An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Updated Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: Supporting pupils at risk of educational disadvantage

For post-primary schools

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

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Introduction

This guidance from the Department of Education (DE) advises on how schools and teachers can support continuity in the learning of students at risk of educational disadvantage during the school closures associated with Covid-19[1].

Students in a range of education settings may be at risk of educational disadvantage. Contexts which can give rise to this risk include socio-economic disadvantage, being a Traveller or a member of the Roma and migrant communities, and accommodation arrangements, including homelessness or residing in a direct provision setting. This guidance also takes account of the fact that schools and other education settings have various resources and supports available to them to assist them in meeting the needs of students at risk of educational disadvantage. These range from student support teams and in-school management teams to the services of the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) and other agencies. Further, schools in the DEIS programme have additional resources to assist them in supporting such learners.

The guidance builds on the key messages in a range of guidance materials which were issued to schools and centres for education as they were published (Appendix 1) and are available at gov.ie. Specific guidance has been published by the Department to support schools in the context of remote teaching and learning in a Covid-19 context.

- *Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context;* https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/#additional-guidelines-and-procedures *(*Department of Education, December 2020)

This has been complemented by the Department of Education Circular Letter 0074/2020 in relation to the establishment of Digital Communication, Teaching and Learning Platforms.

The need for students at risk of disadvantage to have regular, ongoing schooling is particularly important. While all students need to be supported to maintain their engagement in learning, learners at risk of educational disadvantage need even more support at this time. Since March 2020 many schools have introduced a range of strategies and measures to ensure that the needs of these students are catered for, including students who have limited access to technology or whose parents are not in a position to support their learning. Examples of those strategies are included in this guidance note. The Department thanks the schools and teachers involved for sharing

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[1] The document will be updated as necessary to take account of future circumstances regarding school closures which may arise.

their practice. The Department also acknowledges the advice provided by a broad range of stakeholders in the preparation of the guidance.

Key themes of this guidance

- Teachers and school leaders working to support students at risk of educational disadvantage

- Features of provision for remote teaching and learning

- The role of teachers in engaging with students in learning

- Keeping in touch with parents and guardians

- Staying safe in the distance learning environment

- Resources for teachers

Teachers and school leaders working to support students at risk of educational disadvantage

During school closures as a result of public health measures, schools and teachers have to consider teaching and learning from a different perspective. Students' routines and support mechanisms have been impacted significantly and, in some instances, home circumstances may be challenging in terms of continuity in the students' learning. To the extent that is possible, schools should take account of these circumstances in planning programmes of work.

Members of the school community play a key role in ensuring that there is continuity of learning for all learners, but most especially for learners at risk of educational disadvantage:

- Boards of managements should work to ensure that the school provides for continuity of schooling for all students and that school leaders have taken the steps necessary to identify students who are at risk of not progressing their education

- Boards should also support their school leadership teams in working to engage these students by using the extent of the school's resources and by putting in place and monitoring appropriate strategies and interventions

- The school leadership team, comprising the principal and those in management or coordination roles should:

    - Maintain oversight of the continuity of learning for all students by engaging regularly with teachers

o   Ensure that the school's resources are targeted at those most in need through existing care and management structures

o   Promote a positive solution-oriented approach that will support all students to achieve, to learn and to progress in their education

o   Use all available information to work towards minimizing any further educational inequality among those at risk of educational disadvantage

o   Use information relating to students' levels of engagement from no engagement, to partial and full engagement to inform the identification and planning of strategies to re-engage students.

Guidance counsellors have a key role to play in supporting students. This support is particularly important at times when students become disengaged or demotivated. As a means of enhancing continuity of learning, particularly for learners who are significantly at risk of educational disadvantage, guidance counsellors could undertake the following supportive actions.

- Clarify student perceptions of any previous difficulties in the remote learning environment, and identify any potential obstacles and barriers to learning in this context
- Engage in motivational strategies by reminding students about previous achievements, discuss different learning strategies that have been successful and what might work in the current context
- Provide students with goal setting and decision making techniques to support independent learning
- Focus on future plans, the value of learning and probable outcomes.[2]

Schools should use all available supports both in-school and community-based, to engage with students.

Key amongst these are those supports provided by Tusla Education Support Services (TESS). These comprise supports provided under the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme and the School Completion Programme (SCP) (in schools where they exist); and also the statutory service of Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs). EWO's are in place nationwide and play a pivotal role in engaging with schools in supporting the educational welfare of students.

