EDUCATION SUPPORT (ES) STAFF   
TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT

GUIDANCE NOTE  
ROLE OF ES STAFF IN THE DELIVERY OF REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING

**EDUCATION SUPPORT (ES) STAFF TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

This note provides guidance about effective ways Education Support (ES) staff can work with teachers and other school staff, remotely and on-site, to support the health, wellbeing, teaching and learning of students.

ES staff support roles in schools cover these four broad areas:

* student/teacher support
* administration/operations
* technical
* professional services.

**KEY points**Each school deploys ES staff in different ways. This note provides broad guidance on the role of ES staff in the context of remote and flexible learning and is not intended to address all specific ES staff roles.

This note should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training’s (the Department) current advice regarding flexible and remote learning, including, but not limited to the:

* [operating model](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flist.comms.educationupdates.vic.gov.au%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D770f4d1425f14b0d9936ca688e358872%26id%3Dd748d8a1%26e%3Dadf25f7a&data=02%7C01%7Cbolas.fiona.e%40edumail.vic.gov.au%7Cec2808d0bd5440a002c908d7daf011e2%7Cd96cb3371a8744cfb69b3cec334a4c1f%7C0%7C0%7C637218596943932650&sdata=QOf4l60A%2B1G8ANI2H35H6QF3M%2BLtC8R6ysXgdyNwhz0%3D&reserved=0) and,
* [Child safety, reportable conduct and duty of care in remote online learning environments fact sheet.](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Shared%20Documents/Childsafetyandonlinelearningfactsheet.docx)
* Where schools provide flexible and remote learning, ES staff duties and responsibilities do not change in nature or scope and remain consistent with the employee’s classification level and salary range. ES staff should be consulted on ways the work may be allocated or organised. School leadership should refer to the [Dimensions of Work Education Support Class](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Dimensions-of-Work-ES.pdf), when considering the work that can be required of an ES at their classification level.
* In remote and flexible learning arrangements, staff should not visit or work in students’ homes.

The Department’s website for teachers, parents and carers: [Learning from Home](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/Pages/coronavirus-home-learning.aspx) provides advice to schools about how they can support learning continuity for children and young people learning flexibly and remotely.

**ES STAFF ROLES**

The following information is relevant to all ES staff working across the four broad areas listed in the ‘Overview’ above. Schools should communicate to parents that ES staff will form a key part in the delivery of remote learning and that each school’s program is tailored to best meet current local needs.

**Working remotely**

Where schools implement flexible and remote learning, ES and other staff will need to be supported to work remotely. School leadership should refer to the Department’s guidance, including the [operating model](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flist.comms.educationupdates.vic.gov.au%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D770f4d1425f14b0d9936ca688e358872%26id%3Dd748d8a1%26e%3Dadf25f7a&data=02%7C01%7Cbolas.fiona.e%40edumail.vic.gov.au%7Cec2808d0bd5440a002c908d7daf011e2%7Cd96cb3371a8744cfb69b3cec334a4c1f%7C0%7C0%7C637218596943932650&sdata=QOf4l60A%2B1G8ANI2H35H6QF3M%2BLtC8R6ysXgdyNwhz0%3D&reserved=0) and [the child safety, reportable conduct and duty of care in remote online environments fact sheet](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Shared%20Documents/Childsafetyandonlinelearningfactsheet.docx), to support ES staff to transition to this way of working safely and effectively.

Schools will have their own modes of technology to communicate with staff, students and families. Please refer to the ‘Considerations’ below, to ensure ES staff can access the school’s chosen technologies and platforms, and are provided with the support and equipment to do this. School meetings and planning will be able to continue remotely. This will be particularly important in supporting staff to transition to working flexibly.

Student Support Group (SSG) meetings, staff meetings, health and wellbeing meetings, family meetings, professional learning communities and collaborative teaching and learning planning can all continue while staff are working remotely. Where appropriate, school leadership should include ES staff in these meetings to promote collaboration and consistent communication.

Teachers being supported by ES staff will need to ensure communication is regular, consistent and clear. Teachers and ES staff should work collaboratively to support communication with families and students, and to support teaching and learning. Teachers always lead the teaching and learning, and ES staff support teachers to do this. For example, an ES staff member could be asked by a teacher to assist a student remotely to access a particular web-based program or how to upload completed work. In these circumstances of remote learning the supervision responsibility remains with the parents and/or guardians, the teachers lead the task, and the ES staff member assists students and the teacher.

