



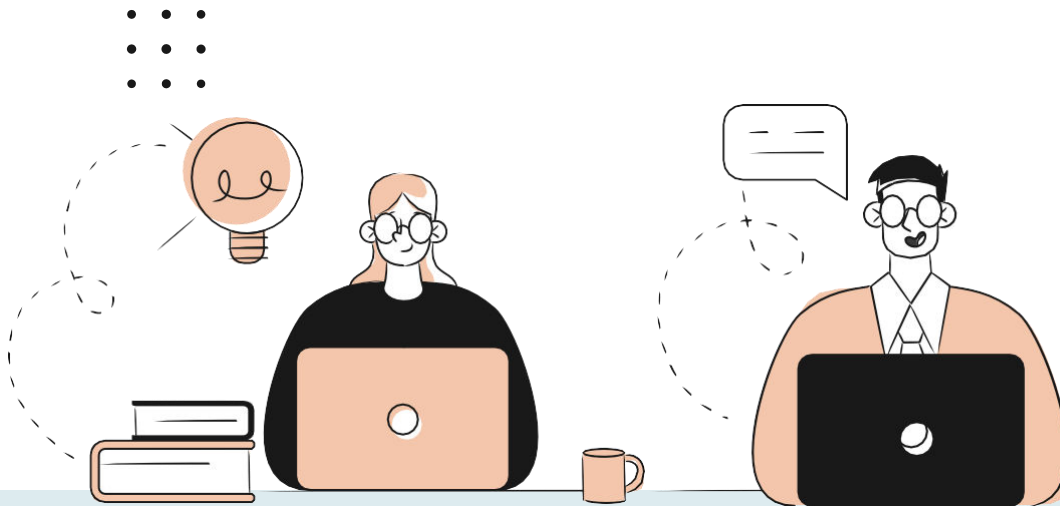
**CARLOW COLLEGE**  
ST. PATRICK'S



# Wellbeing Handbook

# 1. Purpose of Wellbeing Handbook and Initiatives

The purpose of this handbook is to promote the College's commitment to Workplace Wellbeing. Carlow College, St Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) recognises the importance of employee wellbeing and that a work environment that fosters and supports employee wellbeing is hugely beneficial for all concerned. The College is committed to taking a proactive approach to this area and to regularly review its approach in line with internal and external developments, which may affect employee wellbeing.



## 2. Definitions

Carlow College defines Workplace Wellbeing as any workplace health promotion activity or organisational policy designed to support a culture of healthy behaviour and attitudes in the workplace and to improve health outcomes for employees. This handbook applies to all employees of the College, full time, part time and temporary.

Carlow College is committed to an inclusive education for all, which welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for staff to develop to their full potential. As a result this:

- Enables the College to fulfil its caring, educational and legal responsibilities to staff;
- Heightens awareness and increases understanding across the college community about mental health and wellbeing issues;
- Promotes informed and constructive attitudes to mental health and wellbeing issues;
- Encourages a partnership approach, with shared responsibility, between the College and its staff, with respect to dealing with mental health and wellbeing issues;

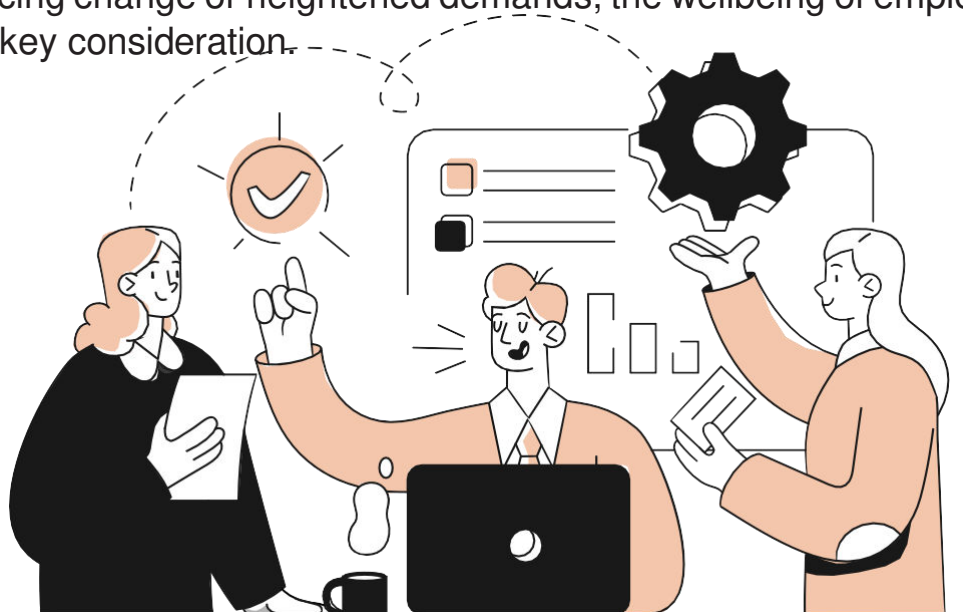
- Follows international best practice guidelines in the area of mental health and wellbeing, including the provision of appropriate and timely support services for staff and students;
- Provides guidance and, where appropriate, promotes training to ensure College staff are aware of the emergency procedures, the support services available and know how to make appropriate referrals and interventions for students they encounter with mental health difficulties;
- Facilitates communication and cooperation as appropriate between the relevant College departments and services on matters relating to mental health and wellbeing;
- Respects the rights of each individual and
- Defines the right to confidentiality within specified guidelines.

