



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

Microsoft Teams – Student Guide for Online Communication

At The Consortium Academy Trust, our vision is to be a Trust:

- that promotes academic excellence, where exciting opportunities allow learners to excel in all that they do, and leave prepared to achieve all their ambitions
- whose academies deliver the maximum potential for progress through inspirational teaching and learning, and outstanding school to school support
- with a leading community role, whose academies are the preferred choice for learners, parents and staff

With this in mind, we are starting to utilise online learning tools / resources within The Consortium Academy Trust for remote learning / working. In an online/blended learning environment, the way you communicate can be quite different to being face-to-face. We have provided the guidance below to help ensure that your online interactions are safe, enjoyable and conducive to a successful and high quality learning journey.

Live (Video) Classrooms and Recorded (webinar style) sessions

Online and blended learning /working environments involve the use of live video conferencing. This provides a more interactive online experience as you'll be able to communicate with others in real-time. However, there are some useful tips which can help make it run smoothly:

- Log into the seminar in good time to make sure that you have your audio and video set up before the session starts. Making adjustments during the session is very distracting to other learners and the facilitator/teacher.
- Turn off other devices during the seminar. Having a phone ringing during the session will be distracting for everyone. A mobile phone near your microphone can also cause noise interference.
- Speak clearly, and don't speak over people or interrupt. Use the options provided by the online tool e.g. raising your hand.
- Mute your microphone when not speaking as this can cause echo and interference.
- Try to find a quiet location to participate in the seminar and avoid making too much background noise, such as rustling papers.
- Remember that the call has video capability, don't make a blunder! If you move around during the session, there are lots of embarrassing examples of this on social media. Try and stay put and concentrate for the entire lesson/interaction

Safeguarding consideration:

- The facilitator/teacher should and will use the record feature to record the session, making everyone involved aware of this at the start, this can then be sent to participants or other learners who perhaps were not able to attend. From a safeguarding perspective this will safeguard all participants.
- Use the tools available to blur or replace your background so that the image is less personal to you
- You will only be able to access the session using your school issued email account

Protocols for the session

There will be a screen at the start of your session that you must read before joining. These highlight the protocols for the session, by continuing to join and engage in the session, you are agreeing to abide by these protocols.

- Mute yourself , when not speaking to avoid background feedback

- Being in a room on your own for privacy where you can concentrate on the lesson. Being on your own will help you feel more confident and ensure you engage without embarrassment in the full lesson.
- Respect other learners and the teacher in the lesson
- Turn off other devices like mobile phones during the lesson to reduce interference and enable you to follow the lesson without distraction
- The lesson will be recorded
- A reminder that the school ICT acceptable use agreement is in place and at no point are you allowed to photograph or share with anyone any elements of the lesson (this includes but not limited to social media platforms)

If you are accessing a **recorded (webinar style)** session, then a verbal reminder to of the protocols will be given by the teacher at the start of each video lesson:

- Being in a room on your own for privacy where you can concentrate on the lesson. Being on your own will help you feel more confident and ensure you engage without embarrassment in the full lesson.
- A reminder that the school ICT acceptable use agreement is in place and at no point are they allowed to photograph or share with anyone any elements of the session (this includes but not limited to social media platforms)

Communications

Online communication including discussion forums and text chat in live seminars come with challenges such as not being able to gauge the body language and tone of voice of the person who is communicating. Here are some suggestions:

- Written text can be easily misinterpreted without the usual clues we have when speaking face-to face. **DO NOT** use of strong or offensive language.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt. If you find something offensive it is possible that the writer did not intend this, and the point can be cleared up by polite debate, or by involving the facilitator/teacher.
- Read your message carefully before posting or sending it to make sure it will be interpreted as you intended. One good way to do this is to read your message out loud to see if it flows smoothly.
- There are some common online communication conventions. **DO NOT TYPE IN CAPS**. This is regarded as shouting and is out of place in a learning environment. Also, stay clear of the abbreviations and emojis/emoticons used in text messages. **NEVER** use slang words.

Chat / Live Classrooms

This section covers the use of the discussion forum and live seminars, and applies to all users either directly or indirectly, registered or otherwise.

- Treat all attendees with respect. Comments or images that would be inappropriate in a face-to-face environment are also inappropriate online.
- If your programme is conducted in English you should always post contributions in English to enable everyone to understand, unless specifically requested to do otherwise.
- Ensure you only post messages that are related to the discussion and avoid posting the same message multiple times ('spam').
- Be careful to only share content that you have a right to make available under any law, this includes sharing resources which may be copyrighted.
- Avoid taking discussion threads off-topic or make off-topic posts within threads. Off-topic posts may be removed at our discretion.
- Any and all complaints directed at a moderating decision should first be addressed to the moderator in question via private message.
- Messages sent in the course of the programme should only be shared with the permission from the sender, unless requested to by an administrator for site administration purposes.
- The Consortium Academy Trust's (TCAT) online learning spaces should not be used to advertise products or services for profit or gain.

Joining the lesson/webinar/posts

To join the lesson and any chat through 'posts' you will be invited by your teacher to join a Team. This will be using the email address for the site where your lesson would normally be delivered. For example, if you are a Howden student you must use your initial surname intake year @howdenschool.net email to join the lesson and your usual school password

Lessons will normally take place during your normally timetabled slot, they are likely to be 45 mins of input with follow up materials.

Team chat will enable your teacher or your peers to support you with your work

