

# Privacy Considerations for Hybrid Learning 2021-2022



## Background

In accordance with the Ministry of Education and Public Health guidelines related to COVID-19 pandemic, York Region District School Board (YRDSB) will offer face-to-face and remote learning options for students during the 2021-2022 school year. Homeschools will review opportunities to build classes that are fully face-to-face or fully remote, however, classes may become hybrid at any point in the school year if required. In a hybrid class, the educator is teaching face-to-face and remote students simultaneously.

## Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) Notice

In accordance with the MFIPPA s.28(2) and under the Education Act and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 164- Requirements for Remote Learning, the YRDSB uses approved virtual learning environments to collect, use and process student information for the purpose of instruction, assessment and evaluation of students who are participating in remote and hybrid learning.

## Cyber Security, Privacy and Online Safety

Throughout this past school year, we have explored new ways for students to learn in online environments. As we open our schools to the new school year, protecting privacy, securing and preserving the dignity of staff and students are paramount. **All members of the school community, including parents/guardians, students and educators, play a role in promoting security, privacy and safety.**

All online activities are intended for learning purposes in educational settings. Board approved digital tools are used in face-to-face, fully remote and hybrid learning environments. These tools, as well as digital platforms will be used to support the inclusion of students who are learning from home. Therefore, the nature of remote and hybrid learning delivery may result in students' images, voices, or other personal information being collected, retained, or disclosed. For example, remote students may see family members of another student when they are within camera range. Similarly, family members or others may be able to view or hear students in class and/or online. Risks shall be mitigated as outlined below.

## Digital Security through Board Approved Platforms and Tools

The following virtual learning environments have been approved by YRDSB for use in hybrid and remote learning:

### Board Approved Digital Learning Platforms

- Google Classroom
- Desire to Learn (D2L)

### Board Approved Digital Tools

- Google Meet
- Google Chat
- Zoom (enterprise with enhanced security)

### Board Approved Digital Communication Tools

- Edsby (for communication and attendance management purposes (elementary schools))
- TeachAssist

These platforms and tools have been chosen because they enable two-way live, voice/video/text chat communication. The platforms have robust privacy policies as well as safety features for classroom use including host controls. Through the use of these platforms and educators being privacy conscious, secure virtual spaces can be created for students and staff to minimize the risk of inappropriate access or breach of student information.

Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)/Learning Management Systems (LMS) are secure. Access and functionality are restricted and controlled by the educator and the YRDSB. Educators will also be equipped with headsets and webcams to support effective use of the technology.

We recognize that students and staff will be returning in the fall having had very different pandemic experiences. It is critical that our online learning plans centre the voices of marginalized students and families and provide opportunities for them to actively participate in learning experiences that are meaningful, relevant and accessible. It is also essential that we seek to identify and address the barriers that exist for students and families who will be engaging with online learning platforms. Please contact the teacher or administrator if any barriers exist (e.g., technology, internet access).

## Instructional Practices

Educators will use instructional practices that protect privacy, security and student dignity. For example:

- muting their microphones when instructing or redirecting individual students;
- using a breakout room for individualized instruction for those learning remotely;
- being conscious of personal information that may be shared by students and redirect or caution as appropriate;
- considering the placement of the webcam and what can be seen;
- being vigilant and attentive to who may be logged in; and
- ensuring they are the last to leave the learning environment.

In an effort to create one learning community, educators may bring face-to-face and remote students together on screen to engage in instructional activities that allow student interaction, engagement and inclusion. Such activities support instruction and students' well-being.

Parents/guardians who have selected face-to-face learning and are concerned about their child participating in these activities are asked to discuss their concerns with the classroom teacher or administrator.

At times, teachers may record all or portions of a lesson for the purpose of student learning, assessment or future instruction. Key components of a period may need to be recorded when International Education students are enrolled in a class but may be learning remotely due to travel restrictions.

- The recorded material will be posted in the Google Classroom. Posting recorded components of a period will benefit many students as they review key concepts and strategies. No student pictures will be recorded.
- Zoom or Google Meet will be used for any recording purposes. Educators can record their lesson, screen or white/chalkboard and any speaker's voice while recording.

