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Using social media

Best online platforms to use for your international school collaboration

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This resource looks at the various online platforms available to enable you to support your international school collaboration.

Please refer to your school's guidance on using the various online platforms regarding safeguarding of children while using these platforms including but not restricted to age limit, audience restrictions and information shared.

Some of these applications will be restricted or banned in certain countries, so it is worth checking before setting them up with a partner school.

Conference calling

Using VOIP, these platforms allow everyone to get involved in the conversation, meeting or conferences. Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) are apps which allow you to make phone calls using the internet rather than your phone's connection. VOIP is banned in certain countries - always check with your partner school/s regarding applications that are permitted for use in their country.

Skype

<https://www.skype.com/en/new/>

Skype is a (VOIP) service available on every platform. A very useful feature is Skype Translator; this can translate what you or your partners say. The current version supports speech translation to and from English, French, German, Chinese (Mandarin), Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Russian.

Skype uses a lot of bandwidth and therefore the picture and speech can sometimes be blurred.

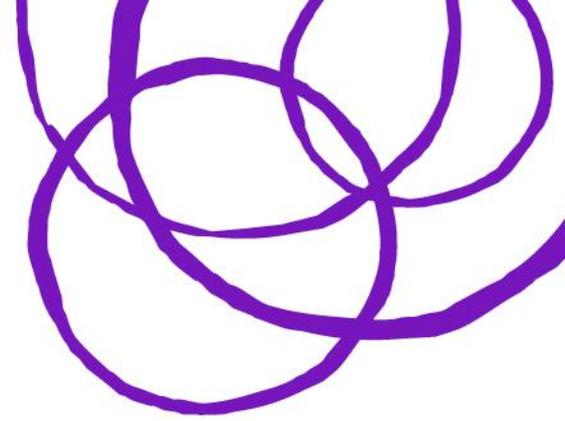
Zoom Cloud Meetings

<https://zoom.us/>

Zoom brings together video conferencing, online meetings and group messaging into one easy to use application and web-based software. A major benefit of Zoom is that only one person has to download the application. Then everyone else can simply click on the meeting link and join in from their phone, tablet, or desktop.

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During video conference calls you can share photographs, children's work and videos, and these can be annotated by the students and teachers taking part in the call. A live call can be recorded, if the host gives permission and has permission from all taking part, so students can look back and revise any concepts they did not understand first time round.

You can use Zoom's breakout rooms to have students do group work. Breakout rooms are sessions that are split off from the main Zoom meeting. They allow the participants to meet in smaller groups. Breakout rooms can be used for collaboration and discussion of the meeting.

Another useful feature the basic annotation tools (text box, free form draw/pen, shapes, and highlighter) that you can use to guide students around a visual display (such as a website) or explain a concept.

Important things to remember when using Zoom:

- Do not share a link to a teleconference in social media posts or other publicly accessible locations. Provide the link directly to specific people.
- Make sure you set the "require password to join meeting" option.

Free group meetings are limited to 40 minutes, (although this is being lifted for all school settings during the Corona Virus school closures) after this they will be cut off.

UK Regional Digital Platforms for Schools

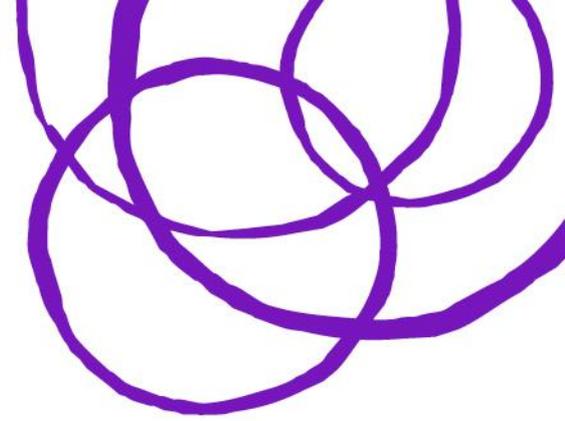
Departments for Education in the 4 UK regions - England (check with local authority), Wales (<https://hwb.gov.wales>), Scotland (www.glowconnect.org.uk) and Northern Ireland (www.c2kni.net) have their own schools platforms. Teachers and students use these secure sites to communicate, access and share resources.

For e.g. C2KNI platform in Northern Ireland has recently launched the Collaborate Ultra platform for the virtual classroom. This platform like Zoom allows online meetings, videoconference calls and break out groups in a secure setup which is accessible only to teachers, students and educational institutions. Northern Ireland teachers can use this facility to communicate and work with their overseas schools.

Please check your local authority's digital platform for more information on the services available to you.

