



Zoom Communication Statement 2021

Introduction

This document was drawn up as a guide for staff, pupils and parents as we consider the necessity of hosting online virtual meetings with the children in our school to help their wellbeing during periods of remote learning. The need for such a document followed the forced school closures due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. While this document is not a policy in of itself, it is an addendum to the school's Acceptable Use Policy and is informed by the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, Data Protection, GDPR and Child Safeguarding policies. The protection of all children and staff members in our school, their personal private data, and their physical and emotional wellbeing is of paramount importance and will serve as the basis for all such virtual meetings.

The use of Zoom may be permitted for use in our school as a means to communicate with our school children during periods of school closure. Such meetings are permitted in these circumstances as a means to cater primarily for the wellbeing of our students.

Guidelines

Due consideration should be given by all staff, in consultation with the Board of Management, prior to engaging in a virtual meeting within a school context. The following list is a sample of what should be considered for the purpose of this document. It has been agreed by school authorities that Zoom will complement, not replace, Seesaw as the preferred remote learning platform used in our school.

- Zoom meetings will be pre-organised by the school/teacher with a given date and time.
- The class teacher will be the 'host' of such a meeting.
- Meetings may be co-hosted with another member of the staff from time to time.
- The class teacher will send out the relevant details for the meeting (time slot) to parents via email.

- Zoom invitation code will be issued by the class teacher no earlier than 15 minutes before start time of the meeting.
- These login details cannot be shared with anyone other than those whom the class teacher has invited. (Please be aware, different groups in the class may be given separate login details by the teacher).
- As children under the age of 16 are not of the digital age of consent, **parents must login in from their own Zoom account.** (Please ensure that your name is recognisable to the teacher).
- Participants should be easily identifiable by their name. Unknown or obscure nicknames will not be admitted to the Zoom meeting.
- Meetings will be available to join from 5 minutes before to 5 minutes after the scheduled time, and will then be locked once the meeting commences.
- One-to-One meetings are not permitted. However, should a SEN Teacher be directed to carry out such a meeting as part of their reallocation of duties following Circular 27/2020 such a meeting will be permitted, following contact with the school Principal.
- Small group meetings may also be permitted.
- By joining Zoom meetings, parents are consenting to their child's participation.
- The rules of the meetings must be set out at the start of each meeting.
- **Zoom meetings are for wellbeing and social purposes.** (Please note if a child/parent has an academic related query, Seesaw/teacher email remain the appropriate channels of communication).
- The recording of Zoom meetings is not permitted for child protection reasons.
- Photographs of meetings are not permitted.
- The sharing of content in relation to such meetings on social media is not permitted.
- Parents will be required to be in earshot of the meeting at all times, but will not engage in the meeting. This is for child safeguarding purposes.
- All members of the meeting should be appropriately dressed for the meeting.
- Meetings should be conducted in appropriate settings in individual houses – not in bedrooms for example.
- An appropriate background for the meeting should be chosen.
- The meetings should last an appropriate amount of time (10-30 minutes depending on the theme/topic and age/ability of the children). This will be communicated to parents prior to the meeting.

- Teachers should keep a record of those children who attended the meeting.
- General notes of the meeting should be kept by the teacher.
- All participants joining the meeting will be muted initially and should remain muted until the teacher gives them an opportunity to contribute.
- Teachers should 'lock' the meeting once all members have joined the meeting.
- Teachers should inform the school's DLP if they notice or have any concerns of child protection issues or should a disclosure be made to them.
- The teacher may end the meeting at any time should he/she deem any content to be inappropriate.
- On the first day, the teacher will explain video call rules and behaviour. In this way all children will become familiar with appropriate behaviour during these sessions.
- **If a child breaks the rules, they will be given a warning.** If the rules are broken for a second time the child will be put out of the Zoom session and the principal will be notified. He/she will not be allowed to return without the permission of the principal.
- Any breaches of the Code of Behaviour or any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Principal/Board of Management and will be dealt with in line with school policy. In such instances, children may be excluded from further meetings of this nature and parents may be contacted and informed.

The above is not an exhaustive list. Rather, it is a guide for your consideration. It has been drawn up in consultation with the staff and Board of Management of our school and has been ratified by the Board of Management in January 2021.

In allowing your child to log on to a Zoom class/meeting, it is assumed that you have given full parental consent and that you agree to the content of this statement as well as relevant school policies.

Some of the relevant policies that apply to this document:

- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- *Anti-Bullying policy*
- *Acceptable Use Contract*
- *Digital Technology Policy*

- *GDPR Policy and Guidelines*

Board of Management and Staff of The Harold School.

February 2021