

Guidelines for School Heads and Teachers: Teachers play an important role in a child's life. Teachers convey their affection, warmth, care, comfort as well as control to the students through verbal and non-verbal communication. Therefore, teachers may be more careful about the verbal and non-verbal communication they make through various digital platforms. Teachers being the first level counsellors, also have the responsibility to take care of the mental and physical health of their students.

Need Assessment: School leaders could consider conducting an informal survey to identify various CLP facilities available at home for each child. This data could be analyzed by school leaders to group or create differentiated plans. Ensure that for each class, teachers and students (i) mode of communication (ii) learning plans and (iii) necessary well-being support has been identified.

Planning: School heads to take adequate measures to facilitate CLP infrastructure for teachers (laptops/tablets, connectivity etc.), encourage and lead them in using different IC tools in teaching-learning and assessment.

- Orientation of teachers, parents and students about using digital technology for teaching-learning and assessment may be done at the initial level and repeated, if so needed.
- School heads should not expect teachers to be engaged in six to eight hours of online teaching in a day. Rather they may be engaged for about two to three hours of online activities per day for the classes they teach. However, teachers may continuously explore, create and share learning resources with their students and/ or parents
- Class-wise instant messaging groups may be formed for smooth communication with teachers, parents and students. For lower classes, the parents may communicate on behalf of students.
- Do not make adoption of digital learning burdensome for students and their parents. Avoid setting unrealistic goals for students as well as yourself.
- Involve teachers and representatives of parents in chalking out modalities of digital education. A systematic timetable (with detailed online and offline activities) for each class may be planned in consultation with all the teachers. Do not rush for the sake of completing the syllabus, rather focus on the consolidation of learning. Plan the interventions keeping in mind students' level, age, resource availability, nature of content etc.
- Plan CLP enabled engaging activities which have scope for tapping the creative pursuit of students leading to the acquisition of important life skills.
- Children exposed to digital technologies/gadgets for a longer time are prone to severe health issues. Hence seating with digital gadgets for longer hours or their excess use can be avoided by designing age-appropriate schedules of digital education.

- If possible, parents and guardians may also be involved in the selection of appropriate resources for e-resources and CLP tools for their children.

Implementation of Digital Education: Keeping overall development of students in mind, it is better that the screen time may be followed as recommended

Use Instant Messaging/Chat groups/emails involving parents (wherever required) for sharing important information, resources, suggestions and follow up activities

- Post a weekly announcement to provide an overview of the coming week's topic or a recap of the previous week's work, or both.
- Teachers may share e-content with students and parents and guide them how to use those contents using available gadgets at home.
- Provide time to time feedback on the responses and performance of students in the assigned tasks.
- School head may interact regularly with teachers and parents (at least once a week) to get feedback
- Where parents are not in a position to support students in digital learning, suggest alternative support like peer learning and seeking help from neighbours, identified local volunteers, etc.
- Teachers may themselves select the contents based on the following criteria and circulate among students and parents to help them choose appropriate digital media:
 - 'age-appropriate' that it matches with children's needs, abilities, and interests
 - clear learning goals
 - content meaningfully presented
 - contextualized and culturally responsive
 - Suggest activities that:
 - are age-appropriate, simple to do at home and have learning goals that focus on building concepts/ skills among children.
 - are meant for holistic development, and parents can easily assist their children in doing the activities.
 - encourage children to explore, observe and experiment using objects easily available in their surroundings/ localities.

It is important to have presentations which are easily readable, slides must follow certain rules like not more than 5 bullet points, maximize the use of infographics, graphs, charts, avoid tables as much as possible.

Cyber Safety and Privacy Measures:

- Students, Teachers, and Parents may be oriented on Dos and Don'ts of cyber safety and security.
- Make students aware of cyberbullying and how to avoid getting bullied. Also, encourage them to refrain from cyberbullying.
- Do not share personal information, textual communications, videos or images of PRAGYATA Guidelines for Digital Education 21 students on social media for any purpose including advocacy and showcasing your work. Create a congenial, safe and secured online learning environment. Communicate often with students with utmost clarity on dos and don'ts of engaging with digital learning.

Specific Guidelines Related to Preschool, Grades 1 and 2:

- Plan joyful learning experiences for digital/online learning as you do for face-to-face.
- Give interesting assignments to children such as listening, and reading stories followed by activities like drawing inferences, adding/changing the climax at the end, pCLPure reading, art and craft, puzzles, simple observation projects, learning new words etc.
- Occasionally organize brief and casual meetings with the parents and children through video conferencing and give them a chance to narrate their feelings and experiences.
- Encourage the parent to document the child's work through a photo or a short video in order to stay connected to the child's early learning experience without making it stressful or going for rote learning.
- Guide parents regarding monitoring TV programs viewing, about what cartoons/programs are being watched by children.

Specific Guidelines Related to Senior Students:

- Give 10-15 minutes break between two consecutive classes for students to freshen up, relax and re-energize themselves to focus on the next class
- Encourage peer discussion and interaction during online classes
- Develop and use formative assessments for immediate and continuous feedback, this would help the teacher and students improve in the learning process
- Talk regularly to students in understanding and encouraging the responsible use of the internet and netiquettes

Teacher Preparation: Teacher Preparation for digital education is a twofold process. The first is the requirement of teacher preparation for adopting digital technology for teaching their students more efficiently. The second is to use the digital medium to keep abreast of new development in

education for their own professional growth. Teachers must be ready to harness the potential of digital technology to keep them professionally up to date. The teacher may:

- Explore digital technologies (LMS, apps, web portals, digital labs etc), repositories of Open Educational Resources (OERs) at national/ State/global level
- Attend webinars, online training programmes, online courses on CLP- PedagogyContent integration
- Use appropriate technology for teaching learning & assessment
- Use digital resources embedded in Alternative Academic Calendars (AAC) developed by NCERT for different stages.
- Be part of forums, interest groups and online communities to interact with peers and know how the rest of the world is doing with digital education
- Get acquainted with copyrighted as well as Free and Open Source (FOSS) e-contents and tools for learning. Teachers can be made aware to use open resources as everything on the Internet is not available for free download or sharing.

