

# HOW CAN TEACHERS BEST ENGAGE STUDENTS IN REMOTE LEARNING SETTINGS?

These recommendations are adapted from  
[CCSSO's Restart and Recovery: Considerations for Teaching and Learning.](#)

Student engagement is always a key concern of teachers — but remote learning settings pose new challenges. As teachers work to better engage students in remote instruction, it will be key for them to:

## 01 Deepen virtual relationships with each student.

- a. Check-in with each student daily in quick ways using the chatbox, reactions/personalized stickers, or other signals on their tech platform.
- b. Set up office hours and encourage specific students to join each day, based on need.
- c. Individually check in with each student and the student's family at least once per week:
  1. Ask how they are feeling.
  2. Ask how school is going.
  3. Share their own perspective on the student.
  4. Ask what else the student and/or family need right now to succeed.
- d. Identify and follow up individually each day with students who appear to be struggling, including those who seem upset, do not log on, are not engaging, and/or do not complete their work.
- e. Highlighted resources:
  - [Daily student check-in survey](#) for teachers to administer.
  - [Checklist](#) for building meaningful relationships during COVID.
  - [Brief on building meaningful relationships](#) with students during COVID.
  - [New Leaders in their new virtual guide](#) details the elements of a successful virtual classroom and ways to partner with families effectively.
  - Check out the [Cult of Pedagogy's recommendations](#) for how online instruction differs from in-person instruction.

## 02 Adapt classroom engagement routines for the virtual setting.

- a. Prepare families and students with weekly emails, newsletters, webpage updates, or text messages that include:
  1. An overview of the week including purpose of instruction, needed resources, and support families can access throughout the week.
  2. All links and technology needs (including an FAQ with answers to common challenges, with illustrative screenshots).
  3. A list of the books and at-home resources needed (and where to find them).
  4. A list of all class work and homework, so families can easily track their child's progress.
  5. Contact information – including names, titles, phone numbers, and emails – if students/families have questions/concerns.
- b. Engage students in each lesson virtually by:
  1. Using peer-to-peer strategies (e.g., breakout rooms).
  2. Using features to check on students' real-time engagement (e.g., white boards, platform thumbs-up features, or polling).
  3. Leveraging research-based practices for virtual engagement (see [Appendix D](#), below).
  4. Making sure that students are clear on how to use the technology and the new ways they can and should engage.

## 02 Adapt classroom engagement routines for the virtual setting.

cont.

- c. Build a community where students feel safe and comfortable, by:
  1. Reserving space for community-building in each class (e.g., morning meeting to share goals for the day, a community board to give praise to peers).
  2. Making sure that students can connect individually with their peers on fun or non-academic topics.
  3. Ensuring that students are engaging in ways that fit their personalities and learning needs (e.g., talking, presenting, using chat, writing).
- d. Consider employing unique strategies for each grade level, including:
  1. More self-directed work for older students.
  2. Shorter increments of learning with regular opportunities for engagement for older learners.
  3. Projects that allow students time to work virtually in small groups.
- e. Highlighted resources:
  1. See [Appendix D](#) (in Academic Guidance) for detailed guidance and curated support resources.
  2. [Digital Promise released this guide](#) with resources for virtual instruction, including specific guidance on teaching students with special needs.
  3. [New Leaders, in their new guide](#), offers concrete advice and resources about how to organize a virtual classroom.
  4. [The Learning Accelerator released a brief](#) on research-based best practices for remote learning.

## 03 Improve virtual content-specific routines for instruction.

Academic structures help students anticipate learning and stay engaged. Implement predictable routines for each content area:

- a. Math: routines support fluency, application tasks, and introduction of new material.
- b. English language arts: routines support reading foundations (K-2), reading comprehension, and writing.
- c. Science: routines promoting student discourse, introducing phenomena, and investigating phenomena.
- d. Highlighted resources:
  1. See [Appendix E](#) (in Academic Guidance) for recommended, concrete routines in each subject area with curated resources.
  2. [University of Florida's virtual learning tools](#) for K-2 reading foundations.
  3. [Nell Duke's videos](#) for teaching reading foundations in a remote setting.