In some instances, students may not respond to the school's efforts to engage with them. In these cases, schools should identify and agree who within the school staff is best placed to make contact with the parents, with a view, in turn, to making contact with

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[2] For more information, please see Continuity of Guidance Counselling - Guidelines for Schools Providing Online Support for Students available on the DE website.

the student. Where a school operates the "Check and Connect" programme the student's mentor should seek to make contact. Once contact has been established, its frequency will depend on the identified needs of the students concerned; in some cases, for example, it will be daily. However, contact should be supportive in nature and affirming of students' efforts.

In most instances, schools will successfully provide for continuity of learning for their students, including those at risk of educational disadvantage. However, a small number of schools may face particular challenges in engaging with some of these students. In these circumstances, and where a school has exhausted all means of making contact with the student, the school should engage with TESS Educational Welfare Officers who will assist in establishing contact with the student.

In the coming weeks, TESS staff will engage in a process of checking in with all school principals across the DEIS and non DEIS settings. Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs), School Completion Programme (SCP) Coordinators and Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) officers will also make direct contact with all open cases, target students and parents respectively.

The three TESS strands will work collaboratively with schools, families and other relevant services to support children experiencing educational disadvantage.

EWOs will continue to maintain ongoing contact with schools in relation to all students on their caseloads, in both DEIS and non-DEIS schools, employing a welfare-oriented approach, working collaboratively with schools and other agencies in meeting the needs of the children and the young people concerned. EWOs, in addition to providing support to all students/families in open cases, will engage with all school principals in their assigned areas on an ongoing basis to promote connectedness to school and will also liaise with all accommodation Centres (direct provision) for children, refuges for families experiencing domestic violence and homeless hubs to ensure students are linked with their schools.

HSCL coordinators will work with school principals to identify those families and students most in need of support and assist in the provision of school meals, learning resources and materials and maintain a supportive link between the school and those families. Similarly, SCP will continue to work closely with school principals and HSCL coordinators to assist in the provision of supports to families. They will also continue to provide one to one support to students both attending school and out of school who are on their target lists of vulnerable students. SCP staff are available to engage with students where principals have identified that intervention is required to maintain the students' participation in education.

TESS staff (EWO, HSCL and or SCP) will assist with signposting families to other services where school principals deem additional supports are deemed necessary

Features of provision for remote teaching and learning

The Department of Education's guidance[3] on remote teaching and learning requires post-primary schools to have:

- **Regular engagement with students:** It is important that teachers engage with their students as regularly as possible.
- **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences:** Teacher-student engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the students.
- **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities:** Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way.
- **Learning tasks:** The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the student, including students with special educational needs SEN, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- **Two-way feedback between home and school:** Schools should ensure that two-way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and their students is encouraged and supported. Schools should provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all students to regularly share samples of their work with the teacher(s) throughout each week. Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.

Schools and teachers should use their professional autonomy and discretion to ensure that the highest quality teaching and learning experiences are provided. This may mean that students are given opportunities to learn using a blend of online and offline activities.

The provision of remote teaching will support students' learning, development and their overall sense of wellbeing. During the period of school closures in 2020, schools used the following strategies to engage with students at risk of educational disadvantage and their parents or guardians:

- Frequent contact between the school and the student; in some instances, particularly for students following the Leaving Certificate Applied[4] (LCA) programme, this should be daily
- Use existing student support and care structures to identify the barriers for those students who are most at risk of disengagement

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[3] Department of Education (2020). Circular Letter 0074/2020 Communication, Teaching and Learning Platforms: Available from https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0074_2020.pdf
[4] Please refer to Appendix 1 for links to resources to assist teachers of LCA programmes.

- Engage with parents and students and let them know how to contact key members of the staff
- Identify an adult in the school community, who has or had in the past, a positive working relationship with students who are most at risk of educational disadvantage and/or disengagement from school, in order to make contact
- Reassure students that any contact from them will be received positively and support will be offered
- Praise students frequently for engaging with the school and continue any rewards system that is in place
- Prioritise students based on a continuum of support model where supports are categorised as available **for all**, **for some** and **for a few**.

Additionally, schools in the DEIS programme should seek to:

- Draw on the existing relationships that the HSCL coordinators and School Completion Programme (SCP) personnel have established with students and families
- Continue SCP interventions, including mentoring for students, where possible and practicable, or adjust interventions that students availed of prior to school closures
- Engage with TESS personnel to continue to proactively engage with all students at risk and their families.

