2020

E-Learning Guidelines for Schools in the Turks and Caicos Islands

Ministry of Education, Youth, Culture, Social and Library Services, TCI

Introduction:

The Ministry of Education, Youth, Culture, Social and Library Services recognises the impact of COVID-19 on the education system in general and, more specifically, the impact on all learners (teachers and students) in the teaching and learning process. Accordingly, the Ministry proposes the following guidelines to govern the continuation of remote teaching and learning for the remainder of Term 3 with a view to:

- ✓ Achieving consistency of operation of remote teaching and learning across schools;
- ✓ Establishing a common platform for the delivery of remote teaching and learning;
- ✓ Standardising the deliverables expected of teachers across the education system;
- ✓ Standardising assessment strategies across schools so that students are treated with equity and fairness as they progress through the system and transition from primary to high school and from high school to tertiary education or the world of work; and
- ✓ Reducing the burden on students and households with limited access to devices and internet connectivity

The guidelines are organized in two main sections with subsections. These guidelines are the result of consultations with Principals of public primary and high schools and the members of the Teachers Association.

While developing the guidelines consideration was given to the reality that remote teaching and learning is not the best approach to delivering a high-quality educational experience for primary and high school students. The Ministry, however, recognizes the significant potential of remote teaching and learning as a tool to deliver the curriculum in the context of the requirements for social (physical) distancing brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government's strategy to reduce the spread of the virus in the TCI population. Due consideration was also given to fact that not all students of compulsory school age have access to technological devices to enable them to fully access remote teaching and learning.

The Ministry of Education continues its work with private sector sponsors and corporate citizens to put devices in the hands of our most vulnerable students and to ensure that the issues of connectivity are addressed as a means of increasing the level of participation in remote teaching and learning.

High Schools

1. **Timetable Formalization:** Recommendations:

   - 9am-1pm virtual school hours suggested time for students to be engaged (teachers are not required to sit at their devices during the entire period but to be available for students' questions). Schools who have an established scheduled that is effective may continue to use the schedule up to the termination of remote teaching and learning in this Term.
   - Students carry out independent virtual learning lessons
   - Teachers are on hand to provide support for students during this period (virtual school hours).
   - Teachers to conduct at least three face to face virtual lessons per class per week. Purpose:
     - introduce new topics/concepts
     - address any challenges encountered

   - Suggestion to use a modified timetable similar to the end of term/end of year examination to avoid clashes (This timetable can be used to schedule the face to face lessons and to provide guidance to students during independent learning period).
   - Lessons for independent learning uploaded before the start of school (teachers also have the option to upload all lessons content planned for the term in advance.
   - Attendance marked daily (students logging on the system/completing assignment/task can be used to record attendance).
   - Students should be encouraged to give written comments about concepts taught or constructive comments about the work of another student's work as evidence of their participation in the class.

2. **Instructional Formats:**
   - **Face to Face Virtual Lessons**: suggested session lesson time 30-40mins
   - **Independent Virtual Lessons:** these are assigned task for students to carry out independently. These can be in the form of:
     - Instructional videos
     - Virtual discussions: e.g. teacher post a topic; students respond to the discussion
     - Games
     - Puzzles
     - Quizzes
     - Questions: short answers, essays, etc.
     - Writing/Literary exercises

NB: the teacher will be available during the allotted time to assist with challenges. Extra time should be given for the submission of assigned tasked. E.g. quizzes and assignments set to lock after three attempts/ due date.

E.g. **Digital Assessment Tools:** Quizlet, Google Forms, Kahoot, Nearpod, Microsoft Teams Forms, Schoology, etc.

3. **Formalization of Platforms:** Recommended platforms:
   - Microsoft OneNote
   - Microsoft Teams
   - Google Classrooms
   - CXC – Learning Hub (Notesmaster)
   - Zoom (has implications for significant data use).

NB: WhatsApp is to be used as a tool for sending messages/notifications to students and parents and not as a tool for teaching and learning. Use this medium in a limited capacity-has the potential for misuse, confidentially issues, limited interaction and capabilities for teachers and students to retain completed work.

