

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	EDU 16/20

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Education

**Date:** 30 September 2020

**Report Title:** Learning, Teaching and Curriculum – Reconnect and Recovery

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the developments to support learning, teaching and curriculum arrangements for schools since the full time return on 17 August. The in-school experiences in the initial weeks have focussed on settling pupils back into school routines whilst ensuring health and safety measures protect pupils and staff from the risks of Covid-19 at all times. This paper sets out the approaches that will build upon this positive return and ensure a focus on The Highland Council's ambitions for improved attainment, achievement, inclusion and positive destination outcomes for all children and young people

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- i. the developments underway to support recovery planning in school settings in relation to learning, teaching and assessment;
- ii. the continued focus on partnership working at school, local and national level to further enhance curriculum delivery and improve outcomes for our learners; and
- iii. plans and actions underway to support the continuity of learning in response to localised outbreaks of Covid-19, period of further lockdown and return to blended learning.

### 3. Implications

#### 3.1 Resource

There will be additional resource implications should schools move to localised lockdowns including additional supply staff, digital IT support as well as Officer and staff time to produce materials and ensure the continuation of Learning and Teaching. This resource is detailed in a separate report as part of this Education Committee.

### 3.2 **Legal**

There will be a requirement to ensure that the necessary Covid-19 legislation is adhered to. It will be necessary to ensure that learning and teaching provision is provided for our young people.

### 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)**

All young people will have access to learning and teaching recovery resources, young people in the most deprived areas will have additional targeted opportunities.

### 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever**

There are no implications or changes to climate change and carbon footprints.

### 3.5 **Risk**

Educational provision is affected if contingency plans are not in place and appropriately risk assessed in light of ongoing Covid-19 challenges impacting upon pupil outcomes.

### 3.6 **Gaelic**

This report supports the work across partners to continue to develop the learning outcomes for our Gaelic medium and Gaelic learners within the context of Covid-19 and localised outbreaks.

### 3.7 **Children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment**

This report supports articles 28, the child's right to education. The provision of direct lessons and wellbeing support to young people should they have to isolate will be a key response to this risk.

## 4. **Introduction/Context**

4.1 For the initial return to school, The Highland Council's focus was to support pupils and staff to re-connect, re-establish relationships, routines and social interaction. There was significant demand on schools around the many logistical plans to support a safe and supported return.

The 4 key principles for Highland school's resilience and recovery throughout the context of Covid-19 are:

- Equity - all pupils have the opportunity to be in school with regular access to high quality activities or to 'experience lessons' from teaching staff should they be isolating at home (through a range of IT approaches)
- Health and wellbeing support
- Recovery of learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment
- Improved attainment, achievements and outcomes for all children and young people in session 20/21

4.2 These principles are based on the Scottish Government National Improvement Framework Plan.

- Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- Improvement in Children's Health and Wellbeing.
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive destinations.

4.3 With schools now returning full time, it will be important to learn from the experiences during the period of lockdown and school closures. This will enable The Highland Council to develop and shape education delivery over this school session.

In addition to individual schools conducting their own questionnaires, a series of 'lockdown' surveys were issued to pupils, parents and school staff to gather views from across all Highland schools. These are in the process of being analysed.

