

COVID-19 Distance Learning Plan

Norman County West Elementary

March 30, 2020

COVID-19 DISTANCE LEARNING DETAILS

What is COVID-19 Distance Learning?

Distance Learning involves planned online or teacher-prepared lessons that students complete when away from the physical school building. Using one-to-one devices and making provisions for students without such devices or access to stable internet connections, Norman County West recognizes that education can continue even when students and teachers are not in the same location. Along with emphasizing the value of learning, using Distance Learning encourages character growth in the areas of self-sufficiency, adaptability, work ethic and perseverance.

What are the goals of NCW COVID-19 Distance Learning?

- To minimize the disruption to academic progress caused by **planned and extended school closures** by making those out-of-school days as educationally productive and engaging as possible.
- To allow NCW grades K-5 students an opportunity to practice the kind of online learning that is increasingly part of the educational process as well as the workforce.
- To support all students in making progress learning at home with the support of parents, teachers and specialists through daily communication.
- Build educational routines and connections to teachers to support social emotional growth during this time of national crisis.

Beginning on Monday, March 30, all students in grades PreK-5 will receive daily instruction through our COVID-19 Distance Learning Model. Below you will read specific details on a variety of topics related to this plan.

Grades PreK

Our young students attending West Adventure Center are at an important time in learning and development. We want to continue to promote learning at this young age through supporting age appropriate distance learning. West Adventure staff will:

- Send weekly games and learning packets home to students through our meal delivery process on Monday mornings. These materials will promote academic, motor, play and social emotional skill development.

- West Adventure staff will make weekly parent and student connections to continue support to help parents support their young children.
- West Adventure staff will be available for questions at their regular phone number or emails during school hours.

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Students in grades K-2 will need typical school supplies for distance learning.

- For those families that have broadband internet, the students iPads will be sent home for student learning use only. The iPads will have the necessary apps for tasks assigned. The main communication tool for work will come through the SeeSaw app that all students and parents have access. Teachers will also speak to the student/parent a minimum of 3 times a week and communicate with parents directly through email as often as needed for support.
- For those families without workable internet, work packets will be delivered to the home with appropriate lesson plans and directions. In addition, teachers will call these parents/students daily to communicate student work, answer questions and provide instruction.
- All students (both those that work digitally as well as those with learning packets) will receive weekly deliveries of student materials as well as hands-on activities from classroom teachers, PE, Music and Technology specialists and Special Education teachers. These deliveries will happen Monday mornings or as communicated to families through our JMC Messaging System.
- All paper/pencil tasks that need to be returned to teachers (as directed in teacher communication) need to be sent back when deliveries occur on Mondays (same time as drop offs of learning packets).

Grades 3-5

- 3rd, 4th and 5th graders brought their school-owned Chromebooks home on Tuesday, March 17th. These Chromebooks are for learning and communication purposes only. All technology equipment will be returned to school upon re-opening including power cords, chargers, school owned mouse and the Chromebook.
- 3rd graders who have adequate access to the internet will receive daily assignments from their teacher through email or SeeSaw. Parents will also get an email or have access to their SeeSaw account. Students are expected to complete the work on the day it is assigned and return it to the teacher as directed. Teachers will contact the parent and student daily through either email, SeeSaw, video conferencing or telephone. Voice communication will happen at least 3 times each week with students/parents.

