

Potential Scenarios

Scenario 1: The school is closed due to public health advice

In this situation, all teachers who are medically fit to work are available to work remotely and may provide remote teaching to their students. This should be done using the school's equipment and digital platform. Teachers should be in a position to exercise their professional autonomy in terms of delivering lessons for students. Teachers should ensure that such provision is delivered within the allocated time for class contact with their students. Teachers must not be compelled to adhere to a virtual timetable. In order to support teacher health and welfare, management should not impose specific time requirements for live lessons. Teachers should be trusted to organise classwork and to use their professional judgement. The professional autonomy for teachers to decide the balance of activities, including screen time, must be respected. The assignment of independent work to students, including homework, is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. In the context of the additional mental strain imposed by remote learning, it is recommended that teachers be conscious of student overload in this regard. Provision should be flexible and appropriate materials may include supports and activities, video materials etc. It is crucial that teacher autonomy and professional judgement be respected and supported.

The flexibility of the above approach will provide the most beneficial learning experience for students given the challenges of online teaching and learning. It also allows the flexibility for teachers to be particularly cognisant of arrangements that support the wellbeing of students.

Scenario 2: All students in a class/year group are at home and have been advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

In this scenario, the subject teachers may provide remote teaching to all students in the class/year group, using the school's equipment and digital platform. This may be provided from within the school if the teacher is not required to self-isolate or restrict his/her movements. Teachers should be in a position to exercise their professional autonomy in terms of delivering lessons for students. Teachers should ensure that such provision is delivered within the allocated time for class contact with their students. Teachers must not be compelled to adhere to a virtual timetable. Teachers should be in a position to exercise their professional judgement and autonomy in terms of delivering lessons for students. This may include online teaching, provision of supports and activities, video material etc.

Scenario 3: A teacher/number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

Where subject teachers are required to restrict their movements, they will avail of special leave with pay, in line with Circular 0049/2020. The Circular provides advice which teachers should follow. A teacher who is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict his/her movements is available to work remotely.

A substitute teacher will be arranged to cover this teacher's teaching responsibilities in the school for this period. The work assigned to the teacher restricting his/her movements is set out at Section 12 of Circular 0049/2020.

Scenario 4: A number of students in a single class group are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements while their class colleagues continue to attend school

In this scenario, classes will continue as normal. Students at home could, for example, work on project work and other areas of learning using digital technologies. It is open to teachers to consider supporting the affected students in this situation using the school's digital platform. However, teachers should not provide recordings of live lessons for this purpose. See 'Recordings'. Teachers are not obliged to engage in such provision and it is clear that not all teachers are in a position to do so. In particular, no teacher should be asked to engage with students in a manner where they have not received training and/or with which they are uncomfortable and have safety or privacy concerns.

Scenario 5: Student absent for a few days having been advised to restrict their movements

It is open to teachers to consider supporting the student in this situation using the school's digital platform. However, teachers should not provide recordings of live lessons for this purpose. See 'Recordings'. However, teachers are not obliged to engage in such provision and it is clear that not all teachers are in a position to do so. The issue of live streaming of classes is fraught with potential difficulties. Teachers should exercise caution in this situation.

NOTES

Substitute teachers should be arranged to provide remote teaching for students in classes where the teacher is absent owing to illness and is on sick leave. Where a teacher has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and is unfit to work a substitute teacher should be employed to provide remote teaching for students in their classes.

The school's digital platform(s) should be utilised by teachers and students. Students should use the school's digital platform(s) to access classes. In that context, the ASTI holds the position that there should be free provision of laptops, procured centrally rather than by means of grants to schools, for students and teachers to ensure that learning can continue as much as possible if classes are required to self-isolate, or schools required to close due to Covid-19.