



## The rationale behind our remote learning provision

During the pandemic, all schools have been required to significantly extend their curriculum offer to include a robust and comprehensive remote learning alongside their existing face to face provision. When planning the methods they choose to deliver their offer, all schools have needed to take account of their individual circumstances in order to develop an appropriate curriculum offer for their setting.

Expectations from parents vary widely and there is a risk that opinions may be guided by media reports and attention grabbing headlines rather than research based evidence and an understanding of an individual school's situation.

This annex to our remote learning contingency plan has been produced as part of our regular curriculum review process and to increase understanding of the complex balance of factors that have been considered in developing our remote learning offer.

Ofsted identify some widely held myths about remote education. Four of the most common are:

- **Myth 1** - remote education is fundamentally different to other forms of teaching/learning
- **Myth 2** - remote education is a different curriculum/offer to the content that would be delivered normally
- **Myth 3** - the best forms of remote education are digital
- **Myth 4** - the best way to deliver remote education is through live lessons

Some of the key factors that must be considered by each individual school when planning their remote learning offer are:

- **Numbers of pupils requiring places in school**
  - In Stockport, this ranges from less than 20% to more than 90% in some special schools.
- **Staffing**
  - Staff numbers, availability (in and out of school), experience and strengths.
- **Availability of technology**
  - This varies widely across the country; some schools have state of the art technology, others have the basic requirements necessary to deliver the curriculum effectively in 'normal' (ie non-Covid19) times.
- **Availability of space**

- Some schools are needing to use all their available space for the pupils who are in school, others have lots of spare classrooms that are not needed at this time.
- **Realistic Workload**
  - All schools are facing significant additional workload as remote learning needs to be planned from scratch to fit alongside the face-to-face taught curriculum. The additional time this takes is immense.
- **Finance**
  - The Government/DfE have supported schools by providing access to high quality pre-recorded content (eg Oak Academy), providing some laptops (numbers vary widely and depend on levels of deprivation), providing catch-up funding to schools to support schools in identifying gaps to help pupils who have fallen behind in their learning (also varies, depending on pupil numbers and levels of deprivation). The Government directs that all schools must use high quality learning platforms (such as Google Classroom/ClassDojo) to deliver their offer. Stockport LA also recommend Google Classroom and have ensured that training and support for this platform is available to all schools.
  - All other additional costs must come from the schools' existing budget (eg additional cleaning products and staff, supply staff where teachers need to isolate, additional resources, higher cost of heating to offset the need to ventilate classrooms etc). Schools are still expected to balance their budgets, despite the significant additional outlay.
- **Safeguarding factors**
  - Some approaches require additional safeguarding measures to be followed, in order to ensure pupils and staff are protected.
- **Current educational thinking**
  - Each method of delivery has its benefits and limitations. It is up to schools to understand these, examine them objectively and apply them to their individual situations, within the constraints of what is possible for each setting. There is no 'gold standard' of method of delivery, but each school must strive to deliver what they believe is the best offer they can and to keep this under regular review, adapting and improving it as new evidence emerges.

### **The High Lane Remote Offer**

Careful consideration has been given to our own individual circumstances to choose the most appropriate effective methods of curriculum delivery. A summary of some of the factors as they relate to our school is explained below.

#### **Pupil numbers**

At High Lane, we currently have over 45% of our pupils in school each day.

#### **Staffing**

Pupils and staff in school must be in small, separated 'bubbles'. Therefore, all available members of staff must be in school for their allocated working hours. Each class has an allocated teacher who plans and co-ordinates in-school and remote learning. Teaching assistants are allocated to a class on a part-time or full-time basis (depending on numbers and individual needs within the

class). They cover the groups for short or extended periods to enable the teacher to feedback on submitted work from remote learners, prepare pre-recorded content, plan work or make phone calls to parents/pupils to support with particular issues.

## **Technology**

Our technology is sufficient for our needs in usual times, but the pandemic has thrown up many challenges. For example, the Internet connection is unreliable, particularly when there is large local demand. This acts as a barrier to reliable live streaming into or out of classrooms. We do not have special cameras or stands. We do not have microphones or bespoke sound systems that would enable high quality live recordings to take place.

## **Space**

All classrooms in school are being used for face to face teaching. No rooms are available for teachers to base themselves and live stream sessions into the classroom and children's homes at the same time.

