

## Guidance and Expectations for Remote Learning in Response to COVID-19

Keeping our students and families safe, healthy, and informed as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) evolves in New York City is our priority. An important part of this support is attending to one another's emotional wellness. We recognize that moving to remote learning will have a significant impact on our students, families and community stakeholders. We want to acknowledge the very real feelings surrounding this, support one another by checking in and, to the greatest degree possible, create community in our remote learning spaces. Remote learning provides an opportunity for students and educators to remain connected and engaged with instruction while working from locations outside of the physical school environment for a designated period of time due to an unforeseen situation. This example of remote learning is necessary in response to the emergency situation posed by COVID-19

Transitioning to remote learning can keep students on track so that when they return to physical school environments, they will be ready for the next phase in their learning. Remote learning should adhere to as many state and local requirements as possible.

Remote teaching is a new way to engage with students and colleagues. Such a moment requires a willingness to take chances and learn. Our shared goal in this moment where the landscape is constantly shifting, is to ensure continuity of learning, student engagement and the prevention of learning loss. We recognize that schools, staff, students and families will have different starting points. To that end, this document provides guidance to help clarify roles as we prepare for what could be a longer-term circumstance.

Below is a suggested list of roles and responsibilities.

### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal is responsible for setting the overall expectations for the school's implementation of remote learning and ensuring that these expectations are clearly communicated to teachers, students, families, and other involved school staff. This guidance is meant to support principals in setting these expectations. The principal may delegate the below responsibilities to assistant principals and other staff as needed. These responsibilities may include:

- Designate roles and responsibilities for administrative school staff with respect to remote learning, so that the following decisions and tasks are implemented effectively. This includes designating an administrator or teacher to be the remote learning lead, or primary point person for the implementation of the school's remote learning plans.
- Implement structures and protocols for checking in with the teachers and staff responsible for executing remote learning.

- Establish a mechanism for tracking student engagement and interaction, which also accounts for student attendance.
- Ensure that updates and expectations about the school’s remote learning program are communicated to students and families. This includes tips for student success, directions for accessing any online platforms, escalation pathways for administrative support, and assurances about student privacy.
- Using NYC DOE academic policy guidance, develop expertise and answer questions related to the impact of COVID-19 on key academic policy areas such as promotion, grading, and graduation. Share questions with the [Borough/Citywide Office](#) as needed for escalation and resolution.
- Ensure that a [Special Education Remote Learning Plan](#) is developed for all students with IEPs in the school by their special education teacher or other school based staff with knowledge of the student, and that each child’s plan is shared and discussed with their family.
- Ensure that a LAP addendum is developed to reflect changes in delivery of services to ELLs through remote learning.
- Set expectations for teacher grade-keeping, data entry, and tracking student participation.
- For high school students, ensure that the school’s remote learning program prioritizes the courses and exam preparation that students need to stay on track toward graduation.

## TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

During this time, teachers use an online platform and email to provide assignments to their students, consistent with the subject content standards of their respective classes. Teachers are expected to fulfill their responsibilities within the contractual workday. These responsibilities *could*, upon direction from the principal, include:

### Student Instruction

- Communicate expectations to students and families about the instructional plan for the week, including learning objectives, required activities, assignments, links to resources, and assessments, along with any associated due dates.
- During designated time, to the extent possible, interact with students in real-time to deliver lessons, facilitate discussion, and lead other instructional activities.
- Archive lessons and other instructional activities for students to access later.
- Utilize agreed-upon communication plan determined by the school daily (Monday thru Friday during the contractual workday) to interact with groups of students and families, account for attendance, and respond to messages from students and families in a timely fashion.
- For any student that is not engaging, follow up with the school protocol to engage the Student Support Team.
- Monitor student participation in activities, grade assignments and assessments, and provide timely feedback on work submitted by students. Communicate with families about student progress.
- For students who need additional support or enrichment, identify appropriate activities and assignments to the greatest extent possible.
- Conduct all annual reviews timely for students with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible.
- Ensure that MLLs/ELLs receive language support as they learn new content through remote learning. Please refer to [Supporting Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners \(MLLs/ELLs\) with Remote Learning](#) in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for guidance.

### Collaboration and Coordination

- Co-teaching pairs should plan appropriately to support their students' needs.
- Maintain ongoing communication with your colleagues who also serve your students (paraprofessionals, co-teachers, related service providers, counselors, the SBST team, etc.) Participate in professional learning opportunities remotely during the contractual work day.
- Participate in IEP meetings (initial/reevaluation/three-year evaluations) remotely at the request of the school psychologist.

- Monitor DOE email for guidance from supervisors and Central DOE. Forward messages to guidance counselors, administrators, and other school staff (e.g., parent coordinator) as needed, per the expectations of the principal.
- Implement the school communication plan, which could include participating in virtual meetings with school administrators; respond to inquiries from school administrators in a timely fashion (Monday thru Friday during the contractual workday).

