

Syosset Central School District

Syosset High School

As we enter our second school year impacted by COVID-19, we recognize the struggles that families face in finding success with remote learning and navigating the transition to a hybrid learning model. For example, a number of students have found it difficult to maintain engagement in online learning and many parents have found it challenging to balance their own work needs with supervising their child's education from home. This guide consists of suggestions for addressing and overcoming common obstacles to remote learning. If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding your child's success with online learning, please contact us so that we can provide targeted support for the unique needs of your child and family.

Suggestions for Creating a Successful Home Learning Environment:

1. Understand and discuss expectations for remote learning, including how much time should be spent in synchronous vs. asynchronous instruction.,
2. Maintain a daily routine that includes a consistent schedule for learning, dedicated "down time", and opportunities for exercise and movement.
3. Establish a dedicated learning space, away from potential distractions (i.e. television, cell phone) to increase focus.
4. Create prioritized checklists for classwork and homework to guide study efforts.
5. Set daily, weekly, and quarterly goals that are clearly defined and realistic.
6. Do not be afraid to ask for help when needed. We are all in this together.
7. *Sources for Further Reading*

Washington State University Counseling Center

<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uw-s3-cdn/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2020/03/18145327/Blue-and-Pink-Illustrative-Beauty-and-Fashion-Flyer1.pdf>

Johns Hopkins School of Education

<https://education.jhu.edu/2020/04/8tipsforfocus/>

Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health: Center for Resilient Children

<https://apertureed.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Promoting-SEL-at-Home-GDB.pdf>

Kern County Schools

<https://kern.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/4/files/sites/4/2020/04/Parent-Tips.pdf>

Suggestions for Managing Child and Adolescent Technology Usage at Home

1. Identify specific activities or periods of time when technology usage is not allowed (i.e. dinner time, homework time, bed time, etc.). Ensure that this is followed by all family members, including parents as a means of modeling appropriate behavior.
2. Create a written contract outlining rules and parameters for technology use. All family members should sign in agreement. Keep this contract on the refrigerator or in another easily viewable location.
3. Provide opportunities and/or ideas for technology-free activities. Physical outdoor activities are great alternatives.
4. Talk with your child about digital citizenship and the potential dangers of social media. Encourage open communication about their social media involvement.
5. Encourage video game playing with peers, to provide opportunities for socialization.
6. If you feel that your child is engaging with technology inappropriately or excessively, temporarily take it away (i.e. confiscate computers, tablets, video game consoles, and phones, replace smartphones with phones that do not allow access to the internet, etc.). It is important that clear boundaries are set and that consequences for inappropriate technology usage are applied when needed.

7. Sources for Further Reading

Very Well Family

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/establishing-cell-phone-rules-for-teens-2609120>

Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/nurturing-resilience/201801/teens-and-dangerous-levels-cell-phone-use>

Healthychildren.org

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/The-Benefits-of-Limiting-TV.aspx>

Education and Health Journal

<https://sheu.org.uk/sheux/EH/eh213mg.pdf>

Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/artificial-maturity/201803/parents-guide-social-media-use-kids>

Suggestions for a Healthy Transition Back to the School Building

1. Discuss and reassure your child about safety measures that will be in place within the school building (i.e. mask policy, social distancing, smaller class sizes, etc).
2. Remind you child of all the positives for returning to school (i.e. seeing friends).
3. Continue to reinforce proper hygiene practices with your child. Assure them that these practices will go a long way in keeping them safe at school.
4. Encourage your child to share their feelings about returning to school without judgement. Model a positive attitude about the return, so as to reinforce a positive outlook for the new year.

5. *Source for Further Reading*

UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>

Suggestions for Healthy Child and Adolescent Sleep Habits

1. Help your child establish a consistent sleep schedule that allows for approximately 9-10 hours of sleep a night. Studies have shown that 9-10 hours of sleep is optimal for adolescents.
2. Limit use of, and/or access to, cellphones, laptops, and other devices before bedtime. Establishing rules against having technology in their bedroom at bedtime may help.
3. Discourage oversleeping on the weekends.

4. *Sources for Further Reading*

Nationwide Childrens'

<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/specialties/sleep-disorder-center/sleep-in-adolescents>

Johns Hopkins Medicine

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/teenagers-and-sleep-how-much-sleep-is-enough>

Suggestions for Supporting Mental Health Struggles at Home

1. Normalize and validate your child's feelings. Let them know that their feelings are an expected response to the coronavirus pandemic and that they are not alone.
2. Model and encourage use of deep breathing exercises. Deep breathing is an effective way in managing symptoms of anxiety.
3. Limit access to news. Frequent exposure to news coverage about the pandemic, whether positive or negative in nature, can trigger feelings of anxiety or depression.
4. Maintain normalcy and structure as much as possible. Children can find comfort in engaging in typical and expected activities.
5. Encourage socialization as much as possible. Even opportunities for virtual socialization can improve a child's mood.
6. Be aware of any significant changes in your child's daily functioning (i.e. changes in eating, changes in sleeping, changes in activity interest, etc.). Significant changes in functioning can be indicative of mental health struggles.
7. In situations involving the death of a loved one, be honest and direct when sharing information with your child. Keep information age-appropriate. Each child may grieve differently. Express your own feelings to reassure your child that grieving is normal.
8. Seek out professional support and treatment to address any concerns regarding mental health struggles.

9. *Sources for Further Reading*

School Refusal Hope

<https://schoolrefusalhope.org/school-refusal-blog/helping-school-refusal-kids-manage-anxiety-during-covid>

Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/>

National Association of School Psychologists

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

Child Mind Institute

https://childmind.org/article/helping-children-deal-grief/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Helping%20Children%20Deal%20With%20Grief&utm_campaign=Weekly-06-23-20

Suggestions for Managing School Refusal and/or Avoidance

1. Closely monitor your child's attendance to be able to quickly identify any patterns of absences as quickly as possible. The longer a child displays school refusal or avoidance, the more difficult it will be for them to overcome.
2. Be aware of repeated physical complaints or reports of "being sick" with no identifiable cause or reason. Anxiety can often manifest in physical ways and it is not uncommon for children to be unaware of the connection between their physical and emotional symptoms.
3. Take time to talk with your child about school and how they feel that it is going. Avoid leading questions and allow your child to direct the conversation. This provides them an opportunity to bring up anything that is upsetting or stressful.
4. Seek out professional support and treatment to address any concerns regarding school refusal or avoidance.
5. *Sources for Further Reading*

Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/article/when-kids-refuse-to-go-to-school/>

If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding your child's success or mental health, please contact us so that we can provide targeted support for the unique needs of your child and family.