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**Analysis and Proposals of the Task Force ‘Preparation of the 2020/21 school year’**

**Board of Governors**

**Extraordinary Meeting of 31 August 2020**

**I. Background**

At its meeting of 5 June 2020, the Joint Teaching Committee (JTC) discussed the document ‘Consequences of COVID-19 – Follow-up of the Board of Governors and Preparation of the 2020/21 school year’[[1]](#footnote-1) and mandated the Office of the Secretary-General *“to set up a ‘task force’ composed of representatives of the Inspectors, Directors, Directors of the European Accredited Schools, EU Commission, ISTC and Interparents, which is supposed to provide the Board of Governors by the end of the 2019/20 school year with a risk assessment and concrete proposals to mitigate these risks for the 2020/21 school year.”*

In its ‘kick-off” meeting, the members of the task force agreed on the following areas of risk analysis which resulted in the following structure and composition of the task force[[2]](#footnote-2):



1. **Roles and duties of the different bodies of the task force**

The Task Force is composed of a ‘core team’, a team of experts covering the main areas of risk assessment and a consultancy body. A list of all members and the corresponding staff in the OSG can be found in the annex 1 of this document.

1. **Core team**

The core team is composed of the representatives of the current Spanish Presidency and the incoming French Presidency of the Board of Inspectors, the Deputy Secretary General, the Head of the Pedagogical Development Unit and the Head of the Baccalaureate Unit. The core team is supported by one Assistant of the Deputy Secretary-General. One task of the core team is to interlink the work and the final proposals of the different teams of experts.

1. **Team of experts**

The team of experts is composed of different national inspectors covering the main areas of risk which need to be addressed to prepare for the coming school year. Moreover, a team of Directors/Deputy Directors addressed administrative and organizational risks. Finally, Heads of Unit of the OSG cover aspects of Human Resources, Finance and IT.

All experts (inspectors and Directors) have direct contact points/partners in the OSG who supported them in their work. Each inspector was in charge and responsible for his/her area. However, it was strongly recommended that each inspector use the resources of the OSG and involve other experts in their area of responsibility (for example Directors, Deputy Directors or members of the teaching staff). The individual organisation of this cooperation was left to the discretion of each inspector.

1. **Consultancy body**

The task force also includes a ‘consultancy’ body composed of a representative of the European Commission, one representative of the Accredited European Schools, two representatives of the teaching staff (ISTC), one representing the nursery/primary cycle and one the secondary cycle, and finally two representatives of Interparents.

The role of the consultancy body was to provide the experts with feedback from their specific perspective and to ensure that their particular interests were heard by the experts.

1. **Time schedule**

At its kick-off meeting on 10 June 2020 the Members of the task force also endorsed the following time schedule already proposed at the meeting of the JTC:

 

This time schedule was meant to ensure that the Board of Governors would be in the position to give the necessary guidance and to take necessary decisions by Written Procedure by the end of July.

However, the complexity of this document which is partly linked to the different scenarios for the coming school year and the potential budgetary impact of some of the recommended measures deserve an in-depth discussion of the members of the Board of Governors in an extraordinary meeting to be scheduled for the end of August. This will allow the Board to take the necessary decisions on a solid basis still in time for the start of the school year.

Nevertheless, this document should already allow school management to prepare the 2020/21 school year in a proper manner. Moreover, inspectors and the OSG will have the necessary guidance for potential preparatory work to be carried out before the start of the coming school year. Finally, establishing in time clear expectations for all members of the school community should give confidence and reassurance in particular for pupils, parents and members of the teaching and administrative staff.

In order to comply with the ambitious time schedule, the task force met three times.

In the kick-off meeting on 10 June 2020 the members of the task force agreed on:

* the different roles and duties,
* the time schedule,
* the potential scenarios for the 2020/21 school year to be analysed and on
* the working method and harmonized templates.

The second meeting scheduled on 30 June 2020 was dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the risk analysis carried out by the different expert groups.

The third meeting scheduled on 14 July 2020 focused on the discussion of the final document to be forwarded to the Board of Governors.

1. **Structure of this document**

The structure of this document follows the structure of the **risk areas** identified by the task force.

These areas are:

* quality assurance (quality assurance, assessment, Educational Support, distance teaching and learning, training, particular challenges in the nursery/primary cycle)
* inspector activities (Whole school Inspections, Audits of Accredited European schools, evaluation of managerial and teaching staff)
* organisation of the school activities (timetabling and other aspects) and
* framework conditions (human resources, budget, IT).

However, some of the proposed actions may address risks in more than one area.

Whenever a proposed action does require a formal **decision on system level** (Joint Board of Inspectors, Joint Teaching Committee, Budgetary Committee or Board of Governors) this is highlighted and summarized in the respective chapter.

Moreover, most of the actions proposed on school level will be reflected in the updated version of the Guidelines on Distance Teaching and Learning[[3]](#footnote-3) in order to give concrete support to schools at the beginning of the coming school year.

Finally, a summary of all actions can be found in annex 2 of this document.

1. **Scenarios for the 2020/21 school year**

Adding a lot of complexity to this document, the proposed actions are linked to different scenarios. Nevertheless, many actions might be applicable under more than one scenario.

At this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not clear what the situation will be at the beginning and during the whole 2020/21 school year.

The situation may vary between the different Member States hosting the European Schools and the Accredited European Schools and may change over the school year. Moreover, health and safety requirements and potential restrictions of teaching and learning ‘in situ’ may vary between the different hosting Member States or even between regions.

In order to deal with this complexity, the members of the task force agreed to base their risk analysis on **three potential scenarios:**

**Scenario 1:** Teaching ‘in situ’ in all schools as a rule, but with restrictions for vulnerable staff (including inspectors) and vulnerable pupils and restrictions for infected staff and pupils

**Scenario 2:** Temporary continuation of measures of confinement which allow only parts of the school population to participate in teaching ‘in situ’

**Scenario 3:** Temporary suspension of teaching ‘in situ’ for the complete school or complete cycles

The discussions in the task force clearly demonstrated that schools in general feel largely prepared for scenario 1. However, certain risk mitigating actions – illustrated in this document - need to be undertaken.

Also, with respect to scenario 3 schools seem to be prepared to a certain extent due to the experience gained during the period of confinement from the beginning of March until at least mid-May and in some cases even the end of the 2019/20 school year. The move of the system of the European Schools from content-based teaching and learning to competence-based teaching and learning over recent years, the IT infrastructure of the schools and the actions already undertaken in the development of the digital competence might have supported the school community to implement distance teaching and learning on an ad hoc basis. However, differences in the quality of distance teaching and learning could be observed and all stakeholders have identified areas for improvement. These areas and potential measures for improvement will be addressed in this document.

The scenario which includes the greatest risks seems to be the scenario 2. The dual functioning of the schools, partly offering teaching ‘in situ’ in small groups due to distance rules or in ‘bubbles’ always composed of the same students, is considered a huge challenge for schools in general and for the European Schools in particular. The challenge derives from the composition of the European Schools, their pedagogical offer and the complexity of the time-table linked to this offer. In the secondary cycle and in particular in the higher year groups (S 4 – S 7) teaching and learning in the same ‘bubble’ are nearly impossible. Moreover, experience gained in the last weeks has shown that scenario 2 will be the most challenging scenario, not only from an organisational point of view, but also for the teaching staff. However, the task force provides several proposals to be better prepared also for the most complex and most challenging scenario 2.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that – for the time being – the European Schools plan to start the 2020/21 school year under the conditions linked to scenario 1, but to be prepared to switch to another scenario. The proposed measures or actions are also meant to ensure a swift switch from one scenario to another. Nevertheless, it needs to be underlined that such a switch will require at least some reaction time which is supposedly shorter in smaller national schools than in European Schools often counting more than 3.000 pupils.

1. **Guiding principles**

Finally, before entering in the different areas assessed by the task force, it is worth highlighting some crosscutting considerations which have guided the work of the task force and which have an impact on the measures proposed and which should be remembered throughout the 2020/21 school year.

1. **Safety and well-being of staff, pupils and parents**

The COVID-19 crisis has added extra mental health and well-being concerns to schools in general and to the European Schools in particular. The staff, pupils and parents of the European Schools had to deal with the challenges of the pandemic quite often as ‘expats’ separated from their social environment in their countries of origin. Measures of confinement might have affected them even more as they could not, and also in future cannot, rely on the support of family members or relatives living close to them.

In their guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21, ‘Blended learning in school education’, the EU Commission has rightly highlighted that “one cannot ensure the well-being of one group without paying attention to the well-being to all the other groups in a schools’ eco-system”. In this context, it needs also to be recalled that many members of the teaching staff are at the same time parents.

The aspect of well-being needs to be underlined in all three potential scenarios.