**Working on-site**

Principals are responsible for identifying work that can be undertaken remotely, and work that needs to remain on-site. In making this determination, principals should be mindful of ES staff who can work from home and should work from home. Principals will need to consider, not only the duties of their staff, but the health and wellbeing of their staff. ES staff may have personal circumstances that preclude them from working on-site, including caring responsibilities or health vulnerability.

Principals will need to consider what on-site work looks like with fewer staff and students. This includes planning a timetable or roster to include ES staff who are willing and able to work on-site.

Students attending on-site must be supervised at all times by staff with either a current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or a Working with Children Check. ES staff can provide direct support to and supervision of students, provided they have access to support from a VIT registered teacher.

Schools should be aware that where ES staff undertake some supervision of students in these circumstances that they will have a duty of care to the students. Therefore, it will be necessary for the ES staff member to have the necessary skills, training and support to undertake any allocated tasks.

**What should principals CONSIDER?**

While the core duties of ES staff will remain the same, a greater focus on remote and flexible learning means the specific ways in which they undertake their duties may change.

To prepare for this, principals should consider the following:

* **Do ES staff have access to the equipment they need to enable them to undertake their role and duties?**

For instance, do ES staff working remotely have access to equipment such as a laptop and the internet? Schools will need to provide any unused or available laptops or iPads to ES staff to use during this time. Principals need to ensure access to the most recent guidance and advice to all staff working remotely.

* **Which ES staff are willing and able to be rostered on to fulfil on-site duties, to support school staff who work with vulnerable children and children of parents who cannot work from home and where no other arrangements can be made during regular school hours?**

Principals need to consider how best to meet the requirements for on-site supervision, including consideration of the range of students attending and their support needs. Principals also need to consider whether any staff who may need to work remotely based on medical advice and in line with the Department’s School Operations Guide. Principals need to ensure that ES staff receive the most recent guidance, training and advice for all staff working on-site.

It is good practice to advise families of the staff (including ES) who may be working on-site. Teachers and ES staff can together connect with families to build and strengthen relationships, in particular where they have not worked directly with these families and students attending on-site previously. Where changes occur, ES staff should be provided with information about safety management planning for any student they will be supervising.

Principals should work with existing providers (including the Schoolcare Program) to ensure that required staff are trained appropriately to meet student needs and to work safely on school sites.

* **Do ES staff have access to professional learning and support to enable them to work with a greater focus on remote and flexible learning?**

ES staff working in classroom support roles are likely to be required to support teachers in developing and uploading online learning and teaching materials or modules. Schools may need to consider how to strengthen the capabilities of their ES staff in relation to use of technology, including collaboration with teachers and other staff, and professional learning courses or programs.

* **Are there systems in place to ensure continued partnerships, collaboration and planning between ES staff and other staff, including teachers, other ES staff, parents/carers, and other professionals supporting students?**

Successful remote and flexible learning requires strong partnerships. Processes for collaboration and planning should continue, with adaptation to remote working, along with scheduling and formalising regular check-ins that may have occurred more spontaneously when working on-site.

* **How can ES staff best support teachers in communicating with families?**

Schools play an important role in guiding families on how they can support their children’s learning. ES staff can support teachers in this area in developing learning tasks and educational materials that students can complete at home.

ES staff undertake these responsibilities under instruction and direction of the classroom teacher.

Work undertaken should at all times comply with the advice for schools on [Child safety, reportable conduct and duty of care in remote online learning environments](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Shared%20Documents/Childsafetyandonlinelearningfactsheet.docx).

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

This section provides specific information around the work of those ES staff in classroom support roles. They will continue to be responsible for supporting teacher-led teaching and learning, irrespective of whether this happens on-site at school, or through remote or flexible means.

Communication should be regular and inclusive. This includes communication between school leaders, all school staff, including ES staff working both on-site and remotely, students, families, Regional Health Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces, community services and other allied health professionals. Ongoing and regular communication is vital to promoting collaborative, professional and respectful relationships and working towards improving student outcomes.

