scaffolded practice;
- Application of new knowledge or skills; and,
- Enabling students to receive feedback on how to progress.

Following the first few days of remote education, will my child be taught broadly the same curriculum as they would if they were in school?

We teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in school wherever possible and appropriate. The work set will be in line with that delivered during normal school days/weeks/terms.

How long can I expect work set by the school to take my child each day?

When teaching remotely, the government expects schools to set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum:

- primary: 3 hours a day, on average, across the school cohort
- secondary: 4 hours a day, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year

Given that students are following their normal timetable, we expect that remote education (including remote teaching and independent work) will take students broadly the same amount of time as if they were in school.

Generally speaking, a student's school day should end at 3.40pm. We are very mindful that students are currently spending long periods in front of a computer screen and the fatigue that can result from too much synchronous learning. In order to mitigate against the risk of school work spilling over beyond the normal school day, teachers have been asked to ensure that students are given sufficient time in lessons to complete activities and application work. We have also taken the decision, for the time being at least, not to set homework in Years 7-10.

Students working towards formal qualifications (Years 11 and 13) and those in Year 12 may be set homework; however, any work set should focus on revision and consolidation, not introducing new content.

How will my child access any online remote education you are providing?

The main vehicle for delivering remote learning will be Microsoft Teams. This enables staff to set lessons online as each timetabled class is now a 'Team' with the relevant member of staff allocated to it.

If my child does not have digital or online access at home, how will you support them to access remote education?

Should your daughter/ son be experiencing any difficulties accessing a digital device or the internet, please email enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk, in confidence, and a member of staff will contact you.

Should you encounter any difficulties with Teams or Office 365 and require technical support, please email: 365Help@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk. Alternatively, a Microsoft Education 'Quick start guide for students' is available here.

We understand that technical issues and/or bandwidth restrictions might make it difficult for students to join live-streamed lessons. We are also mindful that not all students have their own device and may be sharing with other family members. All live-streamed lessons will be recorded and saved in the relevant class Team's 'Channel' meaning that students unable to join will be able to review the lesson at their convenience.

Engagement and feedback

What are your expectations for my child's engagement and the support that we as parents and carers should provide at home?

Assuming that a student is healthy and well enough to work, students will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the remote learning process, attending relevant live sessions, completing independent work, and submitting assessed tasks promptly and to the best of their ability.

Students will also be expected to read and respond to communication from the School (e.g. an email from a form tutor) on a regular basis.

Where students are joining live lessons from home, we would ask them to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household who will potentially be in shot.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, the kitchen, dining room or study and definitely not in bedrooms.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Students should ensure their microphone and camera are turned off. They should not turn them on unless asked to by their teacher. Even then, the background should be blurred or a neutral setting such as a wall.
- Students must only use the Chat feature when asked by their teacher and to keep all 'chat' to a minimum and on task.
- Students must not record or take photos of classmates or teachers during video conferencing sessions, nor share lessons publicly.
- Students need to understand that remote learning is a new experience for teachers as well as students so there is a need to be mindful and interact patiently and respectfully.

Any student misusing these functions will be removed from the lesson and their parents or carers contacted. All live lessons will be recorded so that if any issues arise, the video can be reviewed. Videos will not be stored in the long term and will be destroyed at the end of the academic year. Students should understand that these rules are designed to help keep them safe online and that if they are not followed, school sanctions will be applied.

Preparing your child to learn

Your child's regular place for completing homework may not be suitable for spending more extended periods working. Where possible, set up a physical location that supports independent learning and is as quiet and as free from distractions as possible. Students should wake up with sufficient time to prepare themselves for a day's work. This will of course mean that bedtime will need to be at a reasonable hour the night before. Students should eat

breakfast and lunch and should keep hydrated when working. Everyone should aim to exercise regularly.

Encouraging regular breaks

Remote education is challenging. Spending all day in front of a computer screen, and without the support of teachers in a real classroom, can be difficult. Students should ensure that they take breaks at the usual times in the school day, and it is particularly important that everyone takes sufficient breaks away from any electronic devices, including in the evening.

Ask about their learning

Parents/carers can help a lot by checking in with their child at the beginning and end of the day. Checking in with children to see how they have processed the instructions that they have received from their teachers helps them to organise themselves and set priorities. Not all students thrive in distance learning; some struggle with too much independence. These check-in routines can help provide structure.

How will you check whether my child is engaging with their work and how will I be informed if there are concerns?

Teaching staff are keeping careful records of students who are not attending online lessons. They will also check whether students are engaging with their work through the use of questioning techniques in live lessons and the submission of work.

Where a student does not engage with remote learning (either synchronous or asynchronous), the class teacher will, at first instance, make contact with the student via email. Where engagement continues to be a concern, the class teacher will contact home either by email or telephone.

If students or parents have any questions about the nature of specific tasks set, these should be directed towards the relevant subject area. If there are questions about a student's overall workload (e.g. a student feels they are overwhelmed or falling behind), these should be directed to the student's Head of Year.

How will you assess my child's work and progress?

Staff will use a range of methods to provide feedback to students. Feedback can take many forms and may not always mean extensive written comments for individual students. For example, verbal feedback during live lessons, whole-class feedback or quizzes marked automatically via digital platforms are also valid and effective methods, amongst many others.

There are also a range of other online platforms we are using which self-mark and address misconceptions, such as DrFrostMaths and Seneca Learning. Teachers will be monitoring these and commenting on scores obtained.

Staff will continue to ask students to submit work regularly; sometimes this will be to ensure that work has been completed and so that teachers know what students have understood in order to inform the next stages of their planning. At other times it will be so that individual feedback can be given and acted on by students.

Frequency of feedback will vary according to the normal frequency of lessons and the number of classes for which each teacher is setting and receiving work; however, students can expect feedback on the work they have submitted at least twice per term.

Teachers will select the best method for providing feedback, subject to the following:

1. In Years 7 and 8, feedback will often be in the form of "whole-class feedback", highlighting common strengths (WWW) and areas for development (EBI) with some possible bespoke comments. Teachers may also select some good examples from the year group to highlight best practice.

2. Years 9-13 will receive more bespoke feedback. Feedback will be formative, identifying clearly how students can improve their work.

Additional support for students with particular needs

How will you work with me to help my child who needs additional support from adults at home to access remote education?

We recognise that some students, for example those students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), may not be able to access remote education without support from adults at home. We acknowledge the difficulties this may place on families, and we will work with parents and carers to support those students. If students are unable to learn online because of special educational needs or disabilities, we will invite them to attend school. Teachers will also ensure that work is differentiated as required for all learners when setting online tasks.

Remote education for self-isolating students

Where individual students need to self-isolate but the majority of their peer group remains in school, how remote education is provided will likely differ from the approach for whole groups. This is due to the challenges of teaching students both at home and in school.

Where it is necessary for individual students to self-isolate and it is not possible to offer online live lessons, teaching staff will set work and provide support asynchronously via Microsoft Teams, consistent with the principles identified by the EEF (see above).