



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

Continuity of schooling: Supporting primary pupils who are at very high risk to COVID- 19

1. Introduction

This guidance is provided to support schools in making adapted education provision for pupils who cannot return to school because they are medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19. The guidance should be read in conjunction with [Returning to School: Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers](#) which was published by the Department in July 2020.

The purpose of this adapted education provision is to ensure that pupils who are medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 can maintain a meaningful connection with their class and school in order to successfully continue their learning from home. As such, pupils in this category who engage with learning from home should be marked present on attendance records.

It is important to note that the very high risk pupil is the pupil with the underlying medical condition and the arrangements in this guidance apply to those pupils only. All other pupils are expected to return to school.

The adapted education provision arrangements set out in this document to support pupils at very high risk to COVID-19 do not apply to pupils who are at risk of early school leaving, pupils who are experiencing COVID-related anxiety about the return to school or pupils who have been requested to self-isolate by a medical doctor or the Health Service Executive (HSE). Further information in relation to those pupils is provided in section 4.

While this guidance applies from the start of the first term of the new school year, it is intended that it will be reviewed by mid-October and updated to reflect any necessary changes.

2. Supporting remote learning for pupils at very high risk to COVID-19

It will be important for schools to ensure that pupils at very high risk to COVID-19 will remain as connected as possible with their own school and classmates and that their learning will continue, as far as possible, in line with the curriculum and in a manner that is closely aligned to the learning of their classmates. For pupils with additional needs, appropriate differentiation of their learning will continue to be a priority. The overall responsibility for ensuring that pupils at very high risk to COVID-19 receive appropriate support remains with the school in which they are enrolled. A number of options for facilitating this support are outlined below.

2.1 Options for facilitating adapted education provision for pupils at very high risk to COVID-19

Schools can use any one or a combination of the following options to facilitate adapted education provision for pupils at very high risk to COVID-19. Examples to support teachers in this regard are provided in [Appendix 1](#).

- **A designated teacher who is at very high risk to COVID-19:** In some instances, pupils may be supported by teachers from their school or from another school who are assessed as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and who are available to work from home. Local Education Centres will compile a list of schools in a region that have teachers in this category. Schools with pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19 can liaise with their local education centre which will connect the teacher working from home with the pupils' school for the purpose of supporting the pupils' learning from home.

Alternatively, schools can organise their own local clusters to match pupils and teachers in these categories, outside of the education centre structure. In some instances, clusters formed for substitute teachers to cover principal release days might be considered.

- **A designated teacher from the school's existing support resources:** Schools have discretion to manage and redistribute their existing support resources in order to best meet the learning needs of pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19. For example, special education teachers (SETs) can be designated to provide adapted education provision for pupils in this category, in particular those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN).

- **Support from the class teacher:** Some class teachers might decide that they can most appropriately address the practicalities of adapted education provision themselves, as they can provide support in the form of resources and teaching inputs to the pupil in a manner that is aligned to the teaching and learning in the classroom. These decisions should be made in consultation with school leadership.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities of schools, teachers, Education Centres, the PDST and parents/guardians in adapted education provision

- **School leaders:** In preparing for the continuing education of pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19, schools will need to be aware of who those pupils are. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to seek medical advice and certification to indicate if their child is at very high risk to COVID-19 and to inform the school of this. On receipt of this, the school will organise the most appropriate support for these pupils.

The school should arrange for these pupils to have access to relevant digital technology and other resources as appropriate. This may include making school devices available to the pupil while he/she is learning from home; these may be purchased using funding from the Department's ICT grant issued in April 2020, in line with circular 0031/2020¹. Ongoing, two-way home-school communication and collaboration, including clear expectations about the level of support that is expected of parents/guardians and the supports the school will put in place to support parents in this role and to facilitate continuous learning for these pupils, should be in place. An online platform to facilitate communication should be agreed at the start of the year, and any necessary development of the pupils' or teachers' digital skills should be prioritised.

