

Information for New Families 2023

Welcome to Stratford College



Hard copies of all information / forms / policies and procedures are available from the School Office upon request by emailing admin@stratfordcollege.ie.

About Us

Please visit the school website at www.stratfordcollege.ie for information on the following:

- Principal's Welcome
- Culture & Values
- Facilities
- Board & Leadership
- Contact & Location
- A History

Current Management and Administrative Details

Chair of the Board of Management: Mr. John Rafter

Principal: Ms Patricia Gordon

Deputy Principal: Ms Siobhan Reynolds

School Secretary: Ms. Celine McMahon

Office Administrator/Bursar: Ms Fiona Morrissey

Office Administrator / Enrolment & Admissions: Ms Trish Connolly

School Caretaker: Mr Brendan Meehan

Parents Association

The aspiration of the Parents' Association is to make parent and guardians a valued partner in the educational journey of their child. A journey that will enable their child to learn and develop socially, emotionally and academically. The Parents' Association works with the principal, staff and board of management to build effective co-operation and partnership between home and school. The PA Committee helps to ensure that all parents and guardians feel part of our school community through the organisation of formal and informal events throughout the academic year. All parents and guardians are automatically members of the Parents' Association and are encouraged to become actively involved in the PA Committee, which represents the interests of students.

Email StratfordCollegePA@stratfordcollege.ie

Chairperson: Ms. Emma Jane Carroll

Secretary: Ms. Mags Goddard

Organisation of Our Day

Class structures: One group of 28 students approx. in each year. Six one-hour class periods Monday – Thursday, Four one-hour class periods on Fridays.

Lunch: Students must bring their own lunch. A microwave is available for use. There are no canteen facilities.

Lockers: Each student is assigned a locker for the academic year. This locker must remain locked at all times. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the lock

School Day:

Monday – Thursday	8.55 am – 3.45 pm
Class Tutor Time	10.51 am – 11.00 am
Break	11.00 am – 11.15 am
Lunch	1.11 pm – 2.47 pm

Friday	8.55 am – 1.10 pm
Class Tutor Time	10.51 am – 11.00 am
Break	11.00 am – 11.15 am

School office opening hours:

Monday – Thursday	8.30 am – 4.30 pm
Friday	8.30 am – 1.30 pm

School building morning access:

Open at 8.45 a.m. Students enter the building through the double-doors to the extreme right of front of the school. Students can remain in the Hall where supervision is provided until just before first class.

School Building Opening Hours

Monday – Thursday	8.30 am – 6.00 pm (excluding co-curricular activities)
Friday	8.30 am – 3.30 pm (excluding co-curricular activities)

For Information on the following please click

- Admissions for First Year 2023
- General Admissions Information
- Curriculum *
- Follow Stratford!
- Fees
- International Families

**Subject Specifications*

All Subject specifications are available alphabetically at www.curriculumonline.ie

Teaching Staff

Mr. Sean Brilly	Business Studies and Accounting
Ms. Catherine Conlon	Maths, Music, SET team House Examinations Coordinator
Ms. Sheena Tarrant	Maths, Science, Chemistry
Mr. Michael Culliney	Guidance Counsellor (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays)
Ms. Delia Donohoe	Classics, and CSPE short course SENCO (Point of contact for Class profiles and SEN information)
Ms. Grainne Fanning	English as an Additional Language (Fridays)

Ms. Linda Finnegan	PE, SPHE, and Wellbeing Assistant Principal TY Coordinator
Ms. Venita Kenny	History, Irish, and CSPE short course Assistant Principal
Rabbi Zalman Lent	Hebrew Studies and Religious Education
Ms. Susanne Mahon	Art
Ms Sheenagh Maxwell	Irish and French
Ms. Lynne McGuckin	Geography and Maths
Ms. Helen O'Kelly	Computer Science and Computer Applications Librarian ICT Coordinator
Ms. Kirsty Tomlin	Biology, Maths and Science
Ms. Claudia De Santos	French
Ms. Siobhán Reynolds	Deputy Principal Head of English Dept
Mr. David Fennell	Physics, Maths and Chemistry
Ms. Einat Caspi	Special Needs Assistant
Ms. Gemma McGill	English
Ms. Carmit Bachar	Hebrew Studies

Current Families

For Information on the following please click on the links below:

- Listings

School Uniform, Calendar, Exams, Booklists, Device, Consent & Health Information Forms, School Fees & Way to Pay

- Policies, Reports, & Recruitment

Our School Management Information System (MIS)



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>

Our Learning Management System (LMS) is **SchoolWise**

SchoolWise 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 [Schoolwise Help Centre](#) for more information



As not everyone learns the same way, not everyone either. The diary also contains information for students who are not on the school calendar. The diary also contains information about the Acceptable User Policy which parents and students need to sign at the beginning of the year. It also has really student-centered tools like how to track their grades and set goals for progression, how to create a study timetable, and a keywords section. While Schoolwise will still allow parents and students the ability to view and track their assignments, feedback, and grades, the diary will be there to allow students to keep track of their own progress, thus reinforcing their self-management skills. Class tutors will refer to it regularly throughout the year. 'sation does not suit work to Schoolwise, but nts in their journals eir school calendar. ehaviour Policy, our

Stratford College

Co-educational Secondary School

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[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.

