



Parent Guide to Supporting Your Children During Distance Learning

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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1 Introduction

This guide has been created to help parents support their children during distance learning. It sets out the role parents can play in supporting the continuity of learning and is intended to promote a shared understanding between families and schools, focusing primarily on communication, student wellbeing, engagement, and access to learning.

During these periods, schools remain responsible for teaching, planning lessons, monitoring progress, and supporting students. Parents or guardians play an important supporting role in helping children access learning, follow routines, stay engaged, and maintain their wellbeing.

The guidance is designed to provide practical and age-appropriate advice that families can apply in various home circumstances. Parents and guardians are not expected to replace the role of the teacher or recreate a full school day at home. Instead, the goal is to help children stay connected, supported, and able to continue learning as effectively as possible.





2 What Matters Most

During periods of distance learning, families may be balancing a number of demands at the same time. The priorities below are intended to help children stay connected, supported, and able to continue learning in a manageable way.

PRIORITY

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Staying connected to school

Help your child keep up with the school's timetable, messages, and learning activities.



Supporting participation

Encourage your child to join lessons, complete assigned work, and stay engaged as much as possible.



Maintaining routine

Keep the day manageable and predictable, allowing time for learning, breaks, meals, movement, and rest.



Protecting wellbeing

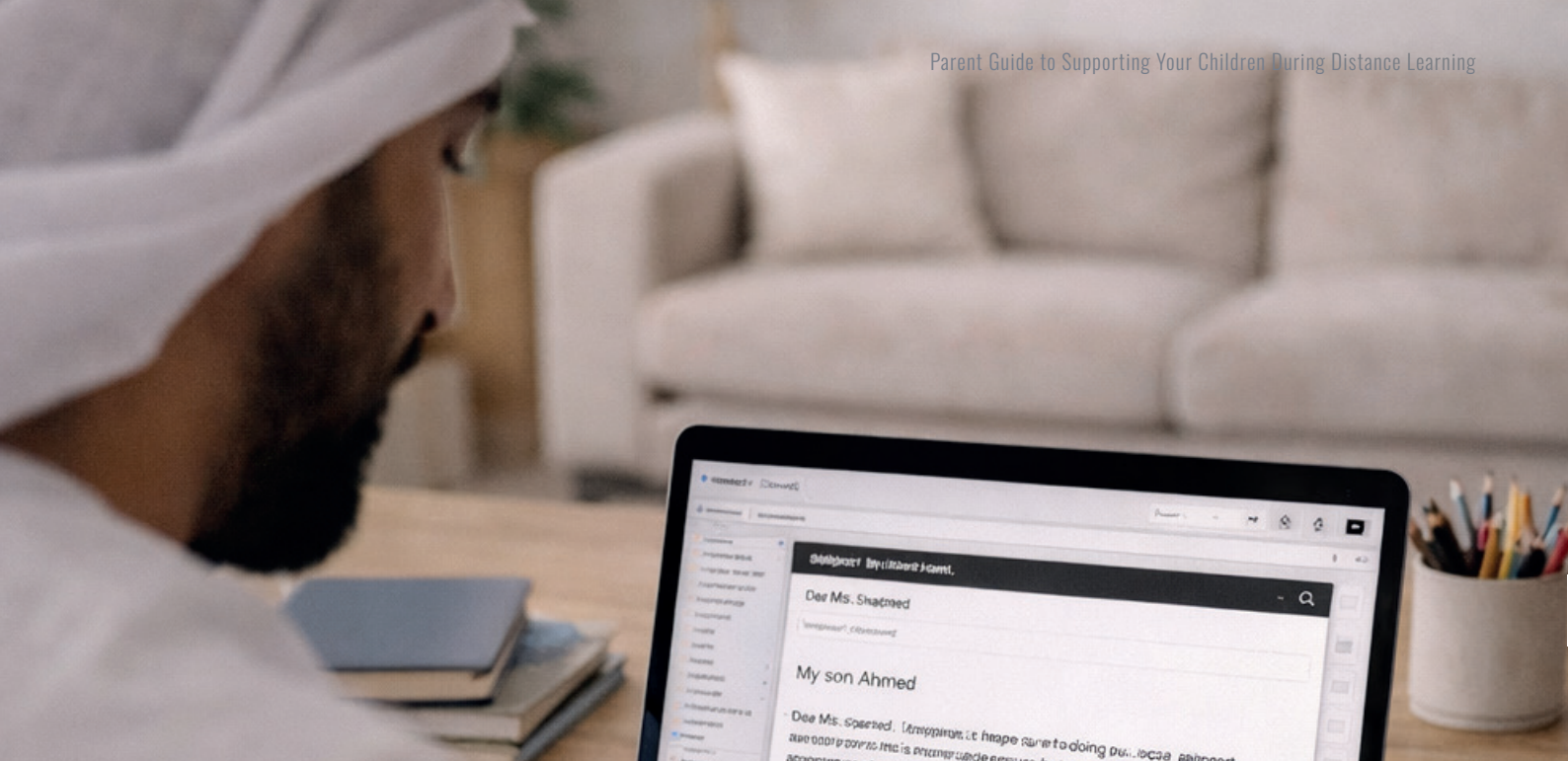
Pay attention to your child's mood, energy, stress, and motivation, not only their work completion.