### 3. Scope of Wellbeing Handbook and Initiatives

The following principles underpin the College's approach to employee wellbeing:

- Employee Involvement – the College is committed to involving staff. This will be achieved through seeking employee feedback and through involvement in the design and deployment of particular employee wellbeing initiatives. Human Resources will work with line managers in this area and any individual employee who wishes to discuss wellbeing issues and initiatives may approach their line manager and/ or Human Resources for a confidential discussion on their own wellbeing in the workplace.
- The design, delivery and review will have the full support of the senior management team.
- Communication – the College is committed to communicating its initiatives on wellbeing to employees and to ensure that staff are aware of the supports available. Employees are encouraged to bring suggestions and feedback to the attention of line management and Human Resources.
- The Human Resources Office will ensure that responsibility for the monitoring and management of employee wellbeing is considered when developing staff related policies.

- The College will regularly review available data to identify any areas where a renewed focus on employee wellbeing is warranted. This may include a review of college-wide absenteeism/attendance data or actively sourcing employee feedback on specific issues via focus groups, staff surveys that will be conducted through the Human Resources Office or line management structure. Where the College is experiencing change or heightened demands, the wellbeing of employees affected will be a key consideration.



## 4. Roles and Responsibilities



### Human Resources will:

- Hold responsibility for this Handbook.
- Work collaboratively with both Line Managers and staff in ensuring that all information is up to date and correct.
- Ensure that Line Managers and staff promote and engage with wellbeing in Carlow College.
- Answer any initiatives related queries from staff and Line Managers.



### **Line Managers are:**

- Responsible for ensuring that both they and their staff understand the Handbook and related policies and procedures
- Required to consult and collaborate with Human Resources as defined within this Handbook
- Responsible for providing support to employees where applicable.
- Responsible for actively engaging and supporting wellbeing initiatives at Carlow College.



### **All college staff members are:**

- Responsible for ensuring that they understand and support, and observe the Wellbeing Handbook, as well as being involved in Wellbeing initiatives.
- Encouraged to actively engage, support and suggest wellbeing initiatives for the College.

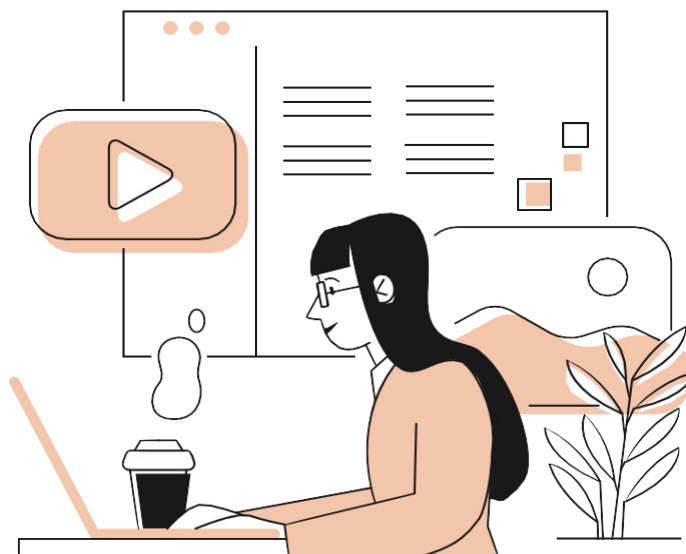
## **5. Related Documentation**

- Appendix 1: Employee Assistance Programme
- Appendix 1.1: Wellbeing Initiatives at Carlow College