- **Class teachers:** The class teacher has an important role in ensuring that the needs of pupils at very high risk to COVID-19 are met in an appropriate way. This can be achieved through liaising with the relevant designated teacher and communicating the short-term/weekly learning plans to this teacher on a regular basis, or through providing some teaching input and learning materials directly to the pupil. In order to maintain a sense of connectedness, the class teacher should facilitate frequent/weekly opportunities for the pupil learning from home to interact

¹ Note: all digital devices allocated to pupils for adapted education provision remain the property of the school.

with his/her peers, through online video conferencing² and/or collaborative learning activities such as project work, group work and pair work which can be carried out online. Feedback on the work completed by the pupil at home should be provided by the class teacher and/or the designated teacher as agreed at local level and in line with the principles outlined in section 2.3.

- **Designated teachers:** In instances where a designated teacher has responsibility for the remote teaching of pupils at very high risk to COVID-19, the designated teacher should be in frequent contact with the class teacher and should strive to provide teaching input and learning experiences for the pupil that are in line with his/her class insofar as possible. The designated teacher should ensure that the class teacher is frequently informed of the progress of the pupil. Daily contact, guidance and support from the designated teacher will be required in order to maintain progress in learning.
- **Education Centres:** Education Centres will assist schools in identifying where there are available teachers in an area who are working from home due to being at very high risk to COVID-19 and linking them with pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19. The Education Centres will also facilitate support from PDST, as appropriate, for those teachers providing remote teaching.

Oversight of a school cluster arrangement will be provided by the designated teacher's base school. In the case of ETB schools, the arrangements will be managed by the ETB.

- **PDST:** The PDST will be available to guide schools and teachers to support pupils at home. Schools can also apply for bespoke support from a PDST advisor who can assist with specific queries regarding teaching, learning and assessment practices in a blended learning context. Schools can apply for this support at pdst.ie/schoolsupport. Supports containing guidance as well as practical applications and case studies are available at pdst.ie/blendedlearning
- **Parents/guardians:** In order to support connectedness with the school and their child's peers, and to ensure that their child is not unduly disadvantaged by being at very high risk to COVID-19, parents are requested to obtain medical certification as early as possible that states specifically that their child is assessed as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and must remain at home and cannot return to school.

² Should it be decided to use video-conferencing, schools who are providing adapted education provision should acquire consent from parents of pupils in the class and the pupils themselves before video conferencing commences. Appropriate arrangements should be made for those who do not give consent.

This information should be furnished to the school. Parents and teachers should work together to establish the expectations related to the level of support that is necessary from parents/guardians and the supports the school will put in place to support parents in this role and to facilitate continued learning for these pupils. Regular review meetings / check-ins with parents will be essential to establish how the pupils are experiencing remote provision.

2.3 Principles of adapted education provision

School leaders and teachers involved in adapted education provision should ensure the following principles are to the fore:

- **Maintaining a sense of connectedness:** Facilitating engagement with and among pupils is essential to their learning experience and maintaining their social and emotional development. Teachers can facilitate this through online interaction, providing feedback on work completed, organising project work that pupils can complete as part of a group and providing learning experiences based on pair work and group work. This will support pupils' interaction and engagement with their classmates and keep them connected to their school community. It will also be essential in ensuring the pupil can reintegrate back into his/her class group when appropriate to do so.
- **Preparing for adapted education provision:** Preparation for adapted education provision in a remote environment should be undertaken collaboratively between relevant teachers, parents and pupils. A checklist of sample questions to guide this process is set out in Appendix 2. Teachers should use their normal preparation strategies, including short-term planning documentation, to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met through appropriate teaching and learning methods.
- **Providing specific daily teaching input:** It is crucial that designated teachers provide specific teaching input on a daily basis to pupils learning at home in order to ensure that they continue to access high quality teaching in line with their peers. This could include pre-recorded video/audio of specific teaching points and access to other resources to support learning. Daily inputs are important so that these pupils are not unduly disadvantaged by their circumstances.
- **Providing meaningful learning opportunities:** Engaging learning experiences should be provided on a daily basis and appropriate opportunities for interactions between the pupils and their teacher(s) and peers should be organised on a weekly basis at a minimum. Meaningful learning opportunities to progress and develop the pupils' learning through independent learning tasks, collaborative learning opportunities, project work and other engaging learning experiences should be provided. There should be a balance of guided and independent

learning tasks provided across the curriculum. The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil, including language needs and the needs of pupils with SEN, and should enable the teacher(s) to monitor learning and give regular feedback to support the next stages in the pupil's learning.

