

Sense College - Operational Strategy

Home Learning

Information and Process



Outcomes

In order to ensure an effective process of home learning, the purpose and aims within college needs to be clear:

- To develop adaptable delivery methods to support learning from home;
- To value learners by improving their competence, confidence and self-esteem whilst learning from home;
- To ensure the college meets all relevant requirements and legislation;
- To develop and improve services for learners;
- To monitor effectiveness of the professional development opportunities and process;
- To work to the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2014);
- To work to the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005);
- To work to the principles of the Equality Act (2010).

For the college Home Learning strategy to be effective, it is important that staff are clear about its purposes and understand the processes, protocols and outcomes; and above all, perceive it as an effective and supportive mechanism for raising standards and learner experiences. Staff will monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and contribute to its development through the team meetings and the college's quality assurance systems.



Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is for Sense College staff working with learners funded by the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency), in addition to:

- All College Staff and Volunteers, including Executive Principal, Principal and College Senior Management Team
- Governors
- Stakeholders

What is this strategy about?

Sense College regards the process of effective home learning as an essential strand in our commitment to excellence and is all about:

- Ensuring robust processes, strategies and policies provide clear direction;
- Improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning; taking into account the training and support needs of learners whilst learning at home;
- Taking into account the learning styles and training needs of staff, to enable staff to deliver learning activities remotely;
- Sharing and listening – giving learners and staff regular opportunity to discuss and share good practice;
- Engaging families and working together in partnership;

One of the Sense College's fundamental beliefs is that all learners accessing the home learning option via the college has an entitlement to equality of access to high quality learning programmes.

Sense College believes that carefully planned and monitored home learning activities can improve standards, raise engagement and assist learners to complete their study programmes despite not being able to attend college centres during extenuating circumstances.



Contents

Introduction: Rationale

Practice:

- Part One: Value of Home Learning
- Part Two: 'Opting in' to Home Learning
- Part Three: Implementing Home Learning
- Part Four: Guidance for Preparing Home Learning Material
- Part Five: Home Learning Safety
- Part Six: Evidencing Learning and Tracking Progress
- Part Seven: Managing Issues and Concerns of Home Learning

Quality Assurance

Conclusion

Appendices and Forms

Appendix 1: Home Learning Agreement Cover Letter

Appendix 2: Sense College Home Learning Agreement

Appendix 3: Sense College Home Learning Response Form

Appendix 4: Helpful Tips for Preparing Home Learning



Introduction

Rationale:

This document provides the process followed by Sense College and guidance for the education team regarding designing, delivering and monitoring the college's Home Learning Option.

Home Learning is designed to offer education funded learners an option to access our curriculum learning programmes and specialist support from their own home, in the event of being unable to physically attend a college centre due to extenuating circumstances, or provide continuity of learning for individuals whose health needs may result in significant periods of absence. Similarly, the Home Learning option seeks to ensure against the negative impact of unplanned disruption to learning or temporary unforeseen closure of a college centre.

Home Learning may also be used as a supplementary approach to support transition back into education or as a strategy for those who will benefit from additional learning to reach their full potential.

Learners, families and the education teams will work collaboratively to identify and prioritise elements of an individual's study programme that are best suited to home learning. They will have the opportunity to agree on delivery methods that form part of the individual's Home Learning offer. Home Learning options will comply with the college's home learning guidance, risk assessments, existing college strategies and organisational policies, in order to safeguard learners and provide high quality education.



Practice

Part One: Value of Home Learning

Home learning has the most positive impact when:

- It is undertaken by the learners to the best of their ability;
- Learners have a suitable designated place at home to work and study;
- Learners develop a routine for completing work and study at home;
- Parents/carers are supportive and encouraging;
- The education team plan for Home Learning relevant to the learner's programme of study, including interests and needs; with full awareness that setting long, tedious home learning activities does not improve learning.

Home learning supports classroom practice, enabling learners to consolidate and extend learning at home, which can support overall development by:

- Providing opportunity for learners to practice skills developed in college to not only maintain skills, but to deeply embed knowledge into long term memory;
- Helping to prepare for new learning activities;
- Encouraging learners to access resources not available in the classroom;
- Promoting personal and independent learning skills for their future;
- Allowing for differentiation where more able learners can extend their learning;
- Enabling independent learning which shows progress and understanding;
- Empowering the learner;
- Encouraging key behavioural skills such as self-reliance, time management and personal organisation;
- Encouraging greater parental cooperation and support;
- Creating channels for home-college dialogue.



Part Two: 'Opting in' to Home Learning

After establishing Home Learning as a potential option for a learner who is unable to attend college, the learner and parent/carer should be consulted – initially via a phone call if face to face is not possible, to explain the options available. This should then be followed up with a **letter (see Appendix 1)** and a copy of the **Home Learning Agreement (see Appendix 2)** along with the **Home Learning response form (see Appendix 3)**.

The response form should be completed and signed by the learner/parent and then returned to the college centre, where it will then be submitted to the college Senior Management Team (SMT) for approval.

Where a learner is offered Home Learning as an optional top up, alongside normal college attendance, approval is not required.

Part Three: Implementing Home Learning

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the learner:

- To listen to home learning instructions and ask questions which aid understanding
- To ensure that home learning is completed and handed in to meet set deadlines
- To attempt all work and give their best effort
- To inform their Education Coordinator of any difficulties

The role of the parents/carers to assist learning:

- Providing an appropriate work/study space
- Negotiating with the learner when home learning is to be done and following the planned schedule



- Checking the time spent on individual tasks/activities
- Act as a supporting partner in practical activities
- Supporting the learner to attend online meetings
- Checking presentation and content of home learning being returned
- Signing the home learning planner each week
- Providing the college Education Coordinator with information about any problems
- Support with setting up activities and logging/recording observations

The role of a parent/carer is crucial to successful Home Learning. Their role is to reinforce its value through positive feedback, giving learners the confidence to persevere, work hard and reach their potential standard of achievement.

The role of the Education Coordinator (EC):

- To plan home learning
- To include learner tutorials where appropriate
- To check that the learner home learning planner is being signed by the learner/parent/carer
- To note and respond to any comments written in planners by learners or parents
- Set home learning according to the timetable, agreement and ILP
- Provide the stimulus/resources required
- Give full and comprehensive instructions
- Set deadlines for completed work and ensure that they are met
- Mark and return all home learning promptly
- Provide help and support
- Inform Education Service Manager (ESM), Education Programme Manager or Principal as appropriate when or if issues arise.



The role of the Education Programme Manager (EPM):

- To seek to enhance the quality of all home learning set
- To monitor and evaluate Home Learning effectiveness and outcomes

Home Learning Agreement and Planning

After choosing and agreeing to 'Opt in' to the Home Learning option, collaboration between the college, learner and their family is required, to establish a suitable Home Learning programme of study. This will involve pinpointing learning priorities taken from the learner's Study Programme and ILP (Individual Learning Plan), which can be adjusted for effective engagement at home. Educational support and wellbeing considerations will also be explored and clarified.

The Home Learning option is an opportunity to continue a learner's intended learning plan outside of the college centre and therefore must work within the original study offer and EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). To plan for success, a Home Learning Agreement will be put in place to outline the expectations and content of the individual's Home Learning programme. This will ensure all parties are aware of their responsibility and understand the factors to be considered during planning, delivery and assessment.

It has been recognised that some learners will require assistance to access a home learning package. They may also require access to a particular device or resources. Therefore, the college will work with learners and their families to offer flexible learning and support, with delivery methods suited to the learner and parent/carer circumstances and needs.

Sense College has produced an information sheet with **Tips for Home Learning (see Appendix 4)** that provides guidance and further points of reference to assist with the drawing up the Home Learning Agreement, including topics such as accessibility, environment and structure, which may inform the agreement.



Home Learning Timetable

Learners will receive an accessible version of their timetable and weekly planner.

Programmes for Home Learning are designed to offer learners and their families the flexibility they need, suited to their individual circumstances.

However, to satisfactorily approve a Home Learning plan and agreement, the expectations of such must be clear and measurable. Therefore a minimum daily timetable of learning activities amounting to 1-2 hours is expected. The 1-2 hours of daily learning can comprise of live remote sessions (via Zoom, for example) or learners working either independently or with parent/carer support.

