

Letter to Parents/Carers

Email: generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk

Date: 26 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Remote Learning

Somerset School leaders are working tirelessly to ensure that learning continues for young people in Somerset during the current lockdown, and with increasingly high numbers of keyworker children in many schools.

Understandably, some parents and carers will find home learning challenging and it is inevitable that comparisons will be made between schools and their offers of remote learning and support. Please be aware that the remote learning offer from your school will vary depending on staffing capacity and the systems in place to deliver lessons.

The Government has not specified a standard for remote learning as every school's context is unique but guidance and minimum requirements have been published that detail the hours and certain expectations. The expected remote learning time for each key stage is as follows:

- *Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children*
- *Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day*
- *Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day*

Schools have been asked to *identify a named senior leader with overall responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education*, and all schools should *publish information for pupils, parents and carers about their remote education provision on their website by 25 January 2021*.

There is **no** expectation that 'live' lessons should be delivered for many reasons including safeguarding, timetabling and potential issues with internet access at home. However, recorded lessons may be provided, and some 'live' engagement is more likely with older students, with many schools offering 'story-time' and tutoring or assemblies regularly.

Younger children in Key Stage 1 or Reception often require high levels of parental involvement to support them with remote education, which makes digital provision a particular challenge for this age group. It is therefore not expected that digital means will be the only way to teach these pupils remotely and schools will develop their own ideas based on their knowledge of the children.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - for pupils and students with (SEND), and those in alternative provision settings, their teachers are best placed to know how their needs can be most effectively met. Some may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so settings will work with families to deliver a curriculum appropriate for their level of need. All settings should have systems for checking whether pupils and students are engaging with their work, and work with families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern.

Somerset is fortunate to have an e-learning advice and support team (eLIM Team) who have been working with schools to provide advice, resources and training on setting up remote learning and virtual learning platforms. All schools have an offer in place and will be communicating with pupils and parents regularly. Some schools may also supplement this with printed resources, workbooks and texts sent home for pupils or for families to collect.

The eLIM Team have a frequently updated Learning resources website for schools, www.somerset.org.uk/sites/edtech/SitePages/Home%20Learning.aspx which includes all the latest DfE remote education guidance and expectations and online safety home learning activities and advice. In addition, we are supporting school leaders to access and provide sufficient laptops, devices and connectivity to enable all pupils to access remote learning.

Local and national support for emotional health and wellbeing which gives details of support avenues for you, your child and for schools during this time is available. The directory of mental health and emotional wellbeing services and resources [can be found here](#).

We recognize that this is a challenging time for children and families, and I know that you will be doing all you can to support your children with their remote learning. This will help them continue to make progress as well enable schools to offer places to vulnerable pupils and those whose parents are essential front-line workers.

Thank you for your support to Somerset Schools.

Yours sincerely



Julian Wooster
Director of Children's Services