



Coachford College

Blended Learning Policy

1. General

1.1 Scope

This Policy applies to all members of the community of Coachford College, and was drawn up in consultation with all school partners. It refers to all aspects of learning, but specifically the utilization of online learning to enhance learning both when students are physically present in school and when learning remotely. It applies to the students, staff and parents/guardians of Coachford College.

1.2 Context

This Policy has been developed in line with the ethos and mission of Coachford College, which has at its core, the care of every student. It has been devised in keeping with the school's characteristic spirit. The Policy serves to support the school's vision for excellence in learning and teaching as part of the School Self-Evaluation process, as set out in Looking at our School: A Quality Framework 2016-2020, and is informed by the Guidelines for Wellbeing in Schools (NCCA, 2016), the National Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, the Guidance on Continuity of Learning (DESk, April 2020) and other relevant circulars. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Digital Learning Plan, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, Website Privacy Policy, Appropriate Behaviour Policy, Safety Statement, Wellbeing Plan, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement/Risk Assessment, Special Educational Needs Policy, Attendance Policy, Data Protection Policy (CETB), Dignity in the Workplace Charter, Data Retention Schedule (CETB), Social Media Policy (CETB) and GDPR. The school's mission is supported by the creation of both a physical and virtual learning environment conducive to the highest standards of achievement in a community in which mutual respect is shared in a positive environment, with student wellbeing at its core. Whether

learning takes place in the physical or virtual environment, the school's focus is on creating a safe learning environment, characterised by positive and caring relationships which enable each student to become empowered independent learners.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

Coachford College seeks to provide the best possible learning experience for each student in its care. In creating an optimal virtual as well as physical learning environment, Coachford College seeks to ensure that learning is not only uninterrupted, but enhanced, through the highest quality blended practices whether learners are

- physically present in school or
- learning remotely.

Coachford College seeks to ensure that the highest quality learning and teaching continues uninterrupted in the following circumstances:

- When a student is medically unfit to attend school;
- When medical practitioner or Coachford College requires a student not to physically attend school;
- When it is necessary for a teacher or SNA to work remotely, or
- When the school is working in a virtual environment.

1.4 Rationale

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of eLearning. It was devised to reflect the changed learning requirements of our students, in view of the benefits that technology brings to learning when physically attending school. Coachford College recognises the value of having a co-ordinated approach to blended learning in order to promote independent learning, enhance wellbeing and to mitigate against the risks posed presently to learning and teaching by public health concerns.

2. Blended Learning Approach

Various methods and approaches such as those outlined below are used to support learning at Coachford College:

- Live classes;
- Live 'streamed' classes;
- 'Flipped' learning, i.e. concept attainment is taught in advance of the live lesson;
- Issue of assignments and/or homework style tasks via Google Classroom;

The eLearning applications used at Coachford College are Google Apps for Education, incorporating:

- G suite;
- Gmail (email);
- Google Classroom;
- Google Drive;
- Google Forms;
- Google Docs;
- Google Slides;
- Google Sheets;
- Google Diagrams;
- Google Meets (for live online or streamed classes);

Additional applications may be selected for use by teachers. In such cases the teacher will provide the student with the information required to access them. This must, in all cases, use an @student.coachfordcollege.ie account as the login.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Students shall

- Be fully aware that eLearning is an extension of his/her learning, and is utilised both when physically attending school and when learning remotely. It is the responsibility of a student who is medically fit to attend school and/or has been advised to restrict his/her movements to remain up-to-date with his/her work;
- Ensure that their G Suite account is operational, and should bring any concerns to the immediate attention of the administrator by emailing info@office.coachfordcollege.ie;
- Check regularly for assigned work;
- Communicate through their @student.coachfordcollege.ie account only. The use of any other account is expressly prohibited;
- Avoid communicating with any accounts other than @mail.coachfordcollege.ie, @office.coachford.ie and @coachfordcollege.ie;
- Report immediately any online activity causing concern to the relevant Year Head's @mail.coachfordcollege.ie account.
- Co-operate fully with their teacher/s/SNAs, and adhere to the expectations set out in the school's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Appropriate Behaviour Policy;

- Make immediate contact with their teacher when difficulty is experienced with any aspect of their work or if they are finding work unmanageable;
- Communicate with teachers during normal school hours, and in keeping with the arrangements set out in the school's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy;
- Ensure that Google Classroom content such as worksheets, exam papers, answers, solutions, videos, notes or Google Meets links are not recorded or forwarded to any other party without the permission of the creator of that content.
- Be aware that online activity is recorded. This includes anything sent or said via email, Classroom, Meets. All records of activity such as checks for assigned work are recorded;
- Participate in live classes in as quiet a place as possible, and free from distraction;
- Avoid the use of bedrooms for live classes;
- Ensure that live online classes are viewed by the participating student only.
- Be aware that online learning may take place via online or live streamed classes, by means of combinations of audio, video, virtual whiteboards, screencasts, etc.

