

Starting the School Year

ELEMENTARY PARENT GUIDE TO

DISTANCE LEARNING

Arlington
Public

OVERVIEW FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

DEAR APS FAMILIES,

Due to the pandemic, Arlington Public Schools will begin the 2020-21 school year in full-time distance learning, which begins on Tuesday, September 8. We look forward to welcoming all students back to school and will continue to monitor COVID-19 developments to determine when it is safe to begin phasing in hybrid, in-person instruction. We will continue to keep you informed of any changes in operations though our website, email and other regular communications from the school division and your individual schools.

This guide is to help you navigate distance learning and to support your student(s) as we begin the new school year remotely. You will find information about instruction, social-emotional learning, student expectations, attendance, technical support, and more. We are committed to providing all students a quality educational experience, regardless of the instructional model they are in. We will work to ensure all students have the academic and social-emotional resources and support they need to learn and grow.

APS leaders will continue to monitor health conditions and work collaboratively with state and county health officials to review our plans and make adjustments as necessary.

Thank you for your patience and partnership during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francisco Durán Superintendent

Arlington Public Schools

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INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN OVERVIEW

Students in all grade levels will engage in both synchronous (live—online) and asynchronous (independent—online or offscreen) learning 4 days per week, Tuesday through Friday. Mondays will be teacher planning days and will also involve small-group interventions for some students conducted synchronously, as necessary. All students will participate in independent/ asynchronous learning on Mondays.

APS is committed to providing engaging, safe, and inclusive online learning environments where all students have the opportunity to learn and grow. New instructional content will be offered to all students. Elementary instruction will include all core content areas; "specials," such as physical education, art, and music; as well as lessons to support social-emotional learning. Attendance will be required and student work will be graded.

K-5 SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Families should receive student-specific schedules from their individual schools during the last week of August.

| MONDAYS | K-2 TUES-FRI (5 hours, 20 min per day)* | GRADES 3-5 TUES-FRI (5 hours, 20 min per day)* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 hours 40 min. asynchronous learning activities Morning Message (15 min) Phonemic Awareness (10 min) Literacy Work Session (45 min) Math Work Session (50 min) Social-Emotional Learning (15 min) | Morning Message (15 min) | Morning Message (15 min) |
| | Phonemic Awareness (10 min) | Reading Instruction (15 min) |
| | Reading Instruction (15 min) | Independent Work Session (Literacy) |
| | Independent Work Session (Literacy) (30 min) | (35 min) |
| Content (25 min) | Movement Break (10 min) | Movement Break (5 min) |
| +Additional synchronous small group instruction sessions for some students | Writing Instruction (15 min) | Writing Instruction (15 min) |
| | Independent Work Session (Literacy) (30 min) | Independent Work Session (Literacy) (35 min) |
| TEACHER PLANNING | Movement Break (10 min) | Movement Break (5 min) |
| | Math Workshop (60 min) | Math Workshop (60 min) |
| | Lunch & Recess Break (50 min) | Lunch & Recess Break (50 min) |
| | Content (Science or Social Studies) and/or Social-Emotional Learning (30 min) | Content (Science or Social Studies) and/or Social-Emotional Learning (30 min) |
| | Movement Break (5 min) | Movement Break (10 min) |
| | Specials (Art, Music, PE) (30 min) | Specials (Art, Music, PE) (30 min) |
| | Closing Reflection (10 min) | Closing Reflection (10 min) |

^{*}Immersion students will receive Math and Science instruction in Spanish, and instruction in both Spanish and English Language Arts.

