Using Videoconferencing for Distance Learning

Guidelines for Teachers
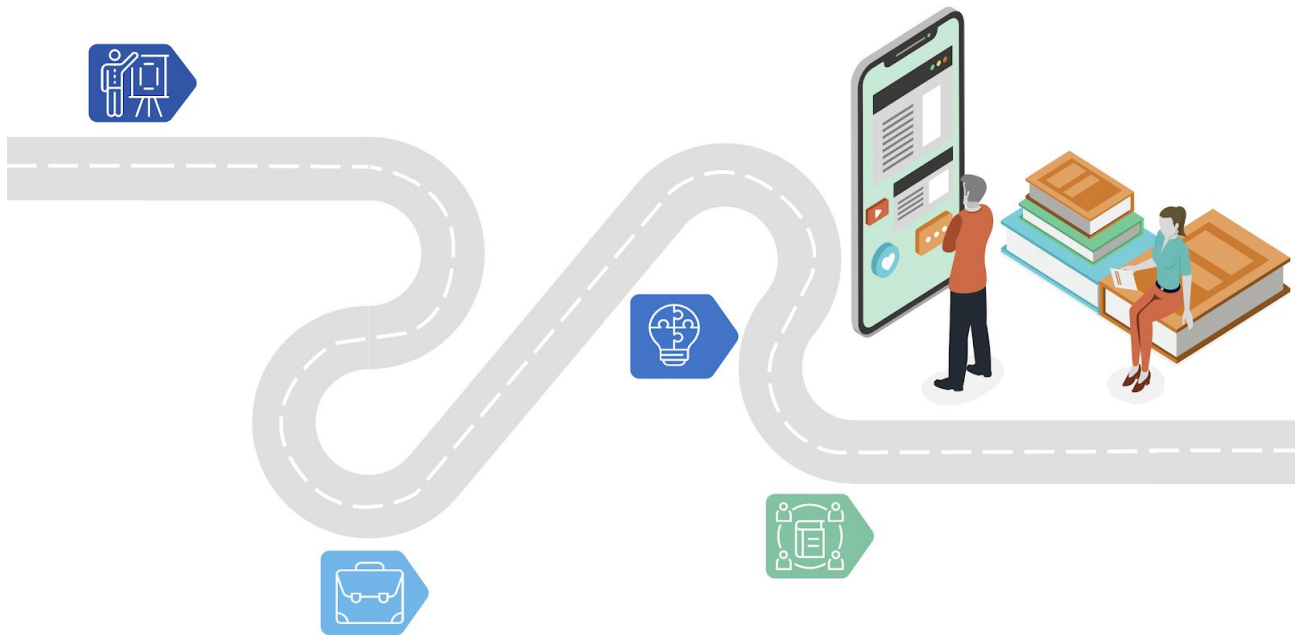
April 2020

Table of Contents

Distance Learning Video Conferencing Applications

Background

The outbreak of Coronavirus/Covid-19 has expedited the need for schools and FET Centres to expand the use of conferencing tools in order to mitigate against school closures. VideoConferencing tools were mainly used for meetings with limited use of the technology as a substitute for Teaching and Learning (T&L).
With the onset of Distance Learning and the Department of Education and Skills *'Guidance on continuity of schooling for primary and post-primary schools'* (April 2020), efforts are being made to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment is not encumbered and that there is continuity in providing services to students/learners and the wider school community.
According to UNESCO, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in worldwide school closures, impacting over 91% of the world's student population.
Reuters reports that global downloads of business apps including Cisco Webex, Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Slack have risen nearly five fold since the start of 2020 as the coronavirus outbreak changes how corporations/institutions work.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning is defined as institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors (Simonson, 2006).

Platforms referenced in DES Continuity of Learning Circular (3 April 2020)

The Department of Education and Skills along with Management Bodies and Principals Networks undertook a survey of schools in March 2020 to ascertain how schools are ensuring continuity in Teaching and Learning (T&L) opportunities for students. The results of this survey demonstrated that there are four main Video Conferencing Apps (please refer to the table below) which are currently being used in schools and centres.

Donegal ETB currently uses GSuite for Education. It is important to note that use of any other Video Conferencing App is not advisable on the grounds of data privacy and GDPR.

Platform	Video Conferencing App	Reseller (Support)
Cisco Webex	Cisco Webex	Compu b / Wriggle
Google G Suite for Education (Google Apps)	Meet	Google for Education Team Ireland & UK
Microsoft Office 365	Teams	365 Learning / Wriggle

Guidance on communicating with Parents/Guardians & Students/Learners

Communication between the school and parents/guardians on the use of Video Conferencing applications is essential for the safe and effective use of the option for both students and staff.

Schools should inform parents/guardians about the details of how Video Conferencing operates during school closure. All schools should advise parents and guardians on the IT platforms in use at the school. More information is available [here](#).

A distance learning environment takes place in a virtual classroom with students the teacher is familiar with. It is essential that teachers maintain safe and ethical use of Video Conferencing apps during distance learning. Students are expected to conduct themselves in line with the normal school rules that prevail in an actual classroom environment.

This page also includes helpful resources that are available at https://www.webwise.ie/ to support teachers, parents and students. The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) should be updated to reflect the use of Video Conferencing platforms.

Teachers should keep personal data safe when working from home and follow the data protection policy around the use of email in the school. Teachers should only use the school's trusted networks or cloud services and comply with any rules and procedures about cloud or network access, login details and data sharing.

All locally-stored data should be adequately backed up in a secure manner. Useful information and guidance in this regard is available at this link: Data Protection Schools

Child Protection

Staff should contact the Principal or 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 should continue to be alert to the possibility that a child protection concern may arise in relation to students 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 should make their own report directly to Tusla and provide a copy of that report to the school DLP at the earliest opportunity.

Details are available on the Tusla website at https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/ or through the Tusla online portal at https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-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.

Teachers and Video Conferencing

Communication between staff and students / learners should only take place on ETB/school management approved applications and platforms. If a teacher / tutor is unsure about whether a particular platform is approved, s/he should contact the ICT department for his/her ETB and the Director of Schools.

It is essential that before using any Video Conferencing tools, students and learners are reminded that classroom rules still apply and that the school's / centre's code of behaviour and classroom rules remain apply. Students / learners should also be reminded that good manners and etiquette are still expected, along with appropriate dress code during video calls.

Be Safe Online - www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/ is the Government's campaign to highlight ways to help teachers stay safe online. This webpage provides access to a wide range of Online Safety resources, to support online safety for all.

The NCSC offers the following advice for securing virtual meetings:

- Ensure you use the most updated version of the App (not applicable in Google Meet)
- Prioritise using the Web Browser over Desktop or mobile application to access your Video Conferencing application.
- Make sure to enable features that alert of newly joined participants - audible tone
- The teacher should restrict who is allowed to use their camera and microphone
- Minimise the use of the chat and file sharing functions or disable entirely if not required
- Do not give control of your screen unless you know and can verify the individual you are passing control
- Select "Lock Meeting" function or similar once all expected guests have joined the meeting
- Before starting a class, make sure to check who exactly is on the call from the Participants menu
- Do not allow students to record the class. The teacher may decide to share the recording after the class.

Simple steps for Teachers to Manage Video Conferencing Classes

🚦 Record your classes if you are worried about 'live' teaching

Teachers can decide to record a class (with just the teacher himself/herself teaching) and share it with students later if the teacher is not comfortable with an online class. This is also effective in situations where students are unwell or are struggling with internet access and miss a live streamed class. A teacher could record videos of the teaching content instead and send them to students so that they can watch in their own time. This can also be useful to reinforce teaching and learning and helpful for revision purposes.

⏰ Keep videos short

Videos longer than 15 minutes can cause issues of slow downloading and learner distraction. If you have more to say, record two or three short videos.

🔄 Test out slides

Make sure you test slides on a smartphone before starting your class so all text is readable on small screens. Font sizes, colours, template designs and screen ratios can be double-checked. Many students may be using smartphones to access online learning.

🚸 Give specific instructions

When you suggest online media which runs for longer than 15 minutes, students will be put off watching. Instead, suggest the exact parts they need (eg 13:35 to 16:28) as this can make students more curious. When you provide more than two resources, label them in the order you want students to approach them. Simple numbering, based on the level of difficulty or importance of each resource item, can be of great help for your students.

🙇 Set reasonable expectations

It is important for teachers to appreciate the pressures that some students may encounter when they are trying to learn from home. Some students could be caring for younger siblings, be significantly distracted, have inadequate access to a space for learning, be required to share a device with other family members etc.

- Teachers need to balance the work that is given to ensure they can provide feedback to students and allow for teachers to balance their own reality of working from home. The emphasis should be on learning intentions that are realistic and achievable.
- On-line classes should be shorter than regular classes.
- Schools and teachers should set reasonable time-frames for return of work.
- Teachers could ask students to write a summary of class video or shared video.
- A set of 15 short questions or a 300-word limit could be sufficient to engage students.

