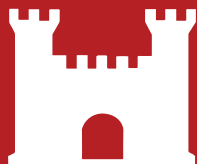




FRAMEWORK FOR NEW CITY SCHOOL REMOTE LEARNING PROGRAM

August 7, 2020



PURPOSE

To create an approach that is aligned with our New City School mission and our Four Pillars: New City School develops each child's individual strengths through an integrated Multiple Intelligences curriculum. We prepare children, age three through grade six, to be confident, joyful learners who are successful academically, knowledgeable about themselves and others, and who value diversity.

The foremost goal of the New City School Remote Learning Program is to engage children in meaningful opportunities for community and connection as they continue to grow and learn through our creative and robust curriculum and instruction that is intentionally designed for remote learning success. New City School faculty and administration have engaged in professional development this spring and summer to enhance their skills in order to provide exceptional learning opportunities for students should we need to transition to remote learning. Our remote learning program will be designed to be developmentally appropriate, differentiated, and manageable.

This plan was initially developed with the thought that it would be utilized only in the event that the entire school is closed and all teachers are teaching remotely. For families who are beginning the year remotely, elements of this plan are certainly applicable to your learning cohort. As we get closer to the start of the school year, the staff member (or members) who will be teaching or coordinating your cohort, along with the Division Heads, will share further details and information.

KEY COMPONENTS WILL INCLUDE

- high quality instruction from teachers to guide learning and keep students engaged, along with time away from the screen for students to explore, create, read, and practice.
- a schedule to enhance predictability for students and families which includes general timeframes, with flexibility built-in, so teachers can support children at different ages and developmental stages.
- shared learning goals and activities for the day which includes math, literacy, specialist subjects, and attention to the personals, as well as morning and closing meetings.
- a structure which optimizes teacher instruction and interaction time with and between students.
- opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning, whole class, small group, and 1:1 instruction.
- daily office hours for students to contact teachers directly and get support.
- check-ins with individual students at least once per week.
- regular feedback and assessment on academic and growth in the personals.
- the use of one primary platform per division (Seesaw in the Lower Division, 3/4s through 2nd Grade; Google Classroom in the Upper Division, 3rd through 6th Grades), access to technology for students that need it (iPads for the Lower Division and Chromebooks for the Upper Division), as well as tutorials to support students and families with technology.

1ST THROUGH 6TH GRADE REMOTE LEARNING PROGRAM

For 1st Grade through 6th Grade, the day will begin with a morning meeting at 8:30am, and then move to class and work times throughout the day which will consist of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities and include breaks. 2nd through 6th Grades will end with a closing meeting at 3:00pm. 1st Grade will follow a similar schedule, with slightly shorter work times, and will end their day at 2:45pm. Based on best practices and research in remote learning for elementary aged children, teachers will more often record lessons that deliver new content and then be live for discussions, small group work, meetings with individual students, and office hours.

1st through 6th Grade Remote Learning Program, continued.

The below schedule is meant to give you general time frames for the day. Your child's teachers will share a more detailed schedule each week.

8:30-9:00am	Morning Meeting
9:00-10:00am	Class/Work Time
10:00-10:15am	Break
10:15-11:45am	Class/Work Time
11:45am-12:45pm	Midday Break/Lunch
12:45-1:45pm	Class/Work Time
1:45-2:00pm	Break
2:00-3:00pm	Class/Work Time
3:00-3:15pm	Closing Meeting

3/4s, 4/5s, KINDERGARTEN REMOTE LEARNING PROGRAM

New City School has put in place a schedule for our 3/4s, 4/5s, and Kindergarten that is especially mindful of what is best for children in their early years. For the 3/4s, 4/5s, and Kindergarten, the day will also begin with a morning meeting at 8:30am, which will then move into instructional blocks of time. End times for the day will depend upon each grade level. There will be synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences, time with specialists, time for learning and community building, independent work times, collaborative projects, and multiple breaks throughout the day. In addition, there will be times for one-on-one and small group sessions with children, as well as whole group activities. Depending on lessons and activities, supplies will be provided to students as needed to help make learning come alive in the home. During in-person learning, there will be time set aside to guide students through how to use technology.

