



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Supporting distance learning: Guidance for parents of 16-19 year old learners in school and college

June 2020



Stay Safe:

Mental health and wellbeing are key priorities for parents, schools and colleges.

Maintaining social distancing and staying safe are vitally important; young people of all ages are safer staying at home as much as possible.

As parents you know your children well, trust your instincts and support your children as best you can. Balance school/college work and family time in the way that best suits your family.

Stay Learning:

Independent learning is an important work and study skill that is a key feature of post-16 study.

There is a lot of pressure, particularly on social media, to persuade parents that they are responsible for home educating their children during this period. Parents can provide support for learning to their children in the form of encouragement, company and guidance, but they should not feel they need to act as home tutors or home educators.

School sixth forms and colleges have been in contact with learners to let them know how they can manage their learning and what activities to engage with while face to face teaching is suspended.

The school or college should be the first point of contact if you need further guidance or have any questions.

Learners should follow any learning plans that their school or college has shared with them, but young people differ and will manage learning differently. Finding the right balance isn't easy, but protecting them from over-working is as important as encouraging them to engage with their learning. Try to help them establish and maintain a clear structure to the day; there should be distinct boundaries between learning and relaxing.

- Your child may be anxious about how to manage their learning and how the lockdown might affect their progress, their qualifications and their futures. The links in the Frequently Asked Questions section will help you find information that is relevant to your child's age and level of study.

- Routines help us all manage the day. Your child may have received advice on setting up a study plan or timetable, or be following one that their school or college has suggested. Getting dressed for the day and sticking to regular study times, including breaks and lunchtimes, could help your child manage the learning activities that they have been set. Not every day has to be the same, do what works for you and your family; create a schedule for learning to fit around the family.
- Find a comfortable and quiet space for your child to study where they can access their notes, online materials and other helpful resources.

Most young people will be missing their friends. They will be used to learning and socialising with them and will be making use of different ways to stay in touch. Encourage your child to form productive working relationships, based on electronic communication, with their peers from school or college. They will benefit from discussing work and collaborating with their friends, but they need to be able to recognise when interactions with friends are becoming a distraction.

Discuss with your child how they can stay motivated and avoid distractions, including social media, when they are learning.

Some young people will find it difficult to find the motivation to engage with their studies after being told that their exams or assessments will no longer take place. Try to help them appreciate that the knowledge and skills they are developing will prove valuable in their future study or work, and that they may regret missing this opportunity to learn under the guidance of their school/college.

Some young people, particularly those undertaking vocational qualifications, will still need to be assessed in order to achieve their qualifications this year. This may involve undertaking assessments in a modified way e.g. online. Other learners may be asked to return to college or school to undertake their assessments in a safe way once Welsh Government guidance indicates it is safe to do so.

Once colleges and schools have guidance from awarding organisations on which learners are affected, they will contact learners to let them know the arrangements for them. Be sure to look out for any such communication and check with your child that they are keeping regular contact with their college/school.

Should you have any concerns about your child returning to school or college (for example; if they or anyone in your household is defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable, or anyone in the household is showing symptoms of Covid-19), it is particularly important that you raise these with the school or college.

Signposting:

The school or college should be your first point of contact. They will be able to advise you on the best way to access support to meet your child's needs.

There are a range of post-16 distance learning resources on the Welsh Government's Hwb webpages (<https://hwb.gov.wales>).

- For those aiming to progress to university or higher education in the next few months, the [Year 13 transition resources](#) include a number of helpful online lectures, master classes, tutorials and other resources. These have been developed by universities, colleges and other organisations to help learners study at their own pace. General information about university life is also available.
- The [Bridge to Post-16 Learning and Skills](#) page on Hwb includes a range of resources and information for Year 11 learners planning to progress into post-16 learning this autumn.
- The [Post-16 Learning and Skills](#) page on Hwb also signposts a range of resources and relevant information.

The BBC Bitesize website has a useful careers section <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers> and <https://careerswales.gov.wales/> has lots of information about post 16 opportunities and courses

University and college websites are good sources of up-to-date information. Many are running virtual open days and live chat sessions to answer any questions you might have.

The Welsh Government has a useful website which contains links to the latest guidance relating to education and childcare coronavirus issues: <https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>

Frequently Asked Questions:

What should my child be working on?

The first point of contact is your child's school or college. Speak to your child about the guidance and interaction they have had with their school or college. Contact the school or college if you are uncertain.

My child attends a Welsh medium school but I do not speak Welsh – is there support available?

Visit [Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's website](#) for a range of online courses, information and resources.

Where can I find out information about how grades will be awarded this summer?

The latest information is on [Qualifications Wales' website](#).

I am worried about my child's mental health and wellbeing – where can I find support?

NSPCC Cymru - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Mind Cymru - <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru/Welsh-Government-Mental-Health-Toolkit>

My child is starting university in September, where can I find information?

Your first point of contact should be the school however the following links will also provide useful and up to date information:

<https://www.ucas.com/careers-advice>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/>

<https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/covid-19.aspx>

<https://qualificationswales.org/english/coronavirus---covid-19/frequently-asked-questions/universities-and-colleges/>

Where can my child get careers advice about post 16 options?

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/> and <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/post-16-learning-and-skills/year-11-bridge-to-post-16-learning-and-skills/>

I am concerned about some of the material my child has been accessing, who should I contact?

The online safety zone on Hwb includes information and resources:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety/>

If your child comes across any terrorist or extremist material, you or they can report it to <https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>