Sample Class Schedule:
English A Class Meeting/Face to Face:
> *Form 1 Monday: 10:30-11:10 am*
> *Form 2 Tuesday: 10:30-11:10 am*

Independent Learning: English A (Form 2)
*Writing Assignment: Expository-If today was your last day alive; what would you do? **Due May 15***

*Class Reading: Read chapter 5 (textbook): **Due May 14***
> - *Comment on the discussion topic based on your reading*
> - *Following our reading, you will individually take the Multiple Choice and Answer the Short Response Questions and submit*

4. **Graduation: Recommendation:**
   - Suspend graduation ceremony (in light of current social distancing requirements). Student's achievement acknowledged and celebrated via social media, press releases and awards given at a specially organized ceremony later in the 2020/21 school year.
   - **Academic Assessment**: All terms grades from Form 3-4 & grades from Terms 1-2 for Form 5
   - **Attendance:** Form 3-4 (all terms) and Form 5 attendance credited up to May 30, 2020.
   - **Conduct:** Form 3-4 (all terms) and Form 5 (Terms 1 -2)

- **Distribute Diplomas/Certificates:**
  Options:
    - In phases- alphabetical order & staggered distribution
    - Engage Stakeholders (Police, DC's) to assist with distribution (if necessary)
    - Distribution via Post Office
    - DoE submits letter to TCICC as proof of diploma/completion list of 2020 graduates (if required).
    - Issue secured virtual copies of diploma to all students
- **Transcripts:** suspension of fees up to October 2020 for all requests (automatically issue transcripts to all fifth formers). Issued via the same method as diplomas
- Transcripts must be requested via email to the school.

5. **Registration 2020/2021**:
   - Electronically (Student Registration form for Form 1(high school) and Infant 1 (Primary school) will be made available on Ministry of Education website
   - Registration forms completed and submitted to the Department of Education via email
   - Completed registration forms must be accompanied by all supporting documents and submitted via email.
   - Department of Education will acknowledge receipt of submission.
   - Incomplete registration forms will not be processed.

6. **Parent Conferences:**
   - Contact hours for parents to liaise with teachers: 1 pm-2:30 pm Monday-Friday.
   - Principals are to be available to parents from 9 am-3 pm on school days
   - In cases of emergency, all staff are to be available.

Primary Schools

1. **Timetable Formalization:** Recommendations:
   - 9am-1pm virtual school hours suggested time for students to be engaged (teachers are not required to sit at their devices during the entire period but to be available for students' questions)
   - Students carry out independent virtual learning lessons
   - Teachers are on hand to provide support for students during this period (virtual school hours).
   - Teachers to conduct at least three face to face virtual lessons per class per week. Purpose:
     - introduce new topics/concepts
     - address any challenges encountered

   - Use of a modified timetable that places emphasis on the core subjects (Mathematics, English Language, Social studies and Science) with accommodation made for Guidance and Counselling, Music, Physical Education (at least one session per week) and intervention of Special Education Teachers where necessary.
   - Lessons for independent learning uploaded before the start of school (teachers also have the option to upload all lessons content planned for the week/ remainder of the term in advance.
   - Design and incorporate special content and assessment strategies for mixed ability classes
   - Attendance marked daily (students logging on the system/completing assignment or assigned task/comments made during virtual lessons and constructive comments about the work of other students as evidence of participation and attendance).
   - Students should be encouraged to give written comments about concepts taught or constructive comments about the work of other students as evidence of their participation in the class.

2. **Instructional Formats:**
   - **Face to Face Virtual Lessons**: suggested lesson time 30-40mins
   - **Independent work:** these are assigned task for students to carry out independently. These can be in the form of:
     - Instructional videos
     - Discussions: e.g. teacher post a topic; students respond to the discussion
     - Games
     - Puzzles
     - Quizzes
     - Multiple Choice Items, short answers questions, essays, etc.

     NB: the teacher will be available during the allotted time to assist with challenges. Extra time should be given for the submission of assigned tasks. E.g. quizzes and assignments set to lock after three attempts/ due date.

3. **Formalization of Platforms:** Recommended platforms:
   - Microsoft OneNote & Teams
   - Google Education suite (Google Classroom)
   - OECS -Notesmaster Learning Hub
   - Zoom (has implications for significant data use).

   NB: WhatsApp is to be used as a tool for sending messages/notification to students and parents and not as a tool for teaching and learning. Use of this medium as a main mode of remote teaching and learning has the potential for misuse, confidentially issues, limited interaction and diminished capability for teachers and students to retain completed work.

4. **Recommendation for Assessment:**
   - Complete and submit School Based Assessment for Grade 6 students
   - Calculate continuous assessment for Grade 6 students using their term grades for Grades 5 and 6 (Terms 1-3 from Grade 5 and Terms 1-2 from Grade 6)
   - Use Grades from Terms 1 and 2 along with a portfolio of completed work for students in Grade 1 to Grade 5.
   - **Completion Certificates:** Individual schools may issue certificates of completion to students