

# Expectations for Online Learning

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviours are expected when we communicate with students. These guidelines for online behaviour and interaction are known as netiquette. We have to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the expectations for online learning.

## Guidelines for Parents

We acknowledge that the transition to virtual learning will be challenging for families. Parents will need to think differently about how to support their children; how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful; and how to monitor and support their children's learning.

Parents need to **establish routines and expectations**

- Create an ambience for virtual classes, remove all distractions from the room. Separate this space if possible so students can associate it with learning time.
- We suggest that students begin their studies at regular school hours. Wake in time for breakfast and hygiene.
- Do set household expectations around, moving regularly, snacks, and taking periodic breaks as they study.
- Agree on the amount of adult supervision and/or assistance is available and how to best access an adult and when.
- All school communications will come to your student's Birch School email address. Please ensure that they are checking it on a daily basis.

**Define the physical space for your child's study** – Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may or may not be suitable for an extended period of time, as will be the case of virtual learning.

- We encourage families to establish a space/location where their children will learn most of the time. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible.
- Ensure that no other device is placed in the same room. Multiple devices encourage multi-tasking during class.

- Multiple windows and tabs should not be open during virtual learning. Some apps are available that will help monitor this if desired.
- Dedicate a box or bin to school supplies so that all materials are together and readily accessible. Discourage your student from using supplies for activities other than school. ( so that they are available when needed during the day)

**Monitor communications from your children's teachers** on Teacherease and via email. General announcements are also made via Facebook Birch Parents Group, please see us for an invitation if you are not a part of the group.

Parents are advised to contact their children's teachers and emails are the preferred mode of communication.

Parents are advised to use Parental Control softwares e.g. Qustodio, McAfee Total Protection, Norton Family Premier

We also encourage parents to have their children explain the features of Teacherease, our Learning Management System, and Google Classroom. Parents cannot directly access google classroom, but the assignments and grades transfer into Teacherease, and parents have access to all of that info using Teacherease. There is also an app that can be used.

**Begin and end each day with a check-in.** Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in and centering exercises.

- In the morning, ask your child
  - What are they learning today?
  - What are their learning targets or goals?
  - How will they spend their time?
  - What resources do they require?
  - What support do they need?

This brief grounding conversation matters. It allows children to process the instructions they've received from their teachers. It helps them organize themselves and set priorities.

- Older students may not want to have these check-ins but they should nevertheless. Parents are encouraged to establish these check-ins as a regular part of each day to help children navigate distance learning and create a much needed structure. These check-in routines are crucial for building the skills of self-discipline among children.
- A challenge for some families with multiple children will be how to manage all of their children's needs, especially when those children are of different ages and have different needs. There may be times when siblings need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. A suggestion for parents would be to use noise-cancelling headphones to block out distractions.
- Encourage physical activity and/or exercise. Make sure your children remember to move and exercise keeping in mind their health and well-being. Our physical education teachers will recommend activities or exercises, but it is important for parents to model and encourage exercise.
- Remain mindful of your child's stress and anxiety. The Birch School is implementing virtual learning given the unique situation at the moment and will continue to work in collaboration with parents to ensure the well-being of all students.
- Monitor how much time your child is spending online. Teachers are creating virtual learning lessons which will have a right balance between online and offline learning experiences.
- Instructional coaches, programme leaders and principal will continue to monitor the quality of virtual transaction, resources, lesson plans and feedback shared by teachers with students periodically.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

It is imperative to set rules around their social media interactions. Parents are expected to monitor their children's use of social media. Help your children maintain contact with friends responsibly.

Older students will rely more on social media to communicate with friends.

Please note that Social media apps such as SnapChat, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Facebook are not official, school-sanctioned channels of communication. We do utilize a Discord server that is monitored. Remind your children to be polite, respectful, and appropriate in their communications and

to represent the school's values in their interactions with others, this applies for written words and as well as tone of conversation, email message, or text messages.

Students must comply with the school's Behaviour Management and Acceptable Usage policy while they are online. Students/ parents/ guardians are not permitted to take photos, screenshots, record videos/ audios of the virtual sessions. All material shared on teamie and google hangouts is the school's intellectual property and downloading/ circulating/ sharing of content without permission is strictly prohibited.

## **Managing screen time**

We recognise that transition to virtual learning does not compare to physical classrooms. It's important that our students continue their social-emotional and cognitive growth in these times of social distancing and isolation. It is comforting to have a routine in these times. Younger students may need assistance with setting up and using online tools. The most effective models of virtual school have a carefully considered healthy and balanced amount of offline and online learning time. This use of learning time will include some synchronous learning with real time conferencing with teachers and classmates. It will also include and be balanced with significant blocks of asynchronous learning and opportunities to work offline and unplugged.

There are multiple research studies that suggest that screen time when paired with high-quality instructional practices and carefully planned lessons is good for students. Screen time is inherently made more effective and less isolating and less passive when there is a human on the other side.

For more information, please check this [blog](#) that summarizes the research on screen time for children:

[Screen Time is Good for Kids – If There's a Human on the Other End](#)

## Guidelines for Students

- Setup a daily routine
- Organize your learning tools: pencils, notebooks, papers, timeline, paper materials. Use these supplies only for school work. Use a box or bin to keep all these items together and easy to find.
- Find a comfortable, quiet space to study. Your background should not distract other participants
- Regularly monitor Teacherease and Google Classroom to check for announcements, assignments and feedback from your teachers
- Do not open multiple windows on your laptop. There should be no other device in the room.
- Be mindful of ambient noise and movements. They should not distract others.
- Keep your notebooks with you. Your brain remembers more when you use pens and paper. Typing your notes may not be as effective
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty and meet the timelines
- Communicate proactively with your teachers if you need additional support
- Collaborate and support your peers in their learning
- Comply with the school's Behaviour Management and Acceptable Usage Policy while you are online

## Be a Cyber Smart Citizen

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviours are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your teachers. These guidelines for online behaviour and interaction are known as netiquette.

- Be vigilant: Visit safe sites which are age appropriate and approved by your parents and teachers
- Be cautious: Make good choices when you are online. Share only information that is required and safe to share. Make sure that you log out after your work is done. Do not share your password with anybody.

- Be respectful: Be kind and respectful to others when you are online. Promise to THINK – True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind. Avoid slang terms such as “wassup?” and texting abbreviations such as “u” instead of “you.”
- Be vocal: Tell your parents and teachers if someone is being hurtful or unkind online or sharing disturbing content. Stand up to Cyber Bullying and remember that your digital presence should not hurt others.
- Be safe: Use safe Wifi networks and keep your device safe and secure at all times.
- Be honest: Always follow copyright laws and remember to cite the sources that you use for your work.