



Learning from home

Your child's school will communicate with you and provide learning activities for your child to do at home, using their normal communication methods such as the school website, newsletters, emails and other online tools.

In many NSW schools, teachers already deliver and manage learning activities using online tools such as email, Office 365, G Suite for Education and Adobe Connect.

In the case of a school shutdown, teachers may move some or all of your child's learning activities into these online spaces.

Where digital or online options are not available schools may use non-digital, off-line strategies. These methods of teaching could include sending worksheets, textbooks or USB drives containing digital worksheets and videos to your home via the mail.

Teachers may also contact students in groups or through one-on-one phone calls.

Key considerations

Parent responsibilities during remote learning

Provide support for your children by:

- establishing routines and expectations
- defining a space for your child to work in
- monitoring communications from teachers
- beginning and ending each day with a check-in
- taking an active role in helping your children process their learning
- encouraging physical activity and/or exercise
- checking in with your child regularly to help them manage stress
- monitoring how much time your child is spending online
- keeping your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions.

Student responsibilities during remote learning

These responsibilities should be adjusted according to the age of your child:

- establishing and/or following a daily routine for learning
- identifying a safe, comfortable, quiet space in their home where they can work effectively and successfully
- regularly monitoring digital platforms and communication (O365, G-Suite for Education, Seesaw, Canvas, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from teachers
- completing tasks with integrity and academic honesty, doing their best work

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- doing their best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates
- communicating proactively with their teachers if they cannot meet deadlines or require additional support
- collaborating and supporting their classmates in their learning
- complying with the departments' [Student use of digital devices and online services policy](#)'
- seeking out and communicating with school staff as different needs arise.

Establishing routines and expectations

Your school should provide your child with a schedule or timetable for their learning. This will include regular breaks for activity, eating and drinking. In the activity breaks, it is important that students get up and move around.

From the first day, you will need to establish routines and expectations. You should use the timetable or schedule provided by your school to set regular hours for school work.

Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your older primary and high school-aged children too.

It is important that you set these expectations as soon as distance learning is implemented, not several days later after it becomes apparent a child is struggling with the absence of routine.

For more information, refer to [Remote learning guidelines for students and parents \(PDF 186KB\)](#).

Setting up a learning environment

Try to create a quiet and comfortable learning space. Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may not be suitable for working in for an extended period of time.

A space/location for extended learning should be a public/family space, not in a bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible. Above all, it should be a space where you or another adult is present and monitoring your children's learning.

Learning environment checklist

Refer to our [Learning environment checklist \(PDF 81KB\)](#) for more advice.



Wellbeing

Being confined to home for an extended period of time can cause stress and conflict. Tips for looking after your children during isolation include:

- Talking to your whole family about what is happening. Understanding the situation will reduce their anxiety.
- Help your children to think about how they have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure them that they will cope with this situation too. Remind them that the isolation won't last for long.
- Exercise regularly. Options could include exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.
- Encourage your children to keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media (where appropriate).
- The Health and Wellbeing page has some great ideas for activities to do at home.

Communicating

Communicating with your child

We encourage you to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. These check-ins need to be a regular part of each day and start straight away. Not all students thrive in a remote learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure and the check-ins help keep them on track.

In the morning, ask:

- what are you learning today?
- what are your learning targets or goals?
- how will you be spending your time?
- what resources do you require?
- what support do you need?

In the afternoon, ask:

- what did you learn today?
- acknowledge one thing that was difficult. Either let it go or come up with a strategy to deal with the same problem if it comes up again
- consider three things that went well today. Why were they good?
- are you ok? Do you need to ask your teacher for something? Do you need help with something to make tomorrow more successful?



These specific questions matter because they allow your child to process the instructions they have received from their teachers and help them organise themselves and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents (this is normal!), but they should anyway.

Communicating with the school

Make sure that you know how the school and your child's teachers will be communicating with you and check that channel regularly.

Make sure you know how to contact teachers for learning support and who to contact for technical support if your school chooses to use digital devices as part of their remote learning plan.

This situation will be new for most schools and families. Schools will be trying to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement and refinement based on feedback so they may ask you and your child for your thoughts on how the system is working.

Most schools already use some kind of platform to communicate with parents and students. These existing platforms should continue to be used whenever possible.

Communicating with teachers

Teachers will need to communicate with your child when they are learning from home. The department provides a range of communication tools for this purpose. Your child's school can use software from Adobe, G Suite for Education or Microsoft Office 365, all offered by the department. Learning tasks can be delivered by email, Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom. Teams allows voice chat for live learning sessions. Adobe Connect allows video and voice communication.

A local school decision may mean that a different application is used to support the learning of your child. In this case the school will ensure that your child will be able to access their learning.

- [How to access Google Classroom from homeExternal link](#)
- [How to access Microsoft Teams from homeExternal link](#)

Teachers may have set times where students can chat with them online and they can deliver video lessons. When digital options are not possible they may have set times for calling your child on the telephone.

It is important for you and your child to remember that teachers will be communicating with dozens to more than 100 other families and that your communications should be meaningful and short. You may also need to remind your child to be patient when waiting for support or feedback.



Using technology

Purchasing new software or devices

It is strongly advised that parents do not purchase software from third-party providers in response to this situation unless specifically advised by the school.

Your school and the department already have a wide range of software and devices available and these have been specifically chosen to provide your child with the support they need.

- [Google Apps for Education](#) - online Google apps. For student access go to: Students portal > Learning > G Suite
- [Office 365 External link](#) - online Office apps.
- [Microsoft Office 365 Desktop Apps External link](#) - may be installed on up to five computers and ten mobile devices. Select the install office link.
- Students can also access additional free Adobe software for their devices from the students' [BYOD software website External link](#).

Accessing digital learning platforms

To support your child in using online and digital resources as part of their remote learning consider the following questions.

- Does your child know how to access the student portal?
- Does your child know how to log in to devices and websites?
- Does your child know their username and password or know how to reset their passwords if necessary?
Note that teachers can reset student passwords if your child forgets their password.

If you and your child are unsure about the answer to these questions contact your child's classroom or roll call teacher for support.

Accessing digital devices and the internet

You need to be aware of the department's policy regarding technology, devices and the internet.

[Student use of digital devices and online services](#) policy.



Managing screen time

Screen time refers to the amount of time a user spends on a device to access on-screen activities.

There are limits as to the amount of time everyone should spend online, but the amounts and the rules for screen time vary by age.

Video conferencing and social interactions using video do not count towards screen time.

The following recommended screen times (excluding video conferencing) are based on the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Ages 2 to 5: 1 hour, broken into sessions of a maximum of 30 minutes.
- Age 6 and above: no specific screen time limits, but screen time should not affect physical activity and face-to-face interactions at home and school. Consistent limits on screen time are also very important.

Some screen time activities such as online socializing and gaming can be very immersive. Make sure that non-school activities are limited in length.

Managing behaviour

Even though your child is at home they still need to comply with their schools' behaviour management policy.

You can refer to the following:

- [Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy](#)
- [Behaviour code for students](#)
- [Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Student use of digital devices and online services](#)

Collaboration, group work and peer feedback during remote learning will require students to communicate online and work together in digital spaces.

The expectations of your child and their required behaviour will be the same as a face to face lesson.

Digital citizenship

We recommend that you take the time to explore [issues of digital citizenship and online safety](#)^{External link} and then discuss these with your child.

It is important that during this period of remote learning that we maintain safe and responsible use of information and communication technologies.

This includes appropriate use of digital platforms, privacy and information protection, respectful communication and how to deal with online issues.