- In addition 3rd grade students with adequate internet connection will have daily video conferencing (Google.Meet) with the classroom teacher or specialist from 9am to 9:30. Our goal is to have as many students as possible available at that time for group instruction. Students practiced video conferencing prior to the school closure to ensure they can be independent with this process.
- 4th graders who have adequate access to the internet will receive daily assignments from their teacher through email, Google Classroom or Discord. Parents will also get an email about the assignments. Students are expected to complete the work on the day it is assigned and return it to the teacher as directed. Teachers will contact the parent and student daily through either email, video conferencing or telephone. Voice communication will happen at least 3 times each week with students/parents.
- In addition 4th grade students with adequate internet connection will have daily video conferencing (Discord or Google.Meet) with the classroom teacher or specialist from 10am to 11am. Our goal is to have as many students as possible available at that time for group instruction. Students practiced video conferencing prior to the school closure to ensure they can be independent with this process.
- 5th graders who have adequate access to the internet will receive daily assignments from their teacher through email or Google Classroom. Parents will also get an email or have access to their Google Classroom account. Students are expected to complete the work on the day it is assigned and return it to the teacher as directed. Teachers will contact the parent and student daily through either email, Google Classroom, video conferencing or telephone. Voice communication will happen at least 3 times each week with students/parents.
- In addition, 5th grade students with adequate internet connection will have daily video conferencing (Google.Meet) with the classroom teacher or specialist from 9:30am to 10:00 and again from 11:00 to 11:30. Our goal is to have as many students as possible available at that time for group instruction. Students practiced video conferencing prior to the school closure to ensure they can be independent with this process.
- For those families without workable internet, work packets will be delivered to the home with appropriate lesson plans and directions. In addition, teachers will call these parents/students daily to communicate student work, answer questions and provide instruction.
- All students (both those that work digitally as well as those with learning packets) will receive weekly deliveries of student materials as well as hands-on activities from classroom teachers, PE, music and technology specialists and special education teachers. These deliveries will happen Monday mornings or as communicated to families through our JMC Messaging System.

- All paper/pencil tasks that need to be returned to teachers (as directed in teacher communication) need to be sent back when deliveries occur on Mondays.

Special Education

Special education services are all about providing accommodations and modifications to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities. This distance learning plan will extend to take the extra time to support students needing academic accommodations and to provide appropriate learning materials and instruction for those that need direct instruction.

Special education staff will contact all parents of the students to explain how services will be provided for their specific child. Daily interactions will occur with the student and teacher to provide the necessary support. These interactions may include phone calls, video conferencing and emails. IEPs will be amended as needed during this time. A distance learning plan for the interim will be created and shared with each family to meet individual student needs.

During the school shutdown time, special education staff will make good faith efforts to meet timelines of due process meetings and deadlines. Meetings may happen virtually if needed. If deadlines and meetings are not possible, proper documentation and parent communication will occur.

Norman County West will make every effort to provide quality support and learning opportunities for our students with special needs.

Homeless Student Support

Students who are designated as homeless are identified and being served by Family Support Worker in the school district.

- Family Support Worker will coordinate the services for each of their students designated as homeless.
- Family Support Worker will coordinate services with the appropriate district personnel, including the District Homeless Liaison.
- Services being provided include meeting student needs for nutrition and academic and social/emotional support.

ELL Support

ELL Staff will continue to provide support and services to our students through a variety of formats:

- Provide activity options for home learning and support (in home language as well if needed)
- Collaborate with classroom teachers for progress monitoring
- Make accommodations/modifications/translations of classroom assignments as needed
- Connect with students and families via phone, email, text, app methods, or other as needed

FOR STUDENTS

Students in grades K-5: All assignments will be posted on the student platform and emailed to parents by 9:00am with teachers available to answer questions via email or phone call throughout the day until 3:00pm. It is understood that students might have a wide variety of responsibilities at home during *Distance Learning Days* and that some may not have access to the internet. Staff members understand this and will be flexible with those situations. However, the expectation is that students will complete the work in a timely manner as developed between student and teacher.

Students in NCW Child Care setting - To help support the families of emergency workforce, child care is provided at NCW from 7:15 to 3:30. Transportation is also provided. Students in the child care setting will receive the same work as others in their grade but this work will be completed at school. Teachers will communicate at least twice a week with these parents and will check in daily with students from their grade level while they are at school.

Students with disabilities, as required under Chapter 125A, will have assignments designed to meet the needs of IEP/504 plans.

- Throughout the Distance Learning time frame, the classroom teacher will be the main resource for help on assignments and lessons. If a child ordinarily leaves the classroom and goes to another teacher for math, reading, or some other subject, the special education teacher should design the online assignment for that particular area.
- When a Distance Learning plan cannot completely replicate an in-session school day, efforts will be made to provide the support needed by particular students. For instance, if reading is a challenge for a student and the student has online access, the teacher may assign tasks on sites that will read text aloud.

- All assignments will be posted by 9:00am with teachers available to answer questions via email throughout the day until 3:00pm. In addition students or parents can request video conference time with the special education teacher to support individual students.

Equal Access

Students and parents without adequate home Internet access or with limited Internet access must inform teachers of this fact or struggles that occur so that needed modifications to assignments, help with technology, changes in the lesson delivery and due dates can be made.

Teachers will be responsible for ensuring support through phone conferences and age appropriate learning packets. Teachers working with students in this format of distance learning, will also communicate a minimum of once a week for support and communication of student needs and success. Students and parents will also be encouraged to call teachers at school for additional support whenever it is needed. Teachers will be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 3:15pm. All phone messages will be returned within 24 hours.

School staff will also help parents who are interested in installing broadband internet in their homes. Several local companies have offered reduced rates and support for families who need this access for educational purposes. Norman County West can facilitate this process for families. Please call the school office for assistance.

FOR PARENTS

- Parents should visit with their child's teachers regarding the expectation on Distance Learning. If required, special arrangements for students must be worked out prior to the first online day. Families are asked to inform the teacher if they do not have Internet access at home since access to SeeSaw, email, video conferencing or Google Classroom and completion of regular K-5 assignments will require Internet access by the student.
- Parents who do not have adequate internet access in their homes (or where the child will be working) will be communicated at least 3 times a week to see what supports teachers can provide with the students' learning packets.
- Parents, along with teachers and students, are asked to remember that distance learning days are designed to be flexible: if a child struggles with a concept or assignment and is unable to complete the work that day, parents should remind

their student to communicate with the teacher about how to meet requirements. Communication is key to making sure all students are progressing.

- If a family does not have adequate internet access, we encourage you to call your local provider. Many companies are working with families to provide free internet access for learning purposes through the end of this school year. NCW administration will complete any necessary paperwork to support you through this process. In our area both Halstad Telephone Company and Arvig have programs such as those named here.
- If technology problems occur on a school device, please contact the school immediately. We will have a staff member get back to you likely the same day with a plan to solve the problem.
- Parents should contact teachers directly with any questions, concerns or frustrations they may have regarding Distance Learning assignments. Teachers and administrators can be reached through the staff emails or by telephone at 861-5800. If a teacher is not available when you call, every effort will be made to return calls the same day.

ATTENDANCE

Norman County West strongly believes in the value of regular support from licensed teachers to help meet the educational needs of our students. To record attendance for our students our teachers will use daily interaction logs. Each student must connect daily with their classroom teacher to be counted as “Present.” Teachers will attempt at least two interactions and if unable to reach the child and no response by the end of the day, we will mark the child as “absent.” It is still the responsibility of the parent to call school if their child is sick so we can record this accurately in our student information system.

If a teacher is unable to contact a child or their parent after 2 consecutive days, they will be referred to the principal or family support worker who will continue attempts to contact parents about “missing interactions” and create a plan to improve their child’s interactions with distance learning plans.

If no contact can be made after 4 days, emergency contacts and other means will be taken to reach parents regarding educational concerns.

GRADING

During this time of distance learning, Norman County West will focus on our students and their educational needs. Teachers will expect students to complete assigned work and return it for feedback and eventually record progress of meeting their learning

targets. Our teachers will make every effort to continue to assess and record students' learning. Some assessments will be delivered via technology devices while others may occur through video conferencing and paper pencil tasks.

At the time of the COVID-19 school closure, NCW was near the end of the third quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers had begun compiling grades and doing assessments with individual students. However, due to these circumstances, we will delay the finalizing of third quarter grades until April 16th. These grades may be slightly abbreviated and will include the limited information that we can gather up until April 9th. For 4th quarter grading, teachers will use a Pass/Incomplete marking code based on the work turned in during distance learning. Report cards and progress reports will be annotated with a note about the COVID-19 national crisis.

