

**Distance Learning**  
**Guidelines and Expectations**  
**during an Unforeseen School Closure**



**26 January 2026**



## **Distance Learning**

### **Guidelines and Expectations during an Unforeseen School Closure**

#### **Rationale**

The information outlined below has been compiled to help ensure the continuity of learning and teaching in the event of an unforeseen or unscheduled school closure.

In the past, unplanned school closures have occurred due to adverse weather, the covid-19 pandemic and could occur in the event of issues with the supply of water, electricity or for other unforeseen reasons. While every effort will always be made to keep the school open as normal, a school closure may be deemed necessary in exceptional circumstances.

Celbridge Community School has developed these distance learning guidelines to ensure that the impact of any school closure on learning and teaching is minimised, through regular online engagement with students, a blend of guided and independent learning tasks / experiences and appropriate and engaging learning opportunities and assignments. Teachers and students will continue to use our online platforms and virtual learning environment (VLE) as they would on a normal school day.

Our school will use a variety of mechanisms to promote student engagement from home. Remote learning and teaching may include 'live' online classes, interactive online material and resources, pre-recorded material, independent learning assigned to students, other relevant tasks, assignments, assessments assigned by teacher and shared on our VLE.

In the event of an unforeseen school closure, students and teachers will follow the normal school timetable. There may however be instances when the timetable will have to be amended or classes may not run, to allow for adequate notice for students and staff to prepare and be online for class. There may also be instances where a teacher is unavailable to hold an online class due to illness or for other exceptional circumstances. If this occurs, the teacher will update students by posting a message on the class VLE.

The nature of online learning and teaching may depend on the reason or length of the school closure. For example, if the school is closed due to a severe weather warning which could lead to a considerable disruption to power and utility services, it would be prudent to assign work to students in advance and not hold live classes. If a school closure occurs over a prolonged period however, a greater emphasis may be placed on live timetabled classes. The reason for the school closure may impact on the form distance learning and teaching will take.



We are aware that school closures may be a confusing and unsettling time for students, staff and their families and that engaging in school work online may prove challenging in terms of online access, organisation, time management and engagement.

We would encourage students to contact their teachers online if they have queries or require assistance. Parents and guardians are welcome to contact the school office if they have any queries. Staff members are welcome to contact colleagues and/or school management.

Outlined below are guidelines and expectations for members of our school community which should support us all to engage in high quality, effective and safe distance learning and teaching. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with all our school policies, including Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, ICT Code of Conduct etc.

### **School platforms**

The platforms / software / apps outlined below are used on a daily basis by members of our school community and will continue to be used in a similar fashion in the event of an unforeseen school closure.

<b>Platform / Software</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Function</b>
Tyro	Our school's Management Information System (MIS)	Student records, including attendance, assessment, behaviour & engagement, online payments and communication with parents/guardians via Tyro Mail
MS 365	Students and staff have access to all MS Office applications	Email, onedrive storage, teams and all MS Office Apps
MS Teams	A MS 365 App	All students and staff have access to Teams as a mechanism for online live classes in the event of an unforeseen school closure.
Showbie	Students and staff have access to this Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	All students have access resources and information for each class / subject that they have via Showbie platform



