



Sequatchie County Schools

Achieving Tomorrow's Excellence Today

Parents' Ultimate Guide to Google Classroom

Google's free-to-schools organization platform makes it easy for students to keep all their schoolwork in one place.

Great video links for Parent Google Classroom Help and Training:

- [6 Things Parents Should Know About Google Classroom](#)
- [Parents Guide to Google Classroom in 2020](#)
- [Google Classroom Tutorial for Student & Parents](#)
- [Teach Parents Tech](#)

In addition to textbooks and binders, kids consider Gmail, Google Docs, and even YouTube essential for school. So it's an easy transition to Google Classroom, the classroom-management tool integrated into Google's G Suite for Education, which Google provides free to schools. Classroom allows students to see what's due, complete assignments, post messages, and more in virtual classes set up by their teachers. The fact that it's paperless and offers built-in opportunities for kids to practice responsible digital skills are great bonuses. Your kid may use it for one class, or all of them. In fact, tens of millions of teachers and students use **Google Classroom in thousands of schools around the world**, making it one of the most popular edtech tools around.

But Google Classroom does invite some risks, including data tracking, potential contact with strangers, and even **cyberbullying**. While Google has stricter privacy practices for its educational apps, it can collect student data from some of the Classroom tools, such as YouTube, if they're enabled. Google pitches the platform to teachers as "mission control for your classroom" -- and it definitely streamlines homework, remote learning, and organization. But as more schools move toward

using Google Classroom, it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with its capabilities so you can best support your kid's online learning.

Click on the topic headings below to go directly to the information (only on LIVE document):

What is Google Classroom?

Do teachers use Google Classroom to teach live, like with Zoom?

How do you set up Google Classroom?

Can you use Google Classroom at home?

Can I communicate with my child's teacher through Google Classroom?

Can Google Classroom be used for cheating or chatting?

Which other apps and websites can be used with Google Classroom?

Can I check my child's grades on Google Classroom?

What are the safest settings to enable on my kid's Google account?

How does my kid find out about new stuff posted in Google Classroom?

Is my kid supposed to be chatting with their classmates during class time via Google Classroom?

Who has control over the options in Google Classroom: the teacher, students, the principal, the tech coordinator?

If my kid is using Google Classroom, how can I make sure they're not goofing around?

How tech savvy do I need to be to help my kid with Google Classroom?

Does Google Classroom track and collect kids' data?

Where can I go to get more information about how to use Google Classroom?

What is Google Classroom?

Google Classroom is a class-organization platform that incorporates Google's core G Suite (Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drive, and other Google products) so students can access everything they need for a class, including homework assignments, group projects, files, and even Google Hangouts to chat with the teacher or the entire class. Classroom also includes optional "Additional Services," including YouTube and Maps, which a school administrator can choose to enable as part of your kid's Classroom tools. Google Classroom isn't a learning tool, like IXL, Khan Academy, and other providers of educational content: It's designed for organization and collaboration.

Do teachers use Google Classroom to teach live, like with Zoom?

Not usually. However, **Google is offering the premium features of Google Meet for free to teachers and students who are at home during the coronavirus pandemic, so it'll be easier to use Classroom for live, remote teaching.**

How do you set up Google Classroom?

Your kid will get an email invite from their teacher with a link or a code they use to join a class. They'll be directed to classroom.google.com, where they log in (using either their school-created account or their personal Gmail account) to access the class (or classes) their teacher has added them to. Each class is private to the people the teacher has personally invited, including the students enrolled in that class and other teachers. Once your kid has joined a class, they can use all the features the teacher has enabled for that class, including class schedules, assignments, announcements, and even teacher "office hours."

Can you use Google Classroom at home?

Kids can access Google Classroom from anywhere, including from their phones, when they download the Google Classroom app.

Can I communicate with my child's teacher through Google Classroom?

It's possible, though teachers may use another tool, such as Gmail, ZOOM, Google Meet, or phone, for parent communication. If your kid's teacher wants to use Google Classroom for communication, they will send you an invitation, and after accepting, you will receive updates directly from them, which may include information on upcoming or missing work and announcements.

Can Google Classroom be used for cheating or chatting?

There's nothing to prevent students from opening up other tabs, such as Wikipedia or Google Search, while they're using Google Classroom. Kids can potentially see other students' work within the platform, too. If they're taking a quiz in Google Forms, however, teachers can disable access to other resources using a feature called Quiz Lock.

As for chatting, yes. Kids can interact with other students and even teachers by text and video using Google Hangouts. Chatting can be a distraction, but there have also been some reports of kids **cyberbullying other students** in Google Docs shared for group projects -- partly because it's a place no one would think to look for that kind of behavior. If the chatting is getting out of control, your kid can shut off Hangouts and remove people from a shared document. (To do this, click the Share button and then click Advanced at the bottom of the window. Click the X next to the name of the person you want to remove. If the document was created by someone else and you don't control it, have your kid make a copy and not share it.)

