**MIC - Remote Working**

**Principles to Apply from September 2021**

***This Document is intended for guidance purposes only pending direction from Government***

* 1. **Introduction**

1.1 In response to public health guidance, from March 2020, the vast majority of MIC staff have discharged most or all of their duties remotely.

1.2 On 29th April 2021, Government made a commitment to a significant increase in on-site further education and training, higher education and research from the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year and in June 2021 published a “Plan for a Safe Return to Onsite Further and Higher Education and Research in 2021/22”.

1.3 A significant increase in on-site programme and service delivery will necessitate an increase in on-campus staff presence. The return of staff to campus will be informed by public health guidance at all times.

1.4 It is recognised that remote working offers benefits to both employees and the College and that the viability of remote working has been clearly demonstrated by recent history. It is acknowledged that staff may wish to continue to have access to remote working. In circumstances where remote working is deemed appropriate, it is envisaged that, in the short term, this will be a blended model comprising of remote and onsite working.

1.5 The longer term approach to remote working will be informed by national and sectoral policy as this develops.

1.6 The purpose of this document is to set out principles under which the primary objective of a return to on campus programme delivery will be supported by the return of staff to campus while facilitating remote working for employees, where appropriate.

1. **Scope**

2.1 The principles detailed in this document apply to all staff.

2.2 For the purpose of this document, remote working refers to an arrangement whereby an employee carries out their duties at a location other than the College campus.

2.3 This document may be revised and amended as appropriate in line with legislation, public health advice and Government circulars.

**3.0 Initial Return to Campus**

3.1 It is expected that there will be a significant increase in the number of staff attending on campus from September 2021. However, in order to minimise risk the following arrangements will apply to the initial resumption of on campus attendance, subject to public or individual health considerations:

3.1.1 Staff whose duties cannot be performed remotely will be required to attend on campus. Where staff have to date attended campus on a staggered basis, full time attendance will resume on the week commencing 6th September 2021.

3.1.2 Staff who are engaged in teaching or supervision of research will be required to resume on campus attendance to facilitate face-to-face teaching and/or necessary support for students.

3.1.3 Staff in student facing roles or whose main duties are to provide direct support to teaching and research activity will be required to resume on campus attendance on week commencing 6th September 2021. On an interim basis, line managers will have discretion to authorise staff to work remotely on a hybrid basis, subject to service need. It is envisaged that staff will attend on campus at least two days per week. The Human Resources Office must be notified of all temporary remote working arrangements.

3.1.4 Staff in all other roles will be required to resume on campus attendance on week commencing 6th September 2021. On an interim basis, line managers will have discretion to authorise staff to work remotely on a hybrid basis, subject to service need. It is envisaged that staff will attend on campus at least two days per week. The Human Resources Office must be notified of all temporary remote working arrangements.

3.2 In all instances, line managers are requested to facilitate staff who wish to resume on campus attendance for their full contracted hours.

3.3 Line managers should ensure that sufficient numbers of staff return to campus to meet service needs and also to facilitate staff training, orientation and mentoring that may have been limited due to remote working arrangements.

1. **Remote Working**

4.1 Staff who wish to, or are required to continue to work remotely will do so having regard to:

* Government, Public Health and Sectoral advice;
* The nature of the work carried out;
* The availability of the necessary equipment to facilitate remote working;
* Compliance with data protection requirements including GDPR and MIC data protection policies and the security of any College owned equipment used at an individual’s private home;
* The physical workspace available on campus;
* Consideration of the individual’s personal circumstances;
* The ongoing effectiveness and normal performance expectations of roles;

4.2 It is expected that staff hours of work will correspond to their contract of employment. Managers are encouraged to be flexible and where flexibility is requested, managers should exercise discretion.

4.3 Staff must ensure regular contracted working hours are maintained and ensure adequate rest breaks are taken in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act.

4.4 Staff must be available to attend work on site where required.

4.5 In order to work remotely staff must have an appropriate working environment and must have the following basic equipment:

* A broadband internet connection capable of using video-based conferencing systems and accessing College systems;
* A College computer;
* A suitable workstation including a suitable chair.

4.6 If a member of staff who wishes to work remotely cannot access the necessary equipment and facilities to enable them to do so in a safe manner, then they are not a suitable candidate for remote working and arrangements will be made to facilitate on campus attendance on a full time basis at the earliest opportunity.

4.7 Staff members who wish to work remotely must complete a Remote Work Questionnaire and return it to the Health and Safety Manager. The Health and Safety Manager will arrange for the employees remote work station to be assessed for suitability.

4.8 Staff members who wish to work remotely must abide by the College’s Data Control procedures and with the Staff Code of Conduct with regard to due confidentiality of information concerning the College, it’s students and it’s staff. Prior to approval for a remote working arrangement the relevant staff member must undertake data protection training specified by the College and will be required to undertake any refresher training deemed appropriate by the Information Compliance and Records Management Office.

4.8 The [Remote Working Policy](https://maryimmaculatecollege.sharepoint.com/sites/staffportal/policies/Documents/PGP60%20Remote%20Working%20Policy%20-%20Covid%2019.pdf) will be updated as appropriate when further direction has been issued by Government.