



Continual Learning Guide

Communication and Connection - The Keys to Success

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Introduction

The goal of this guide is to be a resource for families as we roll out our Continual Learning Plan during the Covid-19 crisis of 2020. It is designed to be updated as new information becomes available. As this document went live, we were early into a global crisis that is now projected to last for months not weeks as was originally predicted. Since the Governor's announcement of school closures in mid-March, the District has been faced with a series of rolling two-week closures. Teachers have been working both to deliver instruction while simultaneously learning and building the platforms for delivering that instruction.

From the outset, we have designed an asynchronous platform and are gradually and consistently adding functionality along two strands:

- Increasing the connection and support structures between students and teachers
- Modifying, optimizing and delivering new instruction to ensure a continuity of learning for all students.

Despite our best efforts, this crisis has presented an unprecedented disruption to "regular schooling." The physical and emotional health and safety of our students, as well as our community, remain our top priority as we work to make learning a part of each student's daily life.

General Overview

During any period of prolonged school closure, the District will take measures to ensure that there is some continuity in the lives of all students. While continual learning through remote experiences cannot replicate the rich learning environment of our classrooms, labs, studios, gymnasiums, and libraries, we can provide experiences that will challenge students' thinking, tap into their abilities to work independently, and keep them current with curriculum content whenever possible.

What to Expect from Your Teachers

Given the broad range of ages in our schools, we understand that students have different needs, levels of independence, and stamina. That is why we have outlined the basic expectations for students based on their school. More detailed plans can be found by grade level in the elementary years on the Concord Road School website and by subject area or course in the secondary grades.

Concord Road

- All students will be transitioning to Google Classroom. Traditionally, Google Classroom has only been used in 3rd and 4th grades and we are building support for teachers and families as we extend Google Classroom connections for all classes.
- The general structure is to provide daily work in three areas - Reading, Writing, Mathematics - as well as work in Science and Social Studies on a weekly basis.
- These assignments are designed to give students 15-25 minutes of work per subject per day; with the understanding, that time on task will vary for each child.
- In addition, your child's teacher will contact children daily for support and to indicate if any work should be submitted for feedback. In addition, teachers will communicate how they will be available to support students between the hours of 8 and 3.
- As a way to stay connected with students, teachers may provide the opportunity for virtual meetings. [Follow this link](#) for K-4 Guidelines for Videoconferencing: Google Meet.
- Classroom teachers and administrators are available to answer questions via email.
- Special area teachers will provide learning opportunities and suggestions for students in their respective subjects on the home page (Art, Music, P.E., Computer Science, Science). These activities are designed to supplement the other work and give your students some choices for different learning experiences.
- The Guidance/Psychology department has provided opportunities to support students with Social-Emotional Learning.

Ardsley Middle School

- Students will continue to use Google Classroom. Assignments and resources will be posted to Google Classroom and will be updated.
- Middle School work will be organized by subject area with the major subjects - ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies giving assignments that can be spread out over the week but should last 20-30 minutes per subject per day.
- 7th and 8th grade will also have World Language assignments.
- In addition, your child's teacher will contact students daily for support and to indicate if any work should be submitted for feedback. In addition, teachers will communicate how they will be available to support students between the hours of 8 and 3.

- Teachers/educators may provide the opportunity for virtual meetings via Google Hangouts, Google Meet, or other video conferencing tools. [Follow this link](#) for 5 - 12 Guidelines for Videoconferencing - Google Meet.
- Classroom teachers and administrators are available to answer questions via email
- Special area teachers will also send activities and suggestions for students in their respective subjects (Art, Music, PE, FACS, Health, Project Lead the Way, Digital Citizenship, Computer Science, and Guidance). These activities are designed to supplement the other work and give you and your children some choices for different learning experiences.
- The Guidance/Psychology department has provided opportunities to support students with Social-Emotional Learning.

Ardsley High School

- Students will continue to use Google Classroom. Assignments and resources will be posted to Google Classroom and will be updated.
- High School work will be organized by course and by assignments that can be spread out over the week but should last up to 40 minutes per subject per day.
- Teachers will make daily contact with their classes (except for half credit classes). They will also post their availability for questions and support between 8 and 3 daily.
- Teachers/educators may provide the opportunity for virtual meetings via Google Hangouts, Google Meet, or other video conferencing tools. [Follow this link](#) for 5 - 12 Guidelines for Videoconferencing - Google Meet.
- In addition, teachers will reach out to students through Google Classroom to indicate if any work should be submitted for feedback.
- Special area teachers will also send assignments and suggestions for students in their respective subjects (Art, Music, PE, Health, Computer Science, and Guidance).
- Guidance will continue to offer support to students in transition planning, course selections, and wellness.

Robust Student-Teacher Connections for Building Community, Feedback, and Support

Principals and curriculum leaders are working with teachers to improve and enhance the frequency and the responsiveness of their feedback and support. This work is ongoing and requires professional development for teachers. Most of the technology currently being used and listed on [Panthers Link](#) and includes:

- Google Classroom allows us to create lessons, distribute assignments and provide feedback. This tool will be a new addition for grades K-4 and more information will come home next week.
- FlipGrid allows us to foster short video-based discussions on classroom topics and create a shared community learning experience.
- Castle Learning offers a comprehensive instructional support platform for in class, homework, review, and testing available both online and offline.
- Padlet is an application to create an online bulletin board that is used to display information for any topic, or use as a soundboard for student participation.
- Dreambox offers adaptive online software that focuses on mathematics education at the elementary and middle school level.

