Guide for Families to Flexible Instruction

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Flexible Instructional Days: FAQ Guide for Families

Introduction
The Lower Merion School District remains steadfast in our commitment to providing a high-quality education for our students. The exceptional circumstances of the full school closure in the state of Pennsylvania has challenged school districts to rethink the delivery model of the program. Under the direction and guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the District has constructed a model for remote learning. The Flexible Instruction Plan is not intended to replicate our traditional onsite learning model; however, we are confident that learning and engagement opportunities for students can and will continue.

The purpose of this document is to outline how LMSD will offer a Flexible Instruction model for the continuation of the educational program. As this is an evolving situation, this resource document may be supplemented as additional federal and state guidance is developed and issued.

K-12 Frequently Asked Questions for All Grade-Levels

Flexible Instructional Days
What is a Flexible Instructional Day?
A Flexible Instructional Day (FID) is an alternate approach to delivering instruction if a circumstance arises that prevents instruction in customary face-to-face manner.

When did Flexible Instructional Days begin in Lower Merion School District?
Flexible Instructional Days started March 18, 2020. However, no student will be penalized for not having begun such instruction on that date. The implementation of remote learning required multi-level planning and professional development, especially in grades K-8. In grades 9-12, where regular technology integration has been greater because of an existing 1:1 technology initiative, remote learning began sooner but the transition to increased synchronous instruction is ongoing. The charts immediately below summarize the District’s phased implementation of Flexible Instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-FID</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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</table>
| • Optional learning resources shared with families from Curriculum Office/District website | • Implementation of prepared work packets to maintain/review skills K-8  
• Teachers supplement with online resources  
• Teachers provide office hours for parents/students to check in synchronously | • Implementation of asynchronous and/or synchronous instruction in new learning led by teacher  
• Reliance on technology to support  
• Continuation of synchronous availability for parents/students to check in with teachers.  
• Increase in synchronous opportunities for engagement |
### Implementation of FID Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades K-8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-FID</td>
<td>3/16 and 3/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>3/18 to 3/27</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>3/30 through extended closure</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-FID</td>
<td>3/16 and 3/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>3/18 through extended closure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timing and Schedule Requirements (K-12)**

*Will instruction occur in real-time? Will my child have to be available on a device at a specific time?*

Students will not be required to participate in synchronous instruction, which means instructional activities at a specified time. The design of the District’s Flexible Instructional Days incorporates maximum flexibility for families navigating these challenging times. Instruction will be planned to be primarily delivered asynchronously. However, we do want students to experience the benefits of connection with their teacher and peers. In that spirit, scheduled real-time instruction will take place and will be offered synchronously. At times, this real-time instruction may be for a class; others times for a small group. Additionally teachers may be inviting students to virtually join them for small-group conferencing and other instructional activities such as literature circles or morning meetings. Student participation with synchronous sessions is encouraged but not required.

**Rationale for Instructional Requirements (K-12)**

*Why doesn’t the District just offer a range of enrichment activities for students and allow students and families to choose their level of involvement? Why does work have to be required?*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provided guidance for school districts to offer continuity of education and planned instruction. This requires instruction of new concepts/skills aligned to grade level standards. For students to be successfully prepared for the next grade level in elementary school, or the next sequential course in secondary school, exposure to, and completion of, tasks associated with the remainder of the current year/course, are essential. At the time of schools closing, students had approximately 12 weeks of instruction remaining, which amounts to approximately 30% of a school year of information, as well as opportunities to learn and refine skills and academic habits of mind.

**Work Requirements and Submission (K-12)**

*How do students submit work?*

Teachers will communicate specific expectations for assignment submission. This will include how and when work should be submitted.

**Student Supports During Flexible Instructional Days**

**Availability of Professionals (K-12)**

To the extent possible, all professionals are available to support students, staff, and families. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, school counselors, nurses, social workers, librarians, and mental health professionals. There remains a structured day in place for staff that includes an opportunity for synchronous communication. Email communication expectations remain consistent. Non-emergency
communication beyond the workday or on the weekends should expect return communication the following work day.

