



RDPSD Alternative Programs
#202, 5214 47 Ave
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www.asc.rdpsd.ab.ca

Students, Parents, and Guardians,

I want to quickly wish everyone a happy and safe Halloween holiday and encourage everyone to spend some time outside before the snow arrives for good!. As we move further into the semester, our weeks will be broken up with fall break and Christmas holidays so it's ever more important to set daily routines and work expectations to ensure we get everyone through their courses by the end of the semester.



As we start to see increased positive COVID-19 cases in Red Deer, I want to be clear that we are understanding, empathetic and flexible, and your child's physical, mental and emotional well-being will always be our first priority. If a student is unable to work due to sickness, please just let our teachers know and we will put a plan in place to get them caught up once they are feeling better. And as always, if your child or another family member needs non-academic support (mental health, depression, etc) please do not hesitate to contact me.

A quick reminder that I strongly encourage you to reach out to your child's teachers to establish an ongoing line of communication to stay informed of their progress. You can find a list of teacher contacts on our website (asc.rdpsd.ab.ca) or by clicking [this link](#). Moreover, the very best way to monitor your child's progress is through the PowerSchool app. I would highly recommend that you install the PowerSchool app on your phone ([click here for a how-to video](#)) and contact your child's teacher to be added to their Google classroom for ongoing updates and communications.

Parent Tips and Tricks for Distance Learning (modified from Common Sense)

Parent and family involvement has always been essential to student success but that has taken on a whole new meaning with at-home learning. You are being asked to assume a lot more responsibility in your child's schooling, and we know that it isn't an easy thing to do. Many of you are working full-time jobs and trying your very best to support your children while balancing all of the other responsibilities you have to keep your households safe and healthy. We understand that this added role isn't easy and I want to make sure that you know that we appreciate every effort you are making and that we are here to support you in whatever capacity we can. I have had a number of parents reach out and ask for help on how they can better support their kids' studies so I thought it would be beneficial to share some strategies with all of you to help your child see some success with their at-home studies.

Principal: Stephen Pottage
Vice-Principal: Shelley Lower





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Set a routine and review daily expectations.

Have students follow a daily routine as if they are going to school (getting dressed, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, etc) and a consistent time that they will start on their school work. Go over what the school and teachers expect around online learning and set some expectations of your own as well. Students should be expected to spend 1-2 hours on each course every day. Set up a "timetable" for their work with plenty of breaks and movement opportunities throughout. Clearly define what times will be spent on each course, and when they can take lunch and breaks. If kids are sharing devices with siblings, make sure they understand how the devices are to be shared, including who gets to do what on the device and when.

Stay focused.

Whenever possible, keep them close. We know it isn't always possible but kids are far more likely to get work done when they are supervised. If you (or another family member) is unable to keep an eye on them, hold them accountable to their work by showing you what they completed during their work periods/day. If you have other devices in your house, keep them out of your kid's workspace if possible, and limit WIFI access. This can also mean shutting down phones or keeping them in a designated place for the day. Teachers are also willing to provide ongoing updates if you request them.

Use natural consequences.

While it might be tempting to "reward" your kid with screen use, that can set kids up to see screens as a coveted commodity. Instead, you can frame it as a timing issue: "We have three hours in the evening, so if you put strong effort into your work and finish, you'll have time to play your video game." If intrinsic motivation is hard to come by, you can incentivize effort and progress in a way that makes sense. Come up with ideas with your kid, set benchmarks, and praise the process along the way.

Making Room for Well-Being

Be a good friend to yourself. If your kid gets caught up saying negative things about themselves, encourage self-kindness by asking them what they would say to a friend in the same situation. The same goes for you: We often beat ourselves up as parents, but what would a good friend say to you? What would you say to your friend? Get help when you need it - we can provide a number of supports to you as well as your child. You won't always know how to help your kid. Think about who could help fill in the gaps -- look to family, friends, teachers, and others for help. Sometimes having another adult take over removes the tricky parent/kid homework battle dynamic and lets you go back to just being a parent. If you are struggling, please reach out. Communicate with the school about how things are going. Everyone's doing their best, AND it's important for teachers to know what's working and not working for your kid so they can get the help they need.



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Thank you to our entire At-Home Learning community for your continued support. If you require support or are seeking answers, please contact teachers, counsellors, administration or contact the office. We are here to help families and students. Have a great weekend and enjoy the weather while it lasts.

Sincerely,

Stephen Pottage
District Principal - Alternative Programs and Support Services
Red Deer Public Schools

Principal: Stephen Pottage
Vice-Principal: Shelley Lower

