



Newcastle Public Schools

Distance Learning Plan: Parent and Student Guide

Spring 2020



Purpose of Distance Learning Plan

Our purpose during the public health crisis is to educate children utilizing distance learning and continue to build each child's confidence and essential skills. Newcastle Public Schools staff will do this through a commitment to maintaining a personal connection to students and their families. Our mission is to ensure each student is supported while learning at home and each student completes distance learning with success.

Message from Superintendent Hau

Newcastle Public Schools Families,

These last few weeks have tested our mettle like nothing before. We are grieving many things - the abrupt ending to the school year, the loss of significant and precious end of the year rituals like graduation, and the separation of students from their teachers. The public health crisis has reminded me, in the most poignant way, to value even more the warm and encouraging smiles exchanged between teacher and student and the relationships that forge lifelong memories and confidence for so many children.

Yet, I am also reminded how resilient and creative we are. The human spirit shines through in our interactions through social media and virtual meetings. The Racer Family is strong and we will come through this crisis together. What we learn in the next few weeks will prepare us for any challenge to come. It reinforces our compassion for one another, and we will be even more grateful for the joy we bring each other when we give our best selves to our work.

I want to assure you students will not be penalized because of this public health crisis and our move to distance learning. I also want to assure you our teachers and principals have been working every day since we first learned about going to a distance learning environment. This plan includes resources for students and families as well as details for how we will function during distance learning for the rest of the school year. We do not expect parents to have anything prepared for April 6. We are preparing to do the work of re-engaging students on that day.

We understand the school closure has been tough for families. We know parents are concerned about loss of learning for students. We are concerned about these things as well, and we miss our students terribly. Parents and students will receive more personal conversations beginning Monday, April 6. Teachers will be contacting students on Monday, if not before, to explain how their classroom will be set up and how students will be expected to participate in learning.

Students will have opportunities to improve their grades during the weeks ahead. I have instructed teachers to continue to provide support for students individually to ensure they are successful. The district and site learning plans provide multiple ways parents may contact the school to receive help.

Thank you for your patience as we move into this new way of teaching and learning. We will remain flexible and work hard to help students and families any way we are able, including providing meals or helping families who do not have internet service or devices. It has been a challenge to create a new system of schooling that reaches each and every student while they learn at home. I am proud of our staff and how hard they are working. I believe you will be pleased with our progress and effort.

Be safe, be kind, and be well,



Melonie Hau,
Superintendent

Learner Expectations

Students will be required to complete assignments given by their teachers through paper packets, through digital learning, or a blend of both.

Students should expect to participate in learning for the suggested time frames per grade level:

Prekindergarten & Kindergarten: 45 minutes a day

- 15 minutes read-aloud and literacy skills
- 15 minutes math
- 15 minutes of reading skills practices (i.e. rhyming, sounds in a word, and letter names and letter sounds)
- Extended learning:
 - 30-60 minutes of outdoor play
 - 10-20 minutes of reading with family (books of their choice)
 - 30 minutes of imaginative play

1st & 2nd Grade: 1 hour and 10 minutes a day

- 30 minutes for read-aloud or independent reading, including reading tasks or writing prompts
- 20 minutes for a combination of math lessons, activities, application practice or games focused on concepts, skills or content (i.e., number sense, computation, problem solving, etc.) three times a week
- 20 minutes of science/social studies activities or lessons connected to an overarching project or topic of study one time a week each
- Flexible time for physical education, music, art, world languages, etc.

3rd through 5th grade: 1 hour and 20 minutes a day

- 20 minutes of read-aloud or independent reading
- 20 minutes of reading or writing lessons, tasks or prompts; may include 15 minutes of independent writing
- 20 minutes for a combination of math lessons, activities, application practice or games focused on concepts, skills or content of the unit (i.e., number sense, computation, problem solving, etc.)
- 20 minutes of science/social studies activities or lessons connected to an overarching project or topic of study
- Flexible time for physical education, music, art, world languages, etc.

6th through 12th grade: 3 hours a day

- 40-60 minutes, 4 times a week for English
- 40-60 minutes, 4 times a week for math
- 40-60 minutes, 2 times a week for science
- 40-60 minutes, 2 times a week for social studies
- Flexible time for physical education, music, art, world languages, etc.
- Additional time may be required for Advanced Placement courses

Good digital citizenship behaviors will be promoted and observed while students engage in distance learning. Resources for teaching digital citizenship to students can be found at [Common Sense Media](#).

Parents will need to actively monitor student progress and check for the following week's lesson plan provided through site websites or through their student's teacher. For more guidance on distance learning see the Oklahoma State Department of Education [Distance Learning Plan](#). Specific learning expectations by site can be found on our district website at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

Picking Up & Returning Items from School Sites

We will provide instructions on how to pick up students' belongings and return school items such as library books and uniforms at a later date. It is critical now for all of us to follow CDC guidelines and the Governor's executive orders to ensure student and staff safety during this public health crisis.

Technology Support

We will loan devices to students who currently have no device in the home. We are limiting devices to only one device per household. We are reaching out to families who need devices based on responses to our survey. Newcastle Schools will offer two new types of tech support for students, parents, and staff during distance learning:

Option 1: If parents have questions about technology or navigating websites being used by their student's teachers, etc., send an email to:

ECCTech@newcastle.k12.ok.us

ESTech@newcastle.k12.ok.us

MSTech@newcastle.k12.ok.us

HSTech@newcastle.k12.ok.us

These emails will be monitored by site librarians or teachers who will assist with site-level usage questions. If the site tech support is not able to help with the question, parents will be provided support by the district Instructional Technology team.

Option 2: If parents have issues with devices or connectivity, they can reach out to our Instructional Technology department directly. If the issue is with a school issued device (Chromebook or iPad) or connecting the district device to their home wi-fi, please contact Rey Medrano at (405) 387-6458 or rmedrano@newcastle.k12.ok.us.

Pioneer Telephone Cooperative is also offering support for families:

- All new Pioneer Internet customers will be eligible for free installation, free equipment, and two months of free service
- Pioneer will waive customer deposits for new Internet customers
- All Pioneer retail office locations will open our WIFI network to the public to create a free drive-up hot spot
- Existing Pioneer Cellular customers will have their data overages forgiven during the crisis to ensure every customer stays connected
- In addition, hot spot limitations for our Cellular customers will be temporarily removed to allow mobile devices to become WIFI hotspots for homes without broadband connectivity

Pioneer is waiving late fee penalties and has suspended all disconnects of unpaid services

How Students Will Receive Work

Students will be contacted by their teacher to begin the distance learning plan. Once a connection has been made with the teacher, students will receive work in two ways:

- Online learning via their teacher
- Paper packets to be mailed to the student

Each school site has a detailed learning plan. Site learning plans can be found on our district website at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/> and at each site's website and our Facebook pages.

Special Education/504s/EL Students

Individualized Education Plans (IEP), 504s, English Language Academic Plans will be followed to the greatest extent possible. District related services providers such as speech and OT/PT will be in contact with students and parents to arrange for continued services within the constraints of this public health crisis. All IEP and 504 meetings will be held through phone or video conference according to the current timeline. Teachers will contact parents directly to arrange all meetings during this time of closure. All IEP/504 team members are required to participate. For information about English Language Services, you may contact Stephanie Cox at scox@newcastle.k12.ok.us.

Parents Tips for Students Learning at Home

- Limit distractions
- Make space for learning
- Maintain breaks as needed-allow time away from school work
- Allow time for interactions with their friends/classmates
- We are all in this together-remain supportive and positive
- Plan your work and work your plan
- Don't forget to have fun

Additional resources for parents are located on our district website <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

How to Receive Help

School sites and teachers will provide specific communication through their site plans. The best way to contact the central office is through the emails listed at the end of this document. Communication will take place via: e-mail, Zoom, Google Classroom, Remind, social media, Infinite Campus messenger, and by other methods. Please be sure your contact information is up to date in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

Teacher office hours have been established at each school site. To see your teacher's office hours please review our site plans at <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>. Teachers are available Monday through Thursday during regular school hours each week to answer questions.

Our school website will be the hub for all site plans and resources for distance learning. Individual site websites will also have resources posted. You may access each site website by following the links below

Early Childhood Center -

https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastleearlychildhoodcenter_home.aspx

Elementary - https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastleelementaryschool_home.aspx

Middle School - https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastlemiddleschool_home.aspx

High School - https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/newcastlehighschool_home.aspx

Meal Options

Beginning Monday, April 6, 2020, Newcastle Public Schools will be offering FREE "grab and go" meals for pick-up at Newcastle Elementary Cafeteria for any student. The hours for pick-up will be from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Daily meals, breakfast and lunch, will be available everyday Monday through Thursday with meals for two days being provided on Thursday. The meal program will continue through the last day of school.

Additional Resources

Newcastle Public Schools website - www.newcastle.k12.ok.us

Best parent resources - www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/ContinuousLearningResources.aspx

OETA - <http://www.oeta.tv/schedule/>

OETA Learning at Home - <http://www.oeta.tv/blogs/education/distance-learning-with-oeta/>

Oklahoma State Department of Education - <https://sde.ok.gov/>

How This Plan Was Constructed

- Communication to parents via district web page, social media, and Infinite Campus
- Parent Survey
 - Technology needs - devices and connectivity
 - Meal service needs
 - Instructional needs
- Teacher Survey
 - Technology needs - devices and connectivity
- Administration meetings to determine needs and plan accordingly
- Staff meetings by site to determine needs and plan accordingly
- Development of technology contract for device check-out
- Establish online resource file for all staff members to utilize

This plan will remain flexible through the rest of the school year. Any additions or revisions will be posted via our district website, social media, email, Infinite Campus messenger, and site level communications.

Contact Us

The best way to contact the central office and sites is through the emails listed below.

Newcastle Public Schools Central Office - (405) 387-2890

Superintendent, Melonie Hau - mhau@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Assistant Superintendent, Kristi Ferguson - kferguson@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operations Officer - Jeff Landes - jlandes@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Director of Special Education, Stacey Gray - sgray@newcastle.k12.ok.us

English Language Services Coordinator, Stephanie Cox - scox@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Director of Athletics, Chris McKenzie - cmckenzie@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Technology Manager, Rick Kowals - rkowals@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Technology Assistant, Rey Medrano - rmedrano@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Site Contact Information:

Newcastle High School Principal, Jennifer Beer - jbeer@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle High School Asst. Principal, Adam Hull - ahull@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Middle School Principal, John Harris - jharris@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Middle School Asst. Principal, Jeremy Reynolds - jreynolds@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Elementary Principal, Terri Scott - tscott@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Elementary Asst. Principal, Angie Ritter - aritter@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Early Childhood Center Principal, Jennifer Rosenbloom -
jrosenbloom@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Newcastle Early Childhood Center Asst. Principal, Cathy Moore -
cmoore@newcastle.k12.ok.us

Website: <https://www.newcastle.k12.ok.us/>.

Facebook: [@newcastle.k12.ok.us](https://www.facebook.com/newcastle.k12.ok.us)