

Maintaining Care, Support and Privacy in UCDSB Remote Learning Programs

Table of Contents

1. Our Ongoing Commitment	1
2. UCDSB Code of Conduct – Policy 124	1
Purposes of the Code	1
3. Appropriate Use of Technology – Policy 301.....	2
4. Safe Schools – Policy 430	2
5. Student Discipline – Policy 126	3
6. Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom and School – Policy 303	3
7. Distance Learning Guidelines for Privacy and Security.....	3
UCDSB Platforms	4
Be mindful of footprints	4
Recording and screenshots require notice/permission	4
Keep your personal privacy in mind when choosing where to sit during video conferencing and when taking photos or videos.....	5
Can others in my home join in?	5
8. Video Conferencing Guidelines for Students and Families.....	5
Preparing for your video meeting	5
Understand the tool.....	5
Get permission	5
Check the invite.....	6
Appropriate Clothing.....	6
Check the technology.....	6
Choose a quiet area.....	6
Check the lighting.....	6
Check the camera framing	6
Check your background.....	6
During a video conference/meeting	6
Be ready	7
Troubleshoot.....	7
Listen for expectations	7
Look at the camera.....	7
Say goodbye	7
After the conference – follow up	7
9. Ontario College of Teachers - Video-Conferencing Guidelines.....	7

Ways to connect with learners using video conferencing	7
Communicating with students, parents and guardians	8
10. Microsoft Office – Keeping students safe while using Teams for Distance Learning	9
11. Closing.....	10

1. Our Ongoing Commitment

The Upper Canada District School Board has factored in the key requirements of privacy, security and safety online as part of its focus on 21st Century learning experiences for students. Over time, this has been relevant in asynchronous learning in our secondary school diploma credit programs (such as Day-School Online Learning and Summer Semester), in the use of internet resources during the school day and in our District-Wide Timetable Synchronous eLearning Pilot Project. Most recently, a sudden shift to synchronous and asynchronous learning as part of the UCDSB “learning-at-home” strategy when the province closed all schools in Ontario due to the COVID 19 pandemic from March 2020 to June 2020 caused us to further build upon our established practice. Our UCDSB privacy, security, and online safety commitments and practices can be found in the policies and resources compiled in this document for your review. These are the current tools at our disposal to ensure safe and engaging online learning opportunities for our students and we will continue to respond promptly to emerging realities as technology applications evolve and grow.

2. UCDSB Code of Conduct – Policy 124

With the **Character Always** initiative as foundation, it is the policy of the Upper Canada District School Board, to promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship and to provide the framework for policies related to student discipline, bullying prevention, student and staff safety, respectful working and learning environments, and workplace harassment.

Each school will develop a Code of Conduct which will be explained and reviewed at regular intervals with all members of the school community including community partners and volunteers.

The UCDSB Code of Conduct and school Codes of Conduct will apply to all board and school related activities and events and will be available to the public upon request.

Purposes of the Code

- To ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority are treated with respect and dignity.
- To promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community.
- To maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.
- To encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict.
- To promote the safety of people in the schools.
- To discourage the use of alcohol, restricted drugs, non-medicinal cannabis, and illegal drugs.

The Upper Canada District School Board Code of Conduct and this policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy reviews conducted by the Board's Policy Committee.

3. Appropriate Use of Technology – Policy 301

It is the policy of the Upper Canada District School Board to encourage clear and effective communication by all trustees, staff, students and representatives using a variety of accepted digital tools and on-line technology, including the internet, email, text messaging, video conferencing applications, and social media.

Use of digital communication must, like all other forms of communication, meet tests of credibility, privacy, authority and accountability. All students are expected to use on-line technology, (including social media) in a responsible, respectful and lawful manner, which must follow all relevant federal and provincial legislation, as well as the school and school board's Code of Conduct.

As well, the Board views its staff as having a specific responsibility to model and teach digital citizenship. As such, all employees of the Upper Canada District School Board are expected to use any on-line technology, (including social media) in a responsible, respectful and lawful manner, which must be in compliance with all relevant federal and provincial legislation, professional guidelines, and Board policies and procedures.

4. Safe Schools – Policy 430

The Upper Canada District School Board is determined to provide a safe, caring, and secure environment for students and staff. To this end, the Upper Canada District School Board requires that the Director of Education take steps each year to actively contribute to this outcome.