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FaceTime

FaceTime runs on iOS devices; each participant must have FaceTime installed. To view devices which can use Facetime, visit [here](#) A major benefit of FaceTime is that it is less prone to interruptions due to bad connection as other video call applications are. FaceTime is also free to use on a WiFi connection. A major limitation of Facetime is that it can only be used for Apple to Apple connections.

Google Hangout

<https://hangouts.google.com/>

Google Hangouts is an application (web based, iOS and Android) that allows you to communicate through text or video with anyone in your network. Through this app you can connect with a single person or a group of people or create a "Hangout on Air" to broadcast your video to a wider audience. Google Hangouts give students a safe platform to express themselves, listen, and learn at the same time.

Viber

<https://www.viber.com/>

Viber is an application that enables the user to send messages (video, voice, stickers or GIFs) and make phone calls (both audio and video calls) to other Viber users for free. A major benefit of Viber is that you can use the add-on: Viber Out. With this you can call from Viber on your phone to any landline and mobile in the world – even if they don't have Viber – at low rates. However, using Viber Out is not free and you need to buy credit upfront, (it is cheaper than using the landline to call long distances).

WhatsApp

<https://www.whatsapp.com/>

WhatsApp Messenger is a freeware and cross-platform instant messaging service for smartphones. Use the Group Chats feature to create groups. Through this, you can share ideas and activities with the members in the group. You can add over 250 members into a group.

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WhatsApp can be used to make voice and video calls. It can be used as a ‘conference call’ between two classes. WhatsApp has optimized the video calling for slower networks, providing a way around the internet connectivity problem in some countries. WhatsApp video calls can charge the user with a high data usage; other video calling apps like Skype and FaceTime ensure that you use less data.

Communicating with China

Most Western social media applications do not work for communicating with China, due to restrictions imposed by the Chinese government. If your partner school is in China, then WeChat is the only option. Any of the activities above can be run using WeChat.

WeChat

<https://www.wechat.com/en/>

WeChat allows you to send images and text, make phone calls and run video conferences.

FILE SHARING APPLICATIONS:

WeTransfer

<https://wetransfer.com>

WeTransfer is a cloud-based computer file transfer service. With the free service users can send files up to 2GB.

How can it be used in a partnership?

WeTransfer is one of the most useful applications to use in a partnership as it can be used to transfer large amounts of children’s work quickly and easily. A major benefit of WeTransfer is that the software is easy to use, and no account needs to be set up. These platforms allow you to share files quickly and easily with your partner school.

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If the internet connection is poor, WeTransfer can be slow to download the file causing it to occasionally fail. The download link is only active for 7 days, after this the file disappears.

SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS:

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Facebook is a social networking website and service where users can post comments, share photographs or other interesting content on the Web, play games, chat live, and stream live video. Through Facebook you can engage with a wide range of people in a project, for example the local community/ parents /other classes in the school and partners all over the world. Both schools can share lessons, school events and activities with their partner school using the live video function.

Twitter

www.twitter.com

Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, "tweets", restricted to 280 characters. Twitter is an easy way to share photographs and short pieces of information about a project. This can be shared with a wide audience. If linked with the Periscope app, live videos can be shared with partners. Like Facebook teachers can use polls as an interactive teaching tool in their Tweets.

YouTube

www.youtube.com

YouTube is a free video sharing website that makes it easy to watch online videos. You can create and upload your own videos to share with others. Videos on YouTube are accessible to students and anyone. As a school, you may not want anyone outside of your school partnership to see your video, however there are options that can limit your audience and block posting.

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However, it needs to be remembered that YouTube is blocked in many schools due to bandwidth limitations and the site's potential for distraction.

Periscope

Periscope is a free application that allows users to broadcast a live video stream to public or private audiences. Within a partnership, or a classroom, it can allow you take virtual field trips, you can go on a tour of the school or local area (depending on mobile internet coverage) without leaving your current location. One drawback on using this application is that Periscope videos will only be available for 24 hours after their live broadcast and will need to be downloaded to view after that time.

COLLABORATION APPLICATIONS:

Seesaw: The Learning Journal

<https://web.seesaw.me>

Seesaw is a website and an app (both iOS and Android) where students create a digital portfolio of their work: independently documenting what they have learnt at school or home. Students can “show what they know and what they have learnt” by using photos, videos, drawings, text, PDFs, and links. Teachers can use Seesaw to document and track student work. Seesaw can become an electronic exercise book journaling a student’s journey throughout their schooling.

