



St. Mac Dara's C.C.

Distance Learning Policy

Mission Statement

"We, the community of this College, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad-based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their potential".

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____
Date

Distance Learning Policy

Introduction

This document sets out the policy of St. Mac Dara's Community College in respect of the use of technology for distance or remote teaching and learning during the Coronavirus stay at home instruction, or at other times where Home stay is necessary, hereafter referred to as "Distance eLearning" — it operates in addition to our existing Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Relevant Policies

All St. Mac Dara's C.C. policies and procedures remain in place during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. Examples of policies and documentation that are relevant, but are not limited to, this guide includes:

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy
- ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
- Learning Code

Child Safeguarding Advisory

Staff should contact the DLP, Principal or the DDLP, Deputy Principal, if the staff member is concerned about any incident or behaviour which they encounter during an on-line class or student gathering via Video Conferencing. The normal and agreed referral procedures should be followed.

Teachers and SNA's should continue to be alert to the possibility that a child protection concern may arise in relation to learners they come in contact with during on-line classes and should follow the normal practice, as though they were in school, as per the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. In circumstances where it is not possible to jointly report a concern with the school Designated Liaison Person (DLP), the teacher or SNA should make their own report directly to Tusla and provide a copy of that report to the school or centre DLP at the earliest opportunity.

Details are available on the [Tusla website](#) or through the [Tusla online portal](#).

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to make contact with Tusla, An Garda Síochána should be contacted without delay. This may be done by contacting your local Garda Station. Parents/Guardians will be informed of our online teaching and learning protocols via our college website and email. All procedures and protocols follow guidelines from the DDLETB Head Office.

Scope of this Policy

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

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

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

Office365 incorporating:

Microsoft Outlook (e-mail) / Sharepoint, Microsoft Teams / Google Classroom, Microsoft OneNote, 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 @stmacdaras.ie account as the login. eLearning will take what is known as a blended approach and some teachers may use different methods more than another teacher. For example:

1. All teachers will ensure that all students work is distributed using Office 365 applications each day.
2. All teachers will interact with students using Office 365 applications to give clarification on questions that arise from the work that is expected from the student.
3. All teachers will interact with students on Office 365 platforms to provide formative feedback on work submitted.
4. Some teachers may use regular live classes/tutorials, through Teams while others may not.
5. Some teachers may use a blend of live classes/tutorials through Teams and other platforms.
6. 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 if they are having difficulty with any aspect of their subject or if they are finding the workload unmanageable.

Everyone's Responsibilities while partaking in eLearning

For staff and teachers:

1. Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class.
2. Disruptive students will be removed in order to allow those who wish to partake a fair chance to do so. Students who disrupt teaching and learning may receive a temporary/permanent ban from all online access. A Parent/Guardian may be contacted in relation to online behaviour.
3. Teachers will do their utmost to be available at the identified time on their timetable.

For students:

1. You are to communicate through your @stmacdaras.ie account only. The use of any other account or e-mail address is expressly prohibited.
2. Do not engage in communications with any account other than an @stmacdaras.ie account. Report any other activity to your teacher or Year-Head using their @stmacdaras.ie email account.
3. Students must always be civil and respectful to their teachers and fellow students.
4. Students are not allowed to record or forward any content within a Teams group — such as worksheets, exam papers, answers, solutions, videos, — to anyone else without the permission of the creator of that content and/or the teacher. See College AI-JP & GDPR policies.
5. All online lessons delivered through Teams may be recorded by the teacher for distribution to students who were absent from the lesson.

6. All other online activity is recorded. This includes anything you send or say via e-mail, Teams Chats / OneNote, and whether you are checking regularly for assigned work.
7. Students must find a quiet space for the Teams meeting, class or tutorial.
8. Students must dress appropriately for the Teams meeting, class or tutorial.
9. Students be on time for their tutorial Teams meeting, class or tutorial.
10. Students must have their camera turned on at all times.
11. The students' microphone should be muted at the start and only turned on when your teacher asks them to do so.
12. If a student needs to speak please type a # into the chat/use the raise hand function and your teacher will ask you to turn on your microphone and you can ask your question.
13. Students must use the chat feature to ask questions during the Teams meeting, class or tutorial.

For parents:

1. You should ensure that your son/daughter is checking in regularly for assigned work.
2. Where live classes/tutorials 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 and students should be appropriately dressed.
3. Live online classes should be viewed by your son/daughter only.

Live Online Classes/Tutorials

Teachers may deliver some aspects of the coursework "live" using Teams. This will use varying combinations of audio, video, virtual whiteboards and screencasts.

In the use of Teams:

1. Students must always follow the direction of their teacher just as in the classroom. See Learning Code.
2. Students are not to record the lessons/meetings at any time. See AUP & GDPR policy for details.
3. 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.
4. A Teams link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive the link. Do not forward any link to anyone else.
5. All Teams sessions may be recorded by the teacher, and these recordings may be made available by the teacher to the class only to watch back again later. This recording includes any comments, video, screenshares, whiteboards and audio from the class.
6. Only the teacher is allowed record a session. No-one else is permitted to record. See AUP policy for details.

Data Privacy Statement

Our Distance Learning Policy operates in addition to the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) 2020 and DDLETB Privacy Policy which are available from our website. For clarity, we will outline aspects specific to Distance Learning but this should be read alongside our existing policies mentioned above.

What we retain:

1. Login activity, specifically, the last time a student logged in to their Office365 account.
2. Within Teams/OneNote, the date and time of if or when a student views any assignments/comments or OneNote notebooks set for them and when they submit any work for same.
3. 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:

1. To assist us in making sure students are engaging in learning sufficiently and in good time.
2. To assist us in generating appropriate and relevant feedback to parents on progress.
3. To provide revision materials by means of replaying 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.
4. 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 @stmacdaras.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:

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 College, either through early exit or through graduation.

Signed: 

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 26/02/24

Signed : 

Principal St Mac Dara's Community College

Date: 26/2/2024

Guidelines on using Teams:

All students are expected to establish a good school-day routine with sensible health breaks and follow their usual timetable on a daily basis.

Please note:

1. The live classes/tutorials are only one element of a balanced approach that we are taking. We expect students to engage in other tasks such as independent work, online classes such as pre-recorded lessons, physical workouts, time away from the screen.
2. It is very important that all students engage fully in the teaching and learning for the remainder of the term. For most year groups this will involve learning new content — failing to engage with this content will disadvantage students in future learning.
3. There may be amendments to planned Teams classes/tutorials from time to time and sometimes at short notice. This can be due to a number of reasons — technical or personal for example.
4. Teachers will try to outline the schedule for Teams classes/tutorials on the Monday of each week. This should assist students with their planning.
5. Communication is two-way: There are genuine reasons why a student may not be able to attend a live class or submit an assignment on time. Please inform the teacher and give an expected date for submission of same assignment.

Protocol for Real-time Classes/Tutorials on Teams:

- Always reply to an invitation sent by your teacher.
- Each video class Teams will have its own code.
- Stick to the timetable and be ready to sign in 5 minutes before the time.
- Use your email address to log in and have your password ready.
- Be ready to speak up and take your turn. Your contribution is important. Other students gain confidence when they hear familiar voices.
- College rules apply. Be courteous, be respectful. Remember, lessons may be recorded by the teacher. Students may not record or share material, see Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- Be aware of any class rules specific to each teacher (eg — using "hands up", "group chat"...))