



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

# Guidance on Remote Learning in a COVID-19 Context: September – December 2020

For primary schools and special schools

08 October 2020

# 1. Introduction

This document is designed to provide guidance for primary schools and special schools in situations where a partial or full school closure is advised by Public Health HSE because of a case or cases of COVID-19. It is also intended to advise schools on how individual pupils or groups of pupils who may have to self-isolate or restrict their movements can be supported in continuing their learning remotely. It is intended to update this guidance in December 2020.

The Department acknowledges the collective effort across the system that enabled schools to re-open at the start of the school year. In particular, it acknowledges the leadership shown by principals, deputy principals and management of schools and the degree to which teachers have prepared for and adapted their practice in order to minimise the risk of infection due to COVID-19 in schools. In addition, the efforts of the wider school community in supporting the reopening of schools, including those of special needs assistants (SNAs), secretaries, caretakers, parents and others, are acknowledged.

The Department recognises that despite the best efforts of all stakeholders, there will be situations where individual pupils or groups of pupils, teachers, or possibly entire school communities, are requested by Public Health HSE to self-isolate or restrict their movements because of a case or cases of COVID-19. It should be noted that decisions around advising pupils, teachers or other school staff to restrict their movements for COVID-19 related reasons are made solely by Public Health HSE. Schools should refer to the *Public Health Guidance Letter to schools* dated 27 August 2020 and to *Schools Pathway for COVID-19: The Public Health approach* prepared by the HSE, both of which are available [here](#). In addition, schools should refer to [Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#), the Government's risk management strategy for the next six to nine months, designed to allow individuals, families, businesses and services to better understand, anticipate and prepare for the measures the Government might introduce to stop escalation of the transmission of the disease. A set of frequently raised topics entitled *COVID-19: Your questions answered about returning to school* is available [here](#).

This Department guidance sets out how schools should plan for and support pupils' learning in a number of possible scenarios which could occur during the 2020/21 school year. As the extent to which these scenarios may occur cannot be predicted, it is possible that individual pupils or groups of pupils and teachers may find that they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements on a number of occasions during the school year. This may lead to an accumulation of a significant number of days where pupils learn from home and/or teachers work from home. Therefore, it is crucial that all schools make every effort to enable teachers to support the continuation of pupils' learning effectively during each possible scenario. This is particularly important in the

context of pupils at risk of early school leaving, pupils with special educational needs and pupils at risk of educational disadvantage. The examples in Section 3 provide some illustrations of how schools can sustain pupils' learning where they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements.

Where pupils are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, teachers should continue to focus on supporting their wellbeing. In addition, schools should consider the wellbeing of all staff and families during this time. Staff and families who are experiencing particularly challenging times can be directed to the support services available at [gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/](https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/) or to the resources and supports provided by agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) or the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme. Schools may also consult with NEPS in relation to the academic, social and emotional needs of their pupils.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Department's previous guidance to schools in relation to supporting continuity of pupils' learning during the March to June 2020 school closure period, available at [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie) .

---

## 2. Planning and organisation considerations

### 2.1 Practical considerations for supporting continuity of schooling

The public health restrictions which resulted in the closure of schools in March 2020 highlighted the absolute necessity for schools to be agile in providing for continuity of schooling in the future. As a contingency for when pupils and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, all schools should create a brief, concise action plan for supporting the continuity of pupils' learning, using digital technology where possible.<sup>1</sup> This should outline the necessary actions and relevant personnel to:

- **Identify appropriate digital communication platform(s)<sup>2</sup>:** All schools should put in place arrangements to facilitate:
  - Digital communication with and between staff
  - Digital communication between staff and pupils
  - Digital communication between schools and parents/guardians, including a designated email address or attended phone number for contact during school closures
  - Remote teaching and learning.

As a priority, schools should research various digital platforms<sup>3</sup> for facilitating communication between teachers and pupils and supporting pupils learning remotely. Schools should then select the most appropriate whole-school approach for their context. In some schools, the use of digital communication platforms may not be appropriate or possible for some pupils. In these cases, alternative arrangements should be identified, including using the postal service, emails and phone calls.

