DUBAI
Knowledge المعرفة

SCHOOL-HOME PROVISION

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO DISTANCE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION



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INTRODUCTION

The shift from classroom-based instruction to distance learning has created challenges and opportunities for educators and learners alike. Online platforms now provide the main source of collaborative working and teacher engagement. As educators become more familiar, confident and creative in the use of this technology, improved differentiation will promote the engagement, participation and progress of almost all students. However, a minority of students, and particularly students of determination who experience the most significant barriers, will struggle to engage with and gather meaning from remote instruction and digital resources.

In accordance with the requirement of Dubai private schools to provide inclusive education, this guide provides information to support school leaders, teachers, education support staff, and specialist professionals to promote equitable access to distance learning provision for students of determination.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

School-Home Provision is a collaborative approach to distance learning that provides increased opportunities for some students of determination to access relevant, meaningful and appropriately challenging education. Key points to consider when developing such programmes include:



WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

The student's *School-Home Provision* should focus upon utilising the enablers and opportunities available in the home to develop a learning experience that is positive and personalised. It is not about imposing external curricular frameworks upon the family.

THE PARENT TAKES PRIORITY

The school should ensure that the parent feels supported and that the *School-Home Provision* does not place excessive burden upon them; stress and anxiety should be minimised to ensure that the experience is conducive to learning and enjoyment.

COLLABORATION IS CRITICAL

Maintaining positive collaboration between the school team, the student of determination, and their family is critical. Each member of the team is reliant upon the other to share their experience and insight in a positive and productive way so that problems can be solved and opportunities for student growth are developed over time.

REPETITION AND REINFORCEMENT ARE REQUIRED

Most students of determination accessing *School-Home Provision* will make small incremental steps of progress as they repeatedly practice skills in a range of situations. Parents should be reassured that repetition reinforces their child's learning and is a key component of their education. The level of independence and understanding their child shows when demonstrating knowledge and skills should be identified important indicators of progress and success.

PROCESS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRODUCT

The home routine provides daily activities that require children to pay attention, communicate, enquire, and initiate. Using these opportunities to practice skills and apply knowledge are powerful enablers of learning for students of determination. For example, the way in which the student engages with the process of making a cake or preparing a sandwich is of much greater value than its taste or appearance.

REVIEWING ROLES

The successful development and delivery of a *School-Home Provision* for students of determination requires key members of the school and the student's family to review and redefine their role in promoting the student's learning experience. These roles include:

THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

The classroom teacher should make daily and direct contact with the student of determination and their parent to ensure that connections between student's *School-Home Provision* and the most valuable elements of their typical learning experiences in school are maintained:

- learning tasks are connected to their assessed starting points in school; their attainment levels, their strengths and their challenges
- common learning themes and topics are connected to the student's *School-Home Provision* and promote opportunities to work and interact alongside their peers
- social connections with peers are maintained.

THE LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

Often, a learning support assistant will play a key role in facilitating and supporting the delivery of *School-Home Provision* for students of determination. They should should provide frequent support to the parent and the child through:

- the implementation of the student's daily schedule of learning activities
- enabling access to resources, information or support the parent requires
- the submission of evidence of progress and achievements
- providing feedback to the teacher and/or the head of inclusion.

THE HEAD OF INCLUSION

The head of Inclusion, or leader of provision for students of determination, is expected to quality assure and review the implementation and impact of *School-Home Provision* for students of determination. In particular they should:

- guide the teacher in the design, adjustment and delivery of the student's home-based learning experience
- provide the advice and support required for the parent to be successful in their role
- supervise and provide guidance to the learning support assistant in their coordination of the student's learning
- adjust the targets and strategies set out in the individual education plan so that they align with the new learning context
- review the student's progress in achieving the goals set out in their individual education plan
- liaise with and work alongside other specialists such as speech and language therapists or ABA practitioners to further enhance learning programmes.

THE PARENT

Parents and other family members have unique and in-depth knowledge of their children. Therefore, they are important enablers of the development and delivery of the *School-Home Provision*. Parents and other family members require direct and dedicated support from the school team.

With a clear understanding of their revised roles each member will be able to work cooperatively to effectively develop and deliver the student's School-Home Provision.

PROVISION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

When developing and delivering *School-Home Provision* for students of determination it is important to follow a systematic process which enables ongoing review and improvement over time. This should build upon success and refine the learning process as it progresses. An example of such a process is explored here:



1. HOLDING A CURRICULUM CONFERENCE

The first step in this development and review process is to hold a routines-based curriculum conference. This meeting between the programme development team, family members and where appropriate, the student should enable a shared understanding of:

- what routines typically look like on a given day
- how the student engages in each routine
- what interaction and communication 'looks like' during these routines
- what the student can do independently
- when and where he or she needs help
- the times when the parent or other family members may be available to support learning and what times to avoid.

