Schola Europaea

Office of the Secretary-General
Pedagogical Development Unit

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Distance Teaching and Learning Policy for the European Schools

Approved by the Board of Governors by written procedure No 2021/8 on 29 March 2021.

Immediate entry into force.

This document cancels and replaces the document 2020-09-D-10-en-3.

Table of Contents

I.   Aim and principles

The aim of the European Schools is to provide pupils with quality teaching and learning in the public interest, pursuant to the 'Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools'). The development and further improvement of distance teaching and learning have been at the centre of the activities of the European Schools over recent months[1] and will continue to be a strategic area in the coming years, irrespective of the question of under which scenario the schools will have to operate.

In exceptional cases and based on the decision of the Director, distance teaching may be organised in order to educate children in the public interest, as stated by Article 26a of the General Rules (see Annex).

The European Schools envision three potential scenarios[2]:

- Scenario 1: Teaching *in-situ* in all schools as a rule, but with restrictions for vulnerable and quarantined staff (including inspectors) and pupils.
- Scenario 2: Temporary continuation of measures of confinement which allow only parts of the school population to participate in teaching *in-situ*, leading to hybrid teaching and learning.
- Scenario 3: Temporary suspension of teaching *in-situ* for the complete school, complete cycles, complete class or course (e.g., quarantine), leading to distance teaching and learning.

The present policy supports the **learning continuity plans** devised by the schools and contains **requirements** that apply to hybrid and distance learning. This policy aims to:

- Ensure fair and equal treatment, wellbeing, health/safety and academic progress for all pupils[3].
- Set out requirements for management, educational staff and inspectors with regard to practices and tools.
- Provide appropriate rules for data protection.

N.B.: Although this policy is also addressed to the Accredited European Schools, some considerations are more relevant to the European Schools' digital environment.

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[1] E.g. Digital Education Vision for the European Schools system (DEVES) (ref.: 2018-12-D-7-en-4).
[2] Analysis and Proposals of the Task Force 'Preparation of the 2020/21 school year' (ref.: 2020-07-D-9-en-2). See also, hereafter, the definition of the main terms.
[3] As a principle, each pupil must receive all parts of the Syllabi whether in situ or at distance.

The requirement levels are expressed using specific words:

MUST	the element is an **absolute requirement** or **obligation** (or "required" or "shall")
SHOULD	there may be valid reasons in particular circumstances for ignoring a particular element and be flexible, but all **implications must be understood** and **carefully weighed** before choosing a different path
MAY	the element is **truly optional** (ort the adjectives "optional" or "recommended")
SHOULD NOT	there may be valid reasons in particular circumstances where a particular behaviour is acceptable or even useful, but **all implications should be understood**, **and the case carefully weighed** before implementing any behaviour described with this notation (or the phrase "not recommended")
MUST NOT	the element is an **absolute prohibition** (or "shall not")

Table 1. Levels of recommendations

II. General arrangements

A. Timetables and live online lessons

1. General principles for scenarios 2 and 3

- Timetables **must** be examined cycle by cycle and if necessary, adapted by the management to fit learning scenarios, and to ensure the best balance between the achievement of learning objectives with the well-being of pupils in each year and educational staff.
- Timetables **should** moderate the time devoted to screens, for well-being and health reasons. Off-screen and on-screen activities **should** therefore be balanced, and breaks **must** be enforced between online classes.
- Timetables **should**, especially in the Nursery and Primary cycles, take account of the role of families in accompanying pupils.

A live **online lesson** is a lesson where teachers and pupils are present in a meeting together for the whole period (via video, audio or chat), with supervision and guidance by the teacher.

In the event of technical difficulty, the teacher must provide the pupils with materials and work instructions and should schedule one or several catch-up sessions with the pupils during the week.

2. Specific principles for scenario 2

In the case of scenario 2, management **must** clearly define any hybrid rotation scheme put in place, and particularly the frequency of rotation. When hybrid-rotation is scheduled, standards from scenario 3 must apply on remote weeks or days.

- If rotation is weekly or multi-weekly, management **must** ensure that full distance learning is applied in weeks of remote teaching.

- If rotation is less than weekly (partial week or daily), management **must** ensure that minimum standards are set and implemented in accordance with this policy.

  - For Primary main classes, full distance learning **should** be applied on remote days; otherwise, the management **must** specify how the policy requirements will be met.

  - For Primary L2 and other subjects, the direction **must** specify how the policy requirements will be met.

For Secondary, the direction **must** specify how the policy requirements will be met and in particular how the minimum requirement for complete live online lessons for each course will be met.

3. Specific principles for scenario 3

In Nursery and Primary, the following **must** apply:

- At least one structured daily live online lesson by the class teacher with all his or her pupils, whether in the whole class, in groups or individually. The duration of the online lesson and/or sessions **should** be based on pupils' self-regulation skills.