- **Identify and develop the skills set of the teachers and support staff, as needed:** On selecting a digital platform or platforms for the school, the school should ascertain the level of digital competency required to use the platform(s) and any gaps in the skills set of the teachers should be identified. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that any necessary professional development be provided to enable teachers to use the platform(s) as outlined above.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Digital Technologies Team has developed a comprehensive range of blended learning professional development programmes for teachers and school leaders; these are available at

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for a suggested checklist

<sup>2</sup> A digital platform refers to any technology that facilitates communication and remote/distance teaching and learning.

<sup>3</sup> From Inspectorate engagement with schools between April and June 2020, the most common platforms in use were Seesaw, Google Classrooms and Microsoft Teams. The [pdst.ie/blendedlearning](https://www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning) site contains guidance on these and other platforms.

[pdst.ie/blendedlearning](https://pdst.ie/blendedlearning). Schools can also apply to [pdst.ie/schoolsupport](https://pdst.ie/schoolsupport) for the assistance of a PDST advisor with specific queries about remote teaching, learning and assessment practices. Other relevant staff, such as special needs assistants (SNAs), should be supported in the development of their digital skills, using time from their Croke Park hours, for example.

- **Enable pupils to develop the necessary skills set:** Pupils should be given frequent opportunities to use the selected digital platform(s). In this regard, it is essential that pupils have age and stage appropriate opportunities to practise:
  - Accessing and navigating the platform(s)
  - Engaging with teaching and learning materials
  - Uploading their own work independently.
- **Support equity of access to digital resources:** Availability of appropriate digital devices and/or internet connection with sufficient bandwidth may be a challenge for some families, including those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, or those who live in geographical areas with poor internet infrastructure. Schools should establish a clear picture of the relevant supports needed by their pupils to engage in remote learning and the steps that can be taken to address any gaps or issues. For example, the school could allocate digital devices, if available, from the school's supply to families<sup>4</sup> for the duration of the pupils' absence from school for COVID-19 reasons. If necessary, other strategies such as using the postal service, phone calls or emails as a means of communicating with these pupils should be considered. Schools should also ensure that teachers have access to the necessary digital technology to support pupils' remote learning when required.
- **Be ready to share preparation for teaching and learning:** Schools should develop a system to enable all teachers to share their short-term preparation documents, including preparation for pupils with SEN, with substitute teachers and other relevant teachers as required, using a shared online data storage drive.
- **Ensure relevant contact details are available:** The chairperson of the board of management should ensure that he/she has access to up-to-date contact details for all teachers on the staff, in the event that some/all of the school leadership team are unavailable for work. This will enable appropriate administrative arrangements to be put in place to keep the school open. The contact details of the school's assigned inspector should also be shared with the chairperson of the board of management.

---

<sup>4</sup> Where schools provide devices to families, all parties should agree the parameters and relevant policies for use of the device, and that the device remains the property of the school to be returned to the school when the pupil returns or the full/partial school closure period ends.

- **Collaborate and communicate with parents/guardians:** Schools should consult with and inform parents/guardians of the approach that will be used for remote teaching and learning should this be required. Good whole-school systems for two-way communication with parents/guardians are essential to ensure that the school is ready to engage in remote teaching and learning in an effective way. In this regard, surveying parents/guardians is advised to ascertain the level of digital devices and capabilities in the home. Partnership with parents/guardians will be critical to supporting pupils who have to learn from home for a period. Feedback from parents/guardians on how their child is engaging with learning in a remote/distance environment will also be important. Teachers should ensure that they outline to parents how pupils' work will be monitored and how feedback will be provided. Guidance for parents on how to use digital platforms should be provided by the school.
- **Communication with external agencies:** During partial or full school closures, it is important that schools maintain appropriate contact, relevant to the needs of the pupils affected by the closure, with any necessary external agencies, including the HSE, NEPS, NCSE and Tusla Education Support Service (TESS).
- **Ensure relevant policies are up to date:** Schools should review all policies relevant to supporting pupils' remote learning. In this regard, Acceptable Usage Policies may need to be amended. PDST guidance for schools in relation to the use of video-conferencing tools is available [here](#). Data Protection and Child Protection policies should also be reviewed and, if necessary, updated to take account of teaching and learning in a remote/distance learning environment. Teachers, parents and the whole school community should be involved in the review and updating of those policies as appropriate.