PREK SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Families should receive student-specific schedules from their individual schools during the last week of August.

| PreK MONDAYS | PreK TUES-FRI (5 hours, 20 min per day) |
|--|---|
| 1 hour of asynchronous learning activities Additional synchronous small group instruction for some students/ individual or small group interventions Teacher Planning/CLT meetings | Morning meeting (15 min) |
| | Caring Connections/SEL (15 min) |
| | Movement/Music (5 min) |
| | Snack & Chat (15 min) |
| | Movement/Community Building (5 min) |
| | Mini Lesson (Language/Literacy or Math (15 min) |
| | Bathroom & Handwashing (5 min) |
| | Independent Work Session/ Play-Based Activities/ Asynchronous Learning (30 min) |
| | Small group instruction (30 min) |
| | Independent Work Session/ Play-Based Activities/ Asynchronous Learning (30 min) |
| | Lunch (50 min) |
| | Rest/Quiet Time/ Reflection or Asynchronous Learning Activities (60 min) |
| | Specials (Art, Music, PE) (30 min) |
| | Closing Circle (15 min) |

PRIMARY MONTESSORI SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Families should receive student-specific schedules from their individual schools during the last week of August.

| Primary Montessori MONDAYS | Primary Montessori TUES-FRI (5 hrs, 20 min per day) |
|---|--|
| PreK Students: 1 hour asynchronous learning activities Kindergarten students: 2 hours 40 min asynchronous learning activities Additional synchronous small group instruction for some students/individual or small group interventions Teacher Planning/CLT meetings | Circle Time/ Movement/ Grace & Courtesy Lessons (15 min) |
| | Caring Connections (15 min) |
| | Individual and Small Group Instruction (60 min) (students engage in asynchronous activities when not working with a teacher) |
| | Snack, chat and story (30 min) |
| | Individual and Small Group Instruction (60 min) (students engage in asynchronous activities when not working with a teacher) |
| | Lunch and Unstructured Play (50 min) |
| | Specials (Art, Music, PE) (30 min) |
| | PreK: Rest/Quiet Time/ Reflection or Asynchronous Learning Activities Kindergarten: Small Group Instruction (45 min) |
| | Closing Circle (15 min) |

THE FIRST MONTH – TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

AUG 31-SEPT 4: THE WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL

Distance learning is new for students and families, and the new schedule and format will take some getting used to. Here are a few steps you can take to help prepare your student for distance learning.

AT HOME

- Create a learning space for your child, if possible, with minimal distractions. An optimal setting is a quiet location where your student can spread out their device and other learning materials on a table or desk.
- Consider having your child use headphones during online class, especially if you have multiple siblings and other distractions.
- Begin a countdown with your child, anticipating the first day of school.
- Begin creating a routine:
 - Get up early enough to have breakfast and get dressed, before class starts.
 - Think ahead to lunchtimes; if you will be using APS meal services, identify your nearest school meal location and have a plan to pick up meals Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
 - Elementary & middle school students have 50 minutes for lunch each day
 - High school students have 60 minutes for lunch each day
 - Make a plan for after school--physical activity, rest time, hobbies, etc.
 - Plan to check in with your child each afternoon:
 - What did you learn today?
 - What challenges did you face today, and how can we make tomorrow better?
 - Try to eat healthy dinners to support brain health.
 - Get to bed at a regular time to get enough sleep.

GETTING READY FOR CLASS

Your child's school will be contacting you before school begins with your schedule and first-day instructions for Teams, Canvas, etc. If you have not heard from your school or your teacher, please call the main office.

Many schools are having virtual open house and back-to-school events during this week; please check your school's website or call the main office to get the schedule.

- Review your child's schedule, including start and end times, lunch and class periods. It might be helpful to print it out and post it near your child's learning space.
- If you don't know what time school starts or what your schedule will be, contact your school this week.
 - o Regular start & end times are posted on the APS website (apsva.us/school-year-2020-21/school-start-end-times/).
 - o You can also check your student's schedule by logging into StudentVUE.

