

GRACE COLLEGE

Safe and Effective Learning Online, Guidance for Teachers – January 2021



Introduction

Throughout the course of the current lockdown the majority of our interaction with our student body will be the Office 365 package, primarily via Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Outlook. In our interactions with our students we must ensure that we are professional and business like, seeking to support our students as they make progress through our curriculum and grow in character.

It is important that we take opportunities to encourage and praise our students for their engagement and effort while they are working remotely and a key tool to do this will be feedback on tasks completed in each of our lessons. We should also seek to do all we can to support students who find accessing and completing work more difficult at home, recognising the challenging circumstances many of our community are in.

Academic guidance on setting work remotely for students working from home is detailed in *Expert Teaching Through Recovery – January 2021 addendum*.

Any safeguarding concerns that are disclosed by students and parents remotely or discovered by teachers should be referred immediately to either the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr J Maylin) or one of our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Mrs L Allan, Miss A Lough, Mrs C Beeckmans) as per the safeguarding policy.

Any pastoral or welfare concerns should be referred to the relevant 'School Team' the 'Student Welfare Team' as appropriate.

If a student has an academic question or concern this can be dealt with directly by teaching staff using their professional email account and the students' GCS email account, or by calling parents/carers. Where teaching staff are concerned about the academic progress of a student they should discuss this with their Head of Department in the first instance.

The Student Achievement Team will work to encourage the best possible levels of engagement on the part of the student body. Where teaching staff are particularly concerned about the lack of engagement of an individual student they should raise this with their Head of Department and the students' relevant progress leader in the first instance. If students are not accessing the work due to a barrier to learning or access, Heads of Department, the Student Achievement Team and the Student Welfare Team will work with students to resolve the issue at hand.

Staff should hold students accountable for their actions during this time, in the context of encouraging the College's core values. We must recognise that excusing poor conduct due to the current context will not build our students' character or be consistent with our belief that all of our students are infinitely valuable with the capacity to achieve far more than they might have initially thought.

Detail of how to hold students accountable should there be conduct concerns while studying remotely is in the *COVID-19: Discipline Policy addendum*.

General Principles

The following principles should be adhered to as staff to enable continuity of learning whilst the College is closed:

- In all communication with parents and students, staff should use appropriate prefixes for themselves and for those they communicate with (i.e. Mr Smith) and avoid informal salutations and 'chat'.
- Staff should communicate professionally with students when interacting through Office 365.
- Emails from staff to students to discuss academic concerns or progress are permitted if this is the best way to encourage learning to take place or to redress academic concerns.
 - All emails must be from the staff's professional email.
 - Staff can choose to copy in their line manager to any emails if they see fit.
 - Welfare and pastoral concerns should not be discussed via email.
- Staff should not communicate to students directly or interact via any form of social media. If students attempt to contact staff via social media, staff should refer the issue appropriately, as made clear in the *COVID-19: Discipline Policy addendum*.
- All teaching staff must share the Microsoft Teams Usage statement with their students. The statement reads;

MS Teams Usage Statement

Dear student,

When using the teams feature to communicate with your tutor, teacher and other students, please consider the following rules and expectations.

- *The chat feature will only be switched on during the scheduled individual lesson times or registration period or at the discretion of staff only.*
- *Please act responsibly when posting messages within your team, ensuring your post will not upset or offend any other member of your class.*
- *If you need to speak with your tutor or teacher outside of these contact times, please send them an email (dgreenshields@gracecollege.org.uk)*
- If staff feel it is appropriate to email parents, they should ensure that all communications are professional and appropriate, as referenced above.
- Phone calls, if appropriate, should be made to parents first. Staff can then speak to students on the same call. If the parent is not present when a call is made, staff should ask briefly after the student's welfare and then ring back later.

The only exception to the above is:

- An acute safeguarding or welfare concern for a student: when this is received, the DSL, and DDSL, in consultation with the Principal and with R&A, may make a decision to phone a student directly. This would only be done in exceptional circumstances. In nearly all cases, parents/carers would be contacted first.

Any Progress Leader who feels it appropriate to phone a student directly for any other reason should consult with the relevant Head of School or a Vice Principal prior to doing so.

Delivering Live Lessons Effectively and Safely

It is important to remember at the outset that our expectation is **not** that teachers will be 'live' on camera for the duration of a lesson with a teaching group, but that a section of the lesson in the Upper School and the Sixth Form. Teachers may choose to teach 'live' with Lower School groups, but this is at their discretion.

Teaching 'live' requires careful planning, as does teaching in a classroom. Teachers should have our resources prepared in anticipation of our time with the students, and have shared the Microsoft Teams Usage statement with the students prior to the lesson.

Teachers should schedule our live lesson with our teaching groups via our Microsoft Teams. Having scheduled the meeting teachers can then adjust the meeting settings by 'editing' the meeting details. Teachers must ensure that their meetings are set so that **students cannot bypass the lobby**, and can only be admitted by the teacher. As a rule, students cameras should not be enabled. Teachers should exercise discretion as to when students should 'unmute' themselves to contribute to the lesson.

All lessons must be recorded.

Teachers should ensure that students are aware of what conduct is and is not appropriate at the start of a 'live' lesson. If any student behaves inappropriately in regard to what they write or say, the Head of Department should be told immediately and the student removed from the lesson, as per the *COVID-19: Discipline Policy addendum*.

At the end of the 'live' session teachers should end the meeting for all participants by using the drop-down menu beside the 'leave' button within a Microsoft Teams meeting.

All lessons in the Upper School and the Sixth Form should include a portion of the lesson live. This provides teachers with the opportunity to provide effective direct instruction to our students in relation to our curriculum and whole class feedback on work undertaken during the current lockdown. In the Sixth Form it may be that teachers choose to extend the time that they are engaging 'live' with their students. This is at the discretion of the teacher.

'Live' online lessons may involve two-way audio (teachers and students) or one-way audio communication (teacher to student). Live chat via text within Teams is permitted.

Teachers may choose to either broadcast themselves teaching from the front (with face visible) or their face visible via 'Teams' for instance and must ensure that they are dressed professionally and that there is nothing in the background to their video which could compromise their professionalism, contravene safeguarding procedures or distract students.

Students should sign into the lesson from home and then mute themselves and turn their camera off (which needs to be monitored by the teacher), unless invited to change this by the teacher. Students should dress appropriately and should ensure that their background is professional and without distractions, as far as possible.

Teachers should also be aware that family commitments, technology issues, illness and other complexities may prevent students from accessing 'live' lessons, and should be mindful of student wellbeing, workload and mental health at this time, adjusting the quantity of work set as the lockdown progresses so that all students make the best possible progress through the curriculum.

Preparing effective Pre-recorded material

Teachers may choose to pre-record materials, such as narrating a PowerPoint, or working through a Microsoft Whiteboard or equivalent piece of software. If the teacher wishes to do a recording with their face visible, they should adhere to the guidance above. This pre-recorded material can be used to support the learning of students in the Lower School or to enhance the provision for students in the Upper School and Sixth Form.

In cases where teachers are unable to deliver a lesson 'live' in the Upper School and Sixth Form this personalised approach to instruction and feedback is the preferred method of supporting student learning remotely.

Links

Here is a [link](#) to DfE guidance on safe online learning for staff.