👥 Let students work in small groups - Think, Pair, Share & Post

Teachers could set up online group spaces for small groups of students and ask them to support and consult with one another before sending emails back to the teacher. This could save time for teachers and promote peer-learning.

⏱️ Timing

For live classes of longer than 15 minutes, it is recommended to include pauses for reflection, questions, and insights. Research suggests videos should be a maximum of six to eight minutes. Students should get a break to ask questions, debate the video, answer follow-on questions based on the video from the teacher.

Tips for Teachers when using Conferencing Tools

Starting a Class

1. If it's your first time using Video Conferencing, schedule your class in the application for your desired date/time and email the invitation link details to students.
2. Join your class a couple minutes early to ensure a proper connection.
3. Set aside some time to ensure that students are able to connect their audio and video.
4. Give an agenda or plan for each class by Screen Sharing a document or slide at the beginning of class.
5. Discuss online etiquette and expectations of the students in your first virtual class and periodically revisit the topics.
6. Take time to promote questions, comments, and reactions.
7. Give students a chance to allow your students to write their questions in chat, or be unmuted to ask their questions live.
8. Divide into smaller groups for a discussion on a certain topic.
9. Ask students to present and share ideas/comments with the class.
10. Speak as if you're face-to-face with the class while ensuring you're at the appropriate distance from the microphone for the best audio experience.
11. When delivering a presentation, sharing images, files or video, give your students a moment to open or take in what you've shared.
12. Use the chat tool to connect regularly with students during on-line classes.
13. Encourage students to find a quiet space in which to participate where they won't be interrupted. However, students should not use bedrooms.
14. In the event of audio or video problems use the chat facility.

Providing Feedback to Students

Keeping in touch with students – the importance of providing feedback and advice

Teacher feedback to students is very important to ensure continuity and progression in learning, to affirm students' work and to ensure that students stay motivated and focused while working at home. In this regard, teachers should ensure that:

- They respond regularly to students with helpful feedback on the work that the students submit to them

- They are flexible and agree timelines for return of work with parents and students

- Their feedback is relevant and easily understood

- Their feedback informs the next stage of learning

- Their feedback is manageable for both teachers and students

- Their feedback is specific – there should not be an over-reliance on self-correcting tools or generic feedback.

Advice for Guidance Counsellors in Schools

Following the closure of schools and further education settings, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, NCGE has developed the following information for school Guidance Counsellors to support the delivery of remote / online guidance.

Local decisions about the nature and suitability of remote / online school guidance provision should be discussed and agreed by School Management and Guidance Counsellor(s) and documented accordingly.

School management and Guidance Counsellors have autonomy and may plan for and schedule guidance classes and one-to-one meetings with students using remote / online platforms in line with school policy.

To provide clarity and to support post-primary school management and Guidance Counsellors in their planning and provision of one-to-one or small group guidance counselling and guidance classes to students during the Covid-19 school closures the document available at this link may be useful.

Data Protection implications

A school's / centre's data protection obligations remain largely the same despite the unsettling environment within which we are currently operating. Therefore, staff must be familiar with their GDPR obligations in the use of all devices. The use of apps which have not been determined as being GDPR compliant is prohibited.

It is important to implement the following measures when teaching remotely:
- Be aware that a person may record or screenshot a video conference etc.
- Do not stream audio or video from student / learner devices unless it is unavoidable and essential.
- Only share recorded personal images / video footage of the teacher/tutor where necessary.
- Avoid losing or misplacing devices such as phones, laptops or tablets.

