

# KEIS Online and Distance Education Guidebook (2020/2021)

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## Overview

### The International Baccalaureate (IB) Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

### The Košice International School Mission Statement

Košice International School (KEIS) aims to provide a challenging, world-class, 21st-century international education. KEIS is the first international school in Eastern Slovakia based on the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB).

KEIS strives to develop a community of lifelong learners that can innovate the world. We value the uniqueness and potential of each student, fostering curiosity and ambition within our inquiry-based pedagogy.

KEIS supports and empowers creative, respectful and digitally skilled global citizens who can communicate and collaborate actively through a rich understanding of diversity from their local and international identity. Together, we can create a sustainable, just and peaceful world.

### The IB Learner Profile

The profile aims to develop learners who are:

- Inquirers
- Risk-takers
- Knowledgeable
- Open-minded
- Communicators
- Thinkers
- Reflective
- Balanced
- Principled
- Caring

### IB Standards and Practices

This Online and Distance Education (ODE) guidebook supports KEIS in recognising and implementing a selection of IB PYP Standards and Practices (2014) as a candidate IB World School. By addressing these ODE needs in these current challenges around the world, this guidebook helps us all to put in place these standards and practices:

Standard A6: Philosophy: The school promotes open communication based on understanding and respect.

Standard A9: Philosophy: The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy.

Standard B1: Leadership and Structure: The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programme(s).

Standard B2.5: Resources and Support: The physical and virtual learning environments, facilities, resources and specialized equipment support the implementation of the programme(s).

Standard B2.10: Resources and Support: The student schedule or timetable allows for the requirements of the programme(s) to be met.

Standard C2.7: Written Curriculum: The written curriculum promotes students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues.

Standard C3.5: Teaching and Learning: Teaching and learning supports students to become actively responsible for their own learning.

Standard C3.11: Teaching and Learning: Teaching and learning incorporates a range of resources, including information technologies.

## KEIS Distance Learning Plan

This is a guidebook for parents and staff regarding the possibility for distance learning to be implemented.

If the Slovakian government determines that schools must close their campuses, KEIS will provide educational services via online platforms following the established distance learning plan. In such an event, KEIS will abide by the required national regulations and suggestions of the host country. If at any point it is mandated to close campus to students, we will need to follow these guidelines. In this case, we will be providing distance learning to any students that the closure applies to.

We are committed to making sure that students continue to engage in inquiry and the IB Learner Profile through the care and commitment of our staff and the routine of learning, even when it is happening online. Our approach to distance learning cannot replicate the magic that happens in a usual educational setting (the invaluable social interactions and mediation, real-time, in-person feedback, community and extracurricular events, and so on). However, quality inquiry-based, student-led learning can still be sustained and delivered in the form of online and distance education.

The purpose of this document is to describe the actions KEIS will take to continue PYP teaching and learning in the event of an unavoidable campus closure. We endeavour in our Online and Distance Education (ODE) guidebook to accomplish three goals within a flexible framework:

- Student-Teacher Contact – large and small groups, as well as one-to-one interactions
- Online Content Delivery
- Online Monitoring of Student Progress/Student Assessment

In order to prepare our students to respond to an ever-changing world, learning must remain responsive, adaptive, personalised, and inquiry-based. This guidebook provides us with a unique opportunity to reinforce the KEIS mission statement and the PYP.

As we enter the 2020–21 online school year, it is our goal to remain in close communication with all members of our school community, including faculty and staff, families and students. The Head of School will periodically send email updates to parents and faculty/staff apprising them of any pertinent information about when KEIS may reopen for regular classes. If there are any future adjustments that create a division of student age groups who can or cannot return to the KEIS campus while others are required to continue with online and distance education measures, the KEIS Learning Community will be updated on how these needs will be met when required.

## We are Lifelong Learners

Online and Distance Education (ODE) presents us all with formidable challenges. We are all learning how to do things differently in the digital age. Across our KEIS Learning Community there is a wide range of technology available and implemented across all subjects in our PYP. If and when ODE is required, many elements of learning will take a different shape, making it difficult to easily identify what learning in with online environments. Our parental tips for ODE, bring together productive and manageable solutions conceptualised from successful IB PYP World Schools who have been applying similar and proactive approaches during the COVID-19 educational crisis. Students, teachers and families must adapt to a rapid and unexpected pivot towards ODE because it is what the children of today require for their future in the digital age. We are all required to be lifelong learners as part of the KEIS Learning Community.