Student Life

For Information on the following please visit the school website:

- Teaching & Learning
- Awards & Achievements
- Health & Wellbeing
- Subject Blogs
- Alumni



Stratford College Communications Information for Parents and Staff

This policy has been formulated by Stratford College to facilitate good communications between staff and between staff and home. It also highlights the importance of confidentiality in all matters. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and Complaints Policy.

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other and aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning so that the child's education can be effective.

The Board of Management believe that:

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job where they are supported by and working closely with parents.

We know from research that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

The Board of Management is committed to:

- Developing close effective links with parents
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as Primary Educators¹ of their children
- Maintaining the ethos, values, and distinctive character of Stratford College
- Supporting and facilitating the Parents Association
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents in school policy and decision making

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values, and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school and Parents Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

Behaviour of All Adults in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all stakeholders e.g., the staff, parents and the wider community: anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in the school is of vital importance, adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

- All adults will treat our children, staff, and other parents with the utmost respect.
- All adults within the school are expected to speak to each other with respect, shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If any adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In severe cases, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.
- The school will respect all children and parents' right to privacy so staff should not be asked to speak about any child except your own.

Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy:

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.
- The school should always know who is collecting your child. The school secretary should have list of people and their contact information who you have authorised to collect your child. Should this change the onus is on you to



inform the school secretary of the change. You can provide this information by email or by dropping into the school office. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone unauthorized/unknown to the school. If, at any time, parents alter the pick-up arrangements for their child, the school should be given written authorization by the parent immediately. In an emergency, the parent must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the principal/teacher.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents

Annual Consultation throughout the year including:

- Induction for incoming 1st Years (March – November)
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one (a short, written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher).
- Class teachers / SET meet with parents whose children have additional educational needs.

Written communication via our Learning Management System (LMS) Schoolwise including:

- Daily notification to inform parents about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Emails and noticeboard notifications sent from class teachers to parents, through VShare
- Emails sent from parents to class teachers, via the office
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Text messages for general reminders (e.g school closures)
- Website blogs or other online platform

Generally, communication sent from the school will be 'paperless'. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the student's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents.

Other structures and processes including:

- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. The PA receive policies in draft form and provide feedback to the Board. The document once ratified by the Board is made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year.

Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary, usually via email, to arrange a suitable time. In the unlikely event that a parent has a complaint, our school Complaints Policy outlines the procedures to be followed.

On some rare occasions a parent may need to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the students do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc, this can be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

Online and Social Media Communication

Stratford College has official online communications and social media accounts that are operated by the school i.e. a web page and social media accounts. Parents are encouraged to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters, comment and contribute to posts and share information to help publicise the school and the achievements of our children. The list of social channels may be updated from time to time

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used on online or on social media that is not officially operated by the school (for example class Facebook or Whatsapp forum which might be set up by parents) by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management. Stratford College will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

Communication between staff

The following tools of communication are in place:

- Oral communication between staff
- Staff meetings

- Staff emails - with 'scheduled send' function used as necessary to protect personal hours
- Staff Whatsapp Group for social events/notifications
- Collaborative use of Microsoft Teams
- Oral notices to teachers by the Principal
- Announcements/discussion in Staff Room at break times
- Staff Room notice board
- School-related events
- Assembly
- Regular classroom visits by the Principal
- Monthly Board of Management meetings and shared report

Communication between BOM & Parents Association Committee

Representatives of the Board of Management and the Parents Association Committee meet annually.

The Principal attends meetings monthly.

Email communication between School and the Parents Association is generally limited to:

- Principal to Chairperson/Secretary

Communication with outside agencies

Stratford College has enjoyed and benefited from links with state agencies including:

NEPS / NCSE / SESS / SENO / HSE / Tusla / EWO

Stratford College also aims to make links with the community through:

- Links with local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events)

- Links with the community Gardaí
- Links with local events in Rathgar and wider Jewish Community.

Communication through the school office

Through the Vsware system emails can be sent by teachers directly to parents. All incoming emails are communicated through the office.

Communication by email- response time

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email may only be checked intermittently).

