

Section 5: Contingency planning for remote education

This section covers the process for local outbreaks, contingency plans and remote education.

Contingency plans

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans should be in place. These should meet the same expectations as those for any pupils who cannot yet attend school at all due to coronavirus (COVID-19). See the section on [remote education support](#).

The government has made it a national priority that schools should continue to operate as normally as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This remains the default position for all areas irrespective of local restriction tiers. To help with this, we have published a [contingency framework](#) for the rare circumstances in which schools might need to revise their delivery models for a short period of time to help contain virus transmission within a community. Such measures will be implemented in the fewest number of schools required, for the shortest time.

Any decision to initiate local restrictions to any childcare or education settings will not be taken lightly, and will be made by central government on a case by case basis, in the light of local and national circumstances.

Remote education expectations

Where a class, group or a small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or local restrictions require pupils to remain at home, we expect schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education. All pupils not physically unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19) but who are at home as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) should have access to remote education by the next school day. Schools are expected to consider how to continue to improve the quality of their existing curriculum, for example through technology, and have a strong offer in place for remote education provision.

DfE understands that, thanks to the dedication of teachers and school leaders, the vast majority of schools are already delivering remote

education when it is needed and continually improving their provision in line with expectations and emerging best practice. Schools should be aware that any DfE and Ofsted engagement concerning remote provision will always take into account the circumstances of the school and its pupils, including staff absences related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Note that the expectations set out in this guidance are for schools rather than for individual teachers.

In developing their remote education, we expect schools to:

- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject
- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to high-quality online and offline resources and teaching videos and that is linked to the school's curriculum expectations
- give access to high quality remote education resources
- select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained in their use
- provide printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable online access
- recognise that younger pupils and some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so schools should work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum - for pupils with SEND, their teachers are best placed to know how to meet their needs

When teaching pupils remotely, we expect schools to:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum:
 - primary: 3 hours a day, on average, across the school cohort
 - secondary: 4 hours a day, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos

- have systems for checking, at least weekly, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and inform parents immediately where engagement is a concern
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and provide feedback, at least weekly, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding

We expect schools to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents' help or support. We expect schools to avoid an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

We have now published a [temporary continuity direction](#) which makes it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). This came into effect from 22 October 2020. The direction poses no additional expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools beyond those set out in this guidance.

Schools can find help and support in the [remote education good practice guide](#) and school-led webinars.