



REMOTE LEARNING GUIDE

Elementary/Secondary



August 31, 2020

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1. UCDSB Remote Learning Options for 2020-2021

UCDSB provides the following overview of available Remote Learning Options for the 2020-2021 school year.

| Remote Learning Option | Key Factors | How learning takes place |
|--|---|--|
| Remote Synchronous (Digital learning, in real-time, from home) | ->Access to a teacher in their regular school for synchronous learning. -> Connecting with their in-person classmates. | Instruction is provided through the local school and the child’s classroom teacher, through a live video stream. |
| Remote Asynchronous: Digital (Digital learning, not in real time, from home) | Digital access (email, phone, etc.) to a teacher during scheduled times and by appointment. | Instruction and support provided by District staff on assignment with the UCDSB Virtual School. |
| Remote Asynchronous: Non-Digital (Learning is completely offline, at home, using print materials) | Printed booklets for students to complete and return to a Virtual School teacher. | Instruction and support provided by District staff with the UCDSB Virtual School. |

2. Definitions and Program Details

Remote learning:

Remote learning occurs when classes are taught at a distance and when students and educators are not in a regular classroom setting at their local school. Remote learning takes place in times of extended interruption to in-person learning – for example, as a result of a pandemic or during a period of extreme weather that may cause the closure of your school. Classes can be delivered synchronous or asynchronous, usually online through a Board-approved Learning Management System (LMS) like Brightspace D2L or Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) or by using video conferencing tools. In some cases where students have limited internet connectivity and when authorized by the Principal, learning may also be delivered through email between the teacher and, print materials, broadcast media, or telephone calls.

What is Synchronous learning?

This is when learning happens in real time. Synchronous learning involves educators using text, video, or voice communication to instruct and connect with students in real time. It helps teachers provide immediate feedback to students and enables students learning remotely to interact with other students from the home school class each day. Daily attendance in scheduled synchronous learning is required and will be recorded by the teacher. Students in this delivery model will follow a daily schedule or timetable with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning in accordance with a 300-minute instructional day.

What is Asynchronous learning (digital)?

Asynchronous learning (digital) is online learning that is not delivered in real time. In this model students work at their own pace at the time of day that is right for them. Asynchronous learning may involve students watching pre-recorded video lessons, completing assigned tasks, or contributing to online discussion boards. Daily student attendance in the virtual environment is required and will be recorded with evidence of daily participation in online discussion posts, submission of assignments and email interactions with the teacher. Students in this delivery model will be provided with a sample daily schedule or timetable in accordance with the 300-minute instructional day.

Students wishing to select Asynchronous Learning (Digital) must apply for an Exemption from Synchronous Learning.

What is Asynchronous learning (non-digital)?

Learning that is delivered using non-digital resources. Pen/paper learning resources will be provided to students in this model. A teacher will be assigned to connect regularly with the student to provide support and arrange for assessment of completed tasks and student understanding of key concepts.

Students wishing to select Asynchronous Learning (Digital) must apply for an Exemption from Synchronous Learning. More information the process for requesting such an exemption is included in this document.

Virtual School:

UCDSB Virtual Public School and UCDSB Virtual Secondary School are the schools that have been created to serve the learning needs of students wishing to study remotely in an asynchronous format in the 2020-21 school year. Staff working in the Virtual Schools may not be connected with the student's school.

What is In-Person Learning?

This is the term commonly used to describe learning that occurs between a teacher and students who are physically present with each other. This is the traditional teaching-learning model. In this document it will also be referred to as 'in-person learning.

Home School:

The home school is the actual physical location of your local school that students attend when studying in person. Students selecting in-person learning or electing to return to in-person learning will return to their home school.

Quadmester:

As part of the 2020-21 School Reopening Plan, all secondary school students will take two courses at a time over a nine-week period. In the in-person/synchronous remote delivery each class will consist of 150 minutes of instruction. In the asynchronous remote delivery, each course will be structured to provide the equivalent of 150 minutes of daily learning activity.

The quadmester model is being adopted in both in-person and remote secondary school programs in UCDSB to support fewer in-person student-to-student and student-to-staff contacts.

Secondary students studying asynchronously will take the same compulsory courses that they were scheduled to take in the same quadmester at the home school. This will ensure a seamless transition with in-person peers to compulsory courses in subsequent quadmesters and school years.

