

Hartstown Community School

**Interim Policy on Use of Technology for Remote
Learning**

January 2021

Ratified by the BOM 27th of April 2021

Interim Policy on the Use of Technology for Remote Teaching and Learning

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and information to students, their parents/guardians, and staff, surrounding the use of technology when teaching and learning happens remotely i.e. when a student 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).

While this policy informs best practice for remote teaching and 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 this extended unforeseen school closure (and not outside that time).

This policy does not set out to replace our Acceptable Usage Policy, but rather intends to be an important addition to the area of teaching and learning from a digital platform (i.e. remote teaching and learning).

The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Charter of Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Hartstown Community School is a school under the patronage of the DDLETB and the Diocese of Dublin. As a community school we take instruction from the Department of Education and Science and it is of paramount importance that we have policies to ensure that procedures are in place that fulfil our statutory obligations.

The primary obligations that all schools have are to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote teaching and learning is safe for all student learners under Child Protection Procedures 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 Skills 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 2017
- (g) GDPR
- (h) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools
- (i) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).

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. Advances in technology mean that students may participate in live classes and that recorded classes and assignments can be delivered remotely, affording the opportunity for real learning to take place under the watchful and professional guidance of the teacher. However, whether a student 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 at school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Charter of Behaviour and all of the school's policies. This interim policy has been developed during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020-2021 when in unprecedented times and resulting school closures, remote teaching and learning has been undertaken by the school community without prior knowledge and preparation.

Hartstown Community School 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, in our response to the Covid-19 emergency school closure. This includes remote learning or when a student 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).

Hartstown Community School's Guidelines on the appropriate use of Online Platforms for engaging in Remote Teaching and Learning

Section A

Students have already received this information regarding Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Students

- Microsoft 365, including Class Notebook, Teams and @hartstowncs.ie email addresses, will be the typical platform used by teachers to upload work and assignments
- Check email, Teams and Class Notebook at least twice a day
- Communication may only take place during normal school hours
- The normal school calendar will apply
- The school Code of Behaviour is applicable to remote teaching and learning including
 - o Anti- Bullying Policy
 - o Acceptable Use Policy

This will, in particular, apply to student-to-student communications

- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply with students expected to present all

assignments to the best of their ability and on time, where this evolving and unprecedented situation allows you to do so.

Section B

Additional information for the Hartstown Community School community:

- In Hartstown Community School all staff and students are encouraged to use Microsoft Office 365. This is a very useful tool for remote teaching and learning and we are satisfied that it will support remote teaching and learning adequately.

All staff and students have been given account details. If problems arise with Microsoft Office 365 accounts the first point of contact is the school's IT administrator or info@hartstowncs.ie and the query will be resolved or referred to the relevant person.

- Teachers when working remotely will on most occasions try to communicate 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 of all members of our school community as we can, especially in these uncertain times. Parents/guardians and students should note 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 or via email outside of normal school teaching hours. Whilst it might suit teachers or students to communicate outside of normal working hours, it is essential that everyone agree that responses or actions outside of normal working hours are not required.

Likewise, while teachers, in their own time, may chose to engage in correcting those assignments already submitted by the due date and upload feedback, there is never an onus on teachers to have to correct or comment immediately, on work sent on Teams or via email outside of normal school hours.

To support this, we urge all members of the school community to turn off notifications outside of their learning/working hours.

- The SEN department and SNA Team will endeavour to support all students with additional needs to access Remote Teaching and Learning. As far as possible, supported by the SNA Team provision for SEN students will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.
- No matter what time a student and/ or teacher is on Office 365 (Teams, OneNote, email) i.e. whether the teacher is online giving a tutorial or not - the moment a student logs onto Office 365 they must abide by the school rules and the rules will be implemented if and when necessary.
- Students cannot choose to leave a Team once a teacher has created one.
- The material created by the teacher and shared on Teams, OneNote, email is the property of the teacher and students do not have permission to share to others outside of the group it was shared with unless given permission to do so.
- Recordings should not be made of any work by the student or anyone other person (e.g. video conference, live class, recorded video, PowerPoint with recorded explanations) unless with explicit

permission from the teacher. In this instance, it is of utmost importance that any such recordings are not shared.

- Teachers may choose to conduct live classes, in which case Microsoft Teams video conference is the preferred option. 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. Students will not record the class unless with the prior permission of the teacher conducting the live online class. If a recording is made with the permission of the teacher, it cannot be shared with anyone outside of the class.
- Teachers are the owners/ managers of the Teams they create. Most Teams will be whole class groups, but this may vary according to the needs of the group. 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 rules continue to apply.
- A teacher will only correspond in and engage with a student who is signed up to a school agreed Platform, Microsoft Office 365.
- Official school social media accounts may be used by teachers to demonstrate examples of good work. Using social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Hangouts, WhatsApp etc.) to communicate with individual students is not encouraged and teachers have been advised accordingly. Official school Social media may be used by teachers to demonstrate examples of good work to parents/guardians and the wider school community, but again is not encouraged for the conduct of teaching and learning. Any such activity will only be on the official school social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter). All student names on student work should be redacted.
- Other Teams created by students themselves within a Team created by the teacher is not permitted.
- As per all matters pertaining to our school's Charter of Behaviour, if a student acts in a fashion that is contrary to our Charter's expectations, they may receive a sanction as outlined in the Charter of Behaviour
- 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.
- The criteria for mandated Child Protection reporting remains the same as if the child was being taught in school.
- All provisions relating to the student's data remains the same under GDPR procedures and guidelines.
- We recognise that teachers and students have a variety of circumstances that they are managing whilst engaging with remote teaching and learning. Acknowledging this, we understand that all students and teachers engage as best they can with all efforts at remote teaching and learning.

Student Netiquette:

- Our School's Charter of Behaviour, School Rules and our ICT Acceptable Use Policy apply to all Remote Learning.
- Students are expected to follow our school code when involved in remote learning: Respect for myself, respect for others, respect for diversity.
- All students participating in online courses are expected to conduct their communications in a respectful manner.
- The use of proper Internet etiquette is expected at all times.
- Students are encouraged to interact with the platform provided but are asked use common sense in their interactions with one another and between student and teacher. Please do not add teachers to your personal Teams without their express permission.
- Circulating or publishing (including on the Internet) material recorded without consent with the purpose of humiliating, undermining the reputation of or causing damage to another person, whether considered a "joke" or not, may be considered as a serious breach of discipline. This could result in suspension or expulsion from school depending on the circumstances.
- Inappropriate language or behaviour will result in disciplinary action.
- Remember that Remote Learning is not private. Think about the consequences of anything you might write or post online.
- Above all, be positive in your engagement with HCS Remote Learning.

We thank the school community for adhering to the above guidelines for everyone's safety and welfare.

This policy was agreed on the date noted below.

Signed: _____ **Date:**

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:**

Principal