



# Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: Chairperson BOM: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

This Policy has been developed as a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic when remote teaching and learning became compulsory. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and information to students, their parents, and staff, surrounding the use of technology when learning remotely i.e. from a place other than our school. It is intended to provide guidance for the conduct of remote teaching and learning during an extended unforeseen school closure.

This policy is an important addition to our policies on Mobile Phone Usage and Acceptable Usage Policy for IT equipment. It is not a replacement for these policies.

The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. Staff members should read this policy in tandem with WWETB Social Media Policy 2018.

## Legislative Context

Bridgetown College is a school under the patronage of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) and thus, take instruction from the Department of Education and Science. We are required to have policies and procedures in place which fulfil our statutory obligations. Schools must ensure that learning may be able to take place in an environment that is respectful and fair to all members of the school community.

Therefore, this policy is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of:

- (a) The Education Act (1998)
- (b) Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- (c) Equal Status Act (2000)
- (d) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- (e) Disability Act (2005)
- (f) Children First Act (2017)
- (g) The Data Protection Act (2018)
- (h) Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary schools (2017)
- (i) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).

## Context and Overview

Advances in technology, combined with the digital platforms already in place in colleges in WWETB mean that lessons, assignments, and assessments can be delivered remotely to students. This allows meaningful learning to continue under the professional guidance of our teachers.

However, whether a student is being taught remotely or in a traditional classroom environment, it is very important that all partners understand that once a learning exchange takes place between a student and teacher (at home or school), students must continue to uphold the behavioural expectations outlined in the policies mentioned above.

## Guidelines on the appropriate use of Online Platforms for engaging in remote teaching and learning

### Platform

Bridgetown College encourages all students to use Microsoft Office 365. All students have been given an account and login details. If problems arise with Microsoft Office 365, they should contact Ms. Anne Carroll or Mr. Adrian Power. The primary online platform our school is currently using is Microsoft Teams.

### Membership of a Microsoft Team

1. Teachers are the owners/managers of the Teams they create. Most Teams will be whole class groups, but this may vary. When students are invited onto and put into a Team it is the exact same as being in the classroom and being with a class group. They have a teacher, and the normal classroom and school rules continue to apply.
2. A teacher will only correspond and engage with a student who is using and is logged into their WWETB account.
3. A teacher will only correspond to a student who is signed up to the correct platform (\*unless alternatives have been agreed in advance with both parties and parents/guardians)
4. Other sub-groups/Teams created by students themselves within a class Team created by the teacher is not permitted.

### Remote Teaching and Learning Expectations

1. Teachers will communicate to their classes the times that they will be having live online teaching. It is very important that students make every effort to attend there.
2. Classes will follow exactly existing timetables on VShare. Break will be at 11:00 until 11:20 for all students and lunch will be as timetables.
3. The live classes will take place for roughly half of the class periods that a student would normally have in that subject. There is not an expectation that any student would engage in online classes from nine to four each day. This much screen time cannot be maintained.
4. Work will be assigned that should be completed in the class times that are not live teaching classes.
5. Assignments will be submitted on Teams and must be submitted by the deadline. This will reduce the stress of work building up for students and save teachers having to follow up looking for work to be returned.
6. If a teacher cannot make a class for any reason, they will communicate this to the class in advance and reschedule where appropriate.

### Managing our time

1. Teachers when working remotely will on most occasions communicate online during normal working hours and will endeavour not to communicate with students outside of these hours. However, everybody's circumstances are different, and we have to be as accommodating to all members of our school community as we can, especially in these uncertain times.

2. Parents and students need to be aware that teachers may have to send material/ assignments outside of regular school opening hours. This does not mean there is an expectation on the student to begin work at the time it is received.
3. Likewise, there is never an expectation on the teacher to have to correct or comment on work sent on Teams 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. We would urge all members of the school community to turn off notifications outside of their learning/working hours.

#### Data Protection and Privacy

1. The material created by the teacher on Teams is the property of the teacher and students do not have permission to share to others outside of the Team unless given permission to do so. Students are not permitted to record an online tutorial. Teachers may decide to record their own lesson and make it available to students who could not attend the lesson in real time.
2. Teachers may choose to conduct live classes using the Meetings Tool in Microsoft Teams. Teachers will trust students to behave appropriately online, as they would in their real classroom.
3. Should a teacher only have one student in attendance at an online Teams lesson or has to carry out a 1 to 1 tutorial, the teacher is required to record that class for the protection and safety of all the participants.
4. 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, Twitter, Instagram or the School App). All student names on student work should be redacted.
5. All provisions relating to a student's data remains the same under GDPR procedures and guidelines.

#### Responsibilities and behavioural standards

1. Once logged on to Teams, students must always comply with the school rules as set out in our Code of Positive Behaviour.
2. Any behaviour or language deemed inappropriate during school applies online, in all communication, before, during and after established school hours. The consequences for such behaviour will be the same as if the student was in school as they are involved in prescribed schoolwork, on a school created platform using a school log-in and which has been directed by school personnel.
3. During online/live tutorials or classes, we are using a high trust model to ensure the safety, privacy and dignity of all participants. We wish to avoid the scenario of students being compelled to disable their webcams and/or muting their audio. Students' attire must be suitable.
4. Any language directed towards a fellow student or teacher that is very aggressive/ threatening or offensive may also be reported to the Gardaí or TUSLA or both.

5. The criteria for mandated Child Protection reporting remains the same as if the student were being taught in school.
6. As normal, if a student behaves in a manner that is contrary to our Code's expectations, they may receive an appropriate sanction in line with the school's code of behaviour.

#### Additional Support

1. Teachers will find it necessary to proceed with teaching new course work online. While it is acknowledged that this situation is far from ideal, it is expected that all students and teachers will engage as best they can with all efforts at online teaching and learning so as not to be behind when normal school resumes.
2. Our Special Educational Needs team will continue to liaise with our students who may need additional support. Teachers and students are familiar with a variety of accessibility tools within the Office 365 suite of applications.
3. Teachers who have students for resource will provide support where necessary and possible. This may be timetables weekly or it may be arranged on a more a hoc basis between the teacher and student(s).
4. If any student is experiencing difficulties accessing their work, please contact your subject teacher in the first instance by email and then Ms. Anne Carroll or Mr. Adrian Power.
5. Students who are not engaging with online learning will be follow up by school staff. We will make every effort to accommodate students who are having difficulty, however, parents / guardians have a responsibility to try to ensure their child is engaging with online learning in so far as is possible.
6. Where possible, it is a good idea for students to have a particular workspace set up at home that is dedicated to their schoolwork. This, in effect, will become their remote classroom. It should be as free from distractions as possible and have a comfortable chair and desk.

We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare. The above guidelines are subject to review at any time as is deemed necessary. Changes to the policy will be communicated to Parents, Students and Teachers.