



Public Schools of the Tarrytowns

Rigor, Responsibility and Respect - Personalized Learning by Design

Learning From Home

GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

This document will be updated regularly as new information is available. Changes will be noted.

Note: Due to the dynamic nature of our current environment, we anticipate changes to this document. We will continue to update this guide, and make notations of these updates for as long as our students are Distance Learning. We will update the date on the cover page to alert you to changes. Of course, significant changes will also be shared via e-mail and/or website posts.



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Contacts & Communication

District Communication

The district will continue to update the community through our notifications systems of emails, robo-calls, and posting to the district website: <https://www.tufsd.org/>. Principals will communicate building-specific information, and teachers will update families with class-specific information as they do when classes are in session.

General Questions about Distance Learning

For general questions about Distance Learning, please contact Dr. Ronald Gonzalez, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at rgonzalez@tufsd.org .

Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services

Questions about Special Education and other PPS Services including but not limited to counseling, nursing, and clinical support, should be directed to:

- Scott Dorn - Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services - sdorn@tufsd.org
- Robin Tepper - Supervisor of Special Education - rtepper@tufsd.org

Teacher & Administrator Communication

The best way to reach teachers and administrators during an extended closure is **by e-mail**.

- Sleepy Hollow High School [Staff Directory](#)
- Sleepy Hollow Middle School [Staff Directory](#)
- Washington Irving School [Staff Directory](#)
- W. L Morse School [Staff Directory](#)
- John Paulding School [Staff Directory](#)

Other Questions

Additional information can be provided by your child's principal:



Sleepy Hollow High School	Debbie Brand	dbrand@tufsd.org
Sleepy Hollow Middle School	Joshua Whitham	jwhitham@tufsd.org

Washington Irving School	Thomas Holland	tholland@tufsd.org
W.L. Morse School	Torrance Walley	twalley@tufsd.org
John Paulding School	Maureen Barnett	mbarnett@tufsd.org

Introduction to Distance Learning

As we transition to the new frontier of Distance Learning, we will do our best to support and engage our students through meaningful and thoughtful learning experiences. With our investment in technology, professional learning, and multi-year focus on the meaningful integration of technology, we are well-positioned to engage in Distance Learning experiences with our students. With some practice, feedback, adjustments along the way, and your support, we are confident that we can design increasingly powerful learning activities from afar. We ask for your patience as we refine our systems, and transition to Distance Learning.

To the extent possible, we will emphasize technology platforms that are familiar to students. Learning objectives will be communicated to students with each lesson. Content and skills will be introduced in a variety of ways. Teachers will track student progress to ensure participation and check-in with students and parents. We will provide age-appropriate ways for students to interact with their teacher and with other students via video, audio, chat, or discussion boards. Teachers will continue to assess student progress and provide timely feedback. Administrators, counselors and other support personnel will continue to support our families. Although we have transitioned to a virtual world, we will continue to provide the layers of support and connectivity to which you have become accustomed.

What Parents and Students Can Expect

Teachers will be in communication with their students on a daily basis. They will provide activities, guidance and expectations. They will communicate via a number of different platforms. Email will always be a consistent form of communication, and if our students or parents need to be in touch with a teacher or administrator, email will be the most effective mechanism as long as our schools remain closed.



Essential Questions

We have used the following three questions to guide our Distance Learning professional development with our teachers and leaders. As your teacher shares the specifics of their plan with you, please use these questions as a framework to understand the essential parts of Distance Learning. If the answers to these questions are unclear to you or your child, please contact your child's teacher.

- How will students access instructional plans and materials?
- How will students receive assignments, submit work and get feedback?
- How will students collaborate with their teacher and with each other?

Effective Distance Learning Practices

The fundamentals of teaching and learning hold true in our classrooms as well as in a Distance Learning environment. We will make every effort to hold true to these fundamentals.

- Lesson objectives will be clearly communicated to students.
- Content and skills will be introduced and reinforced in a variety of ways.
- Collaboration is an important part of learning. Students will have opportunities to interact with their teacher and with other students, via video, audio, chat, and/or discussions.
- A variety of formative (during the learning) and summative (after the learning) assessments will be intentionally planned, and made clear to students. Timely feedback will be given.
- Teachers are encouraged to engage in two synchronous or asynchronous opportunities per week with their students.

Supporting Distance Learning at Home

Daily Schedule

We know that it's important for students to have structure during the day. We are also very conscious of the fact that every family situation is different at the moment. This is one of those rare opportunities when families can truly individualize schedules in ways that make sense for the lives of each individual. A schedule of planned learning activities has been shared at the building level.