Here are some practical measures that schools put in place previously during school closures to assist students at risk of educational disadvantage:

> - *Provide for remote teaching and learning on a daily basis*
> - *Ensure that students with Special Education needs engage with their SET regularly*
> - *Post information packs to students who are experiencing difficulties connecting remotely*
> - *Put out a call at local level to community services for extra digital devices that may no longer be in use to be redistributed*
> - *Loan school digital devices to students*
> - *With parental/guardians' permission, use Apps which facilitate pupils to access remote teaching or videoed lessons on mobile phones and other digital devices*
> - *Provide phones to identified students who have no means of communication*
> - *Provide a dedicated help line which students can use and a guarantee of receiving a return call from the school*
> - *Engage with students to establish what is working well for them*
> - *Set up a mentoring system where both staff and students can act as mentors to support, encourage and motivate students*
> - *Send a communication to the parents and guardians of the student by post, inviting them to encourage their child to check in with the school*
> - *Link with local community and youth groups to support some students in the community*

> ➤ *Where possible and practicable, provide students with tables and chairs to do schoolwork where needed.*

The role of teachers in engaging with students in learning

Most of the strategies outlined in this guidance are intended to be used by post-primary schools. Many may also be suitable for use in other settings where post-primary school-aged children are to be found, including Youth Encounter Project schools and schools attached to Special Care Units (SCUs) or to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Teachers at the different levels will take account of their students' ages and abilities in devising programmes of learning. Teachers play a pivotal role in keeping students connected to school. Teachers should encourage their students to follow the relevant learning based on the curricular programme that the students are pursuing. Teachers should attempt to achieve a balance in the nature of work assigned to students to facilitate creativity and independent research while also keeping students on task. Where appropriate, teachers should encourage students to maintain a focus on the development of their literacy and numeracy skills as outlined later in this guidance.

Here are some strategies that teachers can use to support their students' learning:

- Adapt approaches to ensure that for those students who do not have digital access, their ability to participate in learning is not compromised
- Daily contact with those most at risk of educational disadvantage as this connection enhances the students' sense of wellbeing and is a key enabler of continuity of learning. Devise tasks so that all students can achieve some success
- Scaffold work and provide manageable components so as to maximise completion rates and not overwhelm students
- Tap into knowledge of individual students' interests to devise student-centred learning tasks accordingly
- Provide students with a choice of activities and invite them to present their work in a flexible manner
- Adopt a flexible approach when designing activities, so that learning can take place using the students' own physical surroundings
- Invite the students to submit work on a completely open task which the student identifies for him/herself.

> *In addition to the strategies listed above, here are some practical ways that teachers have used to engage with students:*
>
> ➤ *Post work and materials to students who are not able to engage digitally*

> ➤ *Upload videos/audio of lessons and learning materials on the school website, so students can access these materials at a time that is best suited to them. Devise simple recipes with everyday ingredients and post these on the school website with a video demonstration*
> ➤ *Upload a video demonstration on the school website of physical exercise routines that students could do at home.*
> ➤ *Set up systems so that groups of learners can work together, either by phone or internet.*

Focusing on students' literacy and numeracy skills

In ensuring continuity of learning for students at risk of educational disadvantage, it is important that schools continue to provide opportunities for those students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In that regard, schools can continue to avail of the services of support personnel in the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) as well as the support of psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). Contact details for these, and other organisations, are to be found in the appendices.

> *Here are some measures that schools have put in place to develop literacy skills:*
>
> ➤ *Arrange competitions for students to write a short story using a small set of random words*
> ➤ *Invite students to submit a book or film review and award a prize*
> ➤ *Offer loans of books from the school library*
> ➤ *Communicate to students about JCSP library activities that are ongoing*
> ➤ *Send supportive texts to parents at appropriate intervals to remind them to read with their child or encourage their child to read and send congratulatory texts when tasks were completed*
> ➤ *Encourage parents and guardians and students to join Libraries Ireland (see Appendix 2 for details)*
> ➤ *Connect students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) of the same home language group to work together on tasks*
> ➤ *Connect students with EAL of different languages to teach each other one new word a day in their home language*
> ➤ *Ask students with EAL to watch the news in their own language and provide a summary in English.*
>
> *Here are some measures that schools have put in place to develop numeracy skills:*
>
> ➤ *In subjects where numeracy plays a key role, teachers:*
>   o *Include questions that involve some element of problem solving in tasks or assignments*
>   o *Include questions that allow different approaches to addressing any problems posed and presenting their solutions*
>   o *Assign work that requires that students draw conclusions and explain their reasoning*