The arrangements of a daily timetable are negotiable and are agreed between all parties involved as part of the Home Learning Agreement. Offering flexibility could mean negotiating a timetable made up of a 2-hour morning slot with a 15 minute break scheduled after the first hour. Alternatively, learning could be split into two 1-hour slots, one in the morning and one in the afternoon; or where an individual requires short bursts of focused learning, 4 x 30-minute slots spread throughout the day, could be offered.

In addition, monitoring and feedback support from staff will also take place 2-4 times a week. Monitoring and feedback might include sending the weekly planners, checking in via phone, email or any online learning hub, sending reminders, marking work or offering tutorials.

Delivering Home Learning

The expectations are that education teams work flexibly and fairly to cater for the needs of all learners and to establish a reasonable amount of online learning that is supplemented with practical activities and assessment tasks.

Home learning can include, but is not limited to, any of the following activities:

- Live or pre-recorded online lessons



- Online/telephone meetings
- Practical activities
- Independent learning/study
- Consolidation of work completed in college
- Completion of course work assignments
- Research
- Reading
- Interviews
- Creating, drawing and producing artwork
- Using ICT

Incentives

Sense College believes that high quality Home Learning and an excellent work ethos should be praised. Where appropriate, home learning should be included in display work within centres, or included in college newsletters etc. For exceptional pieces of home learning, a letter or certificate may be awarded.

Part Four: Guidance for Preparing Home Learning Material

The programme of Home Learning options follows the college's curriculum pathways and subject areas. To provide consistent college wide access to home learning opportunities, our education team will work across college to prepare and share home learning materials that can be centrally quality assured and uploaded to the learning platform. ECs are responsible for creating or personalising learning and assessment materials in the form of activities, worksheets or online lessons. See Tips for Preparing Home Learning (appendix 4) for more information regarding access, environment and structure.



Formatting and Accessibility

Home learning material should be created following Sense's standard formatting guidelines. This can be found on IRIS under 'Sense Accessible Communication Guidelines' and 'Sense Generic Word Template and Instructions for creating a document'. ECs are responsible for providing learning materials in learner specific accessible formats – e.g. large print, symbols, braille, audio etc.

Planning Home Learning Activities

Careful planning can improve the quality and continuity for a greater learning experience.

This can include:

- **Using age and level appropriate material**

There are lots of online materials and free resources, however many of these are aimed at children or might not be accessible to all learners' needs. ECs should ensure the activities and links sent home are suitable.

- **Trialling scenarios**

Education staff are encouraged to practice activities with a colleague, particularly if it has not been delivered remotely before, to pre-empt issues and improve the sessions.

- **Embedding learning within learners interests**

Activities that include a learner's interests or have motivational factors, are likely to be more appealing and lead to successful engagement in completing college work.

- **Being creative and fun**

Being creative to capture the learner's attention, makes learning meaningful, motivating and engaging; for example, dress it up, use different sounds and make it fun.

- **Being flexible**

Education staff should change it up if it is not working by adapting the programme or session. Families should be advised to build up the length of sessions gradually. Initially, learners may only engage for 5 or 10 minutes, so listening to their 'voice',



trying to re-engage them, moving on or ending the session when they indicate this, is encouraged. For online sessions, it is recommended to gradually work up towards 30 minute slots.

- **Being patient**

It takes time to build rapport with the learner and Home Learning is a different approach. React to individual needs and pace appropriately. Learning should be an evolving scheme, building on prior knowledge and experience. Pushing for the next step before the learner is ready can cause confusion and break trust.

- **Embracing opportunity**

This is an opportunity to bridge the gap between home and college life. Parents can be coached through strategies so they can apply them too. Sharing successful techniques with all those involved is essential.

- **Ensuring activities have clear instructions**

Guidance or clear instructions to enable delivery of a task/activity as well as information about what learning looks like should be provided – for example, sending a video clip to demonstrate specialist techniques may be considered.

- **Being mindful**

Considering which activities might be best and when is the best time for them to be carried out may help some learners be more alert and ready to learn. Some learners may prefer the morning and some may be better suited to afternoons. However, there should be an awareness that an activity can over stimulate/dysregulate the learner and this may impact on the rest of their day.

- **Being successful**

Sessions should be bite-sized and end on a positive.

- **Being aware of cost implications**

Consideration should be made of the resources available and used, the technology available in the home and the space that is required or may be available.



