



Scoil Ruáin

Killenaule, Co. Tipperary

Interim Strategy on the use of technology for remote e-learning

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 school and where it is not possible for the teacher to deliver the class within the same location, as would be the case, if the class was taking place in a classroom setting.

While this policy informs best practice for remote learning and the use of online technologies during normal school term, it is devised in response to the Covid-19 emergency and is intended to provide guidance for the conduct of remote teaching and learning during an extended unforeseen school closure.

This policy does not set out to replace our Acceptable Usage Policies or Internet User policy but rather intends to be an important addition to the area of learning from a digital platform.

The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) Policy.

As a school under the patronage of TETB and who take instruction from the Department of Education and Science, it is of paramount importance that we have policies to ensure that procedures are in place that fulfil our statutory obligations. The primary obligation that all schools have is to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learners under Child Protection Policy and that their data is also protected under GDPR legislation. Schools must ensure that learning may be able to take place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties. This Policy is prepared, therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of legislation.

Context

Teaching and Learning is always evolving, especially as we move deeper into the 21st century. Developments in IT provide us all with great opportunities as learners and teachers. Never before has there been greater scope to learn using technology and it continues to change the learning relationship between teachers and students. Advances in technology mean that assignments can be delivered remotely and that greater access to information on the internet affords the opportunities for real learning to take place under the watchful and professional guidance of the teacher. However, whether a child is being directed remotely or via a traditional classroom environment, it is very important that all partners are aware that once a learning exchange takes place between a student and teacher, whether at home or school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and all of the school's policies.

This interim Policy has been developed during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when remote teaching and learning will be imposed on the school community without prior knowledge and preparation. Scoil Ruáin endeavours to make it very clear to all of our partners that the values that are instilled in all of our policies remain, no matter how we change our teaching and learning methodologies or the location of that teaching and learning. This includes remote learning or when a child is being taught in an environment that is not within the school building and the teacher is working remotely and is not present with the student(s).

This policy covers any aspect of student distance learning as used by School Staff.

Scoil Ruáin encourages all students to use Microsoft Office 365. All students have been given account details. If problems arise with Microsoft Office 365 they should contact Mr. Treacy (ttreacy@tipperaryetb.ie) or any other of our school's digital leaders (Ms. Gubbins, Ms Breen or Mr. Williams). Microsoft Teams is a very useful tool for remote teaching and learning.

Edmodo is also used by some of our teachers, especially for our senior students. The primary online platform our school is currently using is Microsoft Teams.

In all cases students must use their @scoilruain.ie account to log in. Students are not to use any other account under any circumstances for the purposes of Distance eLearning within the school.

The list of applications that will be used for distance learning will primarily be:

- Office365, incorporating:
 - Microsoft Outlook (e-mail)
 - Microsoft Teams
 - Assignment
 - Student notebook
 - Microsoft Forms

There may be some additional applications that teachers may use, and the teacher will provide the student with the information required to access them. This must, in all cases, use an @scoilruain.ie account as the login.

eLearning Approach

eLearning will take what is known as a blended approach and some teachers may use different methods more than another teacher. For example:

- Some teachers may use regular live classes via teams while others may not
- Some teachers may distribute work as weekly bulk assignments while others may do so as daily homework-style tasks.

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 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.

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

1. 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, everyone's circumstance is different and we have to be as accommodating to all members of our school community as we can, especially in these uncertain times. 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. 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.
2. In so far as possible, provision for SEN students, will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.
3. No matter what time a student and/ or teacher is on Teams i.e. whether the teacher is online giving a tutorial or not- the moment a student logs onto Teams they must abide by the school rules and the rules will be implemented if and when necessary.
4. Students cannot choose to leave a Team once a teacher has created one.
5. 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. Recordings should not be made of any online tutorial unless with explicit permission from the teacher. In this instance, it is of utmost importance that any such recordings are not shared.

6. Teachers may choose to conduct live classes. Microsoft Teams conference might be used. We would like to avoid the scenario of students being compelled to disable their webcams and/or muting their audio. In order to avoid this scenario, we are using a high trust model. Teachers will trust students to behave appropriately online, as they would in their real classroom. Students' attire must be suitable.

In the use of Teams live classes:

- Students must always follow the direction of their teacher just as in the classroom
 - Students are not to turn on their microphone unless the teacher invites them to do so. In any case, all microphones should be on mute when a person is not speaking to avoid distracting background noise being broadcast to everyone.
 - A team link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive the link. Do not forward any link to anyone else.
 - All teams sessions are recorded, and these recordings may be made available by the teacher to the class to watch back again later. This recording includes any video, screenshares, whiteboards and audio from the class.
 - Only the teacher is allowed record a session. No-one else is permitted to record.
7. 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 school's same rules continue to apply.
 8. 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.
 9. A teacher will only correspond and engage with a student who is using and is logged into their Tipperary ETB or Scoil Ruáin accounts.
 10. Using 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 (Instagram and Twitter). All student names on student work should be redacted.
 11. Other Teams created by students themselves within a Team created by the teacher is not permitted.
 12. Any behaviour or language deemed inappropriate during school applies online and after established school times. The consequences for such behaviour will be the same as if the student was in school as they are involved in prescribed school work, on a school created platform using a school log-in and which has been directed by school personnel.
 13. Any language directed towards a fellow student or teacher that is aggressive/ threatening or offensive may also be reported to the Gardaí or TUSLA or both.

14. The criteria for mandated Child Protection reporting remains the same as if the child was being taught in school.
15. All provisions relating to the child's data remains the same under GDPR procedures and guidelines.
16. As per all matters pertaining to our school's Code of Positive Behaviour, if a student acts in a fashion that is contrary to our Code's expectations they may receive a sanction and/or Suspension/ recommendation to the Board of Management for Permanent Exclusion.
17. As far as is practicable, we recommend that teachers and students use any unexpected school closure time, for revision. This may not be feasible in all instances, and in particular for exam classes who may not have finished their courses yet; teachers may find it necessary to proceed with course work. 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. We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare.
18. For parents:
 - You should ensure that your son/daughter is checking in regularly for assigned work
 - Where live classes are being run you should ensure your son/daughter is in an area of the house that is quiet and free from distractions. Please be mindful of Child Protection Guidelines, for example, bedrooms should not be used for live classes
 - Live online classes should be viewed by your son/daughter/daughter only.

Data Privacy Statement

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 School's own systems which requires a valid @scoilruain.ie login to access
- The School'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:

- Ordinarily this is cleared at the end of each exam session, i.e. at the end of 3rd Year and at the end of 6th Year. In any case, activity and content will not be retained beyond the students exit from the School, either through early exit or through graduation.

This Strategy was revised and adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Ruáin on:

Date: _____

Signature Chairperson BOM: _____

Signature Secretary BOM: _____

(Principal)