We know from research that distance learning is more taxing on our earliest learners, which is why we will do everything we can to keep our youngest students coming to school for in-person learning. Because of New City School's designation as a licensed exempt child care facility by the State of Missouri and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there is a possible scenario that if schools are closed but the City of St. Louis allows child care centers to operate, there is a very strong chance that New City School will choose to remain open and provide care for our 3/4s, 4/5s, and Kindergarten students, thus eliminating the need to move preprimary students who started the year in person to remote learning, unless they choose to stay home. The addition of Kindergarten is a recent, positive development and we will keep these families informed of this possibility as the year progresses.

ASYNCHRONOUS AND SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

We want to address the differences between live instruction and recorded instruction. Both can be meaningful and have their advantages.

ASYNCHRONOUS (RECORDED INSTRUCTION) LEARNING:

- gives us the ability to sustain student stamina and teach abstract concepts.
- can be watched at a differentiated pace (students can pause and rewind and replay and even skip unneeded parts).
- allows for differentiated instruction (different paths).
- diminishes some of the distraction factors for younger learners.

Asynchronous Learning, continued.

- allows us to accommodate requests from families who are not able to stay in step with our schedule with the caveat that we will still at times offer live sessions that may or may not be recorded, depending on the purpose.
- is, according to research, best used to deliver new content.
- can utilize tools such as Flipgrid and Padlet to allow for student responses and dialogue, even when students might not all be online at the same exact time.
- allows for students to record their thinking so that teachers have insight about students' level of understanding, as opposed to just seeing a product.

SYNCHRONOUS (LIVE) LESSONS AND MEETINGS:

- allow for students to ask questions and get answers in real time.
- create opportunities for students to participate in discussions, breakout rooms, small groups, and other collaborative work.
- are shown to be best in meeting the social emotional needs of students and building connection and community.

FAMILY AND STUDENT SUPPORT FOR REMOTE LEARNING

TEACHERS WILL:

- design lessons and instruction to engage students, provide opportunities for discussion and collaboration, meet with students 1:1, hold office hours for students, and assess students' learning to guide instruction and give effective feedback.
- be your first point of contact. Please reach out directly to your child's advisor or teacher or specialist with questions.
- provide weekly office hours for families who need help supporting their children during remote learning.
- reply to families within 24 hours during the school week. Please understand that teachers have to balance working with students and communicating with their families and that not all emails can have a quick and immediate response.
- along with administration, work to understand families' and students' needs and partner collaboratively with families to help meet those needs.

DIVISION HEADS AND THE HEAD OF SCHOOL, WILL:

- work with and support teachers with curriculum and instruction.
- partner with families as needed to help facilitate the remote learning process.
- be a part of classes and morning meetings.
- offer virtual opportunities to come together as a community as well as share tips and feedback.

If you have questions or feedback about the structure or overall remote learning program, please contact your child's Division Head: **3/4s through 2nd Grade:** Janine Gorrell (jgorrell@newcityschool.org); **3rd through 6th Grade:** Laurie Smilack (lsmilack@newcityschool.org).

KRISTI, OUR TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST, WILL:

- help prepare students to use designated technology for if or when we move to remote learning.
- provide support for families and students at home who need support with the technology tools we are using or providing.
- share tutorials for students and their families to help support remote learning.

If you have a technology related issue, please contact Kristi directly at kcloninger@newcityschool.org

MISSEY, OUR COUNSELOR, WILL:

- continue to teach classroom guidance lessons using our social-emotional learning curriculum.
- continue to run small groups and work individually with students or families as needed for social and emotional support.
- work with teachers and administration to support families with ongoing education on various social-emotional learning topics that will aid in students' emotional wellness.

