Trelawnyd VA Video-conferencing policy

What is video-conferencing?

Video-conferencing is a synchronous approach involving multiple parties with the option for each participant to turn on cameras and audio. It requires all participants to take part at the same time.

Rationale for video-conferencing:

Video-conferencing can be carried out through Hwb using Google Meet or a Microsoft Teams Meeting. Using these applications through Hwb can provide an interactive experience and an opportunity to collaborate and engage in a safe and accessible way.

Benefits:

It gives participants an opportunity for face-to-face contact in real time.

It facilitates interactions.

It has positive impacts on learner engagement and well-being.

It is useful for keeping in contact with learners.

Feedback to learners is instant and interactive.

It enables individualised support.

Safeguarding:

When video-conferencing Trelawnyd VA pays due regard to ensuring staff and learners are appropriately protected and safeguarded.

Safeguarding is an integral principle of digital learning. At Trelawnyd VA the safety and welfare of learners is paramount and takes precedence over all other considerations. The governing body, Head Teacher and staff at Trelawnyd VA pay full regard to national safeguarding guidance and local safeguarding policies.

Trelawnyd VA adheres to the following recommendations of the Welsh Government:

* all video-conferencing sessions will be carried out via Hwb using Microsoft Teams or Google Meet.
* School staff will not use their own personal equipment under any circumstances
* At all times staff will continue to follow the school safeguarding policies.
* All issues relating to online safeguarding will be dealt with in the same way as face-to-face teaching or interactions.
* Trelawnyd VA’s policies and procedures for reporting incidents of misuse will be followed at all times. Staff are aware they have a duty to report children at risk (including online abuse) under section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
* If there are any safeguarding concerns about a child, these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP).
* Concerns will be reported as soon as possible to the DSP and Flintshire’s/Denbighshire’s Children’s Services Team.
* If staff think a child or young person is in immediate danger they will contact the police on 999.

Initial considerations

When deciding whether the use of video-conferencing is suitable for a session staff at Trelawnyd VA will consider:

* the purpose, benefits, limitations and appropriateness of video-conferencing
* the appropriateness for all learners based on their individual circumstances
* the availability of learners, e.g. whether all learners are available? Will some need to join or leave at different times?
* the number of learners on a lesson or session
* the length and time of lessons and sessions, ensuring they are both appropriate for the learners in question
* the connectivity and devices available to learners and staff members.

Preparations

If it is determined that video-conferencing is suitable and appropriate for the member of staff and learners, the following should be undertaken as part of any preparations:

* Authorisation from the Head Teacher **must** be given before video-conferencing.
* The session should be planned in advance and sufficient notice should be given to learners and parents and carers as required.
* Appropriate use agreements should be in place for all learners involved in video-conferencing. These agreements should be clearly communicated to learners and shared with parents and carers. The agreement will set out clear expectations from all parties and identify actions that will be taken if the agreement is broken.
* A central record of all online events alongside list of attendees should be maintained.
* All learners should have access to the Hwb platform.
* Content should be checked to make sure it is appropriate.
* If the session includes tasks then staff will be aware that some learners may require more time than others.
* All staff should familiarise themselves with the functions of Microsoft Teams and how to use it effectively (more information is available in the Hwb Support Centre on Microsoft Teams and Google Meet).

Top tips for effective practice

Location

If staff or learners are joining a video-conferencing call from home they should:

* choose a neutral location that is appropriate and safe, e.g. a living room, a study or a kitchen
* work from a suitable communal home location where they feel comfortable, preferably accompanied by their parent/carer
* reduce the possibility of the lesson being interrupted by other household members or pets.
* carefully consider what is in view of the camera, i.e. check that the background is professional and does not contain images or information that should not be shared or that could be deemed inappropriate. It may be helpful to ask a ‘critical friend’ to check what is in view of the camera.
* where possible, it is recommended that practitioners and learners change their background as standard practice.
* be mindful that not all learners will want to switch their camera on – you should make turning the camera on optional.
* staff and learners can design and upload their own background in Microsoft Teams. This could be a participatory class activity.

Professional conduct

Staff at Trelawnyd VA will continue to work in the same professional manner as they would in the classroom.