- Be on the lookout for information from your child's school regarding picking up devices and learning materials.
- Make sure your student has their APS device (iPad or Macbook Air) and can start it up and log on.
 - If you have not received your APS device or have trouble logging on, contact your school.
- Practice logging in with your child to the apps they will need
 - All the apps you need should already be on your device.
 - o Elementary: Seesaw, Canvas, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams
 - Secondary: Canvas, Microsoft Teams
- Know your child's APS student ID number and password; this information will allow you to access various applications.
- Test the microphone and camera on your device, and if you have headphones, make sure they work.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL: SEPT 8

- Fully charge your device the night before.
- Wake your child up early and make sure they are dressed and have had breakfast.
- Class will begin at your school's regular start time--check the schedule you received from your child's teacher.
- Help your child log onto their device and log into Microsoft Teams at least 5 minutes before class starts.
- If you have connectivity problems, see the Technology section for tips and resources.
 - In order to ensure your child is not marked absent, please contact the school before 11 a.m.
- Plan to be available, as much as possible, on this first day to assist your child with transitions between classes, bathroom breaks, etc. This will get easier with practice!

FIRST MONTH

The first few weeks of school are designed to allow teachers and students time to build new routines and establish a strong community as a foundation for learning. Students will acclimate at different paces depending on their unique circumstances and comfort levels with technology. Teachers will provide students with time to adjust and ask questions regarding virtual classroom expectations, while gradually incorporating new content as part of the core curriculum.

Our initial priority will be building community, addressing students' social-emotional needs, and making sure they are prepared to learn. We anticipate there may be some challenges in the first few weeks, but teachers and staff are committed to supporting all students in every way possible.

We ask for your support and patience during the first few weeks of school, as teachers and students adjust to the rhythm and routines of distance learning.

SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION TIME

SYNCHRONOUS

- **Synchronous** learning is interactive, two-way online instruction that happens in real time with a teacher in the virtual classroom.
- **Synchronous** instructional minutes are NOT one consecutive block. Synchronous instruction will be presented in "chunks" to ensure that students are not focused on screen for extended periods of time.
- **Microsoft Teams** is the approved APS platform for video-conferencing and will be used for synchronous instruction. Teachers, students, and parents will be able to interact virtually through Teams.

Students will receive a minimum of **2.5 hours of synchronous (live) instruction** per day. All other learning will occur asynchronously.

When students are not present for synchronous instruction, teachers will treat this absence as they would have in the face-to-face classroom. Teachers will have procedures in place where students can locate their missed work to make up for learning.

RECORDING LESSONS

Teachers will record portions of their whole group synchronous instruction (e.g. introduction of new content or a mini-lesson) and make the video link available to students via a password-protected platform (i.e. Canvas). The recording of the lessons can take place as long as there is no personally identifiable information or student records disclosed. Teachers will make these recordings available to students to refer to when they are absent or need to review the information.

Families are able to opt-out of having their child recorded during instruction when completing the Annual Online Verification Process (AOVP). If families do not opt-out during the AOVP timeframe, they are able to notify their child's school in writing at any time that they would like to opt-out their child from being recorded during instructional recordings.

Parents should note that video recordings of instruction are only for educational use by students and may not be shared with others.

ASYNCHRONOUS

- Asynchronous learning occurs in many forms. Materials, tasks, and assignments are
 made accessible to students and may include video recorded lessons, online activities,
 or offline tasks. Interactions with other students and the teacher may occur through
 various formats (e.g., discussion boards, assignments).
- In **asynchronous** learning, students may engage in assignments that are completed on their device OR offline.
- In asynchronous learning, teachers are supporting instruction, remediation, and extension activities. This support may consist of giving feedback, providing clarifications, and emailing with students.

• **Asynchronous** learning is meant to be flexible and self-paced to fit within student schedules, while still maintaining expectations for completion.

Teachers will create asynchronous assignments that allow students to step away from their device as much as possible. Students will not be required to print materials.

HOMEWORK

Elementary students are encouraged to engage in nightly independent reading of their choice. Beyond that, no additional assignments/homework will be required outside of the expectations for asynchronous work that is part of students' daily class time, or the 30 minutes per subject of asynchronous work assigned for Mondays.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to behave and demonstrate responsibility, respect for others, and self-discipline on a daily basis, while in the virtual classroom, when participating in school-sponsored events, and before and after school hours.

