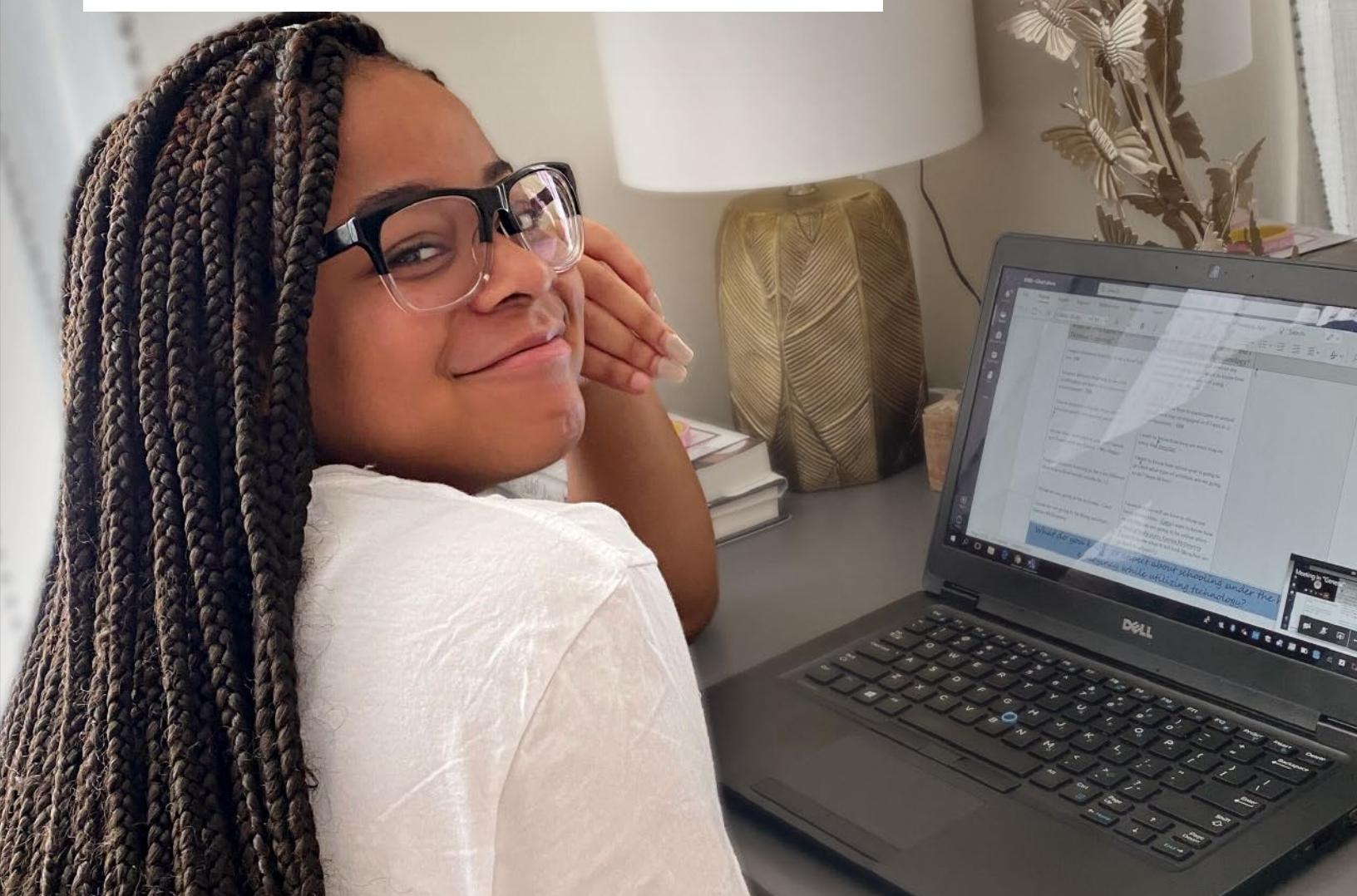




AUGUST 2020

Reopening Strong Together

A Family Guide to Learning at Home





Our guiding values

At DC Public Schools (DCPS), we believe that families are our strongest partners. As we begin the 2020-2021 School Year (SY20-21), this partnership is more important than ever. This guide provides you with key information about virtual instruction at DCPS, including technology tips, student schedules, family wellness, and more. Visit DCPSReopenStrong.com for additional resources for families.