Response times to emails to the Principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable.

Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. Office hours are limited and the secretary is not always at the desk. We ask for patience during these times.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the student better as individuals
- To help realise that home and school are working together.
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To get general feedback from the parents regarding the school
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

Organisation of parent teacher meetings

Parent Teacher Meetings are scheduled across the school year. Appointments are made by way of a on-line platform. In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time in so far as is possible.

For children with designated additional educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the child's Individual Education Plan or School Support Plan will take place in September/October. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment. In the case of separated/ divorced parents, Stratford College will facilitate requests made by parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

School Reports

Please see our Assessment Policy for further details.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as

schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of DES Circulars which deal with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Appendices

1. Social Media Guidelines & Some Advice on Remote Teaching, Keeping Data Safe when working From Home JMB Guidelines *April 2020*
2. What's App Policy
3. Guidelines for Parent Communications with Teachers & Staff
4. Resources

Appendix 1

Social Media Guidelines & Some Advice on Remote Teaching, Keeping Data Safe when working From Home JMB Guidelines April 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Instagram are now part of everyday communication and information sharing. Messages and visual images can be seen immediately by others using the internet on desktop computers, laptops, mobiles, tablets, notebook computers, smartphones and similar devices.

These guidelines and A.U.P. have been developed to assist employees of **Stratford College** (hereinafter referred to as “the School”) in making ethical, respectful and acceptable decisions about their online interactions in both a professional and personal capacity and to provide clear direction on the importance of protecting the reputation and confidential information of the School.

The guidelines and A.U.P. are not intended to prevent employees from engaging in social media in their personal lives but are intended to give effect to agreed professional protocols as prescribed by the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council, June 2012) which provides that teachers should:-

“ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and social networking sites.”

And

“ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format.”

Given the ever developing and changing nature of social media and the internet the within guidelines and policy will be reviewed and adapted as required.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other staff policies, including but not limited to the Dignity at Work and Disciplinary policies and our General Data Protection Regulation Policy (GDPR)

2. SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN THE COURSE OF EMPLOYMENT ON A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE RELATING TO THE SCHOOL OR WHICH IDENTIFIES YOU AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE SCHOOL

(i) **Seek permission:** Employees should seek permission from the Principal / Deputy Principal(s) before setting up / registering in the School’s name on social media sites, user groups, special interest forums and bulletin boards and/or using social media for teaching and learning purposes.

- (ii) **Ownership:** All ownership rights arising from a sanctioned social media account in the name of the School are vested in the School.
- (iii) **Responsibility:** A permitted employee is responsible for his/her social media activity and posting and for compliance with the terms and conditions of the relevant social media platform.
- (iv) **Confidential information:** Please respect and maintain confidential information regarding the School, its students, employees and other School contacts. Do not divulge or discuss proprietary information, internal documents and / or personal data of others or other confidential material on social media sites.
- (v) **Reputation:** Any postings by an employee that are defamatory or damage the School's reputation on a school related social media, email or other account will be addressed pursuant to the School's disciplinary procedure.

3. PERSONAL USE AT WORK RELATNG TO PRIVATE AND/OR WORK RELATED MATTERS

- (i) **Boundaries:** Personal profiles are not to be used to conduct school business or to communicate with students/parents. Online interaction with management, other employees and/or school contacts should be appropriate and professional in nature. Do not use your official School e-mail address when participating in social media that is not related to your job. Use of social media for private matters, i.e. not for work purposes, is restricted to break times at work.
- (ii) **Identify yourself:** You should make clear who you are and that your postings do not represent the School, its ethos, position, opinions or views. You should make it clear that you are posting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the School.
- (iii) **Be responsible and respectful:** You are personally responsible for your posts and actions on social media. You should exercise sound judgement, common sense and respect when participating in online social media. You should not use insulting, offensive or disparaging language. If in doubt, don't publish or post anything. If you have been insulted or inappropriately treated, do not engage in an online dispute, rather you should report the matter to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- (iv) **Respect privacy of others:** Do not publish, post or upload personal data, including photographs, of third persons (including employees, students, parents and other members of the School community) without their permission. In line with our General Data Protection Regulation policy (GDPR).
- (v) **Unacceptable use:** Do not create, publish, download or post material/content that might be defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, pornographic, damaging to the School's reputation or refer to a third person without their permission. Uploading, forwarding or linking to the aforementioned content is also unacceptable. Never reveal sensitive details whether relating to the School, its employees, students, parents and other members of the School community on social media sites.
- (vi) **Confidential information:** Do not divulge, publish or discuss proprietary information, internal documents and / or personal data of others or other confidential information pertaining to the School on social media sites.