## **5. Schools re-opening and ongoing Covid-19 resilience response**

- 5.1 In terms of practicalities, 203 of our schools and 245 Highland Council and commissioned ELC settings opened by 17 August which was testimony to the preparatory work across all Council services for the safe return. All schools are now open and continue to take account of local circumstances in updating detailed risk assessments which have been shared with school communities. Health and wellbeing is a high priority across all of our schools and staff have been taking the time to re-establish relationships to ensure that children feel safe and secure.
- 5.2 Local Project Boards will continue to run on a fortnightly basis, with a focus on individual school and community issues relating to transport, catering, FM and digital issues. These Boards comprise all key services of The Highland Council in supporting our learning communities. They continue to work well together to support schools collectively and individually. When these local Project Boards cease to meet, any issues will continue to be resolved within the Area teams and Officers will link directly with other Services to ensure that there is a consistency of approach and that any issues are dealt with timeously.
- 5.3 Since the reopening of schools in August, officers have been working closely with the Highland Parent Council Partnership (HPCP) group. This has led to joint communications for parents from the Education & Learning Service and the Chair of the HPCP. This supportive partnership will continue to grow as it is important that the messages for parents are clear and consistent across all of our schools in each of the four Areas.
- 5.4 In supporting the response to Covid-19, the links between The Highland Council resilience teams and Public Health teams have forged effective communication and partnership working. This partnership working has resulted in the development of a flowchart for schools, parents and carers, in addition to Scottish Government advice. A Tactical Response Team now meets twice weekly (previously daily) with protocols in place to respond to any future cluster outbreaks or incidences in schools, as well as local Emergency Liaison Groups as required in each Area.

## **6. Learning and teaching 3-18**

### **6.1 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)**

- 6.1.1 ELC is an essential part of ensuring long term equity in outcomes, and in improving attainment for all. Highland children experience a linked and coherent set of inputs, starting before birth at the first midwife contact and running through into early primary years, that support families, staff and young people to build the developmental foundations for learning and wellbeing. The approach to learning from pre-birth through to the end of early level (end of P1) is set out in recent Scottish Government practice guidance, Realising the Ambition (to which Highland staff contributed). Settings in Highland are supported to provide experiences across the curriculum by a coherent range of tools, training sessions and quality assurance approaches, most of which can be viewed on [www.elchighland.com](http://www.elchighland.com) and [www.highlandliteracy.com](http://www.highlandliteracy.com). During the lockdown period, all of The Highland Council's professional learning materials for ELC were translated into online versions and based on a principled process of individual and setting self-

evaluation. The Early Years Education Officer (EYESO) team, along with the Literacy Development Officers and Allied Health Professional partners made use of the opportunities offered by the lockdown period with training and support offered to hundreds of staff in ELC and early primary.

#### 6.1.2 Learning and teaching in ELC, next steps:

- the use of Google Meet for training and consultations during the lockdown is being continued, with an extensive library of “bitesize” training sessions available for setting managers and education leaders to use with staff to meet local needs;
- family engagement resources and support are being developed by the ELC officer team. This has been a request as many Managers of settings have to find new ways to involve and share a child’s learning journey under current Covid-19 restrictions;
- an Early Maths Program to be developed by a Numeracy Development Officer;
- outdoor learning training for practitioners offered by ELC officer team.
- development of resources to support [Words Up](#) program in GME total immersion stages; and
- continued partnership development on identified priorities with ELC partner providers and Highland ELC team (the term ‘providers’ includes Childminders, Partner Settings and Local Authority Settings who provide funded hours for children aged 2-5).

## 6.2 **Primary, English and Gaelic Medium Education (GME)**

6.2.1 Primary, English and Gaelic Medium Education learning and teaching developments are ongoing, following on from curriculum developments during Covid-19 lockdown. As per National discussion and Scottish Government guidance, developments relate to curriculum planning, design and delivery during the Covid-19 education recovery phase. Resources created in the Highlands, in line with national guidance include literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, outdoor learning and play.

6.2.2 Promotion of play: In the Early Level Realising the Ambition calls for the early primary environment to be as similar as possible to a high quality ELC setting. Highland practitioners have produced resources to support effective play pedagogy in early primary that have been nationally recognised by Education Scotland, and also adopted by Play Scotland as a key part of their play pedagogy resources at <https://www.playscotland.org/playful-pedagogy/>

6.2.3 The recovery curriculum frameworks in literacy and numeracy are now finalised and shared with schools. These frameworks are based on our Highland Literacy and Highland Numeracy Progression approach but can also be used by schools who previous to Covid-19 used other frameworks. These resources supplement learning and teaching materials produced by Education Scotland.