In scenario 1, it will be of utmost importance to maintain social and professional contacts with vulnerable staff and pupils and to ensure that no one is left behind.

In scenario 2 the risk of overload and even burn-out of members of teaching staff is considerably high. Moreover, in scenario 2 it will be most challenging for Directors, being ultimately responsible for the health and safety of their staff and pupils to guarantee the respecting of national requirements of health and safety under the particular conditions of the European Schools.

In scenario 3, again it will be important to maintain social and professional contacts, but also to avoid an overloading of pupils which could be observed in the first month of distance teaching and learning in this school year.

For all scenarios, it will be of utmost importance to recognise that pupils may lose the school and their class mates as ‘safe’ environment away from their home environment where they might be at risk for various reasons.

**b) Particular attention to vulnerable pupils, staff and inspectors,**

**aa) General Observations**

In all three scenarios, vulnerable pupils and staff might be excluded from ‘normal’ school life for a considerable time. Again, the sense of belonging to the school community and not feeling being left behind will be at risk and needs particular attention in various areas.

Moreover, vulnerable inspectors might be partly excluded from inspector activities which require their presence on the school site. This will have an impact on Whole School Inspections (WSI), the Audits of the Accredited European Schools and the evaluation of the pedagogical executive staff and the teaching staff.

The members of the task force underlined that, in particular, a clear definition of ‘vulnerable staff’ is of utmost importance in order to establish a better understanding which might be the impact on teaching and learning under all three scenarios.

In this context, it is worth highlighting two principles:

**(1) Application of national law**

According to Article 6 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, the schools are to be considered as public educational institutions. As such, all the 13 European Schools are bound by national law applicable to national schools, unless the Convention or its implementing regulations do provide specific rules.

Neither the Convention nor its implementing regulations do provide a definition of ‘vulnerable staff’. Therefore, the national law of the hosting Member States has to be respected.

In this understanding, and in order to achieve a harmonised approach over the system, it is proposed to analyse the risks under the three scenarios under the assumption of a harmonized definition of ‘vulnerable staff’ illustrated here below. However, if the national law provides even stricter rules, these rules will have to be respected by the Director of the school concerned.

**(2) Final responsibility of each Director**

A second principle to be observed is the ultimate responsibility of each Director for his or her school which is laid down in Article 1 of the General Rules. Moreover, it is also a guiding principle, established in the different Staff Regulations[[4]](#footnote-4).

If a Director decides to derogate from the national rules or to derogate from the common definition of ‘vulnerable staff’ he/she may do so by taking the responsibility for this decision.

**bb) Definition of ‘vulnerable staff’**

Notwithstanding even more restrictive national rules, for this risk analysis and for the planning of the common school year, the following members of staff are considered as ‘vulnerable’:

* Pregnant staff members (regardless of gestational week);
* Staff members over the age of **60**;
* Staff members with chronic cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy, stroke);
* Staff members with chronic obstructive or restrictive lung disease, severe asthma, obstructive sleep apnoea;
* Staff members with immunosuppressive conditions (with active malignancy, or receiving chemotherapy or long-term steroids or other immune-modifying treatment;
* Staff members with hypertension or diabetes, when accompanied by complications (i.e. simple diabetes or hypertensions, well controlled under medication, are not included);
* Staff members with chronic kidney or liver or hematologic or neuromuscular or autoimmune disease; infectious diseases: chronic hepatitis B, chronic hepatitis C that has not responded to treatment;
* Staff members who are very obese, with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or higher, or significantly underweight (BMI< 18.5).

With the exception of the criterion ‘age’, the staff members will have to provide a medical attestation in order to demonstrate the risk factor referred to.

**It is recommended on local level**

* that the schools establish a register of vulnerable staff taking in consideration this harmonised definition of ‘vulnerable staff’.

Moreover, it is suggested to apply the same definition (where applicable) to pupils and inspectors without prejudice to stricter national rules applicable to them.

On **system level**

* the OSG will establish with the support of the Presidency of the Joint Board of Inspectors an inventory of ‘vulnerable inspectors’.

**c) Particular attention to the challenges for teaching and learning in the nursery/primary cycle and business continuity in the BAC cycle**

The members of the task force agreed that particular attention has also to be given to the challenges linked to teaching and learning in the nursery/primary cycle and business continuity in the BAC cycle.

**aa) Teaching and learning in the nursery/primary cycle**

Experience has shown that distance teaching and learning for pupils in the nursery/primary cycle are a particular challenge for the pupils, teachers and parents. Being less independent learners, the impact on the teaching approach and the impact on parents is particular high under scenario 2 and 3. For this reason a particular chapter will address the challenges linked to the nursery/primary cycle.

**bb) Business continuity in the BAC cycle**

Finally, pupils entering the BAC cycle in September 2020 need particular attention mainly for two reasons. As for other year groups their teaching and learning was impacted by the measures of confinement nearly during the whole second semester of the 2019/20 school year. The harmonised exams at the end of S 5 had to be cancelled. Moreover, their first year in the BAC cycle might be impacted by COVID-19. Nevertheless, their BAC exams in spring 2022 will cover the whole curriculum of the BAC cycle.

Pupils entering now in S 7 were also impacted by the measures of confinement in the second semester of the 2019/20 school year and they need to be prepared for the BAC exams in spring 2021 without knowing what the situation will be by then. Anxiety and concerns about their final assessment, the recognition of the European Baccalaureate and concerns about the impact on career prospects need to be addressed.

1. **Areas of risk and proposed actions**

The task force and this document address - as stated earlier – the following areas of risk:

* quality assurance (quality assurance, assessment, Educational Support, distance teaching and learning, training, particular challenges in the nursery/primary cycle)
* inspector activities (Whole School Inspections, Audits of Accredited European Schools, evaluation of managerial and teaching staff)
* organisation of the school activities (timetabling and other organizational questions) and
* framework conditions (human resources, budget, IT).

The document does not provide a separate chapter for the area ‘framework conditions’, but addresses the framework conditions whenever relevant in the context of the risk analysis linked to ‘quality assurance’, ‘inspector activities’ and ‘organisation’.

1. **Quality assurance**
2. **Quality assurance**

**aa) General observations**

Quality assurance in general implicates most of the activities carried out by all stakeholders in the European School system.

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

The most essential areas of risk addressed by the experts were

* potential need of revision of syllabi,
* difficulties of following syllabi and
* harmonisation of teaching practice.

In the following chapters, it is proposed to create a new ‘Distance Teaching and Learning Policy’ document and to amend the evaluation toolkit by the inclusion of the aspect of the evaluation of the distance teaching situation. These proposals are also meant to reinforce the quality assurance system already in place in the European Schools.

**bb) Revision of syllabi:**

According to the risk analysis this area will not be affected in the short term. Existing digital tools will make it possible to continue the work.

When a syllabus is due to be revised (at the end of the ten-year-cycle), the inspector will be able to rely on the new chapter on distance teaching and learning to be added to the documents ‘Guidelines for producing syllabuses’ (2019-09-D-28) and ‘Structure of syllabuses’ (2019-09-D-27).

**cc) Difficulties of following syllabi:**

According to the experts, in scenarios 1 and 2 there will be minor problems. If scenario 3 stays for a long time, it could be necessary to make recommendations, adjustments or to add annexes to syllabi in order to clarify the expectations. This will also have an impact on assessement (see in the following chapter). This work has to be done in close cooperation between subject coordinators/subject referents and the inspector responsible for the subject.

**dd) Harmonisation of teaching practices:**

According to the task force, a clear definition of distance teaching and learning is needed on **system level** (see in this regard the concrete proposal under the chapter ‘distance teaching and learning’) aiming to make it possible for the schools to develop plans for the different scenarios[[5]](#footnote-5).

On **school level,** it is recommended in particular with respect to scenarios 2 and 3:

* to monitor and ensure a good balance of the work (and the assignments) for students and teachers,
* to stream lessons (so not to have to repeat lessons),
* to ensure good cooperation between teachers, between coordinators and between sections by organising regular on-line meetings,
* to ensure good cooperation between coordinators inside the School with management and across the Schools to maintain a certain harmonisation,
* to ensure regular communication between coordinators and inspectors,
* to foresee regular meetings between colleagues for professional and social reasons and
* to ensure a close cooperation with parents in the nursery/primary cycle..

**ee) Required decisions on system level – quality assurance**

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| Action | Document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Add a chapter on blended learning and distance teaching and learning | Guidelines for producing syllabuses 2019-09-D-28 | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | WP Nov 20 |
|  | Structure of syllabuses2019-09-D-27 | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | WP Nov 20 |

1. **Assessment**

**aa) General remarks**

The second semester of the 2019/20 school year has demonstrated that the area of assessment is an area of high risk at least in case of scenario 3. Due to the situation of confinement and the uncertainty with respect to the conditions at the end of the 2019/20 school year the Board of Governors had decided in April 2019 to cancel B tests and exams in the year groups S 4 to S 6 and to replicate the results of the B tests and exams of the first semester. Moreover, the written and oral BAC exams were cancelled.

