

NEC Remote Learning Plan: Expectations for Students

Our primary goal at NEC is the safety, health, and well-being of all of our staff and students. This document addresses how we will provide remote learning when our schools are closed for a prolonged period of time during the pandemic of 2020.

To the extent possible, we will be following the guiding principles and recommendations for remote learning as outlined by Commissioner Jeff Riley in his memo on March 26, 2020, as well as the Special Education Guidance provided by USDE and DESE.

For the first two weeks of school closure in March, we focused on support, connection, and enrichment. We made sure that families had their basic needs met (i.e. food and shelter) and we delivered technology and student-specific equipment or communication devices as needed. Once it became clear that school would be closed at least until May 4th, we began to develop a plan for individualized learning for all of our students.

Guiding principles:

- Remote learning cannot replace school.
- Health, safety, and emotional wellness are the most important priorities.
- Maintaining connection and engagement with students and families is critical.
- We understand that during this period, students are not receiving their usual supports, and that families are dealing with a wide array of challenges, and may not all be able to fully support or engage in remote learning with their students.
- NEC students are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) but this must be delivered in a way that protects the health and safety of all involved. Therefore, the provision of FAPE will look different and may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided remotely through resources and supports (such as strategies, projects and packets provided to students matched with regular and ongoing communication from special education team members) and services and instruction (such as virtual, online, or telephonic instruction).
- In most cases, our focus will be to strengthen skills and mitigate regression. In some cases, students will be able to master new content.
- Remote learning will involve the use of technology but should also provide students with opportunities to move, create, and explore.
- Learning will not be measured or evaluated in the usual ways. Any evaluation of student work will take into account the differences in family living circumstances and access to technology and support.

Structure and Expectations:

We recognize that the level of instruction for remote learning will not be equivalent to what is taught in the traditional classroom setting. We need to be more sensitive than ever to the needs of our students and families. We recognize that parents and guardians will be in charge of their children's learning, and they will likely have less familiarity with content and pedagogical knowledge; thus, students will have less explicit structure, support, and time for learning than they would receive in a typical school day in our buildings.

- By April 6th, each student will have an individual learning plan that includes opportunities for on-line learning, independent work, suggested resources, and a schedule of student-specific services and supports.
- Learning may be synchronous (in real time) or asynchronous (not in real time).
- On-line learning will utilize platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and Classroom Dojo. Learning may include group video or audio conference calls, pre-recorded videos, 1:1 phone calls or video calls, email, work packets, creative projects, reading lists, online courses, etc. Staff will provide parents/guardians with support on accessing these platforms.

- Students are expected to spend approximately 3 hours/day on structured learning opportunities. High school students who are earning credit toward a diploma may need to do additional independent work.
- Staff will work with families to discuss expectations, learning plans, flexible timelines and needed supports with an ongoing commitment to the prioritization of safety, physical health, and emotional wellbeing.
- Clinical staff will check in frequently with students and staff, as indicated on individual plans.
- Specialists will work with families to develop schedules for direct provision of Speech, OT, PT, or other services, and will provide resources for independent practice and enrichment.
- Teachers and specialists will take advantage of “real life” opportunities. For example practicing life skills in the home environment, or learning math, science, or historical concepts related to the pandemic.

Program or Grade Level Specific Information:

Grading for High School Students:

- For purposes of grading, Semester 3 grades will be based on work completed prior to closure. Students with S3 grades not in the passing range will be given an opportunity to submit work to improve grades by the end of the year.
- For Semester 4, all students will receive ongoing feedback from their teachers on work completed during the closure. If there is not a return to school, final grades will be recorded as either *Pass* or *Incomplete*, in accordance with DESE guidelines. Students receiving grades of *Incomplete* will be expected to work with the principal to develop an action plan to move the grade to *Pass*.
- Students who become ill or are caring for ill family members will be given alternative assignments with flexible deadlines during and after the closure. Students with documented illness may receive a medically excused (M) for the semester.

MCAS and MCAS-Alt: The state is in the process of seeking a formal waiver to eliminate MCAS testing for this year.

IEPs: If requested by the district and parent, our staff will be available for remote IEPs. Progress reports will be written on the usual schedule.

Expectations of students and families for appropriate virtual technology use

NEC is dedicated to providing engaging and effective remote learning opportunities for our students. Prior to engaging in these virtual opportunities, we want to clarify expectations around appropriate use of virtual technologies for educational opportunities.

1. NEC strictly prohibits screenshots, pictures, audio/video recording and distribution of any virtual educational experience in order to protect student privacy, proactively prevent potential cyberbullying, prevent the distribution of copyrighted materials and comply with Massachusetts law. Please note that in Massachusetts, it is illegal to record another person through any medium without his or her knowledge.
2. Students, and where appropriate parents/guardians, agree to engage in virtual educational experiences in a quiet, private area to the extent practicable given the circumstances, in order to minimize background noise and distractions and to protect the integrity of student engagement as well as student confidentiality.
3. Parents/guardians and other household members who normally are not privy to day-to-day classroom and group service discussions agree to respect and keep confidential any personal or private information (e.g. disability status) inadvertently discovered about other students due to proximity of virtual education. As a reminder, NEC’s Acceptable Use Policy applies to virtual learning, including school issued devices and networks.

Other:

As previously communicated parents should be in touch with the Executive Director, Principal, Teacher or Counselor if in need of technology, translation, or support around physical or mental health or wellbeing.

Many resources for all of the above are listed on our website at www.nsedu.org on a special page set up for this purpose. All parent communications from NEC and DESE are listed on that page as well.