Distance Learning Video Conferencing Applications

- If possible, use encryption to restrict access to your device and to reduce the risk regarding the personal data if your device were stolen or misplaced; Staff should check if their ETB has recommendations for encryption and should implement the same.
- If a device is stolen or misplaced, report this to your Principal or Centre Manager and copy the ICT Department on the mail also, as it may be possible to carry out a remote memory wipe.
- Ensure that your device is locked if you have to leave it unattended for any reason (on a computer this can be done by clicking the button with a 'windows' symbol on it + 'L' at the same time).
- When you are not using your device, ensure that it is turned off, locked, or stored carefully.
- Ensure passwords are unique (e.g. do not use the same password for a personal activity as for the VSware account etc.).
- Be alert to the possibility of impersonation, trickery, deception, phishing, social engineering etc.
- Immediately notify the Principal or Centre Manager and copy the ICT Department on the mail also if anyone attempts to obtain unauthorised access to personal data.
- Use strong passwords (8 characters, mixture of alphanumeric, upper- and lower-case, and symbols, e.g. %, £, & etc.) and change them regularly. Never share log-in credentials. If you must give someone access to your account to access resources unexpectedly, the password should be changed immediately thereafter.
- Never allow someone else to see the password being entered (particularly students/learners).
- If possible, PCs and laptops should have 2 Step Verification requiring that the user enter a password and a pin number which can be sent to a mobile phone.
- Keep anti-virus and anti-malware software up to date and install patches when required.
- Ensure that all devices have the updates required e.g. operating system updates (such as iOS or android) or software updates.
- Smartphones should have some basic protection such as anti-virus / anti malware installed (all smartphones with a Donegal ETB account automatically have Mobile Device Management applied remotely). There are free versions available, but if you are unsure, contact your ETB's ICT Department.
- Ensure that data are kept safe and secure.
- Store any device in a safe location i.e. a position which minimises the number of persons who can view the screen, particularly if working with special category data.
- Adhere to all school policies and protocols and follow all instructions given by the Principal or Centre Manager.

The Data Protection Commission
The DPC has published beneficial advice in relation to remote working which you might consider sharing with your staff and is available at -
https://dataprotection.ie/en/protecting-personal-data-when-working-remotely-0

You may also wish to request that IT staff/service provider or both examine other relevant DPA advice (such as that on Data Security which is available at https://dataprotection.ie/en/guidance-landing/guidance-controllers-data-security to ensure that the school's / centre's practices comply with same.

Recommended Update to Acceptable User Policy regarding use of Video Conferencing

Reasonable Use

Our school utilises Video Conferencing during periods of school closure. Distance learning is a way of learning remotely without being in regular face-to-face contact with a teacher in the classroom. There are many benefits to teaching and learning in this way, and students and teachers have the tools and expertise to use Video Conferencing to sustain learning.

Our school provides a Video Conferencing option for our students and staff. It is expected that students and staff will use the platform in a professional and ethical manner for the purpose of teaching, learning and assessment.

The use of Video Conferencing requires students and teachers to observe the following rules in order to ensure that both staff and students benefit from this way of teaching and learning. Students and Staff should never;

1. Post, stream or transmit any content, including live video, that violates this Policy in such a way that is offensive to students / staff.
2. Do anything illegal, facilitate any illegal activity, or promote violence.
3. Do anything that threatens, exploits or otherwise harms children or fellow students.
4. Engage in any activity that is harmful, obscene, or indecent. This includes offensive gestures, displays of nudity, violence, pornography, sexually explicit material, or criminal activity.
5. Engage in any activity that is fraudulent, false, or misleading.
6. Engage in any activity that is defamatory, harassing, threatening or abusive.
7. Store or transmit any data or material that is fraudulent, unlawful, harassing, libelous, threatening, obscene, indecent or otherwise inappropriate.
8. Send unauthorized messages or irrelevant material.
9. Misrepresent a user's identity or affiliation with any entity or organization, or impersonate any other person.
10. Harvest, collect, or gather user data without consent.
11. Violate or infringe any intellectual property or proprietary rights of others, including copyrights.
12. Violate the privacy of others or distribute confidential or personal information of others.
13. Engage in any activity that is harmful or disruptive to the operation of on-line classes. This includes transmitting viruses, malware or other malicious or destructive code or using tools that mask IP address location or to otherwise circumventing restrictions on use due to regulations or account closures.

If school authorities are made aware of any abuse or infringement on these rules, the school will investigate the issue and take immediate, appropriate action where warranted in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

References

- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) 2020: https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/pdfs/WFH-Advisory.pdf

Distance Learning Video Conferencing Applications

- Data Protection Ireland: https://www.dataprotection.ie/

- DataProtectionSchools.ie: http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie/en/

- PDST Technology in Education: https://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/