(vii) **Reputation:** Any postings by an employee that are defamatory or damage the School's reputation will be addressed pursuant to the School's disciplinary procedure.

4. ENFORCEMENT

A reported or suspected breach of this policy is a serious matter and will be investigated by School management pursuant to the appropriate workplace procedure. Employees who are found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The School reserves the right to monitor social media use on School computers, laptops, mobiles, tablets, notebook computers, smartphones and similar devices provided by the School.

5. REMOTE TEACHING: SOME ADVICE TO MINIMISE RISKS JMB Guidelines

Cybersecurity

The National Centre for Cyber Security (<https://www.ncsc.gov.ie>) reports that it has observed an increase in phishing and malware campaigns exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools are encouraged to contact the JMB for advice in such an eventuality. Schools are also reminded that it can be appropriate to seek Gardai advice in these circumstances. <https://www.garda.ie/en/Crime/Cyber-crime/> Email is the primary channel for cyber-attacks. A typical phishing email contains a lure to induce the recipient to activate the second part, the payload (usually by clicking on an attachment or a link). This usually links to malware or sites designed to install ransomware, steal credentials or banking details, or enable further remote access by the attackers. Phishing emails can be convincing to even seasoned IT users and emails related to COVID-19 often try to create a sense of urgency to rush people into making a mistake.

Phishing emails might be targeted at staff, such as happened with a recent data breach at the Teaching Council (<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/News-Events/Latest-News/Statement-regarding-data-breach.html>), or at other recipients such as parents. For example, in the UK, the Department for Education has recently highlighted a scam email asking parents of children eligible for free school meals for their bank details, so that their child could still receive meals during school closures.

When it comes to prevention there are many sources of advice available. For schools, as data controllers, it is important to keep a close eye on the advice published by the Data Protection Commission for example, <https://dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/blogs/staying-safe-online-during-pandemic>.

It is also recommended that you request your school's IT support provider to review other relevant DPC advice with a view to ensuring that the school's practices are aligned as closely as possible with appropriate standards. See for example, <https://dataprotection.ie/en/guidance-landing/guidance-controllers-data-security>

Other useful advice may be accessible from commercial sources, for example, the following booklet on *Cyber-Security at Home*
https://www.bankofireland.com/app/uploads/assets/D10507-BOI-Cyber-Security-Brochure_Customer-Security-MARCH-2020.pdf

Are staff using their own devices?

If personal devices are being used by staff, here are some steps they can take to reduce risks:

- (i) Check that anti-virus software is installed and up-to-date
- (ii) Check that the operating system (Windows or Mac) is up-to-date
- (iii) Ensure that the device has a strong password, passcode or PIN
- (iv) Check that the device has a firewall enabled
- (v) Check that the device's storage is encrypted.

Determine appropriate communications channels

The Data Protection Commission strongly recommends that all communications should use “work” email addresses rather than personal emails. It will help therefore if staff (and ideally students also) have been provided with school email addresses. Many schools are using Office 365 or G-suite products for this purpose.

Communication between staff and students should be confined to the approved applications and platforms. JMB advice is that any direct contact by other means (e.g. voice/text/apps) should be exceptional i.e. extremely limited and only allowed within set guidelines approved by school management.

In terms of communications between staff, best practice is that staff should minimise any online discussions that include special category data (e.g. data about SEN issues) that relates to identifiable students. Often these communications are best handled through direct telephone conversation.

By determining which channel will be used for each type of communication, schools can avoid sensitive data being placed on inappropriate platforms. For example, a school using Microsoft Office 365 suite might decide that communications between staff are handled as follows:

- School provided Microsoft Outlook is used for email (with strictly confidential messages being sent using encrypted email)
- School provided Microsoft Teams is used for meeting, video meetings & chat
- School provided Onedrive and Sharepoint is used for file sharing.

It would be unacceptable in this case for staff to use personal email accounts and personally-owned file sharing accounts such as Dropbox.

Other GDPR issues

If your school is signed up to a system like Office 365 (or similar equivalents like G suite), then Microsoft (or Google) will be acting as a processor for your school's data. Normally, as part of the sign-up process (with Microsoft/Google etc.), the school will have been offered (and accepted) a Data Processing Agreement (GDPR Article 28) that will address many of the major GDPR compliance issues. Hence the primary risks that arise for any school using these systems are typically local ones i.e. ensuring that staff are accessing and using the systems appropriately.

Where systems (such as the above) have a long track record of use in schools, we can have some degree of confidence that many of the risks around their use have been identified. Hence these applications should not present any major GDPR compliance concerns provided your school is using them in an appropriate and secure manner. In this regard the DPC has issued some helpful advice on remote working that schools can usefully share with staff. <https://dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/blogs/protecting-personal-data-when-working-remotely>

Schools also need to remember that while data protection is related to data security it is not the same thing. It is equally important to give some thought to compliance with the other data processing principles for example, the need to ensure data minimisation and limited data retention as well appropriate transparency.