We know that the uncertainty of this pandemic has caused anxiety, hardship, and raised many questions. We are grateful to you — our entire school community — for your perspective, patience, and perseverance as we navigate the start of the school year with learning at home.

Our core beliefs

about family and community engagement remain at the center of how we plan for the year ahead.

The DCPS community extends beyond the school walls.

Families are experts in their child and partners in their success.

DCPS cannot do this work in isolation.

DCPS values equity.



What's new in learning at home

As DCPS prepares to start SY20-21 with all-virtual instruction during Term 1 (August 31 through November 6), we want to help you and your child get ready for learning at home. Our staff and teachers have worked hard to create a stronger virtual experience for all our students:



More Predictable Schedules

Predictable weekly schedules will provide more structure for students, families, and staff.



More Live Instruction

Students will be more engaged and connected with their teachers and classmates through frequent, live instruction.



Everything in One Place

Canvas, our online learning management system, will be used by teachers and students to access learning at home materials and live lesson links, all in one place.



More Progress Reviews

Teachers will have a variety of ways to review student progress, including quick checks for understanding, the ability to provide direct feedback, and virtual assessments.

Let your school know
IF YOU NEED A DEVICE
OR INTERNET ACCESS!

DCPS will ensure a technology device
for all students who need one.



Student schedules

Your school will provide you with your learning at home schedule. It will include live whole-class time, small group times, and independent work time.



Live Instruction

Younger students will have shorter bursts of learning in small groups; elementary students should anticipate 2-3 hours of live content; and older students should anticipate 4-5 hours of live content.



Brain Breaks

We will continue to offer the arts, health, and Physical Education (PE) to support the health and wellness of our students. The day will also feature regular “brain breaks” such as movement or deep breathing exercises, physical activity, and quick social connection to promote social and emotional health and wellness.



Wednesdays

For grades K-12, Wednesdays will follow a different schedule than most days and be dedicated to virtual office hours with core instructional teachers, small group instruction, independent learning, and supplemental programming such as college and career exploration, advisory, and community building.





GRADES
PK3-PK4

GRADES
K-2

GRADES
3-5

GRADES
6-8

GRADES
9-12

The following pages are examples of what a typical day will entail for these different grade groups. Individual school schedules will vary based on student need, staffing, enrollment, and course offerings.

Contact your school for more information.

PK3 & PK4

Sample schedule

LIVE Average of 30-60 minutes per day of live instruction



AM

Morning Meeting

LIVE

Small Group Lesson

LIVE

Independent Play & Practice

Snack with My Teacher

LIVE

Rest



PM

Learning through Play

Individualized Student/
Family Check-in with Teacher

LIVE

Art, Music, PE, or other
Inner Core Subjects

Independent Play and Practice

Grades K-2

Sample schedule

LIVE Average of 2 hours per day of live instruction

Some schools may use an AM/PM schedule – this shows a student with an AM schedule. Art, Music, or other Inner Core Subjects may rotate per quarter.



AM

Morning Meeting

LIVE

Literacy Learning

LIVE

Small Group Lesson

LIVE

Independent Practice

Social Studies or Science

LIVE

Math Block

LIVE

Lunch



PM

Art, Music, PE, or other
Inner Core Subjects

LIVE

Independent Practice

Grades 3-5

Sample schedule

LIVE Average of 2-3 hours per day of live instruction

Art, Music, or other Inner Core Subjects may rotate per quarter.