KEIS staff are provided professional development and have guidance and support from the school and the IB World School network in distance education. KEIS staff improve their skills across a wide range of areas to set them up for continued ODE when necessary.

This guidance can help us all make the best of new and sometimes unfamiliar online and distance learning environments. It can help you be ready for some of the more practical aspects of learning from home.

## What 'DISTANCE' means for Teachers and Parents

*For teachers:*

The intricate world of the classroom takes on a new form for the digital age with the knowledge and skill base of the digital educators in the 21st-century. The vital social interactions taking place as children learn to be part of a wider world continue to be provided. The careful construction of individualised curricula for each child supports their developmentally appropriate learning journey. Teachers must redesign their learning and teaching, facilitating an open pedagogical approach with technology.

*For parents:*

The anxiety of providing and receiving online learning guidance, managing multiple resources, and the increase in your time and effort with your child can restructure your home life. Online and distance education is proven to provide a quality 21st-century education, for everyone in primary education it requires a new learning design and pedagogical approach. For parents, this means reflecting with their children, providing feedback and scaffolding and securing your child's online presence so that their digital future is supported.

## How to communicate

**How will KEIS communicate with parents, students, and faculty/staff during an extended campus closure?**

KEIS will continue to use the same channels it employs for normal day-to-day communications with parents, students, and faculty/staff. All of these systems are remotely accessible and will function in an emergency situation.

The table below describes these systems:

Channel	Audience	Description
Email	Faculty, Staff, Parents	Email will be used for all major communications and announcements, including those from the Head of School. Teaching staff will also use email to communicate, although they will use other platforms to interact with their students as well.
Zoom	Students and Teachers	Zoom is an online video conferencing platform that allows for live group meetings, hosted by teachers.
SeeSaw	Students, Teachers and Parents	Teachers and Students will continue to use Seesaw and other apps they are already familiar with.

**How will KEIS ensure that students have access to these tools from off-campus?**

All students may be able to take the school iPad home only during this unexpected time by prior written agreement with KEIS. Also, most of our technology tools are not device-specific, which means students can also access learning through other personal devices in the event that they cannot access their school iPad.

**Distance Learning Platforms and Communication System at KEIS**

The following online platforms support both Distance Learning and faculty/student/family collaboration to ensure a quality student learning experience when planning and learning remotely:



Seesaw – is a platform for student engagement that provides creative tools to take pictures, draw, record videos, and more to capture learning in a portfolio. Teachers can find or create activities to share with students and parents (PYP 1 to 6).



Zoom – is a virtual classroom platform that may be used by lower preschool and lower elementary teachers. This is very easy for students and parents to access, as the classroom teacher simply sends a link via SeeSaw and/or email for individuals to join the meeting/class (PYP 1 to 6).

## Mobile learning strategies

An option that is part of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in Online and Distance Education (ODE) is mobile learning. “Mobile” does not only refer to the portable computing device but also the learning that is best used with smartphones or tablets.

The 4C framework below is a simple, well-established starting point to decide on how to implement learning through mobiles.

- Content: providing media (for example, documents, audio, video) to the learner/performer
  - Compute: taking in data from the learner and processing it
  - Capture: taking in data from sensors (for example camera, GPS, etc) and saving for it sharing or reflection
  - Communicate: connecting learners/performers with others
- (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2020)

## Eight Distance Learning Guidelines for Teachers

*The transition to distance learning will not be simple or easy. Teachers will need to think differently about how to communicate, give instruction, and provide feedback, how to design lessons and assignments that are authentic and meaningful, and how to ensure students continue to collaborate and communicate with others. The eight guidelines provided below are intended to help teachers across all divisions reflect on challenges they'll confront in shifting to distance learning.*

### 1. At KEIS, we know our students and they know we care

KEIS' commitment is to nurture relationships and demonstrate deep care for our students and one another. In the event of a crisis that leads to implementation of this DLP, your students may be stressed or worried. Before diving into curriculum, take the time to assess your students' mental, physical, and emotional well-being. How are they doing? How are their families?

### 2. Evaluate your students' conditions for distance learning

While most students will have reliable online access at home and the necessary devices to shift to distance learning, others will not. Teachers should remember that each family's circumstances will vary and they should avoid assumptions about limitations or restrictions students are facing. Ask your students and/or their parents whether their online access is reliable and what devices the student has at their disposal. Open a dialogue with students and families and avoid assumptions that all students' circumstances are the same.

