



## LETTER CIRCULAR

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

**Ref:** DCLE 08/2020

**To:** All Schools: State and Non-State

**From:** Mr Stephen Cachia, Director General

**Subject:** **Online teaching during the third term 2019/20**

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Dear colleagues

Following the decision to extend the closure of schools till the end of the present scholastic year, the Working Group set up by the Ministry for Education and Employment has continued working to strengthen methods of online teaching during the third term of this scholastic year as well as to explore the impact of the present situation on the curriculum. The working group is made up of representatives from the all three sectors: State, Church and Independent Schools, together with the Malta Union of Teachers.

The working group would like to sincerely thank all schools and educators for their strong effort in taking teaching and learning online as well as to all parents/guardians and students for their engagement and collaboration.

The following points have now been agreed upon:

- Online teaching is to continue for all years until the end of the present scholastic year, including the post-secondary level, according to the guidelines issued to date and which will continue to be issued by the Working Group.
- All educators are expected to communicate with all their students to provide an educational service. Educators may use their own discretion over the use of the preferred online platform to reach students. They are encouraged to use the respective approved official platforms of their school or the Educational Directorates to ensure support, safety and security.
- Any direct real time interaction with students shall be carried out during existing timetabled slots allocated to respective subjects in Secondary and to the respective school day in Primary. This cannot extend beyond the respective school hours or school days. Whereas a level of contact and service is to be expected by

all professionals, no pressure should be placed on educators to carry out live teaching through video streams or otherwise.

- Any meetings called by management must be conducted during school hours whilst respecting timetables and the needs of educators to reach students during this period.
- Educators have the right to disconnect from online platforms and from work. There shall not be any communication from management or the general public expecting it to be addressed during weekends, holiday periods or in short timeframes like overnight. Online teaching shall stop during weekends and holiday periods.
- Teachers of Year 11 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year post-secondary classes shall still be available for students during the third term as requested by students but need not follow any formal structure.
- During the third term, educators are to cover the most important aspects of the respective syllabi and which render themselves best to online methods of teaching and learning. Due to the present situation, it is clear that it is not possible to assume that the full syllabi for all year groups can be covered. The working group will therefore be exploring and analysing the impact of the present situation on the respective syllabi and examinations. The working group will discuss mitigating measures to address this for next scholastic year and subsequent scholastic years if necessary.
- In this respect, due to the impact of the present situation on the whole educational system, the annual planned implementation schedule of learning outcomes programmes, including the new SEC model will not continue during the next scholastic year and will be **postponed** to the following year. This means that teachers in Year 1, Year 5 and Year 9 will continue to implement the present syllabi during scholastic year 2020-2021.
- During the third term, the focus of schools should be on the provision of online teaching to students. For this reason, no work is expected to be held on School Development Plans during this period.
- Educators will strive to provide realistic and timely feedback to keep students motivated and to scaffold the learning process. The general public is invited to retain realistic expectations on the type and extent of feedback provided.

- Full and complete support will be given to all educators to ensure that their rights are protected both with regards to intellectual property rights related to all original material and resources used online by educators as well as to potential misuse of such material by third parties.
- All individuals, minors and professionals, have the right to feel and be safe also online. A ZERO tolerance approach will be adopted in assertively addressing any verified reports of inappropriate or abusive behaviour. All applicable legislations on abusive behaviour generally and the protection of minors apply and will be enforced accordingly.
- Finally, the working group would like to sincerely thank all schools and educators for their commitment during these challenging times. Educators who may still be experiencing difficulty in contacting their students online are to liaise with their school or use the support and helpline offered at [digitalliteracy.skola.edu.mt](http://digitalliteracy.skola.edu.mt). Educational resources are also available at [www.curriculum.gov.mt](http://www.curriculum.gov.mt).

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