

Supporting Pupils, Parents And Teachers – Learning During Term 4

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Introduction

Since schools closed last month, a significant amount of positive work has been undertaken by a wide range of professionals to help support continuity in children and young people's learning.

Local authorities, schools, teachers and practitioners have shown extraordinary dedication and professionalism in adapting and making decisions in the best interests of the children and young people whom they know best.

Their knowledge of their communities has been invaluable to date in responding to the coronavirus outbreak and will be vital in ensuring continuity of learning, wherever possible, in the coming weeks and months.

Given the unprecedented circumstances we face, we cannot predict with any certainty when schools in Scotland will reopen. However, it is clear that, for the vast majority of pupils, at least the start of Term 4 will be experienced from home. Decisions as to the duration and combination of coronavirus related restrictions will be subject to regular review.

Our starting point is a clear understanding that schools are closed but learning continues: we all have a role to play in supporting learners. There is no expectation that the kind of learning approaches and experiences provided in schools will be replicated at home while schools are closed during Term 4. The primary focus of our education system, working closely with a range of public and third sector partners, remains to ensure that pupils, teachers, practitioners, parents and carers are supported to cope with the challenging circumstances in which we all find ourselves in.

Education Scotland has changed how it is working to provide tailored support to local authorities, schools, children and young people in response to the closure of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. This collective approach, drawing on the wide-ranging skills and expertise available in the agency, allows Education Scotland to provide national advice and support. This will have greatest effect when done in close partnership with school and local authorities.

This document, prepared by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, with helpful advice and input from COSLA, Solace, ADES and professional associations, gives an overview of the shared expectations at a national and local level of what we will all do to support children and young people in Scotland. It outlines how we will ensure that learning continues for children and young people during Term 4.

The document sets out some of the measures in place, and being developed, to support:

- learning at home;
- parental and carer involvement and engagement; and
- teachers, practitioners and school leaders.

1. Learning and Teaching at Home

What are we seeking to achieve?

We are living in extraordinary times and we understand that learning in Term 4 will be different. We also know that this is a new and evolving situation and that we must be both ambitious for our learners, yet realistic too. In addition to supporting wellbeing, a key goal during this period will be to maintain engagement in learning, with approaches that are appropriate to children and young people in different age groups; in different home circumstances; and with different levels of digital connectivity.

Not all learning, however, will be done online or through digital channels or platforms. We know that there are many other learning resources and activities, including books, television, radio, and creative activities that will help with learning at home.

What support will be available?

- **Support for Digital Learning**

Following school closures in March, Scotland's local authorities, schools, teachers and practitioners responded quickly and creatively to put in place measures to support learning through digital platforms. This is taking many forms, including use of online platforms and apps such as Glow and [DigiLearn](#), focusing on the immediate needs of their learners and teachers and practitioners. We have seen great examples across Scotland emerging, which use digital platforms and social media to ensure young people learn and continue to have social interactions with friends and peers through virtual groups or gatherings.

More support will follow in Term 4, building on the positive feedback to date and taking account of the continuing priorities that teachers and practitioners identify.

School leaders are engaging with their professional networks, local authorities and with national agencies for advice and support in relation to use of digital platforms that will best support learning. Privacy and safeguarding should be a primary concern when considering use of any online tools, particularly in respect of live video conferencing or when signing pupils up for a service using their personal details. The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) has published [Engaging Online](#), which provides guidance on this.

Glow has been developed and configured with safeguarding, child protection, information security and the GDPR as primary considerations. The public facing Glow Connect website includes a range of advice, guidance and support on all aspects of Glow usage, including account management and provision, and 'how to' guides for the range of services on offer. This will help school leaders and teachers and practitioners to choose activity and appropriate tools and configure online spaces for collaboration and engagement with learners.