The following actions provide school leaders with guidance to best assist ES staff to support teachers and students and promote collaborative working relationships. These actions will be implemented differently in each school, depending on the school’s circumstances, including student cohorts and existing processes and practices that can be leveraged.

| Action | What does this look like? |
| --- | --- |
| Clearly define roles and responsibilities of teachers and ES staff working in classroom support roles | *When teaching and ES staff roles and responsibilities are clear and there is collaboration, ES staff can more effectively support improvements in student outcomes.*  In remote and flexible learning arrangements, this may look like:   * prioritising time to clarify the respective roles of ES staff and teachers and how they will work collaboratively remotely and/or on-site * determining the work that can be undertaken remotely, and what needs to be done onsite, and prepare rosters for this and a process for seeking ES staff to participate in the on-site teaching and learning program, in line with the Department’s guidance * scheduling time for ES staff and teachers to plan for and prepare resources for students learning remotely * establishing routines for regular contact between ES staff and teachers, through the school’s chosen technologies * reinforcing the role of ES staff in supporting learning continuity and enabling teachers to take responsibility for teaching all students in their class, in collaboration with ES staff * ensuring ES staff are included in the technologies teachers are using to deliver remote or flexible learning, so they can communicate with the students and provide additional help or resources. |
| Build capability of, and provide leadership support for, ES staff working in classroom support roles | *When ES staff and teaching staff receive professional learning, support and feedback, inclusive education practices are reinforced, and student outcomes improve.*  In remote and flexible learning arrangements, this may look like:   * ensuring that ES staff continue to be supported to develop and action an effective Performance and Development Plan (PDP) * strengthening systems for ES staff to self-reflect and receive regular feedback from staff they work collaboratively with * assisting ES staff to continue to strengthen and build their capabilities to support teachers to engage students in learning and improve student outcomes, particularly in new technologies, e.g. web-based skills and video modelling * empowering ES staff with the skills to work with groups of students on teacher-led and designed teaching and learning activities, and encourage students to interact with their peers, teachers and the resources to address challenges presented by the learning tasks * working with ES staff to identify relevant professional learning, and potentially engaging allied health staff (Regional Health Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces) or other school staff to remotely deliver professional learning content.     As a starting point, professional learning could include:   * opportunities listed on the Department’s website:  [https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/classrooms/Pages/pd.aspx#link](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/classrooms/Pages/pd.aspx#link1) * *Disability Standards for Education (DSE)* e-learning modules: <https://www.nccd.edu.au/resources-and-tools/professional-learning/format/e-learning-5> * facilitating professional learning communities around a key area of the school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). |
| Promote productive and inclusive partnerships between all staff, including teachers, ES staff working in classroom support roles, parents/carers and community services | *When teaching staff and ES staff are part of an active network of families, Koorie Education Support Officers (KESOs), Student Support Services (SSS), allied health professionals and other community services supporting all students, they can promote student wellbeing and engagement within and beyond the classroom.*  In remote and flexible learning arrangements, this may look like:   * establishing the role ES staff will play in assisting teachers to communicate with families as they provide support to students learning remotely * identifying how ES staff can assist teachers to provide additional support to families and students in vulnerable cohorts, for instance preparing a list of students/ families for more regular contact * ensuring relevant meetings and *team around the learner* approaches are continued, and including ES staff where appropriate, to promote collaboration and consistent and effective communication * allocating time for teaching staff and ES staff to work collaboratively to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and participate in Student Support Groups (SSGs) as required. |
| Advocate for, and support high expectations of, all students by implementing evidence-based approaches that support students’ learning, social inclusion, independence and responsibility | *When ES staff share a school’s high expectations for all students, they can support teaching staff in using evidence-based approaches, irrespective of whether the teaching and learning is delivered on-site or remotely.*  In remote and flexible learning arrangements, this may look like:   * continuing to provide regular opportunities for teachers and ES staff to collaboratively review student data to inform teacher-led and inclusive teaching and learning, via the school’s chosen technologies * allocating ES staff to support teacher-designed learning, using the [Victorian Teaching and Learning Model](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/Victorianteachingandlearningmodel.aspx) (VTLM) * promoting the understanding that the support provided to students will continue to be differentiated according to their individual needs, whether it is delivered onsite or remotely * providing opportunities for ES staff to join in teacher and student discussions that empower student voice and agency * supporting ES staff to practice evidence-based interventions that have been identified and agreed on in their meetings with teachers and students. |