**Access to Supports (K-12)**

*How will my child receive the support that they are scheduled to receive?*

Support teachers (e.g., Special Education, Math Support, Reading Support, English Language) are creating learning activities and/or are providing support through differentiated instruction and/or support plans. These supports are communicated directly from the Support teacher to the family. Students will have opportunities for synchronous sessions with support teachers.

**Incorporation of IEP/GIEP/504 Accommodations (K-12)**

The District remains committed to providing meaningful access for all students including our students with disabilities. We are committed to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Students with IEPs, GIEPs, and 504s will continue to receive the supports and services outlined in these plans, to the extent possible. Case managers will continue to work with general education teachers on accommodations and modifications to assignments to ensure access to the general education curriculum. Additionally, as appropriate, special education staff will provide instruction in areas identified within the student’s IEP or GIEP. Related Services such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Vision Support, Hearing Support, etc. will be provided through a teletherapy approach. Special education teachers and related service providers will contact families to share how they will be providing services. Annual IEP/GIEP/504 meetings will be held virtually. A Student Services team member will contact families to schedule a time for the meeting. Meetings will be held via phone conference or Zoom.

**Impact of Flexible Instructional Days on Other Areas**

**Access to Meals (K-12)**

Lower Merion School District’s Nutritional Services offers “grab-and-go” lunches and breakfasts on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. While meal pick-up occurs on only two days, children will still be able to receive 10 meals per week. The distribution site is the Suburban Square parking lot located at Montgomery and Anderson Avenues in Ardmore. The meals are available for Lower Merion and Narberth children, age 18 or younger. A parent, guardian, or family member may pick up the meals for the children in their household.

**School Calendar (K-12)**

At this time, there has been no impact on the school calendar. Scheduled school days will be treated as flexible instructional days. Weekends, staff development days, holidays, and Spring Break will occur as scheduled. Given the uncertainty around the timing of return, decisions have not yet been made on the end-of-the-year activities.

**School and End-of-Year Activities (K-12)**

During the closure, all field trips, school activities, and athletic and extracurricular activities are cancelled. We understand the value of end-of-year culminating activities for students. Upon return to school, the District will continue to explore supporting routines and special events to the degree possible, following the guidance of health professionals and government officials (e.g. prom, end-of-year activities and trips,
etc.). The high schools will have yearbooks for the year. Commencement is a once-in-a-lifetime event for students. If our return to school does not allow for our commencement ceremonies to occur as scheduled, the District will explore other alternatives to appropriately honor this accomplishment. Students who fulfill their graduation requirements for the year will still graduate on June 2 (Harriton HS) or June 3 (Lower Merion HS).

**Standardized Testing (K-12)** (Pennsylvania State Exams: PSSA and Keystone Exams, AP, IB, SAT)
The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) cancelled PSSA testing and Keystone exams for the 2019-20 school year. This includes the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). IB Exams have been cancelled by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. In-person AP Exams have been cancelled by The College Board. AP Exams are being rescheduled in an abridged online format. Information about SAT exams and AP exams is available at [https://www.collegeboard.org/](https://www.collegeboard.org/).

**Attendance (K-12)**
At this time, student attendance is accounted for via student engagement in instructional activities and/or through completion of daily assignments or tasks. PDE is providing additional guidance on attendance and attendance protocols are subject to change.

**Communication (K-12)**
*What is the best way to keep up to date with my child’s schedule/assignments?*
Blackboard will be the primary instructional tool used for communication with families. Teachers are available for regular office hours. These specific times are posted on each teacher’s Blackboard. This time can be used for parent and student questions. Teachers communicate via email, phone, and/or videoconferencing, depending on circumstances. Email remains the best way to communicate with teachers.

**Technology Support (K-12)**
*What if my child needs technical assistance?*
- **Grades 9-12:** High school students can request technical assistance by submitting a helpdesk ticket at [https://helpdesk.lmsd.org](https://helpdesk.lmsd.org).
- **Grades K-8:** Elementary and middle school parents/guardians can request technical support by emailing [techsupport@lmsd.org](mailto:techsupport@lmsd.org) or by calling the Lower Merion School District helpdesk at 610-645-1899. When calling or emailing the helpdesk, please provide the following information: Your first and last name, phone number, child’s first and last name, the school your child attends, your child’s grade level, and a detailed description of the problem.