Through using this information, the team should identify the learning opportunities that are embedded in everyday routines and connect these to the student's learning targets and their individual education plan.

Over time and on a regular basis, these meetings become a key review and improvement opportunity, where all members of the team are able to discuss struggles, celebrate success, identify solutions and further refine the learning programme.

2. SETTING GOALS AND TARGETS

The student's individual education plan is a key point of reference when working to ensure the continuity of student learning. It is likely that the goals outlined in the plan will need to be adjusted to suit the new learning environment and programme structure. However, the focus of the plan should remain the same – to lower the student's most significant barriers to learning and to empower them to be more successful and independent.

The setting of goals and targets to guide the student's learning will be informed by using knowledge of the student's current levels of attainment, their expected next steps and their profile of ability. Examples of how a daily task, such as making toast for breakfast, can provide opportunities to work towards such goals are illustrated below:

- literacy; sequencing the steps to make a piece of toast (e.g. using first, next, then and last) or practicing prepositions (e.g. in, on and under)
- numeracy; cutting toast into different fractions (e.g. ½ or ¼) or different 2D shapes
- science; the changing state of bread when it is heated (reversable and irreversible changes to materials) or the process involved in generating electricity to power the toaster
- communication skills; making requests for help when assistance in required or taking order requests from other members of the family
- organisation skills; preparing the resources required to make the toast, butter it and serve it or clearing away after making toast.

3. CONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM PLANS

It is important to take time to construct curriculum plans which reflect the student's age, stage of development, ability and the challenges they experience. This includes formalising the design of the provision and using a range of different activities and engagement strategies:

- the learning that takes place through the student's access to *School-Home Provision* is valuable. The student's progress should be carefully considered and intentionally planned to ensure that access and engagement is as equitable as possible. As such, the school should focus upon:

    - identifying the priorities for the student's learning
    - specifying the intended outcomes
    - agreeing how to capture evidence of the student's outcomes and performance
    - finding ways to track their progress in accordance with suitable assessment scales.

- each student's *School-Home Provision* should provide a blend of different learning experiences, shaped around the routines and resources that are available in the home. It is important that their educational experience is as broad and balanced as possible and is likely to include a combination of:

    - online social engagement with peers and teachers
    - physical and emotional wellbeing activities
    - targeted activities to develop their understanding of core knowledge areas related to subjects such as literacy, numeracy or science
    - practical tasks that focus upon the development of key skills such as communication or collaboration
    - opportunities to apply their learning to an increasing range of meaningful contexts, such as meal preparation or playing board games.

4. SELECTING STRATEGIES

The quality of student learning that takes place will be heavily influenced by the strategies that are selected by the school to support the engagement and participation of the student and their parent/s. Some of the most helpful strategies include:

- recordings of key staff demonstrating an activity or modeling a particular support prompt or communication strategy. This provides a reference to the parent and/or the student
- technology or applications appropriate to the needs and abilities of the student and their parent/s
- personalised daily videos from the student's teacher and/or learning support assistant which celebrate successes from the previous day and highlight tasks for the day ahead
- giving guidance on how to embed therapeutic approaches in everyday activities, such as those related to speech and language or occupational therapy
- providing choices so that students make their own decision about the order or selection of learning activities for the day
- online platforms to easily upload photo evidence or recordings of student activity
- live and shared activity sessions with other students or supporting adults
- daily feedback forms.

5. PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESS

Students of determination who access *School-Home Provision* may require additional scaffolding, differentiated to their particular needs. Examples include:

- adult prompting - often, the level of prompt required for a student to complete an activity, is an important progress indicator and should be used and recorded in a structured way. For example, using a hierarchy of prompts to record incremental progress towards achieving IEP goals. Supporting parents to understand how to use prompting to promote student progress is an important consideration
- visual timetables – providing a daily visual timetable, that sequences activities for the day, provides a predictable routine and reduces anxiety
- reward systems - structured reward charts, linked to each activity in the student's schedule provides increased levels of motivation and purpose to their day
- behaviour support plans - changes to the routine and expectations of learning may create confusion, frustration and anxiety. Students and their families, may benefit from specifically designed behaviour support plans to help manage these situations
- additional services – at times, the student may require support from additional services such as counselling or therapy services. This may be provided through direct delivery via online platforms or through support that is embedded within the student's daily learning activities.

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Because of the vital role that the parent plays in promoting the learning of their child as they engage with the *School-Home Provision,* it is essential that the school does all it can to reduce any unnecessary workload or anxiety. It is important to consider how the school will:

- help the parent/s to engage with support networks of other parents who are enabling a *School-Home Provision* for their children
- supply learning plans, timetables, resources and activity guidelines
- provide ways for the parent to directly and quickly access support or get answers to their questions when it is required
- connect with the parent and their child to monitor their wellbeing and provide ongoing support and guidance.





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