



Teachers' Union of Ireland

Emergency Remote Teaching & Learning in a COVID-19 context

Guidance for TUI members*

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Partial or Full School Closure owing to COVID-19

The school is required to close on foot of public health advice, what is expected of me?

All teachers who are medically fit to work, including SETs, are available to work remotely and should provide emergency remote teaching to all students in their subject class/es or on their caseload.

Substitute teachers should be arranged to provide remote teaching for students in classes whose teacher has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is medically unfit to work or is absent owing to another illness and is on sick leave.

All students in a class/year group are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements. What do I do?

You should provide emergency remote teaching to all students in your class/es in the year group, using the school's digital platform(s) or other agreed method as outlined below.

School is open as normal but student/s medically advised to self-isolate or restrict movement due to COVID-19

A student is on medically certified COVID-19 absence, i.e. advised to self-isolate or restrict her/his movement. Does a teacher have to teach that student remotely?

Not necessarily. A number of options are available, one or more of which can be used:

1) Peer Support

A peer could be nominated within the class to update the student who is medically certified to remain at home owing to COVID-19. The student who is at home may feel well enough to submit work to the teacher either electronically or via post.

2) School's Digital Platform

The student may access lesson content via the school's digital platform if a teacher wishes to upload content and the student has access to a digital device.

3) Posting Learning Materials

The teacher may, if s/he chooses, send learning content to the student via post.

4) Live stream a class

The teacher may, if s/he chooses, live-stream her/his class to the student/s at home.

5) Blend direct teaching and self-directed learning

The teacher may, if s/he chooses, use a combination of both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the student/s

6) Support from very high-risk teachers who are working from home

Some teachers have been certified as being at very high-risk from contracting COVID-19 and cannot therefore return to a physical school setting. These teachers are being facilitated to work from home and may be used to support the student/s.

A teacher who undertakes this role does so within her/his timetable, i.e. provision is made within her/his normal class contact hours to engage in supporting students who are learning from home. Schools should ensure that teachers who are facilitated to work from home are provided with an appropriate digital device and the requisite training.

7) Support from Local Education Centre

Schools may seek the assistance of their local Education Centre to source a teacher to meet the needs of student/s medically certified to stay at home owing to COVID-19. Local education centres will co-ordinate/connect teachers from other schools to assist.

8) Support from other schools/within ETB

A group of schools - for example, schools within one ETB or schools within a local geographical area - may decide to organise a cluster of teachers and to match students and teachers.

9) Support from other teachers within the school

Schools may use their existing, allocated teaching resources to meet the needs of students who are at home due to COVID-19.

10) Support from a teacher who is restricting her/his movement

A teacher within the school who has been advised to restrict her/his movements but is medically fit for work can support emergency remote teaching and learning for individual students or classes, in line with Circular 0049/2020.

Role of the Subject Teacher

What is the role of the subject teacher (i.e. the teacher within the school who is not working remotely) in facilitating students who are learning remotely?

Subject teachers who decide that they themselves can most appropriately address the practicalities of adapted, emergency education provision may share key teaching points of lessons and activities with the student/s using the school's online digital platform.

The subject teacher can also provide or recommend resources, including books and/or packs of materials, that are relevant to the planned lessons, for use by the student.

*In circumstances where a subject teacher in the school decides that s/he cannot appropriately address the adapted education provision, s/he **may**, at his/her discretion, co-ordinate the support for the student through liaising with a designated teacher with expertise in the subject who is supporting the student remotely.*

In circumstances where a subject teacher in the school decides that s/he cannot appropriately address the adapted education provision and there is no designated teacher with relevant subject expertise available from the student's own school or indeed from another school in the local area, the local Education Centre will advise the school of the teachers available in the region who have the required expertise.

Should this approach be taken, the subject teacher should advise the teacher who is teaching the student of the topics the student has covered to date and periodically check-in on the student's progress.

If a subject teacher decides to support a student learning remotely, what happens?

Such a teacher could, using technology:

- *allow the student to connect remotely (using school-supported digital devices) to the live class taking place within school.*
- *send the student video recordings of practical activities, or links to such recordings. These videos may be sourced on-line. They are not a recording of the teacher's lesson/s.*
- *provide regular opportunities for the student to interact with her/his peers in the relevant subject classes through online video conferencing and/or collaborative learning activities, such as project work, which can be carried out online.*

If a teacher working in the school is supporting student/s learning remotely, is there any change to her/his teaching contract?

No. Such a teacher is only required to teach the number of hours s/he is contracted to teach with her/his school/ETB.

Role of a teacher assigned within a school/ETB to assist students who are learning from home

As a teacher assigned by the school to assist students working remotely, what do I do?

As designated teacher you will be teaching the students remotely and will be allowed further time, from within timetable, to ensure frequent contact with the subject teacher(s). You should strive to support the learning experiences for the student in the subject in a way that aligns with the learning of the student's peers in her/his subject class, insofar as possible and practicable.