### 3. Stick with the familiar at the beginning

The beginning of the year is a critical time to build relationships and establish routines. Given an online start to the year, avoid trying to do too many new things. In other words, stick with what's familiar to you to ease your transition and the students' transitions to an online start to the year. If you have an activity that you love that you typically use at the beginning of the year, consider whether or not you can apply it for an online platform. If so, use it so that is one aspect of your start to the year that is comfortable and familiar for you.

### 4. Less is more

One challenge confronting teachers will be how to best streamline content and elevate the most essential learning for students. In other words, teachers need to take a less-is-more perspective, including the pacing of lessons and volume of assignments and assessments. It can also be hard to know exactly how long school closure might last, which makes longer-term planning difficult.

### 5. When ready, seize the moment; embrace new opportunities and possibilities for your students

Years or decades from now, how will your students remember the emergency that resulted in school closure? While distance learning should attempt to bring some normalcy and routine to students' lives, teachers should consider capitalizing on the opportunities resulting from school closure. Teachers might require students to keep a daily journal or diary for the duration of the crisis. Personal journaling and/or other creative writing assignments can help students process their thoughts, worries, and emotions, particularly in times of crisis. Students might use other media as well, including video, drawing, painting, and music. Moreover, the crisis might also provide other real-life opportunities to study scientific phenomena associated with the crisis, how the media is reporting the incident, how governments are responding, and many other opportunities to seize the moment and design new learning transdisciplinary experiences for our students.

### 6. Design asynchronous learning experiences

When school is closed and students are learning from various locations, teachers can still connect them asynchronously (not all students at the same time). For example, teachers can use familiar discussion forums/thread or tools like Flipgrid and Padlet to allow for student responses and dialogue during a set time period, knowing that students might not all be online at the same exact time.

### 7. Design synchronous learning experiences

When it comes to student engagement and learning, relationships matter as much online as they do in person. Since the KEIS campus will move online, students will be able to gather for synchronous learning times via Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. Collaboration remains important and there are many ways teachers can foster it through synchronous (all students at the same time) learning.

### 8. Think differently about assessment

Assessment is one of the most challenging adjustments for teachers in online learning. Distance learning should be seen as an opportunity for students, individually or collaboratively, to complete

writing assignments, design infographics, make video presentations, or complete oral assessments via video chat. Luckily, online and distance learning design is structured around inquiry, collaboration and action. This reflects the PYP more now that it goes beyond just in the school grounds.

Teachers are encouraged to think differently about the frequency and end goal of assessment instead of forcing a traditional assessment method that doesn't fit distance learning. Thinking differently about assessment will positively influence the experience for students, leverage the strengths of distance learning, and prevent frustration on the teacher's part when traditional methods do not work.

## Blended Learning to suit all learning abilities

Blended learning is an approach to Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) for Online and Distance Education (ODE) which supports the essential elements of the PYP. Applying the approach enables KEIS PYP teachers to collaborate and encourage students to set their own learning pace across the spectrum of a blended classroom.

## How to manage online learning and teaching

There are two kinds of online learning and teaching that schools will need to balance based on their circumstances: **synchronous** (happening collaboratively and at the same time with a group of online learners and usually a teacher) and **asynchronous** (happening at any time, not necessarily in a group, but with teacher feedback). Schools should not assume that synchronous teaching is required or even desirable in order to support effective learning. The goal is not to try to recreate face-to-face (F2F) classrooms.

Online and blended learning provide opportunities for learners to work more independently, expand their agency, and learn to use tools and strategies that they otherwise might not have. While it is not recommended to experiment in emergency situations, innovation, creativity and resilience are required to make things work. Most schools will discover they need to be adaptive and fast-thinking in order to ensure that learning continues in a healthy way (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2020, p. 3).

## Providing a safe and positive online experience

*Here are five ways you can keep your child's online experiences safe and positive.*

It is likely that you are spending a lot more time online – school, chats, friends, family, music lessons, physical education – so much more has moved online.

Being connected helps reduce the impact of these COVID19 challenges, but it opens up new challenges for every parent.

How can you maximise all the internet has to offer, while minimising harm?

1. Keep them safe with open communication  
Have honest and open dialogue with your children about who they communicate with and how. Make sure they understand the value of kind and supportive interactions, and discriminatory or inappropriate contact is never acceptable. If this happens, tell a trusted

adult immediately. Be alert if your child seems secretive or upset with online activities or even cyberbullying.

