

The Parents' Guide to Distant Learning for Students with Learning Challenges

The Learning Support Center at H.H.H.S.

Students with learning challenges are particularly susceptible during times of disruption and change. To ensure ongoing growth and progress, the H.H.H.S. team focuses their planning efforts on how to continue serving these students to the greatest extent possible by tailoring distant learning that provides educational benefits to students with learning challenges.

The basic guidelines are based on the following core beliefs:

- IEPs remain in place and should direct the students' distant learning, being mindful that a student's program may require commencing a team meeting.
- Every student is unique, and this must be appreciated.
- Embrace differences and empower the leadership skills of each student through the digital and technology era.
- Students with educational challenges benefit greatly from ongoing motivation and excel when relationships with teachers and peers are strong.
- Affirm that all students can achieve growth in all capacities. Learning opportunities should occur at all times and should be tracked, as appropriate.
- Keep students at the center by building relationships and maintaining connections in terms of agency, self-efficacy, social-emotional well-being, and the attributes of the learner profile.
- Build on each student's strengths, interests, and needs and use this knowledge to impact learning positively.
- Develop a Weekly Plan and Schedule by emphasizing routines and structures for consistency and for balancing think time, work time, and playtime for health and well-being.
- Support students' learning through ongoing communication and collaboration.

- Design learning for equity and access by setting goals using knowledge of each student and their current educational need and using appropriate learning strategies.
- Deliver flexible instruction-by providing content depending on tools and resources accessible to each student. Delivery of instruction may include paper and pencil, technology-based virtual instruction, or a combination to meet diverse students' needs.
- Establish a routine for communication with families.
- Engage families by communicating with them about engagement strategies to support students as they access the learning and seek input about assessment results to inform the next steps.
- Assess and monitor student learning and plan what's next for learning.
- Use a variety of strategies to monitor, assess, and to provide feedback to students about their learning.
- Make instructional adjustments by using formative assessment results to guide their reflection on the effectiveness of instruction and to determine the next steps for student learning.
- Adjust students' plans to meet the needs of in-home learning environments.
- Investigate and determine whether newly introduced apps/platforms are accessible to a child based on the child's unique needs.

Instruction:

The instruction will be individualized and based on the students' IEPs, including the goals, the modifications, and the accommodations. To ensure that this differentiation occurs, there will be communication between all the involved teachers, parents, SEN coordinator, language coordinators, support teachers, clinicians, and head of department to support students in improving their performance and in meeting their IEP benchmarks and goals.

The team will:

- Identify realistic, individualized time frames for task completion. They will be mindful of extended time accommodations outlined in IEPs.
- Provide specific instruction and mini-deadlines/benchmarks for assignments, especially those with multiple-tasks.
- Create opportunities for students to demonstrate progress and receive feedback related to assignments and IEP goals.
- Use student interest to address objectives and activities.
- Provide and model different alternative options for participating in virtual class discussions.
- Create video modeling of how they expect something to be done.
- Provide subtitles when needed of any pre-recorded audio or video used with students.
- Use descriptive titles, headers, and captions to provide additional context and information for students.

Assessment:

Assessments should be as inclusive as possible. Suggestions for assessment practices that most students with Educational challenges benefit are:

- Rubrics
- IEP Goals and Objectives evaluation
- Portfolio
- Feedback for Video Observations in real-time
- Feedback for Written Work or assignments
- One to one assessments through individual conferencing

When developing individualized assessment practices for students with disabilities, the following factors should be considered:

- Student need and present levels of performance
- IEP Goals and Objectives
- Kinds of accommodations/modifications/services that are provided
- Capacity of support in the virtual learning environment
- Social-emotional response to the COVID-19 crisis, Beirut explosion, financial issues...
- Access to needed resources to participate in learning

Strategies

- Flexible grouping strategy:

- 1- Whole group Sessions (20 to 30 minutes once daily)
- 2- Small group sessions (50 minutes twice per day)
- 3- Conference with individual students (upon need)

- 1- The whole group session might include:

- Build community and learning experience
- Recognize work from previous day/ week and connect by providing an overview for the objectives of the week ahead
- Connect learners online through different games targeting some social –emotional considerations.
- Introduce big concepts
- Time for students queries

- 2- The small group session might include:

- Provide differentiated instruction
- Guided practice and application
- Collect formative assessment data
- Give feedback when appropriate
- Facilitate small discussions

3- The individual session might include:

- Personalized instruction
- Provide feedback on student work
- Provide individualized practice and application in real-time
- Conference about individual student progress
- Conduct a one to one assessment

*Allowing time for synchronous and asynchronous time daily is essential to inform learning and pull students who need additional support or scaffolds into a small or individualized group sessions. HHHS will mostly consider the **Hybrid** learning as framework that allows a combination of synchronous, asynchronous, and/or in-person services.*

Communication

Communication between the support teachers and the parents will be made via telephone, email, MS teams meetings etc. Confidential documents will be sent via email. To ensure ongoing communication, please let the teacher and school know your accessible way of communication.

Non-Technological Distance Learning:

Some students and families may have limited or no access to technology when normal school operations are closed. In these cases, providing instruction and instructional materials may need to take place via alternatives such as phone calls, or teacher-developed folders. Teacher developed folders can be distributed via school administration office. Folders may include items such as print materials, games, school supplies, books, and manipulative.

This process may include designating times for students to pick up items from school at a specific time.

Related Services Considerations

Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychomotor Therapy, Counseling Services, Parent Training, Psychological consultations are related services in which IEP teams should consider for students.

Meetings between the IEP team and the clinicians and parents can take place virtually upon need.

Below is a table that can be filled by teachers and/or support teachers during the first 2 weeks of virtual learning:

Current skill-based performance:

Skill	Level of Support Needed	Recommended Strategies and Interventions
Listening		
Speaking		
Writing		
Reading		
Math		
Behavioral		