## Guidelines and Expectations

### Students

- Students should develop a routine that allows them to continue to engage with school work in the event of an unforeseen school closure.
- Students should ensure their iPad is fully charged once notification of a school closure is received and if possible ensure that any required resources are brought home from school.
- Students should engage with work and with teachers online (as required), during the school day and in line with their normal school timetable.
- Students should check their VLE and email accounts in a timely manner, in order to stay informed of work being assigned and other information that is shared with the students.
- Students should complete and upload work/assignments by the deadline set by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to complete the work or communicate to the teacher why it is not completed.
- If you are unable to complete work / if you are unwell / any other reason, please contact your Caomhnóir to inform them, as you would do on a normal school day.
- If you have any questions / difficulties in relation to work / need additional time for assignments, please contact your teacher / Caomhnóir to seek help, as you would do in a normal classroom-based lesson.
- If you have any ICT issues e.g. with your iPad, VLE account or email account, please fill in an IT Ticket on our school website (<https://celbridgecs.ie/index.php/i-t-ticketing>).
- Students may request additional support/guidance from their teachers, Caomhnóir, AEN team, Guidance Counselling team if required. Students should contact the relevant staff member by email or fill in a Student Support Self-Referral form.
- Students understand that distance learning / working from home may vary depending on the reason or length of a school closure. For example, if there is a severe weather warning and possible disruption to power and utility services, work may be assigned to students in advance. On other occasions, live classes or other types of learning and teaching may be facilitated.
- For online 'live' classes,
  - The online platform Teams which facilitates 'live' online classes or video conferencing style classes will be used to facilitate online live lessons. Links for online Teams classes will be shared by teachers on the VLE and the Teams calendar.
  - Teams is the only video conferencing platform which will be used by Celbridge Community School for live online classes.
  - Invitations / information about scheduled classes will be shared with students in the normal way on the VLE (e.g. the time of online class, materials required by student etc.).
  - All 'live' online classes will take place during school time and in line with the normal school timetable.



- If a student is invited to attend a 'live' class online the student must join the class at the agreed time and should have all relevant material to hand (e.g. pens, copybook, other resources). Teachers will have overall control over who is permitted to join or be removed from the class.
- Students should understand that an online class may incorporate various elements just as a normal in-school class would e.g. input from teacher, collaborative task with other students (break out rooms), independent tasks (students may be assigned individual work during a live class), whole class collaboration / input, feedback from teacher & peers and other relevant learning activities. Therefore an online "live" lesson can be structured in a variety of different ways. Different subject areas may be suited to various online class structures also.
- When attending an online class, the student must be appropriately dressed and prepared for class as they would be on a normal school day. They should be sitting at a desk in an environment conducive to school work / studying and with no interruptions.
- Students should have their camera on for roll call and cameras will normally stay on to promote engagement and collaboration. Each student should have their background blurred and neutral. Students must not have any additional images / visuals linked with their account / name / screen.
- In some instances, a teacher may request that cameras are turned off, or may turn a student's camera off. Teachers may also ask students to mute their microphone or may also turn off students' microphones.
- In 'live' online classes, students must follow agreed protocols, and must not interrupt the teacher during the lesson. Questions should be sent to the teacher via Teams tools e.g. direct message to teacher/chat function or hand up function.
- Students must adhere to the settings that the teacher has in place and should keep their microphone muted throughout the lesson and follow requests to unmute/mute as required for collaborative activities.
- Please note, the messaging/chat function should only be used for questions/discussion about the work and not for other unnecessary communication.
- Students should not initiate any online live classes with their teacher. Students should communicate with their teacher via their VLE or email.
- The recording of a live lesson (audio / video / photographs / screenshots etc.) by students is strictly prohibited.
- The recording, sharing and posting of any images / video / live lessons on any social media platform, messaging platform or online is strictly prohibited.
- The sharing of any links, content, or any other school related material / information with anyone outside the relevant class / year group is strictly prohibited.
- Students must understand that all school policies (including Code of Behaviour etc.) and all school / classroom rules apply.



- Students should keep themselves safe, healthy, and well by following these guidelines and maintain good digital practices at all times.