- **Ensuring there is regular assessment of and for learning:** Pupils should have frequent opportunities to show how they are progressing in their learning and should receive supportive, constructive and timely feedback from the teacher(s). The views of pupils should also be sought in order to see how the adapted provision is working for the pupils. This form of two-way feedback is essential for maintaining motivation, progression in learning and pupil wellbeing.
- **Making appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs:** Where a pupil has identified additional learning needs and has been receiving support in line with the Continuum of Support, the class teacher should collaborate with the relevant special education teacher (SET) to review the pupil's priority learning needs. Subsequently, the SET should plan to provide any additional support that would normally be available to the pupil including, for example, support for behavioural, emotional and social needs, and support for literacy, numeracy, or English as an additional language (EAL). Wellbeing and emotional regulation should also be prioritised for children with SEN. An Individualised Education Plan (IEP) or support plan should be developed for the pupil in cooperation with the class teacher and involving the pupil and his/her parents.

Ongoing liaison between the class teacher, designated teacher and the SET regarding curricular content and classwork will be necessary, including updating of the goals and strategies in the IEP/ support plan. In some instances, this may involve a special education teacher in the very high risk category who is available to work from home supporting pupils learning remotely across a cluster of schools.

- **Supporting pupils' skills for learning remotely:** The pupils' capacity to engage with learning remotely will need to be supported through developing their digital competencies, their self-organisation skills and their ability to engage with learning outside of the classroom context.
- **Ensuring equality of access:** Some pupils may face additional challenges when trying to learn remotely. Those challenges may arise from, for example, lack of an appropriate study space, the capacity of parents to support the child's learning, socio-economic disadvantage, or accommodation arrangements including homelessness or residing in a direct provision setting. Department guidance in relation to supporting these pupils, including pupils who are Travellers or members of the Roma and migrant communities, is available at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/National-Emergencies-Public-Health-Issues/guidance-support-pupils-at-risk-primary.pdf>

Availability of appropriate digital devices may be a challenge for some families, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. In such cases, pupils should be provided with access to one of the pooled devices, where available in the school and as needed to support their remote learning. Some pupils may not have adequate connectivity to support online learning. In such instances, other strategies such as using the postal service, phone calls, email or text as a means of communicating with pupils will need to be considered. Teachers will need to understand pupils' individual needs, including the needs of pupils with SEN.

- **Communication between the relevant teachers and the home:** Early and ongoing two-way communication between the pupil's school, class teacher, designated teacher where relevant, and the home will be essential to supporting the pupils' engagement with their learning and their continuous connection with their classmates and school community. Where schools have a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) coordinator, the HSCL coordinator will assist the class / designated teacher in supporting parents to support their child's learning.

3. Additional curriculum considerations for pupils who cannot attend school

3.1 Initial curriculum priorities

It will be necessary for teachers to ensure that, at the start of the new school year, pupils who are learning from home experience a curriculum in which the following are prioritised: Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE), Language and Mathematics. SPHE and PE will be significant in supporting the pupils' wellbeing while Language and Mathematics will be central in supporting their overall learning.

3.2 Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

The mandatory aspects of the SPHE programme, including Stay Safe and RSE, should be prioritised as many pupils may not have accessed these areas of learning during the school closure period. Agreed approaches to these areas in order to cater for the needs of pupils who cannot attend school should be arranged in consultation with parents/guardians and in line with school policies.

3.3 Pedagogies

The use of cross-curricular and thematic approaches to learning will support pupils at home to experience a broad curriculum that includes Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and the Arts. Project work on specific cross-curricular themes will be key to the provision of active learning experiences that will allow pupils to demonstrate their existing knowledge and skills and to develop their research skills. In the infant setting, teachers should advise parents/guardians on the use of play-based learning opportunities to support the development of their child's early literacy and numeracy skills in line with the themes and topics planned for the school year. Differentiated teaching approaches and learning materials based on pupils' identified needs will be essential.

3.4 Younger pupils

The needs of pupils in the infant and junior classes require particular consideration as the hands-on, active nature of their classroom learning experiences may not be best supported by online approaches alone. Parents/guardians will require specific guidance and assistance to support their child's learning at home. In particular, these young children will require:

- Home learning packs that contain a range of materials to support engaging and fun early literacy and numeracy skill development that are aligned with the classroom learning programme
- Specific opportunities for hands-on, active development of early literacy and numeracy skills that can be carried out at home, and in line with the learning of their peers
- Opportunities to use the home environment in an experiential way in subjects such as SESE and the Arts
- Opportunities to share samples of learning activities with their teacher(s) and/or assigned SET and their peers.

The [PDST](#), [NCSE](#), [COGG](#) and [Scoilnet](#) websites provide a range of materials to support learning at home for young learners.

4. Supporting the return to school of other pupils

Other pupils who are likely to require some support to ensure they return to schooling in the normal way include:

- Pupils at risk of early school leaving
- Pupils/parents who are experiencing COVID-related anxiety about their child returning to school
- Pupils who have been requested by a medical doctor or the HSE to self-isolate.

The usual guidance for attendance records for these pupils applies and therefore these pupils should only be marked present when they are in attendance at school.

4.1 Pupils at risk of early school leaving

Pupils at risk of early school leaving should be supported by the school to return to school in the normal way and it is not expected that they would be educated using adapted education provision provided by the school. Each school is asked to identify those who have not returned to school and/or are at risk of early school leaving.

TUSLA Education Support Service (TESS) will work systematically with schools throughout September and October to ensure that pupils receive support in relation to their return to school and school attendance. TESS staff will support school personnel to follow up on attendance issues, providing guidance and signposting appropriate support services and referral pathways.

Where pupils have not returned to school, despite the efforts made by schools and others, Educational Welfare Officers will engage with, encourage, and support those pupils and their parents to facilitate a return to school. The underlying principle in all cases is to ensure that all pupils are reconnected with education.

4.2 Other pupils/parents who are anxious about returning to school

Some pupils or their parents may be experiencing anxiety about the return to school to such an extent that their child does not return as expected. All schools are expected to support such pupils in making a full return to school and to provide supports to ensure their anxiety is managed in such a way as to enable them to re-engage productively in their learning.

The National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) [Return to School webinar and Toolkit](#) provide information and resources to support pupils' return to school. In addition, NEPS have developed resources for parents, teachers and pupils on anxiety.

It is not expected that pupils who are experiencing COVID-related anxiety would be educated through adapted education provision.

Pupils with special education needs (SEN), especially those with complex needs, will need additional, individualised supports to enable them make a successful return to school. The SEN supports for SEN pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19 that would normally be available to them to address their special educational needs will continue to be available to them in the context of both adapted education provision and on their return to school.

4.3 Pupils who have been requested to self-isolate for a short time

From time to time, a number of pupils may be required to self-isolate for a short time on foot of medical advice. It is not expected that these pupils would be educated through adapted education provision during this time. Instead, schools should, at a minimum, ensure that these pupils are supported to catch up with their learning on their return to school. In some instances, where adapted education provision is already being provided by teachers in the school to other pupils, it may be possible for pupils who are self-isolating to avail of that adapted provision. This decision should be made at local level by each school in the context of the needs and circumstances of their pupils.

