
Aspiranet

~August 2020~

Monthly Regulation Topic

Distance Learning

Governor Newsom recently announced a school distance learning plan with state guidelines on when schools may resume in person learning. Schools located in counties that are on the County Monitoring List must not physically open for in-person instruction until their county has come off the Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days. Schools in counties that have not been on the Monitoring List for the prior 14 days may begin in-person instruction, following public health guidelines. Due to the current spike in COVID-19 cases, according to these new rules a majority of California students will begin the school year on distance learning. These guidelines apply to public and private schools.

Distance Learning Requirements

To address needs related to distance learning, the state has passed a budget with additional funding and set requirements for schools to provide grade-appropriate instruction. Under new state law, school districts are required to provide:

- Devices and connectivity so that every child can participate in distance learning.
- Daily live interaction for every child with teachers and other students.
- Class assignments that are challenging and equivalent to in-person instruction.
- Targeted supports and interventions for English learners and special education students.

This means schools must provide meaningful instruction that includes daily, live interaction and assignments similar to in-class experience.

Requirements When Schools Re-Open

As noted, safe in-person school will resume based upon local health data - when a county is no longer on the County Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days then schools can reopen.

Return to in-class instruction will require the following per the California Dept. of Public Health:

- All staff and students in 3rd grade and above will be required to wear a mask or face covering. Students in 2nd grade and below are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering. Schools have been provided child-sized masks, in the event a child does not have.
- Social distancing (6 feet) between adults and children is required, as much as practically possible. Anyone entering the school must do a health screening, and any student or staff with a fever or other symptoms will be immediately sent home. Also requires that if anyone in a student or school staff member's household is sick, the student or staff member should also stay home.
- CDPH also recommends staff in every California school be tested for COVID-19 periodically based on local disease trends and as testing capacity allows.

When Open Schools Must Close

CDPH issued updated guidance for when schools must physically close and revert to distance learning due to COVID-19 infections as follows:

- When a confirmed COVID-19 positive person was at school during his or her infectious period, other exposed students and staff should be quarantined for 14 days, such as those in a classroom.

- The entire school site should revert to distance learning when multiple cohorts have cases or 5 % of students and staff test positive within a 14-day period.
- The school district should revert to distance learning when 25 % or more of its schools have been physically closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days. Closure decisions should be made in consultation with local health officers. After 14 days, school districts may return to in-person instruction with the approval of the local public health officer.

To read the full details on California’s school distance learning plan, go to this [LINK](#).

Distance Learning Support for Children and Parents

There is not doubt that closed schools and distance learning can be challenging for students and parents alike. No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or subject matter experts! It’s important to set clear and realistic expectations for both your child(ren) and yourself. Please consult with your Aspiranet Social Worker for support and advocacy if you or your child(ren) are experiencing obstacles or struggles. Please also review the following suggestions:

1. Establish routines and expectations:

During distance learning, it is important to develop and maintain a household “school” routine and schedule. Establish a set time to wake, get dressed, have breakfast, etc. along with a start time for learning. It’s ok to be flexible and adjust schedules to meet everyone’s needs. The main goal is follow a routine and provide structure. Build in breaks, just like recess, with snacks, lunchtime, and some outside and active time each day. Keep typical “school” household mealtimes, bedtimes, and rules for screen time/digital devices. Check in with your children and talk about how it’s working over time; make adjustments as needed.

2. Choose a good place to learn:

Your family’s regular space for homework might not work for distance learning, particularly with virtual classes. As possible, locate a space in your home that’s dedicated to school-focused activities. Ideally it is quiet, free from distractions and has a good internet connection. Make sure an adult monitors online learning. Keep doors open, and practice good digital safety.

3. Stay in touch:

If not already communicated by the school/teacher(s), ask your child’s teacher(s) how best to communicate with them and establish a method for regular communication. Encourage your older children and youth to find the help they need to be successful, and when needed, step in to assist with communication with teachers.

4. Begin and end the day by checking-in:

It is can be very useful to have daily check-in’s to help your child(ren) to process instructions they received from their teachers and help them organize themselves and set priorities. As we know, not all students thrive in distance learning; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid later challenges and help students develop self-management skills.

In the morning, you might ask:

- What classes or assignments do you have today?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?

At the end of the day you might ask:

- How far did you get on your assignments today?
- What went well? What was hard?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?

- 5. Give your child (and yourself) a break:** Your child's teacher does not want your child to be frustrated with or miserable about learning. Teachers spend time trying to make lessons interesting, and to tailor instruction to provide the right level of challenge for their students. If something is too challenging, or your child has hit a frustration level, it's okay to stop the activity and give them a break. It's also okay to slow down the pace, which means giving your child time to think and process information. It also means participating in segments of learning one at a time rather than trying to tackle a whole lesson in one sitting. You can give yourself permission to pick that lesson back up another time or another day.
- 6. Make Adjustments as needed:** Consider working with your child on those activities or subjects that are more difficult during the times of day when your child is most alert and engaged. Learning material that is easier for a child, and therefore moved through more quickly, can be completed at a different time (such as in the afternoon or even another day). It's also helpful to share with your teacher what is working best for you and your child.
- 7. Encourage movement:** Kids need to move their bodies frequently throughout the day. Allow time for exercise before your child is expected to focus on a distance learning task. Some children are able to better focus on tasks when standing. Consider having space with a raised surface so that your child can stand.
- 8. Provide immediate positive feedback:** Each time your child completes distance learning instruction/assignment, provide immediate and positive feedback! Something as simple as putting a check mark, star, or sticker on the work assignment can go a long way in helping to motivate your child. And don't forget to celebrate yourself, as you are playing such an important role to help your child learn and grow.
Examples of rewards: verbal praise; stickers; choose a movie; gaming time; choose a family activity; a treat such as ice cream, candy, or a popsicle, play with a special toy; free choice time; or an extra 15 minutes to play before bedtime.
- 9. Establish times for quiet and personal space:** For families with children of different ages, and parents who may also be unexpectedly working from home more often, it's good to build in some time for peace and quiet. Siblings may need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Many families will need to negotiate access to devices, priorities for wi-fi bandwidth and schedules throughout the day. Noise-cancelling headphones are an idea. Work together to find ways to prevent 'down time' from becoming just more 'screen time'. Encourage quiet time with reading or other quiet activities, such as art, journaling, etc.

Links to Free Educational Resources:

Distance Learning Resources —California Dept. of Education

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/distancelearnresources.asp>

350+ Free Online Learning Resources for children of all ages

<https://www.weareteachers.com/free-online-learning-resources/>

Sources:

Office of Governor

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/>

Johns Hopkins School of Education

<https://education.jhu.edu/2020/04/8tipsforfocus/>

ACS International School Parents Guide to Distance Learning

<https://www.acs-schools.com/parents-guide-distance-learning>

Please sign and return this page to your Aspiranet Social Worker for training credit.

My signature below indicates that I have completed the August 2020 "Distance Learning" training.

Signature Foster Parent #1

Date

Print Name Foster Parent #1

Signature Foster Parent #2

Date

Print Name Foster Parent #2

Aspiranet Authorized Signature

Date

Training credit: _____ minutes