So rather than impose a uniform schedule, we suggest the following:



- Create blocks of time for focus on academics and electives/specials. These could be from 45 to 90 minutes depending on the age of the child. This will be broken down into chunks of time that is developmentally appropriate for our younger students.
- Decide in advance what subject should be the focus during each block. Limit distractions during this time.
- Make sure there are real breaks between those blocks, when physical activity should be encouraged.
- Make sure there is time for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. To the extent possible, this should be social time whether with family or with friends via phone or video-conference. Don't let school work interfere with meal times.
- Encourage children to be outside regularly, while paying attention to all the social distancing and other health guidelines we are receiving.

Work Space

Again, we know that each family situation will be different, so these are recommendations:

- Try to create a dedicated work space for each child, where there is a desk/table, access to necessary technology and other typical school resources (paper, pencils, etc.).
- Try not to have the workspace be the child's bedroom.
- Try to have the space be in a quiet but not entirely isolated location (so that the student is aware of but not distracted by adult supervision).

Work Completion

It will be important for students to make every effort to stay current with the work their teachers are providing. We have asked our teachers to create windows of time when work can be submitted rather than hard and fast deadlines. Again, we recognize that every family situation will be different. We want our students to know that completion of their work continues to be important while minimizing additional stress during these challenging times.

Grading

Initially, we asked teachers to mark individual assignments for completion rather than for a grade. Teachers will provide feedback to students and students are encouraged to ask questions.

Our secondary students (6-12) are receiving credit/grades for both completion and accuracy where applicable.

We have also organized teams at both the elementary and secondary level to consider how best to determine fourth quarter and final grades for our students. We understand the varied and considerable impact this transition to *Learning from Home* has had upon our students and families. For this reason, we



need to balance compassion for this unprecedented experience, while encouraging the engagement of all students during *Learning from Home*. The elementary schools will transition from using a standard-based report card (1-4) to the categories of Consistent, Inconsistent and No Progress. While our middle and high school will utilize an interval grading system and the weighting of quarters will be adjusted.

Communication

Students can expect to hear from their teachers regularly and we believe the mechanisms for communicating back will be apparent. If they are not, all teacher emails can be found in the [Faculty and Staff Directory](#).

While our schools are closed, we recommend that families NOT use our school telephone system. We cannot ensure that messages will be monitored on a regular basis.

All staff will make every effort to respond to emails within a 24 hour period.

Parental Involvement

The Distance Learning environment adds a new level of complexity when it comes to parent involvement in the learning process. Only you, your child, and your teacher can find the right balance of parental involvement. In most cases, our recommendation is to give your child just a touch more independence that you may be comfortable with. As parents, we have a tendency to want to intervene as watching our children struggle is hard. Watching them deal with frustration or even failure is harder still.

Nevertheless, we know that struggle is an important part of learning. Although we may be inclined to contact a teacher about a trouble spot, teaching our students how to self-advocate is an important skill. There is no one right way to be involved in supporting your child. Strive to find the “just right spot” and then slowly back away as your child becomes more skillful. Working together, we can use this Distance Learning experience as a way to support the development of self-advocacy and independence in our students.

Consider convening a family meeting to discuss how and when you will communicate with one another. How often will you discuss schoolwork? How involved will you be, when and how. What will be the parent’s responsibility and what will be the students. For high school age students, typically, we might recommend a “school business meeting” happen once a week. Since this is a new way of teaching and learning, you should start more frequently and adjust depending upon how things are going. Instead of general questions like “How’s it



going?” consider asking specific questions like “What was challenging for you today?” or “What have you learned about yourself as you tried Distance Learning for the first time?”

If Things Get Tough

Spending nearly all of your time together during an unprecedented pandemic is bound to elicit a wide range of emotions. Greeting your child's feelings with acceptance and empathy, as well as modeling acceptance of your own emotional state, will help them to more quickly self-regulate. You've got to “Name it to Tame it” or the emotion will become stronger and last longer.

Reach out for Support - your school staff may not be in the building, but they are still available to families. Use email to contact any of our counselors or clinicians. If you are not sure who to contact, reach out to your principal and they can connect you with someone who can help.

Technology Access & Usage

Access to and use of technology will be an important part of Distance Learning. Although an incredible tool for learning and connection, technology use does not come without significant concerns related to security, privacy, appropriate use and more. We will need your help to ensure that our students maximize the positive impact of technology use in their lives while minimizing the potential negative consequences. There are many online resources which can help you strike this balance in your home as we strive to do the same each day while students were in our classrooms.