To support digital learning, all partners in the education system are working together to ensure:

- the provision of clear guidance and direction for teachers and practitioners about the digital platforms that can, and more importantly, cannot be used in view of online safety – beyond the Glow platform, these will be local decisions respecting the position of local authorities as data controllers;
- that online services, functionality and configurations are made in full recognition of data protection, information security, safeguarding and child protection.

Education Scotland is continuing to engage with individual local authorities and partners to review the Glow service offering and to make changes where appropriate, including for online safety purposes. Education Scotland will also:

- make use of its network of ‘Glow key contacts’ in local authorities who are supporting the use of the Glow service across Scotland. Regular contact (weekly or more frequently if required) will enable Glow key contacts to raise issues directly with the Glow team at Education Scotland.
- further enhance the Glow Connect site, providing information, advice and user guidance on all Glow services and engaging with local authorities to understand where there are gaps.
- develop and deliver a range of other support with local authorities and teachers and practitioners.

- ***Learning at home – equity of support***

We are very aware that the current situation is likely to affect disproportionately the most disadvantaged children and young people in our society. We recognise and value the efforts which colleagues across the country have already made to support our most disadvantaged children. Against that background, the Scottish Government has provided local authorities with the flexibility they need to redirect resources aimed at closing the attainment gap to help mitigate the impacts of school closures on our most disadvantaged families.

Flexible use of The Attainment Scotland Funding - comprising Pupil Equity Funding, Challenge Authority funding, Schools’ Programme Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding – can play an important part in mitigating the impact of home learning arrangements that may prove more challenging for our most disadvantaged families to adapt to. Local authority/school level Pupil Equity Funding allocations will be announced by the Scottish Government shortly.

There are already examples of schools and local authorities deploying the additional funding flexibly to support disadvantaged learners in innovative ways. Examples of this include: providing laptops/tablets; the purchase and delivery of books and other learning material; providing transport to enable some learners to attend local authority hubs and childcare provision; and supporting home-school link workers to maintain regular contact with children.

Extraordinary circumstances require creative approaches: we would encourage schools and local authorities to continue to seek innovative solutions to the challenges faced.

The Scottish Government's 'No One Left Behind' project is currently working with industry and other partners to identify and support digitally excluded households, whether that be through devices, connectivity or skills.

The extent to which teachers and practitioners have access to digital devices, or are digitally connected, will impact on their ability to connect with pupils. These factors will be carefully considered by partners and addressed wherever possible.

- ***Support for Learning at Home for children with additional support needs***

For some children who have additional support needs, their parents and carers may find it particularly challenging to support their learning when they are at home. While almost all children and young people will continue to learn at home, it may be necessary for some children and young people to access appropriate provision within their local authority.

The Scottish Government will continue to work closely with local authority partners to ensure families have the advice and support they need at this time. This will include providing support to the Enquire service and additional guidance will be added to the Parent Club Scotland website.

All partners in the education system will work together to signpost parents and carers to:

- CALL Scotland which has information on tools that parents can use to support home learning, such as overlays and text to speech.
- The Reach – which provides information to young people on coping while schools are closed.
Enquire – which provides advice for parents and carers of children with additional support needs.

- ***Support for Transitions***

Local authorities, head teachers and teachers are experienced and skilled in leading transition arrangements. For Term 4, and looking ahead to the next session, schools, clusters and local authorities are considering new and innovative approaches to transition in relation to curriculum and wellbeing matters. This will include consideration of a wide range of factors, including the challenges faced by young people who have been particularly affected by COVID-19. This could be due to illness or bereavement, the impact of social isolation or experiencing poverty for the first time. The importance of relationships at a local level is paramount to successful work in this area.

To support local authorities and schools, Education Scotland is developing further bespoke Term 4 guidance to assist in planning for the many transitions that take place during Term 4. These materials will be available in early May.

Appropriate links will also be made to joint Scottish Government and local authority work on employability for those young people moving into further education or employment.

2. Parental Involvement and Engagement

What are we seeking to achieve?