2. Use technology to protect them  
Check that your child’s device is running the latest software updates and/or antivirus programmes and that privacy settings are on. Keep webcams covered when not in use. For younger children, parental controls and safe search can help keep online searches positive.
3. Spend time with them online  
Get online with them because connection is important more than ever at the moment. You can model the IB Learner Profile attributes and help them to develop transdisciplinary skills that both drive who we are and how we learn at KEIS.
4. Encourage healthy online habits  
Promote and monitor good behaviour online and on video calls. Encourage them to demonstrate the IB Learner Profile to classmates and educators. Avoid joining a meeting from a bedroom and be mindful about the type of clothes they wear.
5. Let them have fun and express themselves  
Sharing is caring, and having fun doing this is important for a child’s psychosocial development. Encourage your child to use digital tools that can get them inquiring! Inquiry is the pedagogical approach of KEIS. One excellent way to engage them online through inquiry is to discover the world through citizen science.

Reference: UNICEF (2020)

## Roles & Responsibilities During Distance Learning

<b>School Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Head of School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and distribute KEIS Distance Learning Plan, or DLP</li> <li>• Establish clear channels of communications between faculty, staff, families, and students in the event of this DLP being activated</li> <li>• Support faculty and students/families shifting to a distance learning environment</li> <li>• Help teachers implement DLP and ensure high-quality learning experience for all students</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom teacher/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver explicit instructional inquiry-based teaching and learning</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to be independent learners</li> <li>• Manage time and schedules accurately</li> <li>• Design learning appropriate for age and time frames according to the online schedule</li> <li>• Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students</li> <li>• Communicate frequently with your students and, as needed, with their parents</li> <li>• Provide timely feedback to support your students’ learning</li> <li>• Reflect on the 8 Guidelines for KEIS Teachers shared earlier in the DLP and how you can implement them</li> <li>• Record and upload Zoom conference in SeeSaw</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist Teacher/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver explicit instructional inquiry-based teaching and learning</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to be independent learners</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage time and schedules accurately</li> <li>• Design learning appropriate for age and time frames according to the online schedule</li> <li>• PSPE – Develop a bank of exercises, physical activities for students and share these with classroom teachers and families</li> <li>• Visual Art – Staying mindful of the resources and tools families may not have in their home, develop a bank of projects and activities for students and share these with classroom teachers and families</li> <li>• Music – Staying mindful of the instruments or resources families may not have in their home, develop a bank of activities for students and share these with classroom teachers and families</li> <li>• Communicate regularly with your students and provide timely feedback to them</li> <li>• Collaborate with classroom teachers on how to integrate music, art, and PSPE into classroom projects and experiences.</li> <li>• Record and upload Zoom conference in SeeSaw</li> </ul>
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<b>Student Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences (e.g. following your daily schedule)</li> <li>• Identify a comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively and successfully</li> <li>• Regularly monitor online platforms (Seesaw, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from your teachers</li> <li>• <b>Attend class meetings via Zoom according to your class schedule and available through the Zoom scheduler app on your iPad or home laptop or device</b></li> <li>• <b>Zoom Class Expectations:</b> When attending a zoom class, students must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dress in KEIS Uniform for virtual meetings</li> <li>- Have your camera 'on' if directed to do so by your teacher</li> <li>- Sit where you feel motivated and ready to learn</li> <li>- Communicate and behave with the same respect and consideration you would use in the classroom</li> <li>- Try not to interrupt others when speaking. One person speaks at a time!</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Zoom Classes Will Be Recorded in order to provide additional resources for students and to monitor behaviour</li> <li>• Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work</li> <li>• Do your best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates</li> <li>• Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or require additional support</li> <li>• Collaborate and support your KEIS peers in their learning</li> <li>• Comply with KEIS ICT Acceptable Use Policy, including expectations for online etiquette</li> <li>• Proactively seek out and communicate with other adults at KEIS as different needs arise (see below)</li> <li>• If students are not present in conferences, parents will be notified via email or SeeSaw</li> <li>• Practice the IB Learner Profile attributes</li> <li>• Reflect on your learning</li> </ul>	
<b>For queries about...</b>	<b>Contact</b>
A task, assignment or resource	The relevant teacher
A technology-related problem	Classroom teacher or Head of School
A personal, academic or social concern	The class teacher