Also the group of experts confirmed with respect to the 2020/21 that the highest risks are linked to a potential scenario 3. However, scenario 2 also creates some risks with respect to the organization of the BAC session 2021 and is in general considered to be the most complex scenario with respect to assessment.

Moreover, when analyzing the risks linked to assessment and proposing potential actions in particular, ‘transparency’ and ‘equity’ are considered to be two important principles which need to be respected.

The chosen approach should have a clear purpose and needs to be communicated clearly and early in advance in order to allow teachers, pupils and parents to get prepared and in order to avoid anxiety.

The principle of ‘equity’ and ensuring an equal treatment of all pupils over the system of the European Schools including the Accredited European Schools might be even bigger challenge as the situation at the schools and in their hosting Member States might be different. For sure, the principle of ‘equity’ deserves serious recognition with respect to the BAC examination.

**bb) Start of the year assessment**

The start of the 2020/21 school year will be different from the start of a school year in previous years. Pupils from within the system of the European schools, but also newly enrolled pupils, have experienced in the second semester an interruption of the teaching and learning ‘in situ’ and might have faced difficulties to follow distance teaching and learning in a sufficient manner.

Therefore, the expert group recommends to the schools in particular, but not only for the primary

* to conduct a ‘Start-of-the-year assessment’ intended to identify the level of each pupil and to motivate each pupil from the beginning of the school year and to establish differentiated teaching and assessment.

**cc) Assessment primary**

With respect to the assessment of pupils the expert group recommends on **school level**

* to adapt the home work policy and to communicate the revised policy at the beginning of the school year (for all scenarios),
* to set up/reinforce communication channels, to adapt within the established frame, the pedagogical planning (for all scenarios) and
* to strengthen the use of formative assessment in order to evaluate pupils’ individual progress.

On **system level** it is proposed

* to establish guidelines on formative assessment at distance, which could become part of a broader policy document on ‘distance teaching and learning’ (see concrete proposal under the chapter ‘distance teaching and learning’),
* to amend - in a mid-term perspective - the assessment policy for primary and secondary (doc. 2011-01-D-64) and
* to modify the General Rules with respect to promotion and progression in primary.

**dd) Assessment S 1 – S 6**

With respect to the tests and exams in S 1 to S 6 the expert group underlines that even in scenarios 2 and 3 test and exams ‘in situ’ should be given priority by providing the necessary conditions to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff.

However, on system level on-line tests and exams should be developed which will require also an amendment of the existing assessment policy document and the guidelines on assessment.

The group of experts put a particular emphasis on the aspect of the planning of written tests and exams under all three scenarios and recommended

* to adapt the planning of written tests and exams (only in scenarios 2 and 3)
* to adapt existing tasks to be more performance-based,
* to assign project tasks,
* to consider shorter tasks rather than long tests,
* to include conversations for pupils to ‘defend’ assignments,
* to teach the attitude of ‘academic honesty’ beforehand and
* to provide examples of A mark assignments applicable in the different scenarios.

For the time being, a cancellation of written tests or exams –as had to be decided by the Board of Governors in April 2020 for the second semester of the 2019/20 school year – is not considered as the most probable option, and experts expressed their view that it is the least desirable solution.

**ee) BAC exams**

The importance of the BAC cycle and the BAC exams in particular for all stakeholders and the credibility of the system of the European Schools was already highlighted in the introduction of the document. At the same time, scenario 3 is creating the highest risks for the organization of the BAC session 2021.

In particular, in the interest of ‘transparency’ it will be important that the system of the European Schools agrees on the conditions of a BAC session under scenario 3 in advance as early as possible.

The group of experts recommended under scenario 3:

* to give preference to ‘in situ’ examinations in the Pre-Bac,
* to organize distance correction only for the Pre-Bac (via Viatique),
* to sit also the BAC ‘in situ’ wherever possible and
* to agree on a potential change of the BAC formula and ‘moderation’ early in advance.

Also a postponement of the BAC to autumn 2021 should be considered, but only as a measure of last resort.

Most of these proposals would require – like for the BAC session 2020 – derogations from the General Rules and the BAC Regulations. Moreover, this would have to be reflected in the Arrangements for the Implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate (applicable for the Year 2021 European Baccalaureate session).

**ff) Introduction of the New Marking System (NMS) in S 7**

The introduction of the New Marking System (NMS) will be continued in the 2020/21 school year with the introduction of the new system in S 7. The BAC 2021 will be the first BAC where the NMS is applied.

According to the risk analysis carried out by the experts none of the three scenarios will have a considerable impact on the introduction of the NMS in S 7. Trainings intended ‘in situ’ will be delivered from distance in October 2020. Also new assessment record sheets and proposals for the BAC exams will be prepared from a distance.

**gg) Required decisions on system level – assessment**

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| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Establish guidelines on formative and summative assessment in distance teaching | Guidelines on and Policy on Distance Teaching and Learning 2020-03-D-11 | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | - |
| Amendment of Assessment Policy | Assessment Policy2011-01-D-64 | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | - |
| Modification of the rules on promotion and progression in primary | Art. 57 of the General Rules | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |
| Re-define criteria for awarding the A- and B-marks | Art 59 of the General Rules | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | WP Oct 20 |
| Revise the formula to establish the final marks | Art 59 of the General Rules | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | WP Oct 20 |
| Revise the rules on the BAC with respect to scenario 3 | Art. 59 and 60 of the General Rules  | Oct. 20 | Oct. 20 | - | WP Oct 20 |
| Revise the BAC Arrangements |  | Oct. 20 | Oct. 20 | - | WP Oct 20 |

1. **Educational Support**

**aa) General observations**

It was highlighted already in the introduction that under all three scenarios particular attention has to be paid to ‘vulnerable’ pupils, among them potentially pupils with special educational needs.

Moreover, as some pupils with special needs might have suffered even more under distance teaching and learning, it will be important to assess their progress and potential needs at the very beginning of the new school year. In this respect, the experts propose that:

* the schools/pedagogical staff apply a comprehensive and thorough diagnostic and formative assessment to assess the pupils’ real knowledge and competences, detect the areas that have to be reinforced for each and every pupil and the planning of the teaching and learning activities should reflect the outcome of this assessment.

In order to prepare the 2020/21 school year, a MEMORANDUM[[6]](#footnote-6) has been shared with schools on 4 June 2020 prolonging existing Intensive Support A Agreements where needed and also prolonging the validity of medical/psychological/psycho-educational and multidisciplinary reports by one year where updated reports cannot be delivered due to measures on confinement.

The experts have identified in the area of Educational Support the following challenges respectively risks which are to a certain extent applicable to all pupils, but might be an even bigger challenge with respect to pupils with special educational needs:

* Full achievement of the learning objectives of curriculum and syllabuses might be in danger in case of the pupils with special educational needs and with learning difficulties even more than in case of the other pupils.
* Challenges for teachers to develop meaningful and inclusive teaching and learning environments.
* Challenges in coordinating teaching and learning activities with pupil’s class/subject teachers and support teachers/assistants.
* Challenges in time management in a context of multiple learning environments and the corresponding tools and methodologies adapted to different learning difficulties and special educational needs.
* Challenges in assessing pupils' progress and in coming to a solid assessment of the pupil's competences.
* Transition Nursery/Primary/Secondary.
* Possible negative impact on well-being and self-confidence of the pupils with special educational needs.
* Limited social contacts between pupils and between pupils and teachers.
* Additional burden on parents of pupils with special educational needs.

**bb) Measures on school level**

In order to mitigate these risks, the experts are proposing on **school level** the following actions:

**(1) Planning and coordination**

* Thorough assessment at the beginning of the school year.
* Establishing Individual Learning Plans (ILP) at the beginning of the school year.
* Regular (virtual) meetings of the Support Advisory Groups.
* Avoiding scheduling support in breaks to promote social interaction and avoid overload.
* Planning of teaching and learning activities be coordinated between all support staff working with the pupil(s) under support and shared with parents.
* Planning includes activities to develop and promote healthy social relationship between peers and between pupils and educators.
* Regular coordination meetings be held, under the responsibility of class teachers.

