



Digital Education Platforms for Schools - Toolkit

June 2020

Introduction

COVID-19 has seen schools across the country quickly adapt to new ways of working. Teachers and others working in the education sector are working incredibly hard to support pupils remotely.

The Department for Education (DfE) is giving schools funded support to set up effective digital education platforms.

The government has invested over £100m in remote education. As part of this, the DfE is providing up to £2,000 per school to help them set up an effective digital education platform.

[Evidence](#) shows digital education platforms can make a significant difference to schools by improving learning outcomes, particularly for pupils who are struggling, prompting better knowledge sharing, reducing teacher workload, and streamlining processes to save time and money.

Digital education platforms have the potential to transform how schools operate even when their doors are open to all. Adopting these platforms now will unlock whole new ways of working to enhance educational outcomes and school operational efficiencies for years to come.

We would like your support in ensuring all schools, local authorities, and education leaders know what support is available to them and their pupils, understand why it's important they make full use of them, and know how to access them. The following content is designed to help you share news of the available support through your channels and to your networks.

If you have any questions about the scheme or the contents of this pack, please contact dferemotelearning@fourcommunications.com.

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News story: how schools can access support

If you're able to, we'd encourage you to share this short news story explaining what the Department for Education's support package includes and how schools can access it. Please feel free to tailor as appropriate.

Core copy

The Government has announced a range of measures to support teachers and pupils during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic and introduction of social distancing, schools have adapted quickly to continue to provide their pupils with education and support at home.

To help them to do this, the Government is investing over £100m to support remote education. This includes up to £2,000 per school to help them set up effective digital education platforms, and improve outcomes for pupils now and in the future.

To ensure teachers feel confident in using digital education platforms, the Government is funding expert training and support for schools to set up the free-to-use platforms, G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education. The Key is also offering [free impartial information](#) and guidance on the platforms available.





To support a phased return of pupils this term, a combined approach to using face-to-face and remote education will be needed. Digital education platforms enable teachers to design and deliver tasks for pupils both attending school and those continuing to learn remotely ensuring a quality learning experience for all our young people. Thousands of schools across the country are already currently accessing digital education platforms and the remainder are being urged to follow suit now.

To find out more, and get impartial advice on which platform is right for their setting, schools should visit [The Key](#). To ensure schools continue to get the most out of using their platform the Government is also funding training and peer-to-peer support from demonstrator schools, who are already leading the way in using digital education platforms. Schools can find out more about this free support [here](#).




Social posts

If you're able to, we'd encourage you to share one or more of these social posts on your own channels. Please feel free to tailor as appropriate.

Twitter

Post	Image
<p>@educationgovuk is partnering with @GoogleUK and @MicrosoftUK to give all schools access, tools, and expert help to set up a digital education platform to support remote education.</p> <p>Help your pupils now and in the future, access support at: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://www.pexels.com/photo/little-boy-pointing-on-the-laptop-4008820/</p>
<p>All schools can get funded training to set up a safe and secure digital education platform with @GoogleUK or @MicrosoftUK via @educationgovuk. Access free help and support to get set-up today: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-woman-using-laptop-3891135/</p>
<p>“This is distance learning, not home schooling”.</p> <p>@AETAcademies is embracing digital education platforms to support pupils and their parents. Find out how your school can get @educationgovuk funded training to use these tools now: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://unsplash.com/photos/gicQUPeAsxA</p>
<p>Digital education platforms can improve learning outcomes, drive knowledge sharing, and streamline processes to save time and money - @educationgovuk is offering all schools free training to set up a safe and secure digital education platform with @GoogleUK or @MicrosoftUK. Access it today at covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-</p>



	<p>child-sitting-on-couch-while-holding-tablet-4145154/</p>
<p>To support a phased return of students, schools can take advantage of @educationgovuk digital education offer. Many schools across the country are already accessing digital education platforms. Get your school online today: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://unsplash.com/photos/_b279kVy0c</p>
<p>@WinAcadTrust uses Google Classroom to remotely assign lesson activities to pupils to complete each day. Teachers can also set self-marking questions for pupils to answer. Find out how @educationgovuk can get your school online for free here: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://www.pexels.com/photo/boy-wearing-yellow-shirt-while-writing-on-white-paper-4144100/</p>
<p>@BCPSchool encourages pupils to participate in virtual lessons through video calls. Pupils can ask and answer questions, and fully participate as though they were at school. Discover how @educationgovuk can get your school online for free here: covid19.thekeysupport.com</p>	 <p>https://www.pexels.com/photo/siblings-sitting-on-a-couch-and-looking-at-a-laptop-4260744/</p>

