New Canaan Public School’s Distance Learning in Response to COVID-19
Guide for Parents and Students
March 12th, 2020

Welcome to Distance Learning (e-learning)! The New Canaan Public Schools have worked together to develop plans that are meaningful, enjoyable, and relevant for all of our students! Since this is new for everyone, there are bound to be some bumps along the way. Together, let’s remember that challenges are also opportunities, and we’ll be able to work through whatever struggles we face as we implement our program. To help everyone to be successful, we have created this simple guide for your reference. Additionally, we will continue updating our student and parent resources on the district website under the e-learning heading.

Where distance learning has been successful, students have established a daily routine and have done their best to follow the schedule. By maintaining a routine, students are less likely to fall behind with assignments. Additionally, students who succeed in distance learning communicate often with their teachers. Of course, the communication will vary based upon each student’s age and the subject matter; regardless, if questions arise along the way students should always begin by reaching out to their teacher and/or principal. Student schedules vary from school to school, so please check messages from your building principals and teachers.

Hopefully students have spent some time today getting themselves set up and ready to go. If not, there is certainly time tomorrow morning as things get underway. For the distance learning (e-learning) program, we recommend establishing routines similar to good homework routines, such as:

- Establish a quiet work place with limited distractions.
- Put all of your materials in one location. Students in younger grades will need to access a variety of materials based upon the lesson.
- If you discover you are missing materials, contact your child’s teacher directly. They are very creative and can help you brainstorm how to substitute an item.
- Log into your computer and assure you can access classes (grades 3-12). Parents of younger children may need to help with technology.
- Parents of students in Grades K-2 should begin checking email regularly, beginning Friday morning, for an email from their classroom teacher.
- Reach out to the teacher immediately if you have questions. Your building principals can be helpful as well.

We encourage you to also use this time to continue fostering student self-direction and independence in learning. While you may be curious about and interested in seeing what they are doing, please let your child do the work. By letting them work independently, we guarantee that you’ll see what we see every day – that your children are capable of amazing things!

As the program gets underway, your child may run into technological issues. If that happens, your first resource is our district website, where you’ll find helpful resources. Some problems need expert help, however, so we’ve established a technology response team who are ready and able to help you.
with issues remotely. To contact the team, send an email with the student’s name, grade, building and issue to studenthelpdesk@ncps-k12.org.

While it’s not a live chat, they will get back to you as quickly as possible to help resolve the issue. If you’re having an issue, it will also be helpful to let your teacher know.

In secondary classrooms, teachers may set up times for live chats. Just as we have norms and expectations in school, please remember that we have norms and expectations when classes are live:

- Be aware of what is in view on the camera behind you
- Think about the lighting on your face so everyone can see you.
- Be on time to the class.
- Dress appropriately - it is school, after all.
- Use a headset or headphones, especially if you’re in a room with others. Any kind will work.
- Follow all guidelines established by your teacher.

We have worked hard to anticipate and address possible challenges. However, things will undoubtedly come up, and when they do please know that we’re committed to figuring them out.

Most importantly, please always remember that your family’s health, physical and emotional, is the very highest priority for all of us. Our outstanding school counselors, social workers and psychologists are available to talk with you or your child throughout this experience, and always throughout the year. You are welcome to contact them directly, or please feel free to contact your school principal who can connect you with them anytime.

If you or a family member become ill, please call the school voicemail as you normally would to report an absence. We will be retrieving this information daily, and it is an important data-point for us during this closure. Of course, if you would prefer to contact your school nurse directly, please feel free to do so. Contact information for everyone in the NCPS is available on our website.

As we begin our first distance learning (e-learning) day tomorrow, please know that our entire team stands ready to help in whatever way possible to ensure it is an enjoyable and productive experience. We are all in this together – and there’s nobody we’d rather be in this with!

Onward!

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