6.2.4 GME resources created are available and will be further developed upon as part of a framework to support immersion in response to both recovery planning and a potential support as an adaptable and flexible resource if required due to a lockdown/school closure.

6.2.5 A planned undertaking of the pilot for ‘*Cùm Ort!*’ the new GME reading intervention programme will provide trial schools with a short term, targeted approach for pupils in the early stages of GM who are experiencing difficulty in acquiring pre/foundation literacy skills undertaken this session.

## 6.3 **Secondary**

6.3.1 Curriculum review is a core aspect of school, Highland and National improvement priorities. The refreshed narrative supports schools to review and reflect on their curricular provision. This is particularly relevant given the period of lockdown. As in Primary, resources have been provided by both Education Scotland and The Highland Council to support the recovery of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Schools can use these resources to supplement their work underway on curriculum review and design. Ongoing changes are being made to senior phase certificated courses in response to the Covid-19 context impact upon key subject delivery e.g. in PE and HE. Staff across subject areas are working closely together with local and national officers to ensure that updated course changes and guidance are followed. It is expected that the routemap to exams in summer 2021 will continue to be a challenge which will require extensive support and collegiate working.

6.3.2 College and Foundation Apprenticeship courses are working through a period of transition with face to face delivery in place in schools along with virtual learning options where access to practical workshops is restricted. Some schools have introduced blocks of double periods across each day/week. The key benefit of this is to reduce pupil contact and minimise movement of young people across the school day. Learning and teaching approaches are adjusted to accommodate the longer blocks of learning with schools reviewing the progress of these arrangements. Where online delivery enabled learning to progress, the return to school has brought valuable face to face learning opportunities and pupil/teacher interaction which is enhancing the pupil experience. This is particularly notable in practical subjects.

## 6.4 **Learning and teaching in Primary and Secondary, next steps:**

- Schools are encouraged to use THE Highland Council resource 'Refreshed Narrative of CfE'. This resource encourages schools to re-focus their school vision and what the school community priorities are and how they are delivered. This resource supports engagement with staff, young people, families and wider communities.
- Support schools in using the BGE assessment resource.
- Provide training and support to all school settings in implementing and delivering recovery frameworks/curriculum planning going forward.
- Further development of Literacy and Numeracy frameworks to include third and fourth level (BGE) including online assessment resources
- Training approaches to develop in response of Covid-19 guidance; voice overs, recordings, Google meets, etc.
- Connecting practitioners with online drop-in sessions for sharing of good practice including teacher Google classroom networks and Northern Alliance/Education practitioner forums.
- Continue to support those learners who are unable to attend school full time.
- For some learners, access to Immersion experiences were interrupted during school closures. Resources to support oral language skills are a key focus for recovery development work within Literacy frameworks supported by input from Speech and Language. Opportunities for further training around this within a GME framework are under development.

## 7. **Effective use of assessment**

7.1 Every child and family will have had a different experience of lockdown and the continuing Covid-19 crisis, with different impacts on learning, development and

wellbeing. Schools will focus on maximising young people's engagement with their learning and remain focused on identifying and closing gaps in young people's learning.