AM

Morning Meeting

LIVE

Reading, Research & Writing

LIVE

Small Group Work

LIVE

Independent Practice

Social Studies or Science

LIVE

Lunch



PM

Math Block

LIVE

Small Group Work

LIVE

Art, Music, PE, or other
Inner Core Subjects

LIVE

Independent Practice

Grades 6-8

Sample schedule

LIVE Average of 4-5 hours per day of live instruction

Day A (Day B Alternating)

B Days would include other core content of Math, Science, and PE.
Most students will have seven courses total.



AM

Advisory

LIVE

PERIOD 1

English Language Arts –
Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/ Small Groups

PERIOD 2

Social Studies – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/ Small Groups

Lunch



PM

PERIOD 3

World Language – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/ Small Groups

PERIOD 4

Elective – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/ Small Groups

Grades 9-12

Sample schedule

LIVE Average of 4-5 hours per day of live instruction

Students could have up to four courses each semester.



PERIOD 1

English Language Arts – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/Small Groups

PERIOD 2

Science – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/Small Groups

Lunch



PERIOD 3

Mathematics – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/Small Groups

PERIOD 4

Elective – Instruction

LIVE

Independent Practice/Small Groups



REMEMBER

Every Day Counts!



Attendance will be taken daily.

Even in the virtual setting, daily school attendance remains legally required by the District for students 5- to 17-years old. We want to see our students learning with us every day.

Students must sign into Canvas, dcps.instructure.com at least once every day between 6:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m., otherwise they will be counted as absent. If your child experiences a tech issue, you should call their school to have their attendance recorded for that day.

Schools will use much more than just daily attendance as an indicator of student engagement in learning, including completing assignments and participation in live classes.

Your virtual learning home

We spent the spring and summer working with over 200 teachers and staff to transfer our curriculum to an online experience and create a more user-friendly, efficient, and organized approach to virtual learning.

Everything in One Place

Canvas, our online learning management system, will be used by teachers and students to keep learning at home resources in one place. From student schedules, to teacher assignments, to Microsoft Teams live lesson links, everything will be on Canvas.

You can access Canvas by going to dcps.instructure.com.

The Canvas Course Companion

In grades PK-5, you'll have one Canvas Course "Companion" (CCC) that incorporates all subjects. For grades 6-12, every course (e.g., Math, Science, Art) has a companion that serves as a learning hub for students.

The course companions will house student learning materials, meeting schedules, assignments, quizzes, instructional videos, and course information.



Canvas also has accessibility features such as immersive reader, translation, and dictation.



Design for All Learners

Students in need of special education services, English language support, and other required supports will still receive these services with all-virtual instruction. The learning at home experience may include co-taught and/or small group or individual lessons with a special educator or English as a Second Language teacher. Individualized distance learning addendums will be created by special education teachers in collaboration with parents to help apply each student's Individualized Education Program during virtual learning.



TECH TIPS

-  DCPS students will begin their day by logging into Canvas. From there, DCPS utilizes Microsoft Teams for live instruction.
-  Each student will need their own device with a keyboard that runs either Windows 10 or iOS, has a dual-core processor, and at least 4GB RAM.
-  Every student who needs a device or internet access will receive one; your school can help secure these for you.

Note: Kindle Fire tablets do not support DCPS learning at home tools such as Canvas and Microsoft Teams.

How can I support my child in learning at home?

Creating an environment that will support your child's learning is an important part of ensuring their instruction continues while school buildings are closed. Here are six things you can do to support learning at home for your family.



Connect with your child's teacher

Share a little about your family, your child, and your experience with learning from home this past spring. Share your expectations, hopes, and dreams for your child. Additionally, be sure to note your preferred method of communication. Ask teachers how and when you can expect to hear from them and how you can partner with them to support your child's learning.



Talk to your child

Have a conversation with your child about learning at home. Ask what worked for them in the spring, what they are looking forward to, what they are worried about, and how you can help.



Build a routine

Create a flexible routine that works for your family. It could be organized as a morning routine, lunchtime routine, and a bedtime routine. Consider your child's preferences and give them a choice in what's included.