**Elementary (K-5) Information**

**Phase 1 Learning Materials (K-5)**
Learning activities provided via “the packet” were designed for the first ten days of distance learning. The goal for this initial phase was to focus on practice, reinforcement, and maintenance of previously learned skills. This packet is the source of work for students until March 30, 2020. Teachers may also supplement these activities. Beginning on March 30th, instruction will focus more on new learning and will look different than packet work.
Phase 2 Learning Materials (K-5)
Beginning on March 30, 2020, instruction will focus more on new learning and will include reliance on technology for asynchronous, or recorded, instruction. Teachers will be focusing on essential core skills that support grade level mastery and provide foundations for future learning. Synchronous opportunities will begin through Morning Meeting the week of March 30th with other opportunities for teacher check-ins with small groups. Following spring break, after instructional routines are established, building teams will develop schedules to support increased small group student interactions.

Requirements for Student Work (K-5)
Teachers may use language like Must do/May do, or “Required” and “Optional/Choice,” to indicate essential core skills versus extensions and engagement activities. This language is used to communicate important mastery skills for parents/guardians. These will be the skill areas we try to monitor so we can continue to offer and design customized supports and instruction. It is important to note that elementary students have different proficiencies with skills as well as with independence. Families also have unique challenges at this time. Consider the core/essential required assignments as connected to the most important skills, but recognize the expectation is for students to try what they can do and what families can manage during these difficult times. The intent of noting the difference between required and optional, or core essentials and choice, is not to create stress for families, but to provide a pathway to essential learning in less than ideal circumstances. The language can also help students distinguish between core and choice.

Assessment (K-5)
Teachers may include informal and formal checks for understanding for core/required assignments. These help teachers monitor student progress and plan continuing instruction as well as customizations.

Grading (K-5)
We will, throughout the closure, continue focus on mastery of essential skills. Our commitment to provide feedback to students remains consistent. At the elementary level, we will not be issuing a Trimester 2 report card, but will provide a final summative report card on each student’s progress.

Parent/Guardian Role (K-5)
Since elementary age students have different levels of independence, family partnership is necessary for students to engage in tasks and to access on-line resources. Time and assignment completion depends on each individual families’ circumstances. Instruction and assignments will be designed for maximum flexibility for families. The suggested time guidelines are approximate and actual appropriate time may vary by child. Steps or routines parents/guardians can follow to support student engagement include the following:

- Check teacher updates and assignments posted in Blackboard, email or Seesaw.
- Review learning assignments with your child
- Help your child find a work space where they can work independently on learning tasks.
- Email your child’s classroom teacher if you or your child has questions or needs extra help.

Teachers will be available and present on-line daily to help and support. These hours of availability will be posted by the teachers.
**Expectations for Student Time (K-5)**

*How long can I expect my child to work on this daily?*

We encourage families to try to maintain a routine that helps create a feeling of normalcy for students. Suggested times below are approximate. Students work at different paces and have different levels of proficiency and independence. Students shouldn’t be working on required assignments much longer than the guidelines below. Learning is designed to include some screen time and activities that are extensions of this time (e.g., reading aloud, pretend play, investigations, writing, drawing). Students will not need to be on a device for all the learning time described below.

- If students experience great difficulty or become exceedingly frustrated with a task, have the child stop the activity, and please email the teacher. If a student continues to demonstrate frustration or misunderstanding, encourage the student to conference with the teacher during office hours. During face-to-face instruction, teachers glean information about students’ strengths and struggles. Knowing teachers do not have access to these same informal cues during online instruction, teachers will appreciate parents'/guardians’ thoughtful partnership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade K-2 time recommendations:</th>
<th>Literacy: About 60 minutes of literacy activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● About 30 minutes for a required assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● About 30 minutes for choice, extension or engagement activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ This time can be in segments or smaller chunks of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Literacy activities include reading, writing, speaking and listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Viewing educational videos or films that are rich in language and build background knowledge also support comprehension of both fiction and informational reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math: About 30-60 minutes of math:</td>
<td>○ Choice activities that support mathematical thinking can include Dreambox, games, card games, pattern and shape games, counting and building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● About 30 minutes on required math activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● About 30 minutes on extensions or choice activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ This time can be in segments or smaller chunks of time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grade 3-5 time recommendations:

#### Literacy:
- About 60-120 minutes of literacy activities:
  - Approximately one hour for required assignments
  - Approximately one hour of choice/extension opportunities.
- Literacy activities include reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Viewing education videos (Brainpop, for example) that are rich in language and build background knowledge also support comprehension of both fiction and informational reading.

#### Math:
- About 60 minutes of math. This may include a combination of required, choice and application/extension activities.
  - This time can be in segments or smaller chunks of time.
- Choice activities that support mathematical thinking can include games, Dreambox (K-4) or Exact Path (Gr 5).

### Grade K-5 Enrichment/Extensions

- We are offering additional enrichment resources to keep students engaged in learning throughout the day.
- These extension and engagement activities are designed to provide choice for students and families.
- Families will see core skill instruction labeled as a required activity, and extensions labeled as choice activities.
- A variety of STEM activities will be provided to promote synthesis of thinking, problem-solving and engagement.
- Part of the elementary experience is learning to love learning, developing curiosity and stamina for engaging in problem-solving and learning activities. The variety of experiences provided is designed to help your child develop habits of mind that support a lifetime learning mindset.

### Special Areas and Specialists

- Special area teachers (Art, Music, FLES, PE, and Library) and specialists will also be providing resources and synchronous opportunities to connect with students. We hope these resources may support parents in keeping some learning routines in place that keep students interested and engaged while we undergo this new challenge of social distancing and remote learning.

### Middle School (6-8) Information

**Student Communication with Teachers (6-8)**

When communicating with teachers via email, students should use their Lower Merion School District email account.

**Daily Assignments (6-8)**

Lessons and instructional activities will be posted to Blackboard. Any assignment that would be due for that day will be posted by 9:00 am.
**Expectations for Student Time (6-8)**

Daily learning activities for each course are designed to take approximately 30 minutes for students to complete. Knowing students work at different paces, student work should not exceed 30 minutes per course per day, and no more than 150 minutes per week, inclusive of reading, watching videos, or written tasks. Some learning activities include multi-day activities assignments designed to be chunked into smaller pieces and completed over the course of multiple days. In some circumstances students determine how to break up learning activities themselves; in other circumstances the teacher directs students how to break up the learning activity. It is further recommended that students engage in 15-20 minutes per day of independent reading with a book of their choice.

**Student Difficulty (6-8)**

*What should a parent/guardian do if their child becomes exceedingly frustrated or is spending considerably longer on an assignment or task than the recommended time?*

If your child experiences great difficulty or becomes exceedingly frustrated with a task, have your child stop the activity, have your child email the teacher, and encourage your child to conference with their teacher during office hours. If your child continues to demonstrate frustration or misunderstanding, please reach out to the teacher via email to share your observations. During face-to-face instruction, teachers glean information about students’ strengths and struggles. Knowing teachers do not have access to these same informal cues during online instruction, teachers will appreciate parents’/guardians’ thoughtful partnership.

**Assignment Due Dates and Submissions (6-8)**

Submission deadlines will be set by the teacher but should not be before 3:00 pm on the same day that the assignment is posted. Work will not be considered late or missing provided it is submitted by the end of the week Friday at 6:00 pm. The format for submission of each assignment will be included in the directions and/or posted on the BlackBoard page.

**Supports for Student Assignment Completion (6-8)**

Similar to feedback given to students throughout the year, teachers will continue to offer guiding questions, suggestions, amendments of misunderstandings, and/or possibilities for extension or application so that students can deepen their understanding or improve performance.

**Student Feedback on Assignments (6-8)**

Teacher assignments on BlackBoard contain a task for students to complete and the expectations for successful completion of this task. After an assignment is formally submitted, teachers offer feedback regarding how effectively a student met the expectations of the assignment, highlighting positive aspects of the students’ performance to be applied in future contexts and recommending suggestions for future academic texts and/or amending misunderstandings.

