

## *Consideration of the delivery of online lessons via a platform such as Zoom or MS Teams.*

In order to consider this concept, I have spoken to a number of other teachers in other schools at length. In particular I spoke to a maths specialist teacher in a secondary school who detailed to me the way she uses MS Teams for her lessons. I was then able to apply/adjust her experiences teaching GSCE and A'Level maths to the lessons we deliver in a Primary School.

### **Security of platform**

**Concern:** Online collaboration platforms can be 'hacked' so that legitimate participants are exposed to undesirable content.

**Detail:** For Zoom this is known as zoom-bombing and has already happened on several occasions during the pandemic lockdown where zoom lessons have been 'gate-crashed' with pornographic images being displayed on all the screens of participants. This is possible when the meeting ID is detailed to a third party, either by accident or intentionally, who then connects to the meeting uninvited.

Zoom is not included on the DfE's approved list for use in schools.

A recent update for Zoom (released 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020) has addressed many of the problems in Zoom but in school we would have no way of confirming that the computer a child is using has been updated to the latest version of the software.

The 'waiting room' feature can be used to prevent uninvited participants trying to join the lesson however, someone determined could mask the name of a legitimate participant and 'trick' their way into the lesson.

Use of MS Teams would require a Microsoft account to access a lesson if the guest access was disabled (for safeguarding reasons as above).

**Solution:** Zoom or MS Teams could be safely used for online lessons once all participants have confirmed that their Zoom / MS Teams software is up to date, that their computer is secure behind an appropriate firewall and it is protected by up to date anti-virus software. Before starting a lesson, the participants would need to detail their screen name to the teacher so they could reject any unknown names and the waiting-room function would be required for each lesson.

## Safeguarding of children

**Concerns:** Any participant in an online lesson would be able to create a screenshot-image of the other lesson participants.  
A child might choose to make a safeguarding disclosure during an online lesson.  
Excessive amount of screen time is not good for a child's health.

**Detail:** Any child taking part in the lesson or anyone who has joined the lesson uninvited would have the opportunity to capture the screen and store it as an offline image. This image could then be used for bullying (ridicule through image alteration and wide spread publication) or the more sinister practice of creating new pornographic images through the cut and pasting of an innocent facial image onto an existing image.

A small number of families also have legitimate reasons for not wanting images created or published of their child and for these children they would need to take part in the lessons with their camera switched off. This could lead to ridicule / isolation by their peers.

As we know, a safeguarding disclosure can occur at any time. If a child chose their moment to disclose during an online lesson, their peers would also be party to the disclosure.

**Solutions:** There is no technical solution to prevent anyone who is taking part in a lesson from capturing screen images. A non-technical solution would be to extend and reissue our online-safety code of conduct AUP to include a new section covering expectations within online lessons. This would require the reissuing and collection of signed documents before lessons could go ahead. However, even with a re-signed AUP, there is nothing we could do to prevent an image being taken we could only use the AUP to take action following the event.

If a child makes a safeguarding disclosure during a lesson, the lesson would need to be immediately stopped and a school DSL informed. They would then need to make direct contact with the child disclosing and start the usual process from that point. If the disclosure has happened in front of other children in the lesson, each of these children and their parents would need individual contact to offer reassurance.

To protect the children's health, the total number of online lessons would need to be limited to a specified amount of time per day.

## Safeguarding of staff

**Concern:** There are documented cases of staff having their image captured and this then being used against them through the image being altered and then widely published.

As with the details above regarding capturing of images, there are very limited options on what can be done to prevent this other than the member of staff 'appearing' in the lesson with the camera switched off.

To protect against allegations, lessons would also need to be carried out from school.

## Delivery of a 'lesson'

**Concern:** A standard lesson consists of numerous different parts and not all of these parts can be replicated through a platform such as Zoom / MS Teams.