> ➤ *Post Numeracy Problems of the Week on the school's website for the various class groups and award prizes*
> ➤ *Use the school website to post a STEM challenge that students can undertake with everyday materials*
> ➤ *Send frequent texts to parents to remind them to encourage their child to engage with the numeracy resources on Scoilnet.*

Keeping in touch with parents and guardians

Schools should continue to engage effectively and continuously with parents and guardians as a means of supporting them to support their children. Schools are advised to ensure that:

- Effective systems are in place to identify parents and guardians most in need of support
- Communication from the school is frequent, daily where necessary, clear and written in accessible language
- Parents and guardians are provided with contact numbers or emails to assist them in contacting the school
- Efforts are made to link in with local community support agencies including Youth Services to assist with translation of communication with the parents and guardians of students with EAL needs
- Feedback is sought from parents and guardians regarding what is working well and suggestions for improvement
- Information of a general nature is updated on the school website

> *Here are some practical strategies that schools have implemented to ensure effective communications between the school and the parents and guardians of learners at risk of educational disadvantage:*
>
> ➤ *Use the normal systems of communication via school website, text, email, VSWare*
> ➤ *Print a dedicated parent and guardian newsletter to provide advice and an update on how the school is providing continuity of learning*
> ➤ *Place an article in a local community newspaper outlining how the school is supporting students and providing contact details encouraging parents and guardians to get in touch*
> ➤ *Be interviewed on local radio to reiterate support and to encourage parents and guardians to contact the school*
> ➤ *Develop a dedicated social media communication platform for parents and guardians*
> ➤ *Provide the link to the Covid-19 advice in different languages on the school website*
> ➤ *Reach out to parents and guardians to support parents and guardians with EAL in their understanding of any school communication.*

The role of the HSCL teacher in DEIS schools in linking with parents and guardians of students at risk of educational disadvantage is critical. The HSCL should ascertain how parents and guardians and their children are adjusting to remote learning. The importance of regular phone calls and contact by the HSCL cannot be overstated.

Schools should continue to use their existing programmes to support students' upcoming transitions into, within or from post-primary schools. Where schools have the services of the SCP, this should be availed of to support identified students who may require additional support. It is very important that communication is sent to parents, guardians and students to assure them that, as much support and information as possible in relation to the next stage of education will be made available to them. This will help reduce anxiety among students and parents and guardians.

Staying safe in the distance learning environment
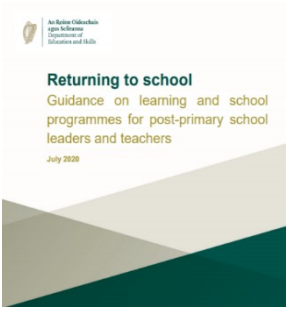
Staying safe in the distance learning environment is critically important for schools, teachers, parents and guardians, and students. For guidance on this issue, please refer to the Department's *Circular 0074/2020: Communication/Teaching & Learning Platform* which was published in November 2020. It provides advice on the safe and ethical use of the internet during distance learning and on keeping personal data safe when working from home. Schools should particularly ensure that their Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) informs and guides remote or distance learning activity and engagement in all its forms.
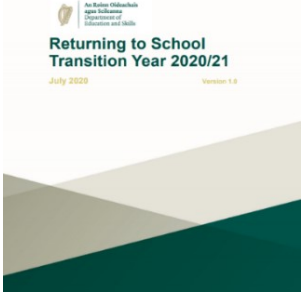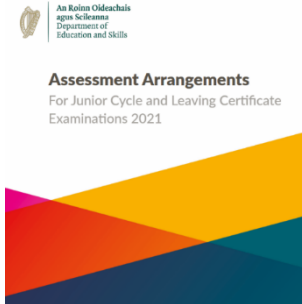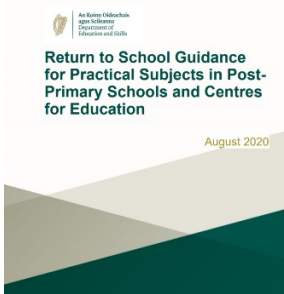
Resources

