

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 March 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Education Resources: Response to Remote Learning January 2021
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update on the Education Resources' response to the requirements around delivering Remote Learning, with particular reference to the period from 11 January 2021 onwards.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Education Resources' response to the requirements around delivering a Remote Learning offer, as detailed in Appendix 1, be noted; and
- (2) that the content of the "Remote Learning Audit", as detailed in Appendix 1, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, school buildings were closed to the majority of children and young people from March-June 2020 and schools were asked to move to a Remote Learning model for this period. The exception to this was for those learners who were entitled to attend school in person due to either being children of eligible keyworkers or because they were deemed as having circumstances which may make them vulnerable.
- 3.2. Education Resources worked hard during this period to support schools in providing a high-quality remote learning offer. A key priority was to ensure that appropriate devices were issued to those who needed them. This work continued and evolved and was the subject of a report to Committee in January 2021. To date 5,719 devices have been deployed to learners in South Lanarkshire Council schools.
- 3.3. During the period August-December 2020, the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) entered a period of both reflection on the quality of the first Remote Learning Offer and a period of planning. This was with the aim of ensuring that our schools were fully prepared and ready to deliver an evolved Remote Learning offer should the country enter another period of lockdown where the majority children and young people were asked to learn from home.
- 3.4. Between August-December 2020, Lead Officers worked alongside their Learning Communities and provided them with support materials for planning purposes. Each school was asked to identify and fill any gaps in their offer, whether digital or

otherwise and were given assistance to do so. A comprehensive programme of training and support was put into place.

- 3.5. As a result of this work, by December 2020 schools were in a strong position to review and improve their Remote Learning offers.

4. Remote Learning January 2021

- 4.1. On 4 January 2021, the First Minister announced that all children (unless otherwise eligible through keyworker status or because of other reasons) were to move to a model of full time Remote Learning from 11 January 2021.
- 4.2. Immediately following this announcement, Education Resources produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for schools to follow and this was issued in conjunction with National guidelines published by Education Scotland. In addition, meetings for Headteachers took place.
- 4.3. The guidelines clearly set out a set of guiding principles for each school's Remote Learning offer. Each school was asked to reflect on their context and write a summary plan that indicated how they would deliver an offer that would ensure children's learning would be of a high quality, consistent, engaging, and which would reflect the needs of all learners.
- 4.4. Schools were asked to submit their plans to Headquarters and these were analysed by Lead Officers. Where schools were needing support, this was provided. Schools were asked to consult and engage with parents, carers and young people and to communicate their plans to them so that expectations were clear from the outset.

5. Response of Schools to Remote Learning January 2021

- 5.1. Our schools fully embraced the key principles within their plans for this new period of Remote Learning. All plans were detailed and bespoke to the needs of their families and communities. These plans were put into effect from 11 January 2021.
- 5.2. As part of the central monitoring and Quality Assurance process, Education Resources asked each school to complete a baseline Audit of their provision following the first full week of Remote Learning. Schools were asked a series of questions about aspects such as use of digital platforms, methods of delivery, ways of tracking pupil engagement and how they were consulting and responding to the views of stakeholders. Schools were also asked about the use of external resources e.g. The West Online School platform and the use of the National resource, e-Sgoil. This audit was analysed, and any issues followed up on. At the beginning of February, schools were asked to complete the Audit for the second time. Progress in almost all areas was significant.
- 5.3. Schools were asked to submit their good practice around Remote Learning to Headquarters and this was collated on the Staff Learning Centre website in order that schools could learn from each other. In addition, schools were asked to submit feedback from their stakeholders.
- 5.4. Using the evidence from the Audit and evidence from schools and stakeholders, Education Resources compiled a full report of our response to Remote Learning, a copy of which forms Appendix 1 of this paper. This document blends factual information about our Remote Learning response with the views of parents, carers and young people. It also includes a number of "case studies" illustrating the creative and unique ways that our schools have responded to the challenge presented to them.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Appendix 1, which provides a comprehensive account of the response of our schools to the Remote Learning ask of January 2021, will be published on the South Lanarkshire Council website as part of our commitment to providing accountability and assurance to stakeholders.
- 6.2. Schools and central staff will continue to monitor and support the Remote Learning offer for the forthcoming period as schools begin to return in a phased way.
- 6.3. As a continued commitment to seeking and acting on the views of our stakeholders, Education Resources will now embark on a consultation with our Senior Phase learners around their experience of Remote Learning, with particular reference to their readiness for SQA certification. The results of this consultation and any identified next steps will be presented to Committee at a future date.
- 6.4. The Committee is also asked, through this report, to acknowledge the work and commitment of all staff in our schools and educational settings to the way they have adapted at pace to the changing circumstances in challenging times.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. None.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. Financial implications are within existing budgetary resources.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no climate change, sustainability and environmental implications arising from this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. There are no risk implications in terms of the information contained in this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not present a new strategy, policy or plan and is, therefore, not subject to equality impact assessment.
- 11.2. There was no requirement to undertake any formal consultation in terms of the information contained within this report.

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

24 February 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning

Previous References

- ◆ Education Resources Committee – October 2019

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Education Resources Resource Plan

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council Leadership Framework
- ◆ Council Plan

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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