In addition, we continue to look for other proven technological solutions to improve our connections with students.

Ensuring the Continuity of Robust Curriculum/Implementation of New Instruction

Based on the feedback from our teachers and from other districts, we understand that new material cannot always be introduced in the same formats or volume as in conventional classroom schooling. Over the past weeks, teachers have been working to break down lessons and reorganize units to include all the essential curriculum elements needed to carry us through to the end of the school year - approximately 45-50 instructional days. We want to ensure all curriculum outcomes are met and properly assessed in order that every student will be “September Ready”.

However, we realize that in highly skills-based and sequential subjects like reading and mathematics, all students may not make as much progress this spring as they could have in a regular classroom setting. In order to make sure that students are ready for the next level of coursework in September, we will work with our teachers over the summer to adjust units allowing for more up-front review and expanded coverage of specific topics. Put another way, “September Ready” means helping students make progress this spring, as well as, teachers supporting students next fall differently so that they can continue to make successful academic progress in all subjects.

Specific guidelines on the volume and pace of new instruction will vary by grade level and will follow in the coming days and weeks.

Enhancing Student-Teacher Connections with Live Video

In our last update, we mentioned that Principals and Curriculum Leaders are working with teachers to broaden channels of support and feedback. As that work continues, we are reinforcing our commitment to Google Classroom based on the platforms robust tools and

security features. This past week after the Passover/Easter holiday week, as planned, we have made Google Hangouts/Meetings available to teachers and are providing the training necessary to enable our teachers to have live contact with students both in whole-class and small-group formats. In the last few days, we have embarked on our soft launch of our “Go-Live” plan as this training rolls-out to all teachers.

Live Connections Expectations

Our expectation is for all teachers to conduct a minimum of 2 “live” sessions using video per week with their students, with 3-5 contacts being ideal for younger students. These live video contacts should total about 60 minutes per week and will take the form of class meetings, office hours, guided practice, as well as opportunities for feedback, questions, revisions, and review. Students with IEP’s and 504 plans will have contacts commensurate with their written plans. These live connections will not replace the asynchronous instruction (through video, Flipgrid, and other means) but rather build in time for guided practice, feedback, student sharing, community building, and support. In all, students will have more instruction within a more structured environment between 9 am and 3 pm Monday-Friday

We recognize that our shift to “live” connection has been gradual, but we feel that in doing so, we are keeping the safety and privacy of students a priority. These same reasons have influenced our choice of Google Meeting over the Zoom platform:

- The need to protect student privacy and safety while ‘live.’
- The need to avoid scheduling conflicts with multiple live sessions.
- The need to provide equitable access to “live” experiences.
- The need to anticipate and minimize potential behavior issues.

In the coming days, you will receive from your building principals this official [Parental Notification](#) letter, [student guidelines](#), and instructions for students or parents about how to join a meeting. Tentative Schedules for AMS and AHS will be shared by Friday, April 24.

Support Services

We are committed to supporting our students, families, and staff as we further develop strategies to navigate through the process for a successful school year.

Special Education and Section 504 Services

As our continual learning plan rolls out, Special Education providers will be reaching out directly to the families and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Section 504 plans. All direct and related service providers (speech, occupational/physical therapy, and psychologists) have met and developed plans that include the following:

- Appropriate skill-building work and/or differentiation of classroom teacher assignments;
- Clear guidance on how to contact them in case of questions or concerns; and
- Regular check-ins to consult on how to help children structure their time and continue to review and advance their skills while at home.

We encourage all parents who have questions to reach out to any of their providers via email.

ELL (English Language Learner) Support

The teachers of English Language Learners will be directly reaching out to our ELL students to provide the following resources and supports:

- Checks of understanding for classroom assignments;
- Activities for practice and skill-building; and
- Opportunities to connect in case of questions and concerns.

Technology Help

Students should first reach out to their teacher if they have a technical question or problem. Your principal can also help if you are having trouble reaching your child's teacher. If the technical issue is at our end, we will set up tech support.

Devices - Needs and Repairs

If you need any help with a school device, please reach out to your child's principal.

Attendance

Teachers expect students to check-in daily through google classroom. If your child is sick or cannot check-in, please contact your child's schools as follows:

CRS: vadinaro@ardsleyschools.org

AMS: preid@ardsleyschools.org

AHS: cwhite@ardsleyschools.org

If we have not heard from you or your child after 3 days, someone from the school will reach out to you to make sure that you and your child are OK. While we do not intend to use attendance in a disciplinary way, we are obligated to keep attendance and hold students accountable for "attending school" and maintain our State mandates.

