



Nutley Public Schools

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Nutley, NJ 07110

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March 19, 2020

Dear Nutley Parents and Staff,

We've almost completed our first week of Virtual Learning. We thank you for your patience and flexibility as we all work to figure out this unique time together.

Routine will be important to keep education going during the next week and potentially longer.

It may be helpful to make sure your students wake up at the same time, every day, shower, eat breakfast, and get dressed to prepare for a school day. And, while it may be harder for some to adapt to this at first, it will become normal again to attend school, just at home. It will also be an easier transition when we return to school, and work.

Although flexibility is one of the many strengths of virtual learning, children (and parents) benefit from having structure in their lives. With a schedule, you and your child can develop a daily and weekly rhythm—no surprises, no arguments—so your student can focus on learning. Knowing the district's stated expectations, and that each lesson for grades 3-12 is approximately 40 minutes, can help you to plan. You should also factor in if your child needs extra time to navigate modifications and/or accommodations. The [Nutley Public Health Related School Closure Plan](#), and the [School Closure Special Education Preparedness Plan](#), have additional information on expectations. Both are posted on the website. Many of the following tips for developing routines are inspired by Denise Kale, a virtual learning coach from Arizona.

1. Try different schedules until you find one that works. If you create a schedule that doesn't seem to be working well for you or your student, don't give up! Find which one is the most successful for your child, knowing it might take several attempts, but finding a routine that works for you. There is no pressure or to have the virtual learning figured out immediately, as the staff and teachers understand that families will need some time to adjust. So do we!
2. What are your child's natural tendencies and preferences? If your daughter is an early bird, you may want to plan to do her most challenging subjects early in the day, when she's at her best. On the other hand, if your son is a night owl, you may want to arrange a later start time, with the more involved topics covered in the afternoon.
3. What are your child's favorite subjects? Some families prefer to get a positive start each day by beginning with a student's favorite subject. Others place the favorite courses last, as an incentive for completing the rest.
4. Everyone needs a break! Having a schedule will also help you remember that children—and adults—need breaks for physical activity, lunch, and play. Just as anyone who spends a long period of time on a task or assignment gets tired, students can quickly lose energy if they don't stop to rest their brain every once in a while. Make sure that your child still has time for hobbies and activities and gets fresh air. It's also vital that students stay connected in some way with friends even though we are social distancing. I've heard of some students using Facetime to play a board game with a friend. It's time to get creative.

5. Pay attention to your child's attention span. If your child has a shorter attention span and moves easily from subject to subject, a conventional schedule may work well. But if your child has trouble "shifting gears," he or she may benefit from working on one subject for larger chunks of time. Please see [this link](#) to sample Virtual School Learning Schedules .

Once you have your daily schoolwork routine set, be sure to discuss it with your children. By setting and clearly communicating your agreed-upon schedule and daily expectations, you and your children should be able to complete the daily learning with minimal distractions—and fewer debates! And parents will be able to get some of their work done, too!

Please also note that the new date for elementary report cards for the second trimester is April 2. They will post on Realtime at 4pm.

We ask that you check your email and the district website daily for ongoing communications. And as always, send along technology issues to VirtualLearning@nutleyschools.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Glazer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Dr. Julie Glazer