Guidance for Learning at Home

Overview

Translators: Spanish / Russian / Vietnamese / Khmer

Learning at Home: Guidance for Parents and Guardians

Ensuring the success of distance learning will require the full cooperation of students, teachers, parents & guardians. This transition will present opportunities for parents and guardians to think differently about how to support their children’s learning. To help students thrive, here are some guidelines about creating structures and routines as well as monitoring and supporting learning.

1. Take Care of Yourself

Students will not be the only ones entering a new routine. We acknowledge that many parents and guardians are also navigating a work structure that may look very different. Many of us will be balancing the demands of our jobs in conjunction with taking care of small children and providing guidance in educating school aged children. Please know that we recognize these obstacles and encourage you to find balance in not only helping your child adjust, but adjusting to your own new routine. We are here to support families and hope the information provided is a helpful tool.

2. Establish Routines and Expectations

Together with your child, set up a schedule for your family to promote routine and consistency. Consider maintaining your child’s regular school hours, including their usual start time and bedtime. As hard as it may be to enforce a schedule during this time of uncertainty, students and parents will thrive off of the structure and predictability. (See the SAMPLE Daily Schedule for K-5 Distance Learners or the Secondary Student Distance Learning Checklist as an example.)

3. Define a learning space for students

As students begin their distance learning, they will require a physical space to complete their school work. Encourage your child to go on a scavenger hunt and collect the supplies they will need to be successful, such as their school assigned iPad or laptop, paper, pens/pencils, books, etc. Having their materials housed in one space and creating their own special classroom will support their time management and productivity.

Things to consider:

- Wi-fi signal if possible
- Charging station for iPad or Laptop
- A public and family space where parents and guardians are present and monitoring their children’s learning.

4. Monitor communications from your children’s teachers

Teachers will be posting assignments by 9:00am daily on Seesaw (Elementary) & Canvas and email (Secondary). You can expect individual communication twice weekly as determined by the classroom teacher. If at any time you have questions about your child’s school work, do not hesitate to contact their teacher. However, please remember that teachers will be communicating with a high volume of families; therefore, patience and flexibility will be important.

5. Begin and end each day with a check-in

Parents and guardians are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. In the morning, ask what your child is learning that day, how they will spend their time, and what resources and support they need. At the end of the day, ask how they met their learning goals, what worked, and what didn’t. These brief conversations matter. They allow children to process the instructions they’ve received from their teachers, organize themselves, set priorities, and reflect on their learning.

Keep in mind… some students will find the different levels of independence or lack of structure challenging, so implementing these check-in routines from the first day is important to prevent students from falling behind or struggling.

6. Take an active role in helping your children process and own their learning
In the course of a regular school day, your child constantly engages with peers and teachers. Some of these social interactions and opportunities for mediation will be re-created on virtual platforms, others will not. We often learn best when we have the opportunity to process our learning with others. Parents are encouraged to regularly circle back and engage with their children about what they’re learning. That said, it’s important that your child owns their work; don’t complete assignments for them, even when they are struggling. Try to help them problem-solve to move forward, or reach out to their teacher.

7. Remain mindful of your child’s stress or worry, as well as your own

Shakopee Public Schools acknowledges that this transition to Distance Learning may cause worry, anxiety, and stress for everyone involved. Your child may act out of sorts. Whether they admit it or not, students need as much normal routine as families can provide. Also, please be mindful of your own needs during this time. Reach out to family, friends, and neighbors to maintain solidarity. We all need to support each other as we navigate these changes.

8. Setting Expectations for Digital Citizenship

The initial excitement of distance learning will quickly fade as students start missing their friends, classmates, and teachers. Help your child maintain contact through digital means as circumstances permit. However, please encourage children to take responsibility for their own digital citizenship. Reinforce positive practices when interacting with others online. Please also be mindful that social media apps such as Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Facebook are not official, district-sanctioned channels of communication.

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