The amount of time students spend on screens weighed heavily in our decisions related to the recommended length of each instructional module provided. Our goal was to balance the importance of delivering appropriate instruction without excessive screen-time. Adjustments to these guidelines will be made as we receive feedback from students, parents and teachers.

Technology Help Desk

If you are experiencing trouble connecting, logging-in or accessing a required program, please email

Jean O'Brien jobrien@tufsd.org

Daniel Larkin dlarkin@tufsd.org



Supported Technology Platforms

Teachers have been encouraged to use a variety of found, and created, content to review and deliver new instructional material. The list below, although not exhaustive, contains district approved and commonly used technology tools.

John Paulding	Morse	WI	SHMS	SHHS
Raz-Kids	GoogleClassroom	GoogleClassroom	GoogleClassroom	GoogleClassroom
BookCreator	Google Apps for Education			
Pearson Realize	Brainpop Jr.	IXL	IXL	Castle Learning
Google Meet	Book Creator	Brainpop	MyOn	Brainpop
	Kodable	Book Creator	Storyboard That	Kahoot
	Pearson Realize	Typing Club	Brainpop	Nearpod
	Raz-Kids	Pearson SuccessNet	Book Creator	Webassign
	WeVideo	WeVideo	Google Meet	Google Meet
	Google Meet	Google Meet		

Student Expectations While Distance Learning*

Teachers and students should follow these guidelines to ensure productive, respectful class time through all of our Distance Learning platforms.

- **Practice Social Distancing.** The reason we have turned to Distance Learning is to practice social distancing, in order to prevent the spread of the virus. Please do not congregate at each other’s homes to do work, socialize, etc. — we want you to stay safe and healthy.
- **Everyone is visible in a synchronous videoconference.** Students should dress appropriately and should be in a comfortable work space with their iPad or laptop. It should be a quiet place with minimal distraction. The background should be appropriate for a child’s learning environment.
- **Focus and engage.** While in a synchronous videoconference, the microphone should be muted and released only when speaking in the virtual class. Keep your video conference platform open and do not navigate to other tabs or web pages unless directed by the teacher.



- **Respect.** Respect the privacy of other participants. Do not take screenshots or pictures of your teacher or fellow students. Do not make any audio or video recordings. These behaviors violate our policies and could result in disciplinary action. Also the use of headphones when engaging in a voice/video chat, will help to ensure the privacy of others.

Teachers will communicate to the administration inappropriate behavior that violates our Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Student Code of Conduct. Appropriate action will be enforced if necessary.

REMINDER: Audio or video recording of a TUFSD Staff member without his/her permission is a violation of the District Code of Conduct.

**Adapted from Fordham Preparatory School and CCSD LIFE School*

Staff Availability

We recognize that synchronous (real time) opportunities for student-teacher interaction are an important part of the teaching and learning process. We also realize the complexity of this in the virtual environment. All educators will be available and will identify how they will provide daily, timely and thorough feedback. Staff office hours are posted on each school's website. Acceptable platforms may include video-conferencing, conference calling, a discussion board, chat room, etc. This time may be structured by appointments or drop-in interactions, as appropriate. Each teacher will communicate with students their specific availability during the school day, providing and posting an announced opportunity each day for students who need direct instruction

Standardized Assessments

Details regarding the administration of assessments is changing frequently. Please consult the official webpages of each organization for the most up-to-date information.

[NYS Education Department Coronavirus](#)

For questions about the assessments list below, please reach out to your child's counselor (Grades 5-8) or your principal (Grades 3-4).



Grade 3-8 State Assessments

The administration of the 3-8 State Assessments has been [suspended](#) by the New York State Education Department and will not be rescheduled.

Regents Exams

The administration of the Regents examinations have been suspended by the New York State Education and will not be rescheduled.

AP Exams

Our teachers and administrators will continue to monitor updates from the College Board and communicate with our students and families as appropriate. The College Board is posting updates here:

[AP Updates for Schools Impacted by Coronavirus](#)

SAT Exams

The College Board is posting updates here: [SAT Coronavirus Updates](#)

For Students Who Were Unable to Take the March SAT OR were registered to take the May SAT:

- The College Board has cancelled the May SAT and all March rescheduled test dates.
- Families who registered for the May SAT will receive a full refund. They need to register for the June SAT as quickly as possible, as we anticipate a high volume of students and test sites reaching capacity sooner than usual.
- Registration for the fall testing dates will open in July
- For students who need to take Subject Tests, we recommend prioritizing the June test date for the SAT and to plan on taking Subject Tests in the fall. If students have already taken the SAT and feel good about their scores, they can use the June test date as their opportunity to take Subject Tests

ACT Exams

ACT.org is posting updates here: [ACT Coronavirus FAQ](#)

- The ACT has announced that the April ACT has been cancelled nation-wide. Students who registered for April will receive an email about being able to reschedule for an upcoming test for free – either for June or a future test date.



