



KINGSTON HIGH
Excel Through Knowledge

Parents' Guide to Remote Learning

2021 - 2022

WE ARE ALWAYS LEARNING!

Distance learning presents incredible challenges and opportunities for teachers, parents, and students. These changing circumstances call for great flexibility and resilience as learning moves from school to home and back again.

Everyone's circumstances are different. More focused and independent learning from home is easier for some students and families than others. Even very digitally-savvy young people may struggle with educational technology. While some aspects may not transfer quickly to online environments, students often learn new skills and develop critical personal and academic competencies in distance learning environments.

These tips synthesize what schools around the world have been learning during the coronavirus pandemic. Students, teachers, and families must adapt to rapid and sometimes unexpected pivot towards hybrid and remote learning.

Teachers have been working hard throughout the year to develop comprehensive distance learning plans. They are mastering new and complex demands for supporting students in the classroom and at home. We continue professional growth and development that strengthens our collective efficacy for:

- prioritizing learning standards
- signposting and consistently communicating expectations
- developing time-saving processes and forms to monitor student learning, manage feedback and reduce workflow demands
- create more tiered strategies for setting and achieving learning goals

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DISTANCE LEARNING TIPS

The guidance below can help us all make the best of new and sometimes unfamiliar distance learning environments. It can help you be ready for some of the more practical aspects of learning from home.

1. Establish routines and expectations

It is essential to develop good habits from the start. Create a flexible routine and talk about how it's working overtime. Chunk your days into predictable segments. Help students get up, get dressed, and ready to learn at a reasonable time. Everybody make your bed! Keep regular bedtime routines, including standard rules for digital devices. Adjust schedules to meet everyone's needs but don't default to staying up late and sleeping in (However, a 'duvet day' now and then can be a treat).

2. Choose an excellent place to learn

Your family's common learning space for occasional homework might not work for extended periods. Set up a physical location that's dedicated to school-focused activities. Make sure it is quiet, free from distractions, and has a good internet connection. Make sure

an adult monitors online learning. Keep doors open, and practice good digital safety. Our teachers will do the same.

3. Stay in touch

Teachers will mainly be communicating regularly through our online platforms and virtual learning environments. Make sure everyone knows how to find the help they need to be successful. Stay in contact with classroom and subject teachers and the principal but understand it may take a day for us to respond. If you have concerns, let us know via email.

4. Help students 'own' their learning

No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or to be educational and content matter experts. Provide support and encouragement, and expect your children to do their part. Struggling is allowed and encouraged! Don't help too much. Becoming independent takes lots of practice. At Kingston High, your child will be given opportunities to engage with others students each day. Many of these social interactions will continue from a distance, but they will be different. You cannot replace them all, and that's OK.

5. Begin and end the day by checking-in

In the morning, you might ask:

- What classes/subjects do you have today?
- Do you have any assessments?
- How will you spend your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?

At the end of the day, you might ask:

- How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
- What did you discover? What was hard?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?

6. Let the child be the student in the virtual classroom

Teachers have seen parents sitting in front of the camera instead of their children, and answering questions for the kids or even whispering answers to students. It might be tempting to chime in, but "Let your kid answer for him or herself no matter how much you want to speak. Teachers know all about wait time!" Another important aspect is that teachers "really want to know what students know and understand".

7. Beware of hot mics

Teach your child how to mute and unmute. Then, remember that when the mic is on, the class will hear everything anyone says within its range. Please check your child's audio daily. Check that they can hear and that when they unmute when asked to by the teacher, the teacher and class can hear them. Have your child practice how to mute and unmute on their device independently."

And when they have mastered the mic, remember: Don't yell at, threaten, or belittle your child during a live lesson in front of others or in front of their teacher. That might be a good rule of thumb when the mic isn't on, too.

8. Respect the teacher and the classroom

Yes, your child is learning from home, but when they are logged in, they are in a real classroom. Please don't pull your child away to have breakfast or help in a chore. Parents and children need to treat this as if their child were sitting in a brick-and-mortar building. This isn't distanced learning.