**(2) Delivery of Educational Support (in particular under scenario 2)**

* Pupils with similar learning needs should be kept in the same group/’bubble’.
* The last semester may have proved that some pupils work even better at home than ‘in situ’ – organize the groups accordingly.
* Ensure daily direct contact with pupils who are at home and regular communication with their families.
* When needed, support staff works in a ‘pedagogical pair’: teachers online with the pupil(s) with the support ‘in situ’ of a teacher or an assistant (scenarios 1 and 2).
* Teachers use diverse and inclusive strategies to develop competences, adapted to the different learning environments.
* The work of the assistants who are assigned to one pupil be organized according to the schooling situation of the pupil.
* Therapies under Tripartite Agreements be carried out according to the schooling situation of the pupil.
* Continuous update of the list specific online resources/digital tools to work with pupils with learning difficulties and special needs and online training for teachers to use those tools.

**(3) Assessment**

* ILPs must include diverse, inclusive assessment methods and (online/distance) tools, including electronic portfolios and pupil self-assessment.
* Live online oral assessment must be put in place to complement other online assessment tools.
* Teachers should provide timely and meaningful feedback to pupils and families.
* When the situation prevents the parents from submitting the multidisciplinary reports whenever they are required – ILP and/or request for special arrangement for the BAC – prorogation of existing reports and/or flexible deadlines can be envisaged (scenario 3).

**cc) Budgetary impact**

The proposed measures might have an impact on the budget of the schools. This is in particular valid under scenarios 1 and 2 for:

* the potential replacement of vulnerable support teachers and
* the additional need of assistance in the class room.

The schools are invited to identify these needs by the very beginning of the school year and to provide the Administration Board in September 2020 with an estimate of the additional needs and proposals for financing these measures by reallocating means within the approved budget for the financial years 2020 and 2021.

**dd) Required decisions on system level – Educational Support**

The envisaged measures do not require ad-hoc decisions on system level. Necessary guidance can be given - if necessary – by MEMORANDA to be launched by the Office of the Secretary-General.

However, particular support provisions linked to distance teaching and learning could be integrated in the Support Policy document which it has been agreed to be subject to a review in the 2020/21 school year.

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| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Add to the revision of the support policy document a chapter on Educational Support in case of suspension of teaching and learning ‘in situ’ | Educational Support Policy2012-05-D-14 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | March 21 | April 21 |

1. **Distance teaching and learning**

The development and further improvement of distance teaching and learning has been at the center of the activities of the European schools over the last months (see, e.g., 2018-12-D-7-en-4, ‘Digital Education Vision for the European Schools system (DEVES)’) and will stay there also in the 2020/21 school year independent of the question of under which scenario the schools will have to operate during the coming school year.

**aa) Smooth transition from one scenario to another**

The experts analysing the risks linked to distance learning and teaching underlined the need to be prepared to move swiftly from one scenario to another.

In this context, they recommend on **school level** that schools should:

* have a communication strategy in place to inform parents, students and all those responsible for services (canteen, transport, extra-curricular activities),
* have all assignments accessible on a digital platform for students and parents (primary and lower secondary),
* systematically combine digital and face-to-face activities (blended learning) and promote digital assignments,
* run ‘digital learning days’ (drills) to prepare staff and pupils,
* initiate or accelerate BYOD pilots and projects (secondary),
* offer regular training in distance teaching and learning,
* foster professional learning communities, sharing of practices, peer-to-peer training, etc.

In order to foster these local activities, on **system level** it is envisaged:

* to finalise as soon as possible the Digital Competence Framework (for students with teaching and learning activities and practical pedagogical hints for teachers),
* to update the continuous professional development framework (2016-01-D-40),
* to globalize and monitor the online training offer across schools and
* to create procedures and guidelines on subject-based teams at system level.

**bb) Digital Learning Coordinator**

The experts in particular highlighted the role of the foreseen ‘Digital Learning Coordinator’ (in replacement of the current role of ‘ICT Coordinator’).

Accentuating the mission of the actual ICT Coordinators, the Digital Learning Coordinators will support members of the teaching staff in digital teaching and learning, promote relevant digital tools, organise trainings and foster the local learning communities and school-wide digital culture. Moreover, they will exchange best practices with their fellows in other European Schools.

For these important tasks the Coordinators currently receive - depending on the school approach - a décharge between 0,5 and 4 periods/hours per week.

The experts recommend that on **system level:**

* a more harmonised approach should be promoted and
* (at least) on a temporary basis for the 2020/21 school year the décharge for the current ICT coordination task and for organizing training on blended learning and distance teaching should be increased.

**cc) Access to devices, bandwidth and IT support**

In its guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21 ‘Blended learning in school education’[[7]](#footnote-7) the EU Commission highlighted the fact that “every member of the school will need access to dependable digital devices, a reliable infrastructure (including broadband and WiFi) and knowledgeable IT staff to assist teachers and learners to use online resources effectively”. This conclusion is in particular valid for ‘blended learning’. However, it is in general valid for all three scenarios assessed by the task force.

Representatives of teachers have stressed that teachers do not have access to school devices, but have to provide devices at their own expenses in order to provide teaching and learning from a distance, with no specific security nor privacy measures.

IT support has been at its limits during the period of distance teaching and learning in the second semester of the 2019/20 school year and will need at least temporary reinforcement in case of scenario 2 and the potential fostering of live streaming of classes (see here below).

It is therefore proposed:

* to increase temporarily the ICT staff in the schools by 50% in the 2020/21 school year.

**dd) Moving from ‘guidelines’ to a ‘policy’ on distance teaching and learning**

The European Schools have promoted in early March 2020 ‘Guidelines on Distance Teaching and Learning’[[8]](#footnote-8) which have been updated over the last months and have become more binding for the schools.

These guidelines will be updated in the light of the experiences gained in the last semester and published in advance of the beginning of the new school year.

However, the experts in charge recommend that the European Schools develop a concise policy document on distance teaching and learning which should define **binding standards** for distance teaching and learning and which will serve as the basis for the more dynamic guidelines, which also in future will have to be updated on a regular basis. Finally, this policy document shall also contain a chapter on **assessment** in distance teaching and learning (see proposal under the chapter ‘Assessment’).

In this context, it should not be forgotten that parents also need transparent and reliable guidelines on how much support and supervision might be requested from them depending on the different scenarios.

Therefore, it is also recommended on **system level:**

* to review the guidelines established in March 2020 in the light of the experiences gained and in the light of the three potential scenarios, and to use part of them as a basis for a policy.

**ee) Teaching standards**

In the longer term also, the Teaching Standards (Booklet/Evaluation of Teachers in the European Schools)[[9]](#footnote-9) will have to be amended in the light of the envisaged policy document.

**ff) Live streaming**

Live streaming of classes has been tested in pilot projects during the period of gradual re-entry in the months of May and June at several European Schools. Live streaming does allow a group of pupils to follow the teaching ‘in situ’ while the other group of their class mates can follow the teaching at the same time from a distance. Live streaming is supposed to have an added value in particular under scenario 2 in order to maintain physical distance. Within scenario 2, live streaming is seen in particular as an option to ensure ‘business continuity’ within the BAC cycle. Therefore, priority should be given to the year groups S 6 and S 7.

Moreover, live streaming is considered also as one approach under scenario 1 in case vulnerable pupils and/or teachers cannot be ‘in situ’ or at least not in the same room as the rest of the class.

However, live streaming has also constraints and does require further clarification in particular with respect to the right of privacy of teachers and pupils.

The experts recommend on **system level:**

* to further analyse the compliance of live streaming and in particular the streaming of the image of teachers and/or pupils with labor law and GDPR,
* to analyse under which conditions a recording (audio and/or video) of lessons would be allowed,
* to assess the specific workload required of teachers to design and manage proper streamed lessons, and the potential pressure exerted by external presence (e.g., parents) and
* to give with respect to live streaming priority to the year groups S 6 and S 7.

**gg) ICT charter**

Independently from the question of whether ‘life streaming’ will be promoted, the experts identified the need to revise existing ICT charters in the schools and to establish by the beginning of the 2020/21 school year a harmonised charter addressing teachers, pupils and parents. This common charter has to address for example aspects of IT security, data protection and data privacy, intellectual property, cyber bullying and ‘netiquette’.

**hh) Budgetary impact**

The proposed measures will have an impact on the budget of the schools. This is in particular valid for:

* the proposed temporary increase of the internal structures by 15%,
* the proposed temporary increase of the IT support staff in the schools and
* the necessary investment in hard ware and bandwidth to ensure live streaming for vulnerable pupils and the year groups S 6 and S 7.

The schools are invited to identify these needs by the very beginning of the school year and to provide the Administration Board in September 2020 with an estimate of the additional needs and proposals for financing these measures by reallocating means within the approved budget for the financial years 2020 and 2021.

