

Powys Distance Learning Plan



Information for parents and carers to support children's emotional health, wellbeing and learning at home



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Message from Cllr Phyl Davies Cabinet Member for Education and Property

Dear Parents / Carers,

First of all, I would like to say a huge thank you for all the work you are doing in supporting your children with their learning at home.

Your children have now been at home for six weeks, and it is possible that the current arrangements may continue for the foreseeable future.

The Education Minister has made it clear that until it is safe to reopen schools, they will remain closed.

Therefore, we have to find different ways of delivering teaching and learning. This is a challenge for us all. The Welsh Government has issued guidance for all parents which can be found on the following link:

<https://gov.wales/covid-19-guidance-parents-and-carers-support-families-stay-safe-healthy-and-learning>

There is also a support page on the [Welsh Government's Hwb](#), the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales.

The Hwb provides you with guidance and places to find activities for your children to do that are safe. You will need your child's username and password to access Hwb, you will then be able to access the link: <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/distance-learning-tools-through-hwb/parents-and-carers/>

We are working very hard with our schools to ensure all learners are equipped for distance learning.

I would like to thank our headteachers, teachers and support staff for the work they are doing in preparing for distance learning as well as their invaluable work in the emergency childcare hubs. It is still early days for this new way of working and you as parents, your children, and teachers alike are rebalancing, finding a new rhythm, and essentially still making the changes in these unprecedented time. With each week that passes this change will feel more like the new norm for us all.

By working together - parents, children, headteachers, teachers, governors, elected members and officers at the council, we can ensure that your children are safe, well and enjoying their learning during this time.

Once again, thank you for all you are doing. Keep safe.



Please be reassured we are not expecting you to home school your children during this period - you cannot take on the teacher role or deliver the school day in your own home:

- You are there to parent – to provide your children with a safe and healthy environment in which they can work on what their teachers are sending them
- You can support your children to learn just by being there and by giving them your encouragement, you do not need to act as home tutors
- You are not expected to cover the normal school day, give support and guidance to your children as and when it is appropriate during the day
- Be guided by what the school is setting for your child. Teachers will be ensuring that tasks set are age and ability appropriate, and within reasonable time limits
- Let your children do things on their own as well – encourage them to be independent, particularly as they get older, such as in upper primary and secondary school
- You know your children best and know the time and support they need
- Talk to your child about the work they've been doing and take an interest in what they've been learning
- Learning is not all online - there are lots of things that your children can do in the house and garden that will help them learn - from books, drawing and other creative activities, to cooking and gardening, television and radio
- Not every day needs to be the same – make distance learning work for you
- Remember that your children are learning all the time, and being in school is just part of that
- If you have any concerns about your child and their distance learning, you should contact your school.

Powys Distance Learning Plan

We have been working closely with Welsh Government, ESTYN, our regional partners, headteachers and school staff to develop this new way of learning.

We have put together a Distance Learning Plan which sets out the way forward for learning during the coronavirus outbreak. We are providing a range of learning opportunities across the curriculum for all of our children and young people and are working hard to ensure that they can quickly catch up when our schools reopen.

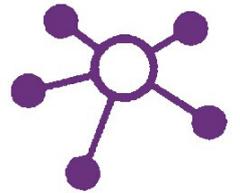
The plan includes:

Learning and learners

Schools are working hard to review their curriculum plans to ensure that there are planned learning opportunities for all pupils. The local authority and the ERW region are supporting schools with their planning. This is to make sure that it is consistent with the curriculum requirements of the national Continuity of Learning plan.

Connectivity

It is important that we make sure all pupils can continue learning by having access to a PC / laptop / tablet, as well as the relevant software and connectivity.



An audit of learners who are having difficulty with access to learning has been carried out and plans put in place to mitigate any issues. For example, by issuing laptops and other devices and providing support for connectivity.

Teaching

All schools are ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are committed to the Powys Distance Learning Plan. For example, by preparing appropriate learning materials, monitoring work and feeding back to pupils as well as continually reviewing what is in place.



Sharing and collaborating

It is important that schools work together to create suitable learning resources, as well as share relevant resources and good practice with each other.



This will be carried out mainly through a programme of online distance learning and will help to develop digital teaching skills using a variety of tools.



Wellbeing

The wellbeing of pupils and staff is a key priority. Schools will check in regularly with learners and their families, especially pupils with Additional Learning Needs, vulnerable children and harder to reach groups.

Communications

Effective communication is important, and schools / teachers will be keeping in regular contact with families during this time.

Leadership and Management

Effective leadership and management are vital to delivering this plan, as well as in terms of making sure schools continue to function during this period and for when the time comes for schools to reopen.

There is also a range of web-based training that school staff can access to continue to improve their skills and knowledge.



Further advice / support

If you have any issues or concerns in relation to your children's continued learning, your school and teachers remain your first point of contact. Your head teacher will be able to give us feedback and if there is any additional support needed, we can look into it.

We would urge parents to please stay in touch with their schools, let them know how you are getting on and send some photos too.

We also want to thank you for your support and co-operation at this time, we know it isn't easy especially when you are working or have to care for others too.

Distance learning support

Distance learning support on [Hwb](#) includes a range of tool and resources to help you with learning activities as well as links to advice on health and wellbeing.

It is suitable for use from nursery age onwards. Your child will have been given a login and shown how to use it in school. If you have young children, you will have received login details and information on how to access [Hwb](#) from home.

A number of [support videos](#) have also been developed to help parents using [Hwb](#), including getting started with logging in and how to use the range of distance learning tools available.

Welsh Government - Stay Safe, Stay Learning

Welsh Government has published information on its Stay Safe, Stay Learning: Continuity of Learning plan on its [website](#). This includes further guidance and advice for parents during the coronavirus pandemic.