

E-Learning Roadmap in Stratford College



Introduction

Student roles and responsibilities will be explained at a special induction session and we will continue to support them in this regard.

Rationale

We have devised a new e-Learning Roadmap to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19 and the significant increase in the use of technology to continue learning. This roadmap does not introduce any new concepts, rather, it specifically outlines the various applications used for the delivery of online classes and the protocols expected in their use.

In all cases the primary aim is to cover the required curriculum areas for their specific subject. The teacher will decide the most effective method to use to achieve this aim. Students should contact their teacher directly if they are having difficulty with any aspect of their subject or if they are finding the workload unmanageable.

Learner Safety, Learner Well Being and Learner Support will continue to be our priority in face to face and/or on-line learning environment and determine our e-learning protocols.

Scope

This roadmap is formulated with reference to Department of Education (DE) Guidelines on [Well Being](#) and [Continuity of Schooling](#) along with DE Guidelines on Reopening Schools and Stratford College's Response Plan, and DES Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context For post-primary schools and centres for education.

Reference is also made to key Department of Education Circulars [DE Circular Number: 0074/2020 Communication/Teaching & Learning Platform](#) and Guidance on Remote Learning in a COVID-19 Context: September – December 2020 For primary schools and special schools (see attached).

The following requirements in relation to remote teaching and learning of all pupils/students are particularly important:

Regular engagement with pupils/students: *It is important that teachers engage with their pupils/students; in a primary setting this should, ideally, be on a daily basis; in a post-primary context teachers should, as far as possible, engage with students as per the normal school timetable.*



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- **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences:** *Teacher-pupil/student engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the pupils/students.*
- **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities:** *Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give pupils/students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way.*
- **Learning tasks:** *The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the pupil/student, including pupils/students with SEN, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.*
- **Two-way feedback between home and school:** *Schools should ensure that two-way feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and their pupils/students is encouraged and supported. Schools should provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all pupils/ students to regularly share samples of their work with the teacher(s) throughout each week. Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided.*
- **Support for pupils/students with SEN:** *Special education teachers (SETs) should continue to engage with the pupils/students on their caseloads and class/subject teachers should differentiate teaching and learning in line with their pupils'/students' needs to minimise disruption to their learning and progression.*

This roadmap also operates alongside all our existing policies. It does not set out to replace our Acceptable Usage Policy (including rules on use of mobile phones in school) but rather intends to be an important addition for the area of learning from a digital platform. The policy should also be read concurrently with our school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Stratford College [Acceptable User Policy \(AUP\)](#)

Stratford College [Code of Behaviour and Discipline](#)

Stratford College [General Data Protection Policy](#)

Stratford College Digital Learning Strategy

Stratford College [Child Protection Policy](#)

As advice and circumstances are constantly being updated so too this roadmap will be updated.

Our protocols attempt to comprehend the wide ranging responsibilities of on-line in school and distance learning.

Blended Learning

Blended Learning is a pedagogical approach combining online and face-to-face learning and incorporating a range of learning materials, resources, types of assessments and in-class activities to enhance the learning process. Blended learning is not about replicating face-to-face time online, the aim is to enhance student experience supported by carefully selected online tools.

On-line Learning

Online learning is where more than 80% of content is delivered remotely through a combination of synchronous, structured and/or asynchronous activities.

Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning is where the traditional form of face-to-face learning converges with newer methods of remote and online instruction. Students and/or teachers may be simultaneously be in the classroom/another classroom and at home.

Stratford College e-learning Platforms

01: STUDENTS TOOLS

LMS: Schoolwise + Office365 + [VShare](#)

02: ONLINE TEACHING

03: Teams meetings, audio conntention with the class, chat, [Onenote](#) Notebooks (Collaboration, Class Plans and Students folders)

04: [screencasting](#), digital tools, virtual field trips

05: STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Independent learning: flipped classroom, 'cold call' questions

Group learning: break-out rooms, collaborative projects, presentations, debates, quizzes, questions

Assessment and feedback: audio feedback, or online corrections

SEN, inclusion

06: WELLBEING

Student: Junior Cycle & Senior Cycle Key Skills

Teacher: Mix of real time and remote teaching

All: pacing, breaks



STRATFORD COLLEGE

Helen O'Kelly, Siobhan Reynolds. August 2020

VSWare is our Management Information System (MIS). VSware is a design-led, cloud and mobile based school administration platform – which handles all core school data from attendance, assessments, and behaviour to the mandatory September and P-POD returns. VSware provides collaborative data management and innovative reporting tools giving school management, administration, teachers and parents the ability to monitor and improve the progress of their students and a real-time view of school activity.

VSWare Parent App <https://support.vsware.ie/parent-app-overview>

Office 365 Education is a collection of services that allows teachers to collaborate, share resources and schoolwork with students and fellow teachers. It has several built-in features that allow for effective distance learning.

Office365 incorporates:

- Microsoft Outlook (e-mail)
- Microsoft Teams
- Microsoft OneNote
- Microsoft Forms
- Microsoft Stream

There may be some additional applications that teachers use, and the teacher will provide the student with the information required to access them. Again, students must, in all cases, use their *studentnameYYYY@student.stratfordcollege.ie* account as the login.