The Director shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees for the implementation of the Board's policies, procedures and codes, developed to provide a safe school environment, including:

- creating and promoting a Code of Conduct outlining expectations for appropriate behavior for all school members when on school property, on school buses, or when participating in a school-sanctioned event;
- support for specific student-based events, activities, or organizations at the school, or throughout the school-district, that contribute to positive and inclusive school climate;
- access to professional resources for schools to support early intervention for students at risk of suspension or expulsion and, care for students impacted by a safe-school incident;
- administrative procedures that leads to the recommendation of the expulsion of a student by the Board whenever necessary to protect the safe environment at all our facilities;
- administrative procedures that leads to the suspension or dismissal of any staff member who threatens the safe environment of the school;

- cooperative liaison with police forces through the Police / School Board Protocol to facilitate protection and support as needed at each school, including the laying of charges against trespassers, students, or employees as necessary;
- each school principal/vice-principal shall consider the most appropriate response to address inappropriate behavior including the suspension of students for up to twenty (20) days for incidents that compromise the safety of students or staff, subject to all mitigating and other factors as required by the Education Act and as set out in Ontario Regulation 472 /07; and
- a monitoring system that facilitates reports to the Board as required on safe schools.

This policy is subject to annual review following the report by the Director of Education to the Board and Community on Safe Schools.

5. Student Discipline – Policy 126

It is important that all pupils have a safe, caring and accepting school environment in order to maximize their learning potential and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community.

A safe and caring learning community is one that takes a holistic approach, including opportunities for character development, respect for diversity, parent and community partnerships, and citizenship development.

Student discipline shall be in accordance with established Procedures which will subsequently be aligned with all relevant Legislation and Ministry of Education directives.

6. Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom and School – Policy 303

In recognition of their differing interests, abilities, personalities and learning preferences, the Upper Canada District School Board encourages its students to select and use the supplies, equipment, devices and other resources they need to learn effectively at school and at home.

The Upper Canada District School Board supports its students by providing an environment that allows students to bring supplies, equipment, devices and other resources of their own into the school and classroom in a way consistent with Upper Canada District School Board policies and values.

As directed by the Ministry of Education – Personal electronic devices will not be permitted in the classroom with the following exemptions:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator;
- for health and medical purposes;
- to support special education needs.

7. Distance Learning Guidelines for Privacy and Security

The UCDSB provides this guideline to support educators, students and families to teach and learn in virtual environments while respecting personal privacy.

In addition to the **UCDSB's Appropriate Use of Technology Policy 301** and **UCDSB Code of Conduct**, students are required to follow this guideline when participating in both "live" (synchronous) classroom activities and those that allow students to contribute as they are available (asynchronous classroom activities).

The UCDSB also expects that parents/guardians will support the implementation of this guideline to facilitate their child's use of technology.

Educators will monitor classroom activities to ensure alignment with UCDSB's expectations for privacy and information security.

In addition, they will address any concerns directly with students and their parents/guardians, as appropriate.

Failure to respect this guideline document may result in the suspension of online classroom privileges and/or suspension/expulsion in accordance with the UCDSB Code of Conduct.

UCDSB Platforms

To ensure privacy and security for both students and staff, teachers are directed to use UCDSB approved platforms for distance learning. As all staff transition to only using UCDSB approved platforms, teachers must inform parents/guardians if the tool they are currently using is not board approved and provide clarity regarding the privacy policy and any inherent risks in using this tool.

Parents/guardians are advised to take this opportunity to ask questions and become informed about the tools being used.

Be mindful of footprints

Teaching and learning online can contribute to the creation of digital footprints. Teachers and parents/guardians can support students to make informed decisions about what and with whom to share information online. For this reason, staff and students/parents should review the privacy policy of any additional web app before use.

Efforts should be made to reduce the personal information that is shared online. Platforms that do not require registration and do not collect personal information are preferred. Where possible, students should use pseudonyms. Students should not enable geo-tracking, not post photos and refuse the implementation of Cookies.

Recording and screenshots require notice/permission

Educators can only record online learning activities for pedagogical or evaluation purposes and will not do so without prior notice to participants.

Participants may not take screenshots or use another device to record or copy classroom activities without asking the teacher first.

Unauthorized recording, screenshots or copying of teaching and learning materials, classroom chats, discussion forums, photos or videos is contrary to UCDSB policies and may violate another person's right to privacy or be contrary to copyright laws.

Keep your personal privacy in mind when choosing where to sit during video conferencing and when taking photos or videos

You are inviting the school into your home when you video conference or take a photo or video to share, so be mindful not to share private spaces like bedrooms, personal effects such as photographs, or other details you wouldn't normally share with other teachers and students.

Participate from shared spaces like a home office, kitchen, or living room if you can.

Can others in my home join in?

Synchronous (live) and non-synchronous video conferencing are intended to include the educator team and students.