During distance learning, students are expected to:

- Make every effort to attend classes, engage in online activities, and be an active participant in their own education.
- Complete assignments during the assigned time frame on their own, or with help from parents as appropriate.
- Complete remote assessments (testing) as directed by teachers.
- Communicate with their teachers around any conflict that may arise in regard to the completion of their work (illness, work, or care of siblings).
- Take care of their APS issued device and interact online in accordance with APS policies and guidance.

As they engage in learning online, students should:

- Actively attend and participate freely in class.
- Come to class dressed appropriately and with an appropriate background (blur or another background choice) showing on Microsoft Teams.
- Work under their teacher's guidance regarding the use of their camera during Microsoft Teams meetings (live online instruction); staff will allow students and/or parents/guardians the flexibility of having cameras on or off.
- Mute their microphone when they are not speaking.
- Use the "raise hand" feature in Microsoft Teams if they have a question during class.
- Minimize distractions to themselves and to other students (no TV on in the background, minimal interaction with family members, etc.)
- Use appropriate language throughout all virtual interactions. Offensive or inappropriate language is not to be used in any form of communication (e.g., emails, discussion boards, group projects, submitted assignments).
- Treat each other, and their teacher(s), with courtesy and respect. Students have the right to express themselves in a safe online environment as if it were an in-person class.
- Notify the teachers and/or school administrator immediately if they receive inappropriate online interactions.
- Add a photo or bitmoji of themselves to their Canvas and Microsoft Teams profile.

Student conduct during distance learning should comply with all APS policies, and is subject to normal APS disciplinary procedures. Please see the Behavior and Disciplinary Responsibilities section of the APS Handbook (apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Handbook2020-21-distance.pdf).

SPECIALS (ART, MUSIC, PHYSICAL EDUCATION)

ART, GENERAL MUSIC, AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

- Students will learn new content using both synchronous and asynchronous models
- Students will use platforms, including Canvas and Seesaw, to access content and resources for lessons, with an emphasis on visual arts concepts and lessons, musical literacy readiness, and note and rhythm reading.
- Flipgrid will give students the opportunity to interact with one another via video to create social and emotional connections with their classmates and teachers, transitioning between asynchronous and synchronous learning models.
- Each instrumental student will be provided with an interactive online method book, providing students the ability to record video and audio assignments, with or without accompaniment, and receive both instant feedback as well as individualized feedback from their teachers.

Instruments will be distributed at the school sites.

While students may be learning at a distance, our shared passion and curiosity for music and art in APS will keep us united as a community.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Students will:

- Learn new content using both synchronous and asynchronous models
- Participate in relationship-building activities
- Perform or demonstrate physical skill development
- Perform fitness activities toward their personal fitness goals at their level of engagement
- Understand and develop health skills to make healthy decisions
- Acquire and practice effective communication, stress management, social emotional learning and relationship building strategies

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) AND SUPPORT

Instruction in social-emotional skill-building will occur in Grades K-5 daily.

School Counselors will lead and partner with teachers to deliver these lessons using our foundational SEL program, Second Step. HomeLinks, an activity that your family can do at home, will be shared to practice and reinforce lessons.

School Counselors will support student needs K-5, including individual counseling and group counseling, and individual and group check-ins.

Counselors will also hold daily office hours and meet with students and families by appointment.

- Synchronous SEL lessons taught by teachers and counselors, Tuesday-Friday
- Counselors provide small group and individual counseling, based on teacher referrals and by appointment
- Counselors advise on academic, college and career planning and transition to middle school

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Teachers will review Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students in their class, so that services and accommodations can be implemented in the distance learning model. Special Education teachers and Case Carriers will be collaborating with classroom teachers and Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) to ensure supports are thoughtfully planned for and implemented.

Some common accommodations used in virtual learning may include:

- Reinforcing instruction through written materials and voice recordings
- Providing copies of all notes and handouts
- Allowing students to slow down the pace of content or have extended time
- Providing assessment (testing) in the student's most successful format
- Providing students opportunities to use alternative methods for assignments
- Having multiple ways to assess course content, and provide students options for task and assignment completion

For additional suggestions on collaborating with IEP Teams, please visit Special Education Supports and Services: Fall, 2020 Guidance for Families (apsva.us/special-education/fall-2020-special-education-information-for-families-8-25-20/).