A selection of elective courses will also be available in the Virtual School.

3. Synchronous Learning Requirements

What can I expect during Remote Synchronous Learning?

During remote synchronous learning, students will connect virtually with their teacher and classmates learning in-person in the home school. Students and parents will be provided with a daily schedule that includes 300 minutes of learning opportunities per day. Synchronous learning via video/audio conferencing will occur for 225 minutes per day with the remaining 75 minutes of learning taking place asynchronously offline at home.

Remote learners may experience a combination of the following learning opportunities: guided instruction, large and small-group learning, synchronous check-ins and asynchronous independent work.

The learning programming for all students (in-person and remote) will be based on the **full** Ontario curriculum. The exception would be where a student may be working on an alternative program as part of an Individual Education Plan.

How much time will remote synchronous students be online each day?

During synchronous remote learning students will participate in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Educators will communicate a consistent daily schedule to all students and parents at the beginning of each week including both synchronous and asynchronous learning according to the Ministry requirements. Parents and students will communicate with the teacher if, on occasion, a student is unable to participate in a scheduled synchronous learning session.

The minimum amount of synchronous learning to be included in each student’s school day has been outlined by the Ministry of Education for each grade:

| Division | Grade Level of Students | Daily Minimum Synchronous Learning Time Requirement | Total Daily Minutes |
|------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Elementary | Kindergarten | 180 Minutes | 300 Minutes |
| Elementary | Grade 1 to 3 | 225 Minutes | 300 Minutes |
| Elementary | Grade 4 to 8 | 225 Minutes | 300 Minutes |
| Secondary | Grades 9 to 12 | The higher of 60 minutes for each 75-minute class period or 225 minutes per day for a full course schedule | 300 Minutes |

The synchronous learning time requirements outlined in the table above may be divided into shorter periods throughout the school day. The home school classroom teacher will determine the daily schedule for synchronous learners in consideration of the scheduling of breaks, recess, lunch periods or outdoor learning experiences for in-person learners. Remote synchronous learners will be provided with all breaks/lunch and with asynchronous learning tasks when live connection is not occurring.

Technology requirements for Remote Synchronous Learning

In order to take advantage of synchronous learning opportunities, students will require an internet connection and a device on which to access the class online learning platform.

Desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones are all capable devices. For the full experience, a device that can play audio is important, and a device with a camera would be a benefit.

Families who indicated in the Confirmation of School Attendance survey a need for a device or internet connectivity will be contacted by UCDSB Information Technology (IT) staff for follow-up.

Process for Exemption from Synchronous Learning

Families/students not wishing to participate in remote synchronous learning (live video/audio conferencing) may apply for an Exemption from Synchronous Learning. Those requesting an exemption will choose between Remote Asynchronous Digital and Remote Asynchronous Non-Digital programs as described earlier in this Guide and in Appendix B and C.

Each student/family who selected Remote Learning in the Confirmation Attendance process will receive an email on Monday, August 31 with instructions on how to request an exemption. Exemption requests must be received no later than 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 2.

4. Transitioning Between Remote Learning and In-Person Learning

What if families decide to make a change in their choice of program setting for their child?

There may be circumstances for which families decide to make a change. If families change their decision regarding whether they want their children to attend in person after the start of school, their requests for a change will be addressed as soon as possible. We will ask that families be patient as some time will be required to develop transition plans from one form of learning to another, as we will need to adhere to Ministry of Education and Public Health guidelines that support student and staff health, safety and well-being. Secondary students returning to in-person learning may be limited to the new term or new quadmester based on course availability, enrolment, and time missed in the course.

5. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff in Remote Learning

The expectations for teaching staff in the remote learning environment are the same as those working in in-person schools. Teachers will be planning and teaching using the Ontario curriculum and assessing and evaluating students using the Growing Success Assessment & Evaluation policy document. Teachers will provide ongoing feedback to students on their progress towards the achievement of curriculum expectations in keeping with provincial requirements. Specifically:

“In all subjects and courses, students should be given numerous and varied opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their achievement of the curriculum expectations.”

Teachers are required to host their online classroom on a Board-supported platform and will meet the ministry requirements for teaching and synchronous instruction time. Teachers are required to communicate learning to students and families and will complete the required progress reports and report cards for all students at the same timelines set out by the Province (elementary) and in an adjusted timeline within the quadmester model (secondary).

