



# Hebron Academy

## Optimizing the Remote Learning Experience: Tips for Parents

### Establish and Maintain a Routine/Schedule

- Establishing consistent daily and weekly routines are not only important to help in maintaining our physical and mental health, but are also necessary to achieving academic success. Without a set schedule it can be very easy for our days to slip away from us! Being intentional with regard to how we spend our time is key to accomplishing our goals. That being said, your support as parents may be necessary to ensure your child has established a healthy and productive schedule. Assisting your child to create and follow-through with a schedule can be easier said than done, so feel free to reach out to your child's advisor, members of the AGC Team, or Amanda Miller, Director of Mental Health and Wellness, for additional guidance or support.
- Establish a healthy bedtime and wake time...and stick to it. Without the pull of early morning classes, it can be a challenge for teens to maintain a consistent and healthy sleep/wake schedule. And, then there is the draw of late night Netflix binges and midnight texting with friends! While it can be tempting to overlook the potential negative consequences of these late night activities, they can significantly interfere with sleep and lead to an unhealthy disruption to teens' sleep/wake cycle....resulting in low energy, amotivation, mood disruption, difficulties concentrating, etc.
  - For more information about adolescent sleep needs and associated recommendations, click [here](#) and [here](#).
- Shower and get dressed! This seems trivial, but it is amazingly hard to get into "work mode" when we are in our pj's!
- Incorporating exercise/self-care into our daily routine --
  - If your child struggles with initiating their day, consider [incorporating exercise](#) into their morning routine, prior to getting started on academics. Being confined to our homes can result in feeling physically, cognitively, and emotionally stuck...making getting started on the academic day a significant challenge. Exercise is a great way to energize us, incite motivation, and initiate momentum.
  - If your child struggles with afternoon fatigue and struggles to accomplish work in the afternoon, consider midday exercise as it can, as mentioned above, serve to energize and help with academic motivation.
  - Engage in other self-care activities
    - Get outside / [Connect with nature](#) (if able)
    - Start a [meditation practice](#). This can be a very effective way to [minimize stress and anxiety among teens](#).
    - Sign up for an online yoga class (if your child is interested in this, let me know as I am happy to help to find an online class that works with their schedule; AND...Mrs Bonis is hosting/teaching a weekly Zoom yoga class for students and faculty on Wednesday mornings...parents and siblings are welcome, too!)



- Step away from the screens -- this can be tough as technology provides us all with a connection to the outside world more than ever these days. Increased screen time is to be expected. That being said, our eyes and mind need to take breaks. So, encourage your child to incorporate routine screen-free breaks into their daily schedule.
- Relaxation/Downtime -- Allowing for “downtime” is important as it is an essential act of self-care. If downtime is built into your child’s schedule, it can be utilized as a “carrot” to incentivize and reward periods of focused and engaged academic work. But, again, I recommend that this time be intentionally built into your teen’s schedule so a Netflix break doesn’t turn into a 3 hour Netflix binge!

### **Limit Distractions**

- Establish a study/work space in an area of the home that is subject to minimal distractions. Distractions include not only other people and ambient noises, but technology, as well. TV should be off, phones should be away. For those kids who struggle with resisting the urge to check their phone (which is most teens...and humans, in general, for that matter!), consider placing phones in another room during work time. This can be a point of contention, so I suggest having an open conversation with your child about possible distractions and together creating a plan to minimize them.

### **Set Daily Work Goals**

- Advisors and AGC coaches are helping students to organize their assignments and to create plans to complete their assigned coursework. Parents can help their child by checking-in with them at the beginning of each day and prompting them to set meaningful daily work goals. (if your child is enrolled in AGC, the AGC Distance Learning Chart will be a great resource). Advisors and AGC faculty are tremendous resources and are happy to speak with any parents about their child’s coursework planning. Please don’t hesitate to reach out!

### **Help Your Child Maintain a Healthy Outlook**

- Prompt them to shift away from focusing on what has been lost due to Covid and instead on identifying ways to move on with plans and establish short term goals and longer term goals. (See above about establishing daily work goals). As for longer term goals, if you or your child have any questions or concerns about how Covid might impact the college search, application, or admissions process, Danny Barr, Director of College Counseling, would welcome a conversation!
- Maintaining a healthy outlook also includes focusing on what we have to be grateful for during these challenging times. There is a considerably wide range of hardship that families are experiencing right now and I appreciate that practicing gratitude is not as easy as it might sound. For those struggling, I recommend this [link](#) for some more guidance on the subject.
- Feelings of isolation, loneliness, stress, anxiety, amotivation, and depressed mood are just some of the emotional struggles that your child may experience during this challenging time. All of these aforementioned feelings and experiences can compromise their ability to meet their academic demands. Should you feel that any such emotional struggles are interfering with your child’s academic performance or general well-being, I highly encourage you to seek out the guidance and support of Amanda Miller ([amiller@hebronacademy.org](mailto:amiller@hebronacademy.org)), Director of Mental Health and Wellness, as she is available remotely to all students and parents and is a wonderfully supportive resource to all.



## Be Mindful of How You Interact with Your Teen

- It is important to recognize your child for being on task and getting their work done. They might not show it, but they undoubtedly appreciate recognition for their efforts! That being said, praise the effort, not the grade.
- Refrain from micromanaging and taking over for them (this can be tough!).
- Avoid shaming statements or catastrophizing outcomes. Your child is likely overwhelmed. And, you, in turn, may be overwhelmed. In such situations, it can be reflexive to catastrophize and lash out, yell, or shame as a last ditch effort to get your child to accomplish what they need to. Know that the frustrations and anxiety that underlie such parental responses are totally understandable. But, be aware of those feelings and try to manage these negative emotions and [resist the urge to respond negatively](#). Again, don't hesitate to reach out to Amanda Miller if you'd like some support or guidance in this area.
- Check-in regularly and routinely regarding your child's work goals, progress, and struggles. Provide supportive prompts and encouragement. Parents often assume that teens should be left to figure things out on their own. It is important to note that there is a happy medium between micromanaging teens and providing complete independence. While complete independence is the goal to aspire to as they progress through their adolescence and into adulthood, many teens in high school will continue to require some degree of adult oversight and support to ensure that they are on track, organized, and engaged. This can be a point of contention, to say the very least, as many teens go to great lengths to keep their parents at arm's length (which is, to some extent, a very normative adolescent phenomenon!). That being said, I suggest the following as a conversation launching point:
  - Express an interest in what your child is working on in each of their subjects.
  - Ask your child to share with you their advisor coursework chart or AGC Distance Learning Chart highlighting coursework that is due in each class.
  - Have a conversation about the benefits of establishing daily work goals.
  - Have a conversation about what struggles your child is experiencing. Help them by troubleshooting possible solutions to their struggles (encouraging them to reach out to their advisor and/or AGC team for additional help is always a good suggestion!).