## 6. Referenced Policies

- Equality Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Performance Management and Development Policy
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Benefits Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Remote Working Guidelines
- Menopause Policy
- Flexi-Time Policy
- Hybrid Working Policy

*\*Note: The College have an array of policies and procedures that support staff, which are available through the Staff Gateway and the BrightHR system. These policies should be read in conjunction with the above.*



## 7. Monitoring and Review

The Wellbeing Handbook and Initiatives will be reviewed on an annual basis by the HR Office to reflect any legislative/organisational changes. Staff will be informed through regular email communication and through the staff portal regarding any updates to it.



## 8. Queries

Any queries or requests in relation to wellbeing should be directed to your Line Manager in the first instance. For further information or queries in relation to the above, you can contact the Human Resources Office at:

[hr@carlowcollege.ie](mailto:hr@carlowcollege.ie)

T: 059 91 53 293 / 059 91 53 288

# Appendix 1: Employee Assistance Programme

## Employee Assistance Programme

From time to time staff may face certain challenges in their work and home life that are difficult to deal with. To support staff, and to foster a culture of wellbeing at Carlow College, an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to staff. The EAP has numerous guides, webinars and information pertaining to health and wellbeing. The Human Resources Office will regularly communicate wellbeing information to staff via email. The College receives an annual wellbeing calendar that covers monthly themes including Self-Care, Mental Health Awareness, and Diversity/Inclusion/Equality. The HR team send out monthly communications where staff can access the pre-recorded webinars and monthly newsletters. The EAP plays a significant role in the College's commitment to employee wellbeing, and it is expected that all College staff support and engage in this commitment. The EAP is provided by VHI Corporate Solutions and is a confidential and specialist information and counselling service. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Family members of staff can also avail of these service.

Employee probationary periods do not apply to the Employee Assistance Scheme. It is open to all employees on commencement of employment. Employees can refer to the Employee Benefits Handbook for further detailed information, which can be accessed through the Staff Gateway and BrightHR system.

The EAP cover a full spectrum of issues such as:



### How can I access the EAP?

You can free-phone 1800 995 955 or

Email an enquiry to the specialist information service: [eap@vhics.ie](mailto:eap@vhics.ie) or access the following link <https://vhi.healthhero.com> (Username **Carlow Col**).

Additional information is available through the Benefits Policy and Benefits Handbook



# Appendix 1.1: Wellbeing Initiatives at Carlow College



## Introduction

Central to Carlow College's mission and vision is the expansion of its supportive and inclusive community. Safeguarding mental health and wellbeing is a concern for all members of the College community, and all members share in the responsibility of promoting an inclusive environment, which supports the promotion, protection, and restoration of mental health and wellbeing. To promote Health and Safety and Wellbeing the College provides mandatory training, in addition to supportive training such as Dignity and Respect Training, Resilience Training and Induction Training. HR will continue to schedule this training as necessary. The College is committed to undertaking employee surveys to assess how the needs of employees align with college practices.

As detailed in our **Benefits Handbook** and **Employee Handbook**, the following are just some of the ways The College encourages the promotion of healthy living for our staff:

There are many opportunities to become more physically active at Carlow College. Daily exercise can be challenging, especially if the job you have is mostly sedentary. Try a '**Walk & Talk**' meeting with another staff member; or instead of meeting over coffee, try taking a 15-minute walk outside to discuss your business.

The **Bike to Work Scheme** is a tax incentive scheme, which aims to encourage employees to cycle to and from work. Under the scheme, employers can pay for bicycles and bicycle equipment for their employees and the employee pays back through a salary sacrifice arrangement of up to 12 months.

## TaxSaver

This scheme lets you purchase annual TaxSaver commuter tickets from Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and Luas through Carlow College, and takes the stress out of driving to work every day as well as reducing traffic congestion.