## **Workload**

All staff in school have risen to meet the workload challenges they face in a manner that can only be described as heroic. They are working very long hours (way beyond their contracted or paid hours). They have very little capacity to further extend this by adding live streaming of lessons into the mix. In order to do this, other elements of our provision would need to be reduced.

## **Finance**

We are a small school, in one of the lowest funded local authorities in the country and have very low levels of deprivation. As such, funding is very tight and has been considerably stretched by the additional costs of the pandemic.

## **Safeguarding factors**

Stockport LA do not currently advise the delivery of live lessons for primary aged pupils unless suitable protective measures are implemented.

Where schools choose to deliver live lessons, a range of strict safeguarding measures must be considered. These range from advising that pupils' cameras are switched off to muting microphones, ensuring an additional member of staff is present in the live lesson at all times, providing staff to monitor the feed while the teacher is teaching and ensuring that all parents take full responsibility for taking appropriate safeguarding measures at home. If live lessons are streamed from the classroom, the school must ensure that pupils in the room are either not visible/audible or that permissions have been granted from parents and it is appropriate for them to be filmed.

Whilst all of these precautions are possible, they may significantly impact on the quality of the learning experience (eg muting microphones and turning off cameras limit the interaction pupils can have). They also place high demands on resources and staffing that must be measured against the value of other methods.

## **Our current curriculum offer includes:**

Provision of high quality full or part time education in school for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. This is carefully planned so that children experience the full breadth of the curriculum alongside targeted wellbeing activities. It includes face-to-face lessons, pre-recorded content, lesson presentations, paper based and practical activities, independent learning, feedback on submitted work and wellbeing support.

A timetable of at least 4 hours (3 in KS1) of high quality remote provision. This is also carefully planned so that children experience the full breadth of the curriculum alongside targeted wellbeing activities. It includes pre-recorded content, lesson presentations, online activities, paper based and practical activities, independent learning, feedback on submitted work and wellbeing support for pupils and their parents, through online messaging and phone calls.

**NB - Wherever possible, the in-school and remote offer overlap and are co-ordinated to address the same learning objectives and content.**

Feedback from the majority of parents and pupils to this approach and to the adaptations we have made this year has been overwhelmingly positive. We continue to work with families to further improve the provision and tailor support for individuals and specific groups of learners, wherever time, resources and technology allow.

### **F.A.Qs**

#### **1. Why are you not offering 'live' remote lessons?**

Our primary reason for this decision is that we strongly believe that, to be successful, live lessons must be:

- Interactive (ideally pupils should be able to see and speak with each other and their teacher).
- Delivered by the teacher and monitored by at least one other teaching professional (to allow for pupils' questions to be responded to and behaviour to be monitored).
- Accessible to all pupils (this is difficult in families with limited devices, limited Internet access or more than one child).
- Attended consistently by all pupils who are remote learning (missing out on one lesson or more can mean that children cannot understand the new content that is being taught).
- Focus must be maintained throughout the lesson (this is very difficult even for older secondary aged children).
- Completely safe (all safeguarding needs must be met).
- Delivered at the right level for the learners (work that is too easy or too hard will disengage children and/or increase anxiety).
- Use high quality, reliable technology (breaks in transmission, poor sound or video quality all lead to reduced learning).
- Manageable for staff when undertaken alongside all other requirements.

**If these pre-requisites are not met, this method of delivery risks falling short.**

**At High Lane, it is not currently possible for us to meet all or even most of these requirements without significantly diminishing other elements of our provision that provide essential valuable input for our learners.**

**In place of live lessons, we use pre-prepared and/or pre-recorded content (either DfE recommended lessons or those that are uploaded by the teacher). These are proven to have many educational benefits. They can be easily reviewed and children can ask for individualised help and support from their teacher using the message function on Google Classroom or through ClassDojo.**

**On balance, in our current circumstances, live lessons would not produce a better curriculum – just a differently delivered, and possibly less effective, one.**

**2. Will the school consider some limited use of live interaction in the future and develop additional provision to support home learning?**

We will consider this and are already researching new systems to support delivery for some live sessions, such as wellbeing check-ins. Where solutions can be found for some of the challenges above, we will strive to do so, but we will not deliver sub-standard live lessons just because they are in-vogue or because of pressure from others to provide them. As school leaders and professionals, we have very carefully considered how to make best use of the knowledge, skills, time, resources and technology that is available to us and every member of staff has gone well beyond what should realistically be expected of them in order to respond to the range of diverse needs of our pupils and our families at this time. We will constantly strive to make the best resources available to improve the home school provision and evaluate and change the approaches as appropriate.