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

English Learners (ELs) will be a part of their grade-level classes. They will have the benefit of learning from their grade level teacher as well as their EL teacher. While their grade level teacher will focus mostly on the content instruction, the EL teacher will support that learning by focusing on the students' English language development.

- ELs will be supported by EL teachers who will provide a combination of "pull out"
 (working with a small group of students synchronously, not with the whole class) and
 "push in" (a collaborative model, teaching with the general education teacher)
 instruction.
- EL teachers will provide small-group instruction in distance learning, to maximize peer
 interaction around content and to practice language across the four domains of
 listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The small groups will provide more
 opportunities for the students to get individualized instruction as well as focused
 support on their English language development.
- The focus of the EL teacher's work will be on students' four language domains (reading, writing, speaking and listening), as well as the content of that particular instructional block (ie: English language arts, science, social studies, etc.).
- All teachers will keep the learning focused on new content and language development.

Elementary EL teachers were trained on best practices for distance learning, specifically for English learners, during their pre-service training week. This training was provided to all elementary EL teachers.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

The APS model for delivering differentiated instruction for gifted learners is a "collaborative cluster" and is guided by our adopted local plan. Gifted learners are clustered by area of identification by classrooms, to provide more efficiency in planning and delivery of differentiated instruction, with weekly coaching and support from the Resource Teacher for the Gifted (RTG). This also allows for a structure to support students having academic peers throughout the day.

Resource Teachers for the Gifted (RTGs) will continue ongoing support and coaching of cluster teachers in grades 1-5 and K teachers who may not have clusters in elementary school. They will also support instructional planning using the APS Critical and Creative Thinking Framework and/or curricular framework of resources written for gifted learners as supported by content offices.

RTGs will continue collaborating with special education case carriers and teachers to provide planning and support for twice exceptional (2e) learners supporting the Instructional Expectations for Special Education in this document. When possible, the RTG will be part of the IEP and 504 process. RTGs will continue collaborating with English Learner teachers to support students who are advanced/gifted and need extension activities.

ATTENDANCE

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requires that attendance be taken daily. In order to be considered "in attendance," students are expected to interact and respond to "meaningful interactions" with their teachers every day as determined by your teacher. This may include an online survey question (i.e. exit ticket, SEL video question, etc.) or chat participation.

Attendance is not based on assignment completion. Attendance will be documented in Synergy, our Student Information System. Families will be contacted if students are marked absent because they did not complete the check-in that day.

Check-in each day, Monday-Friday

- Grade level teachers will provide specific check-ins for each day of class Monday-Friday
- Parents of students who are having connectivity issues need to report no later than 11:00 am to their school's attendance hotline.
- All students need to **complete the instructional check-in by 4 p.m.** or be counted absent for the day. Attendance phone calls will be sent at 7 p.m. (Students experiencing connectivity challenges should make the effort to complete this check-in, if possible.)
- If a student is ill and cannot attend to complete the check-ins, parents should email and/or call the attendance office (provide email address of attendance person and school attendance hotline) to report the absence

For information on acceptable absences and attendance procedures, please see the APS Handbook (apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Handbook2020-21-distance.pdf).

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Teachers will assess student readiness in September based on diagnostics and formative assessments. A variety of assessments will be used throughout the year to monitor progress and students' mastery of standards and skills. Digital assessment tools (i.e. Canvas Quizzes, Google Forms) will be used to evaluate ongoing learning.

Parents and students can help make virtual assessments successful. Together, they should:

- Keep assessment content secure and confidential. Students may not copy or share test content in any manner.
- Ensure that tests are not viewed or taken by anyone other than the student.
- Work in an environment that is quiet and free from distraction.
- Not receive assistance from any individual or resource (textbook, internet site, cell phone texting, etc.) while testing, unless expressly indicated by their teacher.