## Healthy Eating

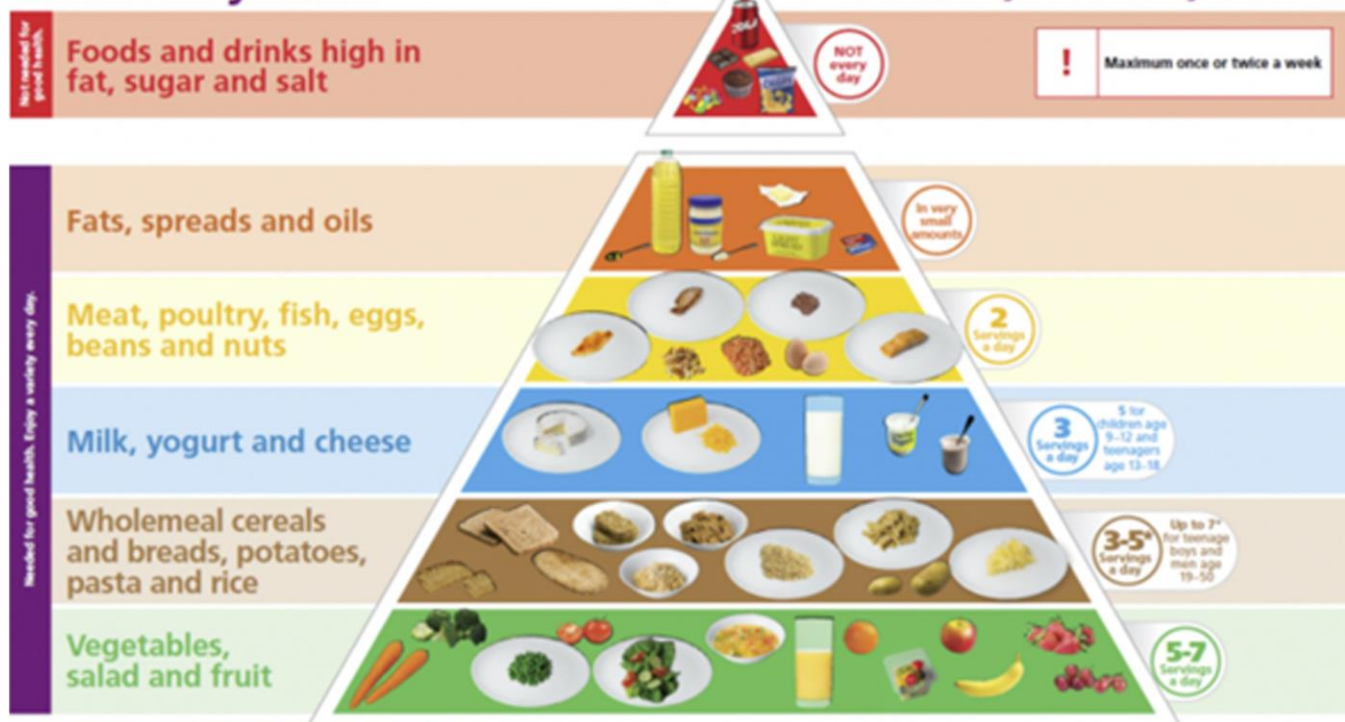
The Dining Hall offers subsidised food during the academic year, and provides a range of meals such as healthy breakfast and dinners, as well as light snacks.

The key messages for healthy eating are as follows:




- Limit high fat, sugar and salt foods from the top shelf of the Pyramid to no more than once or twice a week – with suggested servings of no more than 100 calories (small un-iced bun, ½ bar chocolate, 2 plain biscuits, 1 scoop ice-cream)
- Eat more fruit and vegetables, at least 5 to 7 servings a day – aim for half your plate at each mealtime, and have a piece of fruit as a snack if hungry between meals

## The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



\*Daily Servings Guide -- wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active					Inactive			
	Child (5-10)	Teenager (11-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)		Teenager (11-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)
	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Source: Department of Health, December 2016.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day -- water is best

**Get Active!**  
To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

For examples of meal plans, and a more detailed version of the food pyramid please see <http://www.healthylireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/>

## Healthy Mind

Meditation can be done via our College Chaplain in a quiet, safe space. Chaplaincy services are available to staff and offer pastoral and spiritual guidance. Some Tips on creating a Healthy Mind:

1. For Work Stress and Anxiety Relief, try this [10-minute mindfulness meditation](#)
2. [TED Talks based on Mindfulness](#)
3. Try finding a calming music playlist that you like; many are freely available on YouTube.

## No Smoking

It is the policy of Carlow College that the majority of its workplace premises are smoke free at all times and that both employees and learners have a right to work in a smoke-free environment. However, the College does provide a designated smoking area. In addition, the organisation also prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes in the workplace.