## 2.2 Personnel to support continuity of schooling

Where pupils and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, local contextual factors mean that no one-size solution will fit all schools. The class teacher should provide for continuity of schooling to the greatest extent possible for those pupils who are advised to restrict their movements. However, this may not always be a practical option. Therefore, all teachers are expected to be flexible in their approach to supporting pupils who are asked to restrict their movements. The non-exhaustive list below outlines the variety of alternative personnel who could be considered when arranging for continuity of schooling.

- **Special education teacher (SET):** The principle of allocating the greatest level of support to those pupils with the greatest need remains, in line with the Continuum of Support. However, the SET(s) assigned to a pupil/class affected can reassign this time to supporting remote teaching and learning. Alternatively, the SET(s) can reassign time normally allocated for *whole-school and classroom support (for all)* on the Continuum of Support from his/her normal timetable, by, for example, pausing

some team-teaching initiatives for the duration of the closure to release time for remote teaching and learning.

- **Designated teacher from the staff:** A teacher on the staff who has been medically certified as being at very high risk to Covid-19 and is available to work from home can support remote learning for individual pupils or classes, in line with circular 0049/2020.
- **A teacher from the staff who has been advised to restrict his/her movements:** A teacher on the staff who has been advised to restrict his/her movements but is medically fit for work can support remote learning for individual pupils or classes in line with circular 0049/2020.
- **Designated teacher from a local Education Centre:** A teacher from another school who has been medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and is on the assigned list in the local Education Centre can assist in this work in line with circular 0049/2020.

---

### 3. Responding to a range of scenarios

The list below outlines a variety of possible scenarios which schools may encounter in the coming weeks and months. Where a partial or full school closure is required, schools should immediately put in place their plan of action to enable continuity of learning for pupils. It should be noted that in situations where pupils are requested to self-isolate or restrict their movements but the teachers have not been specifically advised to do so, the resources and digital infrastructure in the school building should continue to be used during the school day by these teachers. In all of the scenarios outlined below, the class teacher maintains overall responsibility for:

- Sharing his/her short-term plans with the relevant teacher where necessary to enable the pupil(s) to progress in line with the curriculum and his/her peers insofar as possible
- Providing frequent, constructive feedback to all pupils on their work, in order to maintain a connection with those pupils who are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements and in order to ensure and monitor progress in learning.

In addition, SETs and SNAs should collaborate with the class teacher in order to provide learning support for pupils on their caseload with special educational needs (SEN) who are required to restrict their movements. The school principal should maintain oversight of the procedures put in place to support pupils' learning from home to ensure that the learning experiences provided are appropriate to the pupils' needs.

**Scenario 1:** An individual pupil from a class is advised to self-isolate or restrict his/her movements. No other pupils in the school are affected.

The class teacher can choose to provide teaching input and learning opportunities to the pupil using the school's chosen digital platform or other agreed method as needed, if he/she feels this is the most appropriate way to address the needs of the pupil.

Alternatively, this support can be provided by a teacher from the list of personnel outlined in Section 2.2.

**Scenario 2:** The pupils in a number of pods in a classroom are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements. Some of the pods in the classroom are deemed to be unaffected and can continue to attend school.

The class teacher continues to teach pupils who are in attendance as normal. He/she can provide opportunities for all pupils to work together collaboratively insofar as possible, for example, on project work and other areas of learning, using digital technologies. A teacher from the list of personnel outlined in Section 2.2 is assigned the responsibility of providing remote teaching and learning for the pupils at home in line with local arrangements at school level.



**Scenario 3:** All pupils in one or more classes are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements.

The class teacher(s) will be required to provide remote/distance teaching to all pupils in the class, using the school's digital platform(s) or other agreed method as needed. This should take place from the school if the teacher is not required to self-isolate or restrict his/her movements.

