RCT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES DIRECTORATE







Guidance for Parents and Carers on

Distance and Blended Learning

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Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

We are all learning and learners

Distance learning presents incredible challenges and opportunities for teachers, parents and pupils. This year's changing circumstances call for great flexibility and resilience as learning moves from home to school and back again.

Everyone's circumstances are different. More focused and independent learning from home is easier for some pupils and families than others. Even very digitally-competent children and young people may struggle with educational technology. While some aspects of education may not transfer easily to online environments, pupils can successfully learn new skills and develop important personal and academic competencies in distance learning environments. Teachers have been working hard throughout the year to develop comprehensive distance learning plans. They are mastering new and complex demands for supporting pupils in the classroom and at home. All schools in the local authority continue to grow professionally and develop, strengthening our collective efficacy for:

- prioritising learning standards
- signposting parents, carers to learning resources and tools
- consistently communicating expectations
- creating effective strategies for setting and achieving learning goals.

What is remote learning?

Remote learning allows pupils to continue accessing the curriculum beyond the classroom by tasks set online. This allows them to learn through a guided study programme set by their teachers. A remote learning task could be a combination of what is listed below:

- An extended task over a series of lessons
- Worksheet and questions
- Background reading or supporting materials
- Assessment opportunities
- Completing past papers and providing model answers and solutions
- 'Live Lessons' via a digital platform of the schools' choice.

Here are some explanations to help parents and carers understand the different forms learning that can be provided for pupils during this lockdown period. **Not one method is better than another and schools will choose the best fit according to your child's age and learning need. It is recommended that a balance of on-screen and off-screen activities are undertaken where possible.**

Teachers present carefully planned video and/or audio explanations as live lessons **(synchronous)** or recorded sessions **(asynchronous)** to explain concepts and new learning.
A **live lesson** is designed around small learning increments and clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. These sessions will complement and enhance activities presented face to face in school.
Tasks give pupils opportunities to apply knowledge and understanding from face to face and online sessions. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together and collaborate on online group projects. Pupils may work on a document or video presentation together.

Teachers also provide pupils with independent activities which may include digital tasks and offline.
Pupils complete tasks using workbooks, textbooks or paper resources and materials. Work is presented when pupils next attend school, uploaded to the school's platform of choice or is returned by post. Tasks are purposeful and worthwhile for example; pupils use scaffolds and models to apply the knowledge and understanding developed in the face to face sessions.
Teachers may deliver a presentation. Pupils may then submit questions or make observations through a chat facility. Teachers may present carefully planned video and/or audio explanations as live lessons (synchronous) or recorded sessions (asynchronous) to explain concepts and new learning. A live lesson is designed around small learning increments and clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. Teachers and pupils may work on an activity/document together.
Teachers address questions and misconceptions in a live session. This may be recorded to serve as a resource for learning. Individual pupils or groups of pupils could be asked to join with timetabled intervention. Alternately, pupils could opt into this where needed Pupils may be referred to online software or applications as an intervention strategy.

Some schools may identify that learners are unable to effectively engage with online learning; this can be particularly true for hard to reach learners. In this instance, during face-to-face time teachers may plan and deliver direct teaching of the experiences, knowledge and skills learners need to complete tasks. Learners then engage with these tasks at home without the need for further online instruction.

Examples of possible shared language:

Blended learning:	an approach to learning that combines face-to-face, distance, digital and online learning experiences The face-to-face learning that takes place should complement the other aspects by using the strengths of each mode of delivery.
Distance learning:	allows learning experiences to happen from just about anywhere and may or may not involve a digital device and internet connection. This supports the well-being of all learners, including a choice of learning opportunities for social, physical, emotional development and tasks to promote their resilience. It allows individuals to learn when and where it is more convenient for them. Equitable distance learning does not have to mirror learning as it normally does in school.
Digital learning:	any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a learner's learning experience. Additionally, digital learning can be used for professional learning opportunities for teachers and to provide personalised learning experiences for learners.
Online learning:	education that takes place over the internet. It is often referred to as e-learning among other terms. However, online learning is just one type of "distance learning".
Synchronous learning:	teaching where the teacher is present at the same time as the learner(s). This can take place face to-face or online.
Asynchronous learning:	where teaching materials are provided and learners work through them in their own time. This could include a variety of media, including audio and video clips. WG have provided guidance on the use of livestreaming.

Further information and guidance can be found at:-

https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/

https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/sharing-our-experiences/#plans-for-increasing-operations-in-schools-and-settings

https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/parents-and-carers/guidance-parents-and-carers

http://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/repository/discovery?catalogs=50f72adb-cdf7-4da9-a01a-d9b5ecafd264&kiosk=1&sort=recent&strict=1

https://www.s4c.cymru/en/press/post/41359/s4c-releases-80-hours-of-programmes-on-the-welsh-governments-education-platform-hwb/

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zvryp4j?utm_source=%2A+SCHOOLS%2A+CSC+Communications+List&utm_campaign=66ff16f85b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_06_17_11_16_COPY_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_693196c4f6-66ff16f85b-128862066