To get help with quitting for good, the HSE has a Workshop on Cessation available [HERE](#) or you can contact:

Help can also be obtained from the EAP

Some of the most common reasons that people might want to quit smoking are listed below.

- To improve their health and reduce risk of life threatening diseases.
- To have more money in their pocket.
- To regain control over their life – smoking won't dictate your daily routine.
- To improve their image, have better skin, teeth, hair and nicer smelling clothes.
- To improve their self-esteem and to be better able to deal with the daily stresses of life.

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/quit-smoking/reasons-to-quit-smoking/reasons-to-quit-smoking.html>

The College Nurse is also a source of information and support for smoking cessation.

### **Self -Care Products**

The College will provide self -care products in the women's staff bathrooms which will consist of sanitary towels, tampons, deodorant and cleansing wipes. This initiative is aimed at supporting women in the workplace who have recently returned from maternity leave, and those who may be entering the menopausal stages. This is in support of the College's recently produced Menopause Policy.

The purpose of the Menopause Policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where managers and employees can discuss any issues associated with the menopause, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed. The menopause is a natural process and for many can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. With the right support, it can be much better. Whilst many may not suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

### **Hybrid Working**

Currently there are temporary guidelines in place to allow for remote/hybrid working. These temporary guidelines are currently being reviewed with the view of more flexible working arrangements, allowing for a greater work/life balance. More information and all related documents can be found on the Staff Gateway.

### **One to One Meetings**

Regular One to One meetings with your Line Manager allow even shy employees to share their hopes, concerns, and ideas in a safe environment; as well as enabling more balanced, mutually active conversations than big meetings.

### **Parents and Guardians at Work**



Carlow College recognises the importance of supporting parents in balancing work and family life. With this in mind, there are numerous policies and information concerning Maternity and Paternity Leave, Adoptive Leave, Parental Leave and Parent's Leave, and Carer's Leave. The College has recently introduced a trial Flexi-Time, and core-working hours to allow working parents/guardians to have increased flexibility in their working day. HR are available to coach and advise you on the supports designed to provide a positive environment for staff availing of family leave. These supportive policies are available on the Staff Gateway and BrightHR.

## **Mental Health**

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which an individual recognises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to their community.

Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world.

The 'turn2me' service with funding from Sláintecare, offers adult counselling and peer support services to adults and young people aged 12 plus. The turn2me online platform is a purpose-built secure platform that delivers mental health services online in Ireland. It is available for anyone who self-identifies as a frontline worker – from healthcare professionals to those working in retail, and from teachers to tradespeople. To find out more visit <https://turn2me.ie/>

## **Stress**

The College has a duty to have safe systems of work in place. This includes supervision, communication, training, breaks, supports, respectful behaviour and management. Where employees feel added stress from the location of their work, the employer should act reasonably. As such, where stress complaints do arise, these should be met with considered, systematic and appropriate control measures.

## **Occupational Health**

Occupational Health seeks to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of employees, with the purpose of ensuring a supportive relationship between an employee's work and health. Having access to specialist occupational health practitioners is crucial. The Occupational Health Practitioner, Medwise, acts as an advisory service rather than a treatment service and has specialised training and experience. Carlow College actively engages with Medwise, when necessary, to ensure the on-going health and wellbeing of staff

## **Equality and Diversity in the Workplace**

Carlow College recognises the particular contributions to the achievement of its educational purposes that can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. It seeks to attract and retain the best talent to the College, and to attract a diverse range of learners to enrich and diversify the College's

learning environment; The College reaffirms its commitment to gender and equality in higher education through its membership of Advance HE and adherence to the Athena SWAN Ireland Charter and Principles. The Athena SWAN Charter is a framework which is used to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research. Carlow College's successful application for the Athena SWAN Bronze Award is testament to the College's commitment in this area.

The College is also represented on the Higher Education Authority (HEA) National Committee for Equality and Diversity.

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1 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>



# CARLOW COLLEGE

## ST. PATRICK'S



# 1

## Information

Employees are working at various locations and times due to hybrid working, flexitime and other arrangements, and are using both personal and work devices. The purposes of these Communication Guidelines are to assist employees to stay in touch with each other and achieve a work-life balance.

The College continues to be committed to policies and procedures which support flexibility in the workplace and is in the process of developing a Remote (Hybrid) Working Policy. This will occur over Semester 2 2022. An area highlighted by the subgroup is the importance of effective communication and methods.