**Scenario 4:** A teacher / number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements.

Where teachers are required to self-isolate, they will avail of special leave with pay, in line with Circular 0049/2020. These teachers should follow the advice outlined in the Circular in this instance. Any teacher who is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict his/her movements is available to work remotely. If the teacher's class group is still attending school a substitute teacher should be arranged to cover this teacher's teaching responsibilities in the school for this period, but the work assigned to the teacher restricting his/her movements should support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning for pupils as per Section 12 of Circular 0049/2020. If the teacher's class is also self-isolating or restricting their movements the class teacher(s) will be required to provide remote/distance teaching to all pupils in the class, using the school's digital platform(s) or other agreed method as needed.

**Scenario 5:** The school is required to close on foot of public health advice.

In this case, all teachers who are medically fit to work, including SETs, are available to work remotely and should provide remote teaching and learning to all pupils in their class or on their caseload. Substitute teachers should be arranged to provide remote teaching for pupils in classes where the teacher has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and is medically unfit to work. Schools should ensure substitute teachers have access to appropriate digital technology.

### **Examples of how schools could support pupils' learning remotely**

The information provided below demonstrates how schools might choose to use their available resources to support remote teaching and learning. Please note this list of examples is not exhaustive and schools will make their own decisions at local level to provide for continuity of schooling, in line with this Department guidance.

**Example 1:** *Preparing for a partial or full closure in a 3-teacher rural school*

*In this school, the teachers have decided to continue to use Seesaw, which they used during the previous school closure. Parents reported in a recent survey that they found this to be very easy to use and beneficial for their children, although laptops will need to be provided to four families in the event of a closure.*

*One teacher is new to the staff, so the deputy principal is using two Croke Park hours to upskill her and to share expertise with the whole staff, using the PDST Digital Technologies materials*

*as a guide. The principal has asked that the platform be used by each class teacher to teach one SESE lesson per week in class for the month of September in order to enable the pupils to become familiar with the app again. They will then use it to provide homework on a regular basis for the duration of the school year.*

*At a whole school planning level, all teachers are requested to upload their fortnightly plans to the shared drive each fortnight, so that in the event of a teacher being advised to restrict his/her movements, the plan of work will be available for the substitute teacher without delay.*

**Example 2:** *Providing remote teaching and supporting pupil learning in a 12-teacher urban school for four siblings who have been advised to self-isolate*

*In this school, four siblings have been advised by Public Health HSE to self-isolate for 10 days. Each of the pupils is in a different classroom. As two of the pupils have special educational needs (SEN), the SET has released the pupils' allocated time from his timetable to provide remote teaching and learning to them in line with their needs. The second SET has readjusted her timetable to pause early intervention sessions in the infant room for two weeks, so that she can support the other two pupils during this period.*

*Both SETs can access the relevant class teacher's plans on the school's shared Google drive and are using these plans to create very short video and audio recordings of key teaching points, which they upload to the school's Google Drive for the pupils to access. Along with this, they assign learning activities in line with those being completed by their peers in the classroom. All pupils then upload their work to the Google Drive for their class teacher to provide feedback.*

*One of the classes had just started a project in small groups on 'the Normans' before the siblings were advised to self-isolate, so the class teacher has liaised with parents/guardians to ensure that the required technology is available for the pupil to use Google Slides to collaborate with his peers. She intends for this pupil to present his part of the project to the class by video conferencing facilities on the same day as the rest of the pupils towards the end of the fortnight.*

**Example 3:** *Providing remote teaching and supporting pupil learning in a 5-teacher DEIS rural school for pupils in two pods in a class who were advised to restrict their movements*

*In this school, two pods in sixth class were advised to restrict their movements, but the remaining three pods can continue to attend school. The class teacher was not advised to restrict her movements so she is continuing to teach the children who can attend.*

*The school has contacted the local Education Centre and has been connected with a teacher who is working from home as he is at very high risk to COVID-19. This teacher will provide remote teaching in line with the class teacher's plans on a daily basis. All learning tasks are returned to the class teacher for constructive feedback, using the school's agreed digital platform, Google Classroom.*

