



## UPDATE TO UTU MEMBERS

### REMOTE LEARNING

January 2021

Dear UTU member,

Principals, school leaders and teachers have quickly adapted to the challenges of remote learning and blended learning since March 2020. Since last September, many school leaders and teachers have been evaluating and refining remote learning practice. Many school settings have also been using remote learning successfully for pupils or staff during periods of isolation from September to December,

As we enter another lockdown, we will continue to meet new challenges and we will all want to ensure that our pupils can continue to learn in a meaningful way.

This document updates the UTU distant learning document that was issued to members in April 2020. It can be found at

[https://www.utu.edu/uploads/files/Distant\\_learning\\_\(1\).pdf](https://www.utu.edu/uploads/files/Distant_learning_(1).pdf)

Our School leaders should continue to be mindful of the fact that teachers are doing the best they can in challenging times and respect and trust their professionalism.

It is important to acknowledge that remote learning does not mean that a teacher must be available to give instantaneous feedback to pupils or parents. Rather remote learning is the setting, uploading and giving feedback to pupils. As in the latest **Curriculum Planning Document** *“Remote Learning can occur synchronously with real-time teacher to pupil or peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration, or asynchronously, with self-paced learning activities that take place independently of the teacher.”* As in the past periods of lockdown it is important that the time should primarily be focused on supporting the child or parent. We would ask school leaders to be considerate and attempt to make the administration and paperwork of teachers to a minimum.

Teachers should try, as much as possible, to provide work which is meaningful and as close to the curriculum which would be taught to the pupils should they be able to access face-to-face teaching.



- The use of live streamed lessons appears to be on the increase. However, this can lead to inequalities with some pupils unable to access these at the time they are being delivered.
- UTU members are reminded that school leaders and Board of Governors should ensure all the safeguarding procedures for staff using remote learning are in place and have been agreed. Comprehensive risk assessments must be carried out and discussed with staff, a detailed policy on remote learning should be in place and members of staff should not feel under pressure to engage if they have concerns.
- With this in mind, we continue to suggest that members should be aware of the risks involved. We have serious concerns regarding the use of live streaming. Teachers should not be pressured into partaking in these.
- In **Further guidance for schools on supporting remote learning - Updated Circular – 05 January 2021** it is noted that schools may, however, wish to consider implementing some live lessons via a C2K supported digital platform. *“Scheduling one lesson a day or even one or two lessons a week at a regular time can be valuable and help to develop something of a routine for pupils.”*
- There are also technological problems that must be overcome for both those providing and those partaking in a live lesson.
- Where a school has implemented policies, which ensures the safeguarding of both the pupil and teacher the UTU would advise that the use of cameras be kept to a minimum and the teacher should be able to control the camera and microphone access of pupils at all times. It is also recommended that there should be two members of staff present.
- At times you may wish to upload to a school YouTube channel or make a short video clip, but members should be aware that when this goes onto the web, who observes it cannot be controlled.
- Teacher images and faces should not be included. The UTU strongly advises that were you asked to make video conferencing or a YouTube clip with your image that you contact us immediately.
- School leaders should provide any equipment necessary to make recordings and should also ensure that a clear policy is in place to ensure that any recordings are not misused by parents or pupils.

The UTU strongly advises against giving out staff email addresses or contact details to pupils or parents. However, there may be times where Senior Leaders, Pastoral leaders or others find that parents or pupils require a point of contact. When this is



required the UTU advises that only your C2k email account is used. Never use any personal email account.

Likewise, if pupils or parents can contact teachers via an app, the communication should be professional. Staff should be under no obligation to communicate with pupils or parents and should speak to line managers or the designated teacher when concerns arise.

At this time although pupils may be able to submit work and complete activities remotely, the assessment of and feedback regarding such work must be flexible. Teachers should not feel obliged to report on tasks set remotely but rather encourage and support pupils and families to ensure that learning in whatever form is available to the child and can take place in a meaningful way.

The mental health and well being of both our members and staff are paramount. For teachers, the Inspire Wellbeing Team [www.inspirewellbeing.org/](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org/) is available 24hrs a day and the Public Health Agency have 5 steps to wellbeing, available at <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/> For pupils and families, support is available via the family works counselling service <https://familyworksni.com/>

We are all working together to do our best in these unprecedented circumstances. If you require any support please contact us at [office@utu.edu](mailto:office@utu.edu) with your TR number, name and contact number.

ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION



Links to support members:

**Curriculum Planning 2020/2** - Circular Number: 2020/06 - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/circular%20curriculum%20planning%202021.pdf>

**Educational Continuity Direction** - 3 January 2021 - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/EDUCATIONAL%20CONTINUITY%20DIRECTION%20-%203%20January%202021.pdf>

**Extending Teaching and Learning beyond the school document for information C2k Services** - (Information SheetEN091)  
<https://www.utu.edu/uploads/files/EN091-Extendingteachingandlearningbeyondtheschool.pdf>

**Feedback and Assessment in the Post Primary**  
<https://sway.office.com/fltBhbSWB2SGouzi>

**Further guidance for schools on supporting remote learning - Updated Circular – 05 January 2021** - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Updated%20Circular%20Remote%20Learning%20-%2005%20January%202021%20%28002%29.pdf>

**Guidance For Schools On Supporting Remote Learning To Provide Educational Continuity** - Circular Number: 2020/05 – <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202020-5-Guidance%20for%20Schools%20on%20Supporting%20Remote%20Learning.pdf>

**Moving to Blended Learning in the Primary School** -  
<https://sway.office.com/fGiPRZ9erLTnXDhy>

**Moving to Blended Learning in the Post Primary School**  
<https://sway.office.com/JbEgePVXEFWEPqyh>

**Supporting Learning** - Support for teachers and parents working together so that pupils continue to learn at home and through school.  
<https://www.eani.org.uk/supporting-learning>



**Support resources for schools and parents -**

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-for-schools/>

**UTU distant learning document – March 2020 -**

[https://www.utu.edu/uploads/files/Distant\\_learning\\_\(1\).pdf](https://www.utu.edu/uploads/files/Distant_learning_(1).pdf)