In Secondary, the following **must** apply:

- At least one live online lesson (1 period) with all pupils per week for 1- or 2-period/week courses.
- At least two live online lessons (2 periods) with all pupils per week for 3- or 4-period/week courses.
- At least three live online lessons (3 periods) with all pupils per week for 5- or 6-period/week courses.

B. **Vulnerable or quarantined pupils**

Pupils obliged to stay home due to vulnerability or quarantine (with a due medical certificate or accordingly to the local administrative rules) during an epidemic or similar event, and for more than a week, **must** receive pedagogical continuity via regular contacts.

Contact with the pupils can be with the whole class, in groups or individual, and is either:

- a live online lesson (when possible),
- a call (if possible, especially for Nursery pupils) or written communication (upper Primary and Secondary) for pedagogical guidance.

1. Nursery and Primary

- The class teacher **must** send a weekly work plan with an agenda.
- The class teacher **must** organise at least two contacts per week with each pupil at home.
- L2 teacher **should** contact each pupil at home at least one time per week for P1-P3 and two times a week for P4-P5.

2. Secondary

- Each Secondary subject teacher **must** contact each pupil at least once per week. The number and length of contacts **should** commensurate with the number of course periods and appropriate to the year level and subject.

C. **Vulnerable or quarantined teachers**

In both scenarios 1 and 2, teachers who are "present remotely" according to the school's absence policy **must** provide pedagogical continuity to pupils.

Teachers at home (vulnerable or quarantined) **must** follow the provision of scenario 3.

Their pupils **must** continue to attend lessons at school.

The school **must** provide the proper environment to ensure proper teaching and learning.

D. Digital tools and services

The management **must** ensure consistent integration of officially approved digital tools and services[4] into the regular working life of the schools. This is a necessary foundation for digital education and also provides a stable foundation in each scenario (*in situ*, hybrid and fully online).

Concerning videoconference (live discussion between people in remote locations via digital means of communications: video, audio, and chat), and according to Article 26a of the General Rules, the choice of the communication system shall be the sole responsibility of the Director, being the data controller of the school. The Director shall ensure that the system chosen complies with data security, reliability and confidentiality requirements as laid down by the host Member State's privacy legislation.

The European Schools are currently using Microsoft Teams as an interactive online communication system for distance teaching. Even though Directors are in principle free to choose other video conferencing tools within their autonomy as data controller, this is not recommended. In the event a Director has decided to opt for an alternative video conferencing tool, the School's Data Protection Officer (DPO) must be consulted and assess such an alternative tool beforehand.

Similarly, if a staff of the European Schools needs to use another digital tool or resource (including the applications available in the Teams apps library as they are not approved by the school like the usual Microsoft 365 applications), he or she **must** contact the school's DPO, to launch an authorisation request procedure[5] (pedagogical added value and General Data Protection Regulation compliance assessment).

E. Personal data protection

Article 26a of the General Rules provides a legal basis for the use of interactive online communication systems (audio/video) including online teleconferencing systems. It also clarifies that the use of teleconferencing tools has to be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)'s requirements[6].

Using interactive online communication tools (including video conferencing systems) implies the processing of staff members' and pupils' personal data. Anything done with personal data (collection, recording, organization, structuring, storage, alteration,

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[4] In the European Schools, these tools and services are primarily SMS, and Microsoft 365 enabled applications, amongst which Microsoft Teams is a central component.
[5] 2020-01-D-9-en-2 Annex to MEMO 2019-12-M-3/GM.
[6] General Rules of the European Schools (ref.: 2014-03-D-14-en-9).

retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, restriction, erasure) is a processing of personal data. Hence, any data processing activity **must** comply with the GDPR's provisions.

In the event of distance teaching, classes **may** be taught and assessed using an interactive online communication system (audio/video). Nevertheless, not all features (which from a pedagogical point of view might be useful) are necessary to fulfil the European Schools' mission and to provide quality distance teaching:

- Teachers are **allowed to**:
    - post a video or audio recording of themselves for their pupils[7];
    - run live sessions where pupils may appear on the screen.
- Teachers and pupils **must not:**
    - **record video, audio or screenshot of pupils[8].**

III.   Roles and responsibilities

A. Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools

- **Must** ensure the consistency of this Policy with the European Schools frameworks and strategic priorities, within the available resources.
- **Should** ensure the consistency of this Policy with the European Union strategic priorities and the research in the field of hybrid and distance education.
- **Must** ensure and support the proper implementation of this Policy in the European Schools, especially with the support of the 'IT Strategy Group' (PEDA & ADM).

B. Inspectors

"One of the most important tasks of Inspectors is to assure the Quality of teaching and learning. Concerning the work of inspectors, most of the activities can be carried out with distance working methods, giving the same support to the management and the teachers by distance."[9]

Inspectors **must** support teachers and school management in organising the pedagogical continuity. To this end, inspectors are supported by the relevant working groups, as well as by the online professional communities (coordinated by the

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[7] When the pupils' microphones and cameras are not switched on and no pupil name appears on the screen.

