

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Explorer West Families and Students,

It was so much fun to connect with students today via Zoom! Thanks to everyone who was able to pop in. If you couldn't, don't worry -- we will see you Monday morning.

Enclosed is the Explorer West Remote Learning Guide. **Please read this together as a family over the weekend.** It should give you a sense of how everything will work, including a typical schedule.

Every day beginning Monday morning, students and families will receive a daily schedule email by 8:15 am. That email will provide Zoom links for any synchronous classes, and instructions (usually: Go to Google Classroom!) for any asynchronous classes. We will be sending a different email to each grade level, so **we will be using our email group lists for the students and families.** We have had trouble with the lists this year, so please help us in the following way: if you are a current parent or guardian who got *this* email, and if you do *not* get a schedule email on Monday by 8:15, *check your spam*, and then please let Alex know (alexu@explorer-west.org). Thanks.

Let's do this!
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Remote Learning Guide for Students and Families

Remote learning allows discussions, collaboration, and feedback to continue even when we cannot all be in the same physical space. Online learning spaces are classroom spaces, and we place importance on making these spaces safe and productive for learning. We expect students to be positive contributors to their online learning environment. We also acknowledge that everyone's home/family situation is different, with various challenges to work around.

Please review this guide together, and come up with your own family norms for remote learning. Important things to discuss include how students can stay focused, how to take frequent breaks, how to get fresh air and physical activity, and how to get support when needed.

Student Norms for Remote Learning

These norms were brainstormed by Explorer West students, and approved by the teachers:

Setting up Your Workspace

- Organized space - desk/table if possible
- Quiet room if possible
- Let people in your home know when you'll be on a live conversation
- Remove/turn off distractions (phone, tv)
- Have your charger ready or plugged in and sit near an outlet

Class Expectations during a Synchronous Lesson

- Don't be on a separate tab or task when your teachers think you are present.
- When you are in a class discussion you go on mute until it is your turn to talk.
- Follow the protocols for the conversation from the teacher.
- Participate, not just staying quiet because you think the teachers won't notice.
- This is still class; you have to do your work.
- Take care of your needs before class (getting a snack, using the bathroom, etc.). Wait for breaks to take care of unexpected needs. If there is an unavoidable situation, message your teacher to let them know why you needed to leave.
- Be respectful: When you have video on, you are not judging what you see in the video's background. We are making ourselves vulnerable by opening up our homes to one another.

- Be extra aware of the fact that everyone is learning. Give each other grace, and give your teachers grace, as teachers and students are all learning something new.
- Do not eat food or chew gum when you are in a video class conversation.
- Dress appropriately.
- Don't talk over people, take turns, and mute when not talking.
- Be aware of sensitive topics (hard to tell tone if something is written).
- Take your time, check spelling, and reread before sending.
- Be respectful and kind. Keep sarcastic comments to yourself.
- Use school appropriate language and minimize distractions (like emojis).
- Stay with the group and assignment.
- Advocate for yourself and your needs
- Be patient with your teachers and each other.

To support remote learning I will **avoid**...

- Talking when other people are talking.
- "Just Google it", practice being curious and showing integrity!
- Getting on your phone or watching tv/Netflix/etc. in the background.
- Saying unkind things to others or inappropriate comments.

Tools For Remote Learning

Google Classroom

Google Classroom will be used by students and teachers for resources, links, tutorials, assignments, and feedback. You will be able to monitor assignments and deadlines here (use the calendar!), and you should submit your work through Google Classroom instead of via email. Show your families how it works.

Zoom

Purpose - to have a live meeting with your class

1. Your teachers will send you a link for the time(s) you will be joining on the daily schedule email. Click on that link, then join the meeting (allow microphone and camera).
2. Be sure the mute button is on (it is on the bottom of the screen and should be red):
3. You will see a sidebar of the people in the meeting on the right side of the screen. Click on your teacher's picture and pin your teacher so they show up central to your screen.
4. You can ask for a turn to speak by pushing the button that says "Raise Hand" or let the teacher know if you need to leave the room for any reason using the chat.
5. Sometimes the teacher may present their screen. If it doesn't show what they are presenting automatically, you may have to pin their presentation. Do not share your screen unless asked to do so. If you are asked to present your screen, your teacher will

help you do it. Have your assignment pulled up and ready to present before clicking the button.

6. When class is over, leave the meeting (just like you would physically leave a class) so you can attend your next class.