Engaging with new online tools and platforms

In more normal times, schools will often spend a significant period of time, assessing the suitability of a new software application or platform prior to its adoption. In the current climate, when there is so much pressure to maintain continuity of teaching and learning to the greatest possible extent, it has been a challenge for schools to adhere to their normal protocols around this.

It's also common for staff to find creative ways of doing their job using new technologies; often ones used personally. These technologies can appear to be very attractive. However the reality is that they are often ill-suited for work purposes and can present cyber security and data protection risks.

Hence, while we need to support teachers and schools who are trying to be creative in their delivery of learning at this time, we also need to make sure that we give some thought to risk assessment around any new activity we undertake (and that we update this risk assessment as we learn from the experience of delivering remote learning).

Do consider the terms of service together with privacy policies and in particular if there are any minimum age requirements of the chosen service. There are a wealth of online services and systems that enable online video and audio communication. The PDST has many of these identified online. <https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning>

Even where a particular tool or platform has been examined by schools and educators and deemed to have potential for distance learning, there can still be many implementation details to clarify and tease out. For example, it is nearly always much



safer for all sorts of reasons (e.g. GDPR, child-protection, teacher safety, accountability etc) that teachers should access and use these new platforms through an account that is linked with the school, rather than setting up their own personal account.

In addition, risks can arise because of gaps in knowledge about how to design the learning experience and also how to implement controls and security measures within the application or platform e.g. :

1. best practice to ensure on-line learning is well structured and managed;
2. safe protocols to minimise risks related to participants subsequently misusing any personal data that may have been shared;
3. managing security settings to prevent disruption, uninvited online guests etc.

(These gaps in knowledge can also become evident because a platform such as Office 365 which the school may have using for a time already is suddenly being utilised on a much wider scale and scope.)

From a GDPR (and risk perspective) our own strong recommendation would be that any sharing of personal data when using these systems is minimised to the greatest extent possible. Remind staff and students of the Code of Behaviour and school's policies, notably the Acceptable Use Policy - this will still apply.

Those who are actively exploring and using the various platforms for teaching purposes at present will undoubtedly have lots of good advice to offer based on practical experience. Groups like the Computer Education Society of Ireland are a great resource. www.cesi.ie

Teachers and students appearing on Screen

The interactive, live or synchronous connectivity provided by some platforms allows students and staff to connect in the same service at the same time - i.e. live video and audio. Schools are advised to exercise caution here on a number of counts as without expertise and experience this may not be the most appropriate approach for teaching and learning. Staff should be reminded of the requirement to minimise any online sharing of video data (of either teacher and students) and of the potential for someone to record or screen shot what is being done (and subsequently share this data online through social media etc).

Even if teachers are happy to engage with tools that support the use of real-time video in teaching, the school as controller should take some time to decide what it considers to be appropriate practice and also how to minimise any risks that might arise (for both teacher and students).

Cf Guidelines for Microsoft Teams settings eg blurred background, restricted access to recording to host only, access to meetings settings, restricted access to setting up Team(s) to staff members only etc.

6. ADVICE FOR APPROPRIATE ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The Dos

- Do think carefully about how you present yourself when choosing a profile image. Your online reputation is important. Think also about the language you use even if used jokingly – what you say and do online lay down your digital footprint.
- Do trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. If you find something online that you don't like, turn off the computer and tell an adult.
- Be careful about the images/comments you post online, as soon as it is posted, you have lost control over who will see it and how it will be used. Don't post anything that you wouldn't want everyone you know to see, including your parents and teachers.
- Do be careful with the personal information of others. Don't tag others in photos without their permission. Don't share their personal details and information with the world. They have a right to privacy, and you have a responsibility to protect it.

The Don'ts

- Don't reply to abusive or upsetting messages. This is exactly what cyberbullies want. They want to know they've got to you and that you are worried or upset. They want to think that they are important by being able to get a reaction from you. Don't give them the satisfaction. Stay in control. Defriend them. Report them. If necessary, remove yourself from that social networking site.
- Don't assume everyone you meet online is who they claim to be. Information provided by users when they are registering is not checked. Anyone can create a fake profile.
- Don't post information that could be used to find you offline. Be careful of posting photos with things like car registration plates or identifiable landmarks. Don't post messages about your daily routine. There are people out there who may piece together this information and use it against you.