Grading

Grading in an online environment presents many challenges to traditional grading, and we acknowledge that the nature of the closure was disruptive to the 3rd Quarter in grades 5-12 and disruptive to the Parent-Teacher Conferences at Concord Road. Our goal with our grading plans and policies are intended to:

1. Maintain the integrity of our assessment and grading practices so they are transparent and fair for all.
2. Remain flexible enough so that no student's grades are unfairly impacted by the challenges of working remotely.
3. Remain in compliance with State regulations around credits, promotion requirements and graduation requirements.

Grading in the 4th Quarter

Grading in the final marking period will be modified to match the limitations and challenges of working online while being fair. Each building will share how their assessment, feedback, and grading plans will unfold this spring so that every student's progress can be evaluated and recorded.

Grading and Reporting at CRS

At this point, the March Parent-Teacher Conferences have been canceled. However, teachers are available to check in with any families with any concerns. End of Year report cards will be adjusted as needed. We will update you closer to the end of the year. Concord Road is developing a modified report card that will be able to record students' progress and provide parents as well as next year's teachers with valuable information to support all learners in September.

Grading and Reporting at AMS

At this point, the 3rd Quarter will be graded Pass/Fail and will be based on the completion of collected assignments since schools closed on 3/16. Graded work collected prior to 3/16 will be carried over to the 4th Quarter. AMS students will receive a letter grade for the 4th quarter as well as a final grade for the year

Grading and Reporting at AHS

At this point, the 3rd Quarter will be graded Pass/Fail and will be based on the completion of collected assignments since schools closed on 3/16. Graded work collected prior to 3/16 will be carried over to the 4th Quarter. AHS students will receive a letter grade for the 4th quarter as well as a final grade for the year.

Assessments

NYS 3-8 Testing

NYS announced that it is suspending the following assessments: ELA and math in grades 3-8; science in grades 4 & 8; NYSESLAT K-12; and NYSAA in grades 3-8 & high school.

NYS Regents

At this point, no changes have been made to the NYS Regents Examination Schedule. We are preparing lessons and teaching our classes with the understanding that Regents exams will be administered as scheduled and that students can receive course credit through online learning. However, we will be evaluating how these exams will be weighted in a student's final average so no student is disadvantaged as a result.

Our teachers have been preparing our students for state assessments throughout the school year and students will be provided with resources to support their understanding of concepts and skills during e-learning. Upon our return to school, teachers will continue to assess student progress and provide support in order to best prepare students for the NYS assessments.

Advanced Placement Exams and SATs and ACTs

AP Exams

The College Board announced that it will cancel face-to-face exam administrations and move to home testing in each AP subject with two different testing dates. You can review detailed information on their [website](#). Our teachers of AP courses will continue to provide instruction to students in preparation for the exam and monitor the updates from the College Board.

SAT's

The College Board canceled the May 2, 2020 SAT administration. Registered students will receive refunds. The College Board will provide future additional SAT testing opportunities for students as soon as feasible in place of canceled administrations.

ACT

The [ACT](#) has rescheduled the April 4 national test date to June 13 across the U.S.

Local Exams and Placement Exams

Decisions about Local Finals as well as any processes that lead to placement into Honors classes will be reviewed as part of our work on 4th Quarter Grading. Honors decisions will NOT be made after the 3rd Quarter as has often been the case. Since the length of the closures is

uncertain, we will need to reassess these practices and policies as we learn more. Once again, we intend to adjust policies and practices so that no student is disadvantaged by the impact of school closures and on-line instruction.

Considerations for High School Seniors

At present, we do not have definitive plans for events and traditions that have been disrupted. Our plan to postpone or modify events before ever considering canceling them. We will update this section regularly. Some of the events we have in mind are:

- Externships
- Senior Cruise
- Prom
- All Graduation Ceremonies

Resources for Parents

CK-12 [Link](#)

Internet Discounts for Families COVID-19 [Link](#)

Learn From Anywhere [Link](#)

TedEd [Link](#)

YouTube Learning Hub [Link](#)

Data Privacy and Safety Online

Online Subscriptions Privacy Policy/Terms of Use [Link](#)

Ardsley District Approved Technology List [Link](#)

Guides and Tutorials

Parents' Guide to Google Classroom [Link](#)

K-4 Guidelines for Videoconferencing: Google Meet [Link](#)

5 - 12 Guidelines for Videoconferencing: Google Meet [Link](#)

K - 12 Guidelines for Videoconferencing: Google Meet [Link](#)

Your Feedback Helps Us Grow

Our faculty and administrators are collaborating every day to build, deliver, and assess a robust program that will support student growth while schools remain closed. We know that we are learning along the way, so we value your and your children's feedback to help us refine our thinking and assure that every student is supported. If you have any questions or concerns, please continue to reach out to your teachers, to your principals, or to me directly. Thank you for your continued support of Ardsley Schools.

F.A.Q.'s

Q: When do you expect our schools will reopen for our students?

A: Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered the closure of New York State schools until at least May 15 in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus. We will carry out our Ardsley Continual Learning Plan as we further develop and bolster our on-line connections with our students.

Q: Where can I find information about the District's food service program?

A: For information on the Ardsley School District Food Service Program during the extended coronavirus school closure, [follow this link](#).

(This section will be updated weekly)