

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year and hope you have managed to keep safe throughout the festive period.

I know that this is not the start to our spring term that we had hoped for and that with the announcement of a national lockdown many of us face a challenging and uncertain term. Despite these challenges I want to reassure you that we will endeavour to support our students and community as much as possible. With this in mind please find below a summary of the remote provision available and answers to many of the questions we know you will have.

### **Remote Learning**

As an Academy we pride ourselves in our teaching of our knowledge rich curriculum and whilst we would prefer to be teaching the students face to face under current circumstances we currently are not offering live online lessons for the following reasons:

- Only 40% of Noel-Baker Students have access to their own electronic device meaning 60% would automatically be excluded from the process. Many households have to share devices with siblings / parents working from home.
- Recorded lessons ensure students can access the learning at times suitable for them
- Our recorded lessons are designed to build clearly on students' prior learning.
- Teachers are on site teaching vulnerable and key worker students and therefore can't deliver face to face teaching in addition to live virtual lessons simultaneously.
- Many members of staff are now having to juggle their personal and professional responsibilities. A significant number of staff are now having to home school their children whilst still recording lessons, developing the curriculum, tracking engagement and providing feedback to students.

At the end of this letter please find attached a copy of a report produced by the Education Endowment Foundation which surmises that the quality of instruction is more important than the method of delivery in ensuring pupil progress.

### **Work packs**

In addition to our remote learning offer we are currently in process of putting together work packs of booklets for our students to collect from the Academy, which will support their learning with their online lessons.

Should you have any issues relating to your child's online learning please contact us through the gateway app or via [enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk).

Additionally your child's form tutor will be in contact with all parents weekly via phone or email to allow us to check how they are coping and if we can offer any more support.

### **Key Worker/Vulnerable places**

We have had an extremely high number of parents who have requested a place for their child/ren during this current lockdown. Thank you to all parents who responded to our emails/surveys as early as possible and allowed us the time to allocate our places.

We are now at capacity for our keyworker and vulnerable provision onsite.

Should any keyworker parents who have chosen not to take up a place find that emergency care be required please contact us via [enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk) and we will do our best to support. Please note that we will prioritise requests for emergency support in line with the prioritisation criteria on our website and we cannot guarantee places.

### **Face Coverings**

For our students who are on site during this lockdown government guidance stipulates that face coverings MUST be worn at all times by students if they are travelling on public transport to and from the Academy and in corridors around the Academy.

### **Free School Meal Vouchers**

Our finance team have completed all the requests for FSM Vouchers and these should be with you via email by the end of the week. If you do not receive this or you are unsure as to whether you can receive free school meals then please contact Mrs Gale who will look into this for you – [rachelgale@noelbakeracademy.co.uk](mailto:rachelgale@noelbakeracademy.co.uk).

### **Home Support**

If you feel your child is struggling at home then please speak with your child's form tutor or Pastoral Lead. You can access form tutor email addresses through your child's microsoft365 account and the pastoral lead direct telephone numbers are below. Please note that these are work mobile phones and will only be answered between the hours of 9:00am – 4pm Monday to Friday.

- Alistair Lumber – Pastoral Lead Y7 – 07458 079 586
- Sophie Foulstone – Pastoral Lead Y8 – 07458 080696
- Diana Scott – Pastoral Lead Y9 – 07458 080697
- Lucy Southern – Pastoral Lead Y10/11 – 07458 080698

### **Mental Health and Well-being** [www.noelbakeracademy.co.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.noelbakeracademy.co.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing)

The Academy website has resources to help with you and your families mental health during this period. This includes links to outside agencies as well as specific activities you can undertake to support well-being during times of isolation. Last term our mental health and wellbeing team sent out their newsletter to all parents outlining the support available.

### **Tracking and recording engagement**

Teachers will monitor student engagement throughout the week and record engagement via Go 4 Schools.

Students will be assigned one of the following statements for each of their subjects;

- Has completed their weekly remote learning tasks

- Has not completed their weekly remote learning to an acceptable standard
- Has not engaged with weekly remote learning

Engagement will be recorded on a Friday for all pupils across all of their subjects. Please use this information to have the appropriate conversations with your children. Teachers will message and phone the parents of those students who do not meet expectations.

We have changed the Go 4 School configurations so that parents receive one weekly summary email rather than an email for each event entered. This makes it easier to digest the engagement information entered for you child and prevents you from being bombarded with emails unnecessarily.

### **Parents/Carers Visiting School Site**

During the COVID-19 pandemic parents/carers are not permitted on the Academy site and parents and carers are asked not to congregate outside the academy in large groups if collecting students.

Please note that anyone who arrives to site without a confirmed prior appointment will not be admitted.

### **Contacting the Academy**

If for any reason you need to speak with a member of staff please contact the Academy reception by Phone, our reception will be open Monday to Friday from 8am till 4pm should you need to contact us at any time throughout the lockdown period alternatively email us at [enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@noelbakeracademy.co.uk).

On behalf of all our staff we would like to thank you for all you are doing to support your children's success and our Academy during this time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Donaghy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs Ann Donaghy  
(Headteacher)

# Rapid evidence assessment

## Distance learning

This [rapid evidence assessment](#) examines the existing research (from 60 systematic reviews and meta-analyses) for approaches that schools could use, or are already using, to support the learning of pupils while schools are closed due to Covid-19.

When implementing strategies to support pupils' remote learning, or supporting parents to do this, key things to consider include:

### Key findings and implications

#### 1. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered

Pupils can learn through remote teaching.

Ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present – for example clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback – is more important than how or when they are provided. There was no clear difference between teaching in real time ("synchronous teaching") and alternatives ("asynchronous teaching").

For example, teachers might explain a new idea live or in a pre-recorded video. But what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on pupils' prior learning or how pupils' understanding is subsequently assessed.

#### 2. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils

Almost all remote learning uses digital technology, typically requiring access to both computers and the internet.

Many reviews identify lack of technology as a barrier to successful remote instruction. It is important that support is provided to ensure that disadvantaged pupils – who are more likely to face these barriers – have access to technology.

In addition to providing access to technology, ensuring that teachers and pupils are provided with support and guidance to use specific platforms is essential, particularly if new forms of technology are being implemented.

#### 3. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes

Multiple reviews highlight the importance of peer interaction during remote learning, as a way to motivate pupils and improve outcomes.

Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for live discussions of content.

The value of collaborative approaches was emphasised in many reviews, although notably many studies involved older learners. Different approaches to peer interaction are likely to be better suited to different age groups.

#### 4. Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes

Pupils learning at home will often need to work independently. Multiple reviews identify the value of strategies that help pupils work independently with success.

For example, prompting pupils to reflect on their work or to consider the strategies they will use if they get stuck have been highlighted as valuable.

Wider evidence related to metacognition and self-regulation suggests that disadvantaged pupils are likely to particularly benefit from explicit support to help them work independently, for example, by providing checklists or daily plans.

#### 5. Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils

Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should be supported to consider which approaches are best suited to the content they are teaching and the age of their pupils.

For example, games for learning were found to have a high impact on vocabulary learning in foreign languages, but there is less evidence related to their use in other subjects.

Likewise, using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can help pupils retain key ideas and knowledge, but is not a replacement for other forms of assessment.

The evidence in this review is drawn from diverse contexts that do not closely parallel the circumstances facing schools responding to Covid-19 in 2020.

Many forms of digital technology could in theory be used to support remote learning, but are typically used in schools and have not been evaluated as remote learning tools.

In all cases, it is important for teachers and school leaders to use their professional judgement in determining the support they provide their pupils and to monitor its impact on learning.