Other issues related to distance learning	Head of School
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<b>Parent/Guardian Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
Provide support for your children by adhering to the 10 Guidelines for KEIS Parents as well as you can:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish routines and expectations</li> <li>• Define the physical space for your child’s study</li> <li>• Don’t interrupt communications of your child or children’s teachers</li> <li>• Begin and end each day with a check-in</li> <li>• Take an active role in helping your children process their learning</li> <li>• Establish times for quiet and reflection</li> <li>• Encourage physical activity and/or exercise</li> <li>• Remain mindful of your child’s stress or worry</li> <li>• Monitor how your child communicates and much time your child is spending online</li> <li>• Keep your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions</li> <li>• Reflect on your child’s learning</li> <li>• Practice the IB Learner Profile attributes with your child</li> </ul>	
<b>For queries about...</b>	<b>Contact</b>
A task, assignment or resource	The relevant teacher
A technology-related problem	Classroom teacher or Head of School
A personal, academic or socio-emotional concern	Classroom teacher
Other issues about distance learning	Head of School

## ELEMENTARY DISTANCE LEARNING Schedules

### PYP 1 to 3

Schedule	Virtual time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 – 9:15	15 mins	Language: English	Language: English	Office hours Inquiry at home	Language: English	Language: English
9:15 – 10:00	0					
30 mins break	0					
10:30 – 10:45	15 mins	Mathematics	Mathematics		Mathematics	Mathematics
10:45 – 11:30	0					
11:30 – 11:45	15 mins	Language: Slovak	Language: Slovak		Language: Slovak	Language: Slovak
30 mins break	0					
Lunch 12:15 – 13:00	0					
13:00 – 13:15	15 mins	Unit of Inquiry	PSPE	Office hours Student Inquiry at home	Music	Visual Art
45 mins break	0					
14:00 – 14:15	15 mins		Unit of Inquiry		Unit of Inquiry	Unit of Inquiry
14:15 – 15:00	0					

### PYP 4 to 6

Schedule	Virtual time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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8:30 – 9:00	30 mins	Language: English	Language: English	Office hours Student inquiry at home	Language: English	Language: English
9:00 – 9:30	0					
30 mins break	0					
10:00 – 10:30	30 mins	Mathematics	Mathematics		Mathematics	Mathematics
10:30 – 11:00	0					
11:00 – 11:30	30 mins	Language: Slovak	Language: Slovak		Language: Slovak	Language: Slovak
30 mins break	0					
Lunch 12:00 – 12:30	0					
12:30 – 13:00	30 mins	Unit of Inquiry	PSPE	Office hours Student inquiry at home	Music	Visual Art
30 mins break	0					
13:30 – 14:00	30 mins		Unit of Inquiry		Unit of Inquiry	Unit of Inquiry
14:00 – 15:00	0					

## Elementary Distance Learning on Wednesday

On Wednesday, elementary students will observe a different schedule that continues to provide meaningful and enriching academic learning. This is still a school day. The intent is to provide learning opportunities that provide options for offline engagement as well as support through one-to-one teacher online time. Teachers will be purposeful in communicating the expected learning activities for Wednesday.

Homeroom teachers/assistant teachers will be available through Zoom during their normal class time to provide additional support. They will be available during each of those times (designated as Office Hours on the schedule) to work with students, either by invite or student drop-in. These Wednesday efforts are made to allow for more screen-time breaks.

## PYP Approximate Time Frames for Learning

	Teacher-led learning	Independent practice	Independent Inquiry	Well-being
PYP 1 to 3	10–15 mins Reading 10–15 mins Writing 10–15 mins Math 10–15 mins Unit of Inquiry (daily or as scheduled)	10–15 mins Reading 10–15 mins Writing 10–15 mins Math 10–15 mins Unit of Inquiry (daily or as scheduled)	45 mins	120 mins
PYP 4 to 6	15–25 mins Reading/Writing 15–25 mins Math 15–25 mins Unit of Inquiry (daily or as scheduled)	15–25 mins Reading/Writing 15–25 mins Math 15–25 mins (daily or as scheduled)	60 mins	120 mins