A list of useful resources is provided in the appendices to support the work of schools in continuing to engage with students at risk of educational disadvantage. These resources relate to teaching and learning, to promoting positive health and wellbeing, and transitions. The list is not exhaustive, so schools are encouraged to draw on as many additional sources of information as possible to address the needs of their students and particular context. Seeking solutions to the current challenges provides a significant opportunity for schools to access information from the websites of their patron bodies, the managerial bodies, and all relevant professional and teaching networks to learn from each other. It should be noted that the DE does not endorse any particular external tools or resources.
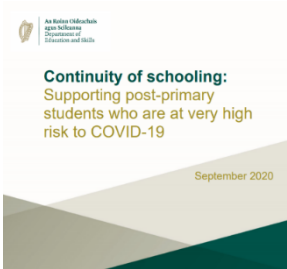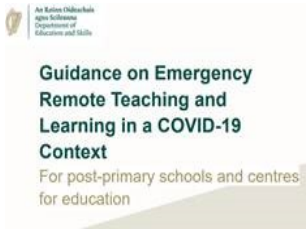
Appendix 1

Post-Primary guidance available at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/

	Returning to school: Guidance on learning and school programmes for post-primary school leaders and teachers July 2020	• This guidance was designed to support school leaders and teachers in preparing for the re-opening of post-primary schools in August/September, in mediating the curriculum during 2020/21, and in the preparation of students for the State examinations in June 2021. • The general curriculum guidance is based, for the most part, on the premise that schools and teachers are best placed to plan the mediation of the curriculum in the unusual circumstances that present themselves this year.

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Advice for management and teachers of LCA 2020/21 in Second-Level Schools and Centres for Education July 2020	**Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Advice for management and teachers of LCA 2020/21 in Second-Level Schools and Centres for Education** July 2020	• The LCA guidance builds on the Returning to School: Curriculum Guidance for post-primary school leaders and teachers and includes centres for education where LCA is also offered. • The guide sets out the impact of COVID 19 on both the LCA curriculum and assessment arrangements for both LCA year 1 and year 2.
Returning to School Transition Year 2020/21 July 2020	**Returning to school: Transition Year 2020/21** July 2020	• This guidance has been designed for school management, leaders, TY co-ordinators, subject teachers to support planning of a TY programmes in the context of impact of COVID-19 restriction. • It builds on the *Returning to School: Curriculum Guidance for post-primary school leaders and teachers*. In doing so, it provides clear guidance on the expectations of good planning for an effect TY programme should include and practical advice on accessing specific support and alternative to aspects of the TY programme.

	Assessment Arrangements for Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021 Updated December 2020	• This document sets out the adjusted assessment arrangements for post-primary students taking certificate examinations in the 2020/21 school year. These arrangements are designed to take account of the disrupted learning experienced by students during the 2019/20 school year and also takes account of possible interruptions to students' learning in the 2020/21 school year. • The adjustments have been arrived at through discussions between the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and key stakeholders.
	Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education August 2020	• The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in relation to subjects that involve using equipment in order to support the safe implementation of the practical aspects of those subjects. • This advice aligns with the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

	Continuity of schooling: Supporting post primary students who are at very high risk to COVID-19 September 2020	• This guidance is provided to support schools in making adapted education provision for students who cannot return to school because they are medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19. The guidance should be read in conjunction with Returning to School: Guidance on Learning and School Programmes for Post-Primary School Leaders and Teachers. • The purpose of this adapted education provision is to ensure that students who are medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 can maintain a meaningful connection with their class group and school in order to successfully continue their learning from home. Students in this category who engage with learning from home should be marked present on attendance records.

Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context For post-primary schools and centres for education	**Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching in a COVID-19 Context**	• 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 partial or full school closures are required cannot be predicted, it is possible that individual or groups of pupils and teachers may find that they are advised to self-isolate on a number of occasions throughout the school year. • It provides a number of scenarios and worked examples for continuity of schooling during periods of partial or full school closure.
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna Department of Education and Skills 27 August 2020	**Public Health Guidance - Letter to Schools** **27 August 2020**	• This letter, issued to school principals, outlines the information contained in Schools Pathway document for Covid-19, setting out the Public Health approach to managing isolated confirmed cases of Covid-19 within the school community, and also the principles that will underpin the management of outbreaks or potential outbreaks and the aligned testing strategy within an educational facility.

Appendix 2: School Resources

Information issued by DE on home tuition through distance learning for the duration of the pandemic can be accessed here.

National Council for Special Education resources

- The NCSE website outlines a wide range of resources suitable for children with special educational needs. The site has a new dedicated resource section to support home learning during this time that includes Online Resources for Teachers, Online Resources for Parents and Useful apps for home use. There are also links to many useful educational websites to direct parents and guardians and teachers towards further online supports.
- NCSE's network of advisors also remain available to schools via NCSE's online application form to provide support and advice by telephone and email to teachers of students with SEN. The form is available here.

