



Media Release

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ESC says Distance Learning programme a great credit to teachers & lecturers

Distance Learning currently being delivered in States schools and via the Guernsey Institute is designed to ensure students all have access to direct support from their teachers and lecturers every day, while also providing families with flexibility to manage schoolwork around many other commitments parents and carers are having to juggle during lockdown.

The Distance Learning policy has been revised since it was introduced during the first lockdown, under the previous Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture, and now includes a greater emphasis on daily access to direct teaching. Direct teaching can be provided in several different ways including pre-recorded content, content from third party providers or live lessons.

Distance Learning will never fully replace a normal school day, but the policy is designed to ensure that all students continue to make progress while away from the structure and routine that school provides. Students are themselves going through very challenging times, the likes of which no other groups of young people have faced in the digital era.

The Distance Learning package allows families to plan school work at times that suit their needs, recognising that many parents have to juggle their own work commitments alongside their children accessing learning, often on shared devices. Flexibility is key for parents and students, and Education's approach has been welcomed by many including teaching unions and many parents.

Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen, President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, said:

'Our excellent Distance Learning provision has been developed by senior educationalists with support from staff across our schools. They should be commended for their innovation and the Committee is hugely appreciative of the dedication and commitment shown by staff, who themselves are also adjusting to different work practices and the stresses and strains that lockdown brings for many of us. Parents know how hard their children's teachers are working to support them and the Committee wants staff to know just how much their efforts are valued.'

'The Committee is aware that there is a debate on whether "live" lessons are superior to pre-recorded or self-directed learning. The reality is there is no educational evidence to suggest teachers hosting live online lessons is the best or only option, which is why the Distance Learning policy supports a blended approach.

'More than 7,000 of our island students are in the States comprehensive education system, which is specifically intended to cater for students of mixed ability and from a diverse range of social and economic backgrounds. Our Distance Learning programme must cater for them all. In many families – regardless of income – individual devices are only provided for older children. Our policy does not assume that each child has access to their own device. Indeed we do not believe that providing six year olds with individual devices is a healthy development, nor do we think it is suitable for the youngest of our children to work directly from a screen all day.

'The Committee is confident this package caters for all, building on the policy for Distance Learning put in place by previous Committee during the first lockdown. The education profession has epitomised the "Guernsey Together" ethos throughout our island's response to the pandemic and I know, as a parent of school age children myself, that they remain ready to support all students and parents, as we all work through what is a difficult time for many.

'I would urge any parent who has questions about Distance Learning, or who needs support, to contact your child's teacher.'

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