**ii) Required decisions on system level – Distance teaching and learning**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Establish a distance teaching and learning policy | New document | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | Nov 20WP |
| Amend the teaching standards  | Booklet/Evaluation of teachers2015-09-D-32015-09-D-40 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |
| Finalise the Digital Competence Framework | New document | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | - |
| Create guidelines on subject-based teams  | New document | Oct20 | Oct 20info | - | - |
| Provide the necessary means for IT infrastructure and support | Potential amending budget (potential reallocation/budget transfer within the 2020 budget) | - | - | Oct 20WP | Nov 20WP |
| Increase the décharge/Internal Structures temporary by 15% in order to support current ICT Coordinators and training measures linked to distance teaching and learning | Temporary Addendum to the ‘Internal Structures’ Annex 1 of document 2019-04-D-13 | - | - | - | Aug 20 |

1. **Training**

**aa) General observations**

The aspect of training was partly already highlighted in the previous chapter on ‘distance teaching and learning’.

All members in the task force have praised the capability and willingness of the teaching staff to adapt at short notice to the requirements of distance teaching and learning. Despite the experience gained over the second semester 2019/20 it is not realistic to consider the majority of members of the teaching staff as highly experienced and competent in distance teaching or blended learning.

Moreover, new teachers arriving in the European Schools already being confronted with a different school system, different curricula etc., might have even less experience in distance teaching and learning and might not be familiar with the soft- and hardware established in the European Schools.

Finally, new approaches, like for example blended learning or the live streaming of teaching will require further training also for very experienced members of the teaching staff.

**bb) Recommendations on local level**

In the light of these general observations, the experts dedicated to the training area in particular stressed on the **local level:**

* the importance of the induction of new teaching staff,
* the need for local trainings on blended learning and distance teaching and learning,
* the need to promote teacher collaboration, through distributed leadership, professional learning communities and peer to peer activities.

**cc) Recommendations on system level**

The experts involved in the assessment of the training area recommend on **system level:**

* to adapt the Common Framework for Continuous Professional Development[[10]](#footnote-10) establish peer learning networks,
* to adapt the planning for the 2020/21 In-Service Training (INSET) and
* to establish an online training catalogue on system level and promote networked professional learning communities.

**dd) Required decisions on system level – training**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Adapt the Framework on Continuous Development  | Common Framework for Continuous Professional Development2016-01-D-40 | Oct 20 | Oct 20 | - | - |
| Adapt the INSET planning for 2020/21 |  | Oct 20 | Oct 20info | - | - |
| Create guidelines for a catalogue of online training across the schools | New document | Oct20 | Oct 20info | - | - |

1. **Challenges for the nursery and primary cycle**

**aa) General observations**

It was already highlighted in the introduction of this document that distance teaching and learning in particular in the nursery and primary cycle proved to be a challenge for teachers and pupils, but also for parents.

Younger pupils are less independent learners, need more surveillance and may also need more teacher contact time.

The experts dedicated to this area based their analysis on the assumption that in-situ teaching and learning looks different in the nursery and primary cycles. Therefore, on-line learning, distance learning and blended learning should also look different in the nursery and primary cycles.

One of the main differences between the different contexts for learning is pupils’ capacity to sustain engagement in an on-line learning and distant learning context.

The experts stressed that the younger the pupil, the more learning should be grounded in playful learning methodologies, the manipulation of concrete materials, the scaffolding of discussion including the focused modelling and teaching of language and the provision of on-going and immediate feedback to pupils on their learning; this kind of learning is difficult to achieve at a distance and in an on-line context if it is solely reliant on the teacher.

The younger the child the more the parent would need to take a proactive role in facilitating their child’s learning if that learning is going to be meaningful. In these circumstances, parents are not expected to become teachers teaching lessons, rather parents will be guided by teachers to engage in activities that lend themselves to rich learning in the home context e.g. counting in real life, uncovering mathematical concepts through noticing them in the real- life context. This kind of learning does not happen in pre-defined time-slots. For this view of learning to work well, it will be important that parents understand why this approach is adopted and how such activities meet the learning objectives of the ES syllabus.

While older primary pupils will be better able to engage in on-line lessons in a more sustained manner, the wider potential of on-line learning possibilities should also be realised to facilitate the pupil in engaging in a wider range of learning activities such as peer learning. In this context the home and local environment should still also be seen as an opportunity for pupils to engage with an authentic learning environment in which pupils can engage in authentic learning tasks, can apply learning in real-life scenarios, can engage in open-ended learning tasks to observe, record and conjecture, can engage in independent learning tasks and develop the capacity to set targets, benchmarks for success and to self- assess their own progress and attainment. Such learning activities should accompany on-line teaching in order to enrich on-line teaching.

From the view point of the experts, the blended learning context (in scenario 2) provides the teacher with the best opportunity to optimise learning involving the distance and on-line spaces. The reason for this is that the teacher can use the in-situ time not just to teach but also to prepare, to consolidate, to probe, to extend and to enrich the learning happening in the distant and on-line learning space.

The blended learning context provides the teacher with the ideal opportunity to develop their flexibility to moving between the three learning contexts and to be readily able to adapt their teaching and learning to a changed school context.

In this sense, the experts considered that distance learning, on-line learning and blended learning can offer possibilities to enrich learning not always achievable through in-situ teaching and that these possibilities for learning should be actively sought.

However, they also stressed that envisaged actions must be feasible for teachers.

**bb) Concrete proposals**

The experts addressed major risks which had already materialised in the second semester of the 2019/20 school year and recommended in particular

* to ensure under scenario 2 the teaching of L 2, SWALS languages, European Hours, Religion and ONL by either allocating one day per week to the mentioned subjects being taught from a distance (preferred option) **or** by splitting the school day in an ‘in situ’ morning and an on-line afternoon;
* to foresee screen-free days and
* to develop guidelines for cooperation with the parents.

Moreover, the experts underlined – as mentioned in the chapter ‘assessment’ – the importance of a start-of-year assessment. In this context, it should also be recalled that, due to the decision of the Board of Governors in April 2020, all pupils in the primary cycle were promoted unless both, parents and school management had agreed that the promotion would not be in the best interest of the pupil.

1. **Inspector activities**

Many inspector activities can be executed from a distance. However, an important number of activities take place in the schools. They can be divided into joint activities like for example Whole School Inspections, Audits of the Accredited European Schools and evaluation missions and into individual activities like the evaluations of seconded teachers.

The following chapter addresses the risks linked to the activities which normally require that the inspectors travel to the schools and perform their tasks ‘in situ’. The potential ‘vulnerability’ of inspectors will have an impact under all three scenarios.

1. **Whole School Inspections (WSI)**

**aa) General observations**

Due to measures of confinement, the WSI envisaged for the European School Frankfurt in spring 2020 had to be postponed to the 2020/21 school year. Two further WSI were scheduled for spring 2021.

The expert group analyzing the risks linked to the organisation of the WSI identified a risk linked to vulnerability of the involved inspectors which may materialise in all three scenarios and the risk the schools might have to suspend partly (scenario 2) or completely teaching ‘in situ’ (scenario 3).

The experts agreed that:

* in the short term, WSI should rather be postponed than carried out from distance and that
* the criteria for the assessment (the teaching standards) could be reviewed to address also the school specific policy and practice of distance teaching and learning and blended learning and provide school specific recommendations also in this area in the light of the inspection.

The latter would also aim to avoid on system level that the distance teaching and learning runs the risk of a poor reputation in comparison to the usual teaching and learning ‘in situ’.

**bb) Required decisions on system level – WSI**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Revise planning for the WSI |  | Feb 21 | Feb 21info | - | - |
| Revise the common framework for WSI |  | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | - |

1. **Audits of the Accredited European Schools (AES)**

**aa) General observations**

During the 2020/21 school year, in total 11 audits for AES need to be organized. Two of them correspond to the initial accreditation.

Moreover, for the 2021/22 school year already six audits are planned and three further audits might have to be carried out as well.

Finally, it is worth to mentioning that, from the 2020/21 school year onwards, the framework of the audits has been adapted, involving now besides national inspectors also external experts. Following the new regulations and the toolkit, the scope of class observations has been narrowed essentially to checking that the content of the lessons corresponds to the syllabus of the subject and that the level of difficulty corresponds to the one foreseen in the syllabus for the given year level.

**bb) Proposals to mitigate the risks**

Against this background, the experts in the area of audits have analysed the three potential scenarios and recommend the following:

* under scenario 1 ‘vulnerable’ inspectors or experts might be replaced in time or work at a distance;
* given the number of the envisaged audits for the 2020/21 school year, and the already to a certain extent known number of audits for the 2021/22 school year, a postponement of all audits is not considered as an option under any scenario;
* instead, under scenarios 2 and 3, audits could be conducted entirely or at least partly from a distance and
* observations of distance teaching could be envisaged.

Also in this context, the legal conditions for ‘live streaming’ (see already in the chapter ‘distance teaching and learning’) need to be further analysed by taking into consideration the legal frame applicable in the Member States hosting the AES concerned.

