Mitigating known challenges for learners who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH): The problem with face masks and social distancing on learning and belonging.

While there are few published studies to date that document the impact of face masks and social distancing on learners with hearing loss in schools and preschools, it is likely that for many DHH learners, understanding spoken instruction, sign language and/or everyday classroom dialogue will be more difficult than usual. The following messages and inclusive practice ideas are designed to help support your planning and teaching during these largely unfamiliar times.

Key Messages

1. In-person and remote learning poses substantial viewing, listening and comprehension challenges for learners with *any* level of hearing loss, including mild.
2. Be familiar with your student's/child's One Plan to ensure you are following the recommendations as best you can. Contact SERU or your site's Special Educator: Hearing for advice, if you need support.

Beyond the One Plan and expert advice

Teaching Face to Face	Teaching Remotely
Where possible, remove facemasks to allow the learner to see expressive communication that occurs naturally when talking Plan for groups of students, to work in a space where they can safely socially distance without facemasks. Many DHH people need to see to be able to hear.	Synchronous Online Teaching: ✓ Record synchronous lessons and group meetings. ✓ Use a program that allows the learner to turn on their own closed captioning (Teams and Google hangouts) ✓ Record a transcript of the lesson and provide this to the learners after the class. ✓ Draw attention to key points with a visual marker-pointing or highlighting words. ✓ Where possible, select video resources that have the option of closed captioning ✓ Increase use of visual supplements on PPT, lesson outlines, instructions etc. ✓ Focus on highlighting key words and concepts.
Repeat important instructions given to the whole class <u>at the child's eye</u>. *Alternatively, and if appropriate, ask another student or SSO to be a notetaker while you are giving instructions. This action alone can reduce stress and learning fatigue for many DHH students*.	
Increase use of visual supplements. Focus on highlighting key words and concepts.	Increase use of comprehension check-ins with student (develop a system between you and them)
Increase use of comprehension check-ins with student (develop a system between you and them or SSO/ECW)	Share and clarify the learning intentions, big ideas and outcomes in advance of the online session. This action allows the student to know and connect what is to come. This action alone will provide time during the lesson to listen and focus on conversations. Repeat key messages/big ideas in chat line
Monitor the frequency and quality of social interactions to avoid the person feeling lonely or isolated from classmates. Plan for activities that bring children together, positively.	Monitor the frequency and quality of social interactions to avoid a child/student feeling lonely or isolated from classmates.
Speak/sign precisely. Using gesture to demonstrate emphasis, emotion, number etc. can help with understanding intent, the first time.	Increase options for 1:1 communication with your student-chat line, parents, email etc.
Schedule regular breaks when teaching synchronously. It is very difficult to listen/watch, read and process all at the same time.	Seek out which teaching strategies and adjustments are working/not working for the student.
Increase options for 1:1 communication with your student	If available, use speech to text applications
If available, use speech to text applications	Schedule mini breaks when using explicit instruction online. The use of wait time supports processing and signals this is an important piece of information.
Share and clarify the learning intentions and outcomes of the lesson before the class. This action allows the student to know and connect what is to come.	If your learner has a wireless/personal communication device encourage them to use this when connected to their computers/devices.