

***Social Media for Synchronous and Asynchronous  
Communication: Guidelines for Teachers and Educators***

Social media platforms facilitate communication in quick and convenient ways. There are various social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, Telegram, being used worldwide by people of all ages. These platforms have quickly reached even the remotest of places on the earth and help people to access various information, from their homes, at a nominal cost.

We can communicate with individuals as well as with groups through different media – text, image, audio, video and other documents. These communications are either synchronous – which means that all participants are sending and replying to each other’s message in real-time/live; or it can be asynchronous – means that one sends a message and the others reply at their convenience. Synchronous communication includes individual or group audio/video calls, chatting through instant messaging apps. Asynchronous communication includes emails, messages or chats that may not be replied to instantly.

Given the unprecedented social distancing and home quarantines due to COVID-19, social media platforms have immense potential to contribute to teaching-learning processes. When physical access to schools and colleges are closed, we can leverage these platforms to effectively carry out academic activities in innovative ways. In the following section, 12 different social media platforms are identified and their possible usage mentioned. Teachers and educators are at a liberty to choose any of these tools as per their convenience and use for reaching out to learners and pupil teachers, and provide online support to facilitate learning. Also teachers and educators are advised to inform learners below 14 years of age to seek permission to share and use the gadgets (Smart Phone, iPad, Tablet, laptop and Desktop) of their parents, grandparents and elder sibling(s) for accessing learning situations created under the guidance of elders at home.

## 1. WhatsApp

It is an application that requires to be downloaded on mobile phone (also can be accessed on laptop or desktop) and the user has to register using individual mobile number. We can send messages, making audio-video calls. We can also share a wide variety of media like photos, audio, video, and other documents. We can communicate one-to-one or in a group in the above mentioned ways. Up to 256 people can join a group and interact with each other. One can create any number of groups (e.g., one group for each class or subject or course) on WhatsApp.



**Use case:** A teacher or educator can use WhatsApp group call to organise a virtual class and post an assignment on a group. Later learners can post their completed assignment. A teacher can share the link for learning resources in a group or share a downloaded document/ own recorded voice/ a self-created document on a topic. The teacher can also help parents with tips on how to engage learners at home. The School Head can create a WhatsApp group to interact and mentor fellow teachers.

## 2. Facebook

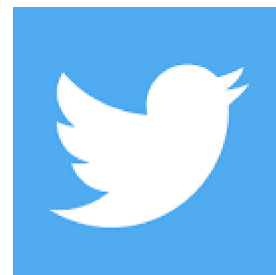
Facebook can be accessed on a laptop/desktop computer as well as through mobile App. One needs to create an account to log into Facebook. Facebook allows us to share or post information consisting of text, image, audio, video and other documents. It gives a sense of community as we can add and connect with other users as 'friends', thus creating a sense of community. Facebook also provides options to have closed as well as open groups. It also provides the user with control like permissions of users to collaborate, share, join etc.



**Use case:** Teachers can create subject or class wise groups and share contents in various forms. In addition, they can interact with learners, deliver live lectures, organise a watch party etc. Personalized feedback can also be given to learner in Facebook chat/messenger. Facebook for education (<https://education.fb.com/>) is a dedicated platform of Facebook for educators to collaborate and innovate.

### 3. Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging and social networking service on which users can post and interact through messages known as "tweets". It can be accessed on a laptop/desktop computer as well as through mobile App. It allows users to write and share their ideas and opinions in real time (instant messaging) within maximum 280 characters. We can also upload and share image, audio, video and document through twitter. While sharing, one can mention other person or group through a feature called hashtag (#). Twitter can be used for self-expression, social interaction, and information sharing.



**Use Case:** Teachers can use it as an effective pedagogical tool to gain information, engage learners, follow interested communities, share their insights on specific topics, etc. It can enhance engagement and collaboration among peers, learners and teachers. The teacher can tweet assignments, link to other resources or web pages. Learners can work collaboratively on assignments using Twitter. Teachers and learners can subscribe to relevant and important hashtags for further learning.

### 4. Edmodo

Edmodo is a free and secure online educational learning network. It is a social network to interact with others. Teachers can use it to create and manage an online classroom community, and learners can connect and collaborate with their peers. It helps to schedule homework and assignments, network with other teachers, and monitor students' progress.



**Use Case:** Teachers can manage their classes and consolidate all of their activities in one place. Teacher can create a digital classroom space for all teachers and students to work together share ideas and resources. Edmodo's quiz builder or poll feature can be used to assess students' learning during or after a unit of study. Teacher can divide a class into smaller groups and have them post their work to their group for peer review and feedback. Teacher can further use Edmodo Badges to help motivate Students to push their learning and increase their practice time on new topics. Badges let students show off their accomplishments and motivate others. Administrators can use the

platform to coordinate and collaborate with fellow teachers. Panning professional development seminars is easy, especially with SchoolTube, Edmodo's video service.