- **Being practical**

Ensure learning activities are created and suited to the home environment, but that they can also be mapped to the curriculum learning and the learner's individual targets from their ILP.

- **Avoiding making assumptions**

Education staff should avoid any assumption about what is already known. Learners can be hugely different in the home environment compared to the college centre.

- **Following planning**

The learning activities should not have any random filler tasks thrown in to the programme without purpose.

Part Five: Home Learning Safety

All Home Learning must be undertaken alongside, and in compliance with, Safeguarding policies, strategies and procedures, and tracked via Databridge (the college's Management Information System), using the appropriate Event Log category. Particular activities may have additional linked policies, procedures and guidance that apply.

Online Technology Related Learning

This includes using online learning material, email and video conferencing. All online learning must be carried out adhering to the college's E-Safety Strategy and the college's Online Home Learning Risk Assessment, to ensure the safety of all learners and staff whilst working online.

Education staff are required to:

- Ensure all online lessons are pre-planned and that the ESM has a copy of the online meeting schedule;
- Ensure staff and learners are booked on to attend online lessons or video calls in advance;
- Ensure there are always two staff members present – e.g. an EC and ESW;



- All online lessons and video conference calls must be recorded and logged on Databridge;
- Any learner and parent/carer participating in online learning must have received e-safety guidance as part of the Home Learning Agreement.

Part Six: Evidencing Learning and Tracking Progress

Recording learning and progress effectively ensures learning can be tracked and developed over time. It enables the college to monitor the quality of materials used, respond quickly to develop further learning activities and identify any unmet needs.

Record Sessions

All online sessions should be recorded. Parents may also be willing to record activities at home. This is an opportunity to review and evaluate what has been put in place and an opportunity to amend delivery or level of challenge.

Tracking Small Steps

Learners and families should be encouraged to use reflective logs to monitor small steps in progress over time. Capturing observations on Databridge if an objective was worked on but not achieved, helps point out what is being aimed for in future learning.

Communicating with Parents/carers

It is essential to find out how parents/carers prefer to feedback. Parents should be supported to feedback on sessions at home, by clarifying the learning intentions of a set task/activity. They should be asked to set up the next session/activity in a particular way, so that it is more engaging. Parents/carers can be asked for video clips of the activity, so education staff can carry out observations and evaluate the learning.



Recording/noting Contact with Parents

If parents prefer to give verbal feedback over the phone, then this should be noted and captured as evidence to learning too.

Avoiding Overwhelming Parents/carers

To help prevent overwhelming parents/carers with the tracking of learning through complicated paperwork, education staff should follow the college's system to organise evidence, using Databridge Event Logs for mapping progress to individual targets and learning areas.

Part Seven: Managing Issues and Concerns of Home Learning

Where there are concerns with a learner's engagement and/or completion of learning activities from home, the EC should initially support the learner and provide extra tutorials and/or assistance to ensure the tasks set meet the learner's needs. Should the concern continue, then the following approach should be used:

- EC to facilitate discussion and negotiation with the learner and parents, logging a record on Databridge via the Home Learning Event Log
- ESM to facilitate discussion and negotiation with referred learner and parents, with a follow up letter to parents if necessary
- Weekly monitoring through tutorials
- Concern and situation escalated to EPM to discuss, negotiate and apply sanction or support, where appropriate

Where a parent is concerned over any aspect of home learning, they are encouraged to contact the college immediately, either by telephone or email.

Programmes of Home Learning will be monitored by the Education Programme Manager and other college leaders, as part of ongoing quality assurance measures.



Quality Assurance

The Home Learning Strategy and processes follow various elements of quality assurance to ensure quality of education is delivered to all learners and that practices are followed with consistency, fairness and accuracy; as well as providing opportunities for the sharing of good practice and overall development to ensure skills development is embedded in overall college improvement.

This strategy will be reviewed:

- As the need arises;
- Following feedback on the documentation;
- Annually.

Conclusion

Sense College believes that an effective system of providing Home Learning can significantly enhance the access to quality education for learner unable to access centres at unprecedented times and will assist in raising standards, increasing learner confidence resulting in greater independence and achievements, as well as supporting staff to develop and improve their practice.

For Quality Assurance Use only:

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