When parents/guardians are providing support for the learner during a session, notice should be provided to the teacher. Educators will also provide notice if someone in their home must be present.

Efforts should be made by everyone to reduce distractions from other children or pets.

Parents/guardians who incidentally learn personal information about their learner's classmates while supporting online learning must keep such information confidential.

Synchronous learning is an effective strategy to facilitate ongoing, meaningful communication with students and families in support of continued student learning.

This Distance Learning Guideline provides all users with the tools to maintain safety and privacy in digital environments

8. Video Conferencing Guidelines for Students and Families

Preparing for your video meeting

For Students: Your teacher will send an invite to you or your family through your UCDSB email, D2L, or Microsoft Teams. Check what day and time you will be meeting. Ensure you only use your UCDSB account to access all tools. Do NOT use a personal email account.

For Families: The UCDSB supports the appropriate use of video conferencing and virtual meetings for educational purposes, with a focus on privacy and security issues. Virtual sessions offer a range of possibilities for program delivery to students including audio only collaboration, or audio and video collaboration for remote and distance learning.

Understand the tool

Before allowing your child to connect using a video conference tool, make sure you know the purpose and intent from the teacher. If necessary, participate in the first video conference to support your child and help them with the settings.

Get permission

For Students: If you are under 13, make sure you have your family's permission to participate. You do not need an account. The link from your teacher is all you need to connect through your UCDSB account.

For Families: Moving forward, you will be asked to allow your child to participate in future video conferences to support remote/virtual learning during this time. The teacher may be checking in with the class to see how they are doing and/or providing instruction.

You may choose to turn the camera off on the student's device, or cover it, if you are uncomfortable. Your child will still see the teacher video and hear the conversation.

Your child DOES NOT need to create an account to participate in a video conference. They should not sign-up for any video conference accounts without your consent.

Your teacher will be using Microsoft Teams, or the Virtual Classroom tool in D2L. Each of these must be tied to your child's Upper Canada DSB email account. Do NOT use private email accounts for access.

Using only Upper Canada email accounts inside UCDSB's approved platforms, helps protect people's privacy and helps keep our data secure.

Check the invite

You and/or your child will receive a link through their UCDSB email, or in Microsoft Teams or their D2L Online classroom.

Appropriate Clothing

For Students: If your teacher enables the camera option, you will be seen from your shoulders up. Please wear school appropriate clothes.

For Families: If your child has the camera enabled, please be sure they are dressed. This includes any family members that may run through behind your child's camera. Be aware of the surroundings of where the child will be participating in the home

Check the technology

Check the audio to make sure your speakers are not turned off. You will be able to check the mic when you get to the video conference program. Figure out how to turn on/off the mic and/or video in the conference tool.

Choose a quiet area

Try to find a place to set up the device where it is quiet with few distractions so you can engage in the conference. Try to keep other siblings and pets free from the conference.

Check the lighting

Make sure you have front lighting so your teacher and classmates can see your face. A window in the background may create shadows on your face and others will not be able to see you.

Check the camera framing

Make sure that your face and shoulders are centered in the frame of the camera.

Check your background

Make sure whatever is behind you, and visible to the camera, is simple and school appropriate.

During a video conference/meeting

- Be on time

- Understand Expectations
- Follow Instructions

Click on the time when your teacher has scheduled the video conference. You may want to join a couple minutes early, just to be safe,

Be ready

The program may ask you to do a few things after you click on the link. Some tools ask you to download a client or connect by browser. Use the browser option, if possible. It may ask to allow the microphone and camera, click on allow. If the teacher set up a waiting room, you will get a message that the host will open the meeting shortly. Be sure to check your microphone and sound before the conference.

Troubleshoot

You may have some technology difficulties. Check the settings on the video conference interface. The video and microphone icons usually have settings close by. Also, use the chat function to communicate with the teacher/others. You may be able to get help from the chat. Listen for Expectations! You may or may not be muted when entering the room. Check to see if your mic is on. The teacher will talk about the expectations and functions of the video conference tool.

Listen for expectations

Your child may be muted when entering the room. This means that nobody will be talking except the teacher. The teacher will talk about the expectations and functions of the video conference tool. It will be awesome! Please help your child with the expectations and how to use the tools.

Look at the camera

If you get a chance to talk, look into the camera on your device so your teacher and classmates feel like you are looking at them. Follow Directions! It is important that all participants follow the directions of your teacher to avoid distractions. Help your teacher and classmates enjoy this limited time together. It is good practice to turn your video and/or mic off when you are not speaking. This also allows the platform to work more easily for everyone.