## 5. Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service that has millions of active consumers all over the world. It can be accessed on a laptop/desktop computer as well as through mobile App. It can be used to share short videos, pictures, audios, quotations, write-ups and much more. Teachers can also make groups on Instagram and post photos and other media on groups. They can either keep a group open for all or make it a closed group.



**Use Case:** Through Instagram, teachers can effectively engage in visual storytelling. One can use hashtags that are relevant and often searched to be discoverable. There are other features as well which teachers and students can use such as video recording up to 15 seconds, unlimited story additions, direct messaging within Stories, etc. IGTV gives users the ability to share videos that are up to an hour long – like a TV episode.

## 6. Telegram

Telegram is a mobile app based communication tool. It has a capability to share a wide variety of media, be it photos, audio, video, and even documents. It supports one to one communication as well as group communication. Subject groups can be created, and each group can have even 1,00,000 members. It provided various admin supports such that the groups can be maintained by several admin in a collaborative manner. The groups can be controlled to have only one way or two way communications. It can also be used for making audio calls and video calls. Group conference calls are also an additional support that will help teachers to take online sessions and encourage interaction. Every time when someone opens his/her desktop, just click on the telegram icon, it will start working. Telegram channels can be helpful for providing the desired information to an unlimited number of students and teachers.



**Use Case:** Teachers can create large groups of teachers, students and continuously interact on various themes. During NISHTHA training many states like Assam, Karnataka, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan used Telegram for sharing of information and best practices.

## 7. Blogger

A blog can be considered as an online journal or an informational website. Individuals setup a blogging website and regularly post articles called blogs. Users can subscribe to blogs to receive notification of a new article through their email or can directly go to a blogging site and read articles.



Blogger is a blog-publishing service provided by Google. A user having a Google account (Gmail ID) can freely use the blogger facility to create a blogging website of its own and start writing articles on a topic or area such as travel blogs, experience blogs, marketing blogs, product description blogs, educational blogs, etc.

Use Case: Teachers and students can create their accounts on Blogger through their Gmail accounts. Teachers can write and share blogs on difficult topics related to the subject areas they teach, for instance, Science, Mathematics, Language, etc. They can display teaching learning material on blogs by adding pictures, videos, audios, PPTs, etc. A common classroom blog can also be created using WordPress, and a community of teachers and students can together post and discuss about concepts and ideas.

## 8. Skype

Skype is generally used to communicate through video conferencing either one-to-one or in groups. It can be accessed on a laptop/desktop computer as well as through mobile App. Users are required to create an account and then log in. Skype group calling includes conference calling and group chats. It can be used to host a group video chat or conference call for up to 50 people. Adding people who already have Skype is free.



**Use Case:** Skype provides an excellent way for teachers to introduce the world beyond the classroom to their students. Through video calling, students can connect with teachers, educators and other students for live discussions and solving their queries. We can also use Skype to explore virtual field trips, organise guest speaker sessions with two-way communication between presenter and the audience. Special events can be conducted like live discussion with authors, celebrities, technology experts, doctors, artists, etc. Sharing of screens, files, resources and other information with students, teachers and parents can also be part of an e-learning process through Skype.

### 9. Pinterest

Pinterest is a visual social network in multilingual format available on social web as well as mobile application (both android and iOS supported). It is like an online open bulletin board in which communities, teachers, students and parents can interact, share and post/ pin on a single forum. It enables posting, saving, blogging and discovery of information using images, GIFs, interactive videos, documents and blogs etc. The resources which are pinned get segregated into various categories. There are a lot of categories to choose from diversified fields of learning. These categories or boards are displayed on the user's Pinterest profile. Since these pins can be shared and are easily searchable, they have the potential to become a very useful educational tool.



### 10. YouTube

YouTube is an online video sharing platform wherein the users can watch, upload, edit and share videos. They can also like, dislike the content and comment on it. It allows the users to create free of cost YouTube channels in which they can upload the videos created by them. Also, users can sort videos and create their own playlists. Video lectures, animation videos, 360 videos are useful resources to engage the students and help them learn difficult concepts.



**Use Case:** Teachers, for example, can create “Geometry” as a playlist containing all the videos related to the geometry topic of maths. Teacher can search and share with students videos on various topic which are correct both

conceptually and pedagogically. The videos can be auto-translated in local languages making them useful for everyone. The subtitles which can also be in a local language can be added in the videos for inclusion. The teachers can also Live Stream the lectures wherever they are to the selected group or public.

### 11. Google Hangout

It is a unified communications service that allows members to initiate and participate in text, voice or video chats/communication, sharing content either one-to-one or in a group. Hangouts are built into Gmail, and mobile Hangouts apps are available for iOS and Android devices.



Only Gmail account is required to use this application. Up to 150 people can participate in a Google Hangout, though a video call is limited to 25 participants.

**Use Case:** Teacher can use hangout to live stream class from his/her home and students can join the live class from their respective homes. Smaller groups can be formed within a class for group discussion and peer learning among students, through audio or video chats.