If you have a social/emotional development related issue, please contact Missey directly at mdoll@newcityschool.org

EXPECTATIONS

WHAT WE NEED FROM OUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- Please establish routines and expectations for your child. We need our students to show up for remote learning ready to learn, just as they show up to school. We want them to get a good night's sleep, have a nutritional breakfast, brush their teeth, get dressed, and be ready for the day. In addition, please help them create a comfortable, distraction-free place to work. Students should be sitting up, cameras on, and ready to learn in time for the morning meeting. Food should only be eaten during designated snack or lunch times.
- Just as in in-person school, students should follow our Rules to Live By: Truth, Trust, Active Listening, Personal Best, and No Put Downs.
- The schedule is an important school routine to sustain remote learning excellence. We need families to do their best to follow the schedule.
- Teachers and our technology specialist will provide support with the technology; however, there will be times, depending on the age of your child, where you need to assist your child with logging into the device and/or various applications and walk them through instructions if needed. That being said, our goal is to help children be as independent as possible; however, the younger the child, the more they will require and benefit from adult guidance and support.
- There will be times allotted for breaks within the schedule (brain breaks, lunch, and more) and for independent work. While your child is at home, think about how you can provide opportunities for your child to play and move, inside or outside, while practicing responsible social distancing.
- Support your child's metacognition (thinking about their thinking). You can help your child further process their thinking by asking questions, such as: *What goals are you working on? How have you met your goals? What did you learn today? What questions do you have? What was challenging? What don't you understand yet? What is one thing that you understand today that you didn't understand yesterday? Can you show me how you solved your most challenging activity today?* (And then encourage them to reach out to the appropriate teacher by email or the one-on-one check ins.)
- Monitor communications from your child's teachers. Teachers will communicate with parents, when necessary, through myNewCity messaging and/or email. The frequency and detail of these communications will be determined by your child's ages, maturity, and their degree of independence. Virtual Classrooms, weekly schedules and links will be housed on Class Bulletin Board pages in myNewCity.
- Familiarize yourself with our [Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy](#). It is important to help your child stay social, but you need to set rules and closely monitor their online presence and interactions.
- We want students to be focused on their work but also understand that there may be other priorities at home at times. Teachers will show flexibility and empathy while continuing to hold students to an appropriate level of accountability. Please partner with your child's teachers and reach out should any challenges arise. Teachers will take attendance during live classes and meetings; please notify teachers if your child will be absent and unable to turn in work or attend class, just as you would for in person school.

RESEARCH USED TO INFORM OUR FRAMEWORK

We spent time researching and collaborating around remote learning best practices in the spring and throughout the summer. Teachers had the opportunity to learn from what worked and didn't work in the spring and develop the best program for our students and families. Much of what teachers discovered during their remote learning experiences aligns with what we learned this summer in terms of what is considered best practice.

Below is a listing of many of the organizations, professional development opportunities, and publications that have provided resources and support to help us further refine and strengthen our approach. We are also grateful for the parent feedback provided in the two surveys last spring.

- Center for the Professional Education of Teachers @ Columbia University, *Best Practices for Blended Learning Professional Development Course*.
- Courses in partnership with ISACS, Independent Schools of the Central States group, including *Creating Research-Based Pathways of Learning for a Blended-Learning Approach* with [Jeff Utecht](#), an Educational Consultant and expert in online learning.
- *The Distance Learning Playbook* by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie.
- Harvard Graduate School of Education, *Developing Strategies for Online Teaching and Learning Course*.
- Methodology with Sarah Schaeffer and Dr. Yeap Ban Har *Essential Ideas in Mathematics Course*.
- The Reading and Writing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University, has offered several Distance Learning and Reading and Writing Workshop Courses in which the faculty have participated.
- Edutopia research and articles, evidence and practitioner-based learning strategies to improve K-12 education.
- Mindshift research and articles, a service of KQED News that was launched in 2010 by KQED and NPR.
- Independent Schools of St. Louis (ISSL), the St. Louis independent school community is small, and the Heads and Division Heads of schools have been meeting regularly since late March around various topics, including remote learning for young children.
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Since March, NAIS has offered several high-quality webinars and articles on the reopening of schools and curriculum and instruction.

