

School children in West Cumbria get help to learn at home

MORE than 420 pupils in West Cumbria will receive a laptop or tablet to help them learn at home.

Currently these school children do not have access to a digital device that is suitable for remote learning.

The device donations have been provided by a group of organisations who contacted local schools with an offer of help and support during the current pandemic.

Copeland Borough Council, in partnership with The WELL (Western Excellence in Learning & Leadership) Project, funded by Sellafield Ltd and the NDA, assisted with the co-ordination of purchasing or refurbishing digital devices, or in some cases awarding funding to individual schools to enable purchasing.

The WELL Project is a transformational education programme that aims to raise standards in every classroom in West Cumbria.

All local primary and secondary schools were approached by the partnership and 28 schools in Copeland identified pupils that were currently disadvantaged and could benefit from the use of a digital device.

Pupils have so far received 156 devices across Copeland and Allerdale, funded by Sellafield Ltd.

A further 268 laptops and tablets have been funded by Cumbria County Council and Copeland Community Fund, who have both pledged £20,000 towards the project and a further £3,000 has been awarded by the Sellafield supply chain.

One parent of a West Cumbrian pupil said: "I was contacted by my daughter's school to see if she could access remote learning.

"We had an old iPad but unfortunately it was so outdated that we couldn't access any of the systems or programmes my daughter needed.

"I normally decline accepting any type of help, through embarrassment and shame, but this has made the world of difference to us."

Jo Jones, Head Teacher, Kells Infant School, said "Without the support we would definitely have families who would struggle to engage with their children's learning at home.

"It has allowed children to engage in a live register each morning so that they can see their friends and speak to their teacher and each other even if it is just to wave and say hello.

"In these such unusual times our priority as a school is always to ensure that every child has access to their learning but also to stay connected to those who are important to them.

"These devices will allow these families to do just that."

Emma Williamson, Community Resilience and Social Inclusion Team Leader at Copeland Borough Council, said: "The swift financial support in addition to the donated equipment we received has enabled us to provide much needed resources to children and young people, to access remote learning and enhance their education.

"The £43,000 awarded by Cumbria County Council, Copeland Community Fund and members of the Sellafield supply chain is a testament to partnership working and demonstrates how pooling our resources can really benefit the local community and have a direct impact on those in need."



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