Resources for using MS Teams

[Back to School with MS TEAMS](#)

or [Introduction to MS TEAMS](#)

[Family and Guardian Guide to MS Teams](#)

[Helpful checklist for parents/guardians to support students on MS Teams](#)

[Teacher Guide to MS Teams](#)

[Teacher Checklist for MS Teams](#)

[Student Guide to MS Teams](#)

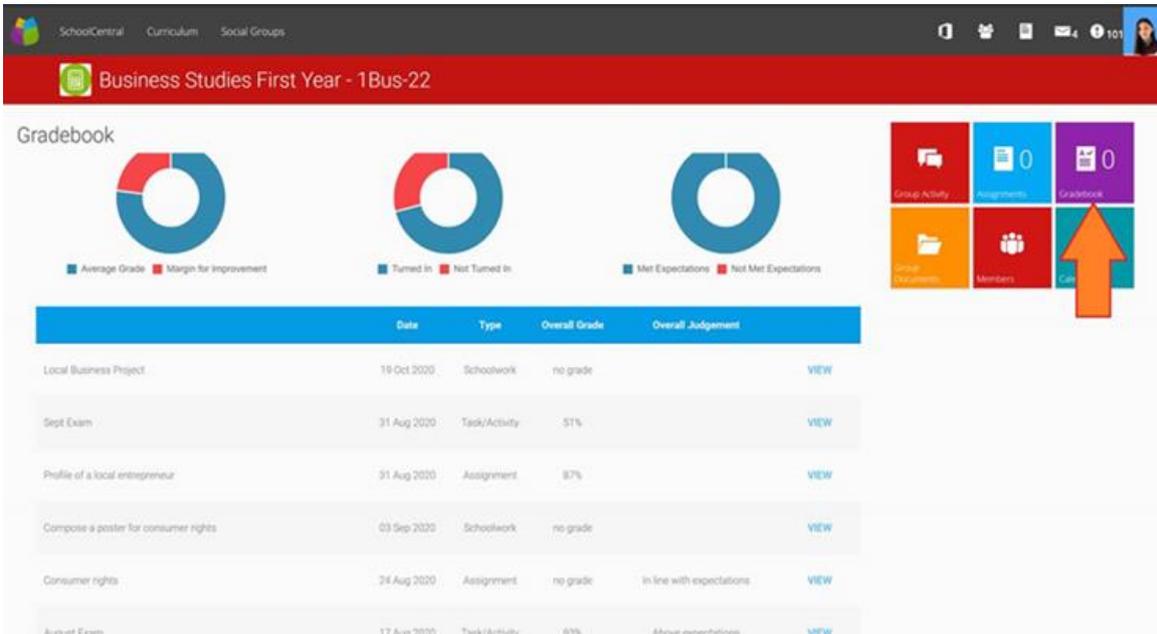
[Student Guide to MS Teams Booklet](#)

[Student Checklist for MS Teams](#)

[SchoolWise](#) is our Learning Management System (LMS).

SchoolWise, also helps your son/daughter track their progress. Students have their own Gradebook in SchoolWise. This is where they can see all their assessments for each class group, the grading information (grades, feedback, etc). This can be accessed directly in a group or from their profile menu. Please see the graphics below for how to do that.

