

**Knowsley FACE**

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| **Policy:** | Remote Learning |
| **Date created:** | August 2020 |
| **Date to be renewed:** | August 2021 |

We are fully aware of the sterling efforts made by many of our FACE tutors to support their learners during this health crisis. Although this advice comes deep into the crisis a few pointers could still be helpful to those tutors already providing remote learning and to those who would benefit from guidance on how to initiate it.

**Tutors**

Teaching at a distance adds many additional challenges to a tutor. Successful and effective remote instruction requires a lot of the same things as any form of instruction does. There needs to be clarity, review, checking for understanding and prompt feedback.

Obviously, the sudden transition to teaching from home has found tutors at different levels of preparedness. Some tutors are simply sending lessons by email while others are ensuring students use various devices to access coherent online curricula. However, even in the best of circumstances remote instruction can intensify challenges already inherent in face-to-face classroom settings. Research has acknowledged that online learning in many cases doesn’t generally work as well as traditional classroom instruction. Moreover, learners who are already struggling are more likely to be harmed the most. Still, there are some small pointers that can help remote instruction be as effective as humanly possible.

**1. Enhancing Learner participation.** The initial challenge is motivating learners to engage. Some FACE tutors have reported low numbers of learners regularly participating in remote learning. This problem may be particularly pronounced among learners from the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, in part because they may lack reliable access to the internet. A few small steps could help motivate learners to engage and maintain a good level of participation.

* Tutors should make goals and expectations crystal clear.
* Tutors should specify clearly when learners should communicate and exactly what tasks they need to complete.
* Most learners have a fear of ‘Missing Out’, meaning that they fear classmates are gaining a learning advantage through their remote participation. A psychological approach to increase participation may be to emphasize how many other students are showing up. For example, show a positive trend by communicating to all learners that more learners than ever have completed a recent task or assignment.

Ideally, the level of participation in remote learning will gradually increase and become a habit, although it may take some considerable time for this habit to form. **Although teaching remotely it is still essential for tutors to monitor and record session attendances and report these when requested by the designated FACE member of staff.**

**2. Keep focused on the course content.** Once learners start to participate, the next question is what to teach? In many cases it’s impossible to deliver a comprehensive classroom based programme remotely. This most definitely during this health crisis, with learners already trying to cope with a new and highly disruptive way of life. Hours spent trying to digest large amounts of information sent to them remotely may be non-productive and in some cases completely mind-blowing. This may cause learners to reluctantly opt out of any further participation Spending more time on a specific topic, when it’s broken down into manageable small chunks, is much more likely to build on learner knowledge and confidence without overloading them. Although tutors would like to see their learners meet all the syllabus objectives expected during classroom delivery, in many cases this is not the reality when teaching remotely.

**3. Keep it simple.** Simple, clear directions and expectations are always important, but never more so than in a situation where tutors can’t easily gauge when students are confused. Some considerations are logistical. If available to you, try not to use too many different apps or learning platforms such as Edmodo, Teams, Zoom etc\* or different classroom routines. As mentioned in the previous section be cautious about when to introduce new material. Tutors should concentrate on reinforcing what students have already learned, lest they forget it.

**4. Reinforcement of previous learning.** As this health situation is likely to go on for a while tutors will inevitably need to bring in new material. Like classroom teaching, it’s best to connect new information to what students have already learned. If they’ve forgotten the context this will help them understand and remember the new material. Obviously, you must let them know where they can find it. Remember, an essential factor in learning new things is what one already knows.

**5. Provide new information in small doses.** It’s always best to limit the amount of new information learners are getting in any one session. That’s even truer in a remote situation. Learner participation may drop if sessions last for lengthy periods. If participation is low, try limiting your sessions to short 15 or 20 minutes blocks, especially if the subject matter is new to learners. Breaking up the information and delivering it in shorter sessions, then returning to the same points later on, takes advantage of distributed practice, which boosts learning.

**6. Make your sessions as interactive as you possibly can.** Learners need opportunities to not just to listen or read but to actively process the information being presented. If tutors are using learning platforms etc they can provide brief quizzes and get immediate results. Even if tutors don’t have that option, having students quiz themselves periodically or answer questions about when, what, where, or why something happened is a form of retrieval practice. This helps learners absorb and remember the material. Video recordings of skills demonstrations etc are extremely good, especially if learners are able to pause the video and ask for clarity on something they haven’t fully understood.

**7. The benefits of synchronous and asynchronous remote learning.** Remote learning can be delivered in two ways:

1. synchronously, with everyone online at the same time.
2. or asynchronously, with students accessing the same lesson at different times.

Synchronous lessons can be harder to organize and don’t allow as much time for learner practice. However, ideally it’s important to try your best to include at least some time for an entire class to be online together. This will allow for prompt tutor feedback. It will also enable tutors and learners to maintain connections and feel part of a group. This is more important during this health crisis than ever. Asynchronous remote learning, although still very affective, is wholly reliant on each learner’s enthusiasm to access the lesson provided in the first place.

Although it may be impossible for you to implement all of these pointers please bear them in mind as they can be helpful. In this crisis all of us are having to learn new skills and for tutors the provision of remote learning is a major challenge. We need to do our utmost to support our learners for what is currently an indeterminate period of time. **We will do this better as time goes by**. You never know, even when this current crisis is over we may need to do it all over again in the future.

\*There are many excellent online tutorials and guides showing you how to access the software and use it (see the links below). Once accessed, the help pages in the software will also guide you on how to tailor the platform to meet your particular teaching needs. Remember, for the benefit of yourself and your learners it’s advisable to select just one platform to concentrate on and get to grips with that.