- 7.2 In **ELC**, staff use well established tools to assess children's development, wellbeing and progress. The mainstay is the Developmental Overview, which has been extensively reported on previously, along with the Early Level Literacy progression, both of which are linked to resource and strategy ideas. Assessment of numeracy and maths are supported through a suite of CLPL resources designed by the Numeracy Development officers along with Allied Health professionals. For children coming into ELC, health visitors are able to provide initial information where there are additional needs, and various pilot projects around Highland are exploring ways to improve this information flow.
- 7.3 In **Primary**, schools are using many different approaches to assessment. A child's progress is based on the child's progress and achievements that come from day to day learning situations. Evidence of progress and achievement is gathered through self, peer and teacher assessments implemented in different interactions as part of ongoing learning and teaching, based on the core skills within the curriculum. Children and young people are involved in the planning of their next steps in learning, using ongoing assessments as a stepping stone for future learning. Teachers have frameworks available for use to assess children's progress. This process will continue through the session and beyond as children need to have the time to re-connect to the classroom environment. To embed recovery frameworks, training sessions will be offered by Officers.
- 7.4 **GME**, Measaidhean Coitcheann Nàiseanta airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig (MCNG) National Gaelic Medium Standardised Assessments are aligned with Curriculum for Excellence and Scottish National Standardised Assessments. GME teacher training has been arranged on MCNG approaches and the assessments will be used to help teachers identify individual children's strengths and the areas in which they would benefit from further support; and to plan next steps in learning accordingly.
- 7.5 In **Secondary**, the return has enabled young people and staff to re-connect back into the classroom culture and build relationships. An ongoing check on the health and wellbeing of young people has been a central part of the transition back to school. Staff monitored levels of engagement during the period of lockdown however the return to school allows a check on progress, knowledge and understanding. In order to assess where a young person is at in their learning, teachers employ a range of techniques to allow young people to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding including setting learning intentions, success criteria, effective questioning, peer and self-assessment. Feedback, including learning conversations, allow young people to reflect on their strengths and next steps in their learning. Within the Senior Phase, pupils are following course outlines and associated assessments as provided by SQA. These are currently under review nationally ahead of the exam diet 2021. On the back of this national review, Secondary colleagues will be required to adjust the structure of their course delivery and amend the process for SQA assessments as required. Young people will be supported through this process to ensure they are aware of assessment criteria.
- 7.6 **Monitoring and tracking**  
All schools and ELC have a similar approach to profiling and reporting. The approach is driven by learning conversations with pupils, target setting, effective feedback and next steps. Progress and attainment is shared with families on a

regular basis through the pupil profile. Monitoring, tracking and reporting will be a key feature with the school recovery planning process. All schools have a system to track pupil progress with updates shared with parents at checkpoints in the school year. The tracking system enables teachers to plan effectively to build on prior attainment and target support as required. As part of a school's moderation process, discussions take place at a class/department level and also with school Additional Support/Guidance teachers as required. To further support this process, a SEEMiS application to track Progress and Achievement in the Broad General Education, will be implemented this session. Plans are in place to support this development in Secondary schools this term (October) for S1 and S2 pupils. This tracking system is also available for Primary schools where support will be provided for those schools beginning to implement it during the Summer term.

## **8. Learner Engagement**

8.1 The engagement of learners is a key aspect of a school's culture and ethos. The Highland Council acknowledges that the Covid-19 situation will have impacted on learning experiences to varying degrees. An important part of our schools' return will be to ensure that young people play an active role in recovery planning. Schools, along with partner agencies continue to support young people who are struggling to engage with the return to school.

### **8.2 Pupil voice**

8.2.1 Lockdown surveys have been issued to all schools to support an evaluation of what worked well for pupils in Highland during the period of school closure. The purpose of the survey was to capture the positive experiences of learning at home during Covid-19 lockdown as well as areas for improvement. These surveys are currently being analysed and will support next steps and service/school planning. There will continue to be a focus on the pupil voice with children and young people to hear their views on how the future of learning and teaching in Highlands should look like.

8.2.2 A key part of engaging with learners in settings and schools is engaging their families in learning. During lockdown many settings and schools did this effectively using blogs, Google classrooms and social media. For our youngest children a bank of play ideas to promote learning at home were developed and offered as a "daily tip" for families on bumps2bairns.com. Uptake of these was high (over 45,000 views during the 4 months) and the bank now serves as a resource for family engagement cross-referenced with the curriculum.

8.2.3 GME ELC provisions are encouraged to take a 'Child Centred Approach' to plan for learner engagement as this promotes intrinsic language development experiences as part of the Highland Play Pedagogy CPD framework. Child-led, adult facilitated play allows for rich language learning opportunities whereby children are more likely to learn vocabulary that is functional to them and their interests.