Guidelines for Parents: The COVID-19 has brought with it many new challenges in the learning spectrum for parents, families and especially children. Parents' role will now be amplified to keep their children engaged in learning and at the same time to look after their emotional well-being as well as physical health. As the child will feel a range of emotions during this time, the role of the parent may include providing encouragement and support.

Especially young children do not have so much vocabulary to express/describe their emotions and thus parents and family members need to be very careful to watch over the digital behaviours. Keeping in mind the detrimental effects of the internet and gadgets, judicious use of the internet may be monitored by the parents. Following are some of the suggestions made in this guideline that parents can follow.

Physical, Mental Health and Well-Being:

- Parents may interact with children on a regular basis to know their physical and mental well being.
- Watch out for signs of anxiety, depression /anger during digital learning.
- Check if your child is becoming very secretive about his or her online activities. For example, not talking to you, deleting the history of the internet browser, using encryption software, or quickly flicking the screen display when he/she sees you. It's better to talk openly about your own internet use and encourage your child to do the same.
- Explain and talk about basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection during COVID-19 using digital resources. There are plenty of digital resources (videos, animations, booklets, etc) available

in the web.

- Combine online time with fun-filled offline play, games and other activities, so that there is a balance between the screen time and the concrete playtime
- Parents may ensure the involvement of their wards in physical activities such as yoga, exercises, etc. during breaks from digital learning.

Safety Measures:

- Keep TV/ laptops/ computers etc in a common area and definitely out of bedrooms. This will help in restricting usage time and you can easily keep an eye on the child's overall usage of digital devices.
- Develop digital rules in consultation with children, and follow it. The plan could cover things like screen-free areas in home, internet safety rules, duration of watching TV, surfing the web, etc. Talk with children regularly to help them understand the importance of responsible use of the internet rather than scolding.
- Discuss with children about netiquettes like not to post hurtful messages about others, not to post photos, videos and other information without permission of that person online; think before posting one's photos, videos or other data in social media and other places.
- Discuss and enquire if the child is spending too much time on the Internet or mobile, predominantly in instant messengers, forums, texting messages, etc.
- If aware, may use parental controls in devices and enable safe search in browsers while children are surfing the web

Teaching and Learning: • Have a regular communication channel with the school (counsellor, teacher, other staff) to better monitor and help children in their progress.

- Try to create and maintain a routine for your children, particularly the younger ones with respect to all daily activities. This includes digital learning activities suggested by teachers and educational institutions as well.
- Consult with teacher, parents of other children and create simple yet effective learning plans by reflecting on following questions:
 - What would the children learn this week?
 - What digital resources, instructions and support children need to achieve the learning outcomes/lesson/unit?
 - How will children receive these digital resources, instructions and support?
 - How will I know that my children are learning?
- Ensure that your children use assistive aids (glasses, hearing aids etc.) during online sessions.

- Do not force the child to sit continuously in front of the TV, laptop, mobile and never stress or pressurize the child to continuously do online activities when the child is not ready for it.

Guidelines for Students: The most important stakeholder and primary beneficiary of school education are students. The following are guidelines for students to maintain health and mental wellbeing while ensuring continuity in learning.

Balanced Online/Offline Activities:

- Maintain a schedule for sleep, food, noting the time spent on the internet for learning and time spent on the internet for socializing etc.
- Besides online learning, every day read from textbooks and read other books as well
- As a follow up to online class, explore further through activities, experiments, creative expressions etc.
- Access the digital resources provided through the various national CLP initiatives
- Take notes during the online class and review them offline
- Rest CLP time for surfing and regulate screen time for scrolling/reading information on every issue (not more than 2 hours for secondary level students)
- During online activities take small breaks to stand up and move away from the screen. During this break, take a quick walk indoors, do few stretch exercises, practice deep breathing, catch up with family members etc. Do not continue to sit and surf or chat online.
- Avoid using mobile/internet surfing 40 minutes prior to going to bed because engaging in passive communication just before sleeping makes the brain active and makes it difficult for the brain and body to relax.

Safety and Ethics Related Precautions

- Seek parents' permission before sharing any personal information on the Internet
- Be careful about cyber bullying and also stop yourself from bullying others.
- Follow netiquette and behave responsibly while online.

Supporting Online Learning of Children With Special Needs (CWSN)

Children with special needs may require assistance and support from respective teachers. Following are the guidelines that may provide clarity on ways to ensure hassle-free access to online teaching.

Create/Curate and Share Content

- Develop/Identify and use resources like audio books/ talking books, TTS, sign language videos, audio-tactile materials, etc.

- Prepare chapter briefs in advance so that the same may be shared with the CWSN prior to actual group teaching in online mode. Care should be taken to prepare these briefs in multiple formats such as text, audio (voice recorded), audio with visual support etc
- CWSN may be encouraged to watch programs in sign language e.g., the NIOS sign language TV channel and other such programs in sign language.
- Allow flexible ways (types, recorded, audiovisual with gestures, adult/ sibling supported) of responding or submitting assignments/ completed tasks, projects, homework etc.
- The accessibility curriculum of NCERT may be referred for enhancing the participation of CWSN in online mode.

Measures to be taken for CWSN

While creating learning groups of students for online teaching-learning, as far as possible separate groups for students with special needs, maybe avoided and they are treated at par with peers.

Also Watch

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