## PYP Priorities & Considerations

- The primary tools for communication between teachers and families will be Seesaw (K–3) and Zoom
- Students will have both off- and on-screen learning activities designed to engage learners in experiences that connect to the current curriculum.
- Learning tasks and activities will provide direction to families on how best to support student learning and the expected level of adult involvement. It is expected that students in grades K–2 will need higher levels of support than students in grades 3–6.
- The Zoom Scheduler and SeeSaw posts by the class teacher will be the place students will need to go to access all of the Zoom Meetings for all of their classes for the day.
- At first glance the Zoom scheduler may give you the impression that students are engaged with teachers in Zoom meetings all day. Please know that this is not the case. In person instruction is a combination of direct instruction and teacher guided collaboration AND independent work time. We are attempting to include both of these things
- Direct teacher facilitation/group time AND independent work time - even though we are online. In addition, we have thought very carefully about the appropriate amount of Zoom time based on current educational research depending on the age of the children. The outcome of these efforts is that there will be times where teachers dismiss students from zoom for a variety of reasons.

## Ten Guidelines for Parents Supporting Distance Learning

*Distance learning may be challenging for families. Parents will need to think differently about how to support their children, how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful, and how to monitor and support their children's learning. Some students will thrive with distance learning, while others may struggle. The ten guidelines provided below are intended to help parents think about what they can do to help their children find success in a distance learning environment.*

### 1. Establish routines and expectations

Parents need to establish routines and expectations. KEIS encourages parents to set regular hours for their children's school work. Upper School students should plan to follow their regular schedule, using the individualized Zoom meeting schedule. All KEIS students will follow the ODE timetable described in this guidebook. Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your Upper School-aged students, too. (Don't let them stay up late and sleep in!) Across the PYP, we have scheduled in breaks for your child to move, stretch, inquire and log off Zoom. You too can encourage your children to move regularly and take periodic breaks as they study. It is important that parents set these expectations for how their children will spend their days starting as soon as distance learning is implemented, not several days later after it becomes apparent a child is struggling with the absence of routine. Based on educational research, we have limited conferencing screen time as seen in the ODE timetables for upper and lower elementary.

### 2. Define the physical space for your child's study

Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may or may not be suitable for an extended period of time. We encourage families to establish a space/location where their children will learn most of the time. This should be a public/family space, not in a child's bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible.

### 3. Monitor communications from your children's teachers

Teachers will communicate with parents through email, when and as necessary. The frequency and detail of these communications will be determined by your children's ages, maturity, and their degree of independence. When you need to contact teachers, please remember that teachers will be communicating with many students as well as other parents and that communications should be essential, succinct, and self-aware. We also encourage parents to have their children explain the online platforms (e.g. Seesaw, etc.) their teachers are using.

### 4. Begin and end each day with a check-in

Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. In the morning, ask what is your child learning today? What are their learning targets or goals? How will they spend their time? What resources do they require? What support do they need? This brief grounding conversation matters. It allows children to process the instructions they've received from their teachers. It helps them organize themselves and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents (that's normal!), but they should nevertheless. Parents should establish these check-ins as regular parts of each day. Not all students thrive in a distance learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines need to be established early, before students fall behind or begin to struggle.

In the morning, you might ask:

- What classes/subject do you have today?
- What IB Learner Profile attribute will you focus on today?
- Do you have any assessments?
- How are you prepared to inquire today?
- How will you spend your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?
- What transdisciplinary (ATL) skill are you doing mostly today with your work?

### 5. 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 KEIS, your child usually collaborates with other students and any number of adults regularly and consistently in the PYP. Many of these social interactions will continue from a distance, but they will be different. While some of these social interactions will be re-created on virtual platforms, others will not. Human beings learn best when they have opportunities to process their learning with others. Beyond the check-ins recommended at the start and end of each day, parents should regularly circle back and engage with their children about what they're learning. However, it's important that your child own their work; don't complete assignments for them, even when they are struggling.

### 6. Establish times for quiet and reflection

A huge challenge for families with multiple children will be how to manage all of their children's needs, especially when those children are different ages and have different needs. There may be times when siblings need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Parents may even experiment with noise-cancelling headphones (no music necessary!) to block out distractions.

*At the end of the day you might ask:*

- How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
- How were you [IB Learner Profile attribute] principled today?
- What did you discover? What was hard?
- What ATL Skill did you realise needed more development?
- How was everyone else online today?
- What was the key concept from that bit of information you found today?
- Did you enjoy the big class meetings or what did you like best today?
- What did you inquire into today?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?