Create a nurturing environment

Reducing clutter, creating a calming environment, providing healthy snacks and meals, and personalizing your child's study space are some great ways to reduce anxiety. Children tend to learn better in spaces that make them feel secure and happy.



Prioritize physical & mental health

Creating the space for mindfulness and brain breaks can help improve your family's focus while lessening the impacts of depression and anxiety. From practicing meditation or deep breathing to getting fresh air outside or doing jumping jacks in place, moments of selfcare for you and your family can make a big difference.



Connect virtually with other parents

DCPS Parent University is a workshop series for families. Parent University helps families to connect with DCPS and learn strategies to help them support their child's academic and social emotional education. Learn more about upcoming sessions at bit.ly/dcsparentursvp.

MEALS

Meals will be available for all students every weekday at locations throughout the city during learning at home. For more information, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/food.

Meal service times may vary.



TAKE-HOME MATERIALS

- PK-5 students will also receive take-home materials from their school.
- Secondary resources will be mostly digital; select courses will have take-home materials.
- Schools will share with you the instructions for pick up and distribution.

Supporting our students' emotional wellbeing

At the start of the school year, we are most focused on re-connecting with our students and families. We will take time to get to know each other, build trusting relationships, and get accustomed to a new daily routine.



Every school day, teachers will connect with their students through morning meetings or check-ins.



Throughout the day, especially at each transition to a new learning block, students will be greeted by their teachers and other school staff with positive and affirming language.



Virtual classroom supports will include activities such as emoji mood checks, reflection time, 1:1 time with students that appear to be struggling, social emotional learning activities, and referrals for counseling supports as appropriate.





GRADING

When it comes to grading, DCPS believes we must meet the needs of students through various supports. Grades can include student engagement during class and group activities, practicing a skill learned during a lesson, and tests and quizzes to demonstrate mastery.

- Grades and progress reports are critical ways for educators to provide feedback to students and families on academic progress and for students to understand the steps that they need to take to be successful.
- Students in grades 6-12 and their families will continue to use the Aspen Student and Parent Portal to view current course and assignment grades.
- New for this year, students and their families in grades K-5 will be able to access report cards in the Aspen Parent Portal.
- DCPS is committed to providing all students and their families with consistent feedback to inform their progress in the classroom and beyond.

Cornerstone curriculum

Living Through History

Cornerstones are powerful lessons that are embedded in the DCPS curriculum.

This fall, students, staff, and families will have a chance to re-connect to their school community by participating in a Cornerstone called Living Through History. This is the very first Cornerstone that students at every grade and across every subject will experience.

Our students in grades PK-12 will document, advocate, reflect on their personal experiences, and create virtual time capsules in response to the global pandemic and time of increased awareness to racial injustice.

Coming Soon!

Family Cornerstones will provide a roadmap for families from PK to Graduation that highlights a few key shared learning experiences. We are working with community partners to bring these experiences to life for families in an engaging, memorable, and socially-distanced way this fall.



Essential resources



DCPS Tech Help Line

Technical assistance is available for families during learning at home.

Call the DCPS help line at **202-442-5885**.



Enrollment

Enroll in your school if you have not already at enrolldcps.dc.gov.

Don't forget to complete your student health record and vaccinations, too!



Updates

For timely updates about SY20-21, visit us at DCPSReopenstrong.com.



Learning Resources

Canvas keeps learning at home resources in one place.

Sign into Canvas daily by going to dcps.instructure.com.



Mental Health Support

The DCPS School Mental Health Team is committed to supporting the mental and emotional health of you and your family. You can reach out to school.mentalhealth@k12.dc.gov for additional support.



COVID-19

For the latest information on the District Government's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.



Free Daily Meals

Free daily meals and weekly grocery distribution are available throughout the District. Visit coronavirus.dc.gov/food for locations and times.



Questions About Your School

For questions about what is happening at your child's school, please reach out directly to your school leadership and child's teacher(s).



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR