



## Parent Tips for Upper School Distance Learning

### 1. SET UP A SPACE FOR STUDENT LEARNING AND WORK

- Try to identify a consistent, distraction-free, clutter-free area that can be your child's place for learning and doing their work.
- A desk, the kitchen table, a counter can work. A bed is not ideal and should be discouraged.
- Reduce clutter to help students focus.
- Try to enforce no phones in study spaces.
- Provide easy access to books, a computer, and supplies they need.
- Offer noise-cancelling headphones--ask if your student would like to use headphones to better focus when working. Here is a link to the kind we use at school: [headphones](#)
- Discourage music; research suggests that music without lyrics may be helpful but when listening to familiar music with lyrics while studying, your brain is multi-tasking <https://www.theguardian.com/>
- Make a portable work station, if desired: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home>

### 2. CREATE ROUTINES AND A STRUCTURE

- Routines are helpful for kids of all ages. They also are helpful for parents.
- It's okay to allow teens to sleep a bit longer than usual but do try to have regular wake-up and bed-times.
- As students get used to managing their work, help your child set up their daily schedule--at the start of the day is ideal. Over time they may need less support from you as they become more self-directed.
- Have predictable times each weekday for family-connection breaks, free-form breaks, meals, and end of the day connection. Include those times in the schedule.

### 3. CREATE A DAILY PLAN

- Check [LaunchPad](#) with your child at least for the first week or until they can do it on their own.
- Students should transfer all their assignments off LaunchPad in some way.
- They can do this in their planner, on a whiteboard, or with this tool:  
[BPC distance learning assignments sheet and schedule -week of Mar 16](#)  
Help your child fill in the current work tab on the doc, either making an online copy and pasting in assignments from LaunchPad, or printing it out and transferring LaunchPad assignments in writing.

[6th grade](#) (scroll down a bit)

[7th grade](#)

[8th grade](#)

- Once students have their assignments with due dates, help them prioritize what to start with, organizing by:
  - What is due first
  - What is more difficult. If your child is struggling with certain subjects, such as math or writing, they may want to start on those in the morning when they are more alert.
  - Kids still may want to try it their way, but you can offer the gentle suggestion.
- Once they have prioritized assignments:
  - Print out the schedule tab [BPC distance learning assignments sheet and schedule -week of Mar 16](#) which indicates online office hours with teachers, mandatory advisory meetings, and due dates.
  - Have them decide if they will meet with teachers online, note what is mandatory, and then plug in work times and breaks (some long and some shorter) into their daily schedule.
- Tack the daily plan nearby so they can keep track.
  - Set a timer for work and for breaks. You may want to consider a visual countdown timer like this one [visual timer](#) so your child sees when they get a break, or this online timer is also good: <http://www.tomatotimers.com/>
- Know that most teachers are assigning work on Mon and Wed. It is not necessarily meant to be finished in one sitting.
  - If, after 30 minutes, your child has not completed an assignment, move the rest of that assignment to the next day. We know that students need different amounts of time to complete work.
  - Children should email their teacher, cc-ing their advisors to let them know if they need an extension beyond the due date.

#### 4. **SCHEDULE BREAKS THAT HAVE PREDICTABLE CHECK-INS AND CONNECTION TIMES**

- It depends on the person, but research shows that many people can focus in 25-minute chunks.
- Plan out breaks in advance. This can be super helpful for parents trying to regulate screen time.
- Coach has suggestions for PE activities listed on LaunchPad. These are great brain breaks.
- Know that there will be times when you and your children get frustrated. Don't be discouraged! Take an unplanned break. Try to get outside for some sunshine and fresh air while maintaining a safe distance from others.

#### 5. **CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS IN ADVANCE:**

- Brainstorm “what to do in case of” with your child and create a list so that you are not constantly being disrupted. If they know that every 1 ½ hours you will check in, they may be able to get through moments of being stuck. This is especially important for parents who are trying to work from home.
  - For example: What do I do if I'm stuck on a problem? What to do if I run out of paper, What do I do if the printer jams?
- If your student needs support in avoiding screen time temptations/distractions, try: <http://selfcontrolapp.com/>

#### 6. **MAKE TIME FOR REFLECTION**

- Plan a check-in with kids at least at the end of the day to discuss what went well and what didn't.
- For example, this might be the moment that you ask them, “How did it go starting with math this morning?” Be ready to offer suggestions if they need support and know that they still may need to try it their way.

#### 7. **SELF-CARE**

- Try to make time each day for positive family time (board games, baking projects, read alouds, etc.).
- Exercise and physical activity daily, if possible. Lots of evidence that exercise helps us think better.
- Meditation can be a very helpful mental health tool. Calm and Insight timer are two very good apps for this. Spirit Rock ([spiritrock.org](http://spiritrock.org)) offers streamed meditation and classes.

- Limit exposure to the news. Bring the news into your family conversations, but don't let it take over.

#### 8. **KEEP IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY**

- Social distancing does not mean emotional distancing; use technology to allow you and your child to connect widely with family and friends.
- BPC is looking for ways to further connect families. Look for more information coming.
- Reach out to us at [distancelearninghelp@blackpinecircle.org](mailto:distancelearninghelp@blackpinecircle.org) if you need more guidance, have questions or suggestions. We are working to respond as quickly as possible.

#### 9. **OTHER RESOURCES**

- Keep calm and create structure: [makesociallearningstick.com](http://makesociallearningstick.com)
- <https://www.understood.org>