

Structuring Effective Learning and Revision at Home During Self-Isolation: Some pointers for Teachers and Parents of Secondary Age Pupils with SEND (Those at School Support or with an EHCP)

This guidance has been produced for secondary schools and parents who are supporting pupils with SEND who are self-isolating. It is a collation of some key information and ideas from a range of national organisations and other sources and aims to identify generic strategies to integrate into plans and programmes. This is not an exhaustive list of everything now available but provides an overview and some signposting and ideas to explore and consider.

Schools will recognise that although it may seem appropriate to treat a period of self-isolation as you would study leave, all those with SEND do require provision to be made that is *'different to and additional from'* that available to all other pupils, although some of what is provided in school or required through an EHCP will not be replicated in the current circumstances.

Self-isolation and absence from school may increase levels of anxiety for pupils with SEND, particularly those who had been preparing to take national exams or tests and this is also likely to be a stressful time for their parents and carers.

Pupils with SEND may feel more stressed, confused or ambivalent about learning in self-isolation than their peers and will need a higher level of personalisation of the scaffolding and guidance schools provide. They are more likely to need support and specific direction to use the advice and learning resources they are given or required to access on-line and may struggle to maintain focus and keep going without the regular routines of school and sustained contact with teachers/parents and peers.

This guide has information on:

- Getting started – how and where do I learn best? (Page 2)
- Structuring the day – routines and timetabling (Page 3)
- Some resources and ideas to support learning at home (Page 4)
- Taking breaks – looking after myself (Page 5)



Getting Started

For pupils with SEND the way they learn best isn't always suited to traditional ways of revising or working without close supervision. In addition, they may find it difficult to recognise what learning environment suits them best and it is unlikely this has ever been explored with them.

Appendix 1 – Pupil Planning questionnaire is a way for an adult to guide a conversation with a pupil and identify the most appropriate conditions for learning at home for that pupil. This is not an exhaustive list of questions and it may be the pupil identifies several examples or preferences within the same section. Teachers or parents can then use this to help to advise, frame and adjust as they go the learning environment for the child at home and take whatever steps are possible to put this in place.

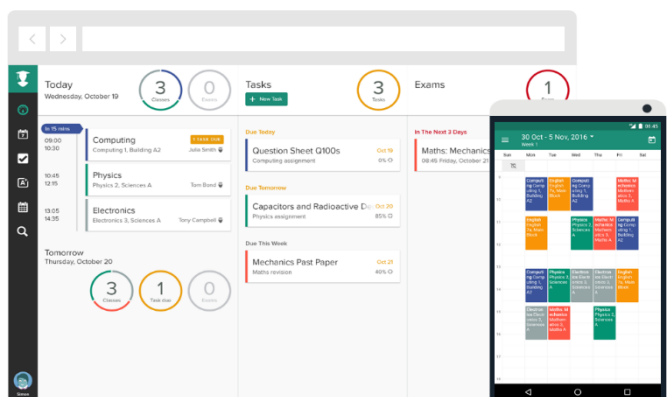
Schools/SENCOs should continue to review pupils' EHCPs, Personalised Plans and/or the school's SEND provision map and provide support and guidance to teachers who are planning packs of work etc for pupils so that their SEND are considered as much as possible. It is particularly important to ensure work provided is accessible and matched to the starting points of pupils with SEND or they will find it even harder to stay motivated and engage with home learning.



Structuring the Day

Many pupils with SEND rely on structure and routine put in place by others. When faced with a situation where they must make their own decisions and manage to complete tasks and assignments themselves, they struggle. For some this is because they may not know how to plan their time, or the demands made mean it is hard for them to stay on task. Some may become fixed on an aspect or perfecting an answer or assignment and be unable to move on to the next thing as planned.

Teachers and parents can help pupils to plan their days by using the outcomes of the *Pupil Planning Questionnaire* to set up and fill a simple study or learning timetable framework alongside them (example Appendix 2). Alternatively pupils can be introduced to and supported to use phone apps and sites such as [My Study Life](#) or [Get Revising](#) to prepare more complex timetables and map any assignment deadlines for example. These are free to use but do require email registration



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One way some parents who already home-school their children with SEND say they structure the day is to not pack it with 5+ formal lesson length sessions where 1:1 learning can get very intense, but to 'chunk' learning into 30-40 minute blocks and intersperse with sensory breaks, exercise/physio, something creative and practical like cooking, gardening or craft and set times for shared activities such as board games, watching a film, listening to a pod cast or multi-player gaming. **Families will only be able to do what the space in the home, availability of adults and resources allow.** Whatever you are able to timetable, encourage pupils/your child to think about setting aside and planning specific time to chat with friends on-line, join a group chat or send and receive a text from a friend as this will also help break up the day and maintain contacts for young people who are having to self-isolate.