These brief grounding conversations matter as they are an essential part of the KEIS Learning Community. Checking in students to process instructions they received from their teachers, and it helps them organise themselves and set priorities – older students too. Not all students thrive in distance learning; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid challenges and disappointments. These kind of conversations with your child helps them to be independent, reflective thinkers who can develop the transdisciplinary Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills of: self-management, thinking, communication and social skills.

#### 7. Encourage physical activity and/or exercise

Make sure your children remember to move and exercise. This is vitally important to their health, wellbeing, and to their learning. KEIS physical education teachers will recommend activities or exercises, but it is important for parents to model and encourage exercise! Think also about how your children can pitch in more around the house with chores or other responsibilities. Don't let your children off the hook – expect them to pitch in!

#### 8. Remain mindful of your child's stress or worry

One thing is for certain: KEIS will only implement this DLP if a serious emergency has occurred. Should this happen, it is imperative for parents to help their children manage the worry, anxiety, and range of emotions they may experience. Difficult though it may be, do your best not to transfer your stress or worry to your children. They will be out of sorts, whether they admit it or not, and need as much normal routine as parents can provide. Please reach out to your child's counsellor should he/she experience high levels of stress or worry.

#### 9. Monitor how much time your child is spending online

KEIS does not want its students staring at computer screens for 7–8 hours a day. We ask that parents remember most teachers are not experts in distance learning and that it will require some trial-and-error before we find the right balance between online and offline learning experiences. Know that we may routinely give your child a task to do independently that provides them a break from screen time. We do this intentionally to allow them time to work but also to take a break from the device. Teachers will periodically check in with you to assess what you're seeing at home and what we need to adjust. We thank you in advance for your patience and partnership!

#### 10. Keep your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions

The initial excitement of school being closed will fade quickly when students start missing the social and emotional interactions with their friends, classmates and teachers. Help your child to maintain

contact with friends through social media and other online technologies. Parents must monitor their child's social media use. Remind your child to be polite, respectful and appropriate in their communications, and to follow school guidelines as stated in the KEIS Student-Parent Handbook (2020) when interacting online. Older students may rely more on social media to communicate with friends. Social media apps such as SnapChat, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Facebook are not official, school-sanctioned channels of communication. Report unkindness and other problems so that everyone maintains healthy relationships and positive interactions. For further information on ICT use at KEIS, there is a section on ICT use as KEIS students in the Student-Parent Handbook. A student's written words and tone can sometimes offend or cause harm to others.

## Helping Parents through COVID-19 and beyond

Here are some tips to help you and your family thrive despite the challenges.

### Managing your stress

- Cut yourself some slack! Remind yourself that there's no playbook for what we're going through. Between work, childcare and everything else, you may be juggling impossible demands. Being kind to yourself helps you stay calm and frees up the bandwidth you need to take good care of yourself and your family.
- Be smart about what you're reading and watching. Consider putting a limit on the amount of news about the coronavirus you consume each day. If your social feeds are making you anxious, take a break, and focus on accounts that are calming.
- Set achievable goals. Give up those unrealistic expectations for what you (and your kids) can achieve in this stressful time. Enjoy your successes each day, no matter how small.
- Practice mindfulness and self-care. Focusing on what you're doing right now, without being caught up in the future or the past, is an important coping skill. Set aside a few minutes around the same time every day to do deep breathing, meditation, exercise — whatever works.
- Stay connected virtually. Keep your support network strong, even when you're only able to call or text friends and family. Socializing can help you feel better and stay grounded. And the same is true for your children — try setting them up with virtual playdates or plan phone calls with relatives.
- Accept your feelings. Many of us feel sad, angry and anxious right now. Acknowledging that — instead of fighting it — allows us to ride out our emotions, and it might even free us up to move on and say, "Okay, so now what needs to be done?"

### Helping children cope

- Be a mindful family. Find a way to help everyone take a moment to slow down, stay present and come together, like family yoga or a quiet walk in the woods.
- Stick to routines. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. As much as possible, kids should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times.

