



Al Zuhour' s Parent Responsibilities During Distance Education Guide

Just like in traditional learning environments, a parent's role and impact on student success is both critical and apparent. Parents serve as a coach for their students, at any age, and support them through their learning process. The same way parents can mentor and encourage students that travel nearby for school, a parent also plays a vital role in a student's online learning. Below are few suggestions that will make the transition to distance Education a little bit less challenging.

1. Establish routines and expectations

It is important to develop good habits from the start. Create a flexible routine and talk about how it's working overtime. Chunk your days into predictable segments. Help students get up, get dressed and ready to learn at a reasonable time. Keep normal bedtime routines, including normal rules for digital devices. Adjust schedules to meet everyone's needs but don't default to staying up late and sleeping in.

2. Choose a good place to learn

Your family's regular learning space for occasional homework might not work for extended periods. Set up a physical location that's dedicated to school-focused activities. Make sure it is quiet, free from distractions and has a good internet connection. Make sure an adult monitors online learning. Keep doors open, and practice good digital safety. Our teachers, counsellors and safeguarding teams will do the same.

3. Stay in touch

Teachers will mainly be communicating regularly through our online platforms and virtual learning environments in order to make sure everyone knows how to find the help they need to be successful. Stay in contact with classroom and support teachers, school leaders and supervisors but understand it may take a day or two for us to respond. If you have concerns, let someone know.

4. Help students ‘own’ their learning

No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or to be educational and content matter experts. Provide support and encouragement and expect your children to do their part. Struggling is allowed and encouraged! Don't help too much. Becoming independent takes lots of practice. At AZPS, your child usually engages with other students in class or educational staff. Many of these social interactions will continue from a distance, but they will be different. You cannot replace them all, and that's OK.

5. Begin and end the day by checking-in

In the morning, you might ask:

- What classes/subject do you have today?
- Do you have any assessments?
- How will you spend your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?

At the end of the day you might ask:

- How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
- What did you discover? What was hard?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?

These brief grounding conversations matter. Checking in students to process instructions they received from their teachers, and it helps them organize themselves and set priorities – older students too. Not all students thrive in distance Education, some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid later challenges and disappointments. They help students develop self-management and executive functioning that are essential skills for life. Parents are good life coaches.

6. Establish times for quiet and reflection

For families with children of different ages, and parents who may also be unexpectedly working from home more often, it's good to build in some time for peace and quiet. Siblings may need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Many families will need to negotiate access to devices, priorities for wi-fi bandwidth and schedules throughout the day. Noise-cancelling headphones are an idea. And one day a week is already planned for independent, low-stress learning. Reading is fundamental.

7. Encourage physical activity and exercise

Living and working at home, we will all need some room to let off steam. Moving (independently and together as a family) is vital to health, wellbeing, and

readiness for learning. It's a great opportunity to practice exercising 'alone together' with digital workouts and online instructors. Set new fitness goals and plan hands-on, life-ready activities that keep hands busy, feet moving, and minds engaged. You may want to think about how your children can pitch in more around the house with chores or other responsibilities. Now's a good time to think about increasing personal responsibility and pitching in.

8. Manage stress and make the most of an unusual situation

We are going through a time of major upheaval to our normal routines and ways of life, and there's a great deal of anxiety in the world right now. Emotions may be running high, and children may be worried or fearful. Parents may be stressed as well, and children are often keenly aware of trouble. Children benefit when they get age-appropriate information and ongoing reassurance from trusted adults. We have put in place layers of support for AZPS students, so please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher, school leader or support team if you need assistance or advice. In these circumstances, it's often possible to reframe challenges as opportunities: for spending time together, discovering new ideas and interests, investing energy and attention in activities that often get pushed aside by everyday tasks and responsibilities. Experts advise that it's a good idea to slow down, find beauty, enjoy unexpected benefits, and express gratitude by helping others. The strength of AZPS's community will help see us through.

9. Monitor time on-screen and online

Distance Education does not mean staring at computer screens five hours every day. Teachers will aim to build in variety, but it will require some trial and error before everyone finds balance between online and close-space offline learning experiences. Work together to find ways to prevent 'down time' from becoming just more 'screen time'.

10. Connect safely with friends, and be kind

The initial excitement of school being closed will fade quickly when students start missing their friends, classmates, and teachers. Help your children maintain contact with friends through social media and other online technologies. But monitor your child's social media use. Remind your child to be polite, respectful, and appropriate in their communications, and to follow school guidelines in their interactions with others. Report unkindness and other problems so that everyone maintains healthy relationships and positive interactions.

11. Create a safe learning environment

We encourage you to place your child's learning device in a common area of your home where you can monitor their online activity and time spent online. For older children, this strategy will allow you to monitor them in an indirect manner. Ensure that the learning space is always clean and disinfected. Place a hand

sanitizer and disinfectant nearby and make sure your child is washing their hands frequently. For the younger children who find it difficult to understand online safety or technical issues, we advise you to check in with them from time to time and see if they are having any issues. We also ask you to review your school's ICT and internet usage guidelines/policies and ensure that you are familiar with the necessary online safety measures. We have also covered online safety in a separate section of this guide.

We are here to support you with Distance Education. If you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher, administration, or the school. The emergency hotline numbers are listed below.

0505543165 (Grades KG-1)

0505547180 (Grades 2-5)

0563957179 (Grades 6-8)

0563597577 (Grades 9-12)