Communicating early

Let the school know promptly if there are any challenges, concerns, or changes affecting your child's learning.

Progress matters more than perfection. Calm support, consistent routines, and open communication with the school can make a big difference.



3 Communication with the School

Clear communication between home and school is especially important during distance learning. It helps reduce confusion, supports timely problem-solving, and enables schools to respond more efficiently when a child or family needs support.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Maintain regular contact with the school during distance learning, and expect clear, consistent, and manageable communication.

Check school messages regularly, use the school's preferred communication channels, and contact the relevant staff if clarification or support is needed.

Notify the school promptly about absences, disruptions, or barriers to learning.

Inform the school if your child is unwell, distressed, displaced, travelling, or unable to access learning as usual.

Raise concerns early if your child is struggling with participation, workload, or their wellbeing.

Do not wait for a problem to become serious before contacting the school.

Communicate early so the school can understand the situation and provide suitable flexibility or support where needed.

Share relevant information such as time-zone differences, connectivity issues, or difficult home circumstances that might impact learning.

4 Supporting Distance Learning

This section provides guidance on how parents can help children remain connected to learning, while recognising that the school remains responsible for teaching, planning, and oversight.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Where possible, ensure your child can access online lessons and has a suitable place to learn.

Ensure your child's device works, has stable internet access, and that there is a quiet, practical, and suitable area to study and attend lessons.

Encourage attendance, participation, and good behaviour during distance learning, while recognising that the role of parents is to support learning at home, not to replace the teacher.

Help with logging in, organising materials, joining lessons, and completing work as required.

Participation may include live lessons, guided home-based activities, recorded input, or other learning formats, depending on the child's age and the school's approach.

Encourage and praise effort, participation, and consistency, not just task completion.

If your family is outside the UAE or your temporary living arrangements have changed, but your child remains enrolled in school, inform them early so that suitable allowances can be made.

Inform your school promptly if time-zone differences, travel, safety concerns, or location-related challenges might affect live attendance, punctuality, or participation, so that the school can offer flexibility where suitable.

If time-zone differences, travel, safety concerns, or temporary living arrangements make live participation difficult, let the school know early so this can be understood and, where appropriate, flexibility can be considered.

Explain early if time-zone differences or location-related challenges may affect live attendance, punctuality, or participation.

If your child is struggling or unable to participate as usual, inform the school as early as possible.

Keep in touch with the school if your child is struggling or cannot participate as usual, so the school can make suitable allowances where possible.

Safety always comes first.

If a Public Safety Alarm sounds, prioritise safety first and continue learning only where appropriate.

5 Supporting Vulnerable Learners

Some children may need more support than others during distance learning periods. Changes in routine, access, learning arrangements, or home circumstances can affect children differently, and some might find it harder to participate, stay regulated, remain engaged, or manage learning independently.

This may include children with learning support needs, younger children, children affected by anxiety or family stress, children facing barriers to access, and children whose wellbeing, behaviour, or participation may already be a concern. Early communication with the school can help ensure that these concerns are understood and that appropriate support is offered.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Early communication with the school ensures that concerns are understood and that suitable support is provided.

Raise concerns promptly if your child becomes less engaged, more distressed, or finds it harder to participate in learning.

Discuss alternative arrangements with your school that are best suited to your child as a student of determination.

Contact the school's Head of Inclusion to discuss the most suitable support for your child, while considering their individual needs and current level of functioning.

For students who require more intensive support, including Wave 3 students, discuss with the Head of Inclusion alternative ways to support your child, such as access to licensed specialist support and therapy services, to help minimise regression.

Ask what school-based support, licensed specialist services, or therapy options may be available to help minimise regression.

Focus on helping your child stay connected, supported, and able to participate as much as possible, rather than expecting every child to engage in exactly the same way.