If you decide to sit in on a class, let the teacher know you are there. If you are in the classroom, the teacher should see you. Sitting off-screen listening without letting the teacher know seems a little like spying. We totally welcome parents to attend meetings with students, if it is absolutely important and has a specific purpose but not as a routine. The teacher has the right to know who she or he is presenting to that day.

It is important that parents stay away as much as possible for if not teachers are not going to have the control they would have in the classroom. Parents are going to have to deal with setting up an environment conducive to learning that impedes on the privacy of their space.

9. Assessments and Assignments

Kingston High will provide a variety of assessment strategies and tools to check students learning, progress and attainment. These will be in the form of formative and summative assessment tasks that will happen at different intervals. They would be assessed based on observations, quizzes, presentations, project based assessments, and so on. A major responsibility of the students and parents is to make certain that these assessments are taken as directed. It is important that students complete assignments and stay on schedule. Keeping current with assignments will allow teachers to provide individual and group assistance. Completing assignments on time will provide the student with knowledge necessary to be successful in future work. The teacher will provide due dates for submission of assignments. Students should complete assignments on or before the assigned due dates. Penalties for turning in late coursework may include but are not limited to a reduction of 10% in grade for assignments submitted after the due date. Students and parents will receive emailed monthly feedback on students' academic progress and have a monthly virtual Parent Teacher Conference besides provision of mid-term and end of term progress reports approximately mid-term each quarter.

10. Attendance, Participation, and Truancy

Attendance and academic performance go hand in hand. Attendance in an online setting also requires "engaging in one's classes and responding to a teacher's directive" and includes the following two student behaviours:

Attendance Component – Includes logging in daily to the Online School and attendance in the live sessions.

Academic Component – Completion of and participation in all required assignments and assessments. If this requirement is not maintained the student is considered Academically Truant.

Absent/Truancy

- One day without logging in to the class and maintaining completion of all required assignments within the stipulated time. Unless the school administration/teacher is notified in writing via email, the absent student is considered unexcused and recorded as such.

- Five Day Absent/Truancy – Five (5) consecutive school days without logging in to the class and maintaining completion of all required assignments within the stipulated time. Unless the school administration/teacher is notified in writing via email, the absent student is considered unexcused and recorded as such. This would be only for medical reasons or any such emergency for which the email should be supported with evidence.
- Repeated Five Day Absent/Truancy – Two sets of five (5) consecutive school days without logging into the LMS and maintaining completion of sixty percent (60%) grade of all required assignments and coursework in two or more classes.
- Habitual Truancy – Three (3) sets of five (5) consecutive school days without logging in to the LMS and maintaining completion of sixty percent (60%) grade of all required assignments and coursework in two or more classes.

Notification of Absence

If the parent or guardian of a pupil attending notifies the school in writing before a school assignment or directive is given that the pupil will not be available to respond to the assignment or directive during a specified period, the missed school days during that period may, if approved, not incur the consequences for failing to respond appropriately. However, the child is required to complete any assignment(s) missed during the period.

We realize there may be times when an occasional illness may prevent you from attending classes. If this situation arises, we ask that the Home Room Teacher be notified.

There are multiple research that suggest that screen time when paired with high-quality instructional practices and carefully planned lessons is good for students. Screen time is inherently made more effective and less isolating and less passive when there is a human on the other side. At Kingston High, we will endeavour to provide high-quality instructional practices and experiences for students.

Checking in students to process instructions they received from their teachers helps them organize themselves and set priorities – older students too. Not all students thrive in distance learning; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid later challenges and disappointments. They help students develop self-management and executive functioning that are essential skills for life. Parents are good life coaches.

We recognise that virtual learning does not compare to physical classrooms. It's important that our students continue their social-emotional and cognitive growth in these times of social distancing and isolation. It is comforting to have a routine in these times. Younger students may need assistance with setting up and using online tools. The most effective models of virtual school have a carefully considered healthy and balanced amount of offline and online learning time. This use of learning time will include some synchronous learning with real time conferencing with teachers and classmates. It will also include and be balanced with significant blocks of asynchronous learning and opportunities to work offline and unplugged.

Wishing you the very best for the new academic session.