What other apps and websites can be used with Google Classroom?

Google Classroom connects with hundreds of apps and websites -- called add-ons -- including popular tools like Pear Deck, Actively Learn, Newsela, and many more. Also, the Classroom Share button makes it easy for users to share content from an app or a website directly into Google Classroom, so kids can see a variety of content through their portal.

Can I check my child's grades on Google Classroom?

No. Though teachers can assign grades using the Classroom service Gradebook, the teacher has to generate a report and email it to you in order for you to see your kid's grades. Your school may use a different tool for grades and other administrative services.

What are the safest settings to enable on my kid's Google Account?

If your kid uses a personal Gmail account for Classroom, you can adjust their privacy settings on their Google Account page. (If they have a school account, consult the administrator for help on what settings you can control.) Keep in mind that in order to use Google Classroom, your kid must share certain information, such as their name and photo. Take a look at these settings:

- From the Personal Info page, you can view the information that others can see about you. You can set this information to be viewable to yourself only.
- From the Data & Personalization page, you can take the Privacy Checkup to find out what information you're sharing and limit it. You can also go through your Activity controls and see what data Google is tracking. If you "pause" activity, Google won't track it.
- From the People & Sharing page, you can see contact information and what information you're sharing on Google Services.

How does my kid find out about new stuff posted in Google Classroom?

Your kid will receive an email when the teacher posts an announcement. These emails come through your kid's email account, not in Classroom. Classroom doesn't alert you when an assignment is due; to keep track of deadlines, kids need to check the class calendar.

Is my kid supposed to be chatting with his classmates during class time via Google Classroom?

Maybe. Teachers may assign collaborative projects, such as a group research paper in Google Docs or a group dialogue, where students comment on each other's work. But if the class isn't using the tools responsibly, a teacher or administrator can turn them all off.

Who has control over the options in Google Classroom: the teacher, students, the principal, the tech coordinator?

PCSS teachers set up Google Classroom for the classes they teach. That person is in charge of all the features included in the service, including Gmail, Google Maps, and Drive -- and can turn them on or off. Teachers decide whether or not they want to use these services, and how to configure them for their classes. If Gmail is enabled, for example, teachers can email their students, turn off email notifications, and mute people. If your kid has YouTube enabled in their Classroom account, you'll need to speak to the admin, not the teacher, if you don't want your kid watching YouTube (the admin can also enable "restricted mode" for YouTube, which limits some mature content).

If my kid is using Google Classroom, how can I make sure they're not goofing around?

Other than monitoring your kid with your own eyes and ears, you have very limited tech options. If your kid uses their own device and not a school-issued device, you may be able to use a parental control app such as Google's Family Link to limit total screen time and allow only certain apps to be used at certain times -- although you'll still need to allow Classroom. Parental controls typically don't work with school devices, since adding programs interferes with the admin's configuration. You can try a few tricks, such as setting a timer, allowing a game break, and giving a reward when your kid is able to focus and resist distractions for a period of time or when they finish something.

How tech savvy do I need to be to help my kid with Google Classroom?

If your kids are younger, it's probably a good idea to have some familiarity with Google's G Suite so you can help your kid upload documents, check the calendar, and do other tasks. It also helps to know how the programs work so you can at least describe the problem to a teacher if anything goes wrong. Older kids may not need any help. Google Classroom is designed to be easy to use, and there's lots of online help.

Does Google Classroom track and collect kid's data?

This is where things get a little tricky. Google Classroom is just one part of the G Suite for Education, and some of the apps in the suite can be tracked. If your kid is given a school account to access Classroom, it will be protected by stricter privacy rules, which forbid Google from tracking and collecting student data (beyond what's necessary for educational purposes). However, if the school's administrator enables Additional Services, such as YouTube and Maps, Google may collect data on those apps as it would for any of its other consumer apps.

If your kid's teacher relies on students to use their personal Gmail accounts to access Google Classroom, their data, including the sites they visit, the videos they watch, and even their location may be tracked by Google -- and kids may see ads, too. This kind of tracking for marketing purposes is why the state of New Mexico [recently filed a lawsuit against Google](#) on behalf of students. The state's attorney general believes Google collects and uses a lot more student data than it admits, and says it tracks students' online activities when they're not using Classroom for school.

Another risk is third parties. Although Google doesn't share or sell student data to partners, and it vets the developers it uses for Classroom, those third parties could collect information from your kid, then profile and target them using that data.

Still, [Google Classroom gets a "pass" rating](#) from its Common Sense privacy evaluation, which means it meets our minimum requirements for protecting students' privacy.

Where can I go to get more information about how to use Google Classroom?

Your administrator or your kid's teacher should provide you with information on what services your kid will be using and how they'll be updating you on progress (such as in weekly or monthly emails). Also, check out these resources:

[Everything Parents Need to Know About Using Google Classroom with Your Kids](#)

[Common Sense Education Google Classroom review for teachers](#)