

April 3, 2020 - Preparing for Phase 2



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Creating a Culture... of Innovation, Caring and Social Responsibility.



OCDSB Learn At Home Plan - Parent Guide

On April 6th, all OCDSB schools will move to Phase 2 of Learn at Home. This is a period of transition for all of us. We are continuing to take a phased approach to our Learn At Home and will focus on teaching and learning in two week blocks. This will give us an opportunity to hear how it is working for our families and students and make any necessary adjustments.

We are fortunate to have such caring educators who have been checking in with students and families over the past two weeks. We've encouraged our staff to work together and to be thoughtful and age appropriate about the number of points of contact for both students and families.

What Does Learn at Home Mean?

Continuity of Learning Plan Phase 2 Learn at Home Review



Kindergarten to Grade 3	Grades 4 to 6
5 hours per week Area of Focus: Literacy and Mathematics	5 Hours Per Week Area of Focus: Literacy, Math, Science and Social Studies
Grades 7 to 8 10 Hours Per Week	Grades 9 to 12 3 Hours Per Course Per Week (Semestered) 1.5 Hours Per Course Per Week (Non-Semestered)
10 hours per week Area of Focus: Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology and History/ Geography	3 hours per course (semestered schools) 1.5 hours per course (non-semestered schools) Area of Focus: Course Content

Learn At Home looks very different from a regular classroom environment. The Ministry of Education has provided direction by grade groupings related to both the [hours of learning per week](#), and the [curricular areas of focus for students](#). The number of hours per week/course varies by age and grade.

The number of hours is **the total amount of time** students will be engaged with their learning in a given week. This would **include any teaching time led by teachers, as well as the time for students to be working on the learning tasks assigned by teachers**. We recognize the need for flexibility for our families in these unusual circumstances.

The scope of instruction has been limited. Our educators are working to deliver an integrated curriculum to the extent possible, but not every subject matter is included in the scope of instruction at this time. We recognize that students are learning in other ways and are engaging in a number of activities in the home that support building critical thinking, inquiry, innovation and creativity. This is a good opportunity to encourage your child's learning through reading, card games, science experiments, independent study, art, music, or personal fitness.

Focusing on Key Curriculum Content

Teachers are reviewing their long range plans and the curriculum requirements to determine which key big ideas and core skills have not yet been taught, practiced and assessed. Teachers will modify and simplify their long range plans; not all specific curriculum expectations will be addressed. This is an opportunity to focus on core skills and big ideas that are essential to the grade or course.

Teacher Collaboration To Support All Students and Families

We have asked our educators to collaborate; together they will create safe and supportive learning communities to ensure that students and families feel supported, rather than overwhelmed, by learning opportunities. That means considering questions such as:

- How many teacher contacts are reasonable for a family/ student to negotiate at this time?
- How can we intentionally draw upon the expertise of colleagues within and across employee groups to differentiate instruction and support for learners/families?

- How can we intentionally build in opportunities to understand the current needs (emotional, learning, physical) of students/ families?

Technology at Home

Technology is a key component to our Learn At Home strategy, but this does not mean that students will be required to be in a virtual classroom all day. Teachers will use technology to reach out to all students and provide meaningful learning opportunities through a combination of teacher-led instruction, resources to support learning, and tasks/assignments. This will look different by age and grade, and could include using Google classroom, Google Meets/Hangouts, Google Sites, and our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Teachers who have established teacher websites and/or other tools may continue to use those. In addition, email or phone calls will be used as appropriate.

Supporting Access to Technology for Families

We have been working with families who require wifi access and/or devices in order to support your child's learning at home and will be following up on this next week. If you require assistance with access to technology, please speak with the principal of your child's school.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Teachers will be reviewing IEPs for students in their class to ensure any accommodations, modifications, or alternative curriculum expectations are taken into consideration when planning learning at home. Parents of students with IEPs may want to consider collaborating with their child's teacher to reinforce accommodations and/or IEP goals in the home learning environment. We know this may not always be possible, but a discussion with your child's teacher may help to identify solutions.

English Language Learners

Teachers are taking into account the needs of English language learners into their planning, using the STEP continuum to address the language learning goals and content/curriculum goals of students. Parents of ELL students should encourage their children/youth to access TVO resources and other age appropriate television and radio where they can be hearing the English language, to practice speaking in English, and know that reading and writing in their own language(s) also helps to build literacy skills.

Accessing learning supports and professional services staff

Under the current exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to provide direct support to students in their homes from OCDSB staff such as Educational Assistants. Support for learning at home will look different and we encourage you to look at our [Special Education Resources and Supports](#) for OCDSB Learn At Home and/or speak with your teacher/principal about what support and approaches might be available.

While our professional staff (i.e Psychologists, Social Workers, Speech Language Pathologists, and Board Certified Behaviour Analysts) have been reaching out to the students with whom they work, we are exploring options to provide support that will benefit students using a secure virtual platform that ensures privacy and confidentiality. If you require services or supports, please speak with your child's teacher/principal.