Share whether your child needs shorter tasks, clearer instructions, more breaks, more frequent check-ins, or a different pace of learning.

Existing support arrangements may need to be reviewed during this period.

Maintain communication about any existing support arrangements, accommodations, or learning plans.



6 Supporting Children by Age Group

Children of different ages are likely to require different types and levels of support during distance learning. The guidance below aims to help parents respond in ways appropriate to different ages, while keeping expectations realistic and manageable.



6.1 Early Years and Lower Primary

Children in this age group usually require the most adult support during distance learning. They benefit from short, simple, and predictable activities, consistent routines, reassurance, and regular breaks.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help your child begin the day calmly and predictably.

Prepare the device, materials, or activity pack ahead of time and let your child know what will happen first.

Support your child to participate in learning in whatever format the school or early childhood setting is using.

This might involve helping your child log in to a live session, watching a short, recorded explanation together, or guiding them through a simple activity.

Keep expectations realistic.

Children at this age might only concentrate for short periods and may need movement breaks, reassurance, repetition, or a change of activity.

Help your child join in, but do not feel you need to take over the role of the teacher.

You might help your child answer a question, complete a counting activity, or discuss a story.

Engage in simple offline activities suggested by the school.

Reading, drawing, storytelling, counting, building, singing, movement, and play-based activities can all support learning.

Contact the school if your child is finding it difficult to participate.

Let the teacher know if your child cannot attend, becomes upset, or is struggling to stay engaged even with support.



6.2 Upper Primary and Lower Secondary

Students in this age group are becoming more independent, but they still benefit from structure, encouragement, and regular adult check-ins. They may find online platforms easier to manage, but can still lose focus, fall behind, or become overwhelmed without support.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help your child understand the day's schedule and expectations.

Encourage them to check the timetable, messages, and learning platform each morning.

Encourage active participation, not just attendance.

Ask whether they joined in, understood the lesson, and completed the learning task, not just whether they logged in.

Maintain consistent routines and habits.

Use a simple pattern for study time, breaks, meals, and the end of the school day.

Encourage independence without expecting full self-management.

Ask your child to organise materials and start tasks independently, but still check in throughout the day.

Help with motivation and pacing.

Break larger tasks into smaller steps and encourage steady progress instead of rushing to finish at the last minute.

Contact the school if engagement drops or work starts to build up.

Let the school know if your child is attending but not participating, avoiding work, or becoming increasingly frustrated.



6.3 Secondary and Senior Students

Older students may be able to work more independently, but they might still need support with routine, motivation, workload, assessment pressure, and wellbeing. Parents can help by encouraging consistent habits, maintaining open communication, and recognising when additional support may be needed.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Encourage your child to maintain a schedule for lessons, assignments, revision, and breaks.

Help them use a planner, checklist, or calendar to organise the week.

Encourage independence while remaining attentive to how your child is managing.

Check in regularly about workload, revision, and any subjects they find difficult.

Help reduce unnecessary stress while maintaining clear expectations.

Encourage consistent preparation and remind your child to seek help early rather than waiting until work accumulates.

Encourage healthy routines and balance.

Support sleep, movement, meals, and time away from screens, especially after long periods online.

Stay vigilant for signs of overload or withdrawal.

Notice if your child is missing lessons, avoiding work, staying up late, or showing signs of anxiety or low motivation.

Contact the school if academic pressure or wellbeing concerns are increasing.

Inform the school if your child is repeatedly absent, not submitting work, or becoming very anxious or disengaged.



7 Managing Learning at Home When Time, Devices, or Support Are Limited

Families may sometimes be supporting more than one child at home, often across different age groups and with varying learning needs. Some parents may also be working or managing other responsibilities, so learning arrangements at home might need to be practical, flexible, and manageable rather than perfect.

SITUATION

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO



More than one child learning at home

Prioritise what is most essential, and identify which child needs the most direct support.

Younger children or those requiring more help may need closer supervision, whilst older children might be able to work more independently.



Different ages within the same home

Recognise that children in different age groups will require different kinds of support.

A younger child may need help logging in, whereas an older child might only need reminders about deadlines.



Shared devices or limited internet

Let the school know early if access is limited.

If one device is shared among siblings, inform the school and ask whether live attendance, recordings, or alternative work can be adjusted.



Working parents / limited adult time

Aim for a manageable routine rather than perfect supervision. What matters is that the child receives appropriate support, structure, and a known adult point of contact where needed.