Say goodbye

The teacher will end the video conference. This will close the video conference window. Make sure you understand the assignment/action (if any) from the video conference.

After the conference – follow up

The teacher may follow up with a survey or instructional materials. You certainly can connect with your teacher if you have feedback, questions or need clarification. We are all learning and want to hear your voice.

9. Ontario College of Teachers - Video-Conferencing Guidelines

Ways to connect with learners using video conferencing

Video conferencing adds a new dimension to the way we connect with friends and family.

When used effectively, it can also be a valuable tool in aiding instruction as it can enhance students' learning and keep them engaged while supporting their mental health, particularly when they are isolated from classmates, friends and extended family.

It can provide different learning opportunities for students including those with special needs.

However, advancements in video conferencing technology also mean an increased level of responsibility.

There are considerations with respect to technology, security, privacy, confidentiality, and consent.

Some of the most popular video conferencing platforms were not created for educational purposes. Hackers have been able to crash sessions and steal information, which raises concerns about student privacy and the security of information such as recorded videos.

The following is intended to assist you in exercising professional judgment to avoid potential risks and safely create your own virtual learning space.

Remember that everyone is in this together. We all learn at our own pace. Be patient with yourself and with the technology – and don't despair as you expand your ability of using technology.

Communicating with students, parents and guardians

1. Follow the policies, resources and advice provided by your employer, the Ministry of Education and the Ontario College of Teachers.
 - Use employer-approved digital platforms and technology.
 - Become familiar with each platform and its guidelines to ensure confidentiality and privacy.
 - Avoid using your personal email/personal texting and social media accounts for instructional purposes.
 - Employers should ensure that members know where to find their policies and protocols.
2. The same standards, behaviours and legal obligations that apply in the classroom also apply online.
 - Keep your language and tone professional.
 - Remember you are on camera. Assume that you are visible and can be heard throughout your session. Video conferencing enables you to acknowledge facial expressions, inflection and tone of voice.
 - Ask your students to participate from an appropriate room, for example a shared space like a home office, family room, or kitchen.
3. Maintain professional boundaries. When video conferencing is used, professional boundaries can begin to blur as students and teachers are participating from their homes. All communication exchanges with students, parents and guardians should be professional and:
 - occur during the regular instructional day;
 - be related to student learning or progress;
 - not be personal.
4. Use professional judgment to ensure that protocols are in place for the safety and privacy of participants.
 - Be aware of content ownership, student information and privacy settings.

- Let students and parents know that video sessions may be recorded – by you or other participants.
 - Keep in mind that video sessions could be recorded and shared broadly. While some platforms will not allow students and parents to record a session, other devices could be used to record it.
 - Record one-on-one sessions.
 - Be aware that chat features are not private and should not be used for side conversations.
 - Keep notes as you normally would.
5. If you become aware that students are being abused, neglected, cyberbullied, or are experiencing mental health issues, follow board protocols.

Please also refer to the College’s professional advisories:

- [Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media](#)
- [Supporting Students’ Mental Health](#)
- [Responding to the Bullying of Students](#)
- [Duty to Report](#)

Be forgiving of mistakes during a video conferencing session. It is a new communication platform. There are bound to be technical glitches.

Everybody is learning how best to use the tools at hand to try to continue to provide instruction in a less-than-perfect environment. Be patient with yourself, your students, with parents, and guardians.

Reference: <https://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/video-conferencing-guidelines>

10. Microsoft Office – Keeping students safe while using Teams for Distance Learning

“Learning online can be just as personal, engaging, and socially connected as learning in a classroom. Educators and teachers can stay in touch and help each other using Teams chats and can feel like they're meeting in person using live meetings.

However, online learning also requires educators and administrators to set up certain policies and restrictions to guard students' safety. These policies can prevent unauthorized users from gaining access to online meetings, can allow educators to quickly and easily remove inappropriate messages, and manage student participation in meetings.

This guide is designed to serve as a foundation for your educational institution's safety plan. We will update these recommendations regularly.”

For more detailed information regarding the safety features of Microsoft Teams, read [Keeping students safe while using meetings in Teams for distance learning](#).

11. Closing

Teachers, educators, students and families all play an important role in addressing privacy, security, and safety during online learning. Students know that our District's Code of Conduct applies to their being part of a learning experience in class or on-line and teachers continue to highlight the expectations and duties of pupils wherever the learning takes place. Parents confirmed the importance of supervising and supporting their children on-line at home as evidenced during synchronous learning activities in the period of school closure in the Spring of 2020. We look forward to continuing to develop and refine our practices so that UCDSB students develop the skills and competencies necessary for success as learners and citizens in our increasingly digitized world.