[8] The technical capability to record live videoconference sessions on Microsoft Teams is disabled for teachers and pupils. Pupils **must not** film/take pictures of staff and peers, as this is also clearly mentioned in the ICT Charter (Memorandum 2020-08-M-1-en-1/AB).

[9] Analysis and recommendations of the Task Force – COVID 19 (ref.: 2020-07-D-9).

Pedagogical Development Unit)[10], the intranet of the Pedagogical Development and the online calendar of online training and events.

Distant training activities **must** be planned and organised considering the actual situation of the schools, when many teachers are absent due to an epidemic or for other reasons. Because the school's management may face difficulties in organising teaching in the school, it is imperative that inspectors previously consult the director and management of the school(s) concerned. Whenever necessary, training is organised online[11].

Evaluation of teachers: the *in-situ* evaluation of teachers is fundamental and **must** predominate. The online evaluation can be done only in exceptional circumstances or if the *in-situ* evaluation is restricted by specific recommendations (made by national authorities or ES).[12]

C. Management

During any of the three scenarios, and in compliance with the General Rules and the present Policy, management team (Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Deputy Directors):

- **Must** ensure the alignment of the school's policy and practices with the present policy and the Recommendations for Distance teaching and learning (2020-03-D-11).
- **Must** clearly announce the move to each scenario (including scenario 1) and the application of Article 26a of the General Rules.
- During any distance learning situation (including scenario 1), **must** lay out absence policies specifying under which situations individual or groups of pupils and teachers can attend classes from a distance. Pupils complying with rules **should** be considered as regularly attending classes for the purpose of Article 30 of the General Rules.
- When necessary under scenario 2, **must** define and communicate any hybrid rotation scheme put in place, and particularly the frequency of rotation.
- **Must** ensure appropriate support, e.g., training and the sharing of good practices for all educational staff.
- **Must** coordinate and monitor the quality of the teaching and learning, as well as the work of players from across the school (such as through regular meetings with coordinators, reviewing work set or reaching out for feedback from pupils and parents and other tools as appropriate to the channels used).
- **Must** ensure effective communication channels with stakeholders, among them parents and pupils.
- **Must** ensure the proper technological infrastructure of the school and availability of essential digital equipment for educational staff in classrooms (especially for

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[10] System-level professional communities in the European Schools (ref.: 2020-08-D-10-en-2).

[11] Framework for and organisation of Continuous Professional Development in the European Schools (ref.: 2016-01-D-40-en-6).

[12] Evaluation of the teachers in the ES system – 2015-09-D-40 – Annex III of the document 'Quality Teaching in the European Schools – Booklet'.

streaming lessons), in the limits of the allocated means and budget at his/her disposal.

- With the assistance of the school Data Protection Officer, **must** monitor the security of distance learning systems, including data protection, and safeguarding considerations.

D. **Teaching staff**

1. General duties

During any of the three scenarios, and in compliance with the General Rules and the official teaching standards, teaching staff:

- **Must** follow learning continuity plans and any specific guidance provided by the Office of the Secretary-General, the inspectors, and their school.
- **Must** use official and appropriate means and tools to teach and assess, responding to the needs of pupils.
- **Must** follow the official timetable adapted to the current scenario and make themselves available during official working hours, to teach and assess, answer questions, monitor progress and encourage all their pupils.
- **Must** foster and monitor pupil's engagement and well-being; if a pupil is not engaged in the lessons and assignments, teaching staff should contact parents and/or the school educational advisor**.**
- **Must** communicate (especially in Nursery, Primary and lower Secondary,) regularly with parents and families regarding expectations, pupils' progress, and on how pupils will be assessed, following general guidance provided by inspectors and schools' management.
- **Must** have a focus on online safety and netiquette.
- **Should** participate in professional development and online professional communities, at school and system level.

During **live online lessons**, especially in upper Primary and in Secondary, teachers:

- **Must** be available somehow during the whole of the scheduled lessons (videoconference or written chat).
- **Should** support group and individual work.
- **Should not** necessarily stream their video with the whole class for the duration of the lesson; teachers and pupils **may** activate their cameras when relevant during online interactions, providing connectivity permits it.
- **Must** at least meet briefly with all their pupils at the beginning of each lesson and **should** also meet at the end of each lesson, as this will allow them to define learning objectives, monitor participation and answer frequent questions.

2. Specific duties in Nursery and Primary

During scenarios 2 and 3, and in compliance with the General Rules and the official teaching standards, and in addition to the previous general duties, Nursery and Primary class teachers:

- **Must** provide a daily or weekly (for Nursery) work plan for the pupils, with clear learning objectives and a clear ranking of the priorities of the activities (e.g., "must do", "should do", "aspire to do"). The daily plan should be sent before 9 a.m. or the evening before, or communicated at the beginning of the week (in the European Schools: SMS and/or Microsoft Teams). Also, a weekly work plan **must** be provided by all other teachers.
- As part of daily interactions, teachers **should** present material; give feedback on work submitted; explain new homework assignments and clarify learning objectives; monitor attendance, participation and general well-being; and answer general questions.
- L2 teachers **must** organise live online lessons at least twice each week for P1-3 and three times each week for P4-P5, and each child **should** be assured of at least 75% of regular in situ hours of live online lessons. Other subject teachers (HE, morale/religion, art/music/PE) **should** organise lessons at least once a week for all levels.

Role of parents and legal representatives

- Nursery and Primary P1: due to their very low level of autonomy, pupils need someone else for almost all educational activities. The highest level to be expected is when parents or legal representatives connect their child to the videoconference, and the child can switch the microphone on/off and end the call. Similarly, parents should start online educational activity (video, game, presentation, etc.) even if the child can manage independently afterwards.
- Primary P2-P5: parents and legal representatives should help children set up the equipment and connect to video conferencing for the first time. As soon as children are sufficiently independent, parents and legal representatives should let them participate in online activities on their own (unless they are invited by the teacher to participate).

3. Specific duties in Secondary

During scenarios 2 and 3, and in compliance with the General Rules and the official teaching standards, and in addition with the previous general duties, Secondary teachers, including educational support teachers:

- **Must** attend all the timetabled lessons of each course.
- **Must** communicate instruction, homework and assignments to their pupils via the digital mean(s) decided by the school for each cycle (in the European Schools: SMS and/or Microsoft Teams).
  - S1-S3: Communication **must** also be received by parents and legal representatives.
  - S4-S7: Communication **should** also be received by parents and legal representatives.

E. **Coordinators and Subject Referents**

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their teaching responsibilities, coordinators and subject referents:

- **Must** maintain and foster online collaboration, among teachers, to ensure that the best practices are shared and discussed for the benefit of all pupils.
- **Must** inform teachers about digital resources they can use to teach their subject remotely.
- **Must** coordinate, when necessary, online assessment practices**.**
- **Should** collaborate with other coordinators and referents at school-level and at system-level.

F. Class assistants in Nursery and Primary

- **Must** support the teachers during online lessons.
- **Must** support pupils when the teacher is teaching from home.

G. Educational Support Assistants

- **Must** participate in the planning and evaluation of the support to be/ provided to the pupil/s.
- **Must** develop the planned weekly support activities.
- **Must** work in close cooperation with support teacher/coordinator and parents.
- **Must** provide weekly feedback on the support provided to the Support Coordinator.

H. Educational Support coordinators

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their regular responsibilities, Educational Support coordinators:

- **Must** maintain and foster online collaboration among support stakeholders.
- **Must** collaborate with other coordinators at system-level and sharing good digital practices and tools.
- **Must** monitor the proper implementation and adaptation of Group Learning Plan (for General Support) and Individual Learning Plan (for Moderate and Intensive Support) in the context of hybrid and distance learning environment.
- **Must** monitor the provision of educational support reincluding support from support assistants and therapists (tripartite agreements).

I. Educational advisers

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their regular responsibilities, educational advisers:

- **Must** routinely inform via the official digital communication channel(s) of the presence *in situ*, remote presence or absence of teachers and pupils.
- **Must** track and monitor online pupil attendance and absence.
- **Must** collaborate on the organisation of extracurricular online activities.

- **Must** maintain and foster online contact with pupils, to listen to their needs and ensure their well-being.
- **Must** contribute to the proper organisation of lessons' live-streaming sessions.
- When applicable, **must** organise/supervise the smooth running of the B Tests and exams of his/her cycle, possibly with alternative tasks and online modalities.
- When necessary, **must** visit online classes and help the teachers with proper management of the class. In doing so, education advisers **should** coordinate with the care team and the psychologists.
- With the cycle coordinator, **must** investigate cases of online disrespect among pupils and other members of the school community (bullying…).
- **Should** collaborate with other educational advisers in School and at system-level and share good digital practices and tools.

J. **Cycle coordinators in the Secondary**

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their regular tasks, cycle coordinators:

- **Must** coordinate common approaches in teaching and learning within the cycle.
- **Must** monitor the follow up of pupils of his/her cycle with difficulties (learning, attendance, behaviour or other), in collaboration with the educational advisor.
- **Must** maintain and foster online collaboration among teachers of the cycle.
- **Must** ensure and monitor assessment procedures: organising/supervising the smooth running of the B Tests and exams of his/her cycle, possibly with alternative tasks and online modalities.
- **Must** organise online modalities for the class councils of his/her cycle.
- **Should** communicate with lower Secondary pupils' parents/legal representatives whenever necessary.
- **Should** collaborate with other cycle coordinators at school-level and system-level.

K. **ICT Coordinators**

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their teaching responsibilities, ICT coordinators (in charge of coordinating digital teaching and learning):

- **Must** support teaching staff in the use of digital tools and foster good practices.

L. **Librarians**

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their regular tasks, librarians:

- **Must** identify and inform teaching staff of digital resources they can use to teach their subject remotely, according to their needs.

- **Must** help teachers, pupils and, when necessary families, to access and use online resources (e.g., libraries, eBooks, web-based educational applications). This can take the form of online sessions (e.g., webinars).
- **Should** develop and maintain an online school library website (e.g., on SharePoint).
- **Should** collaborate with other librarians at school-level and at system-level.

M. Science laboratories technicians

During any of the three scenarios, and alongside their regular tasks, science laboratories technicians:

- **Must** assist teachers in the organisation of live-streamed or recorded demonstrations from schools' laboratories or via virtual laboratories simulations.

IV. Assessment

A. General principles

"Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning. It takes into account the needs of the diverse community of learners in the European Schools and is based on a common assessment approach."[13]

During any of the three scenarios, schools and teachers:

- **Must** comply with the assessment principles of the European Schools[14].
- **Must** monitor pupil performance and record evidence of pupils' learning.
- **Should** promote formative assessment[15] as a key to academic progress, supported by timely and personalised feedback.

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[13] Assessment Policy in the European Schools (ref.: 2011-01-D-61-en-4).

[14] as defined in the following documents:
- Relevant sections of the General Rules (2014-03-D-14-en-9);
- Assessment Policy of the European Schools (2011-01-D-64);
- Relevant sections of the Educational Support Policy (2012-05-D-14-en-9) and the Procedural document (2012-05-D-15-en-12);
- Guidelines for use of the New Marking System (2017-05-D-29-en-9);
- Structure of syllabuses 2019-09-D-27 (principles and Attainment Descriptors);
- Distance Learning Recommendations for course continuity during temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school (2020-03-D-11-en-7).

[15] "Formative assessment plays a key part in supporting pupil progression during the teaching and learning process. In formative assessment, the emphasis is on assessment for learning. However, feedback plays an important role in all forms of assessment" (Marking system of the European schools: Guidelines for use, ref.: 2017-05-D-29-en-2).

- **Must** pay special attention to pupils at or near critical grade transitions — including high school graduation — to ensure all pupils have an equitable chance to complete requirements and demonstrate readiness for the next level.

B. Nursery and Primary

Teachers **should** promote the creation of digital portfolios[16] or reports in different formats. Digital portfolios allow a range of skills to be assessed and with a degree of choice for the learner to construct them in a way that motivates them and builds on their strengths. Such portfolios must respect data protection requirements, such as the Procedure to approve the use of Digital Learning Resources[17] and the pupils' right to image[18].

Classroom blogs and digital portfolios allow for work to be shared between the pupil, parent/legal representative, and teacher. A list of ways in which teachers can assess pupils' learning online has been prepared. Meetings can be arranged in teams between the teacher and the parent.

Reference to the intranet of the Pedagogical Development for updated detailed guidance (access currently limited to Europeans Schools).

C. Secondary: Formative assessment and homework

The amended Article 59 of the General Rules points out the necessity of regular assessment of pupils' competences and the need to give feedback to pupils' development. The coherent approach to A marks remains important when *in situ* teaching is not possible for all or a number of pupils.

- As for the learning process, hybrid and distance education **should** favour autonomous work: carrying out projects or thematic dossiers related to the essential subjects of the syllabus.
- Projects or thematic dossiers **may** be chosen so that each pupil can demonstrate and understand his or her progress and future needs.
- In Secondary, the number of projects and thematic dossiers to be carried out by the pupil **should** be limited (one project or dossier per subject). Teachers of the same class **should** work together to adjust the overall volume of work. This approach **should** be included in the school's homework and assessment policy.

Homework
- Teachers **should** ensure that the volume of tasks imposed on pupils is adapted to the scenario and the feedback of the pupils, so that pupils are not overloaded.

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[16] Digital portfolio: a digital collection of artefacts (dynamically enriched over time) that documents, showcases and facilitates pupils' self-reflection on their learning growth, as well as its assessment by teachers. A digital portfolio can include multimedia content and links to other online material (Extended digital Terminology for the European Schools system, ref.: 2020-01-D-37-en-fr-de-2). Digital portfolios should respect the GDPR provisions (see the section on processing personal data).

[17] Ref.: 2020-01-D-9-en-2 Annex to MEMO 2019-12-M-3/GM.

[18] No video recordings are allowed, nor to upload pupils' photographs without the legal representatives' prior consent.

- Homework tasks to be carried out **should** be announced well in advance; deadlines for submission, presentation, etc. should be indicated at the outset.
- Homework tasks **should** be carried out independently and **should** be accompanied by timely and personalised feedback for the pupils.
- Homework tasks **should** be off-screen as much as possible.

D. Term, semester and final alphabetical grades in years S1-S3

The General Rules of the European Schools stipulates the following:

- "**In years 1-3**, the term or semester grades and the final grades shall reflect all the observations and results available to the teacher of the subject concerned" (Article 59.4).
- "These grades shall be supplemented by teachers' written comments and, if necessary, by a general assessment of all the results, made by the Class Council" (Article 60.2.a).

It is a holistic approach to judging a pupil's performance - an approach that is intended to be comprehensive when awarding a term/semester grade or a final grade. The assessment contains both formative and summative elements.

The use of learning diaries or personal development plans can help track individual pupil progress. Digitally enhanced assessment (quizzes, games, digital portfolios) provides ways to understand and demonstrate learner progress.

Updated detailed guidance can be found on the [intranet of the Pedagogical Development](#) (access is currently limited to European Schools).

E. B marks in years S4-S5-S6

Article 59.5 of the General Rules (2014-03-D-14) read as follow:

> "*The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects.*
>
> *In accordance with Article 26a, the assessment system described in Article 59. 1-5. is also applicable in a distance teaching and learning situation. In such a situation, where B tests and B examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to B tests and B examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, such B tests or B examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment.*"

It is therefore stated that if it is not possible to organise the B tests and examinations *in situ*:

- schools **should** set remote assessments which are identical (i.e., matching closely) to the ones that would be used in normal circumstances,
- or replace them by alternative tasks, which **should** be considered as last resort solutions.

1. Option 1: assessment can be done on site

a) Adaptation of the location

When *in-situ* teaching and learning is suspended, the school management **must** do its outmost to organise the examinations leading to the B marks on-site, if necessary, applying different arrangements respecting hygienic and safety measures imposed by the authorities of the Member State hosting the school. Even if in a Member State it is forbidden to teach *in situ*, it could be possible that examinations are allowed to take place *in situ* under specific conditions.

Therefore, the school management **may** decide to utilise the school building (spreading pupils in several rooms) for examination purposes or may organise the examinations in an external venue. In any case it is advisable to consult the local authorities before such a decision is taken.

b) Adaptation of the calendar

A school **may** also decide to adapt the examinations calendar to make it possible to organise the examinations *in situ* at a later date until the end of the first semester.

2. Option 2: assessment must be done remotely

a) General principles

Remote assessment **must** be carried out in such a way that the assessment principles of the European Schools are respected, as defined in the following documents:

- Relevant sections of the General Rules (2014-03-D-14);
- Assessment Policy in the European Schools (2011-01-D-61);
- Relevant sections of the Educational Support Policy (2012-05-D-14) and the Procedural document (2012- 05-D-15-12);
- Marking system of the European Schools: Guidelines for use(2017-05-D-29) and Annexes;
- Structure for all syllabuses in the system of the European Schools (2019-09-D-27 - principles and Attainment Descriptors);
- Distance Learning Recommendations for course continuity during temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school (2020-03-D-11);
- The assessment instructions included in the syllabuses.

If the assessment is to take place at a distance or online, whether with identical or alternative tasks for assessment (as stated by Article 59.5 of the General Rules), the latter **must** be:

- aligned with the learning objectives of the relevant syllabus[19];

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[19] See 'Guidelines for use of the New Marking System' (ref. 2017-05-D-29): "A valid examination accurately tests the learning objectives of the relevant syllabus. Thus, in a valid examination, there should be an alignment between the syllabus, the learning objectives, the assessment itself and the related evaluation."

- based on the content covered and the competences developed during previous teaching and learning;

- in line with the principles of the New Marking System;

- harmonised, if relevant and whenever possible;

- in line with the conditions established in the Individual Learning Plan of the pupils receiving Intensive Support and the special arrangements for assessment authorised for the pupils by the Directors and/or the Joint Board of Inspectors.

Moreover, when assessing remotely, the school management (with cycle and subject coordinators) **must** also ensure a well-balanced workload for all students. This **should** be achieved by communicating to pupils in which subjects written assessments (e.g., examinations) are to be taken and in which subjects alternative tasks are requested. A general decision **should** be taken for each year level, across language sections.

The following sections present some modalities of alternative tasks. Each school **may** adapt to these modalities according to its needs.

As mentioned previously in this document, more practical and updated guidance is also to be found on the Pedagogical Development intranet (access is currently limited to the European Schools).

b) Possible assessment tasks

i) Open-book or take-home examination formats

Open-book and take-home examinations allow students to access supplementary information (from peers or external resources).

