

Is your school online CPD ready?

Many organisations will continue to support schools during the 'New Normal'. Whilst some will offer face to face support, many will prefer to negate the risks by working online. Research recognise the limitations of purely 'online learning' for younger, less independent, learners but those limitations don't apply for motivated adult learners such as teachers. School leadership teams can take advantage of this new form of support and training as it often required teachers to be absent from class for less time. This document is designed to help you do that. Please feel free to pass it on. *Phil Bagge @baggiepr phil.bagge@hants.gov.uk*

Resources Needed

Hardware Overview

A PC or Mac with webcam, headphone and good broadband are crucial.

Laptops or Desktop

Most modern laptops have a built in webcam so remain the first choice of many schools but webcams can be added to desktop. Many school desktop pcs do not have built in speakers that a laptop will have as standard so the headphone and mic set is essential for a desktop setup.

A Second Screen

If your PC or Mac and second screen has an HDMI port a second screen can be plugged in at very little extra cost. This allows a teacher to leave the video conference screen open on one screen and make notes or use online tools on the other thus improving their experience. Other connection options for a second screen are possible but talk to your local support provider to discover these.

Headphone and Mic Set

For a really good experience buy a USB headphone and mic set. Whilst laptops have a built in mic these are designed to pick up sound from a distance so often add a lot of background sound which makes communicating via video conference harder. The mic on many headsets is designed to pick up a close voice and many even have technology to reduce background noise, improving everyone on the video conference experience.

Broadband

Most schools have good quality fast broadband which can be utilised for a good video conference connection. This is often far faster than even the best home broadband.

Broadband Restrictions

Many schools have policies that restrict harmful content. Making sure that the most common video conference technologies are not excluded is important. The default Hampshire settings in most schools has not been a problem during strict lockdown although we did encounter schools from other authorities where some video conference technology was restricted by over zealous policies. The good news is that these can often be easily changed by you or your IT support provider.

Location & Position

A quiet room with good power and internet connectivity away from distractions will help a teacher to concentrate. Try and avoid positioning PCs or Macs with a window behind the teacher as this causes the teacher to be very dark and indistinct on the webcam. A sign on the door telling others that a video conference is in progress reduces interruptions and increases training value.

Wi-Fi or Wired

Wired connections are almost always faster but good Wi-Fi will suffice. If using video conference technology for staff meetings or inset then make sure teachers are spread out round the school as this reduces the pressure on the Wi-Fi from multiple laptops connecting over the same wireless access point. It also reduces background sounds when teachers interact audibly during the session.



Desktop Computer



Desktop Webcam



Second Screen



Headphone & Mic Set



Example Wi-fi Access Point



Network Cable

Common* Video Conference Platforms used for school support

Name	Icon	Specifications	Notes
Microsoft Teams		1.6 ghz processor 2 GB RAM 3GB Disk Space 1024x768 minimum screen resolution	Teams can be used in a browser or via the downloadable app on PC or tablet. For teachers PC or Mac use is preferred
Zoom		1ghz or higher but recommend quad core processor Recommended 4GB RAM	Zoom works in a browser Some features don't work in Internet Explorer
Google Meet		2.2ghz intel second generation processor or above	Meet works in a browser Chrome, Edge, Mozilla or Safari meet doesn't work well on Internet Explorer
Adobe Connect		1,4ghz processor or faster 1gb RAM Adobe Flash player 13	Connect works in a browser but may need flash updated first

*Many other video conference platforms are available