



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

15 JULY 2020

Report by: Alwyn Jones - GwE Assistant Director

Subject: Blended Learning

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present information to the Joint Committee members on the 'Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools' document (Appendix 1).

2.0 Background

2.1 On June 3 the Welsh Government (WG) announced that there would be a phased opening of schools from 29th June, 2020 to give all pupils the opportunity to "check in, catch up and prepare." Welsh Government have published their Learning Guidance to provide advice on learning and teaching taking place in schools and settings for the remainder of the summer term and to support practitioners as they prepare for the autumn term.

2.2 The WG guidance provided gives schools considerable flexibility to exercise their professional judgement in how they will plan their offer to their pupils. Schools now have an outline framework for planning teaching and learning for the remainder of the summer term and autumn term 2020. The guidance support schools as they reevaluate learning for the foreseeable future in response to a range of challenges.

2.3 Building on the learning guidance published by Welsh Government, this guidance, a document developed jointly by the Regional School Improvement Consortia and Estyn, sets out best practice and approaches to blended learning to support practitioners.

2.4 Settings and schools should build upon their distance learning strategies, and they will have access to support from regional consortia and local authorities as they further develop their approaches to blended learning.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1 Settings and schools will be at different stages in developing their support for blending in school and distance learning and their approach will vary according to their context and capacity. Every setting and school will respond to the requirements on the basis of its risk assessment, site capacity, staff availability and number of learners and frequency that they can safely attend the establishment Planning should be based on research informed guidance on what works best within blended learning.
- 3.2 The basic principles and advice do not try to replace the effective practice that exists, but can help to refine and further develop.
- 3.3 This document provides practical suggestions to support schools with their integrated approach to blended learning and covers the following areas:
- Supporting health and wellbeing
 - Supporting learning fitness
 - Blended learning approach
 - Organising the learning
 - Establishing routines and protocols
 - Engagement with learners
 - Supporting parents and carers
 - Supporting equity for Welsh-medium learners
 - Supporting the learning through collaboration
 - Professional learning

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note and accept the content of the report.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

- 6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

- 7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

- 8.1 Consultation with the GwE Management Board and Headteachers Strategic Forums.

9.0 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – ‘Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools’.
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OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I note again that Section 5 of the report clarifies that “there are no financial implications arising from this report”. In the challenging context of Covid-19 and restrictions, I appreciate that GwE are adding value within existing resources.