Secondary eLearning Courses

All eLearning courses will resume on Monday April 6th. This includes both OCDSB courses, and all of the courses offered through the OELC (Ontario eLearning Consortium). eLearning students, and parents will receive a direct email to share further details. The student learning requirement will be 3 hours per week.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Ministry has shared direction with regards to assessment, evaluation and reporting in Phase 2 of Learn At Home. For elementary students, teachers will use formative assessment approaches to gather evidence of how students are progressing in their learning and provide feedback. Secondary students will be assigned learning tasks, projects and culminating activities that will be marked by their teachers for purposes of formative and summative assessments. Teachers will communicate results of these marked assignments to students. Results will be used by teachers to inform students' final course marks.

Report Cards and Graduation

The learning needs of students from kindergarten to Grade 12 are a priority and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that all students can finish their academic year and be supported to advance to the next year or earn the credits they need to graduate. Students graduating from grade 12 this year will receive mid-year marks for semester 2. All students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, will receive final report cards at the end of the school year.

Easy to Use One Page Summary Guide

We have summarized all this information in a [one page guide](#) .

10 Tips for OCDSB Parents to Support Learn at Home

Here are 10 suggestions to help parents support their children's success while learning at home.

1 - Establish routines

Establish a schedule for learning that reflects the needs of family members. A regular routine will support everyone. Make sure the schedule allows time

for learning, meals, encourages movement, breaks for physical activity, creative play and keeps normal bedtime routines.

2 - Identify a work space

Establish a space where learning can happen regularly and works for you and your child, recognizing the needs of all family members. The nature of the space will look different in every home – desks, kitchen tables, bedrooms or floor spaces are all possible depending on the amount of time and nature of the learning.

3 - Communication with teachers

Educators will communicate regularly through email, or phone for those who do not have access to the internet. Communication will be age and grade appropriate; with younger children, communication will be with parents. At the secondary level, communication will mainly be directly with the student. The frequency of these connections will be based, in part, on your children's needs. As always, parents who have questions can email the teacher.

4 - Regular Check-Ins

Parents are not asked to become teachers, but can check-in with your child to see how their learning is going. Where possible, help them understand instructions, organize themselves and set priorities. Sometimes, just encouraging conversation about the learning helps to clarify the task for the learner. Parents can engage in their child's learning with questions such as: What are the learning goals or big ideas? What resources do you require? What support do you need? What question would you ask the teacher for clarification? Have you asked a friend in the class for their interpretation? As always, please contact your teacher for assistance and clarification.

5 - Help your children own their learning

Group discussions, asking questions, and collaboration are part of a normal school day. Students can use phone calls or texts to chat with friends. Student work is usually a combination of independent work and collaboration with peers. There are many resources available to support your child's learning. To make it easier for you, the OCDSB has created a list of [Additional Online Learning Resources](#) and [Special Education Resources for OCDSB Learn At Home](#) . If you are concerned that your child is struggling with their learning, please contact your child's teacher for assistance.

6 - Access to Student Email and Accounts

Every student has an OCDSB email account. Only students in grades 4 through 12 can access their email outside of the school environment.

Students in Gr 4 - 6 can send and receive email internally and students in Gr 7 - 12 can send and receive email external to the OCDSB domain. The district uses a single sign-on approach - students have one login and password to access email, Google Classroom, Google Meets, D2L, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and the Student Portal. Students can locate the resources they need through the Student Portal. If your child does not know how to access their OCDSB email account or password, they can contact their child's teacher who will assist in resetting it.

7 - Protecting Privacy

We encourage parents to review privacy settings on any device a student will be using to increase safe use by the student. Technology applications that students are using for learning that have not been endorsed by the teacher or school board should have a parent review the privacy and security features, in advance of using it. Here is some [parental privacy control information](#) which you might find helpful. We would also ask that you be respectful of the online work that students and teachers share and that you do not share this work with others or on social media platforms without first obtaining consent.

8 - Encourage physical activity

Movement and exercise are vitally important for health, well-being and learning. Frequent breaks for movement are encouraged. Remember that students are accustomed to recess/nutrition breaks/Daily Physical Activity (DPA) and gym class. Allowing time for physical activity supports more focused time for learning.

9 - Be mindful of your child's stress or worry

Your continued attention to your children's questions and concerns is important. Continue to monitor and limit exposure to media. You can be supportive by listening, validating their worries and concerns, and reassuring them that this situation is time-limited. Here are some resources you might find helpful: [Talking about COVID-19](#) and [Talking to your Anxious Child](#) .

10 - Stay social, but set guidelines

If your child uses social media to connect with peers, encourage responsible use of technology – being respectful and appropriate in communicating with others is very important. Here is a link to some [social media guidelines for kids](#).

These are unprecedented times as we work together to reduce the transmission of [COVID-19](#) . We want to thank you for your continued support, caring and commitment. We will continue to provide updates and further clarification in the upcoming weeks.

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