## Expectations for Technology Use and Behaviour During Remote and Hybrid Learning

Participation in synchronous sessions is limited to students only. Parents/Guardians may assist and support their child logging into or accessing learning platforms or digital tools. In all cases, parents are reminded of the importance of student independence in learning.

Students learning remotely should use both their audio and video when participating in collaborative activities in order to maximize connections with their peers and teacher(s) during Google Meet/Zoom Sessions. The use of a blurred background or stock image for a virtual background is recommended. Special considerations or accommodations may be discussed with the teacher.

When participating in remote and hybrid learning, **students and families** will:

- Use only [Board Approved Platforms and Synchronous Learning Tools](#);
- Follow [YRDSB Appropriate Use of Technology Policy and Procedures](#);
- Adhere to all rules of conduct and behaviour for the regular classroom, as they also apply to the remote and hybrid classroom, including but not limited to:
  - participating in ways that are inclusive, considerate and respectful to all;
  - not engaging in incidents of discrimination or hate, including but not limited to anti-Indigenous racism, ableism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, classism, homophobia, Islamophobia, sexism, transphobia; and
  - immediately reporting any racist, hateful, discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour to a teacher or trusted school staff member.

When participating in remote and hybrid learning, families and students will NOT:

- Share passwords, login credentials (username);
- Share/distribute links to Google Meet and Zoom sessions provided by the teacher;
- Record any aspect of a Google Meet or Zoom session (including pictures, voices or video) using internal or external recording devices;
- Distribute/post any recorded, copied or distributed materials in any way, including to all social media platforms;
- Take photos or screenshots of anything other than when given explicit permission or direction by the teacher to do so (e.g., a visual used for instructional purposes that won't be reposted later); and
- Edit or manipulate instructional materials in any way.

**Failure to comply with these expectations may involve student discipline which could include suspension or expulsion.**

FAQs related to hybrid and online learning can be found on the [Board website](#).

## School Day, Learning Model and Video and Audio

We are thrilled to welcome students back face-to-face in the fall and are anticipating that the vast majority of families will choose this option.

### School Day

- Students in elementary schools will follow a regular school day and will engage in 300 minutes of learning, as well as recess and lunch. Regular start and end times will be used.
- Students in secondary schools will engage in 300 minutes of learning each day. Students will be taught two courses in 150 minute periods per day, rotating to two other classes the following week. Weekly rotations will continue until the end of the semester, or until the Ministry of Education gives clearance for school boards to transition to a standard four period day.

## Learning Model

- All classes have the possibility of being hybrid, meaning students learning remotely from home will be taught by the same teacher as students in face-to-face classrooms.
- Home schools will strive to build as many classes as possible that are fully face-to-face, but all families need to be prepared that a class may be hybrid, meaning the educator is teaching both the face-to-face students and the remote students simultaneously. Any class may become hybrid if required at some point in the year.
- Students learning remotely will access learning from the teacher's digital classroom (Google Classroom or D2L) and will engage in both synchronous and asynchronous learning throughout the day.
- Where possible and appropriate, at different points in the day, students may be working independently, with a partner, in a small group or as a full class depending on the nature of the learning task or lesson, the number of students in the class who are learning remotely, as well as individual student needs.
- Wherever possible, based on privacy considerations and access to technology, teachers will strive to create one learning environment.

## Video and Audio

- Students learning remotely should use both their audio and video when participating in collaborative activities in order to maximize connections with their peers and teacher(s) during Google Meet/Zoom sessions. The use of a blurred background or stock image for the virtual background is recommended. Special considerations or accommodations may be discussed with the teacher.
- Educators may set up activities and spaces where face-to-face and remote students are working together in pairs or small groups, e.g., small group activities to support collaborative problem solving. Students will have knowledge of specific areas of the classroom where the camera will usually be pointed, e.g., front or corner of the classroom.
- Educators will be equipped with headsets and a web-camera for the purpose of supporting remote learners to see and hear lessons; the web-camera will generally point toward the teacher and the whiteboard/chalkboard and at times, may capture the voices/images of students learning remotely or face-to-face for learning purposes.
- Cameras will not be permanently mounted to broadcast the full classroom.