

Ten Top Tips for SENCOs during Lockdown

1. Avoid assuming that being at home and studying online is a negative for all pupils with SEN. There may be positives for some (for example, those pupils with high anxiety).
2. Reflect on what could be gained through integrating this online approach on return to school.
3. For 1:1 support, use the breakout rooms on live platforms to support pupils individually and to check learning so it is not in front of the whole class. Support staff could participate in lessons and offer support in breakout rooms.
4. Use and make pupils aware of built-in accessibility tools (for example, the view menu in Office 365 allows you to change the text colour and background:
 - [Accessibility overview of Microsoft Teams - Office Support](#)
 - [Google Meet accessibility - Google Meet Help](#)
 - [Accessibility - Zoom](#)
5. Engagement is half the story...continue to build those personal relationships with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Find out what they actually need/want from education during lockdown.
6. Remember to be mindful of the variety of difficulties that might exist in a pupil's home: parents working from home, the ICT capability of parents, other children learning at home, space for learning and so on.
7. There are a lot of supportive programmes on the BBC and Oak National Academy have a comprehensive range of lessons available if accessing school online lessons are an issue:
 - [Oak National Academy](#)
 - [Lockdown learning with the BBC in 2021 - BBC Bitesize](#)
8. The [Family Fund](#) has grants available for parents of disabled children to support their child at home; this is especially important during the pandemic as access to respite and other therapeutic services may be limited.
9. To aid communication at home, Widgit have created a [COVID-19 Support | Widgit](#) set of resources to support parents and educators. They include specific Coronavirus symbols and social stories and some inclusive 'Boredom Buster' activity sheets in a variety of topics. They also offer a 21-day free trial of the software if parents need more.
10. Look after yourself! Self-care is not selfish but is essential; remember that you can't pour from an empty cup. As SENCOs we know you are working above and beyond in normal times and this pandemic is making this more so. Take a break and take care of your wellbeing. The [Headspace for Educators](#) and [Calm - Free for Schools](#) apps are free for educators and offer mindfulness and support.