In annex 3 of this document rationales and proposals for audits conducted partly or entirely at a distance are outlined in more detail.

**cc) Required decisions on system level – Audits**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Approve the general principle of carrying out audits partly or entirely at a distance | New document | - | - | - | Aug 20 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Evaluations**

**aa) General observations**

One of the core tasks of national inspectors in the context of quality assurance is the involvement in the evaluation of the pedagogical executive staff and the evaluation of the teaching staff (seconded teachers and locally recruited teachers).

During the period of confinement in the second semester of the 2019/20 school year in particular the evaluation of locally recruited teachers and in this context evaluation missions envisaged were impacted. Three missions scheduled for the months April, May and June had to be cancelled.

Against this background, in April 2020 the Board of Governors approved for the 2019/20 school year a derogation from Article 12.2 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers with respect to contracts of Locally Recruited Teachers supposed to be transferred to contracts for an indefinite period at the end of the school year.

Other statutory evaluations involving the inspectors were postponed to the 2020/21 school year.

**bb) Risk analysis**

The experts dealing with evaluation analysed the risks for all above mentioned evaluations under the three scenarios.

**(1) Evaluation of the pedagogical executive staff – Directors and Deputy Directors**

Directors and Deputy Directors Nursery/Primary Cycle and Secondary Cycle are evaluated in their second and fifth years.

In the 2020/21 school year, five Directors and six Deputy Directors are due for evaluation.

According to the experts involved none of the three scenarios constitutes a major risk that could not be mitigated.

In order to mitigate the risks, the experts propose:

* to replace vulnerable inspectors where necessary and
* to further analyse the possibility of carrying out the evaluation remotely **or**
* to postpone the evaluations by one year.

The latter would require a derogation from Art. 28 of the Seconded Staff Regulations.

Moreover, it is suggested:

* to include in the evaluations how the management has ensured the quality of teaching and learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**(2) Evaluation of seconded teachers**

The evaluation of seconded teaching staff is carried out in the second year (the probationary period ends at the end of the second year) and at the end of the fifth year of secondment.

In the 2020/21 school year, in total 131 seconded teachers in their second year and 159 seconded teachers in their fifth year need to be evaluated.

In this context the experts recommend:

* to replace vulnerable inspectors by nominated substitutes on national level,
* to prioritise the evaluation of the seconded teachers in the second year of secondment and
* to postpone – if necessary – the evaluation in the fifth year to the 2021/22 school year.

The latter would require also a derogation from Article 28 of the Staff Regulations.

Evaluations from a distance are considered to be more problematic for the evaluation of the teaching staff than for the evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors, as the evaluation of the teaching staff includes class observations. Therefore, the undertaking of such evaluations at a distance is not considered as an option for the moment.

**(3) Evaluation of locally recruited teachers**

According to Article 12.2, 14 and 22 of the Service Regulations, locally recruited teachers need to be evaluated by the Director at the end of their probationary period and by the Director and one inspector at the end of the first year of contract in the case where the teachers has received a contract for an unlimited period from the beginning. Moreover, evaluations by the Director and one inspector are foreseen before offering a permanent contract and in the context of advancement to the next higher step.

Due to the postponement of several statutory evaluations in the second semester of the 2019/20 school year, the total number of locally recruited teachers to be evaluated in the 2020/21 school year may amount to more than 300[[11]](#footnote-11).

In order to mitigate the risks linked to the evaluation of locally recruited teachers under the different scenarios, the experts propose:

* to review the composition of the evaluation mission teams,
* to prioritise evaluations linked to the offer of a permanent contract,
* to foster individual evaluations as a complementary option to the evaluation missions,
* to postpone statutory evaluations linked to the promotion to the next step and to award the step with retroactivity **or** toforesee for these evaluations, exceptionally, only an intervention of the management of the school and
* if necessary, under scenario 3, to derogate from the requirement of an involvement of an inspector in the evaluation for awarding a permanent contract.

The latter two proposals would require a derogation from Art. 12 and 22 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers.

**cc) Required decisions on system level – evaluations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action | document | JBI | JTC | BC | BOG |
| Derogate from Article 28 if remote evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors is not considered as an option | Service Regulations of the Seconded Staff2011-04-D-14 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |
| Derogate from Article 28 with respect to the evaluation of seconded teachers | Service Regulations of the Seconded Staff2011-04-D-14 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |
| Derogate from Article 22 of the Service Regulations for LRT in order to award a step without the involvement of an inspector | Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers 2016-05-D-11 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |
| Derogate from Article 12 and 22 of the Service Regulations for LRT in order to award a permanent contract without the involvement of an inspector | Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers 2016-05-D-11 | Feb 21 | Feb 21 | - | April 21 |

1. **Organisation**

The chapter ‘organisation’ deals with measures to be taken mainly on **school level** to be prepared for the 2020/21 school year.

They concern aspects of timetabling under the three potential scenarios, the establishment of health and safety protocols in line with national rules, the establishment of an inventory of ‘vulnerable’ staff and ‘vulnerable’ pupils, the building of testing capacities and measures to improve the local ICT infrastructure where deemed necessary.

In this context, it needs to be recalled that the schools are bound via Article 6 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools by national law in the area of health and safety and the Directors have the final responsibility for respecting the national rules within their school and for the well-being of their staff members.

1. **Timetabling**

Currently, the schools are in the process of finalizing the time tables under scenario 1.

However, it is strongly recommended that as of mid-August also the timetabling for scenarios 2 and 3 be prepared.

The timetabling should reflect main findings of the task force such as:

* ensuring teaching ‘in situ’ of the nursery/primary as far as possible,
* ensuring in primary cycle that also L 2 and other subjects like Music, Arts, etc. are covered,
* ensuing the business continuity of the BAC cycle by either teaching ‘in situ’ and/or ‘live streaming’ of lessons.

**b) Local health and safety protocols**

The schools will have to establish local health and safety protocols in line with the national rules on health and safety which should give an overview on the different measures to be taken under the three scenarios and which are intended to allow a smooth transfer from one scenario to another.

In particular, these protocols should clarify the required action on school level in case a member of staff or a pupil or a family member gets infected.

As such protocols have to respect as a minimum requirement the national rules on health and safety, the Directors are encouraged to establish as soon as possible a permanent working contact with the national and/or regional authorities in charge.

**c) Inventory of ‘vulnerable’ members of the school community**

The task force recommends a common definition of ‘vulnerable’ staff which can be found in chapter 1 of this document.

This definition should – notwithstanding stricter national rules of the hosting Member State – be the basis of a register of ‘vulnerable’ staff to be established at every school.

Moreover, the schools are requested to establish also an inventory of ‘vulnerable’ pupils.

This should allow the schools to offer under all three scenarios distance teaching and learning to all pupils and should ensure that no pupil is left behind.

**d) Building up testing capacities**

The schools, in close cooperation with the OSG, are invited to establish testing capacities which should be part of the local approach to dealing with potential infections.

Currently, the potential needs of every school and the budgetary impact of such testing capacities are analysed on central level.

**e) ICT infrastructure**

The schools are invited to analyse their current IT infrastructure and to identify their needs in order to offer distance teaching and learning in particular via live streaming for ‘vulnerable’ pupils and at least for the year groups S 6 and S 7. Moreover, the IT needs in order to ensure distance teaching by ‘vulnerable’ members of the teaching staff need to be established.

1. **Financial implications**

Some of the envisaged actions have a financial impact.

This concerns in particular:

* the improvement of the IT infrastructure of the schools,
* the temporary improvement of the IT support in the schools,
* the temporary increase in décharge for ‘Digital Learning Coordinators’ and trainings linked to blended learning and distance teaching and learning,
* the replacement of vulnerable teachers and
* the potential additional support in the area of Educational Support and Inclusive Education.

Moreover, the schools will have to invest in measures of health and safety in line with the national requirements.

On the other hand, it needs to be noted that the restriction of travelling and the organization of meetings from distance have created ‘savings’ and will continue to do so.

The envisaged measures will have to be financed – as a matter of priority - by reallocating means within the approved 2020 budget.

The financial situation and the estimated costs of the proposed measures will be illustrated in an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors scheduled for the end of August.

Based on the envisaged discussions, the Board will have to take its final decisions.

1. **Proposal**

The members of the Board of Governors are invited to take note of the document which is meant to inform the members of the Board of Governors about the state of the preparation of the 2020/21 school year and the potential need for decisions at the meeting of the Board by the end of August 2020.

