

SAC Remote Digital Learning Guide – May 2020

In South Ayrshire we aim to take advantage of the benefits offered to us with the use of digital technology to support learning and teaching during the lock down period. Whilst the opportunities to provide advice, support and continue learning online are vast we need to ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront. The safety of our teachers and learners must be paramount and therefore schools must ensure they use only digital services approved by South Ayrshire Educational Services.

The following platforms have been approved to provide a safe and secure environment in which South Ayrshire schools can communicate, collaborate and support remote learning for both learners and parents/carers:

- Glow and the Office 365 suite of productivity tools – free and available to all pupils and educational staff
- Show My Homework - schools register individually and sign up to an annual subscription contract
- Seesaw – schools register individually and sign up to a free or annual subscription contract
- Glow email / South Ayrshire email
- Groupcall Messenger

During these challenging times the ability for children and young people to maintain contact with their teachers is critical and Microsoft Teams, available within Glow, provides a safe and secure environment for this. Teams can facilitate a range of approaches to digital learning such as audio and video instruction and demonstration, pupil assignments, online activities, digital jotters, online storage, plenary and assessment.

Teams Meet allows teachers and learners to engage in live, synchronous sessions where connections with groups or classes is beneficial and meet the needs of the learners. At this current time the teacher can turn on their video camera and microphone and share resources with the learners and the learners can use audio, type messages and view shared resources to participate.

If schools are engaging with learners in this way, via video calls, teachers are strongly reminded to be appropriately dressed, mindful of their surroundings and be a positive role model, displaying good digital habits at all times. Teams Meet has added a 'background' functionality that is recommended that teachers make use of. They can apply a 'blur' filter or even display a background from a small list of options e.g. a beach scene.

However, it is acknowledged that there may be times when the ability to have two-way video calls between staff, pupils and parents is required. Teams Meet currently doesn't facilitate this (it is switched off nationally) and we are investigating the options available to South Ayrshire schools.

Education Scotland are working with Microsoft with the intention of having the video capability switched on for all learners. It is worth noting though that this is a Glow Microsoft Tenancy restriction rather than a technical restriction. If it is possible for it to be switched on as part of the Glow tenancy, which I am confident it will be, all 32 local authorities will need to agree to it and sign a User Addendum.

Please be assured that South Ayrshire support the availability of this functionality and in the meantime, we are looking at our policies, processes and governance to ensure we can protect our learners and staff at all times. The ability to hold two-way video calls and chat provides so many

benefits however it also brings a level of risk and we need to make sure we identify the risks and put in place the appropriate procedures and governance to protect all parties.

We have also started the journey of onboarding Google G Suite within the Glow platform. This will provide Glow users with a choice in the productivity tools they use to meet their learning and teaching needs. G Suite uses Google Classroom and Google Meet to provide similar collaboration, communication and online learning experiences to those offered in Office 365. It is our intention that both productivity suites are available to South Ayrshire schools from August 2020.

We appreciate your support in only using the approved learning platforms mentioned above and however tempting please don't use tools such as Zoom, Facetime, Messenger and WhatsApp to communicate with learners. These online applications place your data and that of our learners on to commercial platforms that we have no governance over and many of which have known security issues.

Staff are advised to consider the following advice when planning and delivering online learning:

- use approved platforms to communicate with learners
- never use personal accounts when communicating with learners (and parents/carers). All pupils have a Glow email account and this can be used to communicate with them as well as via Teams and Class Notebook.
- maintain professional boundaries at all time and exercise good digital habits at all times
- protect your privacy at all times
- follow usual child protection procedures is you become aware of any online activity the raises child protection concerns
- learners shouldn't need to enter personal information to participate such as personal email addresses or mobile numbers. Their Glow email address should be used and where possible they are issued with join codes.

Education Scotland has recently released '[Learning and Teaching Online – Advice for Practitioners](#)' It is recommended that teachers read this document as it focusses on an asynchronous delivery model of learning which is extremely relevant in the current climate.