They will:

* Adhere to professional standards of dress when in front of the camera.
* Be conscious that in an online environment remarks are being heard by a number of learners and could be easily misconstrued.
* End the session for all participants, ensuring learners are not left alone and unsupervised in a session the staff member has left.
* Be mindful of the need for confidentiality; especially if live-streaming a lesson from a venue where other adults or children are present.
* Staff will join the session before the scheduled time to ensure a proper connection and feel prepared for an effective session. A staff member can co-pilot by joining the session but does not have to turn the camera or microphone on.

Recording video-conferencing sessions

There is a recording function available in Microsoft Teams and Google Meet whereby the practitioner can record the session.

As a video-conferencing recording constitutes personal data, all staff must comply with Trelawnyd VA’s data protection policies and GDPR.

If staff intend on recording a session to share with learners at a later date, this should be done as a live-streaming event asynchronous activity without learners being present in the recording.

Any recordings must not be used for any teacher-evaluation purpose.

Learner behaviour and etiquette

Staff at Trelawnyd VA will undertake the following:

* Make parents/carers aware of the expected behaviours and requirements including location to join the session and appropriate dress.
* Clearly communicate that ‘classroom standard’ of behaviour is expected from all participants.
* Create and agree clear ground rules to reflect the standard of behaviour expected based on their existing school or setting behaviour management policy.
* Explain the rules at the introduction of the session, e.g. who can speak, how to ask a question or ask for help. Using the chat function will allow the structured engagement with attendees.
* Continue to remind learners about agreed rules at the start of each session, and outline how they can raise concerns if required.
* Consider using the chat, mute/unmute and the hand up/raised hands functions to make the most of the session.
* Make all of the learners ‘attendees’ and not ‘presenters’. If you ask a learner to share their screen and any work that they do, make them presenters. After they have shown work, etc., change them back to attendees. This helps to control the lesson.
* Create or adapt a class charter with learners as a participatory activity. Children’s rights can provide a basis to develop its key principles, including the rights to: be safe, learn, express an opinion, equality and non-discrimination, privacy, develop talents and skills to the full. Learners can develop a list of key video-conferencing behaviours that uphold their rights and the rights of others. This can be referred to throughout the session.

Appendix 1: Frequently asked questions

*What do I do if a learner joins the class from an inappropriate location?*

Ideally learners would log into the class from a communal area in their home. In some circumstances this may place an unreasonable burden on family spaces.

Practitioners should assess each situation and discuss with their Designated Safeguarding Person or their Head Teacher if they are uncomfortable with the location(s) learners are logging in from.

*A learner speaks or behaves inappropriately in a video-conferencing or live-streaming lesson/session – how do I react?*

All the normal standards of behaviour apply in the online classroom. Although learners will not be in a normal classroom environment, where possible, issues should be dealt with in the same way as they would have been if the incident had taken place in a normal classroom environment. Seek advice from your school or setting’s senior leadership team if required.

*A learner shares something inappropriate on their screen – what do I do?*

Practitioners can remove learners if they are behaving inappropriately. To remove someone in Microsoft Teams – open the participant list and click the X beside the name of the person you want to remove. To remove someone in Google Meet please follow these instructions.

On the right, go to People.

Point to the person, and then click Back arrow.

Click Remove.

If something inappropriate is shared on the screen, practitioners should end the lesson/session as soon as possible and raise the issue with the Designated Safeguarding Person. All learners in the room can then be contacted as soon as possible after the event to inform them of what happened, and what the arrangements are for future lessons/sessions.

As per safeguarding guidelines, the practitioner must write a full account and record in the usual way.

*What do I do if learners log on to the lesson/session dressed inappropriately?*

This should be dealt with in the same way as it would be in a face-to-face classroom setting and also in accordance with the agreed rules (Appendix 2). Setting clear expectation at the outset should help reduce this.

*A learner asks for a one-to-one online chat about a serious issue that is concerning them. What is the protocol for that?*

Supporting a learner must be a priority for the member of staff. Where a learner needs to discuss a serious issue, this can be undertaken in line with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

*A practitioner sees or hears something during online contact which causes them concern.*

If during online contact with a learner a practitioner sees or hears anything in the background that causes them concern, or if the learner’s behaviour causes them concern, they must refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Person and follow their school's usual safeguarding policy.