



# The Federation of Mowden Schools (Academy Trust)

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Dear Parents and Children

## Google Classroom – Instructions: Please Keep Safe

### Remote Learning Platform for Homework and in Case of Lockdown

Starting after half term, teachers will begin to provide children with additional homework every week. Usually focusing on Maths and English, tasks will not be designed to take a long time, and will often require children to complete work associated with previous learning. Rather than sending homework as paper copies, and instead of using ParentMail as we did during lockdown, we will be using Google Classroom, an online learning platform. On top of using this platform to provide homework, it will also be used to communicate with children, teach them and set work if the class cannot attend school due to being in isolation.

I hope to explain a few of the features of the learning platform and how it will work in this letter but there will no doubt be a lot more for you to learn as we start using it.

We have chosen to use Google Classroom as our preferred platform, partly because the staff already use aspects of G:Suite and partly because we hope it will prove to be simple enough to use. G:Suite includes many different features: 'Gmail' for email; 'Docs' for word processing; 'Slides' for presenting; 'Meet' for virtual meetings; 'Drive' for storing your documents; along with 'Classroom' for your teacher to share work and tasks are all aspects of G:Suite with which you will become familiar.

Step 1 for us has been to set up email addresses for all the children in school. These addresses also work as the child's username when logging in to Google. The email address for your child is included in this letter along with their password. To login for the first time, go to the Google homepage and click on the sign in button at the top right of the screen. Please change this password as soon as possible to something both you and your child will be able to remember. Please make it a secure password and explain this to your child, but also keep a record of it somewhere as losing or forgetting it will cause us a bit of a headache.

To change the password, once you've signed in, click on the coloured circle (it may have an initial for your child or say G Suite) at the top right. From there, click 'Manage Your

Google Account' and then choose the Security option from the menu on the left hand side. Follow the 'Signing into Google' link in order to change the password.

Having access to emails is a big responsibility. Please talk to your child about how it works. Google Classroom will alert the children through email if a task has been provided. It will also remind you when work is due so it should be checked regularly. Children should be warned about the dangers associated with email, including junk emails, so please check regularly that your child is using it correctly. At school, we are able to access and suspend any accounts where we suspect it is being used inappropriately. Children need to be aware that any actions they take using the account will leave a trail.

## Google Classroom

The first time you access your G:Suite account, there should be an email in the Gmail inbox asking you to join your child's teacher's classroom. Click to join this. From there, you will be able to access the classroom using the menu button (indicated by nine dots) at the top right of the page. From this same menu, you can access all of the features of G:Suite, including Classroom.

Teachers will use the classroom to post work and tasks. Some might require them to complete the work electronically whereas other tasks might require them to do it on paper before typing their answers into a document (doing sums might be an example of a time where this might be required). You will have received a 'Home Book' already as sometimes the task may require children to write something down using pencil or paper. This can also be used if you struggle to complete the work electronically. Work will be available to view by clicking on the 'Classwork' tab at the top of the Classroom page. However, it should also be accessible from the 'Stream' page as well as through any emails you receive about it.

When a task has been completed, it needs to be 'turned in' (sent back to teacher). This is usually done using the button at the top right of the page. Some tasks can be self-marked; some will mark themselves; sometimes a teacher will post the answers; but there may be times when the class teacher will mark the work and comment back. Please be mindful that teachers are getting used to this system as well; be kind and don't bombard them with messages as they won't always be able to respond. Teachers will not respond to any messages out of normal work hours.

## Google Meet

Many of you will already have used this when you met your class teacher at the start of term. This will be a way the teacher may communicate with the children during any enforced closures such as another lockdown. During these periods, there may be times when the teacher delivers a 'live' lesson using Meet. If a live lesson is planned, a message will be posted to tell you the day and time. You will be able to access the meeting by clicking on the link at the top left of the Stream page. This link won't always be visible to pupils: the teacher will only make it available to view when they are ready to begin. It may be that you need to refresh the page every couple of minutes to see when it appears. **Please don't try to meet with the class teacher unless they have directed you to.**

There will be an element of you 'playing around' with the features of G:Suite and Classroom in order to figure out how it works. Please do this with your child but, beware – the capabilities are endless and we will begin by trying to keep things as simple as

possible! Some of the 'Apps' available in G:Suite have been switched off for children, however there are some which we cannot turn off. This includes 'Podcasts' and a button to take you to the Google Marketplace.

Whilst in the Marketplace children will be able to view products, they won't be able to buy anything. However, children will be able to play podcasts from this App and, while I'm sure there will be some suitable for children – such as bedtime stories – there will be many which are inappropriate due to them being aimed at adults. Please monitor your child to ensure they don't access inappropriate material.

### **Rules for Using Meet**

- Be out of bed and ready – don't be late if a meeting has been scheduled to start at a certain time.
- Be dressed properly in day clothes.
- Make sure you're presentable - brushed hair and teeth, for example.
- Be prepared for the length of the meeting – no leaving half way through.
- Have the camera on the device switched on but the microphone on mute unless a teacher asks you to turn your microphone on.
- Treat the meeting like a lesson – the same rules and behaviour expectations apply.
- Meetings must not be recorded by children or parents. The teacher may decide to record it for monitoring purposes; if they do decide to do this, they will tell the children first and there will be indication on the screen once the recording starts.

G:Suite can be accessed from any device – desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. If you are using a touch screen device such as a tablet or phone, I would advise you download the apps for each of the features (Gmail, Docs, Meet, etc.) This seems to make it all work a bit smoother. Desktop or laptop is best.

Finally, we are all aware of the dangers associated with being online. Please regularly check how your child is using G:Suite and the internet. We want to be able to provide children with homework, and if required again, an excellent learning experience if they have to be off school; for this to happen, we must work together in order to keep them safe.

If you have any access queries, please contact [family@mowden.darlington.sch.uk](mailto:family@mowden.darlington.sch.uk).

As mentioned at the start of this letter, this is new to us all. Please be patient as we get used to using this software.

Regards



Mr Johnson