

27.04.2020

Dear Colleague,

On Sunday 19 April, the Government announced support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who do not have access to a digital device during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Laptops and tablets will be supplied to support remote education and help children and young people stay in touch with social care services.

We have today written to Responsible Bodies (for example, local authorities and academy trusts) explaining who is eligible and how they can request a device and get it to those who need it.

Schools will not order devices directly and you should contact your Responsible Body for further information.

If you have moved Responsible Body since October 2019, you should contact your current and former Responsible Body to discuss who will allocate devices to eligible children who you are responsible for.

Who is eligible?

Laptops and tablets are available for the most disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are:

- › Care leavers
- › Children with a social worker (including pre-school children)
- › Children in Year 10, ahead of GCSEs next year

Responsible Bodies will be given a fixed number of laptops and tablets to support children and young people in these groups.

Care leavers and children with a social worker

Local authorities will be responsible for ordering devices for care leavers and children with a social worker who they are responsible for.

We have asked local authorities to work with schools to identify care leavers and children with a social worker who need devices.

All devices for care leavers and children with a social worker will be allocated and delivered to local authorities. Local authorities are responsible for managing distribution to children and young people, liaising with schools where appropriate.

Year 10 pupils

Academy trusts and local authorities are responsible for ordering devices for Year 10 pupils who do not have a social worker and do not have the means to access a laptop or tablet. We have asked them to work with you to identify these children.

These devices will be delivered directly to schools where you will be responsible for distributing these to identified families and children. You should liaise directly with your academy trust or local authority to manage this delivery.

Delivery, set up and distribution of devices

Laptops and tablets will have settings to make sure they are safe and secure online. You can also apply your own settings and software to match the education resources you use and to fit with your own policies.

Once the devices are set up and ready to go, you are responsible for getting the laptops or tablets to children, for example arranging for them to be collected by families from your school (with a social worker present where relevant) or organising for them to be sent to children's and care leavers' homes. This should be done in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Find information about social distancing in education settings at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

16-19 education

16 to 19-year-olds without a suitable device will be eligible for support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

If you are funded for 16-19 provision, including sixth form and further education provision, you should already have a 16-19 Bursary Fund allocation.

If your Bursary Fund is already committed and you need additional resources to support disadvantaged sixth form students to access education remotely, you will be able to put a business case to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Equipment for students aged 16-19 should be purchased by the education provider directly.

Find more information about the 16-19 bursary fund at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2019-to-2020-academic-year>

What other support is available?

You can apply for Government-funded support to get set up on one of two free-to-use digital education platforms: G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education.

You can apply through The Key for School Leaders at <https://covid19.thekeysupport.com/remote-learning/>

The Key has provided information to help you choose an online education platform.

The Department has also published a list of education resources which include materials on wellbeing and on teaching children with special educational needs and disabilities. We will regularly update this list with further resources.

You can access this list of resources at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

The Oak National Academy launched on Monday 20 April. It will provide 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. It will continue to offer new lessons and resources each week at least until schools are able to re-open.

You can visit the Oak National Academy site at:

<https://www.thenational.academy>

The BBC has also launched its own education package across TV and online to help children keep learning.

If you have any questions, please email COVID.Technology@education.gov.uk for more information.

Regards,
The Digital Infrastructure Team
Department for Education

For more information you can go to the Department for Education's Covid-19 guidance website at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>