Parents and carers are not expected to be teachers, nor to home educate in the formal sense. The needs and the circumstances of families will vary considerably depending on where they are in the country, their child's specific needs, their household circumstances and their knowledge and confidence. The focus is ensuring that parents and carers feel supported in relation to their child's learning at home.

What support will be available?

School teachers and practitioners remain the key point of contact for parents and families. The Scottish Government is working with partners to ensure that advice and support is available and intelligence is being gathered and shared on what approaches are working best to support family wellbeing and learning at home.

During Term 4, at a local level:

- local authorities and schools will be planning how they communicate with parents and families about their child's progress during Term 4 and many early learning practitioners will wish to share information on children's development. This will require a different format to those that may have been taken before.
- Parent Councils may need to operate differently in their functions and interactions with head teachers. The legislation underpinning parental involvement – the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 - is flexible and should be able to accommodate most adaptations to approach and method of communication.

At a national level:

- Parent Club Scotland and Parentzone Scotland web pages will continue to be updated with Covid-19 advice and support on health information, wellbeing, learning at home and other key matters. We will collaborate with education and third sector partners to share this advice.
- The Scottish Government will continue to fund the National Parent Forum of Scotland to provide core information and advice to parents during Covid-19. Education Scotland will work with the National Parent Forum of Scotland to

fast track their planned “in a nutshell” guide on online safety for parents and families.

- The Scottish Government will continue to fund Enquire – the national information source for parents of children with additional support needs in Scotland.
- Education Scotland will produce materials which can also be used in partnership with community learning and development staff.

3. Support for Teachers and School Leaders

What are we seeking to achieve?

Teachers and school leaders play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people and ensuring that learning can continue in an appropriate way, wherever possible. Their response to events has been extremely positive. It is important that the wellbeing of school leaders, teachers and practitioners - particularly those sharing protected characteristics that may give rise to additional challenges in the context of working at home - is also prioritised by all partners. The professional workload generated by the unique demands being placed on our school and early learning and childcare settings is recognised and unnecessary bureaucracy must be avoided in order to maximise the focus on support and learning.

What support will be available?

Throughout Term 4, teachers and practitioners will require specific support and advice as they continue to engage with their learners. As always, support is managed at a school, cluster and local authority level. GTCS is also playing a key role in supporting the wellbeing of the profession with resources available via their website.

Education Scotland will continue to support teachers and practitioners to develop the digital skills to use online resources to support pupils’ remote learning at home. It will work with partners to provide webinars and materials in curriculum areas and sectors, in addition to those already available on the [National Improvement Hub](#). These will help reinforce and build teachers’ and practitioners’ skills and confidence in leading, preparing for and providing distance/remote learning and supporting pupils’ learning at home.

Education Scotland will continue to support teachers and practitioners, including school and system leaders, to lead colleagues and teams remotely. In addition to developing the appropriate digital skills, teachers and practitioners will be supported to consider adaptive leadership approaches during times of crisis and to prioritise their own wellbeing and that of colleagues.

Education Scotland’s key aims during Term 4 will be to build on the strong national and local progress since the closure of our schools to:

- provide additional resources for the curriculum and for professional learning in collaborative ways that complement and support the work undertaken by teachers and practitioners locally and regionally;
- continue to provide a range of Education Scotland PLL leadership programmes and the endorsement of professional learning programmes;
- enable further access for teachers and practitioners to national expertise and continue the support offered from regional teams;
- create opportunities for school and system leaders to develop new or different strategies to promote the health and wellbeing of themselves and the teams that they lead;
- further develop the knowledge and skills of teachers and practitioners to enhance home learning;
- provide through HM Inspectors regular updates of effective approaches to supporting learning at home that will help leaders, teachers and practitioners;
- continue to provide tailored support to local authorities and schools and share innovation widely;
- provide ongoing information and research from OECD and other national and international perspectives that may inform practice.