**Grading (6-8)**

The 3rd Quarter ends on April 3, 2020. For the 3rd Quarter grade, all students will receive a grade of “P - Pass” or “F - Fail” for each course. Time will be provided for students to submit missing work, which will be due by April 3rd. Any missing tests/quizzes will be excluded from the quarter grade. The 3rd Quarter grade will include any assignments/tasks due on or before March 13th. Students who fail to meet the April 3rd deadline will not be penalized and may have the deadline extended if they are experiencing difficulties accessing or submitting the make-up work due to extenuating circumstances.
For the 4th Quarter (or the duration of the closing), all students will receive a grade of “P - Pass” or “F - Fail” for each class. Details of the calculation of the P/F grade will be posted on the teacher’s Blackboard.

### High School (9-12) Information

#### Student Communication with Teachers (9-12)
When communicating with teachers via email, students should use their Lower Merion School District email account.

#### Daily Assignments (9-12)
Lessons and instructional activities will be posted to Blackboard. Any assignment that would be due for that day will be posted by 9:00 am.

#### Expectations for Student Time (9-12)
Daily learning activities for each course are designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. While learning speed for students varies, student work is designed to not exceed 30 minutes per course per day, inclusive of reading, watching videos, or written tasks. Some learning activities include multi-day assignments designed to be chunked into smaller pieces and completed over the course of multiple days. In some circumstances students determine how to break up learning activities themselves; in other circumstances the teacher directs students how to break up the learning activity. It is further recommended that students engage in 15-20 minutes per day of independent reading with a book of their choice.

#### Assignment Deadlines and Submission (9-12)
Submission deadlines will be set by the teacher but should not be before 3:00 pm on the same day that the assignment is posted. Work will not be considered late or missing provided it is submitted by the end of the week Friday at 6:00 pm. The format for submission of each assignment will be included in the directions and/or posted on the BlackBoard page.

#### Grading (9-12)
The 3rd Quarter ends on April 3, 2020. For the 3rd quarter, all students will receive a 3rd Quarter grade on the regular Lower Merion School District grading scale. Time will be provided for students to submit missing work through April 3rd. Any missing tests/quizzes will be excluded from the quarter grade. The 3rd Quarter Grade will include any assignments/tasks due on or before March 13th. Students who fail to meet the April 3rd deadline will not be penalized and may have the deadline extended if they are experiencing difficulties accessing or submitting the make-up work due to extenuating circumstances.

For the 4th Quarter (or the duration of the closing), all students will receive a grade of “P - Pass” or “F - Fail.” Details of the calculation of the P/F grade will be posted on the teacher’s Blackboard.

If the closure extends beyond April 13, 2020, traditional Final Exams will be replaced with a culminating project for each course. This project will be reflective of the various skills/competencies learned throughout the entire course. Work/tasks related to the Culminating Project may be included as part of the weekly assignments/tasks for individual courses. This project work is NOT above and beyond the daily expectations of student work for any course on any given day. Due dates and additional details on grading of the project will be shared at a later time.
Senior Project (9-12)
In the event that the closure extends beyond April 13, 2020, there will no longer be a graduation requirement for seniors to complete the Senior Project in its current design. The feasibility of a modified version of the project will be reassessed upon returning to school to determine if a modified version of a senior culminating project may be offered. Given the uncertainty of the situation, devoting time to securing senior project placements during the closure is not an efficient use of time for students and teachers. If there is no senior project, students would continue in their regular educational program for the remainder of the school year.
APPENDIX A: VIDEO CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE AND ACCESS

Videoconferencing Expectations
What guidance can the District provide when my child is on a video conference with a school staff member?