**Example 4:** *Providing remote teaching and support learning to a pupil with complex needs in a special class*

*In this school, a pupil with complex needs in a special class has been advised to restrict his movements. As one of the teachers on the staff is considered to be at very high risk to COVID-19 and is required to work from home, she provides remote teaching in consultation with the special class teacher each day. She provides videos of the main teaching points from the pupil's class, and has used the online resources on the NCSE website to support learning from home.*

*The SNA for this pupil has been upskilled in the use of Webex and has arranged for a live video call with the pupil and one of his parents each morning to check in with him and talk him through the physical exercises he usually does in school. When appropriate, the special class teacher joins this call to maintain contact with the pupil, and on Fridays, all of the pupils participate in the call during story time.*

**Example 5:** *Providing remote teaching and support learning in a 30-teacher urban school for an entire class who were advised to restrict their movements*

*In this school, one class teacher and her entire class have been advised to restrict their movements. For the first three days of self-isolation, the class teacher was fit for work and provided remote teaching and learning from home to all pupils in the class using the school's agreed digital platform, Microsoft Teams. As four pupils do not have access to digital devices, she has provided them with tablets from the school for the duration of the self-isolation.*

*However, she soon developed symptoms of COVID-19 and is now medically unfit for work. The principal arranged for a substitute teacher to cover the work of her class. The substitute accessed the teacher's short-term plans and continued to provide remote teaching to the pupils from the school building each day, using the resources and digital infrastructure available there. She provides frequent, constructive feedback to all pupils on their work.*

---

## 4. Required features of provision

Where it is necessary to support pupils in their learning from home for reasons related to COVID-19, school leaders should ensure that such provision is characterised by:

- **Regular engagement with pupils:** The teacher(s) assigned responsibility for supporting pupils learning remotely should communicate with pupils on a daily basis, using the school's agreed communication methods, while taking into account that some pupils may not be in a position to engage with remote teaching and learning each day. Special education teachers (SETs) should continue to engage with pupils on their caseload as frequently as they would under normal circumstances. Weekly or fortnightly assignment of tasks to be completed is not, of itself, sufficient because pupils need more frequent contact with their teacher(s) in order to feel connected to the school, to stay motivated, and to make progress in their learning.
- **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences:** Teacher-pupil engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils. Teachers should ensure, as far as practicable, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches including pre-recorded video, audio, presentation software and written instructions. Regular engagement with pupils when they are out of school will also help them to reintegrate when they return to school.
- **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities:** Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way. It may be necessary to adjust the number of tasks usually given in the school setting to take account of the fact that pupils are doing this work from home.
  - **Learning tasks:** Workbook and textbook tasks should be reduced, supplemented or replaced with other learning tasks, to support high quality learning from home. The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil(s), including learners with SEN, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
  - **Skills development:** Pupils need to be supported to develop age-appropriate self-management and organisational skills so they can engage in remote learning.
  - **Transitions:** For pupils with additional and/or special educational needs who are being supported in their transition back to school, the work being carried out should be continued remotely to ensure progress is not lost and to enable successful reintegration back to school after the period of the partial or full closure.

- **Infant and junior classes**: The needs of pupils in the infant and junior classes require particular consideration. Parents/guardians will require specific guidance on how best to support their children at home, when in a position to do so. It is important that parents are provided with clear information about how the tasks and activities will help their child make progress in their learning. In particular, these young children will benefit from home learning packs that contain a range of materials to support engaging and fun early literacy and numeracy skill development, specific opportunities for hands-on, active development of early literacy and numeracy skills, opportunities to learn from home using the home environment in an experiential way in subjects such as Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and the Visual Arts, and opportunities to share samples of learning activities with the class teacher and/or their peers.
- **Gaeilge**: For pupils attending Irish-medium schools and to support the learning of Irish in English-medium schools, resources produced by [TG4](#) and [COGG](#) should be considered as a support for remote learning.
- **Two-way feedback between home and school**: Schools should ensure that two-way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and pupils is encouraged and supported. Schools should provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all pupils to regularly share samples of their work with the class teacher throughout each week. Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided. The benefits of this for pupils are:
  - **Ongoing motivation**: Completing tasks for their teacher and receiving feedback on these tasks motivates pupils to stay engaged and make progress in their learning. Without this, pupils are likely to become demotivated and disengaged in learning.
  - **Customised learning opportunities**: Monitoring progress will guide teachers to maintain or adapt future teaching and learning as appropriate. Providing feedback will help to address misunderstandings in learning and support optimum progress for pupils.
  - **Wellbeing**: Frequent engagement between pupils and teachers can provide a sense of normality and connection for pupils and can contribute to their sense of wellbeing. The role of teachers in this regard is very significant and should not be underestimated.