- Families should consider registering for the July test date, if their schedules permit. Note that there are fewer test sites available.
- Fall test date registration will open in July

Special Education Services

During a school closure, we are committed to supporting our students who receive additional services.

Special Education

As we start Distance Learning, we will make every effort to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the same opportunities as students without disabilities, including the provision of a free appropriate public education. To the greatest extent possible, students with IEPs will receive supports and services that will address their individual identified needs and track their progress toward achieving their IEP goals. Please understand that our exceptional circumstances may affect how a particular service is provided. More information can be found here: Department of Education - [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#). Additional guidance from the Federal Department of Education and Special Education Office of the New York State Education Department is expected in the near future.

Collaboration will continue between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher to support the needs of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Students who have IEPs will have access to all Distance Learning with supports based on their IEP. Your child's special education teacher (case manager) will be providing these additional supports to your child through the provision of online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities. These services will closely track your child's progress toward their IEP goals.

Related Service Providers

(Related Services such as, but not limited to, Reading, Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Counseling and Physical Therapy)

Related service providers will develop a distance learning instructional plan to meet the needs of each individual student on their caseload. To the best of their ability, related service providers who are providing IEP mandated services will continue to support all



students in their progress toward goals. The method of service provision will be tailored to the family and student's needs and may include email/phone consultation, video sessions, zoom meetings, instructional videos, etc. These services will closely monitor your child's progress.

Related service providers will structure communication plans to work with students and parents. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's case manager and/or related service provider, if you have questions.

*The plan for instructional services for students with disabilities will continue to be monitored and revised based on any updated guidance we receive from the Federal Department of Education and the Office of Special Education of the New York State Education Department.

CSE/CPSE & Section 504 meetings

During this time of school closing, we will be using a platform called Google Meet for CSE/CPSE/Section 504 meetings. This platform will provide the opportunity for you to connect via video, voice or both. You will be receiving an email from the special education office that will include a link with which you can connect to the meeting on the scheduled date and time. You can connect for video and/or voice, or use the call in number to conference call. All of the information you need to know to connect in the manner you prefer will be included in the link provided in the email. Just click on the link and join. You will have already received the meeting packet via email, ensuring your ability to meaningfully participate in the meeting.

Section 504 accommodations will continue to be provided, as applicable, to students' distance learning plans.

Support Services

School Counselors

Counselors will maintain a schedule with their students during this time. They will attend to course planning, transitional planning, post secondary admissions processes and support students and families remotely as needed. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's school counselor if you have questions or if your child needs additional support.



English as a New Language (ENL)

ENL teachers will work with the classroom teachers to develop an instructional plan to meet the needs of each individual student on their caseload. To the best of their ability, ENL teachers will continue to support all students per the required frequency. The method of delivery will be tailored to the family and student's needs and may include email/phone consultation, video sessions, zoom meetings, instructional videos, etc. These services will closely monitor your child's progress toward their goal of English proficiency.

To ensure regular communication about progress, ENL Teachers will work with parents to develop a plan for regular check-ins. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's ENL teacher if you have questions.

Athletics

As of March 16, 2020, all athletic competitions and practices have been cancelled on the guidance of the New York State Public School Athletic Association. This includes all the community and outside organizations that use our District's facilities. Athletes and Parents are encouraged to stay active on SportsYou for up to date information and valuable resources that can help us during this time of crisis.

We anticipate an update from section one on the status of spring sports before April break.

For questions about athletics, please reach out to:

Director of Health, Physical Education & Athletics, Michael Arias at marias@tufsd.org

School Facilities

ALL DISTRICT FACILITIES are CLOSED. For health, safety and sanitary reasons -- and to encourage social distancing -- this includes community use of District playgrounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, and track. In addition, all activities and events scheduled to take place in the District are cancelled, except for the Board of Education meeting on March 26, 2020. While this meeting will be closed to in-person public attendance, a livestream video link will be made available.

Special Thanks to:

Kasey Bell: Shake Up Learning Byram Hills Central School District, The e-Learning Guide for Parents Katonah Lewisboro School District, Distance Learning Handbook Somers Central School District, Distance Learning Guide for Families, iLearning Guide for Families Chappaqua Central School District