7. Keeping personal data safe while working from home

Extraordinary circumstances lead to extraordinary measures. Many people now find themselves trying to work from home; for some, working out of the office or from home is routine, but for many others it is new. The suddenness of the measures put in place to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 has meant that most have had little preparation and less than ideal circumstances. Even for those used to home working, the normal solitude has been interrupted by having other family members at home at the same time. It is undoubtedly a time for patience and forbearance.

But it cannot be a time for laxity. Already, mal-actors have been quick to exploit the weaknesses that emerge in a crisis. The familiarity of home surroundings encourages us to relax and let down our guard. With a few simple rules of “data hygiene” we can help to ensure that one crisis does not create another.

Working from home involves access to data (often personal data); the normal ways and means of storing and processing this data is often not set up with large-scale remote-working in mind, and network infrastructure has difficulty scaling up. The temptation to take shortcuts looms large. Resist! Letting your guard down, or failing to act appropriately, is the data equivalent of not washing your hands and then rubbing your eyes. Don't do it.

Obviously individual circumstances vary, but here are some simple guidelines to help protect and safeguard personal data during the crisis:

The basics:

1. **Normal out-of-office security rules apply.** While the surroundings of your home are familiar, when dealing with customer or employee data when working from home it is best to regard your home network as “public” rather than “private” so that your computer's firewall takes appropriate precautions. Take care to obey all of your organisation's security policies and procedures.
2. **Ensure your equipment is up to date.** Make sure that you have all the latest updates to ensure that you have a good first line of defence against (electronic) viruses and other cyber-threats.
3. **Report losses/thefts.** Hopefully it never happens, but if it does, take immediate steps to inform your organisation if anything goes missing.
4. **Don't use personal email accounts.** Use your work email system for work.
5. **Be patient.** If something is slow or inaccessible, wait for it to come back. Speak to your IT. Don't be tempted to find a workaround.

Equipment:

1. **Use the equipment provided by your organisation.** If you've got a company-provided laptop, use that rather than your own. Transfer of personal (or other) data to your own computer may be treated as a breach, and is almost certainly against corporate policy.
2. **Avoid USB memory sticks, SD cards, etc.** You should only be accessing corporate systems through your corporate laptop. Avoid the temptation to “make things easy” by copying stuff onto USB. If you really have to, work very hard at ensuring that the USB is kept safe. Don't multiply the risk by multiplying the USBs.

3. **Lock your screen.** As the lockdown tightens, there are more family members at home. They are not entitled to see any of the data you are working with. Turn your computer off when you are not using it, and keep it somewhere safe.
4. **Don't let others use your work PC (or your phone).** Aside from exposing data to risk of disclosure, those fingers are a vector for viral transmission.

Data:

1. **Check that it's OK.** If you are simply continuing normal work, but from home, that's fine. But if you're asked to do something different (as many are), especially if it involves special categories or sensitive data, check that it's covered by your organisation's record of processing activities. Your DPO should be able to help you with that.
2. **Authorised systems only.** Only use the software and systems that your organisation provides you with.
3. **Special Categories of data require more care.** Certain data (e.g. health data) requires special, extra care is taken to safeguard it. Don't bring these records home, or process them, unless it is strictly necessary that you do so. Use encryption. Again, your DPO can provide guidance.

Printed documents:

1. **Avoid using your home printer.** Do you really need to print something? Is there a risk that something will sit on the printer and be seen by others? Do you have a shredder to dispose of printed material?
2. **Have secure storage.** If working with paper, make sure you have a safe place to keep it. Just as in the office, make sure that anybody with no business in seeing it doesn't see it.
3. **Shred your documents.** Don't just throw paper into the recycling. If you really must have paper documents, and don't have a shredder, get a dedicated bin where you can store documents until you can bring them into shredding facilities at work.
4. **Keep a record of your records.** Know what you've brought home, so it can be accounted for.

Appendix 2

What's App Policy

Policy Statement

WhatsApp is a beneficial messaging service, allowing information to be shared quickly and securely between team members. It also provides the opportunity for managers to give additional support to team members when it is needed.

The use of WhatsApp in the workplace has the potential to create some problem areas and this policy seeks to address these to ensure the continued positive use of the messaging service in the workplace.

Class WhatsApp groups are a very useful and efficient way of communicating to the whole class. The aim of using WhatsApp is to send relevant school-related messages to the entire class group.

The messages in the class WhatsApp groups come from parents in their personal capacity or are sent on behalf of the Parents' Association. The School itself neither sends nor monitors messages on WhatsApp.

The group is set up by the class representative who takes on the role as the group administrator.

Please note, by accepting the request to join, you are sharing your phone number with other parents within your child's class. Once you join, you always have the option to leave the group.

The Parents' Association would appreciate if parents would note the following guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups.