5. Resources for teachers supporting the learning of pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19

Organisation	Website	Purpose of support
<p>The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)</p>	<p>https://www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning</p> <p>https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning</p> <p>https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigitalTech</p> <p>www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie</p> <p>https://teachercpd.ie/</p>	<p>Teachers can access a suite of sector-specific (primary or post-primary) supports when embarking on blended learning in their contexts. These supports contain guidance as well as practical applications and case studies</p> <p>The PDST have developed many resources to support schools in providing distance learning for their pupils.</p> <p>Additional links from PDST Digital Technology Team are also available, including links to good practice videos that contain activities which can be adapted for online teaching and digital learning preparation resources.</p> <p>PDST School infrastructure: Schools can contact ictadvice@pdst.ie regarding queries about their infrastructure or can email broadbandservicedesk@pdst.ie regarding broadband queries. More information on technology can be found at the broader PDST (Technology in Education) website</p> <p>There are a variety of short online courses available on TeacherCPD.ie Teachers can access a variety of online short courses to upskill in many digital areas, including online teaching and assessment</p> <p>Scoilnet contains a database of over 20,000+ online resources including websites, quizzes, lesson plans, notes,</p>

Organisation	Website	Purpose of support
	<p>https://www.scoilnet.ie</p> <p>www.webwise.ie</p>	<p>video/audio, games and other multimedia. To further support distance learning, Learning Paths may be used to create and organise collections of resources found on Scoilnet.</p> <p>Webwise provides guidance and resources in relation to remote learning, including child safety, privacy and data protection. Support will also be available in relation to helping teachers steer pupils to self-directed learning.</p>
<p>The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)</p>	<p>https://ncse.ie/teacher-resources</p> <p>https://ncse.ie/all-online-resources</p> <p>https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Tips-for-Teachers-in-supporting-Pupil-Engagement-and-Motivation-during-Remote-Learning.pdf</p>	<p>The NCSE website outlines a wide range of resources suitable for children with special educational needs. It has also produced a suite of online resources 'Getting back to what we know' to support pupils with complex needs returning to school.</p>
<p>The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)</p>	<p>https://ncca.ie/en/updates-and-events/back-to-school-lessons-to-support-student-wellbeing</p> <p>https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/3ac44a69-57f9-49ea-80db-ebec76831111/PLC-Support-Materials_All-Strands-Final.pdf</p> <p>https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/early-years-of-primary</p> <p>https://www.aisteariolta.ie/en/</p>	<p>The NCCA has developed a range of lesson plans to help students re-connect with school and each other; reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on their wellbeing and develop skills, attitudes and dispositions needed for re-engaging successfully in learning.</p> <p>Specific supports on provision for play in infant and junior classes is available through the Primary Language Toolkit in the 'Across all strands' section.</p> <p>The podcasts and videos on this section of the NCCA website focus on play in the infant classroom.</p> <p>The <i>Aistear S'olta</i> Practice Guide contains a range of resources to support learning and development of children up to the age of 6. The resources will be of use to both teachers and parents.</p>

Organisation	Website	Purpose of support
An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)	https://www.cogg.ie/en/resources/	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta caters for the educational needs of Gaeltacht schools and of Gaelscoileanna. There is a wide range of online resources available such as, access to digital books, videos and teaching aids. COGG is supporting TG4 with Cúla 4 ar Scoil which is continuing in September; the development of 'Fí na Folláine', an Irish language version of 'Weaving Wellbeing' to support children at this challenging time.
<i>Scoilnet</i>	www.scoilnet.ie	Scoilnet contains a database of over 20,000+ online resources including websites, quizzes, lesson plans, notes, video/audio, games and other multimedia. To further support distance learning, Learning Paths may be used to create and organise collections of resources found on Scoilnet.
Education Centres	https://esci.ie/education-centres.html	Access to support in arranging local school clusters to support pupils who cannot attend school. They will also liaise with schools to access the PDST supports available to schools and teachers to support pupils who cannot attend school. They will assist and inform local schools working together to support pupils who cannot attend school in the best possible way.
Webwise	www.webwise.ie	Access to advice, information and resources exploring a range of internet safety issues and concerns.