FlipGrid

Purpose - for students to make a short video to explain their ideas, thinking, and learning

1. Click on the flipgrid link provided by your teachers (likely through Google Classroom).
2. Sign in with Google (and select your @explorer-west.org account).
3. Read through the instructions, then hit the big green button to make your video.
4. Record your response with the camera button. You generally have 1 minute and 30 seconds to record what you're saying; you can pause and add more within the time limit.
5. Click "Next," and a preview of your video will play. You can edit, add, or try again. Then click "Next" again.
6. You will take a selfie as the "icon" for your video submission. Then you will submit your video. And you're done!

What to Expect

What's the schedule? Each morning, you will receive an email to students and families by 8:15. You will start each day with your Advisor. Classes will then follow a five period schedule with breaks built-in. *One of your classes each day will be a Study Hall/SSR.* Please check the daily schedule to determine which classes will be synchronous (video conferencing with your class), and asynchronous (working independently during class time). A typical day will look like this:

8:30 Advisory
9:00 1st Period (45 minutes, plus a break)
10:00 2nd Period (45 minutes, plus a break)
11:00 3rd Period
LUNCH
1:00 4th Period
2:00 5th Period
3:00 Wrap up with Advisor (usually 5-10 minutes)

What do you do when classes are synchronous? Check the daily schedule email for the Zoom link for your class. Join the meeting on time and with your microphone on mute. Use the chat function to ask questions.

What do I do when classes are asynchronous? Check the daily schedule for instructions and also check Google Classroom. You are expected to use the full class period to work.

What about Advisory? You will start each day with a Zoom meeting with your advisor and your advisory; check the daily schedule email for the link. You will also end each day with a wrap up; check the Google Classroom for your Advisory for instructions. Your advisor may also set up additional times for one-on-one check-ins via Zoom. If you need to connect with your advisor at another time, send your advisor an email to schedule another time to talk.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I need tech support?

Some of the teachers will be available during Lunch and/or Study Hall for tech support via Google Meet; check the daily schedule email for the link. If you have an issue that can't be resolved during those times, email tech-support@explorer-west.org, let us know what the issue is, and we will do our best to help within 24 hours.

My house doesn't have good internet -- what do I do? What if I have Wifi issues?

Send an email to tech-support@explorer-west.org and we will try our best to help.

How do I raise my hand?

Use the "Raise Hand" feature in Zoom, or use the chat bar and let the teacher know you'd like to share an idea or type your question into the chat.

When can I take bathroom breaks?

As you do in school, try to go to the bathroom before and after class. If you need to leave the class discussion, write a note on the chat bar to inform your teacher. But remember that your times together for class discussion on Zoom will be fairly short, and you will have big breaks between classes. Try to take care of bathroom needs when you are not in a video meeting.

Will teachers be able to see our screens?

In general, no. We may ask you to share your screen through Zoom at certain times.

What happens at lunch? Can you video chat with your friends?

You are on break during lunch. The Google Meet links set up by your teachers are used for class time only.

How do we do art, drama, music, and PE?

Your teachers will modify their assignments so you can work with what you have available to you. Drama and Music will be together!

What do we do during Study Hall/SSR?

You can catch up on work, get ahead, and read a good book. As your advisor if you need help making plans for Study Hall. We will also share tips for staying focused, and opportunities for you to tell us about what you're reading!

What should we do if we get sick?

If you are so sick that you cannot participate in remote learning, please have your adult send an email to Alex (alexu@explorer-west.org) and your advisor. Contact your teachers about what you missed from the synchronous meetings, and check Google Classroom for the asynchronous classes. Otherwise, you can participate in remote learning if you have the capacity.

If I'm not in a video conference, what do I do?

Follow the instructions on Google Classroom for each class. Do your work, and ask questions through Google Classroom or in a direct email to your teacher.

Can I have my pet with me when I'm in class?

Your pet should remain out of sight to minimize distractions while your camera is on (in the same room but not on camera is okay). Try your best -- we know some pets are persistent.

Can I get together with a friend for Remote Learning classes?

That's up to your families. Having a buddy or two to work with can be great (and a great help to families), but it can also be a distraction, so students and families will need to make sure it's going well. And, remember that the reason we are doing this is to minimize group gatherings and reduce the spread of COVID-19. We recommend that you read [these guidelines](#) from King County Public Health about gatherings of children and youth while schools are closed.

Digital Citizenship Resources

Common Sense Media is a resource for the many topics around digital citizenship. We encourage students and families to have discussions together.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/privacy-and-internet-safety>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CommonSenseMedia>

[Digital Citizenship Videos for Middle School Students](#)

[Digital Citizenship Videos for Grades 6-8](#)