Group



Gradebook

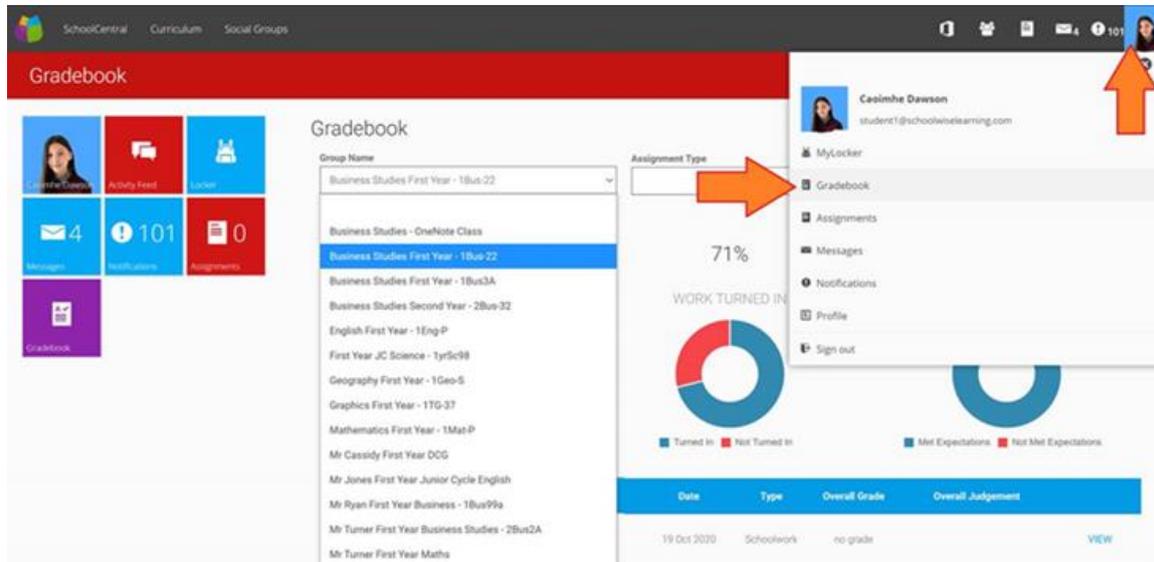
	Average Grade	Margin for improvement

	Turned In	Not Turned In

	Met Expectations	Not Met Expectations

	Date	Type	Overall Grade	Overall Judgement	
Local Business Project	19 Oct 2020	Schoolwork	no grade		VIEW
Sept Exam	31 Aug 2020	Task/Activity	51%		VIEW
Profile of a local entrepreneur	31 Aug 2020	Assignment	87%		VIEW
Compose a poster for consumer rights	03 Sep 2020	Schoolwork	no grade		VIEW
Consumer rights	24 Aug 2020	Assignment	no grade	in line with expectations	VIEW
August Exam	17 Jun 2020	Task/Activity	63%	Above expectations	VIEW

Profile



Schoolwise Help Centre

<http://support.schoolwiselearning.com/en/collections/2213255-i-am-a-learner>

<https://schoolwiselearning.com/myschoolwise>

Continous Professional Development (CPD)

VSWare Support is available at [VSWare](https://www.vsware.com).

Office 365 and SchoolWise is available at <https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigTech>.

Staff CPD is ongoing.

Data Protection

Please click on this link to see our [Data Privacy Statement](#).

In summary regarding e-learning platforms:

What we retain

- Login activity, specifically, the last time a student logged in to their Office365 account

Within Teams and OneNote, the date and time of if/when a student views any assignments or OneNote notebooks set for them and when they submit any work for same

- In live classes using Teams, all audio, video, whiteboard, annotations and screenshare activity of both teacher and participants (audio/video is not recorded if the student is on mute and the video is not enabled).

Why we retain it

- To assist us in making sure students are engaging in learning sufficiently and in good time
- To assist us in generating appropriate and relevant feedback to parents on progress
- To provide revision materials by means of replying topics covered in a live class, and to ensure those who might be unable to attend live classes can still cover the same content as the rest of the class
- To provide a record of activity in the event of a disciplinary or other issue arising during a live class.

Where we retain it

- All recordings are kept within the College's own systems which requires a valid *@stratfordcollege.ie* or *@student.stratfordcollege.ie* login to access
- The College's own systems are configured so that all data resides within an EU country only, which in the case of Office365, is Ireland.

How long we retain it for

Activity and content will not be retained beyond the students exit from the College, either through early exit or through graduation once all school business has been completed.

Firewall

Our WiFi is connected to the Department of Education (DE) broadband and firewall. Strict levels of access are agreed and rolled across the network in each school.

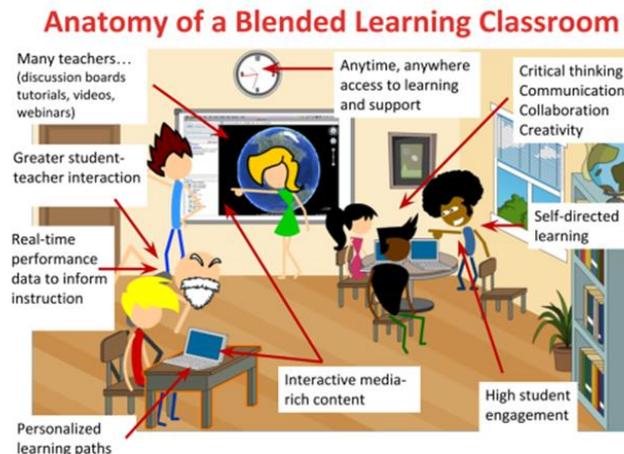
Student Induction

Students attend computer studies classes at least once a week. Their programme includes how to manage information via our on-line platforms. In addition, each teacher will show them best practice in their subjects.

Use of e-learning platforms

1. In-school Blended Learning

While in school and for Health and Safety Reasons students are required to use mobile devices in their classes. Use of textbooks is confined to e-versions and writing material must not be shared. Please see [Stratford College Reopening Handbook](#) for details. There are strict rules about the type of WiFi connectivity that is allowed in the school and when and where mobile devices, including phones, can be use. Please see our AUP for more details.



2. Distance Learning

Distance Learning will take place if a student or staff member is **self-isolating, required to restrict their movements and is otherwise well or if the school is required to close for Public Health reasons.**

Distance Learning will take what is known as a blended approach and some teachers may use different methods more than another teacher.

In both cases the primary aim is to cover the required curriculum areas for their specific subject. The teacher will decide the most effective method to use to achieve this aim. Students should get in touch with their teacher right away if they are having difficulty with any aspect of their subject or if they are finding the workload unmanageable.

e-learning Protocols

The following guidelines on the appropriate use of our online platforms will be regularly reviewed. They apply, variously, to either/both **In-school Blended** or **Distance Learning** as relevant.