## Parents

- Parents/guardians should help their son/daughter to develop a routine that allows them to engage with school work for the duration of the school closure.
- Parents/guardians should support students to engage with school work and with teachers online during the school day and keep afternoons and evenings free for creative and physical activities.
- Parents/guardians should encourage students to try and complete any online schoolwork to the best of their abilities, where possible, depending upon any external circumstances.
- Parents understand that distance learning / working from home may vary depending on the reason or length of a school closure. For example, if there is a severe weather warning and possible disruption to power and utility services, work may be assigned to students in advance. On other occasions, live classes or other types of learning and teaching may be facilitated.
- Parents/guardians should encourage students to communicate with their subject teacher, Caomhnóir, Ceann Bliana (Year Head), or to submit an IT Ticket (link above), if they are having any challenges /have questions during the school closure.
- Parents can support students with distance learning by ensuring students have adequate internet access and a quiet environment to work in.
- Parents should remind students that teachers will continue to use the school VLE and usual communication methods for sharing work, resources and information.
- Parents understand that Teams is the only platform that will be used by Celbridge Community School for live online classes during a school closure. Parents should ensure that students register and log in with their full name, school email address and follow all good practice and digital safety guidelines outlined in this document and in other related policies and documents.
- Parents understand that online live classes may incorporate various elements just as a normal in-school class would e.g. input from teacher, collaborative tasks with other students (break out rooms), independent tasks (students may be assigned individual work during a live class), whole class collaboration / input, feedback from teacher & peers and other relevant learning activities. Therefore an online "live" lesson can be structured in a variety of different ways and different subject areas may be suited to various online class structures also.
- By facilitating your child's 'live' online lessons in your home, your child's lessons may feel very different but the same rules of communication apply as if this were a regularly taught lesson in school. This means that the interaction during these lessons is to be between the teacher and students only
- Parents/guardians may contact the school office or the relevant Caomhnóir/Ceann Bliana (Year Head) by email if you would like to bring anything to our attention e.g. student ill and not available to work etc.



- Parents/guardians should submit an absence note on Tyro or contact the school office by email if their child is ill or otherwise unavailable for school / engage in learning, as would normally occur when the school is open.
- For any prolonged school closure, parents/guardians may request additional support from their child's Caomhnóir, SEN team, Guidance Counselling team if required. Initial contact will be made with parents by email or by phone and appropriate follow up and supports will be agreed.
- Parents/guardians will be able to keep a track of their child's engagement through checking in with them, supporting them with their work and looking at their VLE courses and accompanying submissions.
- Parents/guardians will also be able to view how your child is engaging with assigned work through the Pointí Gradam system on Tyro.

### **Teachers**

- Teachers should ensure that there is minimal disruption to learning and teaching and that they engage with their students and classes in line with their normal school timetable.
- Teachers understand that the nature of distance learning and teaching may depend on the reason or length of the school closure. For example, if the school is closed due to a severe weather warning which could lead to a considerable disruption to power and utility services, it would be prudent to assign work to students in advance and not hold live classes. If a school closure occurs over a prolonged period however, a greater emphasis may be placed on live timetabled classes. School management will liaise with teachers in this regard for each unforeseen school closure.
- Teachers should share updates, information, links and resources with students via their VLE and email accounts in a timely manner. Teams links will automatically be available on the Teams Calendar.
- If a teacher is unavailable for work, they should contact school management in the usual way and should update students by posting a message on the class VLE.
- Teachers will provide meaningful and appropriate work for their specific subject and class groups in line with the normal school timetable.
- Class material and updates will be posted by the teacher in line with the school timetable and teachers will ensure that students engage with any task/activities assigned and will update Tyro accordingly.
- Teachers will assign work for the entire class and will assign tasks/activities for a variety of abilities, differentiating as appropriate for students with additional educational needs.
- Subject teachers, SEN team, Guidance Counselling team and school management are available to support student engagement and wellbeing during a school closure.
- Teachers should continue to use our VLEs, as they would on an in-school day to share resources and updates with students.
- Teachers will follow correct policies and procedures for all online activity including GDPR.
- Teachers will take and maintain an accurate attendance record on Tyro for each online class.