**Annex 1**

**Overview on the Composition of the Task Force**

**‘Preparation of the 2020/21 school year’**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Area | Name of Member | OSG correspondent |
| Core Team |  | Mr GarralónMs IglesiasMs Ruiz EsturlaMr Grosset BourbangeMs DucatezMr BeckmannMr MunkácsyMs Rudomino | Mr Lucania |
| Experts |  |  |  |
|  | **1. Inspector Activities** |  |  |
|  | * WSI
 | Mr Coenen | Ms Piron |
|  | * Audits
 | Ms Huisman | Ms Morley |
|  | * Evaluations
 | Ms O’Toole | Mr Beckmann |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **2. Quality Assurance** |  |  |
|  | * QA
 | Mr Ottosson | Mr MunkácsyMs Piron |
|  | * Assessment
 | Mr Damkjaer Mr Wolff | Mr MunkácsyMs Rudomino |
|  | * Educational Support
 | Ms Musilova | Ms GracioMr LucaniaMs Vandenbosch |
|  | * IT + Training
 | Ms Kamp | Mr JourdeMs Piron |
|  | * Primary
 | Mr Fitzgerald | Mr MunkácsyMr Jourde |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **3. Organisation**  |  |  |
|  |  | Mr GogginsMr RichardMr Alberici | Mr Lucania/Ms Piron |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **4. Framework** |  |  |
|  | * HR
 | Mr Depret |  |
|  | * Budget
 | Mr Escudero Bustamante |  |
|  | * IT
 | Mr BeckmannMr Gassner |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Consultative Body |  |  |  |
|  | **EU COM** | Ms EvangelopoulouMs Karacic |  |
|  | **AES** | Ms Palmer |  |
|  | **ISTC** | Ms WellerMr O’Coimin |  |
|  | **IP** | Mr MolesMs Valentine |  |

**Annex 2**

**Action Plan on system level**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk area | Sub area | Measures | Necessary changes of Doc  | Responsible | Boards | By when |
| 1. Quality Assurance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **a) Quality Assurance** | Add a chapter on blended learning and distance teaching and learning to the Guidelines for producing syllabi | 2019-09-D-28 | PEDA[[12]](#footnote-12) IT-PEDA WG | JBI, JTC, BoG | **11/20** |
|  |  | Amend structure of syllabi | 2019-09-D-27 | PEDAQA WG | JBI, JTC, BoG | **11/20** |
|  | **b) Assessment** | Establish Guidelines on summative assessment in distance teaching | 2020-03-D-11 | PEDAASS N/P and SEC WG | JBI, JTC,  | **10/20** |
|  |  | Amend Assessment Policy | 2011-01-D-64 | PEDAASS N/P and SEC WG | JBI, JTC,  | **10/20** |
|  |  | Modify when needed Article 57 of the General Rules with respect to promotion and progression in primary | 2014-03-D-14 | PEDA | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  | Re-define the criteria for awarding the A- and B-marks in Article 59 of the General Rules | 2014-03-D-14 | PEDAASS SEC WG  | JBI, JTC, BoG | **10/20** |
|  |  | Revise the formula to establish the final marks in Art. 59 of the General Rules | 2014-03-D-14 | BAC | JBI, JTC, BoG | **10/20** |
|  |  | Revise the rules concerning the BAC with respect to scenario 3 | 2014-03-D-14 | BAC | JBI, JTC, BoG | **10/20** |
|  |  | Revise the BAC arrangements | AIREB | BAC | JBI, JTC, BoG | **12/20** |
|  | **c) Educational Support** | Provide the schools with a check list on Educational Support measures | New document | DSG | - | **09/20** |
|  |  | Add to the revision of the support policy document a chapter on Educational Support in case teaching ‘in situ’ is suspended  | 2012-05-D-14 | DSGEDUSP WG | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  | **d) Distance Teaching and Learning** | Finalise the Digital Competence Framework for students | New document | PEDAIT PEDA WG | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  | Update the continuous professional development framework | 2016-01-D-40 | PEDACPD WG |  |  |
|  |  | Create procedures and guidelines on subject-based teams at system level | New document | PEDA IT PEDA WG | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  | Increase the internal structures/décharge by 15% | 2019-04-D-13 | DSG | BoG | **08/20** |
|  |  | Review the guidelines on distance teaching  | 2020-03-D-11 | PEDA | - | **09/20** |
|  |  | Establish a distance teaching and learning policy | New document | PEDAIT PEDA WG | JBI, JTC, BoG | **10/20** |
|  |  | Amend the teaching standards | 2015-09-D-32015-09-D-40 | PEDA WSI and IT PEDA WG | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  | Increase the IT staff in schools temporary by 50% | - | DSG | BoG | **08/20** |
|  |  | Analyse the compliance of live streaming with labor law and GDPR | - | HR, DPO | - | **09/20** |
|  |  | Analyse the compliance of recording of lessons with the GDPR | - | DPO | - | **09/20** |
|  |  | Establish an IT Charter | New document | DSG, DPO | - | **09/20** |
|  | **e) Training** | Adapt the common framework of Continuous Professional Development | 2016-01-D-40 | PEDA CPD WG | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  | Adapt the INSET planning for 2020/21 school year | New document | PEDA | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  | Create guidelines for a catalogue of online training across the system | - | PEDA | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Inspector Activities |  | Identify vulnerable inspectors | - | PEDAPresident of JBI | - | **-** |
|  | **a) WSI** | Revise the planning of the WSI | New document | PEDAWSI WG | JBI, JTC | **10/20** |
|  |  | Revise the common framework for WSI | 2019-09-D-24 | PEDAWSI WG | JBI, JTC | **02/21** |
|  | **b) Audits** | Approve the general principle of carrying out audits partly or entirely at a distance |  | OSG | BoG | **08/20** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **c) Evaluations** | Derogate from Article 28 if remote evaluations are required | 2011-04-D-14 | HR | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  | Derogate from Article 28 with respect to the evaluation of seconded teachers | 2011-04-D-14 | HR | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  | Derogate from Article 12 and 22 with respect to evaluation for a CDI | 2016-05-D-11 | HR | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  | Derogate from Article22 with respect to progression in step | 2016-05-D-11 | HR | JBI, JTC, BoG | **04/21** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Organisation |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **a) Time tabling** | Establish draft time tables also for scenario 2 and 3 | - | Schools | - | **09/20** |
|  | **b) Health and Safety protocols** | Establish for each school health and safety protocols in line with the national rules | - | Schools | - | **08/20** |
|  | **c) ‘Vulnerable’ members of the school community** | Establish an inventory of ‘vulnerable’ staff and pupils | - | Schools | - | **08/20** |
|  | **d) Testing capacities** | Establish testing capacities to deal with potential infections | - | OSGSchools | BoG | **09/20** |
|  | **e) IT Infrastructure** | Ensure live streaming for ‘vulnerable’ members of the teaching staff, ‘vulnerable’ pupils and the year groups S 6 and S 7 | - | Schools | BoG | **09/20** |

**Annex 3**

**Proposal from the Steering Group on Accredited European Schools regarding audits in the AES**

**INTRODUCTION**

During the school year 2020-2021, 11 audits for AES accreditations need to be organised. Two of them correspond to initial accreditations.

For the school year 2021-2022 six audits are already planned, three could possibly be added (interest files have already been presented and approved, but the schools have not yet been activated) and we do not know how many more could join (several interests for accreditation have already been expressed).

If all the audits, foreseen to be organised in Autumn 2020, were postponed to Autumn 2021, the System of European Schools and some AES would face the following difficulties:

1. Already this year planning the 11 audits has been a challenge. If, in Autumn 2021, some 17-20 audits and possibly more need to be organised, finding enough Inspectors and Experts for the pre-audits and for the audits might turn out to be mission impossible.
2. At the same time, planning and organising 17-20, possibly more, audits at once, would considerably increase the work load for the AES cell and extra resources would certainly have to be temporarily deployed.
3. This year all the AES had to re-sign the agreements, in order to put them in line with the newly approved regulations; the exercise has revealed itself to be far from easy. To date, some agreements still need to be re-signed. Should all audits planned for Autumn 2020 be postponed, two schools would complete a whole school year (2020-2021) without accreditation (the two initial accreditations) and nine would start a new school year (2021-2022) without a signed agreement. Alternatively, the Board of Governors could decide to exceptionally sign a renewal agreement for one year, without an audit, waiting for the audit to be organised in Autumn 2021 and the renewal agreements then signed for three years, once the audits have been organised. Again, in both scenarios, the work load for the AES cell would increase considerably and extra resources would certainly have to be temporarily deployed.

For all these reasons, the conclusion of the Steering Group Accredited European Schools (SGAES) is to strongly recommend trying the utmost to run the planned audits this year, either in situ or at a distance.

Only in the case of really unbearable difficulties (i.e. problems detected during the audit conducted at a distance, that raise doubts and need clarification through a visit on site), could those audits that raise concerns eventually be completed on site during the school year 2021-2022. In this, hopefully unlikely, event, a renewal or initial agreement would be signed only for one year and then renewed for two more years, when the visit in situ has been made and doubts alleviated.