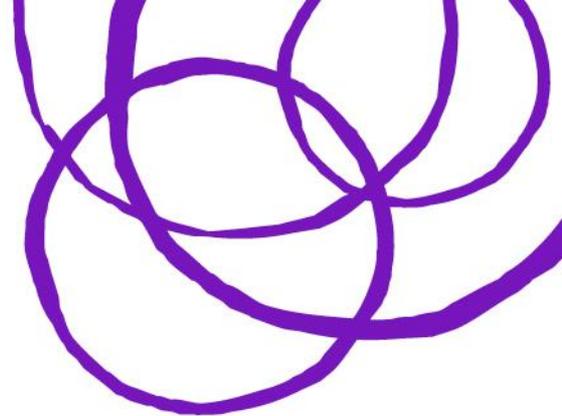
Microsoft Teams

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-GB/education/products/teams>

Microsoft Teams is a hub where you and your students interact online: a workspace where you can communicate, share files, and even meet. Microsoft Teams works within the Office 365 Suite where teams connect through shared notebooks, chat sessions, virtual meetings, and resource sharing. Students can share resources, work on projects, delegate tasks, and communicate their progress via their Class Notebook, and teachers can create assignments and share files via SharePoint, so students get individual copies.

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Google Classroom

https://edu.google.com/products/classroom/?modal_active=none#%2Fready-to-go

Google Classroom is a free web service and is available as a website, an Android app, and an iOS app. The primary aim of Google Classroom is to streamline the method of sharing files between teachers and students.

Google Classroom combines Google Drive for assignment creation and distribution, Google Docs, Sheets and Slides for writing, Gmail for communication, and Google Calendar for scheduling.

The mobile apps allow students to take photos and attach to assignments, share files from other apps, and access information offline. Teachers can monitor the progress for each student, and after being graded, teachers can return work along with comments.

Edmodo

<https://new.edmodo.com/?go2url=%2Fhome>

Edmodo is a free Facebook-like learning management system (LMS). Once an account has been created, students can organise content, manage deadlines, receive and submit work, as well as interact with the teacher and peers by participating in polls and writing posts. An important safety feature is that teachers can see all posts and can moderate content and put class members on read-only mode. Students can share documents, links, video, and images using the drag-and-drop feature, integrating files from Google and Microsoft accounts.

Flipgrid

<https://info.flipgrid.com/>

Flipgrid is a free, simple way to foster short video-based discussions on classroom topics. Educators, learners, and families can use Flipgrid at school or at home to stay connected and share their continued learning experiences.

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Flipgrid is a website that allows teachers to create "grids" to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is like a message board where teachers can pose questions, called "topics," and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display.

Floop

<https://www.floopedu.com/>

Floop is a cloud-based site which enables students to receive annotated feedback from teachers and peers. Using any device, that is connected to the internet, students upload images of an assignment to the platform, and teachers put markers in places where they want to provide written feedback. Students can see and respond to comments, creating a feedback loop that allows teachers to see patterns of student learning.

Kahoot!

www.kahoot.it

Kahoot! is a web-based tool to administer quizzes, discussions or surveys about any subject area. It is a game-based classroom response system played by the whole class in real time or as a challenge in their own time. When coupled with an online video conferencing application that lets you share your screen, for example Zoom, live games can be played remotely. Classic mode and Team mode take place in real time, but Challenge mode enables students to take quizzes within a set time frame, such as for homework or during remote learning. However, Kahoot can be heavy on ICT equipment as children need access to their own tablet/smart phone or laptop.

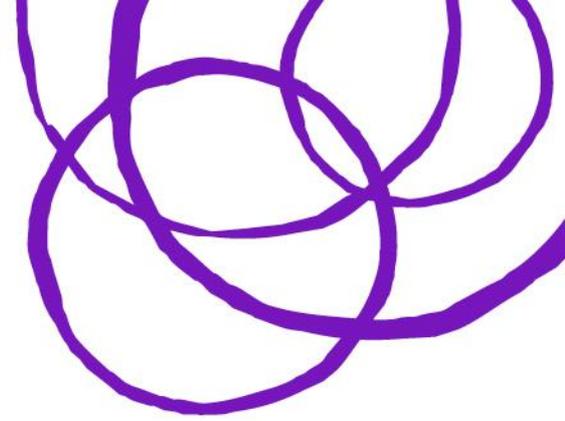
Padlet

<https://padlet.com/>

Padlet is an application to create an online bulletin board/ working wall that you can use to display information for a topic. Padlet is both a website and app that allows teachers and students to organise information onto virtual walls using a simple drag-and-drop system. Students can start with a template or a blank page and add videos, text, links, documents, images to the wall and organise it, like a page full of Post-it notes. Although Padlet is free, recent updates only allow you to make three Padlets before you need to upgrade to a monthly or yearly subscription. By using a Padlet students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, and share links and pictures, in a secure location. It is easy to change who can view your Padlet, making it a secure way to share large quantities of information. It

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is simple to add all the work from a project and use it as a portfolio to share with parents, the local community and partner school.