When using Google Meets:

01. Students must not turn on their video, or record any part of the communication unless the teacher invites them to do so.
02. All microphones should be on mute when a person is not speaking to avoid distracting background noise being broadcast to everyone. Microphones should be switched on on the invitation of the teacher only.
03. A Google Meets link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive this link. A link must not be forwarded to anyone else.
04. Google Meet sessions may be recorded, and recordings may be made available by the teacher to the class to watch back again later. Recordings may include video, screen shares, whiteboards and audio from the class.

3.2 Staff members shall

- Utilise the school's eLearning platform to support learning when physically present in the school and when working remotely as per the requirements of Guidance on Continuity of Learning (DESk, April 2020) and the DESk Alternative Working Arrangements set out in C0049/2020.
- Ensure that positive and collaborative channels of communication with parents/guardians are nurtured;
- Have overall control of and responsibility for their online class;

- Have the right to remove disruptive students in order to allow those who wish to partake have a fair chance to do so. Repeatedly disruptive students may receive a temporary ban from all online access;
- Be available on the identified day of their class, as per normal school arrangements. Communication may take place via live video, through Google Classroom or via email;
- Be aware that all online activity is recorded. This includes anything sent or said via email, Classroom, Meets, etc.
- Adhere to the Teaching Council Professional Code of Conduct.

3.3 Parents/Guardians, and students over 18 years who do not consent to the sharing of personal data shall ensure that

- Positive and collaborative channels of communication with the school are nurtured;
- Regular checks are carried out for assigned work;
- Participation in live classes should take place in as quiet a place as possible, and free from distraction;
- Bedrooms are not used for live classes;
- Live online classes should be viewed by the participating student only;
- The school's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Appropriate Behaviour Policy is fully adhered to;
- In the event of a student's movements being restricted, causing him/her to be absent from school, it is the responsibility of his/her parent/guardian to
 - Email the school prior to 09:00 on the morning of the absence;
 - Outline the reason for the absence, and
 - Ensure that the student continues to participate remotely in the classwork for the duration of the absence.

4. Data Protection and Retention

4.1 Data Privacy Statement

Coachford College's Blended Learning Policy operates in addition to the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUP), Data Protection Policy (CETB) and the Coachford College Website Privacy Policy which are available on the school website www.coachfordcollege.ie. While elements specific to blended learning are outlined herein for clarity, the Policy should be read alongside the existing policies referenced above.

4.2 Data Retention

4.2.1 The following data is retained:

- Login activity specifically the last time a Google account was accessed;
- Within Classroom, the date and time an assignment was viewed, if it was viewed;
- In live classes using Meets, all audio, video, whiteboard, annotations and screen share activity of both teacher and participant (audio/video is not recorded if the student is on mute and the video is not enabled).

4.2.2 Data Retention Rationale

- To support the leadership of learning by ensuring that students are engaging in learning sufficiently and in good time;
- To highlight students who are in need of additional support;
- To assist us in generating appropriate and relevant feedback to parents/guardians on progress;
- To provide revision materials by means of topics covered in live classes, and to ensure those who might be unable to attend live classes can still cover the same content as the rest of the class, and
- To provide a record of activity in the event of an issue arising during a live class.

4.2.3 Data Storage

All recordings are kept within Coachford College's own systems, access to which requires a valid @student.coachfordcollege.ie address. Coachford College's storage systems are configured so that all data resides within an EU country only, which in the case of G Suite is Ireland.

4.2.4 Retention Timeframe

Activity and content will not be retained beyond the students exit from Coachford College, either through early exit or through graduation. All student data is retained in keeping with the requirements of the school's Data Protection Policy and Data Retention Schedule (CETB).

5. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

On-going review and evaluation of this Policy will take cognisance of changing information, circumstances, guidance, developments in DESk and school-based programmes and feedback from students, teachers and parents/guardians. The Policy

will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the SSE framework set out in Looking at our Schools: A Quality Framework 2016-2020.

The Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Coachford College on August 26th 2020, having been signed by Ms Niamh Lehane on behalf of the Board of Management and Ms. Áine-Máire Ní Fhaoláin, Principal.