

# Distance Learning Policy

We have devised a new Distance Learning Policy to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19 and the significant increase in the use of technology to continue learning. This policy does not introduce any new concepts, rather, it specifically outlines the various applications used for the delivery of online classes remotely.

This new policy operates alongside all of our existing policies which can be viewed at <http://www.mercycollegewoodford.ie/pages/parents/policies-forms.php>

## Introduction

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of use of technology for distance or remote teaching and learning during the current Coronavirus stay at home instruction, hereafter referred to as “Distance eLearning” – it operates in addition to our existing Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

## Scope of this Policy

This policy covers any aspect of student distance learning as used by Mercy College staff.

In all cases students must use their @mercycollegewoodford.ie account to log in. Students are not to use any other account under any circumstances for the purposes of Distance eLearning within the College.

The list of applications that will be used for distance learning will primarily be:

- Google Suite
- There may be some additional applications that teachers may use such as Zoom, and the teacher will provide the student with the information required to access them. This must, in all cases, use an @mercycollegewoodford.ie account as the login.

## eLearning Approach

eLearning will take what is known as a blended approach and some teachers may use different methods more than another teacher. For example:

- Some teachers may use regular live classes while others may not
- Some teachers may use live classes through Zoom while others may use Google Meet
- Some teachers may distribute work as weekly bulk assignments while others may do so as daily homework-style tasks.

In all cases the primary aim is to cover the required curriculum areas for their specific subject. The teacher will decide the most effective method to use to achieve this aim. Students should get in touch with their teacher right away if they are having difficulty with any aspect of their subject or if they are finding the workload unmanageable.

## Everyone's Responsibilities while partaking in eLearning

For staff and teachers:

- Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class; however this must be via the school's digital platform only. Students' personal forms of communication must not be used. Communication is through your @mercycollegewoodford.ie account only. The use of any other account or e-mail address is expressly prohibited.
- Disruptive students will be removed in order to allow those who wish to partake a fair chance to do so. Repeatedly disruptive students may receive a temporary ban from all online access.
- Teachers will do their utmost to be available at the identified time on their timetable – this may be via a Zoom live video, through Google Meets chat or by e-mail.

For students:

- You are to communicate through your @mercycollegewoodford.ie account only. The use of any other account or e-mail address is expressly prohibited
- Do not engage in communications with any account other than an @mercycollegewoodford.ie account and report any such activity to your teacher or year-head's @mercycollegewoodford.ie e-mail account
- You must always be civil and respectful to your teachers and fellow students
- You are not to record or forward any content within a Google Classroom group – such as worksheets, exam papers, answers, solutions, videos, notes or Zoom links – to anyone else without the permission of the creator of that content
- You understand that all your online activity is recorded. This includes anything you send or say via e-mail, Google Classroom or Meets, Zoom and whether you are checking regularly for assigned work.

For parents/guardians:

- You should ensure that your child is checking in regularly for assigned work
- Where live classes are being run you should ensure your child is in an area of the house that is quiet and free from distractions. Please be mindful of Child Protection Guidelines, for example, bedrooms should not be used for live classes
- Live online classes should be viewed by your child only.

## Live Online Classes

Teachers may deliver some of the course "live" using Zoom or Google Meets. This will use varying combinations of audio, video, virtual whiteboards and screencasts.

In the use of Zoom (or Google Meets):

- Students must always follow the direction of their teacher just as in the classroom
- Students are to turn on their video as instructed by the teacher
- Students are not to turn on their microphone unless the teacher invites them to do so. In any case, all microphones should be on mute when a person is

not speaking to avoid distracting background noise being broadcast to everyone.

- A Zoom link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive the link. Do not forward any link to anyone else.
- Live classes may not be recorded. Teachers may decide to pre-record classes and post this on the school's e-learning platform.
- One to one live classes are not advised. If one to one discussion is required, another adult is advised to be present e.g. parent or SNA

## **Data Privacy Statement**

Our Distance Learning Policy operates in addition to the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) and College Privacy Policy which are available from our website. For clarity, we will outline aspects specific to Distance Learning but this should be read alongside our existing policies mentioned above.

### **What we retain:**

- Login activity, specifically, the last time a student logged in to their @mercycollegewoodford.ie Google account
- Within Google Classroom, the date and time of when students submit any work for same.

### **Why we retain it:**

- To assist us in making sure students are engaging in learning sufficiently and in good time
- To assist us in generating appropriate and relevant feedback to parents on progress
- To provide revision materials by means of posting materials for topics covered in a live class, and to ensure those who might be unable to attend live classes can still cover the same content as the rest of the class
- To provide a record of activity in the event of a disciplinary or other issue arising during a live class.

### **Where we retain it:**

- All records are kept within the College's own systems (Google Drive) which requires a valid @mercycollegewoodford.ie login to access
- The College's own systems are configured so that all data resides within an EU country only, which in the case of Google, is Ireland.

### **How long we retain it for:**

- Ordinarily this is cleared at the end of each exam session, i.e. at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year and at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Year. In any case, activity and content will not be retained beyond the students exit from the College, either through early exit or through graduation.

All policies including Internet Acceptable Usage Policy available at:

<http://www.mercycollegewoodford.ie/pages/parents/policies-forms.php>