

CRITERIA FOR THE LENDING OF DIGITAL DEVICES TO PUPILS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Criteria

1. The following criteria should be used for the lending of digital devices to pupils during the Covid-19 crisis. This will provide scope for wider distribution of devices if there is capacity to do so.
2. Priority will be given to children currently in year groups: 11, 13, 6 and 3; and
3. Categories: FSME, SEN 1-5, Newcomer target groups (this means Asylum Seeker, Refugee and Roma children), LAC and children who are considered vulnerable¹.
4. Distribution of devices shall be given in the following priority order:
 - i. Current Year 11 pupils who are FSME and SEN or newcomer target groups or LAC or vulnerable;
 - ii. Current Year 13 pupils who are FSME and SEN or newcomer target groups or LAC or vulnerable;
 - iii. Current Year 6 pupils who are FSME and SEN or newcomer target groups or LAC or vulnerable;
 - iv. Current Year 3 pupils who are FSME and SEN or newcomer target groups or LAC or vulnerable;
5. Indicative figures suggest approximately 8,000 children could be eligible for a device using the above criteria in the first round. The more categories a pupil is eligible under, the higher the priority.
6. Those pupils who are FSME in the above year groups but not meeting the criteria of either SEN, newcomer target groups, LAC and/or vulnerable category will be considered next for distribution.

¹ The term “vulnerable” encompasses those children who are in need of protection, or in need, as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995. Children and young people in need may include those: • Receiving support from Health & Social Services including family support, child protection and looked after children services; • On the Child Protection Register; • With statements of special education needs; • Accessing Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS); • Accessing Education Nurture Units; • With emerging and diagnosed mental health needs; • Who are homeless; • Who are young carers; • Subject to paramilitary threat; • Whose parents have mental health problems; • Whose parents have alcohol and drug addictions; • Affected by domestic violence.

7. Subject to availability, pupils who are FSME in other year groups will be considered on a similar basis as the year groups named above.
8. An indicative number of devices (8,942 for primary, post-primary and special) was identified by schools in the daily survey conducted on 24 April 2020 and schools will initially be limited to this as stages 1 to 3 are followed.
9. If at the end of Stage 3, more devices are available, there may be scope to revisit children / schools depending upon their particular needs. In other words, a reserve list may need to be maintained by the EA throughout the process.
10. The three stage process referred to is:
 - Stage 1 – using existing school stock, which is already being lent out
 - Stage 2 – using 3,000 new laptops, which have been procured;
 - Stage 3 – if needed, further additional devices will be purchased.