8.3 For our young people and families, a section of the Highland Digital website was populated with curricular tasks within levels including GME and ASN. This was to support families in the initial stage of lockdown and also support school staff going forward initially with online learning. Expectations of levels of engagement were shared with all school staff, which included one-to-one support and live lessons as appropriate. This was facilitated through Google meets, hangouts and phone calls. Many children engaged with this, however, there were some issues of connectivity and internet access which the Highland Digital Team supported and will be

addressed going forward with the 'Connected Scotland' grant award. The details of how this will support learners is contained with another report at this Committee.

## **9. Digital Pedagogy**

- 9.1 Significant levels of digital training have been provided over the course of the Chromebook Project with training being aimed at all aspects of school staff. During the course of lockdown, this training programme was significantly increased to allow for an expedited upskilling of both teaching and support staff to meet the sudden demands of online learning/blended learning. Digital training support will continue through this session.
- 9.2 To keep ahead of technological developments, the Highland Schools Digital Hub, a Google Site offers staff, pupils and parents across Highland an opportunity to engage with digital skills and learning. It offers pre-recorded content on use of apps and technology to deliver inspiring and innovative teaching and learning. A number of staff across Highland, emerging as our new Digital Leaders (representing staff on the Digital Short Life Working Group) have dedicated their time to developing this resource along with the ICT iLearning Team. Over the course of lockdown there was extensive use of the site and it has become one of the central resources for digital learning in Highland.
- 9.3 The positive impact of digital technology is evident within schools across Highland and is highlighted in ['This is Highland'](#) - a Google Site created to demonstrate the fantastic examples of innovative practice across all areas of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 9.4 The Education Improvement Team and Curriculum Development Officers as part of the local authority phased delivery plan and recovery of schools' plan, are supporting the implementation of the recovery curriculum. The focus for this curriculum aligns with the Scottish Government priority on health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy. Guidance is shared weekly in the Head Teacher briefings and on the School Hub SharePoint site.
- 9.5 Schools are encouraged to make effective use of Google Meet as a platform to not only deliver 'live' teaching, but perhaps more importantly for providing a vehicle through which teacher-pupil engagement can take place both in terms of coursework and pastoral support. Learning tasks may be explained, set and submitted via Google Classroom 'assignments' and teacher input may be best utilised through timetabled Google Meet sessions (individually or in small groups) to discuss the learning.
- 9.6 **Highland Virtual Academy**  
The Highland Virtual Academy delivers high-quality, engaging learning and teaching delivered by *real* teachers in *real* time through active and collaborative experiences. It aims to provide equity of educational opportunities across Highland schools to ensure that all learners can access a wider, enriched curriculum which enables them to progress and succeed. Through the use of digital technology, we equip and empower our young people. Currently the provision is in the Senior Phase and offers 15 courses across National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Building on this model, it is proposed that a Highland wide online resource is created to support learning from 5-18. Dedicated staff from primary and secondary will support learning in literacy, numeracy and interdisciplinary learning activities. The resource will support those pupils affected by Covid-19 where attendance in school



is not possible, for example where pupils are self-isolating or experiencing mental health issues.

## 9.7 **Supporting Learning in the event of a local lockdown (On-line Learning Support)**

9.7.1 Continuity of high quality teaching and learning is important during any period of blended learning. The 'Guidance for Supporting Learners in the event of a local lockdown or self-isolation' should be followed by schools (**Appendix 1**).

9.7.2 The ICT iLearning Team will support schools as part of the lockdown procedure. Agreed protocols, device access, connectivity, communication systems and Google Classrooms should be in place at school level, with a clear process for registration of pupils, as per national guidance. Consideration should be given as a priority to pupils who have additional support needs, have difficulty engaging with the school setting or learning in the home setting for a variety of reasons. All staff should have clear expectations of their role and responsibilities.