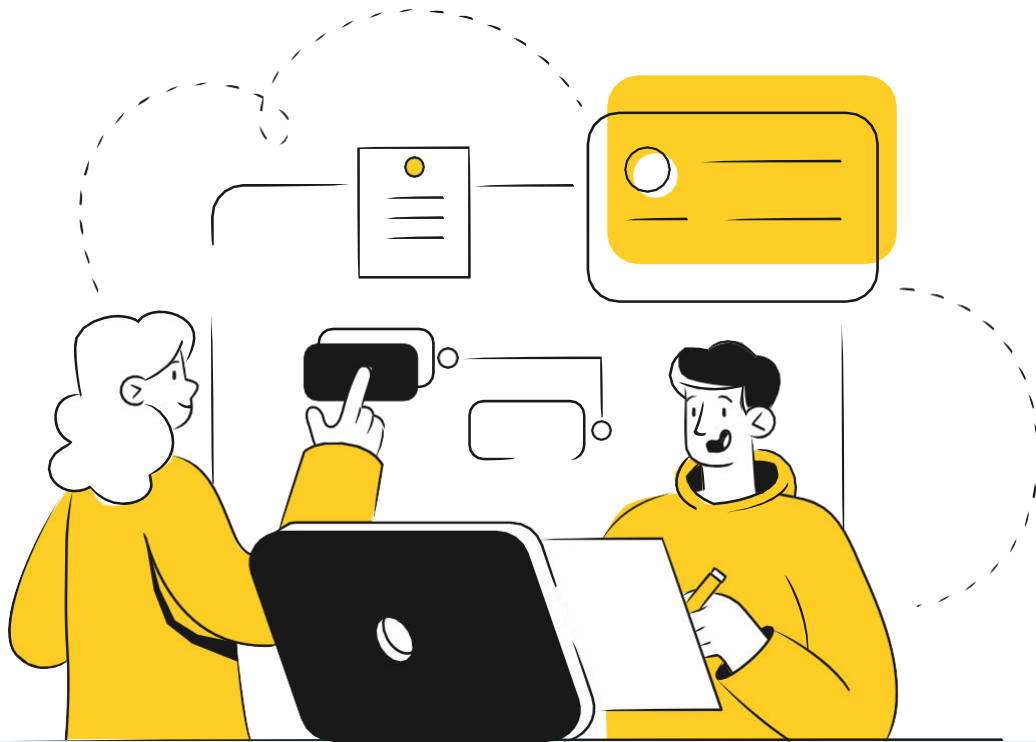


# 2

## Key Communication

- All employees are to ensure Teams is open for contact purposes.
- Unless a matter is urgent, employees should not be contacted by call/phone message outside their working hours.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring that they are contactable during working hours and responding to communications in full within three working days.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that they are in regular contact with employees they manage.
- Microsoft Teams is the primary tool for calls/messages. Employees should only be contacted via their personal phone where they have already agreed to this method of communication, or as a last resort.





### 3

## Keeping in

Employees are working at various locations and times due to hybrid working, flexitime and other arrangements, and are using both personal and work devices. The purposes of these Communication Guidelines are to assist employees to stay in touch with each other and achieve a work-life balance.

The College continues to be committed to policies and procedures which support flexibility in the workplace and is in the process of developing a Remote (Hybrid) Working Policy. This will occur over Semester 2 2022. An area highlighted by the subgroup is the importance of effective communication and methods.

### 4

## Microsoft

- All employees are to be signed into Teams when working.
- Use the status function within your Teams profile to show when you are available / busy / away / offline.
- Teams is the primary communication tool and should normally be used to call employees who are working remotely. Employees may be contacted via their personal phone number if they have agreed to this. It should, however, be noted that it may sometimes be necessary for the College to contact employees using a personal phone number even if this agreement does not exist (e.g. during leave or in an urgent situation); the Right to Disconnect Policy will apply, where relevant.