First, all synchronous video conference sessions are optional. When students are participating in a video conference (Zoom, Blackboard, etc.):

- Remember that any direct instruction lessons may involve two-way camera and audio usage. (This means that the instructor will likely see and hear what is occurring in your home, including what everyone is wearing).
- Do not audio/video record lessons.
- Maintain the confidentiality of other students, if your child is participating in a group lesson. (Remember that all students participating will likely see and hear what is occurring in your home, including what everyone is wearing, just as you may see and hear what is occurring in their home).
- If you have questions or concerns, please email your child’s teacher after the lesson is complete. Do not interrupt the activity with questions, either through the audio or through emails. Allow the professional to focus on the instructional activity.
- This is a special time for the teacher to connect with the students. We appreciate you being quiet observers. If there are technical difficulties, please help out. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your teacher via email during the listed office hours.

Guidance for Children

- Sit in a quiet spot in your house with limited distractions and background noises.
- Make sure to stay in one spot and sit still during our meeting.
- Let friends finish talking. Don’t interrupt your friend when he/she is talking.
- Don’t eat or drink during our Zoom. Help everyone hear each other and focus.
- Keep yourself on MUTE until it is your turn to speak.
- Be on time. We will only be meeting for 30 minutes!
- Make sure family members / pets know not to interrupt you during this time.
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately!

Accessing Video Conferences

Blackboard video conferences will be linked in Blackboard. To access Blackboard, students/parents should follow the link provided by the teacher or log in with your student Blackboard account and password. For additional guidance on setting up or using Blackboard, see the district website: https://www.lmsd.org/parents/blackboard

Zoom Video Conferences (with audio-only options). You do not need an account or to download Zoom to your desktop in order to join in a video or audio-only meeting. Follow the link teachers send and click to join via the web based link.

Sample Message:
Mrs. Smith is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Time: Mar 18, 2020 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting Link
https://zoom.us/p/38114
Meeting ID: 345 123 567

The meeting invitation will come to you in an email. At the scheduled time, click the join URL link to join the meeting. The link above may also work. Enter the meeting ID number when prompted. No need to download.

Click Cancel at the top.
Click Cancel if it pops up again.

At the bottom of your computer screen you might see the following message:
If you cannot download or run the application, join from your browser.

If that message appears, click join from your browser.

If your computer screen looks like the one below, then click cancel and then read the bottom of the screen. You want to click “click here” on your computer screen to launch the meeting.
Rules for Zoom

Our Zoom meetings will be a way for us to all see each other and talk to each other! We will act as if we are doing our Morning Meeting together. We will start with a greeting and then we will have an opportunity to share something with each other. Our Zoom meetings will last about 30 minutes. If you are having technical difficulties, send an email to your teacher to let him/her know.

**DO**

- Sit in a quiet spot in your house with limited distractions and background noises.
- Keep yourself on MUTE until it is your turn to speak.
- Be on time. We will only be meeting for 30 minutes!
- Make sure family members/pets know not to interrupt you during this time.
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately!

**DON'T**

- Don’t walk around with your device. Make sure to stay in one spot and sit still during our meeting.
- Don’t interrupt your friend when he/she is talking.
- Don’t eat or drink during our Zoom call.

**PARENTS**

Reminder: This is a special time for the teacher to connect with the students. We appreciate you being quiet observers. If there are technical difficulties, please help out. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your teacher via email during the listed office hours.
APPENDIX C: TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Additional Information about our Technology Resources

- Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Governor’s orders closing school buildings, and a new state law requirement that school districts make a good faith effort to offer continuity of education to students during periods of school closure, we have embarked on during these unprecedented times on quickly deploying distance learning activities so our students remain engaged and can continue in their education despite schools not being able to physically be open.

- As a result of the current circumstances, all school districts throughout the Commonwealth and across the country have needed to quickly develop new formats for sound instruction. This has required the increased use of technology and new products and technologies.

- Student privacy always has been, and continues to be a top priority when developing and implementing distance learning instruction.

- Any time Lower Merion School District retains a third party vendor, or purchases technology or other products or resources that will have access to confidential student information, the District conducts a thorough review to ensure its use of such vendors, technologies, or other products or resources are compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and other federal and state laws requiring the confidentiality of confidential student information.

- We strive to be as transparent as possible regarding the District’s plan for maintaining continuity of education during these challenging and unprecedented times. We appreciate your understanding, patience, flexibility, and partnership in this process, and we encourage you to stay in touch with your child’s building principal if you have questions, comments, or concerns.