This work will reflect the expertise of colleagues nationally and globally, taking account of research and good practice, and focus on the following key areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Learning, teaching and assessment
- Leadership of digital learning
- Learning at home

All of this work will be carried out in close partnership with schools and local authority colleagues to ensure the best support for practitioners and learners throughout Term 4.

Looking ahead

These are uniquely difficult times for the whole of our society and those working in Scotland's education system have responded to the challenges we face with truly exceptional dedication and professionalism.

Given the extraordinary circumstances we all find ourselves in, we cannot predict with any certainty when schools in Scotland will reopen. What we can say, is that decisions as to the duration and combination of coronavirus-related restrictions are subject to regular review.

As we start this new term, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to work constructively with local authorities and all partners to continuously monitor and review the support in place, and ensure that children and young people's wellbeing and learning is prioritised in these challenging times.

Annex

Practitioner Support for Online Remote Learning

Education Scotland has established four working groups. Each has short, medium and long term goals to both support teachers and practitioners during remote learning and to evaluate solutions and successes that offer long term opportunities to enhance learning. The working groups will continue to listen to teachers and practitioners to shape the resources that are being offered and to share effective practice, research and resources both from within Scotland and beyond.

1. Health and wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing working group are focusing on the following key areas: Transitions, Supporting learners with additional support needs, Resilience, Wellbeing Indicators and Compassion and Grief.

Work to date has included providing easy access to high quality materials in the following areas:

[Staff health and wellbeing](#)

[Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities](#)

[Safeguarding and internet safety](#)

2. Learning, teaching and assessment

Supporting learners remotely using digital tools within Glow

Webinar sessions are available to support educators across Scotland. The initial webinars focused on how to use the products and services within Glow. Webinars will be added on an ongoing basis and will continue to cover digital practice as well as subject and sector specific sessions over time.

Schedule of webinars:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/digilearn/webinars/>

Recorded webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzEsp7PF70TMlqVM4nCsxSg/featured>

Refreshed Narrative

This includes tools and approaches drawn from the focus on the four capacities, four contexts and curriculum design. Resources to support online learning will be collated to complement existing materials on the [Refresh HUB page](#).

Resources to support online learning in curricular areas

Resources have been collated to provide teachers and practitioners with easy access to high quality materials that have been curated from a range of sources and partners. These have been shared online in Wakelets and cover the 8 curriculum areas and sector areas including DYW, Creativity, Early Learning and Childcare and Community Learning and Development. For example:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Curriculum Support</p> <p>Literacy and English Numeracy and Mathematics Health and Wellbeing Social Subjects Technologies Science Languages Expressive Arts RMPS Gaelic Education</p> | <p>Sector areas Support</p> <p>Creativity Early Learning and Childcare Primary Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Developing The Young Workforce Community Learning and Development Staff Wellbeing</p> |
| <p>Live Digital Skills Webinars</p> <p>Sign up for a webinar</p> | <p>Catch Up</p> <p>Catch up on our webinars in YouTube</p> |

Everything can be found at the following link -
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/digilearn/remote/>

3. Learning at home

[Parentzone Scotland website](#) will continue to be updated with relevant information for parents. This includes helping to build the capacity of parents to support their child's learning at home. Work is planned to liaise with national parenting organisations to co-ordinate messages and support for parents. Work to date has included:

- [Be at the heart of our child's learning during Covid-19](#)
- [Support for parents and families who use British Sign Language](#)
- [Supporting children with additional support needs](#)

4. Remote leadership of learning and teams

Guidance and support focus on three key areas:

- Creating opportunities for school and system leaders to share experiences and effective practice in leading remotely.
- Supporting leaders to face the immediate and long term challenges of leading remotely, as well as recognising opportunities of leading in this way.
- Providing clarity on the language that should be used by school and system leaders in line with national policy and guidance. For example the language to describe learning at home and how to facilitate learning remotely.

<https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/>



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