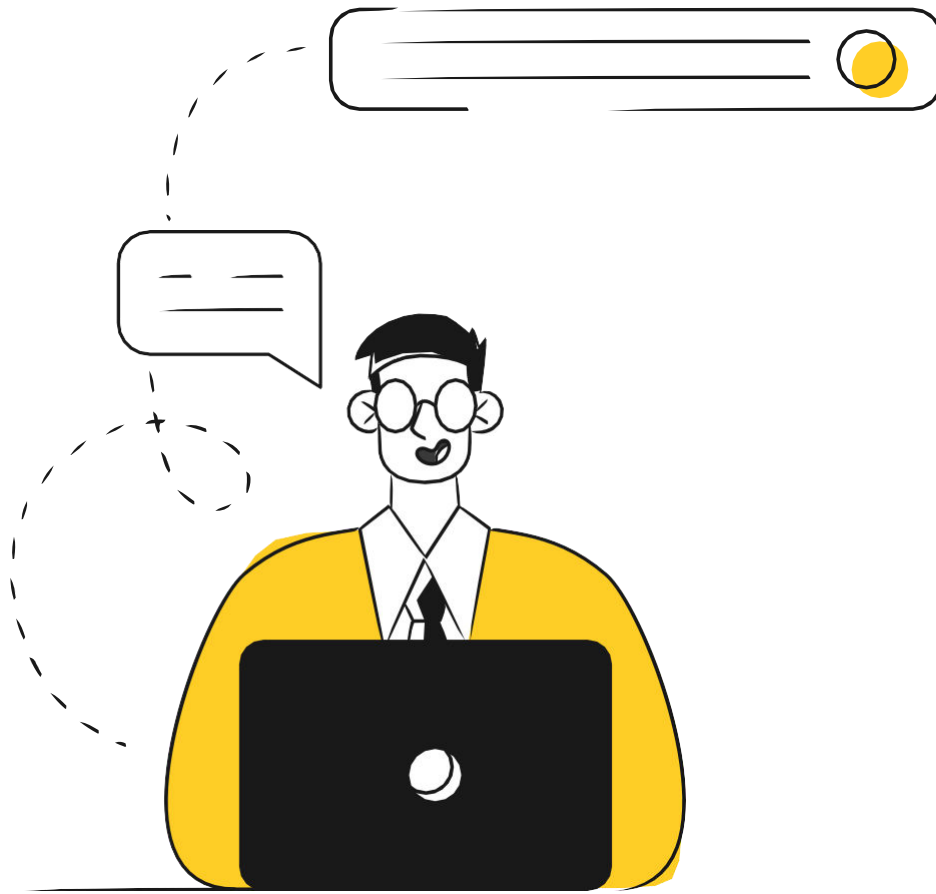
- If your call is likely to take more than 10 minutes, request a meeting instead of making an unannounced call.
- Staff are to use the diary function within Teams/Outlook to list their meetings and classes. This is to facilitate use of the Scheduling Assistant function to schedule meetings.
- To facilitate communication, turn your camera on during calls and meetings unless there is a legitimate reason to turn it off (e.g., poor broadband speed).
- If you only need to send a brief message, use the chat function in Teams instead of email.
- A Microsoft Teams app is available from app stores for any employee who wishes to add it to their phone.



## 5

## Communication

- Use a communication method that is appropriate to the subject.
- Complex and sensitive situations are more suited to conversation than email.
- Do not schedule a meeting if an email will suffice.
- Set the importance level of emails appropriately (e.g., do not overuse the 'high importance' status).
- Work-related communications are subject to relevant College policies, including the Social Media and Social Networking Policy for Staff, Right to Disconnect and Communication policies. These policies are available on the Staff Gateway.
- When communicating about work matters, even using personal devices, the content of messages and other data is potentially accessible under Data Protection and Freedom of Information laws etc.
- Personal phones should not be used to send phone messages containing confidential information or personal data. Official College systems / devices should be used for such information sharing and employees should be mindful of other relevant College policies.



## 6

## Working in

- Use a communication method that is appropriate to the subject.
- Complex and sensitive situations are more suited to conversation than email.
- Do not schedule a meeting if an email will suffice.
- Set the importance level of emails appropriately (e.g., do not overuse the 'high importance' status).
- Work-related communications are subject to relevant College policies, including the Social Media and Social Networking Policy for Staff, Right to Disconnect and Communication policies. These policies are available on the Staff Gateway.
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## 7