**Details:** Some parts of a lesson are presentation style with the children listening and the teacher modelling / explaining a process. Some parts are where the children work independently on a task or activity but seek 1:1 support from the teacher where they need to. Finally, a large part of all our lessons are fully interactive between the teacher and all of the children. We all make extensive use of talking partners, peer review and children presenting their ideas / suggestions. Furthermore, our classrooms have washing lines, toolkits and wall displays that are all essential to the lessons we deliver.

It would only be possible to duplicate the presentation part of a lesson through a platform such as Zoom / MS Teams. It would not be possible to be as interactive with a whole class or simultaneously display all of the other visual resources we have around the classroom.

Finally, an essential part of any lesson that ensures a child has successfully achieved the objectives of the lesson is the process of assessing and reviewing the children's understanding. This would be impossible if children are working on paper / worksheets / in a book alongside their computer screen as the work they are completing would not be visible to the teacher and also the child may be tempted to copy down any demonstrated answers to hide their misunderstanding. Furthermore, the teacher cannot closely observe the child as they are making any mistakes so early intervention is impossible leaving the child to potentially embed misconceptions.

**Solution:** There is no way of making a lesson delivered on Zoom / MS Teams as interactive as it is in the classroom. Instead we would need to redesign our lessons to make them work online. The presentation only parts of a lesson could be recorded offline and loaded to the internet for children to download and use independently.

## Staffing

**Concern:** A substantial amount of staff time would be required for staff to either redesign their lessons to make them suitable for online live delivery or for them to film a series of presentations for uploading to the internet.

**Details:** All teaching staff are currently (summer 2 term) working full time in school. The remaining support staff are continuing to work from home maintaining the learning platform, responding to requests for help through the home.learning@ email address and making contact with all children by telephone.

**Solution:** There is no practical solution to this concern.

## Children's participation & Inclusion

**Concern:** In order for a child to take a full part in a lesson, they need to be motivated and engaged. As a state school, we can only offer a facility / function to the children if we know all children can access it without having to overcome any obstacles.

**Details:** The style of our lessons in a Primary School draw heavily on fully interactive teaching (as detailed above). For a child who is very familiar with an interactive lesson to then be asked to take part in a lesson where their level of direct involvement will be dramatically reduced to one of an observer or participant at a directed point will undoubtedly reduce any child's motivation and concentration.

Any child who does not have reliable access to a computer / tablet and a secure and reliable internet connection may not be able to take part in a lesson and thus we would not be providing a fully inclusive facility.

**Solutions:** All lessons presented online would need a 1:1 supporting adult for each child (parent?) to allow the child to remain motivated and interested in the lesson. Any child without the necessary equipment / internet connection would need to be provided with such.

## School infrastructure

**Concern:** The current school internet connection would not support several simultaneous, stable connections if several teachers were all trying to teach online.

**Details:** Following a recent test, it was possible to have 2 reliable connections from school at the same time but introducing a third caused problems for all 3. We know how the school connection has always been limited and until very recently have not had any suitable alternative until the recent Gigaclear roll-out. However, with all of the problems Gigaclear have experienced we did not take up an immediate connection directly with Gigaclear but had placed an order with Exa who would make use of the Gigaclear backbone network to deliver us a fibre connection but without the need for us to get involved with Gigaclear ourselves. The order for this upgrade had been placed earlier in the year and the installation was scheduled for late March. The rest is history of course!

**Solution:** Once the Exa/Gigaclear fibre installation has been reinstated we will be able to support many simultaneous connections from school.

## What do other organisations say:

NSPCC: In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has no expectation that teachers should livestream or pre-record lessons. Schools should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their pupils and staff (DfE, 2020).

NEU: Online lessons are not desirable as the only tool for primary children, as the teacher-pupil interaction is not easily replicated in this way.

Children's Commissioner: Please be aware, that Zoom is intended for business use by people over 16 years old. To use Zoom in your school with children aged between 13 – 16, you must subscribe to their Education Plan.