

Useful Guidance for Parents of Primary School Pupils

How can I support my child?

You are not expected to be your child's teacher during this time. The teachers will continue to work with all their pupils but there are practical things that you can do as a parent to support your child as they learn from home.

Establish a daily routine

This involves seeing that your child gets up and goes to bed at the usual time, building in mealtimes, play and leisure times, family activities, household chores, exercise and schoolwork.

It is useful to draw up the routine with your child so that they feel they have had some choice in how their day goes. They are more likely to stick to a routine they have helped to develop.

When establishing the daily routine, you should take account of the availability of and use of devices by others in the home. You may find the advice from the Department's [National Educational Psychological Service \(NEPS\) webpage](#) helpful for creating new routines for your child.

The TV programmes developed especially for children in Ireland during this time can help when developing a daily learning routine that is engaging for your child.

Home School Hub
RTÉ2: 11.00am-12.00pm
Monday to Friday

Click the link below:



Cúla 4 ar scoil
TG4: 10:00am-10:30am
Monday to Friday

Click the link below:



Be ready for learning

It can be helpful for your child's learning routine if you can help them find a place where they can work away from distractions as much as possible. Your child should also be ready for any remote lessons or activities scheduled with their teachers if the school is using this form of communication and you/your child have the appropriate devices and technology available to you.

Talk to your child and praise their efforts

Talking to your child about the work they have to do, deadlines for returning the completed work to their teacher and the schedule of any online lessons can help them stay focussed and on track. It will also let them know that you value the work that they are doing. Praise for their efforts is also important and will help them stay motivated and feel a sense of achievement as activities are completed.

Check for communications

You should regularly check the methods of communication that the school has told you they will be using to stay in contact regarding your child's learning. If you have any difficulties with the communication methods being used, you should let the school know as soon as you can so you can agree a way of keeping in touch that works best for both home and school.

Stay positive

*It is very important to stay positive at this time and to keep a balanced approach to the amount of news footage to which your child is exposed. You may find the following link helpful when talking to your child about Covid-19: [Talking to children and young people about Covid-19](#)
It is also important to avoid tensions about school work. If issues arise, you should have a conversation with your child at a time when both of you are ready to talk. You can also contact the class teacher or school for advice.*

How can I support a child who is finding it difficult to do school work at home?

Firstly, it is important for you to know that you and your child are not alone. Many children and parents are finding it difficult to adjust to working and learning from home.

Find out why

The first step is to try to find out why your child is finding it difficult to do school work at home. Your child may be finding it difficult to get used to the new home school routine, be anxious about the current situation or fearful about the future. They may also be uncertain about what is expected of them in their learning, have difficulties with learning or with a particular curriculum area, or perhaps have medical issues. Your expectations or that of the teacher may be unrealistic.

Explore what's going on

Find a quiet time to explore what's going on for your child over a cup of tea or on a walk etc. Help your child to understand that many of their feelings, thoughts and behaviours are normal responses to the current situation and then explore ways of managing or addressing these.

Agree a new routine

You may need to rethink or agree a new routine to ensure it is realistic and achievable and includes sufficient and well-spaced breaks and time for enjoyable activities.

Explore their interests

It may help to encourage your child to identify and explore their interests. Sometimes a break from the routine to tackle a project together may help to ease tension and anxiety and help your child to refocus.

Ask for help

Don't be afraid to ask for help from the school and teachers who know their pupils well. They understand that everyone is finding the current situation very challenging and will be happy to support you and your child. If there are issues impacting your child's ability to complete work at home, or if you feel that it is not feasible for your child to complete the amount of work assigned, please let the school know.

How can I help my child stay safe while learning remotely?

It is important that your child stays safe when working or accessing material online or remotely. It is also important that your child acts responsibly while engaged in online learning. The school and teachers will already have taken steps but there are also a number of things that you can do to help. These include:

- reminding your child to follow the rules set out by the teacher for online activity
- agreeing the arrangements for online classes with your child's teacher
- monitoring your child's online activity
- installing child-friendly web-browsers and internet filters with support from the school
- encouraging correct posture for your child while working online

The school's Acceptable Use Policy for pupils' use of the internet at school specifies the rights, responsibilities and sanctions connected with computer use for school work. You should read this document and make sure that you understand the requirements for appropriate behaviour.

Further advice for parents and children on how to work safely online is available at [webwise.ie/parents/](https://www.webwise.ie/parents/) or the [Be Safe Online](#) webpage.

Tusla social workers also continue to provide family support and child protection related services. You can get further information on the [Covid-19 page](#) and the [Parenting 24 seven page](#) of the Tusla website.

What support is there if my child is moving to post-primary school in September?

If your 6th class child has a confirmed place in a post-primary school for September 2020, you should talk to your principal and class teacher about their moving on to post-primary school and any information that you need from the school for the new school. The post-primary school may also be in contact in relation to the arrangements for first year students.

Should your child who is in 6th class not have a confirmed place in a post-primary school for September 2020, you should talk to your principal and class teacher and seek their assistance. Your principal will, if necessary, provide you with the contact details for the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Alternatively, you can email tessinfo@tusla.ie making sure to leave contact details and the name of the school your child currently attends and an EWO will make contact with you.

What other supports are there for me as a parent or guardian?

From the Department of Education and Skills: The Department provides up to date information on the Covid-19 crisis and access to resources provided by different agencies on the [Covid-19 page](#) of the Department website.

From other parents: Keeping contact with other parents to talk and share experiences will be a valuable support to you at this time. The Parent Council or Parent Association in the school may be an important source of information and way of keeping in contact with the school and other parents. You may also find it useful to contact the National Parents Council (Primary) through their [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

From other websites: Parents Centre at gov.ie/parents provides information and advice for parents and their families at this time on a range of topics including learning, parenting and parent supports.

Websites with educational resources

- The [Scoilnet](#) website identifies resources for distance learning and provides links to the Department of Education and Skills support services.
- The Professional Development Services for Teachers provides support and resources for parents and their children at the following links:
 - [PDST- Irish Independent Articles](#) provides articles for parents written by the PDST and published weekly in the Irish Independent
 - [PDST- Online Tools Tutorials](#) gives access to short tutorials regarding the digital tools that your child may be using to engage in distance learning at home
 - [PDST- Digital Libraries](#) gives access to a variety of online libraries to support their child's literacy learning at home
 - [PDST- Sources of Information](#) gives access to Worldbook Online and other reliable sources of information that can be used at home when students are engaged in project work.
- The Ark provides a full range of resources to support primary school children's engagement with the arts at ark.ie/.

Websites supporting wellbeing

- The [National Educational Psychological Service \(NEPS\)](#) provides valuable advice and resources to schools and families for keeping children and young people well during Covid-19.
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- The [In this Together campaign](#) website provides lots of advice and tips on how you can look after your mental wellbeing, stay active and stay connected during Covid-19. It includes advice on coping at home at this time.
- The Professional Development Service for Teachers provides a range of wellbeing resources and activities for parents and children at the following links:
 - [PDST - distance learning](#)
 - [PDST - relaxation and self-regulation tools](#)

Websites supporting children with special educational needs

- The [National Council for Special Education](#) has helpful resources for parents of children with special educational needs at [ncse.ie/parent-resources](https://www.ncse.ie/parent-resources).
- [AsIAm's website](#) contains explanations on the Covid-19 situation for children and young people with ASD through the [use of social stories](#). It also provides [resources for learning at home](#).
- The Middletown Centre for Autism is issuing tips via social media on helping children and young people manage during the Covid-19 crisis. Resources for parents and children can be accessed at [middletownautism.com](https://www.middletownautism.com).