Assessments

Student classroom assessments will be given on an as needed basis based on the needs of the student and the classroom teacher. Assessments guide instruction and are an integral part of learning. Teachers will use less formal assessments such as short tests, observational notes, and student work completed to help in the assessment process. Some assessments will be online and directions for accessing the assessment will be sent out to the student and explicit instructions for amount of support will be given through these instructions. Parents are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher with any questions or concerns regarding assessments and grading of student work.

Family Support Worker

We understand this is a stressful and difficult time for families. Routines are changed and there are many uncertainties ahead. During these unexpected times, the Norman County West Social Worker wants you to know that she is available. She will be checking her email during the school day and will respond in a timely manner.

Social Work services will include communication with school staff, families, and students as well as collaboration with outside service providers. Students who are on an IEP will continue to receive their direct/indirect services. Service delivery will be through the use of Google Meet, telephone contacts, and email. Students and families are encouraged to reach out through phone calls or email with any questions or concerns. Students should be checking their school email or SeeSaw account on a daily basis.

The school attendance policy will be followed and expectations are outlined in the Distance Learning Plan. Teachers will be in contact with the Social Work Department regarding attendance concerns. If you are experiencing any barriers to learning or attendance please reach out to the classroom teacher or school social worker.

Families and students in need of resources should contact the social worker directly at: truebke@ncw.k12.mn.us

FOR TEACHERS

In preparation for COVID-19 Distance Learning Days, teachers in grades PreK-5 have been asked to:

- Familiarize students with SeeSaw or Google Classroom and/or video conferencing tools so they will be able to access and complete any online assignments.
- Provide a timely plan, posting work for the day by 9:00am.
- Plan for engaging, self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration for age and individual learning needs.
- Anticipate time requirements recognizing students learn at different paces, especially in an independent setting.
- Customize learning opportunities with a focus on supporting troubleshooting for students with digital challenges. These learning packets need to be ready by the end of the day on Friday so they can be delivered Monday morning.
- Communicate with colleagues, parents and students to ensure common expectations, communications and protocols.

During contracted hours, all teachers and support staff have been asked to:

- Report to work in the school building during regular work hours unless medical issues or travel have compromised the person's health or the health of others in the building.
- If a doctor is recommending a staff member to work at home, the staff member is to record their work at home and report to the building principal. To be considered a full work day, the staff member needs to document the hours worked and journal the work completed.
- Should a state or national shutdown occur, NCW will follow the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Education regarding distance learning and work at home for staff expectations. All of this will be communicated with staff and families at the earliest possible time.
- Check SeeSaw, Google Classroom, phone messages and/or email throughout the **Distance Learning days from 8:00am to 3:15pm.**

- Should NCW decide to move to having employees work from home or have less people in the building specific requirements for work tasks will be assigned based on need and position.
- Teachers will be expected to continue the distance learning plan as stated above. In addition, they will send your daily plans by 9:00am each day to the principal. This information will allow district administrators and onsite staff to better answer questions from parents on student assignments and will allow administrative staff to better support your own personalized growth on this day.
- Teachers will also have regularly scheduled check ins with the principal to discuss learning goals, problem solving and communication with families. These check ins will likely be by phone or video conferencing.
- Support Staff assignments should tele-commuting become necessary and will be determined based on the directives from the governor, MDE and administration. This may require some hours to be spent in school with very limited staff to help organize learning packets, nutrition and or cleaning needs. Staff not feeling safe in these conditions can make individual arrangements with the superintendent.
- **Professional Development for Teachers:** This contracted time should also be utilized to continue staff development goals:
 - **Professional Learning Communities** -- Staff should use time throughout the day to work individually or in teams (virtual teaming through Google Hangouts or Zoom are great options) to continue sharing resources and ideas.
 - **Google Classroom** -- Staff should use open time throughout the day to work on learning more about Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw.