

DISTANCE, ONLINE & VIRTUAL LEARNING

During times of physical closures of school buildings, in response to an ongoing health emergency, or in support of the District's virtual learning option¹, the Superintendent may authorize the teachers and staff of the Jackson Public School District to deliver educational services through distance learning. Distance Learning, also called distance education and online learning, is a method of studying in which lectures are broadcast or classes are conducted by correspondence or over the internet, without students needing to attend a school. Distance learning techniques may include, but are not limited to, mailed hard copy materials, web-based instruction, and online materials. The District will train employees to use technology to deliver academic content to support high-quality student learning. Further, the District complies with all online learning guidance provided by the Mississippi Department of Education and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The District assures it does not discriminate and does provide equal access to educational opportunities.

The District recognizes that the health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is the primary concern during times of emergency. Educators, administrators, and parents will have to collaborate creatively to ensure students have access to appropriate educational materials and continue to receive daily interaction with teachers. Teacher and student responsibilities and expectations will change during any distance learning instruction.

All students shall adhere to the District's attendance policies and procedures. Additionally, all virtual students must participate in the required statewide assessments on campus, and other District assessments, as required.

Virtual learning may not be used to circumvent disciplinary practices, including but not limited to suspension and/or expulsion. Further, in keeping with comparable services afforded students in alternative education, students remanded to alternative school campuses for disciplinary offenses or for participation in high school equivalency coursework shall be presented face-to-face instruction from certified instructors in core subject areas unless the district offers a virtual option, as referenced above, to all students.

The District shall ensure that the virtual learning day includes the minimum 330 minutes of actual teaching as required by state statute. Teachers shall provide actual instruction to students during each virtual learning day and may not utilize asynchronous learning only. Virtual learners shall receive the equivalent amount of synchronous and asynchronous instruction as in-person students.

In the event of any audits conducted by the MDE, all process standards (i.e., student-teacher ratios, instructional practices, planning time, compulsory attendance, teacher evaluations, etc.)

¹ The JPS High School Virtual Academy Program is a virtual learning program offered for students in grades 9-12 in accordance with State Board Policy 56.2. For the virtual learning program, all MDE process standards (i.e., student-teacher ratios, instructional practices, planning time, compulsory attendance, teacher evaluations, etc.) will be held to the same standards as in-person learning.

for virtual learning will be held to the same standards as in-person learning. Lesson plans shall include details for virtual learning and denote synchronous vs. asynchronous learning as applicable.

The teacher's responsibilities are as follows:

1. Teachers will have all required technology such as laptops or tablets with them to provide remote instruction;
2. Teachers will provide guidance and feedback on classwork through email, the school website, or any other approved means of communication;
3. Teachers will be available for communication during regular work hours;
4. If a teacher is not available for distance learning due to illness or a personal day, the teacher will communicate with the students/parents within 24 hours of their return to work;
5. Teachers will provide instruction to all students, along with appropriate and reasonable accommodations, who are on a 504 plan or an IEP;
6. Any other responsibilities approved by the Board or the Superintendent.

Student's responsibilities are as follows:

1. Students will be available for their courses during instructional periods and will complete assignments given by their teachers;
2. Students will continue to follow the expectations set by their classroom teachers;
3. Students who do not have electronic access or are not provided with a school district device will complete educational activities through paper/written format;
4. Students will bring any questions or concerns to their teachers;
5. Students will follow all Student Code of Conduct guidelines while engaged in online learning;
6. Students will follow the Acceptable Use Policy with all District issued devices;
7. Any other responsibilities approved by the Board or the Superintendent.

Parent/guardian's responsibilities are as follows:

1. If a family selects online learning, they will sign a commitment that acknowledges receipt and acceptance of this board policy pertaining to online learning;
2. The family will provide reliable internet connectivity in their home or indicate the need for support with connectivity to their child's school;
3. The family will ensure the student's regular attendance and completion of assignments throughout the entire instructional day;
4. The family will ensure the student's compliance with the policies and procedures outlined within the Student Code of Conduct;
5. The family will ensure the student's attendance on campus to meet course requirements and/or interim district assessments;
6. Any other responsibilities approved by the Board or the Superintendent;
7. Failure to adhere to these responsibilities may result in your child being returned to in-person learning.

Students with Disabilities

During times of emergency, individual education must take place for all students, including students with disabilities. District employees will make decisions regarding distance learning based upon what is best for each student. The District will comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities will continue to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE); however, special education and related services may be provided virtually, online, and/or telephonically to maintain the students' health and safety and teachers.

If it becomes unfeasible or unsafe during an emergency closure to provide certain IEP services such as hands-on physical therapy or occupational therapy, the District will offer them online. This includes, but is not limited to, extensions of time for her assignments, videos with accurate captioning or embedded sign language, accessible online reading materials, and other services through video conferencing.

Where technology itself imposes a barrier to access or where materials simply are not available in an accessible format, the District will provide children with disabilities with equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students. This includes but is not limited to distributing print material, reading educational material over the phone, and/or audio recordings.

The Superintendent and/or designee shall develop procedures to support this policy.

SOURCE: Jackson Public School District, Jackson, Mississippi; Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-1-3, 37-13-63, 37-13-64, 37-13-67, 37-13-92

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