Check in at key points during the day rather than trying to supervise every lesson. Where another adult is supporting the child at home, make sure they understand the basic routine, key expectations, and who to contact at the school if support is needed.



High pressure at home

Reduce pressure and focus on what matters most.

Staying connected, participating as much as possible, and communicating early with the school are more important than perfect completion of every task.

When expectations become unclear or unmanageable, parents should contact the school early for clarification or support.



8 Exams, Assessments, and Feedback

During periods of distance learning, schools may continue to use assignments, assessments, and feedback to support progress. Parents can help by assisting with organisation, helping children respond to feedback, and reducing unnecessary pressure around performance.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Stay informed about any changes to exams, assessments, and alternative arrangements.

Check school messages regularly for updates and explain them clearly to your child.

Help your child keep track of deadlines and prepare ahead where possible.

Use a planner or simple calendar to record assignments, quizzes, and key dates.

Encourage your child to review and act on teacher feedback.

Ask what their teacher suggested and how they will improve or respond next time.

Support consistent effort and progress rather than focusing only on marks.

Encourage understanding, revision, and improvement, and not just submission or grades.

Contact the school if workload or assessment pressure becomes overwhelming.

Raise concerns if your child becomes overwhelmed or is unable to manage the workload.



9 Privacy and Use of Cameras

Online learning should continue to safeguard students’ privacy, safety, and dignity. Parents can help by understanding the school’s expectations, encouraging positive online behaviour, and raising concerns early when necessary.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Follow the school’s guidance on privacy, cameras, and expected online conduct.

Ensure your child understands what is appropriate during online learning.

Younger children may need more noticeable adult support online.

Keep devices in a communal space when possible and stay nearby during sessions for younger children.

Protect your child’s personal information.

Avoid sharing passwords, screenshots, recordings, or personal details unless clearly required and appropriate.

Let the school know early if there are any concerns regarding camera use or privacy.

Inform the school if your child feels uncomfortable using the camera or if there is a privacy concern at home.

Contact the school if there are any concerns related to online behaviour or safety.

Raise concerns promptly if your child encounters inappropriate behaviour, bullying, or an online safety issue.



10 Screen Time

Distance learning might mean children spend more time on screens than usual. Therefore, it is important to balance screen-based lessons with breaks, movement, rest, and other offline activities, especially for younger children.

GUIDANCE

The amount and type of screen time should be balanced according to the child's age, developmental stage, and stamina.

Minimise unnecessary screen time where possible.

Maintain realistic expectations for younger children.

Let the school know if screen-based learning becomes unmanageable.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Younger children typically need shorter sessions and more practical or play-based learning.

Help your child take a break from recreational screen time after long periods of online learning.

Do not expect young children to remain focused for long, uninterrupted periods online.

Share concerns if your child is experiencing fatigue, headaches, or reduced engagement due to screen demands.



11 Emotional Wellbeing

Parents play an important role in helping children stay connected, calm, and supported during periods of distance learning. What matters most is not perfection, but helping your child to remain engaged, feel reassured and socially connected, and able to continue learning as effectively as possible. Maintaining appropriate contact with peers can also help reduce isolation and support wellbeing during this period.

GUIDANCE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Children may exhibit stress through tiredness, frustration, withdrawal, resistance to learning, or changes in behaviour.

Notice if your child is unusually upset, refuses to learn, and is more irritable or more withdrawn than usual.

Early support can help prevent concerns from becoming more serious.

Raise concerns early instead of waiting to see if they resolve on their own.

Check in regularly on how your child is feeling and reassure them when learning feels difficult or unfamiliar.

Parents can help by providing reassurance, listening, maintaining routine, and communicating with the school when necessary.

Keep routines calm and predictable wherever possible.

A simple daily routine can help children feel more secure and less overwhelmed.

Contact the school early if your child becomes less engaged, more distressed, or noticeably more withdrawn.

Seek support if your child is showing clear signs of stress, sadness, anxiety, or avoidance.

12 Final Message to Parents

Parents play an important role in helping children stay connected, calm, and supported during periods of distance learning. We recognise that this may require significant effort and flexibility from families, especially when balancing work, caregiving, and other responsibilities. However, parents are not expected to replace the role of the school or the teacher.

What matters most is helping your child:

- **stay connected to school**
- **participate as much as possible**
- **maintain a consistent routine**
- **feel supported and reassured**
- **seek help early when needed**



A calm and supportive approach at home can make a meaningful difference to your child's learning and wellbeing, while also easing the transition back to normal routines when circumstances permit.