

COVID-19

Teacher Virtual Learning Tips:

Promoting student well-being
during the COVID-19 pandemic



Children's Mercy

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1. Accept and explore your new learning environment.

- Focus on the positive aspects of virtual learning and model an accepting attitude as students are looking to you to set the tone of the school year.
- Explore the features of your virtual platform to adapt your teaching practice. Optimize use of features such as messaging, hand raising, reminders and positive feedback.

2. Gather information about your students as soon as possible. Schedule a virtual check-in with families to:

- Identify student strengths, areas for growth and any concerns they have for their child.
- Ask the family what the child's learning environment will be and who will be available to support the student. Help caregivers identify a consistent learning environment with limited distractions and encourage caregivers to be near their children during learning times if possible.

3. Address the pandemic.

- Acknowledge students may be experiencing different challenges and may have different feelings about returning to school.
- Incorporate activities to reflect on the pandemic and teach positive coping strategies with the help of your school mental health professional.
- Inform students how they can seek additional support if needed.

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4. Build relationships with your students to help them develop trust and be more engaged in the virtual classroom.

- Start the year with fun get-to-know-you games and ice breaker activities.
- Facilitate small virtual group activities supervised by you, other school staff members or parent volunteers to make it easier for children to connect.
- When you are communicating virtually, emote more than you would in-person to keep your students engaged and to build a connection.

5. Modify routines and expectations.

- Create virtual learning classroom rules and post them clearly on your virtual platform and review them daily. Example rules include staying upright in camera view, wearing clothing appropriate for school and pressing the raise your hand button to speak.
- Conduct daily class check-ins in the morning to set the agenda.
- Schedule non-preferred activities for most students before preferred activities so they are more motivated to get through the day. Incorporate short, structured and fun brain breaks throughout the day where they can get their eyes off the screen and reset.
- Disseminate information on routines and expectations to families in writing to so that parents and students are prepared.

6. Encourage positive behaviors.

- Consider using a class-wide incentive program to reinforce students for following rules and meeting expectations just as you would for in-person classroom.
- Praise students frequently verbally, nonverbally and through virtual platform messaging for positive behavior. Students who exhibit problematic behavior will need more praise of their appropriate behavior to keep them going.
- For students who are demonstrating significant challenges, set small, attainable daily goals and work with parents to reward their progress.

7. Collaborate and communicate.

- Schedule individual brief meetings with families regularly to evaluate progress and problem-solve barriers.
- For students with special needs or those not meeting benchmarks, meetings should be scheduled more frequently.
- Inform parents of your preferred method of communication, welcome questions and be responsive.

8. Seek support for your students and yourself.

- Connect students and families with school mental health support or other resources as needed.
- Reach out to your colleagues for ideas and support.
- Engage in regular self-care practices to keep you going – you've got this!