**RATIONALE**

Although the preference is always to carry out the audits strictly in accordance with the Accredited European Schools (AES) Toolkit (2019-07-D-20), in light of the coronavirus pandemic and the constraints that this is placing on both travel and normal school activities, it seems prudent to set out plans for online audits of the AES in Autumn 2020 should the need arise.

There are eleven audits planned for Autumn 2020. Of these:

* One is an initial accreditation for N-S5
* One is an initial accreditation for S6-7
* Four are for renewals of both the agreement and the additional agreement (N-S7)
* Five are for renewals of the agreement (N-s5)

Priority has been given for sending audit teams to the schools needing initial accreditation and these visits have been scheduled in the last full week of September. In this case, it is important to make up the audit teams of inspectors who are not in vulnerable categories[[13]](#footnote-13) or currently shielding.

For the other schools, if necessary, the audit could be carried out remotely. This impacts the activities of the school and the inspectors but not of the experts, who were already scheduled to work remotely regardless of the pandemic. If inspectors cannot travel, they could be replaced by the expert who has written the pre-audit report, if available and possible.

The table below outlines the activities that inspectors are scheduled to carry out during their visit, provides possible school scenarios and suggests ways to carry out the activity remotely.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audit visit activity (page reference to doc 2019-07-D-20-en-5)** | **Audit Scenarios** | **Possible solutions and challenges** |
| Lesson observations (pages 36 and 46) | 1. School is open as normal, audit team working remotely2. School is teaching online, audit team working remotely3. Parts of the school are open, parts are online, audit team working remotely | 1. This provides a challenge regarding how the audit team can access an in-situ lesson remotely. Lessons should be streamed so that inspectors can ‘attend’ online.Streaming:The inspector will invite the teacher to a meeting, using TEAMS. The teacher will then accept the meeting and use a device (tablet or laptop) which enables the inspector to see and hear what is going on in the classroom. The inspector could mute their microphone and camera. The school will need to provide the inspectors with the email addresses of all the teachers where observations will take place.The school will need to inform all concerned parents that certain lessons will be live-streamed, during the audit week, in order to be audited.2. The teacher will need to invite the inspector into the online lesson, using whatever online teaching tool the school uses (whilst remaining in compliance with GDPR). The responsibility for ensuring that inspectors can access the online lessons, regardless of the technology being used, belongs to the school. At times, teachers make smaller groups for the children to discuss etc or introduce a topic and then leave the children to work before returning to the lesson. Inspectors should therefore be able to pop in to the virtual lesson at any stage of the lesson but should be in contact with the teacher as a first point of contact in order to find out what is happening in the virtual lesson at that stage. The teacher has the responsibility to ensure that the inspector can see the lesson when they log-on.3. A combination of the possibilities discussed above should be used. N.B. In all cases, it is inevitable that teachers will know in advance that their lesson is to be observed. Inspectors will be reminded that the visit is not for the whole lesson and the scope of the observation (the new lesson observation form will be used). Teachers will also be informed by their management on the limited scope of the observation.  |
| Meetings with the management / teachers / support co-ordinator/ (pages 36,40, 45) | 1. School is open as normal, audit team working remotely2. School is teaching online, audit team working remotely3. Parts of the school are open, parts are online, audit team working remotely | 1. Meetings carried out online using TEAMs. The timings of the meetings can be decided between the school and the audit team but the responsibility for organising the online meeting is with the audit team. One inspector should be in charge of sending the invitations, either via the eursc.eu email invitation system or by using the TEAM set up for each individual school. 2. As point 1, above3. As point 1, above |
| Quality assurance: checking random sample of teacher qualifications (certificates) (page 36)  | 1. School is open as normal, audit team working remotely2. School is teaching online, audit team working remotely3. Parts of the school are open, parts are online, audit team working remotely | 1. The requested certificates (random sample) should be scanned in and uploaded to a secure platform, namely the TEAM already in use for the audit. 2. As point 1, above – assuming that someone can go in to the school to access the documents. If this is not possible due to very tight government controls on movement, then this section of the audit could be postponed until access to the documents is possible. 3. As point 1, above |

As for the lesson observations, the new regulations and toolkit have narrowed their scope, essentially to checking that the content of the lesson corresponds to the syllabus of the subject and that the level of difficulty corresponds to the one foreseen in the syllabus for the given year level. This observation can in principle be conducted whatever technical solution is used to teach at a distance (recorded lessons, assigned tasks, shared materials, etc.). Members of the audit team should be given access to the platform used and should receive the necessary instructions to access the selected lesson from the audited AES. Possible GDPR related complications are in the course of clarification, regarding the streaming of lessons. It should be noted that, in any case, members of the audit team enter the classroom and are present for part of the lesson, when given in situ.

The case would be different if lessons were totally suspended (in situ and at a distance). This has happened in several Member States this year and the SGAES is aware that this has happened in at least one AES. This situation would eventually force the audit to be completed at a later stage (when lessons re-start). In such an extreme situation, the SGAES has also considered the possibility that, in the unfortunate event that the audit could not be completed in time for an approval of the report during the regular meetings, the opinion of the Joint Board of Inspectors and the approval of the Board of Governors could be received using the written procedure.

As real last resort a postponement of the audit, as already mentioned, will be considered.

A ‘how to’ guide will be provided to inspectors to explain how to organise a meeting using TEAMs.

It is also possible that the members of the audit teams might act in different ways i.e. one inspector travels whilst the other inspector works at a distance. This would be an acceptable way for the audit teams to conduct their activities.

The adoption of the new Regulations and the adapted framework for audits mean that the audits that will be conducted from this year on, and their outcome, are hardly comparable with the audits and their outcome as previously organised. For these reasons all audits should be organised according to the “standard” format. The “light” format of audits will be reserved for the second round (starting in three years’ time), as applicable.

**Annex 4**

**Example common template risk analysis**

**Example: Risk Assessment in the area ‘Inspector Activities’ – Evaluation of teaching staff**

**Scenario 2: Temporary continuation of measures of confinement which allow only parts of the school population to participate in teaching ‘in situ’**

**Assessment criteria:**

**Likelihood: very unlikely – unlikely – likely - very likely – almost certain**

**Impact: very low – low – medium – high – very high**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk area | Risk description | Who is concerned | likelihood | Impact | Proposed action | Impact on other areas | Decision of BoG required? |
| Evaluation of LRT | Due to situation of partial confinement and due to vulnerability of inspectors involved not all envisaged evaluations of LRT can be carried out | * XX number of teachers ready for a CDI by the end of the 2020/21 school year
 | likely | medium | * Evaluations linked to CDI should be carried out by management only
 | * Schools will have to ensure the evaluation by management in time;
* no budgetary impact
 | Yes, derogation from Articles 12.2 and 22.2 LRT Service Regulations  |
|  |  | * XX number of teachers ready for progression in step at the end of the 20/21 school year
 | likely | low | * Evaluations linked to step should be postponed and the step be awarded with retroactivity
 | * Potential impact on attractiveness
 | no |
| Evaluation of seconded teachers | Due to situation of partial confinement and due to vulnerability of inspectors involved not all envisaged evaluations of seconded teachers can be carried out | * XX number of teachers need to be evaluated in their **second** year
 | likely | high | * Evaluation should be carried out only by the management

or* Evaluation should be postponed by one year
 | Some savingsno | Yes, derogation from Art. 28 Seconded Staff Regulations yes |
|  |  | * XX number of teachers need to be evaluated in their **fifth** year
 | likely | low | * Evaluation should be carried out only by the management

or* Evaluation should be postponed by one year
 | Some savingsno | Yes,derogation from Art. 28 Seconded Staff Regulationsyes |

1. Doc. 2020-05-D-25-en-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The area ‘LRT evaluation’ was extended to all evaluations involving national inspectors. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Doc. 2020-03-D-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See in particular Art. 2 of the Regulations for the Seconded Staff of the European Schools; Art. 5 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools and Art. 5 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Managerial Staff of the European Schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the proposal in the chapter ‘Distance Teaching and Learning’, where the experts propose to define binding standards for distance teaching and learning in a new document (‘Distance Learning Policy’). This policy would be the reference document for schools when establishing their local policies. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. MEMO 2020-06-M-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/publications/blended-learning-guidelines.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Doc. 2020-03-D-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Doc 2015-09-D-3 and doc 2015-09-D-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Doc. 2016-01-D-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The figure needs still verification. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In the following, ‘PEDA’ refers to the Pedagogical Development Unit and ‘BAC’ refers to the European Baccalaureate Unit in the OSG. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Vulnerable categories: this is in relation to the guidance issued by the OSG and also according to the countries in which the inspectors live. Whichever set of guidelines are stricter should be followed, although the final decision rests with individual inspectors. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)