## 10. **Partnerships**

10.1 Collaboration and partnerships are a core part of our education delivery across all sectors and support The Highland Council aims - ambitious, sustainable and connected. During the period of lockdown, a number of partners including Highlife Highland, Eden Court, Developing the Young Workforce and Skills Development Scotland were supported with Highland Council G-Suite accounts to facilitate communication with schools and young people. Partners to The Highland Council also participated in training opportunities provided by the ICT iLearning team which was extremely well received. It opened up many new opportunities for engagement including delivering training to more rural communities. This support is still on-going and ensures that young people continue to be supported effectively in lifelong learning, development and skills.

10.2 Within a GME context, community partnerships at school, local and national level are working together to further enhance curriculum delivery and improve outcomes. Key partnerships where Storlann officers worked closely with Education officers to increase digital resources to support literacy recovery tools. The Gaelic team adapted projects and 'FC Sonas' for example offered a digital alternative which gained national reach with Gaelic and Gaelic medium communities. Partnerships that support Gaelic and GME are re-focusing their future support plans on the needs of our learners in the event of a period of further lockdown and a growing digital landscape.

### 10.3 **Northern Alliance**

10.3.1 Our partnership with the Northern Alliance enables colleagues to connect across a number of Authorities to network, support and share good practice. A number of workstreams have been identified with Highland representation including curriculum (Primary and Secondary), Leadership, digital approaches, equalities and DYW. The Highland Numeracy Development Officers are working with Northern Alliance colleagues on numeracy resources and training.

10.3.2 Our Highland Numeracy Progression Framework has been central to professional learning events organised across the Northern Alliance. The Highland Council have also received a request to share our recently produced lockdown surveys with our

Northern Alliance partners to support them with their self-evaluation processes and gathering pupil views.

- 10.3.3 The Northern Alliance specific development themes around curriculum for this year include-
- curriculum/subject specific networks and professional development for key curricular areas;
  - curriculum rationales for the BGE and Senior Phase which reflect the uniqueness of each school community;
  - approaches to skills for learning, life and work, including a focus on DYW; and
  - new and innovative approaches to curriculum delivery and development (with a specific focus on digital delivery).

- 10.3.4 The Northern Alliance and Education Scotland have collaborated to create a menu of resources to support Northern Alliance colleagues in achieving equity, raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap for our young people. The Promoting Equity event takes place across the week (28 Sept.- 2 Oct). It has been shared with our school colleagues as it supports our key principles for Highland pupils returning to school. Education Officers will also be accessing these sessions to support our improvement priorities.

<https://sites.google.com/as.glow.scot/promotingequityweek/home>

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning

Date: 21 September 2020

Author: Nicky Grant

Appendices:  
1.Supporting Learning in a localised lockdown.



## **Guidance for Supporting Learners in the event of a local lockdown or self- isolation**

### **Introduction**

All children and young people who have been identified by the Test and Protect (T&P) Team as having been in close contact with a confirmed case are required to self-isolate for 14 days. Clearly this has the potential to impact negatively on both their academic progress and their own wellbeing.

An integrated approach should be taken and where appropriate, School Leaders can contact their link psychologist for further advice and support. If the young person is Care Experienced or if a child or young person at home is known to have an allocated worker in social work services, contact should be made directly with the worker to advise and family support needs can be considered through the allocated worker. The GIRFEC pathway should be used as a guide when planning particular support for these children during their absence and the named person should draw upon the 'team around the child' as required. More regular contact from an identified key adult would help ensure that their wellbeing needs are being met.

Head Teachers have the overall responsibility of ensuring that the children and young people receive an appropriate and progressive curriculum that has been planned to suit the needs of the individuals.

### **Child Protection**

If you are concerned a child or young person may be at risk of harm, the record and report system should be used immediately. For advice and contact numbers please use the Highland Council Child Protection website [HCPC](#)

### **Free Meals Entitlement**

Please liaise with your local Area Manager if a child / class is self-isolating and FSM support is required.

