



Eight Tips for Parents / Guardians Transitioning Students to Remote Learning

Parents and guardians can make a tremendous difference in how well their children transition to remote learning. The following tips might prove helpful as everyone returns to school.

- 1. Initial Contact** – To ensure all learners are ready to begin remote learning on or around September 14, 2020, all virtual teachers will make contact with their students between Tuesday, September 8 and Friday, September 11, 2020. Please ensure that your child's school has your most current contact information (i.e., home phone, cell phone, email) so that this contact can occur. Before remote learning begins, families will be provided with a schedule for each day that will indicate when students must be engaged in synchronous learning.
- 2. Technology** – Since remote learning involves instruction and communication that occurs in real time (i.e., synchronously), students in remote learning must have daily access to the following technology:
 - a. A reliable technological device (e.g., Chromebook, desktop computer, laptop) that allows them to type and/or navigate various programs or applications easily.
 - b. A camera and microphone that functions reliably; the camera and microphone may be built into the device or separate items plugged into ports (e.g., USB, analogue) located on the device.
 - c. A stable Internet connection that is strong enough to allow audio and video to stream smoothly throughout the day. Satellite connections are not recommended.
 - d. One or more Internet browsers (e.g., Chrome, Safari).
 - e. Their Google account, which will provide them with access to a suite of tools, including Google Meet and Classroom.
 - f. The learning management system (LMS), particularly if they are secondary students.
- 3. Learning Conditions at Home** – Successful remote learning requires conditions at home that allow students to concentrate and participate fully in their classes. Each remote learner should be provided with his/her own separate work area or room at home so that visual and audio distractions are minimized. Since teachers will be offering three to four hours of synchronous instruction each day, placing multiple children around a large table in one room is not recommended. Please ensure your children have access to basic school supplies (e.g., pencils, paper) and comfortable and functional furniture (e.g., a table and chair at the appropriate height). If you have questions about what specific school supplies might be needed, please discuss those with your child's teacher when s/he contacts you.
- 4. Supervision** – Although students will be learning synchronously for a good portion of the day, because teachers are working at a distance, students will still require parental / adult supervision at home throughout the school day. Especially for the first day or two of remote learning, it might be helpful for parents to observe a lighter schedule so they can support their children, who may need assistance logging on, troubleshooting, and/or adjusting to the remote learning environment.
- 5. Exemptions from Synchronous Learning** – Although synchronous learning will be offered every day for a specified period of time (i.e., 180 minutes for kindergarten students, 225 minutes for students in Grades 1 – 12), parents may opt to exempt their children from some or all of this time. If this is an option that you would like to explore, please discuss this with your child's classroom teacher when s/he makes contact so that the appropriate exemption form can be completed.
- 6. Online Etiquette** – In virtual classrooms, it can sometimes be easy to forget that cameras and microphones might be on and broadcasting information not intended for others to see or hear (e.g., a dog barking, a squabble between two siblings, an adult family member walking around in a bathrobe). Alternatively, students themselves might feel so comfortable at home that they do things they might not do if they were in a brick-and-mortar classroom. The rule of thumb is if something wouldn't occur or be done in a brick-and-mortar classroom, it shouldn't be done in a virtual classroom either. Positioning the camera so that it points at a wall or bookshelf, rather than an open room, is a good practice.

7. **Stay in Touch** – In an in-person school setting, educators have several hours each day to observe their students' demeanour and interactions with others closely. Through engaging with students during lessons and circulating throughout the classroom, educators often pick up when students are confused by a concept or simply not themselves; they can then offer one-on-one support, check in about feelings, and/or correct misbehaviours. In the remote learning environment, it may be more difficult for educators to pick up on and address subtleties. It is therefore imperative that parents and/or students let teachers know when students are encountering difficulties with course content, relationships with classmates, or challenges in the home environment that might affect achievement.
8. **Breaks** – In a regular school environment, students have frequent opportunities to stand and move around (e.g., changing classes or classrooms, moving locations within a classroom, taking washroom breaks). In the remote learning environment, students might need to be reminded to stand up and stretch periodically in order to stay healthy. Setting a timer can be an effective strategy for those who become easily absorbed in their work.

For a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a copy of the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board's Reopening Plan, please visit www.hscdsb.on.ca.