- Caomhnóirí will hold an online Caomhnóir time each morning in line with the daily school timetable for students in their class, and will record attendance during this time.
- The online platform Teams facilitates 'live' online classes or video conferencing style classes will be used as an additional tool to facilitate online live classes as per the normal school timetable.
  - Teams is the only video conferencing platform which will be used by Celbridge Community School at this time.
  - Teachers will promote active engagement with students through these online classes and aim to ensure high quality learning and teaching continues during a school closure.
  - Teachers will share links/invitations to 'live' classes on our VLE in advance of the timetabled class and on the Teams calendar and will also inform students of the materials required by student (e.g. pens, copybook, other resources).
  - Teachers should have their camera on at all times, with their background blurred and neutral, however there may be occasions when cameras are turned off.
  - Teachers should ensure student cameras are on at all times, that student backgrounds are blurred and neutral and that there are no other visuals shown. There may be occasions when a teacher may turn off students' cameras or direct students to turn off their cameras.
  - The capturing, recording, sharing or posting of any images, audio or video is strictly prohibited and is a serious breach of school policy.
  - Teachers should also ensure that student microphones are muted unless required for engagement in the online class.
  - Teachers should ensure that all other windows are closed on their desktop and that they are logged out of their personal / school accounts.
  - Teachers must adhere to the settings agreed at whole school level for conducting 'live' classes online through Teams (e.g. waiting room, video, audio, chat controls, break out rooms etc).
  - Teachers will explain class protocols at the start of each 'live' class, e.g. student must mute microphones, use chat function to ask a relevant question etc.)
  - Teachers will ensure that students keep their microphone off unless they are invited to contribute and the student's microphone must be turned off again, once the student's contribution to the discussion is finished.
  - Please note, the messaging/chat function should only be used for questions/discussion about the work and not for other unnecessary communication.
  - Only teachers may record their classes/presentation or sections of the class/presentation. Student recording of a live lesson (audio / video / photographs etc.) is strictly prohibited.
  - As part of the online lesson, most teachers will share a presentation or other visual on screen, talk about and explain this content and respond verbally to



questions raised by students in chat/messaging function or verbally when invited to do so by the teacher.

- Usually, the minimum number of people attending any 'live' online class will be three. In some circumstances, there may be 1-to-1 'live' Teams classes/check ins arranged in advance with parent/guardian e.g. SEN & GC support, music practicals, LCA etc...
- The capturing, recording, sharing or posting of any images or video lessons on to any social media platform is not permitted.
- Teachers will provide whole class or individual feedback as appropriate on the VLE or during the live class.
- Teachers must follow all policies and guidelines and ensure that they adhere to the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct at all times.
- Teachers will provide updates on student engagement to parents on Tyro.
- Teachers will endeavour to respond to queries from students in a timely manner, and during normal school time.
- Teachers/Caomhnóirí/Ceann Bliana will endeavour to respond to emails in a timely manner, and during normal school time.
- All teachers will follow normal referral and communication systems if they are concerned about a student's engagement, wellbeing, welfare etc.
- Teachers should try to manage their day so that school work and school communication does not disrupt afternoons/evenings.

### **Support Staff**

- Our school office is contactable by email during normal school hours and every effort will be made to respond to emails in a timely manner.
- Support staff will check emails and online platforms daily and will continue to support students as directed by school management.
- Support staff may engage in online CPD and any other reasonable work as requested by school management.
- SNAs will continue to engage with our school's AEN team to ensure the continuation of support for students across the continuum.
- SNAs will engage in online interaction, student support and timetabled classes as part of their support of students, and may liaise with parents/guardians if required in their support of students.
- If a staff member is unavailable for work, they should contact school management in the usual way.
- All staff will follow correct policies and procedures for all online activity including GDPR.

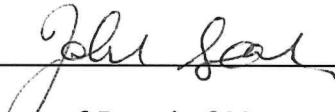
Ratified by Board of Management: 28th April 2020

Updated & Ratified: 26 January 2026



This policy was amended by the Board of Management on 26 January 2026.

**Signed:**

  
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Chairperson of Board of Management

**Date:**

**Next annual review:** January 2027



## Appendix

### Teams Student Checklist

#### Before the Lesson:

- iPad charged and ready
- Logged into Microsoft Teams with school account and access class link from Teams calendar or school e-mail
- Lesson materials ready (copy, book, pen, other resources)
- Find the correct Team and lesson in Teams Calendar
- Join the lesson on time
- Camera ON & microphone MUTED unless otherwise requested by the teacher

#### During the Lesson:

- Microphone muted unless speaking and allowed by teacher
- Listen carefully and follow instructions
- Use Raise Hand or Chat to ask questions
- Be respectful in chat and when speaking
- Stay on task and avoid distractions
- Participate when asked and complete all tasks to the best of ability

#### Online Behaviour Expectations:

- Use appropriate language at all times
- Do not record lessons or take screenshots
- Do not share lesson links or codes
- No private messaging during lessons
- Follow the school Acceptable Use Policy, ICT Policy & Distance Learning Policy