- Make and post a schedule. Changing activities at set times each day lets kids know what's coming. Work together as a family to set a realistic schedule, then print it out and go over it together each morning. Setting a timer can also be a helpful way to let kids know when activities are about to begin or end.
- Alternate work and play. Alternate chores or schoolwork with fun activities and free time. Kids learn more when schoolwork is divided into chunks geared to their attention span. And knowing they will soon be rewarded with something they enjoy helps them focus in the moment.
- Use positive attention! Attention is the best way to influence children's behaviour, and it helps to make that attention big, bold, specific and immediate. Instead of "Good job," try "You're being principled!"; "If you are an inquirer you will find out more!"; "It is so good that you are caring about others when you communicate online!"
- Validate feelings. Kids, especially teens, will be disappointed about losing important experiences like sports, proms, plays and graduations. Let them share their feelings. Listen without judgment, and resist the urge to reassure them that everything will be fine.

## Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19

### What Should I Look For?

#### Anxiety

Anxiety is the most common emotional problem in children, and it is a huge issue during times of stress like the current crisis. Some anxious kids are painfully shy, and avoid things that other kids enjoy. Some have tantrums, and others develop elaborate rituals. Parents should be ready to handle a variety of different expressions of anxiety. Symptoms include:

- Reassurance-seeking (Are we going to be okay? Is grandpa going to be okay?)
- Reluctance to separate from parents
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches
- Moodiness and irritability
- Tantrums or meltdowns
- Trouble sleeping

#### Tantrums and Meltdowns

It will come as no surprise to parents that the most common problem that brings young children to the attention of a psychologist or psychiatrist is emotional outbursts—tantrums and meltdowns. Sometimes the inability to regulate emotions is the result of an underlying problem. Some of the common causes of frequent meltdowns are:

- ADHD: Many children with severe temper outbursts also fit the criteria for ADHD.
- Anxiety: Even if kids don't have a full-blown anxiety disorder, they may still be overreactive to anxiety-provoking situations and melt down when they are stressed.
- Learning problems: When your child acts out repeatedly in school or during homework time, it's possible that he has an undiagnosed learning disorder.

- Depression and irritability: Depression and irritability also occur in a subset of kids who have severe and frequent temper tantrums.
- Autism: Children on the autism spectrum are also often prone to dramatic meltdowns. These children tend to be rigid any unexpected change can set them off.
- Sensory processing issues: These challenges, often seen in autistic children and teens as well as many with ADHD, may cause kids to be overwhelmed by stimulation

## Depression

In adolescent depression, the thing people tend to notice first is withdrawal, or when the teenager stops doing things she usually likes to do. There might be other changes in her mood, including sadness or irritability. Or in her behavior, including, appetite, energy level, sleep patterns and academic performance. Symptoms include:

- Unusual sadness, persisting even when circumstances change
- Reduced interest in activities she once enjoyed; reduced feelings of anticipation
- Involuntary changes in weight
- Shifts in sleep patterns
- Sluggishness
- Harsh self-assessment (“I’m ugly. I’m no good. I’ll never make friends.”)
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

## Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours

Some young people who are thinking about suicide let people close to them know that they are in pain and are open about needing help. Others hide their feelings from family and friends. If you are wondering if your child is suicidal, experts say that asking him is the best way to find out. That conversation can be lifesaving. There are also these warning signs to watch out for:

- Isolation from friends and family
- Problems eating or sleeping
- Mood swings
- Reckless behaviour
- Dropping grades
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Talking about feeling hopeless or trapped
- Talking about being a burden to others or not belonging
- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Writing or drawing about suicide, or acting it out in play

## Tips for Parenting During COVID-19

- **Don’t be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Not talking about something can make kids worry more. Convey the facts and be reassuring.
- **Acknowledge your own anxiety.** And take care of yourself. Remember to “put the oxygen mask on first before you help your child.”
- **Focus on what you’re doing to stay safe.** Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe.
- **Watch out for signs and symptoms.** Now is not the time to “wait and see.”

## Learning to be human

Distance learning relies on mobile learning, it can be anywhere, anytime. Online and Distance Education also enhances our awareness of learning what it means to be human as a digital citizen in the 21st-century.

Resources and the structure of the school day will be totally different. Students are not expected to sit in front of the computer screen all day sticking to the original school timetable of subjects.

The five essential elements of the PYP continues to be demonstrated and assessed, in particular the IB Learner Profile. This requires parents, as our partners in The KEIS Learning Community, including their role as their child/children's primary educator, and therefore have a role as the main protagonists in ODE learning.

Those who care for and educate young children at home have an unprecedented opportunity to exercise (even more than usual) the gift of nurture, love, tolerance, open-mindedness, and to reflect on their intuitive emotional response to themselves others when it comes to being a lifelong learner in any kind of KEIS teaching and learning environment our world demands of us.

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