Some Resources and Ideas to Support Learning at Home

Not all families will have laptops and tablets to access the internet. There are both low and high tech strategies and techniques to support learning for pupils with SEND. This is not an exhaustive list but may provide some helpful ideas and pointers to help teachers and parents make a start:

- Identifying what provision is already made in school for the pupils or could be created/adapted for home use and are easily transferrable into the home – for example, resources that are portable can be sent home with the pupil such as coloured overlays for pupils who find this helps their reading, mind mapping and writing frameworks and social stories that are relevant to learning at home
- BBC Bitesize for [KS3 pupils](#) and for [Year 10 and those previously studying for GCSEs](#).
- [The White Rose mathematics hub](#) has free online resources and is planning more
- Enabling dictate and text to speech options on smart phones
- Explore free mind mapping sites like [bubbl.us](#) or a thesaurus site [like this](#) which, although it is designed for people learning English, has lots of features which will be helpful to pupils with SEND including easy to understand definitions, audio of pronunciation and real examples to show how words are used
- Printing out and sending home relevant elements of [the NHS \(Solent\) Schools resource toolkit](#) in Hampshire and directing parents to the link. Other NHS Trusts across the country also have these resources and a Google search against 'NHS therapy toolkit for schools' is a good place to start to source even more information and ideas
- Parents and children can gather useful items together such as:
 - pens, felt tips, pencils, a ruler, erasers
 - paper of all sorts. Some types of cardboard packaging can even be cut up and used to make revision or flashcards
 - craft materials
 - board games, cards
 - and continue to collect website addresses and explore these as well as checking links to the schools on-line learning platform
- Identify the space available for learning at home and do what you can to set it up/adjust it using the Planning Questionnaire to help
- Download audio books and podcasts which link to set texts or themes in subjects of the curriculum. The on-line service Audible are providing free access to stories for children learning at home. Click [here](#) to log in and get started.
- Make sure audio books, podcasts and materials specifically adjusted for pupils with SEND are uploaded to the schools on-line learning platform and are clearly signposted

See **Appendix 3** for some SEND specific sites to visit for sources of information, resources and ideas. This is not an exhaustive list. Everyday more and more sites and offers are being uploaded. You can pick and choose what will be best for your pupils or child. Don't forget that there are also national organisations like the National Autistic Society which publish a wealth of authentic, evidenced based information online.



Taking a Break

While parents may be anxious to make sure their children are working hard and learning, it is important for them to take regular breaks and do some form of exercise. This should include opportunities to take time to really get moving not just move from the computer to the sofa! It may not be possible or appropriate for your child to leave the house but do encourage them to go into the garden if you have one and get some fresh air and natural light. Physical activity can reduce anxiety and help to re-focus us and it is important for the well-being of all pupils including those with SEND.

There are many free apps to guide stretching, yoga and mindfulness for example and this could be the time to get out those unused exercise DVDs! Or try [PE with Joe](#) which started from Monday 23rd March 2020.

For those pupils who require regular physio or occupational therapy, the NHS (Solent) schools resource toolkit has useful guidance which can be applied in the home and planned as part of the daily timetable.

Appendix 1 – Pupil Planning Questionnaire

Getting started – How I learn best		Notes and ideas
My ideal time to study	In the morning from to In the afternoon fromto In the evening fromto In the same time slots as at school To start atand finish at.....	
I like the background to be	Quiet Music on TV on People talking	
I like the room to be	Brightly lit Softly lit Dark	
While I study I like to	Eat food Have something to drink Chew on something (e.g. gum) Do none of these	
At home I like to study	At a table in my bedroom At a table somewhere else On my bed On the floor Sitting on the sofa	
At home I like to study using	A computer and websites Textbooks from school Past exam papers Newspapers Television programmes A recording device like a phone or an iPad Audio recordings of plays, books etc Other resources – give examples	

I study best when I am	Alone Able to ask another person for help straightaway Able to write down or record a question and talk it through with another person later	
I remember best when	I repeat information to myself I create visuals like mind maps and diagrams I use memory aids like flashcards and revision cards I have created I use colour coding I write lists and notes I break information into chunks and small steps I do practice questions I do past papers I have someone I can talk to and tell them what I have learnt Someone checks and gives me feedback on what I have done	

Appendix 2 – Simple Timetable Framework

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
BREAK					
BREAK					

Appendix 3

- **Some SEND specific websites**
 - [ChatterPack](#) – Free resources, articles and an A-Z information directory of SEND information
 - [Down Syndrome](#) - A list of resources to support learners with Down Syndrome and their families
 - [Inclusive Teach](#) – FREE downloadable resources
 - [SEN resources blog](#) – Advice, learning activities and recommended toys, books, and resources for children with SEND
 - [Boardmaker Activities-to-Go](#) – Free resources
 - [Tes: Tobidynavox](#) – 10 weeks of free content, levelled and thematic units created with Boardmaker – books, communication supports, speech/language activities for students with communication difficulties and SEND
 - [Accessibite](#) – Free apps to support students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, have reading difficulties
 - [National Braille Week](#) – Worksheets in Braille
 - [Teaching Visually Impairment](#) – Resources
 - [SENDcast](#) – Podcasts on sensory processing and dyslexia
 - [ALN Home School](#) – Resources for parents of children with additional needs