In open-book examinations, students **may** use any material (notes, books, texts or other resources, including online material) during examinations, but **must not** make any plagiarism or receive help from another person. Questions on facts as well as knowledge- and content-based questions are easy for students to look-up during a remote exam. Therefore, teachers **should not** ask for factual knowledge or remember level questions but **should** aim at more complex questions that prompt students to show understanding, apply, analyse, evaluate and create. Conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge **should** be preferred to factual knowledge. Similarly, teachers **may** adjust the weighting of the grading criteria so that higher order thinking questions have more value.

ii) Remote oral examinations

Oral tests and examinations assess students' learning by speaking, and their format ranges from open discussions and presentations to formal interviews.

Remote oral examinations guarantee sufficient academic integrity in many subjects. Therefore, teachers **may** organise stand-alone oral examinations with students using a videoconferencing tool (e.g., Microsoft Teams). In this case, no recording is foreseen.

iii) Short-term or Long-term works or projects

Students have a short or long preparation time (several days / several weeks) around an imposed or chosen theme. Teachers **may** also consider problem-based learning (PBL) or inquiry-based learning (IBL) projects.

iv) Long-term digital portfolios

A digital portfolio is a cumulative collection of a student's work. Students decide what examples to include that characterize their growth and accomplishment over the term. Students select their papers (documents and products) and present them in a structured format, accompanied by personal reflection. This task would presume that the teacher has given instructions to students on how to make a well-structured digital portfolio

Subject coordinators and subject referents **should** facilitate professional discussions on how to best design such examinations and alternative tasks.

c) Process

i) Preparation

School management, in coordination with the subject and cycle coordinators **should** decide which type of examination and alternative tasks the pupils should undergo in the different subjects and the different cycles. A planning **should** be established.

Teachers **must** develop the examinations/alternative under the responsibility of the subject coordinators and subject referents. Whenever possible a harmonized approach **should** be chosen, where relevant and where appropriate. Equal treatment **must** be ensured at least on class/subject group level.

ii) Testing

Teachers **must** communicate to students the purpose and nature of such examinations, along with explicit instructions such as time management, length, academic integrity, timelines, and due dates.

iii) Grading and marking

The assessment criteria **must** be communicated in advance to the pupils. The examinations and alternative tasks **must** be assessed in accordance with the different levels mentioned in the attainment descriptors of each Syllabus. A weighting of competencies assessed **might** be established in advance.

Teachers **should** use an assessment record sheet for the transparent documentation and justification of the mark given (harmonised by subject, at school level).

d) Quality assurance and equity

Each school **must** ensure that subject coordinators/subject referents under the responsibility of the Deputy Director of the school collaborate to design sufficient quality assurance for the equity of the alternative tasks for assessment, based on the approved attainment descriptors of each syllabus.

The marking and grading **could** be done according to a well-established matrix within a subject department.

e) Fostering academic integrity and fraud prevention measures

The European Schools aim to foster a climate for academic integrity and trust and to focus on supporting learning rather than on punishment and surveillance. The following strategies **should** be used to nurture academic integrity:

- Teachers **should** discuss with students the concept of academic integrity in the context of their subject and explain why it is important.

- Schools and teachers **must** inform students of the consequences of committing fraud (plagiarism, being helped by others), and of the measures the school has taken.

- Teachers **may** build in opportunities for students to demonstrate the thinking process informing their work, such as through multi-stage assignments, where students submit components of the assignment at staggered due dates.

In addition to fraud prevention measures, schools and teachers **may** take procedural steps:

- Teachers **may** check the exam work with an anti-plagiarism application, when available. Such an application will require prior consultation from the school's Data Protection Officer and approval by the Director as data controller.

- Teachers **may** check the originality of the exam work by following up with short oral interviews.

F. **Short and long written examinations in year S7**

The short and long written examinations in the year S7 (the Pre-Baccalaureate examinations) are covered by a separate Memorandum based on the recommendations of the 'Working Group Assessment Secondary'[20].

V. **Glossary of the main terms**

In general, one **should** refer to the updated digital terminology for the European Schools is maintained on the document: 'Extended digital Terminology for the European Schools system' (ref. 2020-01-D-37-en-fr-de, available on the intranet of the Pedagogical Development). Hereafter are the definitions of some essential terms used in this document.

- **Asynchronous/synchronous**:

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[20] 2020-11-M-2.1-en/AB, 'Oganisation of the Pre-Baccalaureate Examinations in S7 during the school year 2020-2021'.

- o **Asynchronous**: a form of interaction that allows pupils to work at their own pace to meet regular deadlines; interaction with peers is through online written communication.
- o **Synchronous**: a form of interaction that involves live communication either through sitting in a classroom, chatting online, or videoconferencing.
- **Contact**: contact with the pupils can be with the whole class, in groups or individual, and is either:
  - o a live online lesson (when possible),
  - o a call (if possible, especially for Nursery pupils) or written communication (upper Primary and Secondary) for pedagogical guidance.
- **Distance (or remote)**: a modality in which some or all pupils and/or educational staff are not physically present in the same place at the same time, and which takes place at a distance, usually online, synchronously or not.
- **Hybrid**: an approach that combines or alternates in school with distance/online activities (synchronous or asynchronous).
- **Live online lesson**: a lesson where teachers and pupils interact with one another for the whole period (via video, audio or chat).
- **Streaming** (live-streaming): continuous transmission of video and/or audio data over a network such as the Internet (e.g. from a classroom), so that they can be played back immediately in real-time.
- **Videoconference:** a live discussion between persons in remote locations via digital means of communications (video, audio, and chat). Despite the term, a videoconference does not imply that the camera is continuously activated.