By accepting a request to join the class WhatsApp group participants you are agreeing to these group rules.

1. The group must never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a teacher, child or parent in the class or school.
2. The group is not a political platform for airing opinions on current affairs.
3. The group must not be used to discuss non-school related issues.
4. The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group.

5. The group should not be used to post private or confidential messages or express personal opinions or gossip. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members and may not be representative of the whole group.
6. The group administrator:
 - a. is not responsible for any comments posted by individual members of the group.
 - b. will have the right to restrict admission, remove or ban anyone from the group without any notification.
 - c. will have the right to delete any posts or comments deemed inappropriate or against these WhatsApp communication rules.
7. Inappropriate posts include posting promotions, using inappropriate language, personal attacks or insulting messages, bullying of any member, voicing grievances with the school or with individual members of the group.

Parental Engagement

Although WhatsApp groups can be useful in regards to sharing information and having access to support and advice, it is not a mandatory requirement for parents to join the group.

There is also no requirement for participants to respond outside working hours, this applies to all members of the group. If a participant does choose to respond outside of working hours this will be of their own volition and not an expectation of the organisation.

The group rules clearly state that participants can leave the chat at any time and importantly, that notifications can be muted to avoid being disturbed outside of working hours (allowing individual participants to choose when they want to access the group).

Confidentiality / Data Protection

WhatsApp is end to end encrypted. This means that only participants of the group can read or see what has been sent. Each message has a unique 'lock and key', this means that even the WhatsApp service is unable to see any of the content within the group.

As another element of confidentiality, there is a group rule which states that all names are anonymised, and this also includes not revealing identifying features of a person, for instance, revealing a person's address on the group or sharing photos.

Each participant has a responsibility to ensure that the device they use to access the group is secured i.e. password / pin protection and the group is not left open for others to see. If a participant allows other 'non participants' to view the content of a

group, then this will be considered a breach of confidentiality and the matter will be investigated further.

The rules governing the use of information are similar to paper records, e-mails and telephone calls, there is a responsibility by everyone involved to adhere to the data protection principles. There is a list of related policies at the end of this policy which provides more information regarding GDPR and social media use.

When a staff member's employment ends, the chat is cleared (all messages) and then the ex-employee removed from the group which prevents access to historical messages. This is also carried out once a month as a precaution by the departmental Associate Director of the team.

Complaints / Grievance

It's recognised that one administrator is unlikely to be able to actively monitor the group and fully minimise the risk of inappropriate or offensive comments being made.

There are clear rules and a policy in place; however, there could be an occasion where a participant is offended by comments made by other participants and wishes to complain.

The complainant must not respond or engage in any discussion which they are offended by.

They will need to approach the administrator of the group to ensure they are aware of the situation and the administrator will then investigate further and take any action deemed reasonable and proportionate, some examples include:

- Reiterating the group rules to all participants
- Informally discussing with relevant participants to ensure there isn't a repeat of any inappropriate discussion
- Removing relevant participants from the group (depending on the context of the situation)
- Managing relevant participants of the group through the disciplinary process (depending on the context of the situation)

There are policies in place which can provide more detail regarding complaints and grievance.

Data Use

WhatsApp uses data, participants are advised to ensure they are connected to Wi-Fi before joining the group to minimise use of their data allowance.

To reduce the amount of data used (for those who don't have access to Wi-Fi), the group rules clearly state that memes, adverts etc are not to be shared within the

group. Sending videos and photos should also be avoided where possible as this can use far more data.

Ungoverned Groups

There is far more potential for ungoverned groups to create situations which will not be appropriately managed, i.e. claims of bullying and harassment.

Stratford College does not authorise ungoverned workplace groups (workplace groups set up within teams without a manager's involvement).

If there are complaints regarding the content of an ungoverned group, this will be investigated further and, if deemed necessary, disciplinary action taken against all those responsible.

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Parent Communications with Teachers & Staff

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to serve as a general guide for ensuring effective and respectful communication from parents to teachers, staff and administrators. Communication refers to both the sending and receiving of information, such as email and notes, and verbal communications such as telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings. In order to ensure a successful exchange of information, it is important that all parties follow a few key principles.

It is also important to remember that teachers often teach up to 6 classes and more than 160 students a day and need their lunch and coffee breaks like everyone else! Along with this they work additional hours every evening for School Development Planning, attending Staff or Subject Department Meetings and Continuous Professional Development, marking work, completing reports, meeting deadlines and preparing for their classes.

Finally, schools endeavour to teach and model important lifeskills for our students such as resilience, organisation, effort, responsibility, respect, following instructions, social skills, dealing with success and failure etc. Students might benefit more from a supporting role by their parents.