In General

1. The school is the owner and teachers are the managers of the Teams they create and will only correspond to a student who is signed up to the correct platform using their @stratfordcollege.ie login, unless alternatives have been agreed in advance with both parties. All members of Stratford College must abide by the normal school rules and policies when logged onto Teams or any digital learning platform or while learning remotely. In particular, all members of the school community should only use the Chat facility in Teams to ask/answer relevant questions related to classwork and/or school activities. Appropriate use of the Teams Chat facility is expected at all times. Students should be mindful of email etiquette and communication tone when communicating with teachers as distinct from online communication with peers. For example, address the relevant party at the beginning of email, maintain a polite tone throughout, and sign off as appropriate.
2. Students are required to check their SchoolWise account each day to collect assigned work and instructions from various subject teachers.
3. The material created by the teacher on Teams is the property of the School and students do not have permission to share to others outside of the Team unless given permission to do so. Recordings must not be made of any online tutorial unless the teacher has given permission to do so. In this instance, it is of utmost importance that any such recordings are not shared.
4. All members of the school community should turn off notifications outside of their learning / working hours.
5. Social media sites e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Hangouts, WhatsApp etc. to communicate with students is never permissible and teachers have been advised accordingly. Social media may be used by teachers to demonstrate examples of good work to parents and the wider school community but will not be used for the conduct of teaching and learning. Any such activity will only be on the official school social media account (Facebook and Twitter). All names on

student work should be redacted unless express permission to do otherwise has been obtained.

6. For the purposes of Child Safeguarding, teachers of Stratford College are Garda Vetted and are mandated persons. For child and data protection purposes access to remote learning is restricted to registered Stratford College teachers and students only. **Access and permissions will be teacher led only.** Any breach of this requirement may result in the suspension of access to remote learning for the pupil concerned. Third party guest engagement may be approved by the school if permission is sought and given by the parents of the class group in question by the relevant subject teacher. The terms of such requests or arrangements should comprehend GDPR, Child Safeguarding and other key policies.
7. Configuration of our networks to ensure Learner and Staff safety are under constant review.

Distance Teaching and Learning

1. As student internet access cannot be supervised by teachers during periods distance learning, student personal responsibility is essential and/or parental/guardian monitoring where possible.
2. Teachers, when working remotely, will on most occasions, try to communicate online during normal working hours and will endeavour not to communicate with students outside of these hours. However, teachers may have to send material/ assignments outside of regular school opening hours. In this instance there is no expectation on the student to respond or begin work at the time it is received. Likewise, there is never an expectation on the teacher to have to correct or comment on work sent on outside of normal school hours. Whilst it might suit teachers or students to communicate outside of normal working hours, *it is essential that everyone agrees that responses or actions outside of normal working hours are not required.*
3. Class Timetables will be followed closely with the wellbeing of both teachers and students in mind. From previous experience we have learned that having a full day of live classes is not healthy for student or teacher. Therefore, teachers will alternate regular live classes via MS Teams with recorded classes, classwork, assignments by arrangement with their classes. Teachers will engage live with each of their classes at least once a week.

4. It is important for learning that students attend all online classes and engage with the set tasks and activities to the best of their ability during times of distance learning and that they submit work on completion as advised by their subject teachers.

5. Teachers will schedule online live classes at least 24 hours in advance of the class and will always follow the established school timetable.

During live classes microphones should be switched off when the teacher is speaking and turned on to ask/answer questions or engage in the class when invited to do so. Cameras should also be switched on by all students. **Students should also dress appropriately.** Students and teachers will endeavour to have cameras working and switched on at all times during an online lesson/instruction, as students find it easier to engage with learning when this practice is followed.

6. Students should be familiar with the “Four B’s” concept and apply this when engaging in online learning. If a query arises; “Four B’s” consists of

Brain: Re-read all instructions previously given by the class teacher.

Buddy: Ask another individual in the class.

Browser: Post the question onto the class ‘Team’ page to allow other members of the class to respond and/or search on appropriate and trustworthy websites.

Boss: If these steps do not provide adequate clarification, the student should then reach out to the teacher.

7. Any behaviour or language deemed inappropriate during school applies at all times during online learning. The consequences for such behaviour will be the same as if the student was in school.

For parents

We ask parents and guardians to discuss the work being undertaken with your son/daughter. Please ensure that they are leading their learning through availing of all the supports and different methodologies we are offering. We encourage you to check that they are attending scheduled classes (see VSWare) and completing assignments. We suggest you check any communications to their email and encourage them to keep up to date with the work being set and to check on its completion.

Recording Attendance During Distance Teaching and Learning

As normal you will receive a text message letting you know if your child has attended their first class. You can and should monitor your child's engagement in learning by logging on to VSWare and checking the [8:55am](#) roll or the [1:47pm](#) roll calls.

When you know of an absence in advance please send in an absence request via our VSWare app at <https://support.vsware.ie/parent-app-attendance/>. If you have any problem with accessing your app please contact reception@stratfordcollege.ie who will be happy to assist.

Please note not all classes will be 'live' cf [E-Learning Roadmap](#). Attendance at asynchronous classes may be marked present by measuring student engagement. This will be measured by the submission of one key assignment, be monitored by subject teachers and Tutors and a demerit awarded if necessary. Parents should check the behaviour tab on VSWare to monitor this.

Previously, some parents were unaware of their child's actual online engagement until much later on. We will notify you at the end of the week if attendance is of concern.

