# Principles for digital wellbeing in a hybrid working environment

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These principles are focused on how we can build wellbeing practice into our ways-of-working. We all work in different and varied ways, so the guidance below is not concrete policy or an exhaustive list – it is a set of principles we could adopt and develop further as we experiment with hybrid working. The first two sections are about meetings and calendars; the last section is on communication etiquette. In a nutshell, it’s about this: reduce waste, create space, share don’t copy.

## Meetings

### Reduce the number of meetings

* All meeting organisers are asked to review the regular scheduled meetings they are responsible for: is the frequency appropriate, and we are using colleagues’ time wisely? Is it clear why each person is at the meeting?
* When arranging meetings it should be clear who is required and who is optional. It’s often OK to only attend for part of a meeting.
* Chairs should be very clear about the outcomes needed from a meeting; if there is no real need for the meeting, cancel it.
* Meeting-free Fridays: Wherever possible meetings should not be scheduled on Fridays to free up time to progress other activities and work. Colleagues can agree to conversations with each other but no formal meetings should be scheduled.
* Respect the [meetings-light](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/news/display/?id=25252) weeks and make the most of this time for focused and collaborative work.

### Create some space

* Throughout the week, let’s try to avoid booking meetings between 12pm and 2pm to give colleagues a clear window for their lunch break.
* To help give colleagues time for a comfort break between meetings, where possible they should be scheduled at 25 or 50 minutes only. Use the Outlook settings to [change your default meeting length to 30 minutes](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/end-meetings-early-or-start-late-ebb4c4c9-6992-4ea7-9772-8b5883df8500), and to automatically shorten meetings.
* Longer sessions and workshops should have breaks detailed in the agenda when sending out the meeting invitation.
* Some meetings can be fun! Colleagues are encouraged to join in with scheduled socials and ‘virtual coffees’ within working hours.

**But be aware:** for some staff, fewer meetings means fewer opportunities to see their colleagues. To increase openness, video meetings could be recorded to enable team members who do not ordinarily attend to stay connected.

## Calendars

Using your online calendar supports openness as well as your own wellbeing.

### Openness and time-management

* For everyone’s benefit, please use your Outlook calendar and keep it up to date, marking your commitments and your absences.
* Library staff calendars should be [all open](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/library/working-here/induction/open-calendars/). Use your Outlook calendar to plan your time effectively for individual work or as part of your team roster.
* For your own wellbeing, use your calendar to block out time you know you will need to eat or go for a walk.
* Help the organiser: always respond to meeting invitations, with either Accept, Decline, or Tentative. It’s OK to say no, but do respond as it’s the only way meeting organiser can keep track of arrangements.

## Etiquette for Communication: Microsoft Teams and/or Email

The proliferation of communication channels can have a negative impact on people’s wellbeing, so consider agreeing a set of etiquette guidelines in your team, project, or working group. The [Teaching, Learning and Students Teams MS Teams etiquette guide](https://livemanchesterac.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/LIB-C-Library-Leadership-Team/EV7WXrBUKEBBrKUITHQm4QcBGYph-VBmRBvlXjXGwPLCIA?e=09mi6P) is an excellent starting place, which you can adopt or re-purpose.

### Some key questions to ask of yourself and team:

• What communication channels do you use and for what purpose?

• What can you stop using? (for example, the CC box)

• Have you been clear about your expectations for response times?

• Where do you save your operational, project and reference documents?

### Reduce the number of emails

* Always use a subject line, and keep it relevant and short.
* Writing to more than one person? If you need a response from the person, put their name(s) in the To: box. If you don’t need a response from them, consider why you are including them. **Overuse of the CC: box is a major contributor to email overload**!
* Beware of using ‘reply to all’ if you are only actually replying to one person.
* Let’s respect the diversity of our working hours. You are not expected to respond to an email or chat outside of your own working hours, and you might consider including a statement on your email signature along the lines of: “I do not expect any response outside your hours. Please respond when it suits you during your normal working day.”
* Think: is email the best option, or would an asynchronous discussion in a Teams channel be more appropriate and avoid a long email chain?

### Create some space

* Colleagues should not expect a response to any emails sent on Friday afternoonuntil the following week. Avoid sending significant emails (e.g. notification of major decisions, or requests for substantial work) after 1pm on a Friday wherever possible.
* Agree with your colleagues when one-on-one instant messages (Teams chat) is appropriate and when an instant response might be expected. For example, when dealing with live issues or supporting an end-user.
* Ensure you give a specified and realistic deadline for reply when communicating, to give people time and space to contribute or respond.
* Protect your peace. Colleagues are encouraged to mute notifications to channelsand mark themselves as **‘Do Not Disturb’** when they have booked time in their diary to focus on a task.

‘You don’t have to be aware of everything’.With so many communications channels it is useful to remember we are not expected to read and respond to everything. If you do feel overwhelmed, speak to your manager.

## Collaboration: Using Teams

**“Keep it Teams”** Try and avoid duplicating files and discussion across email, chat and Team channels. Agree with your team, project or working group where the associated tasks, meetings, communications and collaboration should take place. Create a single-point-of-truth and use links to documents to collaborate and share rather than sending email attachments. Consider using the [Planner app](https://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/ourservices/popular/microsoft365/planner/) to manage your tasks and enable collaboration on team activities, and the Approvals app to manage leave requests.

reduce waste, create space, share don’t copy

Resources for calendars:

* [Library calendar etiquette](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/library/working-here/induction/open-calendars/)

Resources for meetings:

* [Improving Library meetings while working remotely](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/library/news/display/?id=25168)
* [Four principles of effective meetings](https://medium.com/meetings-makeover/the-four-principles-of-effective-meetings-5297b7b4541f)
* [Library Meetings Makeover resources](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/library/working-here/induction/meetings-makeover/)

Microsoft Teams resources:

* [StaffNet: When should I use Teams?](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/modernising-it/technology/office365/teams/when-teams/)
* [Microsoft 365 at UoM – support and knowledge sharing Yammer group](https://www.yammer.com/live.manchester.ac.uk/#/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=32757088256)
* [Teaching, Learning and Students Teams MS Teams etiquette guide](https://livemanchesterac.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/LIB-C-Library-Leadership-Team/EV7WXrBUKEBBrKUITHQm4QcBGYph-VBmRBvlXjXGwPLCIA?e=09mi6P)