The UCDSB Virtual School has the full range of student supports found in our regular day-school settings and parents of students studying asynchronously will be given the contact information for teachers, office assistants, and Virtual School administration at the beginning of the school year.

6. Communication Practices in Remote Learning

Students studying remotely will have the ability to communicate with teachers and other education staff. **All communication and access to online course material will occur through UCDSB student email or within Board-supported learning platforms (Brightspace D2L; MS Teams).**

Educators will communicate a daily or weekly schedule for learning, including synchronous learning sessions.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child’s teacher. Each teacher will outline the best methods for communication at the start of the year. As much as possible, parent-teacher communication and conferencing should be avoided during synchronous teaching time and should take place outside of instructional minutes.

School Administration (Principals and Vice-Principals) are also available to support student learning and well-being and respond to parental questions and concerns.

7. Special Education Supports in Remote Learning

Educators will continue to provide accommodations, modifications, and alternative programming for students with special education needs as detailed in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students studying synchronously will have their Special Education needs served through the home school. Remote Learning teachers of students studying asynchronously will collaborate and communicate with the home school about the student’s IEP to facilitate any required accommodation in the remote

learning program. More information about special education services can be found in the Special Education, Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Companion Guide ([found on the Special Education Page](#)).

Students with assigned assistive technology will be provided access to these devices for use while learning remotely from home. The process for distribution of these devices not already in the student's possession at home will be communicated soon.

Please note that timelines for updating the IEP will be adjusted in secondary schools as a result of the quadmester model. More information on specific dates will be communicated.

Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators and system support staff will be available to support learning and engagement of students within the Virtual School as appropriate and required.

Private or community-based services that may have occurred in-person during the school day (private counselling, music lessons, etc.) will need to be arranged by families independently.

8. Specialized Support

Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Student Support Teachers and Grad Coaches will be available to support learning and engagement of students within the Virtual School as appropriate and required.

Community-based services that may have occurred in-person during the school day (pre-school speech services, IBI) will need to be arranged by families independently.

9. Student Success in Remote Learning

Virtual School staff will take a team approach to student success. If your child is struggling with remote learning or there are personal circumstances impacting your child's ability to engage successfully in learning, please communicate this with your child's teacher or with school administration.

10. Monitoring and Supporting Daily Student Attendance

Daily attendance will be recorded for all students (in-person, synchronous and asynchronous).

The process for reporting student absences with appropriate contacts will be shared at the beginning of the school year.

11. UCDSB Online Learning Platforms

All remote learning using digital tools (Synchronous and Asynchronous Digital) will be hosted on one of the UCDSB Online Learning Platforms. These platforms include:

- Microsoft Teams (MS Teams)
- Brightspace/D2L - Ministry licensed virtual learning environment

- Office365
- UCDSB email

All students will be provided with a login and password prior to the first day of school.

Educators may use digital tools and resources outside of these Foundational Tools, but will consider the privacy, safety, and educational value of tools before use.

12. Privacy, Security, and Safety Online

The Upper Canada District School Board has factored in the key requirements of privacy, securing and safety online as part of its focus on 21st Century learning experiences for students which have included asynchronous learning in our secondary school diploma credit programs (such as Summer Semester), the use of internet resources during the school day and, most recently, a sudden shift to synchronous and asynchronous learning as part of the UCDSB “learning-at-home” strategy when the province closed all schools in Ontario due to the COVID 19 pandemic from March 2020 to June 2020. Key directions about the UCDSB privacy, security, and online safety guidelines can be found in a number of resources and documents, [located at the following link on the UCDSB website](#).

Families and students play an important role in addressing privacy, security, and safety during remote learning. As evidenced by the Learn-At-Home program during the Spring of 2020, parents confirmed the importance of supervising their children when learning online. Students know that our District’s Code of Conduct applies to their being part of a learning experience in class or online and teachers continue to highlight the expectations and duties of pupils wherever the learning takes place.

13. Accessing Technical Support - for Students and Parents

If a student requires technical support during remote learning, this should be communicated with their virtual class teacher. If the teacher is unable to solve the problem, **the teacher** will communicate this directly with the UCDSB IT Department who will either address the issue or pass to the Distance Learning Support team for follow up.

The classroom teacher will have the ability to monitor this process and update families as needed.

More information will be communicated regarding the ability for parents to access remote learning support from the UCDSB.