Parents can help students create a successful testing environment that is quiet and free from distraction.

Elementary school grading will be in accordance with usual APS policies: Please see <u>Policy</u> Implementation Procedure I-7.2.3.34 PIP-1.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

All elementary students will receive an iPad. Students who do not have internet access at home will be provided with it, either through a MiFi mobile hotspot or through the APS partnership with Comcast. (more details here: apsva.us/internet-service/) Those devices are distributed by your school.

If students are experiencing issues with their device or internet access:

- Email or contact their teachers for any class/content that they may be missing (if they
 are able to).
- Check their school's website for tech help and tips from their school's Instructional Technology Coordinator (ITC).
- Troubleshoot if possible, using these resources:
 - School website
 - APS distance learning webpage (apsva.us/school-year-2020-21/technical-support/)
 - o iPad resources (apsva.us/ms-student-technology-tutorials/)
- Submit the problem using the school's tech help form (apsva.us/digital-learning/contact-itc/)

DISTANCE LEARNING TOOLKITS AND SUPPLIES

All elementary school students will receive a distance learning toolkit including a variety of math manipulatives, art supplies and science tools to support remote learning. Kits will be distributed through schools in mid-September.

Your student's school will also be providing more information regarding traditional school supplies such as paper, glue, pencils and crayons. Here is a list of suggested items:

- K-2: Crayons, Glue Stick, Highlighter, Wide-ruled paper, pencils, ruler, scissors
- 3-5: Colored pencils, Glue Stick, Highlighter, Wide-ruled paper, pencils, ruler, scissors, pencil sharpener, markers

PARENT ACADEMY: PARENT SUPPORT TIPS AND RESOURCES

APS is providing families with tips and resources on distance learning through the APS Parent Academy



(parentacademy.apsva.us). The Parent Academy includes a series of pre-recorded courses, video tutorials and additional

resources to help you understand the distance learning process, and to help you optimize your student's experience. The videos and resources provide information from APS educators about distance learning, and address frequent questions, such as:

- Tips for supporting your student and setting up a successful learning environment at home via Microsoft Teams
- How to access and use Teams, Canvas, Seesaw
- Delivery of specialized services and supports for students with disabilities, English Learner & Gifted students

APS will continue to add new courses, host interactive sessions and add resources in other formats throughout the year.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT

Here are some suggestions you can use to help your child prepare for distance learning.

- Help your child establish routines and maintain a schedule
- Identify a space where your child can learn comfortably. An optimal setting is a quiet location where your student can spread out their device and other learning materials on a table or desk.
- Encourage breaks with physical activity and exercise
- Track your child's learning via Canvas or Seesaw
- Communicate with your child's teacher, school counselor or administrator if you feel your child needs additional resources or support

HEALTH AND SAFETY: TRANSITION TO HYBRID MODEL

Health and safety and preparation for transitioning to in-person learning remains our primary focus and is at the core of our return-to-school planning. APS has a robust, comprehensive health and safety plan based on CDC, Virginia Department of Health and Arlington County Public Health division guidance. Additional health and safety information is available on the APS website (apsva.us/school-year-2020-21/transition-to-hybrid-in-person-model/).

APS remains in close contact with state health officials and the Arlington County Public Health Division, to monitor health data and evaluate opportunities to phase in hybrid, in-person instruction. When we determine it is safe to begin this transition, we will prioritize in-person instruction for students with disabilities first, followed by students in grades PreK-3 and English Learners. We will work toward transitioning all families who select the hybrid in-person model, based on health data and guidance from health officials. APS will notify families well in advance as plans progress and circumstances change.

KEY CONTACTS

If you have a problem with your assignments or need technical support, please contact your student's teacher or your school's ITC. Your first point of contact if you need help with your student's schoolwork is always your teacher or your school.

General questions and feedback can be submitted using the APS Engage online form (apsva.us/engage/engage-aps-online-feedback/).

Thank you for your support and partnership in distance learning for the 2020-21 school year.