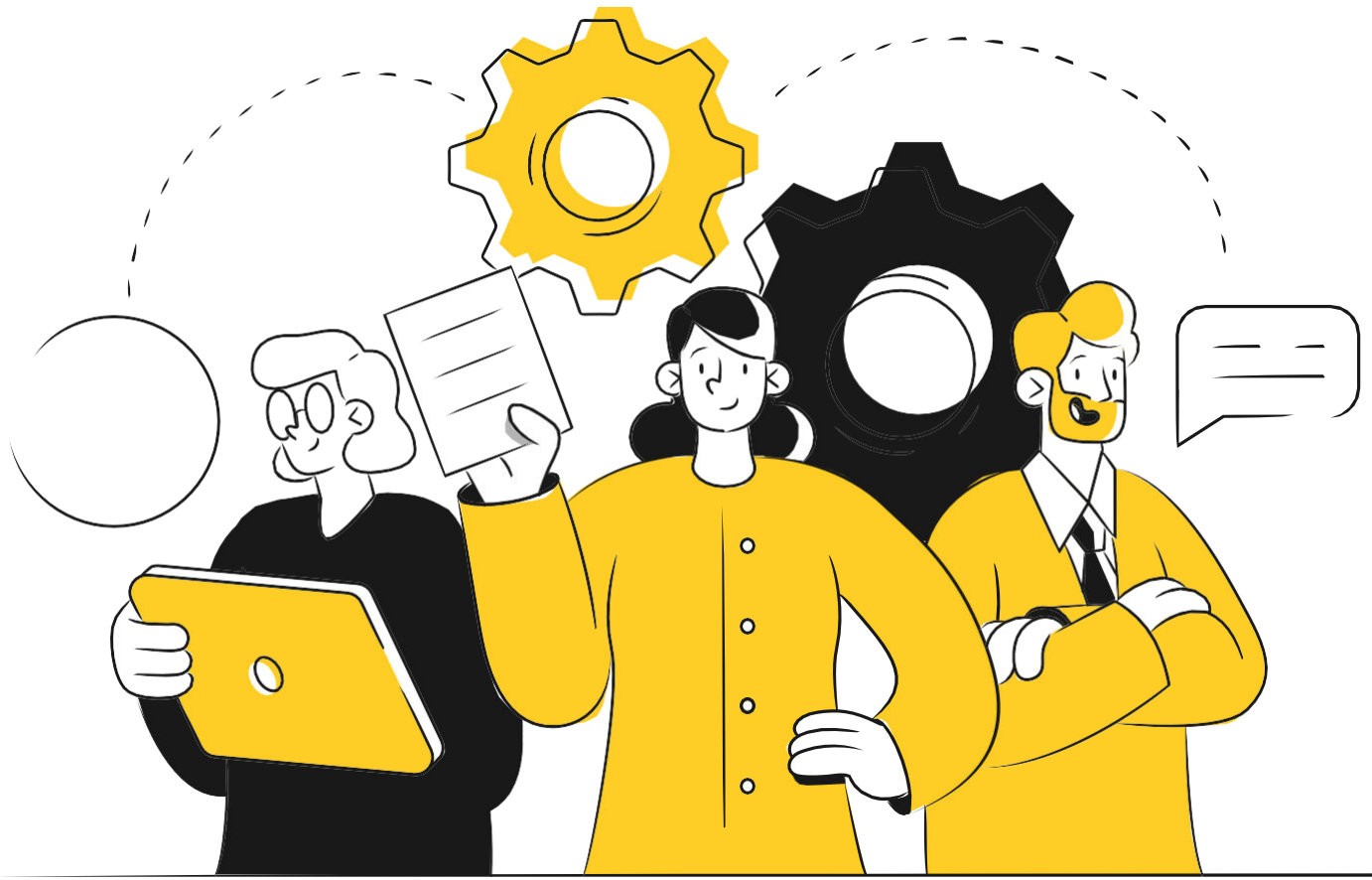
## Meeting

- The standard length of a meeting should be 30 minutes unless there is an identified need for it to be longer.
- Send an agenda if you are organising a meeting.
- Only invite those who are required to attend.
- Be mindful of varied working hours when organising meetings.
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

## 8

## Outside of Working

- Unless a matter is urgent, employees should not be contacted by phone (call, SMS, WhatsApp etc.) when they are not working.
- Use an 'out of office' message when you are on leave and note your date of return. Provide the name and contact details of any colleague who can assist during your leave.
- Use the 'delay send' function in Outlook for emails sent outside of your recipient's working hours so that they arrive during working hours.



## 9

## Local

- Nothing in these Guidelines prevents employees sharing their personal phone numbers with colleagues and coming to a local arrangement about how they communicate with each other.
- Where any local arrangement is in place about the use of a personal phone number, please now reconfirm that all involved parties are satisfied to continue with it.
- Employees may change their communication preferences regarding use of their personal phone number.