VI. Decision of the Board of Governors

While taking into consideration the opinions expressed by the BIP, BIS and JTC at their respective meetings, the members of the Board of Governors approved by means of written procedure No 2021/8 on 29 March 2021 the document ref. 2021-01-D-34-en-23 and particularly:

1. the minor correction also made by the IT PEDA strategy group, so as to clarify the educational continuity obligations in scenarios 2 and 3 (section III, D, 2 and 3).
2. the document "Revision of document 2020-09-D-10-en-3 - Distance Learning Policy for the European Schools" (2021-01-D-34-en-2) and its Annex 1, and their approval by written procedure, with immediate entry into force.

Annex 1 of the document bears the reference 2020-09-D-10-en-5 which cancels and replaces document 2020-09-D-10-en-3. The memorandum "Distance Teaching and Learning Policy for the European Schools" (ref. 2021-01-M-3) and all other related documents will be adapted accordingly.

VII. Annex - Amendments to the General Rules of the European Schools

On 31 August 2020 the Board of Governors approved several amendments of the General Rules with entry into force on 1 September 2020, as follows[21]:

A. Article 26a

Distance Teaching

1. In general, teaching shall be provided 'on site'.
    In exceptional cases and based on the decision of the Director, distance teaching may be organised in order to educate children in the public interest, as defined by Article 1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools.

2. In the event of distance teaching, classes may be taught and assessed using an interactive online communication system (audio/video). The choice of the communication system shall be the sole responsibility of the Director, he/she the data controller of the school. The Director shall ensure that the system chosen complies with data security, reliability and confidentiality requirements as laid down by the host Member State's privacy legislation. Any processing of personal data carried out in that context shall be lawful provided that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, in accordance with Article 6.1.(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation.

3. Providing distance teaching through the potential use of an interactive online communication system, as referred to in paragraph 2, shall form part of the duties assigned to teaching staff, in line with Article 10.2 of the Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools and Article 5.3 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools.

4. The rules on regular attendance, as established in Article 30 of the General Rules, shall apply mutatis mutandis in the event of distance teaching.

B. Article 22

General

[…]

In performing their duties, they [the members of the teaching staff and all other persons whose direct involvement in the school is required] shall take care, by maintaining self-imposed strict objectivity, not to offend the religious and political convictions of pupils and their families and to respect their culture. They shall also undertake to exercise the greatest discretion with regard to all facts and information coming to their

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[21] General Rules of the European Schools (2014-03-D-14-en-9). See Distance Teaching – Amendment of the General Rules (ref.: 2020-08-D-8-en-1), and Decisions of the enlarged extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors of the European Schools, meeting on 31 August 2020, approved by written procedure No 2020/50 on 20 October 2020 (ref.: 2020-04-D-19-en-3).

knowledge and to respect their pupils' privacy, in accordance with the relevant applicable legislation. As regards pupils' personal data, its processing shall be lawful provided that it is necessary in order to educate children in the public interest, as defined in Article 1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools and in accordance with Article 6.1.(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation.

C. Article 30

Regular attendance at classes

1. Without prejudice to the Regulations concerning Educational Support, attendance at classes shall be organised as follows:

   a) [...]

   b) Without prejudice to Article 26a.3 of the General Rules, attending all courses of instruction shall mean regular and punctual attendance at the classes indicated in a calendar and timetable produced and given to pupils at the beginning of the year.

D. Article 59.5 and 59.6

On 20 October 2020, the Board of Governors approved the amendment of the General Rules with entry into force, as follows:

Article 59. 5.- In years 4-6, the semester mark shall comprise two numerical components: A mark and B mark.

The A mark reflects the ongoing observations of the pupil's competences (knowledge, skills and attitude) and performance gained within the subject, which are not taken into account in the B mark of the subject. The ongoing observations require the recording of the pupils' progress.

The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects.

In accordance with Article 26a, the assessment system described in Article 59. 1-5. is also applicable in a distance teaching and learning situation. In such a situation, where B tests and B examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to B tests and B examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, such B tests or B examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment.

Article 59. 6. - The marks in year 7 (European Baccalaureate) follow the specific rules established in the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Baccalaureate.

In such a situation where the short and/or long written examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to the short and long written examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, the short and long written examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment. The same is valid for the assessment of other subjects taught in S7.