

Orono Public Schools Flexible Learning Day Plan

PURPOSE

To employ flexible learning models in order to optimize student learning when on-campus instruction is not possible. Guiding principles of Flexible Learning Days:

- May be called due to inclement weather or another unexpected event that causes a significant disruption to regular on-campus learning schedules.
- Can be utilized up to five days in one school year.
- Counted as an instructional day and included as hours of instruction (Minn. § Stat. 120A.41).

Additionally, Orono Public Schools' Flexible Learning Days aim to:

- Keep students at the center of instruction and planning.
- Leverage technology to maximize student learning.
- Boost teachers' ability to maintain continuity of instruction.

DEFINITIONS

E-learning - A term utilized in Minnesota State Statute to categorize teaching and learning activities occurring remotely during a regular school day (see E-learning Days, Minn. Stat. § 120A.414).

Flexible Learning - A preferred alternative to the term, E-learning, that characterizes the broad range of teaching and learning activities that may occur remotely during a regular school day.

Snow Day - The traditional term for a day on which inclement weather or travel conditions cause the cancellation of school. There are no requirements for students or teachers on Snow Days.

Synchronous Learning - Learning that occurs as teachers and students interact in real time. This may be accomplished through virtual meeting platforms, phone calls, digital chat, etc., and require that each participant has access to functional technology devices.

Asynchronous Learning - Learning activities that are coordinated by a teacher in advance with independent student learning and work time.

Continuity of Instruction - Instruction and activities that provide coherent connections between the scope-and-sequence of relevant content being taught in the classroom.

Learning Management System or LMS - Digital classroom platform used by teachers and students. Seesaw is currently used in grades E-2 and Schoology is used in grades 3-12.

ABOUT THIS PLAN

The District will incorporate age-appropriate activities, while keeping the following priorities in focus:

- Face-to-face, on-campus instruction for all students is the ideal standard whenever possible and prudent.
- The standard learning model for Flexible Learning in scenarios involving less than 24 hours notice is asynchronous, with an opportunity for office hours or connection with teachers.
- The learning model for Flexible Learning in scenarios with more than 24 hours notice may be modified in order to provide increased access to teachers by students.
- “Snow Days” may be utilized initially in a traditional manner.
- Considerations must be made for families without sufficient access to technology and for students with disabilities.
- A primary goal of the Orono Schools Technology Department is to maintain a vigorous security posture for district systems.

COMMUNICATIONS

The following forms of communication will provide stakeholders with information about Flexible Learning Days, when they will be used, how they will be notified, what to expect for a Flexible Learning Day:

1. Communication to families about Flexible Learning Days.
 - a. Beginning of the year communication.
Back-to-school communications will include information about what to expect when a Flexible Learning Day is called.
 - b. Notification to parents of a Flexible Learning Day.
As much advance notice will be given as possible. Parents/Guardians will receive an automated phone call and email about the designation of school closures as a Snow Day or Flexible Learning Day. In addition, district communication announcements are made via local television news networks and the school district web page (www.oronoschools.org) that schools will be closed. When appropriate, this practice will be amended to include notification that the district is implementing a Flexible Learning Day.
 - c. Web pages with Flexible Learning Day resources.
 1. Teachers will provide families with information specific to their course(s) about accessing Flexible Learning Day instructional materials, procedures, and expectations.
 2. Teachers provide Flexible Learning Day resources through the appropriate LMS (Seesaw E-2, Schoology 3-5)
2. Communications between teachers and students and families.

Synchronous Component.

A legislative requirement for Flexible Learning is that there is a synchronous component, or ability for a student-teacher interaction. The following items will help facilitate this.

- i. A standard format for posting Flexible Learning Day content on District learning management systems.
 - ii. Clear understanding of what is expected for Flexible Learning, as established by the teacher.
 - iii. Clear expectations and instructions on how to contact the instructor in case of questions or additional information.
 3. Teacher management of flexible learning.
 - a. Posting of activities and virtual office hours by teachers.
 - i. When a Flexible Learning Day is implemented, teachers are responsible for updating their course pages in the LMS no later than 9:00 a.m. (grades 6-12) and 10:00 a.m. (grades K-5) in the following manner:
 - **In K-1:** activity packets will be sent home prior to the first inclement weather day or teachers may also choose to include this information on their Seesaw pages.
 - **In 2-5:** activities are included on class Seesaw/Schoology pages, as well as instructions for completion.
 - **In 6-12:** teachers will create an Assignment/Activity in Schoology with instructions for students to complete. The title should be the name of the assignment, Flexible Learning Day and include a due date. This should take the form of a Schoology assignment/discussion/assessment to be completed.
 - ii. Make consideration for general activity time guidelines (note this does not equate to screen time)
 - K-2: 45 to 90 minutes
 - 3-5: 90 minutes
 - 6-12: 30 minutes per course
 - iii. Teachers will establish office hours and communicate to families and students the timing and duration of those hours.
 4. Evidence of continuity of learning considerations for meaningful instruction.
 - a. Be present on Schoology or Seesaw and email at scheduled times during the Flexible Learning Day. Provide a school telephone number where parents can call to leave a message (delivered to teachers by email) if they have questions.
 - b. Plan for self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration to age and individual learning needs.
 - c. Customize learning opportunities especially in troubleshooting student challenges.
 - d. Communicate and collaborate with colleagues to ensure similar expectations, communications, and protocols.