### **Digital Devices & Connectivity**

Please use the checklist below to ensure that no child is digitally excluded.

### **Communication with parents / carers**

Please consider using the templates at the end of this guidance as part of an individual or whole school communication (as appropriate).

## A Checklist for Schools in the event of a local lockdown:

- 1) Identified Digital Leader in the school or member of the Senior Management should contact one of the ICT in Learning Team (ICT iLearning) as part of the lockdown procedure.
- 2) The flowchart below should be used to check that agreed protocols, device access, connectivity, communication systems and Google Classrooms are in place. There should also be a clear process for registration of pupils, as per government expectations.
- 3) Consideration should be given as a priority to pupils who have additional support needs, have difficulty engaging with the school setting or learning in the home setting for a variety of reasons. All staff should have clear expectations of their role and responsibilities, as per the flowchart below:
- 4) If P1 - P5 devices have not been distributed, then this process can be supported with immediate effect by the ICT iLearning Team and the FM Team (by arrangement). Any pupil without a Chromebook from P6 - S6 should also be identified & the IC TiLearning Team immediately informed.
- 5) Any pupil who has connectivity issues should be identified, as a MyFi device can be issued from HQ Inverness, processed and posted to the family home.
- 6) Staff, Pupils and Parents should be directed to the [Highland Schools Digital Hub](#) for wellbeing, digital learning and skills support.

### Digital Support in Event of a Local Lockdown

Upon confirmation of Lockdown, ICTiL arranges meeting with SMT to discuss digital support plan for period of lockdown

Arrangements for half day digital training awareness raising meeting is arranged at earliest convenience with key agenda:

- Agreed platform for all communication with pupils, parents and staff
- Agreed expectation around use of Video Conferencing-Google Meet for all pupil related activity
- Agreed expectations around frequency of pupil-teacher engagement
- Agreed templated communication with parents around sharing digital strategy
- Clear signposting around available digital support including:
  - Agreed days and times for twice weekly 'Digital Drop-In' for staff and parents
  - Immediate access to a pre-filled Google Site template (which is to be personalised by school) complete with bank of resources to support digital learning which can also be shared immediately with pupils, parents and staff
  - Access to pre-prepared Google Form to be used for pupils and parents to request digital support from ICTiL

School to ensure digital equity is in place with ALL available Chromebook devices deployed to pupils on a 'needs' basis, including P1-5 allocation bank, as soon as possible.

Where any family, pupil or staff connectivity issues are identified, these are highlighted to ICTiL who will explore providing connectivity

School to consider and agree how best to utilise staff during any lockdown period including:

- Use of PSAs to support ASN pupils via Google Meet/Google Classroom
- Use of ASNT/CCR staff to support classes or individuals as well as to support teacher planning and communication with parents
- Role of SMT-key defined and sign posted remits for supporting pupils, parents and staff

**Scheduled support for staff during term time:** The Digital Drop - Every Monday and Thursday from 4pm till 4.45pm, a member of the ICT iLearning Team (previously known as the Digital Development Team) are available to support with any digital topic or question. Google Meet is used for this purpose and can be accessed at <https://meet.google.com/urm-kxyh-ztz> by using a Highland Council G-Suite email address.

Specific slots can be scheduled at the request of the school or Associated Schools Group.

## **Digital Platforms and Support for online learning:**

### **Digital Tools for Learning**

It is expected that all Highland Schools will primarily use the tools of **G-Suite for Education** for delivery of digital learning. Communication tools e.g. Class DoJo and Seesaw are apps that some schools in Highland utilised for communication with parents and learning during lockdown. It is expected that all schools will continue to use agreed platforms for communication with parents and the school community, but will move to G-Suite for learning and teaching purposes. This may not apply to Early Learning and Childcare, although the same platforms can be utilised. This is particularly important from a security point of view as this platform is not only GDPR compliant but also 'locked down' to only staff and pupils who have a Highland provided Google account. Other platforms may appear to offer a more 'instant' communication channel, however they are not at the required security level for most communication between school and home.