**EDMODO:** Sign Up:<https://www.edmodo.sg/>

Edmodo Tutorials: <https://assets.edmodo.com/images_v2/pdf/Edmodo_TeacherQuickStartGuide.pdf> **and** <https://support.edmodo.com/hc/en-us/articles/360008147674-Getting-Started-on-Edmodo>

**ZOOM:** Install Zoom: <https://zoom.us/zoomrooms/software>

Zoom Tutorial:<https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Comprehensive%20Guide%20to%20Educating%20Through%20Zoom.pdf>

**TEAMS:** Download TEAMS:<https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/download-app>

TEAMS Tutorial: <https://download.microsoft.com/download/a/5/8/a581b311-00fb-447e-b31a-4c9ddda9dcc5/TeamsforEducation_QuickGuide.pdf>

**Learners**

Blended remote learning can be very different from sitting in a classroom. However, there are some ways you can still learn effectively and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Although blended remote learning delivery offers a lot of flexibility, it's important that you have the right working space, mind frame and routine in place. You should view online/blended remote learning in the same way as classroom-based learning. You should:

* maintain regular attendance and participate in all planned online lectures and tutorials
* keep in regular contact with your FACE tutor
* complete all assignments etc. on time
* respond to any communications from Knowsley FACE
* report any concerns you may have immediately to either your tutor or Knowsley FACE

**1. Establish a learning routine**

As well as waking up on time and participating in online lectures etc. it’s also important to:

* schedule time to go over your lecture notes
* take some form of exercise and continue to enjoy your hobbies and interests

Writing down tasks first thing in the morning will allow you to set your intentions for the day and feel motivated to fulfil them. You should write down every task, big and small, that you want to complete and highlight your main priorities for the day.

**2. Stay in contact with your tutor and classmates**

The same online tools (Edmodo, Zoom, Microsoft Teams etc.) being used by your tutor to deliver your classes can also be a great way to keep in contact with tutors and classmates. Maintain your level of engagement by asking questions during lectures, discuss topics in forums with others in your class and reach out to others via email. Although your tutor can’t be there physically with you, your education is still their priority and they’re there to help.

**3. Be kind to yourself and practice mindfulness**

Set aside some time each day for relaxation and meditation. It could be as little as five minutes or as much as an hour. Meditation will help to reduce stress and anxiety, as well as helping you relax. You can download mindfulness apps such as [Calm](https://www.calm.com/) or [Headspace](https://www.headspace.com/)\*

**4. Create an effective working environment**

Making a space dedicated to just studying will help you to concentrate better. To create a productive workspace make sure the objects around you are only those that relate to studying. You need to ensure your space is free of clutter and don’t use your bed as a place to study as this is your place of rest. If you don’t have a desk use a nightstand, a shelf or sit on the floor. It’s also best for you to work by a window for some natural light. Ensure your face is visible at all times during sessions and try to find a quiet location in the home to participate, where possible use pre-set backdrops that do not allow parts of your home to be visible.

**5. Prepare for study**

It’s important for you to get out of your night clothes and have a healthy breakfast. It's essential that you get up and prepare for the day, just as if you were heading out to your class. Wearing something other than your pyjamas will make you feel ready to take on any tasks you have. As they say, look good, feel good.

**6. Schedule your lunch break**

It’s extremely important to take your lunch break. This will give you a much needed energy boost and also a break from your tasks. Avoid making things from scratch as this will take up a lot of time. Just make something quick and healthy.

**7. Cancel out distractions**

Don’t get distracted. The easiest way to achieve focus and productivity is to distance yourself from things that might cause a distraction. Put your phone in another room, in a drawer or switch it to ‘Airplane mode’. Another way is to download ‘[Cold Turkey](https://getcoldturkey.com/)’ on your laptop or phone, to prevent yourself from logging into social media while you’re studying. The app lets you temporarily freeze pages you know you might compulsively visit when studying\*.

**8. Online lectures and tutorials**

Online lectures are just your normal lectures and content delivered in a different way. Listen to them as you would a normal lecture and if watching a recording, try to watch these at normal speed. Hitting the pause button too often may allow you to get distracted easily. Your priority should be understanding the material more than anything else.

Also, if you are watching recorded lectures, watch them at a time when you’ll be able to give them your full attention. For some this may be first thing in the morning, for others this may be in the evening.

**9. Recording or pictures**

Under no circumstances should screenshots be taken of any group learning or individual sessions or for these to be shared in any form unless explicit permission to share is obtained from all those participating.

Recordings of group or individual sessions cannot be made.

Be aware that some applications keep records of chats during sessions.

**10. 1-2-1 Sessions**

Under no circumstances will 1-2-1 sessions take place with any learners under the age of 18.

**11. Get over a slump in energy and enthusiasm**

Channeling your energy elsewhere can help you get over the dip in energy. If you feel restless and unfocused as the day goes on do something completely different for half an hour. When you sit back down, you’ll have a clearer mind and be ready to focus for another few hours.

**12. Plan in other activities**

It’s extremely important to plan other activities at the end of the day that will help you take your mind off studying, rest and recharge. Watch a movie, call friends and family or just have a relaxing bath.

**13. Confirm your Enrolment on your Blended Remote Learning Course**

Read through and return your **Electronic Signature Email** to confirm your enrolment onto your course. Return the email promptly with the response ‘YES’ to confirm acceptance of the enrolment criteria, Learner Agreement and Privacy Notice, stating your preferences for any options as specified in the email.

**14. Emergency Contact Details**

Provide us with an **emergency contact name and telephone number** to cover any such eventuality during a blended remote learning session.