- Webwise: https://www.webwise.ie/

Platform	Additional Notes and Links
Cisco Webex	WebEx™ is a secure, powerful and robust collaboration tool used by public and private sectors globally to enable remote and collaborative successful engagement. Cisco WebEx™ will offer schools the following: ● A secure, robust controllable system ● Simple and easy to use for Teaching staff ● Allows Content sharing, Video, speech, chat interaction, Session recordings for later sharing ● Easy access for pupils – No Login required ● Highly secure ● Compliance areas like GDPR, privacy, audit trail catered for. ● Experienced IBM & Apple professionals will support to schools as part of this offer. ● WebEx works on many devices from mobile phones, tablets to personal computers.
Google G Suite for Education (Google Apps)	Google is extending access to premium Google Meet features to 30 September, 2020. Update on new Meet features available for education users. ● Increased participant limit of 250 participants per video call ● Live stream a video call (up to 100,000 viewers within a domain) ● Record a video call ● Note: As the livestream and recording settings will be default off, you must enable them in the Google Admin Console to allow your users to access them. To limit access to these premium features for your faculty and staff, visit the Set up Meet for distance learning page. **Improvements to Google Meet for distance learning** New features to help schools keep meetings safe Google is also rolling out additional features to all G Suite for Education and G Suite Enterprise for Education users to improve remote learning

experiences:

- Only meeting creators and calendar owners can mute or remove other participants. This ensures that instructors can't be removed or muted by student participants.
- Only meeting creators and calendar owners can approve requests to join made by external participants. This means that students can't allow external participants to join via video and that external participants can't join before the instructor.
- Meeting participants can't rejoin nicknamed meetings once the final participant has left, unless they have meeting creation privileges to start a new meeting. This means if the instructor is the last person to leave a nicknamed meeting, students can't join again until an instructor restarts the nicknamed meeting.

Important: Google recommends that you only assign meeting creation privileges, recording privileges, and live streaming privileges to the organizational units (OUs) that contain your faculty and staff members so that students will only be able to join meetings created by faculty or staff.

Using Meet inside Classroom

To improve the experience of using Classroom as a distance learning tool, Google are rolling out a Meet integration to all Classroom users. This integration will only be available if Meet is turned on for the teacher in the class.

Using this integration, educators can create a unique Meet link for each class, which is displayed on the Classroom Stream and Classwork pages. The link acts as a dedicated meeting space for each class, making it easy for both teachers and students to join. Only teachers can access class settings to create the Meet link. All Meet links created by the Classroom integration are nicknamed links, so students can't join without the instructor present.

How Meet keeps your video conferences protected

Google is committed to building products that help protect student and educator privacy, and provide best-in-class security for your institution. Our default-on measures help keep your meetings secure, including:

- Encrypting all data in transit by default between the client and Google for video meetings on a web browser, on the Android and iOS apps, and in meeting rooms with Google meeting room hardware.
- Supporting compliance requirements around regulations including COPPA, FERPA, GDPR, and HIPAA.
- Making it difficult to guess the ID of a meeting and make an unauthorized attempt to join it by using codes that are 10

	characters long, with 25 characters in the set. ● Leveraging Google Cloud's defense-in-depth approach to security, which utilizes the built-in protections and global-private network that Google uses to secure your information and safeguard your privacy. For tips on deploying Meet to your domain, visit the Meet security and privacy for education page - https://support.google.com/a/#topic=4388346 Other useful link - https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/level_zero/edu_assets/images/Enabling_Distance_Learning_using_Hangouts_Meet.pdf
Microsoft Office 365	What's new in Microsoft Teams (Regular updates on new functionality) https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/remote-learning https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/remote-learning/parents

NEPS Advice & Resources during Covid-19

The Department of Education and Skills' NEPS psychologists have developed advice and some resources for young people to manage and stay well when schools are closed.
- Advice to young people while schools are closed
- Plan for the Day
- Blank Plan for the Day
- Relaxation techniques (text)
- Relaxation techniques (podcast)

NEPS psychologists have developed guidance for parents supporting children to create new routines at home. Having a Plan for the Day is key for children/young people to manage and stay well at this time.
> Guide for Parents Supporting Children with Routines

NEPS psychologists have developed advice for parents and schools on talking to children and young people about Covid-19 here.

Continuity of guidance provision

- Guidelines for continued provision of Guidance Counselling and resources to support practice

Recommended Supports for Video Conferencing Applications

- **Cisco Webex:**

    - Compu b: https://www.compub.com/education

    - Wriggle: Wriggle: https://www.wriggle.ie/home

- **Google:**

    - **G Suite for Education:**

    - https://support.google.com/a/answer/2856827?hl=en

    - Camara Education: https://camara.org/

- **Microsoft:**

    - **Microsoft Teams:**

    - Tara 365 Learning: https://365learning.ie/

    - Wriggle: https://www.wriggle.ie/home