Top tips: how to make the most of digital education platforms

Here we've outlined some top tips which may help schools thinking of adopting one of these platforms - do share this information as appropriate with your networks. If you'd like more bespoke content, do please contact us to let us know via dferelearning@fourcommunications.com.

Both G Suite for Education and Office 365 Education are intuitive to use and already successfully used daily by thousands of schools of all sizes across England with pupils from 4 - 18 years old. [Evidence](#) shows digital education platforms can make a significant difference to schools by improving learning outcomes, particularly for pupils who are struggling, prompting better knowledge sharing, reducing teacher workload, and streamlining processes to save time and money.

Local authorities, academy trusts, individual schools and other relevant organisations overseeing schools can apply to get free help to set up a safe and secure digital education platform with Google or Microsoft. Digital education platforms have the potential to transform how schools operate even when their doors are open to all. Adopting these platforms now will unlock whole new ways of working to enhance educational outcomes and school operational efficiencies for years to come.

There are some tips from teachers using these platforms every day. We'd recommend sharing with your network to help ease their transition in to virtual teaching:

1. **Keep it feeling human:** Give personalised and audio feedback to pupils. This will help with motivation and keep an open line of discussion and connection between teachers and pupils.
2. **Run a school timetable but be flexible:** Having structure is important for the wellbeing of both staff and pupils. In the current climate there's an obvious need for flexibility but, by setting a weekly timetable - as opposed to a daily one - it gives teachers and students more freedom to balance home and work life.
3. **Stay connected and support wellbeing:** Encourage staff to schedule virtual 'coffee catch-ups'. Now more than ever its important time is made for 1-to-1 meetings with line managers and colleagues to check in on one another, particularly if they think someone might be struggling.
4. **Upskill your staff:** Encourage staff to watch online training videos and take part in the training offered by your digital education platform. If teachers feel more confident navigating the software and utilising all it offers, pupils will have a more engaging learning experience.
5. **Get feedback from parents:** Parents see how the children respond to activities first hand so ensure they have the option to share their thoughts and suggestions for alterations.
6. **Record lessons:** This particularly benefits siblings in different classes who have to share one device at home. Children in the same home can alternate between live attendance and watching catch-up videos during gaps in the day.



7. **Teach effectively, remotely:** The digital education platforms allow you to use effective teaching principles that you would in a physical classroom - so you can give feedback, set homework, to check to see if work has been completed and monitor performance.

To take advantage of the free support, and help your pupils now and in the future, visit:
[covid19.thekeysupport.com](https://www.gov.uk/covid19/thekeysupport.com)

There's further guidance available on the DfE site [here](#).

How schools can sign up

Here we've outlined how to sign up - do share this information as appropriate with your networks.

To sign up to one of two free-to-use digital education platforms (G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education), local authorities, academy trusts, schools and other relevant organisations overseeing schools should visit The Key for School Leaders: covid19.thekeysupport.com

The Key has a '[Digital education platform hub](#)' page which hosts details of [primary](#) and [secondary](#) schools who are successfully using the tools, and a comparison page to help decision makers assess which of the two platforms would work best for them.

To proceed, decision makers then scroll down the 'Digital education platform hub' and click:

- [Apply for support from a Google partner](#) or
- [Apply for support from a Microsoft partner](#)

The forms ask for contact details and basic school information such as the URN and the number of students/teachers who will need to be set up.

Once the form is completed, the organisation will be contacted by Microsoft or Google and will be allocated a partner who will help them get set up.

To ensure teachers feel confident in using these platforms, the Government is also funding training and peer-to-peer support from demonstrator schools, who are already leading the way in using digital education platforms - schools can find out more about the free support [here](#).