## **PARAPROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Paraprofessionals are expected to continue to support teachers in the delivery of instruction. Key expectations are as follows:

- Participate in scheduled school-based professional development regarding online learning.
- Support classroom teachers with preparing assignments, content, and activities.
- Assist with collecting materials that will be sent to students.
- Maintain regular communication with teachers and related service provider(s).
- Communicate and check-in with students as determined by classroom teacher and school leadership.
- Under the direction of the teacher or related service provider, support families and students in accessing and participating in remote learning and therapy experiences, including supporting families in implementing behavior supports and structures, as needed.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Working in a new environment creates uncertainty and brings heightened stress. School Counselors will work with students and families by providing support around developing self-confidence in their ability to succeed, helping them demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem, helping them with the ability to manage transition and adaptation to changing situations and responsibilities, and, by helping them demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment. Responsibilities are as follows:

- Work with administrators and staff to develop a plan for how staff, students and families can reach them through phone, email or online platforms.
- Contact families and students as needed.
- Work with administrators and staff to develop appropriate protocols for students and families to follow in emergency situations.
- Continue to support students and families by providing the necessary academic, college and career counseling and advisement.
- Collaborate with administration and staff to determine the remote learning options available to provide consultation, as well as counseling support services based on grade level bands. School counselors also determine supports for families, teachers, administrators and other school staff.

- Continue to monitor the social/personal development of their students and their students' active participation in remote learning.
- Related Service Counselors follow the [Related Service Provider Responsibilities](#).

## **RELATED SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech and Counseling providers will provide appropriate tele-therapy services in conjunction with schools' remote instructional plan. Key expectations are as follows:

- Participate in scheduled school-based professional development regarding the online learning tool utilized by the school.
- Immediately review all mandates in their caseload to determine how best to deliver appropriate tele-therapy services to students starting on March 23 and for the duration of the school building closure period. The Special Education Office has developed [general guidance to DOE providers](#) on how to make this determination.
- In some cases, the opportunity for appropriate tele-therapy will be limited. At minimum, therapists will provide a weekly tele-therapy consultation with the student and their caregiver (where available) to provide support and advice regarding appropriate therapeutic activities.
- While reviewing students' mandates, make initial contact with each student's caregiver, [using a script provided by the Special Education Office](#), and obtain written consent for tele-therapy using a standard form which will be provided by the Special Education Office in consultation with the Office of Medicaid Operations. Therapists must upload the completed consent form to the student's record in SESIS.
- Collaborate with others in the school to develop a schedule for tele-therapy, using the current schedule as a starting point. Regardless of whether a student has been prescribed tele-therapy sessions, ensure that there is at least one touch point per week for each student in their caseload.
- Share the schedule with the student's family, school leadership, and their supervisor and initiate service in accordance with the schedule. Discipline supervisors will check in with therapists periodically, and may participate in and observe tele-therapy sessions.
- Document all tele-therapy sessions in SESIS; guidance will be provided later this week regarding how to code the location of these sessions.

## **SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RESPONSIBILITIES**

School Based Support Team (SBST) Psychologists are expected to conduct IEP meetings remotely with necessary documentation (Notice of IEP Meeting, evaluations) provided to families electronically. Key expectations are as follows:

- Review the status of the Turning 5 caseload; complete all outstanding reports and IEPs that are pending finalization; schedule all cases ready for an IEP meeting for remote/teleconference meetings.
- Review open initial referral and reevaluation caseload; complete all outstanding reports and IEPs that are pending finalization; obtain outstanding reports from any external stakeholders via email communication; identify cases for which parents have provided or will provide evaluations; complete all IEPs that have been conferenced and are pending finalization.

- Provide materials/assessments to be considered to all participants electronically ahead of the meeting.
- Ensure participation of all IEP team members, per [SOPM](#) guidance. School Psychologists should work with their school administrator if they need access to contact information of required participants.
- For all referrals, review the reason for referral to determine what level/type of assessment is needed and consider remote assessment and non-face to face assessments ([as per USDOE guidelines](#)) through contract agencies if and when necessary.
- Develop a plan to engage in remote intervention and prevention initiatives for students at risk of referral to special education (counseling, consultation and intervention).
- Monitor email or other agreed-upon communication channels daily (Monday thru Friday during agreed upon work hours) for messages from families, supervisors, and school leadership, and respond to messages in a timely fashion.

### **SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT TEAM (SBST) SOCIAL WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**

School Based Support Team (SBST) Social Workers are expected to support the successful implementation of remote IEP meetings. Key expectations are as follows:

- Introduce parents to the method for moving forward with cases during the DOE school closure and support parents with the use of technological/online services.
- Schedule and conduct Social Histories and participate in outreach for scheduling IEP meetings.
- Conduct adaptive scales/rating scales and parent and teacher interviews over the phone and using Microsoft teams.
- Review the Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) to verify the language spoken at home; confirm parents' preferred language and mode of communication; inform parents in their preferred language of the parent's right to have a trained interpreter at meetings, if necessary, and of the right to request evaluation reports and the student's IEP translated into the preferred language.
- Confirm that parents have received a copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice and inform parents of their due process rights.
- Ensure that parents have access to the [Family Guide to Special Education Services for School-Age Children](#) in their preferred language.
- Develop a plan to engage in remote intervention/prevention initiatives for students at risk of referral to special education (counseling, consultation and intervention).
- Serve as a point of contact for administrative and logistical questions from families, monitoring email and other designated communication channels Monday through Friday during agreed upon work hours. Support families with outreach to community-based organizations that can support them.

### **STUDENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

In communicating expectations, staff members must recognize the stress of the current situation and the needs of the students and families they serve, as they consider including the following points:

- Students should complete instructional activities assigned by teachers within the expected timelines.
- Students should participate in check-ins, discussions, and other communication mechanisms as expected by the teacher.
- Students should review teacher feedback and complete any follow-up activities as assigned by the teacher.
- Students and families should proactively notify their teacher or a school administrator school with any concerns about progress or additional support needed.
- Families should support students in being successful by establishing routines and habits that support their success in remote learning.
- Families should ensure that students are adhering to their school’s contract for appropriate behavior on web enabled devices.