## 5. Resources

Organisation	Website	Purpose of support
The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)	<p><a href="https://www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning">https://www.pdst.ie/blendedlearning</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning">https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigTech">https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigTech</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie">www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie</a></p> <p><a href="https://teachercpd.ie/">https://teachercpd.ie/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.scoilnet.ie">www.scoilnet.ie</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.webwise.ie">www.webwise.ie</a></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 has developed many resources to support schools in providing distance learning for their students.</p> <p>Additional links from PDST Digital Technology Team are also available, including links to short instructional videos that contain activities which can be adapted for online teaching and digital learning preparation resources.</p> <p>PDST School infrastructure: Schools can contact <a href="mailto:ictadvice@pdst.ie">ictadvice@pdst.ie</a> regarding queries about their infrastructure or can email <a href="mailto:broadbandservicedesk@pdst.ie">broadbandservicedesk@pdst.ie</a> 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, video/audio, games and other multimedia. To further support distance learning, <a href="#">Learning Paths</a> may be used to create and organise collections of resources found on Scoilnet.</p> <p>Access to advice, information and resources exploring a range of internet safety issues and concerns.</p>
An Chomhaire um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)	<a href="https://www.cogg.ie/en/resources/">https://www.cogg.ie/en/resources/</a>	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.
The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)	<a href="http://www.ncse.ie/online-resources">www.ncse.ie/online-resources</a>	The NCSE website outlines a wide range of resources to support home learning suitable for children with special educational needs
Education Centres	<a href="http://www.esci.ie">www.esci.ie</a>	Centres provide a range of online courses/webinars in response to demand from local schools and teachers.

### Appendix 1: Suggested checklist to support action planning for schools when pupils and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

<p>Has an appropriate digital communication platform(s) been selected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it support communication with and between staff?</li> <li>• Does it support communication between staff and pupils?</li> <li>• Does it support communication between schools and parents/guardians?</li> <li>• Does the platform support remote teaching and learning?</li> </ul>	
Have parents/guardians been notified of contact details during school closures?	
Have the relevant skill sets of the staff been identified?	
Has a plan for appropriate professional development and support been agreed where necessary?	
Have other relevant staff, for example SNAs, been supported in their relevant digital skills development, to enable them to carry out their role during remote teaching and learning?	
<p>Has a plan for developing pupils skills for remote teaching and learning been agreed, to enable them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and navigate the platform in use?</li> <li>• Engage with teaching and learning materials?</li> <li>• Upload their own work independently (where age-appropriate to do so)?</li> </ul>	
Has the school ascertained the availability of digital devices and broadband access in all households?	
Has a plan been put in place to address gaps in the availability of digital devices or access to broadband?	
Has a system for sharing short-term planning and preparation documents, including plans for pupils with special educational needs, with relevant substitute and other teachers been established?	
Is the chairperson of the board of management enabled to access contact details of staff members and the school inspector in the event that all members of the leadership team are required to self-isolate?	
Have parents/guardians been consulted and informed about the platform(s) to be used during any remote teaching and learning scenarios?	
Have procedures for supporting two-way communication and feedback during remote teaching and learning been established?	
Have procedures for communicating with external agencies, including the HSE, NEPS and NCSE where necessary been established?	
<p>Have the following policies been reviewed and updated where necessary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable usage policies</li> <li>• Data Protection</li> <li>• Child Safeguarding Statement</li> </ul>	
Have relevant personnel been identified for each of the possible scenarios outlined in the guidance document?	