

Microsoft Teams Policy

Who is covered by this policy?

All staff and volunteers

What is covered by this policy?

This policy outlines the procedure to be followed when using the Teams app at DSC. It also aims to clarify the most appropriate way to use Teams at work.

The Policy

Teams is a useful tool that allows easy communication across both DSC offices and with those staff members who work remotely. Used well it should create the same sort of atmosphere as if we were all in the same offices. It is meant to be an informal means of communication between our staff.

Our policy is that teams should become the standard means of informal communication, in particular using 'Face Teams', ultimately replacing the phone and email for non-critical DSC communications.

Although informal, Teams is still a workplace tool. Please communicate responsibly, and with consideration to your colleagues, not all of whom may share your sense of humour or understand the intended tone of your messages.

Microsoft Teams Procedure

What should Teams be used for?

Teams is an informal communication tool. Its aim is to create the same sort of informal chatty method of communication that you would have if everyone was sat together in the same office.

Teams can be used to message a person or a group; to conduct a video call with a person or a group; to have a phone call with a person or a group; to check calendars or to set up a project working group.

There are two core uses.

We would expect teams to be used for the following:

1 Informal communication across the organisation

- Updates about your movements across the organisation*
- Information about your holiday
- How to contact you if you're travelling all day
- Chats about bits of work or questions to colleagues
- Nice feedback from a customer
- Water cooler chat (eg, who should win Strictly, what's going on in politics, sector 'gossip' of a non-personal nature)
- Quick questions about work that are those that you would yell across the office to a colleague
- Sharing informal knowledge and learning, either across the organisation or in the appropriate Teams group.

*Please note that this is an informal update for everyone at the organisation. Staff should of course continue to speak personally to anyone who will directly be affected by their absence from the office.

2 Project working

Teams is especially useful for project working. You can effectively have project team meetings to discuss what is going on without having to physically meet and you can do this via video-call or via a group set up specifically for the project.

Staff, when setting up a project group should do the following:

- Inform the project team members
- Set up the group
- Determine the protocols around sharing documents – for example there may be times when email is needed, or links to sharepoint in teams
- Ensure that the group is admin accessible even if the project leader is not available

Acknowledging messages

Teams should be checked by all staff members a minimum of twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon.

Once a message has been seen by a staff member, they should use the 'like' function, so the original 'poster' knows their message has been noted.

What Teams should not be used for

It is difficult to track a topic or particular message in a group in Teams so there are some things that it does not work well for.

It shouldn't in normal circumstances be used for document collaboration unless the document is on SharePoint and the link is shared. Please note that unlike emails teams conversations can be hard to search so think about what is going to be the easiest and most effective way for your colleagues to collaborate on Teams.

Similarly, email and SharePoint are the preference when dealing with documents/information that include lots of detail and that may need to be traced back at a later stage.

When using the Teams messaging service, staff should ask themselves about the relevant importance of their question to the running of the organisation. Consider if it is something that needs to be formally tracked or audited in the future.

If in doubt use email.

Video Conferencing Policy

As stated in DSC's 'Video Conferencing' Policy virtual meetings are extremely useful and can save travel time and expense. It is also more effective to be able to see the faces of the people you are remotely engaging with so we would expect Face Teams to be the default communication mechanism. All staff are given headphones so that they can use the facility without disturbing colleagues in the same way you might the phone.

The video conferencing capabilities in Teams should now be used in place of 'Skype for Business' for both planned 'virtual meetings' and instant short term 'mini-meetings' which require quick decisions. Please see the Video Conferencing Policy for more information regarding preparing for a 'virtual' meeting.