

# COVID-19 DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN FOR PK-5 STUDENTS AT BENSON

## What is COVID-19 Distance Learning?

Distance Learning involves planned online or teacher-prepared lessons that students complete when away from the physical school building. Using one-to-one devices and making provisions for students without such devices, Benson Public Schools (BPS) recognizes that education can continue even when students and teachers are not in the same location. Along with emphasizing the value of learning, using Distance Learning encourages character growth in the areas of self-sufficiency, adaptability, and perseverance.

## What are the goals of BPS COVID-19 Distance Learning?

- To minimize the disruption to academic progress caused by **planned and extended school closures** by making those out-of-school days as educationally productive and engaging as possible.
- To ensure Distance Learning is equitable for all students.
- To allow BPS grades K-5 students an opportunity to practice the kind of alternative learning that is increasingly part of both college study and workplace training.
- To maximize the use of technology with our students.

## FOR STUDENTS

**Students in Pre-Kindergarten:** Teachers will mail out packets of work for the 6-week time frame for families to work on at home. Teachers will be in contact with families regarding the packets and also available to take calls or answer emails regarding this form of instruction.

**Students in grades K-5:** will complete assignments posted on SeeSaw (Grades K-3), Google Classroom (Grade 4), or through links sent to their Google emails (Grade 5).

- Grades K-2 will have all assignments for the week posted by 9:00 a.m. Monday morning with SeeSaw.
- In Grades 3-4 assignments will be posted daily by 9:00 a.m. on SeeSaw or Google Classroom
- Grade 5 will post Math and Reading assignments daily by 9:00 a.m. and other subject areas will be posted Monday morning by 9:00 a.m. for the week.

**Teachers will be available to answer questions via email or school phone from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. daily.**

It is understood that students might have a wide variety of responsibilities at home during *Distance Learning Days* and that some may not have access to the internet. Staff members understand this and will be flexible and provide instruction that meets the needs of all learners. The expectation is that students will complete the work in a timely manner as developed between student and teacher.

**Students with disabilities**, as required under Chapter 125A, will have assignments designed to meet the needs of IEP/504 plans.

- Throughout Distance Learning, the classroom teacher will be the main resource for help on assignments and lessons. If a child ordinarily leaves the classroom and goes to another teacher for math, reading, or other related service, then the specialist teacher will provide the instruction/material for that specific service.
- When a Distance Learning plan cannot completely replicate an in-session school day, educators will provide the support needed by particular students. For instance, if reading is a challenge for a student and the student has online access, the teacher may assign tasks on sites that will read text aloud.
- All assignments will be posted by 9:00 a.m. with teachers available to answer questions via email throughout the day until 3:30 p.m.

## **FOR PARENTS**

- Parents should visit with their child's teachers regarding the expectation for Distance Learning. If required, special arrangements for students should be worked out prior to the first Distance Learning day.
- Parents, along with teachers and students, are asked to remember that Distance learning days are designed to be flexible: if a child struggles with a concept or assignment and is unable to complete the work that day, parents should remind their student to communicate with the teacher about how to meet requirements. For younger learners, parents please be in contact with the teacher.
- Parents should contact teachers directly with any questions or concerns they may have regarding Distance Learning assignments.

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## **FOR TEACHERS**

In preparation for COVID-19 Distance Learning Days, teachers in grades PK-12 have been asked to:

- Familiarize students with SeeSaw or Google Classroom so they will be able to access and complete any online assignments.
- Provide a timely plan, posting work for the day by 9:00 a.m.
- Plan for self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration for age and individual learning needs.
- Anticipate time requirements recognizing students learn at different paces, especially in an independent setting.
- Customize learning opportunities with a focus on supporting troubleshooting for students with digital challenges.
- Communicate with colleagues to ensure common expectations, communications, and protocols

**During contracted hours on Distance Learning Days, all teachers have been asked to:**

- Check SeeSaw and/or email throughout the **Distance Learning days from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**
- Reply to student and parent communication in a timely manner.
- Contact families weekly with a phone call, when possible, and see how the learning is going for the students
- **Professional Development:** This contracted time should also be utilized to continue staff development goals:
  - **Develop Appropriate Lessons to Meet Outcomes** -- Staff should use time throughout the day to work individually or in teams (virtual teaming through Google Hangouts is a great option) to continue developing lessons that meet the standards being covered..
  - **SeeSaw/Google Classroom** -- Staff should use open time throughout the day to work on SeeSaw or Google Classroom.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING ESSENTIALS**

### **Structure & routines**

Building structure is important for all of us as we navigate more time at home together. Review the article below for ideas on creating structure at home, and a sample schedule for your days together. A good structure provides comfort and certainty for everyone.

## **Creating Structure at Home**

Creating a structure at home is one of the best things we can do as we navigate the current situation and more time together. Developing a structure offers a sense of comfort and control and helps the day go more smoothly. The key elements in creating structure are consistency, predictability, and follow-through. Here are some ideas for building structure:

- **Create Routines** – Our children thrive on routine. Consider keeping their regular bedtime and morning routines, sitting down for lunch at the same time as they do at school, and writing out a daily schedule so that they know the plan for the day. Keeping these small things consistent can help our kids to feel regulated, calm and make a potentially scary situation feel much more predictable.
- **Schedule Play and Down Time** – While the home is often seen as a place to relax and have fun, scheduling play or downtime may help kids to feel like there is more of a routine. An average day at elementary schools fluctuates between time spent on learning, time to process and reflect, and time to have some fun. With an extended stay at home, it may help to touch on all of these activities. Scheduled play and downtime allow for a child to predict when they will have a break to move their bodies and decompress.

- **Use Screens Wisely** – Many parents will no doubt be working from home and have significant to-do lists of their own. While watching movies and favorite TV shows is likely, explore educational screen-based options as part of your child's day.
- **Move Your Body** – Getting outside for some fresh air is a great option. Here are also some creative ways to make sure our kids have time for movement. Consider options like [GoNoodle.com](http://GoNoodle.com), or [Cosmickids.com](http://Cosmickids.com) for whole-body movement. For options other than video-based activities, consider things like building a pillow fort, keeping balloons off of the ground, having a dance party or setting up a home-made obstacle course.
- **Build Life Skills** – Consider spending this time teaching some skills in the home: have kids help do a whole load of laundry from start to finish, work through a recipe together or other household tasks. All of these experiences build independence in children.
- **Work on Organizational Skills** – Problem-solving, time management, and goal setting are all important life skills. Provide sorting activities, have a child create their own schedule, set a daily goal, practice telling time or play some problem-solving games such as Heads-up, Charades or Guess Who.

**This sample schedule offers ideas organizing days into categories with possible ideas in each category. It is intended to support families in creating their own schedules.**

### Sample Schedule

Time	Activity	Ideas
Before 9 a.m.	Wake Up	Eat breakfast; get dressed; make your bed; put pj's away, create a list for the day, etc.
9:00-9:30	Movement	Go for a walk, do a little yoga, Go Noodle, etc.
9:30-11:00	Academic Time	Sudoku puzzles, crossword puzzles, journal, jigsaw puzzles, offline learning, etc.
11:00-12:00	Creative Time	Music, crafting, lego building, cooking, drawing, building blocks, create a topic bingo board, etc.
12:00-12:45	Lunch	Prepare, eat and clean up
12:45-1:15	Chore-Time	Wipe up kitchen counters and chairs, pick up bedroom, household tasks, pick up toys or materials, etc.
1:15-2:15	Quiet Learning	Reading, storytime, etc.
2:15-3:30	Academic	Online learning such as educational shows, iPad apps, etc.

	Time	
3:30-4:30	Afternoon Activities	Go for a walk, bike ride with family, outdoor scavenger hunt, play outside with family, build a fort, mindfulness activities, etc.
4:30-5:30	Free Time	Select activities and ideas that fit this time
5:30-6:15	Dinner	Prepare, eat and clean up
6:30-8:00	Family Time	Vary activities - this might rotate each evening and include movie night, puppet show, board game night, card games, family reading, etc.
8:00	Bedtime Routines	