Maintain Respectful and Open Communication

Always use a respectful and polite tone

Request, don't demand

Be ready not just to provide information, but to listen to teacher/staff observations and perspectives Enter the exchange with an open mind and assume a shared best interest for your child

Be prepared to work collaboratively to solve problems

Confidentiality

Recognize that confidentiality may limit information that can be shared from school to parents, including consequences for other students' behaviours

Time to Respond to Communications

Teachers will make every effort to respond as soon as possible to parent communications, with the understanding that the teaching day sometimes precludes immediate responses

Teachers and staff may need some time to collect needed information before responding.

Whom to Contact

Most communications of class concerns should be directed at first to your child's subject teacher. If it is a general matter you should contact the Class Tutor.

If you have an issue with a particular staff member, first try to address those concerns with that staff member directly preferably by arranging an appointment to meet that staff member or writing them a letter.

If you have discussed with your child's teacher and the issue has not been addressed to your satisfaction then contact the school principal.

Stratford College operates with openness, collaboration and the shared best interest for every student.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Stratford College communicates mainly through SchoolWise, reports and VSWare.

We welcome the opportunity to have parents contact us about concerns. The expectation is that staff return emails and phone calls as soon as possible on school days and during working hours on urgent matters.

The following are some guidelines for parents to consider as they try to resolve difficulties or conflicts at school which may arise:

How should I approach an issue in the classroom or at school that is of concern to my child?

Approach the issue in an objective, methodical manner. Engage in fact-finding and listen to and reflect on all sides of the story before reaching a conclusion. When appropriate, teach your child to self-advocate by encouraging him/her to talk directly to his/her teacher or school personnel. Brainstorm and role play strategies with your child on how to approach the situation and resolve it on his/her own.

If I have concerns about something that happened at school, where should I start?

The best place to begin is with the teacher. The teacher knows your child best of all school personnel. The teacher has the most accurate information.

What is the best way to communicate with the teacher?

If it is a minor issue or question, a quick phone call or a short email is most appropriate and fastest. More serious issues might require making an appointment to talk to the teacher.

Will my child suffer retribution if I voice concerns to a teacher?

No. Although it may be difficult to make the call, teachers appreciate hearing about issues in a candid, respectful way. By remaining silent or anonymous, your concern will never be resolved.

How should I approach a teacher about a problem?

Teachers appreciate when parents approach a conflict from an information-gathering perspective. Articulate what you see as the issue and offer ideas you have as to how the issue might be resolved.

When should I contact the Principal about a problem with a teacher?

Contact the school office by phone or email or make an appointment to see the Principal. In this initial contact, please let the Principal know that you have already had a meeting with the teacher. If communication between you and the teacher did not occur, be prepared to explain why. In almost all cases, the Principal will share your concerns with the teacher and request that the teacher make an appointment to speak with you directly. We want your child to be successful and happy at school. Together we can make that happen.

Appendix 4 **Resources (click on links)**

<https://www.guidingtech.com/whatsapp-group-admin-rights/>

Stratford College [Student Acceptable User Policy](#)

Teaching Council of Ireland [Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers](#)

Teaching Council of Ireland [Guidance for Registered Teachers About the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication](#)

Note: If you are the subject of inappropriate use of social media and or electronic communication, you may wish to consider the following: If you feel it is safe to do so, you may wish to contact the person who posted the material and request that they delete the post. If there is no response, or you cannot identify the person responsible for posting the material, contact the website/app administrator or provider to report inappropriate use and request that the material be deleted. Check whether your school has a policy to manage inappropriate behaviour of its pupils/students towards teachers. Check whether your school has policies or procedures to manage inappropriate behaviour of employees. A teacher who is the subject of inappropriate use of electronic communication or social media by a school employee may wish to liaise with school management and/or their union representative in this regard. If you perceive that a person has acted in an illegal manner towards you, you may wish to take legal advice and/or contact An Garda Síochána. You may wish to refer to Be Safe

Online, a Government initiative, designed to highlight ways to stay safe online and includes a range of Online Safety resources. See also www.webwise.ie for information and resources addressing a range of internet safety issues and concerns. Webwise offers support for young people, teachers and parents. 'Spectrum Life' is a free and confidential assistance and wellbeing service for teachers and their immediate family members. Through the Department of Education and Skills, 'Inspire Workplaces' currently provides teachers with access to confidential counselling (supportive and solution-focused) that may assist in coping with the effect of personal and work-related issues. T: 1800 411 057 W: www.inspirewellbeing.org/workplace

Resources on Judaism

Please click on the following links for information and an Introduction to Judaism.

<https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5518-Jewish-Family-Life-Booklet.pdf>

<https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Employers-Guide-to-Judaism2.pdf>