Supports

What supports should a school put in place to enable a student who is on a medically certified COVID-19 absence to engage remotely?

School management should arrange for the student (and teacher) to have access to relevant digital technology and other resources, as appropriate.

Following appropriate consultation with staff, school management must also set clear, reasonable expectations about the level of support the school can provide to both the student and her/his parents/guardians.

If a teacher engages remotely with a student, what additional supports will be given if the student also has special educational needs?

The Special Education Teacher (SET) should plan to provide any additional support. The support should be as closely aligned as possible with that which would normally be available in the physical setting of a school.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

Will a teacher who is teaching the student/s remotely be required to meet regularly with parents/guardians?

Regular contact/check-ins with parents/guardians and students will be essential to establish how the students are experiencing the adapted, emergency education provision.

*The conduct and frequency of contacts/check-ins must be clearly communicated to parents/guardians. This contact will be scheduled in a manner that is consistent with the right of teachers to personal/discretionary time and cannot give rise to additional workload. The designated teacher should liaise with the **subject teacher** on the progress of the student.*

Consultation on adapted education provision

Who decides which option/s to use?

*Consultation, on a whole-staff basis, **must** take place at school level in relation to the option/s most appropriate for enabling engagement with parents/guardians and students. Consultation is very important as teachers will know best which option (or combination of options) will be most appropriate for their students.*

Schools will select the most appropriate approach/es for their individual context following consultation and agreement by staff. It is acknowledged that different approaches may be needed owing to a range of factors, including the ICT skills of teachers and students.

What is Consultation?

Being presented with decisions as a fait accompli or being told what is going to happen is not consultation.

Consultation must be a genuine engagement that seeks to reach agreement regarding matters raised (either by management or staff). All the information necessary for fully-informed decision-making should be provided.

Very High-Risk Teacher working remotely

If a teacher (medically certified as being at very high-risk from COVID-19 and, therefore, working from home) is supporting student/s from other schools, is there any change to her/his teaching contract?

No. The contractual relationship with the teacher's own school/ETB is unaffected and a teacher therefore is guided by the policies of her/his own school. Such a teacher is only required to teach the number of hours s/he is contracted to teach with her/his base school/ETB.

If a teacher (at very high-risk and working from home) is supporting student/s from other schools using all her/his contracted hours, is s/he required also to teach her/his normal class/es in her/his base school?

No. Such a teacher, teaching remotely from home, is only required to teach the number of hours s/he is contracted to teach - nothing further.

If the teacher's normal contracted hours are part-time, s/he may undertake additional hours up to a maximum of 22 hours per week (inclusive of 21 hours 20 minutes of class contact and 40 minutes of Junior Cycle professional time) provided that the additional hours are agreed, reflected in a revised contract and in salary.

Recording of Lessons

If a teacher decides/is assigned to support students who are learning remotely owing to COVID-19, is s/he required to record her/his lessons and send them to the student's?

No. Teachers are not required to do this and are advised not to do so. Students should, as far as possible, interact with the teacher online during and in accordance with the normal timetabling of her/his subject in the school.

A teacher could, using technology:

- *allow the student to connect remotely (using school-supported digital devices) to the live class taking place within school.*
- *send the student video recordings of practical activities or links to such recordings. These videos may be sourced on-line. They are not a recording of the teacher's lesson/s.*
- *provide regular opportunities for the student to interact with her/his peers in the relevant subject classes through online video conferencing and/or collaborative learning activities such as project work which can be carried out online.*

Teacher Self Isolating or Restricting her/his movement

As a teacher who has been advised to self-isolate/restrict my movement, what is expected of me?

Any teacher who is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict his/her movements is available to work remotely in line with Circular Letter 49/2020.

Early school-leavers or students who are anxious about COVID-19

Are schools required to adapt education provision for students who are anxious about returning to school or students who are in the high-risk category (not “very high-risk”)?

No. However, schools are required to engage with these students in the same manner as they would have done prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Are schools required to adapt education provision for students who are at risk of early school leaving?

No. However, schools are required to engage with these students in the same manner as they would have done prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If I have a student who is at risk of early school-leaving or is anxious about returning to school, should I record her/his attendance/absence in the usual fashion?

Yes. Where students have not returned to school, despite the efforts made by schools and others, Educational Welfare Officers will engage with, encourage, and support these students and their parents to facilitate a return to school.

School policies

All school policies that are relevant to emergency remote teaching must be updated, for example, data protection, ICT acceptable usage and child protection policies.

****This guidance is based on consultation, at national level, with the Department of Education, relevant statutory agencies, management bodies and the TUI.***

**Source document ‘Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context for Post-Primary schools and centres for education’ can be found at:
TUI’s School Re-Opening Drive - <https://tinyurl.com/yb34t5sk>**