Professional Development Service for Teachers resources

- The PDST provides a range of resources relating to provision for students at risk of educational disadvantage including resources for teachers of JSCP and LCA programmes. These can be accessed using the following links:
    - For JCSP resources, please see the JCSP and JCSP Libraries websites.
    - For LCA resources, please see the list available here through the Scoilnet website and also the LCA Teacher Handbook
- The PDST provides links to a number of post-primary EAL supports and resources which can be accessed here. PDST also suggest websites which can be used to provide support to students with EAL and can be accessed here.
- The PDST post-primary PE team has also produced videos and activities to support students in practising their fundamental movement skills at home in its Beyond the Classroom resource.
- The PDST Maths team is uploading Daily Maths resource banks for post-primary students. A different mathematics topic is covered each day during the school closure period.

Distance learning resources

- The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) website page on distance learning provides support for teachers to engage with learners remotely. Supports include an online teaching course, information about platforms, and distance learning supports for Health and Wellbeing.

- The Scoilnet website identifies resources for distance learning, home access and provides links to the Department's support services that are relevant to the school closures.
- The Webwise website offers a range of resources to help teachers integrate internet safety into teaching and learning. It also provides advice for parents, guardians and children.
- NEPS has provided resources on literacy, transition planning etc, in the Guidelines, Tips and Handouts for Parents and Teacher section of its Resources and Publications webpage.
- The JCSP Demonstration Library Project website has links to a myriad of resources for schools and students categorised by topic and subject area.

State Examinations Commission resources

- The State Examinations Commission provides resources for students preparing for state examinations. These include materials such as previous examination papers, marking schemes and important contact information.

Online reading resources

- Students in the Republic of Ireland have open and free home access to a collection of all eBooks from World Book Online at Scoilnet - World Book.
- Britannica is offering free access to its Science and Humanities LaunchPacks to all Scoilnet users during the school closure period.
- Children's Books Ireland provides access to reading materials, guides and lists.
- Libraries Ireland, the national library system, is providing free online access to eBooks, audiobooks, online magazines and newspapers
- Amazon is providing free access to books and audio stories available.

Publishers' resources

- Folens is offering free access to all of its eBooks and resources.
- CJ Fallon is offering free access to all of its online textbooks.
- The Educational Company of Ireland is offering free access to all of its eBooks and digital resources.

General online resources

- World news from the BBC in many languages is a useful resource for students with EAL.
- National Geographic Kids has a wide range of videos, games and quizzes that relate to History, Geography and Science.
- This Irish visual arts website I Am An Artist has short videos, slideshows, lessons and projects for schools.

Guidance-related learning websites

- The DE Continuity of Guidance Counselling Guidelines offer support and advice to schools as they consider how to provide guidance counselling online. Additional supporting documents and training resources are also available on the National Centre for Guidance in Education website. The full suite of supports can be accessed at on the DE website here.
- Education, training and career information is available on the Qualifax website.
- Education, training and career information, including information on the REACH+ programme is available on the Careers Portal website.
- The CAO has opened a dedicated page with FAQ to support applicants. It also offers an email service for any query which can be accessed here.
- The Access College website provides information on equity of access to higher education and information on DARE and HEAR applications.
- The Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) website provides information on making grant applications.

Individual colleges and Higher Education Institutions are providing applicants with online support and advice including helplines and one-to-one support. See individual websites for more information.

Appendix 3: Promoting positive health and wellbeing

- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides valuable advice for schools and families on topics such as wellbeing, distance learning and provision for student routine and structure.
- Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) is the school support service under Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. Important information is available for schools, parents and guardians and young people.
- The HSE webpage YourMentalHealth website provides information on all mental health supports and services that are available nationally and locally provided by the HSE and its funded partners.
- The HSE webpage Mental Health Supports and Services during COVID-19 gives details of the services providers that offer online and phone mental health supports and services during the current crisis. It lists a range of services and resources that are available to help young people cope and manage themselves in the current crisis. Contacts for Jigsaw; BeLong To; Reach Out; Spunout; Barnardos, Childline etc. are listed. The webpage also give details of mobile apps that may be used to manage anxiety.
- Local authorities (councils) have established a Community Response Forum to coordinate Covid-19 related community supports. As part of this, each local authority has now established a helpline listed at www.gov.ie - Contact Details for Local Authorities that vulnerable people can phone if they are looking for basic services such as delivery of food or meals, or transport for essential trips.
- Teachers' attention is directed to the Department's Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme. Details are available at the following link: Employee Assistance and Wellbeing programme