Please see our revised [Student Acceptable User Policy \(AUP\)](#) for your careful attention. Access to our learning platforms is conditional on appropriate behaviour. This policy includes Top Tips for Students and one for Parents, a list of on-line protocols and so called 'netiquette', a reminder of student responsibilities under GDPR and a useful guide for parents to MS Teams. We ask that all students and parents observe this policy in the best interests of your son/daughter's well-being and safety and to ensure the same level of courtesy is extended on-line as in the physical classroom.

Because students are more on-line than ever Stratford College recommends <https://www.webwise.ie/> for advice on parental controls and child internet safety.

Parental and Student Informed Consent for 1:1 support

During remote teaching our Special Education Team (SET) and/or our Guidance Counsellor may arrange to see your children on a 1:1 basis to provide online 1:1 guidance counselling, support or 1:1 teaching.

Please see footnote for more detailed explanation regarding consent and data protection.

Parental consent will be sought for Learning Support 1:1 via Individual Educational Plans which will be emailed to parents and students by our SENCO (Special Education Needs Organiser) or via email contact.



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For personal counselling support our Guidance Counsellor 1:1 will contact parents and/or students by email/ phone call.

We will not seek consent for regular individual careers meetings. Students have the option to opt out from 1:1 support at any stage. This can be done by sending an email to the relevant teacher, your Class Tutor or the Principal.

Given the confidential nature of this support every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect the security, confidentiality and privacy of these 1-1 sessions. Please see relevant policies and school platforms.

** As the school is ultimately the Data Controller, school managers are free to seek individual parental consent for accessing 1-1 online supports, but it is not a pre-requisite. The Irish Data Protection Act (2018) requires prior parental consent for children under 16 years of age to avail of 'information society services' (e.g. online communications accounts, e-mail or online services), however, there is a specific exemption where the child is seeking preventative or counselling services: "Section 31: (1) The age of a child specified for the purposes of Article 8 [the requirement for prior parental consent] is 16 years of age. (2) For the purposes of the application of Article 8 in the (Irish) State, the reference in that Article to "information society services" does not include a reference to preventative or counselling services." For this reason, where the student is availing of online guidance counselling services, the prior consent of their parent(s) is not necessary.*

Appendix 1

Best Practice for using Microsoft Teams “Meetings” with Students

Appendix 2

Department of Education publication “Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching & Learning in a Covid-19 Context

Best Practice for using Microsoft Teams “Meetings” with Students

- Use Microsoft Teams for online classes or meetings with all classes.
 - Invite attendees by scheduling the meeting in a channel in the class Team.
- Advise students NOT to share a link to any school online meetings on social media or platforms.
 - This should be considered a serious violation of the school code of conduct.
 - The meeting “Lobby” will prevent outsiders from joining if only students are admitted. Be vigilant.
 - Use the lobby feature carefully to verify the identity of each student as you admit them.
 - A friendly word to each student on entry can be part of the routine.
- If possible, start the meeting a few minutes early.
 - As students are waiting in the Lobby you can admit them
 - If following the school timetable schedule the meeting for 5 minutes after the normal start
- Have any screens you intend sharing with students open before you start the meeting.
 - Encourage students to use the hands up feature and add questions to “chat”.
 - Share your screen carefully by managing “options” in your meeting.
 - If recording part or all of a class meeting, make sure everyone on the call is aware.
- Use the “Insight” App in Teams to see the level of student engagement.
 - Add the “insights” App to a channel Tab “+”
 - Only the Teacher can see the “Insights”. (all their activity in the team)
- Use a Background picture to exclude your own home background.
 - Encourage students to do the same with a plain background.
 - You only have to set a background up once and it will work for all meetings.
- Avoid sitting with your back to a window or bright light source.

Do meet your classes regularly online (even if you do not intend to teach online) to provide guidance on what they need to do for you and to get their feedback on their work.



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

Guidance on Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning in a COVID-19 Context

For post -primary schools and centres
for education



Introduction

This document is designed to provide guidance for schools in situations where a partial or full school closure is advised by Public Health HSE because of a case or cases of COVID-19. It is also intended to advise schools on how individual students who may have to self-isolate or restrict their movements can be supported in continuing their learning remotely. It is intended to review the operation of these arrangements at the end of each term while we continue to live with COVID-19.

The Department acknowledges the collective efforts across the system that enabled schools to re-open at the start of the school year. In particular, it acknowledges the leadership shown by principals, deputy principals and management of schools and the degree to which teachers have prepared for and adapted their practice in order to minimise the risk of infection due to COVID-19 in schools. In addition, the efforts of the wider school community in supporting the reopening of schools, including Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), secretaries, caretakers, parents/guardians and others are acknowledged.

It should be noted that decisions around advising students, teachers or other school staff to restrict their movements for COVID-19 related reasons are made solely by Public Health HSE. Schools should refer to the *Public Health Guidance Letter to schools* dated 27 August 2020 and to *Schools Pathway for COVID-19: The Public Health approach* prepared by the HSE, both of which are available [here](#).

In addition, schools should refer to [Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#), the Government's risk management strategy for the next six to nine months, designed to allow individuals, families, businesses and services better understand, anticipate and prepare for the measures government might introduce to stop escalation of the transmission of the disease. A set of frequently raised topics entitled *COVID-19: Your questions answered about returning to school* is available [here](#),

This Department guidance sets out how schools should plan for and support students' learning in a number of possible scenarios which could occur during the 2020/21 school year. As the extent to which these scenarios may be required cannot be predicted, it is possible that individual or groups of students and teachers may find that they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements on a number of occasions during the 2020-21 school year. This may lead to an accumulation of a significant number of days where students learn and teachers work from home. Therefore, it is crucial that all schools make every effort to enable teachers to support the continuation of students' learning effectively during each possible scenario. This is particularly important in the context of students at risk of early school leaving, students with

special educational needs and students at risk of educational disadvantage. The examples in Section 4 provide some illustrations of how schools can sustain students' learning where they are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements.

Where students are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, schools should continue to focus on supporting their wellbeing. Staff and families who are experiencing particularly challenging times can be directed to the support services available at [gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/](https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/). Families can be referred to the resources and supports provided by agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS). Staff can refer to the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme. Schools may also consult with NEPS in relation to the academic, social and emotional needs of their students.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Department's previous guidance to schools in relation to supporting continuity of students' learning during the March to June 2020 school closure period, available at: www.gov.ie

Planning and organisation considerations

Practical consideration for supporting continuity of schooling

The public health restrictions which led to the closure of schools in March 2020 highlighted the absolute necessity for schools to be agile in providing for continuity of schooling in the future. As a contingency for when students and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, all schools are advised to create a brief, concise action plan¹ that includes provision, where appropriate, for the provision of emergency remote teaching² and learning to support the continuity of schooling, using digital technology where possible. This should outline the necessary actions and relevant personnel to:

- **Research and identify appropriate digital communication platform(s)³:** All schools are required to put in place arrangements to facilitate:
 - Digital communication with and between staff
 - Digital communication between staff and students
 - Digital communication between schools and parents/guardians, including a designated email address or attended school phone number for contact during school closure
 - Emergency remote Teaching and learning.Schools should then select the most appropriate approach(es) for their context following consultation with, and agreement by, staff. In some schools, the use of digital communication platforms may not be appropriate or possible for some students. In these cases, alternative arrangements should be identified, including using the postal service, emails and phone calls.
- **Identify and develop the skills set of the teachers and support staff, as needed:** On selecting a digital platform(s) for the school, the school should ascertain the level of digital competency required to use the platform and any gaps in the digital skills set of the teachers should be identified. Arrangements should be put in place, to ensure that any necessary professional development is provided to enable teachers to use the platform(s) as outlined above. Such CPD will be availed of at a time identified and agreed by staff as part of the agreed framework for the provision of CPD.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Digital Technologies Team has developed a comprehensive range of professional development programmes for teachers and school leaders in the context of COVID-19. These are available at pdst.ie/blendedlearning. Schools can also apply to pdst.ie/schoolsupport for the assistance

¹ See Appendix 1 for a suggested checklist

² Remote Teaching and Learning refers to all forms of facilitating teaching and learning with students who are engaged in learning outside of the physical school setting

³ A digital communication platform refers to any technology that facilitates communication and remote teaching and learning.

of a PDST advisor with specific queries regarding emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment practices. Other relevant staff, such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) should be supported in the development of their digital skills, using time from their Croke Park hours, for example.

- **Enable students to develop the necessary skills set: to use the selected digital platform(s).** This will enable students to both improve their use of digital technologies in their daily school experiences and ~~enable them~~ to be ready to use such technology effectively to support their learning should they need to restrict their movements or self-isolate for a period. In this regard, it is essential that students have opportunities to practise:
 - Accessing and navigating the platform(s)
 - Engaging with teaching and learning materials Uploading their own work independently.
- **Support equity of access to digital resources:** Availability of appropriate digital devices and/or internet connection with sufficient bandwidth will be a challenge for some families, including those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, or those who live in geographical areas with poor internet infrastructure. Schools should establish a clear picture of the relevant supports needed by their students to engage in remote learning and the steps that can be taken to address any gaps or issues. For example, the school could re-allocate digital devices, if available, from the school's supply to families⁴ for the duration of the students' absence from school for COVID-19 reasons. If necessary, other strategies for communicating with students should be considered, such as using the postal service, phone calls or emails. This recognises that, in some instances, schools will not be in a position - even with optimal deployment of their existing resources - to ensure equity of access to digital resources.
- **Schools have been provided with funding for ICT resources** and should use this funding to address any shortfalls. In this regard, schools should consider the loan of digital devices to staff (as well as students) in order to ensure that teachers have access to the necessary digital technology to support students' remote learning when required.
- **Learning subject plans:** In order for teaching and learning to progress as seamlessly as possible during emergency remote teaching and learning, schools should ensure that there is a system that enables the substitute teacher and other relevant teacher to access

⁴ Where schools provide devices to families, all parties should agree the parameters and relevant policies for use of the device, and that the device remains the property of the school to be returned to the school when the student returns or the full/partial school closure period ends.

relevant collaborative subject plans as required, including planned learning targets for students with SEN.

- **Collaborate and communicate with parents/guardians:** Schools should inform parents/guardians of the approach to be taken for emergency remote teaching and learning should it be required. Good two-way communication with parents/guardians is essential to ensure that the school is ready to engage in emergency remote teaching and learning in an effective way.
- **Communication with external agencies:** During partial or full school closures, it is important that the appropriate personnel in schools, for example principals, year heads or SETs, maintain contact, relevant to the needs of the students affected by the closure, with any necessary external agencies, including the HSE, NEPS and the NCSE.
- **Ensure relevant policies are up to date:** Schools should review all policies relevant to emergency remote teaching and learning. In some instances, policies may need to be updated. For example, the school's acceptable usage policy (AUP) may need to be updated to reflect the digital environment. Data Protection policies and the school's Child Safeguarding Statement may also need to be reviewed and, if necessary, updated in line with the appropriate review procedures to take account of teaching and learning in a remote environment.

Personnel to support continuity of schooling

Where students and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements, local contextual factors mean that no one-size solution will fit all schools. The subject teacher/s should provide for continuity of schooling to the greatest extent possible for those students who are advised to restrict their movements. However, this may not always be a practical option. The non-exhaustive list below outlines alternative personnel who could be considered instead of, or as well as, the subject teacher when arranging for continuity of schooling. Consequently, flexibility will be required, in supporting students who are asked to restrict their movements.

- **Special education teacher (SET) from the school/ETB:** The principle of allocating the greatest level of support to those students with the greatest need remains, in line with the Continuum of Support. The SET(s) assigned to a student/class affected can reassign this time to supporting emergency remote teaching and learning for these students when required. Alternatively, it may be possible for the SET(s) to reassign time normally allocated for *whole-school and classroom support (for all)* on the Continuum of Support from

his/her normal timetable, for example, by pausing some team-teaching initiatives for the duration of the closure to release time for remote teaching and learning.

- **Designated teacher from the staff of the school / ETB:** A teacher on the staff who has been medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and is available to work from home can support emergency remote teaching for individual students or classes in line with circular 0049/2020
- **A teacher from the staff of the school/ETB who has been advised to restrict his/her movements:** A teacher on the staff who has been advised to restrict his/her movements but is medically fit for work can support emergency remote teaching and learning for individual students or classes in line with Circular 0049/2020
- **Designated teacher from a local Education Centre:** A teacher from another school who has been medically certified as being at very high risk to COVID-19 and is on the assigned list in the local Education Centre can assist in this work in line with circular 0049/2020.

Required features of provision

Where it is necessary for a teacher to support students in their learning from home for reasons related to COVID-19 (i.e. based upon medical certification of a COVID-19 diagnosis or because they are restricting their movements), emergency remote teaching and learning will be encompassed within a teacher's normal, contracted hours. There is no expectation or requirement that teachers will be on call/available outside of those hours or at weekends.

In this context, schools should ensure that emergency remote teaching and learning is characterised by:

- **Regular engagement with students:** Teachers should, as far as possible, engage with students as per the normal school timetable. Special education teachers (SETs) should also, as far as possible, continue to engage with students on their caseload as frequently as they would under normal circumstances. The assignment of tasks to be completed is not, of itself, sufficient because students need direct teaching inputs from their teachers in order to feel connected to the school, to stay motivated, and to make progress in their learning.
- **A blend of guided and independent learning tasks/experiences:** Teacherstudent engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by the students. Teachers should ensure, as far



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as practicable, that direct instruction is provided for aspects of learning that require it, using a variety of approaches, for example video, audio, presentation software and written instructions. Regular engagement with students when they are out of school will also help them to reintegrate when they return to school.

- **Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities:** Teachers should ensure that the chosen learning tasks give students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way. It may be necessary to adjust the number of tasks usually given in the school setting to take account of the fact that students are doing this work from home.
- **Learning tasks:** The tasks chosen should be specifically aligned to the needs of the student, including students with SEN, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning.
- **Skills development:** Schools should make local arrangements that seek to ensure that students are given opportunities to develop self-management and organisational skills so they are equipped to engage in remote learning. For students with additional and/or special educational needs who are being supported on their transition back to school, the work being carried out should be continued remotely to ensure progress is not lost and to enable successful reintegration into school after the period of the partial or full closure.
- **Two-way feedback between home and school:** Schools should ensure that twoway feedback between teachers and parents/guardians and between teachers and their students is encouraged and supported. Schools should provide manageable and accessible opportunities for all students to share samples of their work with the subject teachers as frequently as they would if the students were in school. Teachers should ensure that work received is corrected and relevant feedback is provided, as would be the expectation if the school was open. The benefits for students include maintaining their motivation and their engagement with learning as well as providing a connection with the school and their peers.

Sample situations of support for continuity in schooling

Situation 1: Student absent for a few days for medically certified COVID-19 related reasons

The school might consider supporting the student in this context through one or more of the following approaches:

- **Peer support:** it may be feasible to nominate a peer within the class group to provide the student with updates on the classwork and homework for the relevant subject areas. If the student is well enough then he/she may return completed assignments to the subject teacher via the schools learning management platform or via post to the school.
- **School's digital platform(s) or other agreed method⁵:** These provide ways for teachers to share the lesson content and provide the student who has restricted his/her movements with access to the materials engaged with during the lesson. Teachers who normally engage in the practice of uploading their lesson content or lesson materials to a digital platform are encouraged to continue to do so. However, it is accepted that not all teachers may be in a position to do this.

Situation 2: One student or a number of students in a single class group are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

In such a case, some of the remaining students in the class are not deemed to be close contacts and can continue to attend school.

In this situation, lessons should continue as normal with the subject teacher for those students in attendance. It may also be possible to provide opportunities for all students – including, insofar as practicable, students who are self-isolating at home - to work together collaboratively using digital technologies (for example, on project work and other areas of learning).

- **Sharing lesson content via live streaming:** In addition, consideration should be given, where possible, to live streaming of the lesson (or part thereof) so that the subject teacher can share his/her class teaching with those who are selfisolating or restricting their movements. The live streaming of a lesson may already be in place in an “overspill room” within the school and this facility to share the lesson could be extended beyond the school. Other agreed methods of maintaining the continuity of learning should continue in order to facilitate students’ progress.
- **Support from other teachers:** Depending on the individual student needs and, for those students are deemed to be at very high risk from COVID-19, other teachers may also be involved in the continuity of schooling for an individual student or groups of students. For

⁵ Agreed by teachers and management. It is recognised that the methods must and will be cognisant of the needs of the students and the ICT skills of the teachers.

example, this may include but is not confined to, the SET teacher, a designated teacher from the staff of the school/ETB or a designated teacher from a local Education Centre. A teacher from the list maintained by the Local Education Centre may be assigned the responsibility of providing emergency remote teaching for the students at home in line with local school arrangements.

Situation 3: All students in a class/year group are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

In this situation, the subject teachers should provide emergency remote teaching to all students in the class/year group, using the school's digital platform(s) or other agreed method as needed. The teaching should take place from the school if the teacher is not required to self-isolate or restrict his/her movements.

Some students who are self-isolating or are restricting their movement might not be able to engage with the teaching and learning due to being unwell for a short or extended period of time. Where this occurs, the guidance provided in one of the other situations as outlined in this document could be adapted and followed

Situation 4: A teacher / number of teachers in the school are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

Where subject teachers are required to restrict their movements, they will avail of special leave with pay, in line with Circular 0049/2020. These teachers should follow the advice outlined in the Circular in this instance. Any teacher who is medically fit for work but has been advised to restrict his/her movements is available to work remotely.

A substitute teacher should be arranged to cover this teacher's teaching responsibilities in the school for this period. The work assigned to the teacher restricting his/her movements should support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning for students as per Section 12 of Circular 0049/2020.

Situation 5: The school is required to close on foot of public health advice

In this situation, all teachers who are medically fit to work, including SETs, are available to work remotely and should provide remote teaching to all students in their subject class or on their caseload.

Substitute teachers should be arranged to provide remote teaching for students in classes where the teacher has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is medically unfit to work or is absent owing to another illness and is on sick leave.

An Chomhaire um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)	https://www.cogg.ie/en/resources/	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta caters for the educational needs of Gaeltacht schools and of Gaelscoileanna. There is a wide range of online resources available such as, access to digital books, videos and teaching aids.
The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)	www.ncse.ie/online-resources	The NCSE website outlines a wide range of resource to support emergency remote teaching and learning suitable for students with special educational needs.
Education Centres	www.esci.ie	Centres provide a range of online courses/webinars in response to demand from local schools and teachers.

The school's digital platform(s) should be utilised, where possible, by teachers and students to provide continuity of schooling and could include the use of live (synchronous) lessons and lesson materials. Students should use the school's digital platform(s) to access lessons and engage with the assigned classwork/homework.

In order to progress student learning, the school's digital platform(s) should also, where possible, be used by teachers to assign work and provide regular feedback and by students to return completed work by the end of the specified time and to communicate with their subject teacher about the subject area.

Resources

Appendix 1: Suggested checklist to support action planning for schools when students and/or teachers are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

<p>Has an appropriate digital communication platform(s) been selected and agreed at whole-school level by the teaching staff and management?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it support communication with and between staff? • Does it support communication between staff and students? • Does it support communication between schools and parents/guardians? • Does the platform effectively support remote teaching and learning? • Is the platform, and the use to be made of it, GDPR compliant? 	
<p>Have parents/guardians been notified of contact details during school closures?</p>	
<p>Have the relevant skill sets of the staff been identified?</p>	
<p>Has a plan for appropriate professional development and support been agreed with all staff where necessary?</p>	
<p>Have other relevant staff, for example SNAs, been supported in relevant digital skills development, to enable them to carry out their role during emergency remote teaching and learning?</p>	
<p>Has a plan for developing students skills for remote teaching and learning been agreed, to enable them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and navigate the platform in use? • Engage with teaching and learning materials? • Upload their own work independently? 	
<p>Has a plan been put in place to address gaps in the availability of digital devices or access to broadband?</p>	
<p>Has a system been established for sharing subject plans and learning targets for students with special educational needs, with relevant substitute and other teachers?</p>	
<p>Have parents/guardians been informed about the platform(s) to be used during any remote teaching and learning scenarios?</p>	
<p>Have procedures for supporting two-way communication and feedback during remote teaching and learning been established and agreed with staff?</p>	
<p>Have procedures for communicating with relevant external agencies, including the HSE, NEPS and NCSE where necessary been established?</p>	
<p>Have the following policies been reviewed and updated where necessary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable usage policies • Data Protection • Child Safeguarding Statement 	