#### After the Lesson:

- Check Showbie for homework or assignments
- Complete work by the deadline
- Upload work correctly (photo, scan, file etc...)
- Ask for help if you are unsure – use the Message My Teacher folder on Showbie
- Log out of the lesson properly

#### If Something Goes Wrong:

- Try rejoining the lesson
- Check Wi-Fi and restart Teams if needed
- Message the teacher
- Inform a parent/guardian
- Complete an IT Ticket: <https://www.celbridgecs.ie/page/iPad-ICT-Information-Support/44975/Index.html>



### **Teams Parent/Guardian Checklist**

This checklist is designed to help parents and guardians support students during periods of online learning or school closure. Microsoft Teams is used as the school's official platform for the delivery of online lessons in conjunction with Showbie our virtual learning platform. Before online learning begins, students must ensure that:

#### Before Online Learning Begins:

- Student has access to their school-managed iPad
- iPad is charged and updated
- Student can log in to Microsoft Teams using their school account and access class link from Teams calendar or school e-mail
- Internet connection is available and reliable
- Student understands their timetable and expectations
- Acceptable Use Policy and Distance Learning Policy has been discussed

#### Supporting Your Child During Lessons:

- Encourage punctuality and routine
- Provide a quiet, appropriate learning space
- Remind students to keep camera on and microphones muted unless otherwise requested by the teacher
- Encourage respectful online behaviour
- Avoid interrupting live lessons

#### Communication and Boundaries:

- Teachers communicate with students during school hours only
- Parents contact the school via normal school channels
- No direct messaging with teachers during live lessons
- All online lessons take place within Microsoft Teams. Resources, assignments and homework will be posted to Showbie

#### Homework, Assignments and Assessment:

- Homework and assignments are posted on Showbie
- Deadlines are visible on Showbie
- Support your child with organisation, not completion of work
- Encourage your child to submit work independently

#### Wellbeing and Screen Time:

- Encourage regular breaks from screens
- Be alert to signs of stress or disengagement



- Maintain balance between online learning and offline activities
- Contact the school if wellbeing concerns arise

Safeguarding and Online Safety:

- Lessons are supervised and follow child protection procedures
- Students should not record lessons or take screenshots
- Lesson links and codes must not be shared
- Any concerns should be reported to the school

If Problems Arise:

- Check Wi-Fi and device first
- Encourage your child to inform their teacher via the Message My Teacher folder on the relevant Showbie page.
- Contact the school if technical or ongoing issues continue.
- Submit an IT Ticket: <https://www.celbridgecs.ie/page/iPad-ICT-Information-Support/44975/Index.html>



## **Microsoft Teams Teacher Checklist**

### Before the Lesson:

- Lesson scheduled in Teams Calendar
- Lesson materials uploaded to Showbie (slides, notes, links etc...)
- Clear learning intention and success criteria prepared
- Camera default set to ON for students, particularly for roll call
- Camera on for staff and background blurred
- Audio checked
- Breakout rooms planned (if needed)

### Starting the Lesson:

- Join lesson on time
- Mute students on entry
- Remind students of behaviour expectations
- Confirm chat and hand-up rules
- Take attendance
- Begin with learning intention/lesson structure

### During the Lesson:

- Share screen or PowerPoint (avoid lecture-heavy teaching)
- Check for understanding regularly
- Use chat / hand-up for questions
- Monitor behaviour and participation
- Support students with SEN / access needs
- Be mindful of pace and screen fatigue

### Safeguarding & Professional Conduct:

- Lesson occurs during timetabled hours only
- No 1:1 video calls
- Professional language and background used
- All communication remains within Teams, Office 365 or Showbie
- Any concerns noted and reported appropriately

### Ending the Lesson:

- Summarise key learning
- Explain homework / next steps
- Confirm where work is submitted (Assignments)
- Utilise AFL tools



- End meeting for all
- Post follow-up message or resources on Showbie

After the Lesson:

- Check assignment submissions and provide feedback where possible (use written or verbal option on Showbie)
- Assign pointí for student engagement
- Schedule next lesson if required