Within Highland Schools, there is an expectation that schools strive towards finding a balance at all times, between digital learning and 'off-line' learning. This applies both in the event of any lockdown or during 'normal' school where pupils are physically in the building. Digital tools should only be used where there is clear benefit to the use e.g. increased engagement, improved teacher-pupil interaction etc...and should not be used merely for the sake of using.

### **General Advice for supporting on-line learning**

- Let learners and their parent/carers know when you or a member of staff will be available
- Share activities for the day/week in a post / announcement using Google Classroom
- Any instructions need to be clear and specific for remote learning and try to keep to a similar format for all tasks so that students are clear on expectations.

### **Flexibility of Curriculum Delivery**

During a period of lockdown, schools should have a clear expectation of what amount of time pupils and staff should spend engaging in 'face to face' interaction via video conferencing so that pupils have opportunities to discuss and engage in meaningful learning/pastoral dialogue. There should be an understanding that technical issues such as poor broadband and connectivity and lack of staff/pupil self-confidence in engaging in this way from technical point of view and at times.

Digital Learning may at times be set in a way that allows pupils to complete learning at their own pace and at times where this may suit their circumstance and again, an allowance and understanding must be put in place around increased flexibility as to when blended/digital learning takes place e.g. it may be easier for a pupil to complete a piece of work posted onto Google Classroom in the evening if access to a suitable device is not possible during normal school hours of 9-3. Similarly, teaching staff may have to balance their own home situation if such a lockdown period involves their own family members also being at home.

### **Advice for Face to Face Teaching**

Schools should consider making effective use of Google Meet as a platform to not only deliver 'live' teaching, but perhaps more importantly for providing a vehicle through which teacher-pupil engagement can take place both in terms of academics and pastoral support. Learning tasks may be explained, set and submitted via Google Classroom 'assignments' and teacher input may be best utilised through timetabled Google Meet sessions (individually or in small groups) to discuss the learning. The 'traditional' model of didactic delivery (i.e. teacher talking to pupils for long

periods of time, 'telling' the pupils what to do) does not always lend itself to 'blended learning' and the previously outlined approach may be a more effective way to deliver learning. Deploying this approach can often be viewed as a teacher not teaching as the pupils may not appear to be having 'live' lessons as frequently as they would in school, but if applied correctly, this approach can be highly effective.

### **Digital Skills & Learning Online Resources**

To keep ahead of technological developments, the [Highland Schools Digital Hub](#), a Google Site offers staff, pupils and parents across Highland and opportunity to engage with digital skills & learning. It offers pre-recorded content on use of apps and technology to deliver inspiring and innovative teaching & learning.

## Appendix 1

### **Letter in case of Self-Isolating Pupil / Class**

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you know, your child is required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days. We appreciate that this will be a challenging time for both your child and the family and we wish to provide you with as much support as we can.

It is important that we make contact with you on a regular basis to ensure that we provide appropriate learning that your child can complete at home. Equally as important is the wellbeing of both your child and the family.

We understand that going into isolation can create many challenges including emotional and financial ones so we have included a number of contacts below that we would encourage you to use if required.

### **Home Learning**

Following on from our previous contact, there are a number of learning activities to be found on our [Highland Schools Digital Hub](#).

**SCHOOL TO INSERT info about any learning set on Google Classroom / standalone work packs etc to ensure continuity of learning**

Please do not hesitate to contact [**NAME and EMAIL ADDRESS**] for any further support. We will be in touch with you again during the isolation period.

We very much hope that your child remains well throughout this isolation period and we look forward to welcoming them back to school very soon.

Useful Websites:

[Digital Schools Hub – Support for Skills & Learning](#)  
[Highland Council Back to School Guidance & FAQ](#)