Appendix 1: Samples of adapted education provision to support pupils who cannot attend school

Sample 1

The teachers in a rural three teacher school have been informed of two pupils who will require adapted education provision because they are at very high risk to COVID-19 and cannot return to school: Mary in senior infants, and Seamus in sixth class. One of the teachers on the staff has also been certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and is required to work from home. This teacher has been designated as the teacher to facilitate remote teaching and learning for Seamus and Mary, along with other pupils in the local school cluster established for sharing a substitute teacher for principal release days.

The senior class teacher has met with Seamus' parents who have indicated that Seamus will be with his grandparents while they are at work during the school day, that he has his own laptop and is happy to continue learning during school hours. The class teacher plans to share her short-term plans in advance of each fortnight with the designated teacher and they have arranged weekly phone conversations to discuss progress and any issues that might arise. The designated teacher intends to use Google Classroom to upload short videos and audios of key teaching points along with instructions for learning activities to be completed at home, in line with the class teacher's plans. The designated teacher and the class teacher have arranged for a weekly video conference call on a Thursday afternoon to allow Seamus maintain connection with his peers. Each week, this call will comprise informal chat and discussion as well as more formal small group work and sharing of learning from the week as appropriate. This will allow Seamus to work during the school day from home while maintaining a connection with his class.

When the infant teacher met Mary's parents, they were very concerned that she would not be able to do much during the day as she will be with the childminder and her parents would prefer to work with her themselves. The class teacher and Mary's parents agreed that the designated teacher would use Seesaw to send short videos of key teaching points along with the relevant learning tasks that are being carried out by Mary's peers at school, as this is the platform they used during the previous school closure. The class teacher has organised a pack of materials that Mary can use at home to help her develop her literacy and numeracy skills, and she has given guidance to her parents on how to develop these skills through play. It has also been arranged that the childminder will set Mary up on a video conference call once a week during story time so that Mary can reconnect with her peers.

The designated teacher will provide feedback to Seamus and Mary on the work they have completed in addition to reporting on their progress to the class teachers.

Sample 2

In a 15 teacher urban school, the staff have been informed by parents of seven pupils who will require adapted education provision because they are at very high risk to COVID-19. Three of the pupils also have special educational needs. The school contacted their local education centre and were matched with a teacher from another school in the area who is working from home and is at very high risk to COVID-19. This teacher has been designated as the teacher to facilitate the adapted education provision for these pupils. Meetings between the class teachers, SETs, the designated teacher and the parents were convened, and a survey on the availability of devices and broadband was carried out. The school has used the ICT grant to purchase additional laptops for two pupils, as well as a dongle with prepaid internet access for one pupil who does not have internet access at home.

The class teachers share their fortnightly plans with the designated teacher, who also has been provided with relevant details and targets from the student support files of the pupils with SEN. The designated teacher then uses Google classroom to communicate with the pupils. He provides short audio and video materials, PowerPoint presentations and other relevant teaching resources as teaching input for the pupils. At various times throughout the week and in conjunction with the class teachers, he facilitates video conferencing between the pupils and their class teachers and classmates to maintain connectedness and to support alignment of teaching and learning. He also provides frequent feedback to the pupils on their learning, as well as liaising with the class teachers and SETs about pupil progress. In one class, the class teacher records as she writes on the interactive whiteboard using Screencastify, and these clips are also uploaded for the pupil in her class to access. All of the teachers involved, including the designated teacher, are due to receive training in Google classroom, and it is their intention to use Google Docs and Google Slides to facilitate collaborative learning and project work between the pupils at home and their peers in the classroom before the end of September. One member of staff who is not involved in the adapted education provision but who has a keen interest in ICT has volunteered to provide technical support as needed throughout the period of adapted provision.

Sample 3

In an urban school with a special class for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the special class teacher, in consultation with parents and the school leadership team, has been notified of two pupils with complex medical needs who are at very high risk to COVID-19 and will require adapted education provision. Prior to the school closure both pupils, while based in the ASD class, had been successfully experiencing integration and reverse-integration with mainstream classes and their peers. Hanna who is nine years old was due to continue her integrated learning experiences with third class and Paul who is twelve was due to continue his integrated learning experiences with sixth class.

The ASD class teacher held individual online meetings with the children's parents, the relevant classroom teachers, the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) and the pupils. This was an important way for the school staff to reconnect with both children and their parents. The teachers used a visual

social story to explain how the ASD class teacher and the mainstream class teachers would be supporting the children in learning from home.

The ASD class teacher held meetings with the relevant classroom teachers to consider how they could provide the pupils with a choice (using a visual to aid understanding and processing) of tasks and activities that they could successfully complete in collaboration with their peers and build on their strengths. They also considered how, within the mainstream classes, a range of appropriate and meaningful learning tasks could be differentiated to meet the pupils' needs and progress their learning. They discussed the digital resources that the children have access to in their homes and what further materials the school could provide to the home to support the children's learning, including packs of sensory and movement materials to support the children to take comfort breaks from learning activities.

The teachers reviewed the targets from the children's 2019-20 Student Support plans and considered their strengths and interests, possible targets for the pupils and strategies that would help them achieve the targets within the home environment. They also considered the record of progress that had been sent to the school from the teachers who had supported the pupils in the 2020 Summer Provision Programme. Finally, the teachers also discussed how the parents might prepare the children for the learning experiences in the new term by looking at and revisiting a draft learning schedule/ timetable together, by using a visual calendar to help the pupils with the countdown to schooling, by establishing routines and home visual schedules, and by using strategies to help the pupils to manage and regulate their feelings and behaviour.

Sample 4

In a special school for children with moderate and severe learning difficulties, the senior management team have been informed of a number of children at very high risk to COVID-19 who will not be returning to school. During the school closure, staff remained in contact with all pupils via their parents and celebrated graduation via a virtual assembly. Cathal is 14 years old and has autism, learning difficulties and epilepsy. He is pre-verbal and uses assistive technology to communicate his needs and wants. Cathal enjoys school and has built up an excellent rapport with his teacher. During the school closure, his parents reported that he has struggled with the lack of routine of school and other activities. This frustration has resulted in displays of negative behaviour by Cathal such as kicking walls, shouting and spitting at his parents and siblings.

A virtual multidisciplinary team meeting was held to help Cathal and his parents manage his behaviours and engage in activities at home which were calming and regulating. Strategies included creating a visual timetable for activities at home so Cathal knows what is happening and when, providing deep muscle activities designed to calm and regulate, motivational games designed by his teacher based around his area of interest which are Toy Story movies, and providing assistive technology software Proloquo2Go and a tablet.

Appendix 2: Checklist for preparing for adapted education provision

The following optional checklist can be used in preparing for adapted education provision. Teachers should use existing preparation documentation to guide and support adapted education provision through differentiating content and methodologies for these pupils. Short-term planning documents can be adapted to support this process.

Pupil's name	
Class	
Teacher(s) involved	
Questions	Comments
Has the school had a conversation with the pupil and his/her parents/guardians about how home-based education will work?	
Has a draft timetable been prepared that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily provision of teaching input and learning experiences • Provision for pupil interaction with the class teacher or SET and other pupils on a weekly or more frequent basis • Tasks that can be undertaken independently • Tasks undertaken in collaboration with peers 	
What equipment, programmes or resources including digital resources are available to the pupil in the home environment?	
What equipment, programmes or resources can the school provide to support learning in the home environment?	
Has a suitable digital platform been agreed upon with the pupil and parents/guardians and the designated teacher, and are all those involved sufficiently skilled to use this platform?	
Has a plan for developing the skills of the teacher, pupil, parents/guardians been put in place as relevant to ensure continuity of learning without undue delay or difficulty?	
What supports can the parents at home provide, and how can the school ensure that parents are equipped to provide this support?	
What monitoring and review arrangements can be put in place to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs of the pupil?	
Has a plan been put in place to review all relevant policies and, where necessary, to update them to reflect adapted education provision, including the Acceptable Usage Policy ³ , Data Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and the Child Safeguarding Statement, and have these been communicated to parents/guardians of these pupils?	

³ School authorities will need to ensure relevant parental and pupil consent has been obtained where online sessions are held to facilitate communication between the pupil and his/her classmates

