**[School](https://www.soundvision.com/categories/school) Developing an Online Schooling Schedule this Year: An 8-Step Guide**



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At this writing, [20 of the 25](https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/school-districts-reopening-plans-a-snapshot.html) largest school districts in the United States are choosing to teach online exclusively this school year because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This will affect over four million students across the country. Other schools are choosing to go semi-remote, with some teaching online and the rest in class.

In response, some parents have decided to homeschool their children. But the vast majority are choosing to keep them in the same school as last year, even as they struggle to keep up with the demands of online or semi-online schooling.

“We don’t call this homeschooling because homeschooling is something someone makes a choice to do and it’s done through choosing curriculum and choosing a process to follow. We call this actually ‘crisis schooling’ among the educators,” explained Kathyrn Jones, founder and head educator of [Back To The Fitrah](http://backtothefitrah.com/?r_done=1) Mentoring Academy in Melbourne, Australia.

“Parents are basically in the crisis care of their children’s education, so it’s really difficult for parents.”

She shared her own experience during lockdown earlier this year, as she juggled her work and her children.

“When my children’s school was shut, it was impossible to get work done because every hour, I was getting emails from teachers.” She said she also had to keep checking that classwork was being completed. “It was impossible to keep up.,”

The key to managing this new reality is developing a routine and daily schedule. Here are some ideas on how to do that.

**Step 1: Note down the days and times of every child’s class(es).**

Last school year, post-lockdown, some teachers repeated the classroom experience for specific days and times by teaching classes via platforms like Zoom online. Others chose to send the work with some written instructions to students and let them submit it by a deadline.

You and your child, if s/he is old enough, need to add the days and times of every class to your phones and other devices. Deadlines for assignments and projects should be added as well. Older children should be delegated this responsibility as much as possible, with sufficient guidance from parents.

Also, post a schedule on your fridge or another central location in the home where everyone can see it.

If you have more than one child, color code the schedule, so that each child is designated one color, making it clear whose class is when.

Making a central, color-coded schedule will also help in making sure laptops and other devices are available at the right time for each child.

It will also help coordinate and arrange pick-up and drop-off times for children who are attending school semi-remotely this year.

For classes that are not being offered with the teacher online, a time needs to be scheduled to get the work done. For example, if the math teacher assigns work on Monday or at the beginning of the day and expects it to be submitted by the end of the day or week, schedule a specific time slot to get that done daily. It could be one hour in the morning after breakfast or before Dhuhr. But the key is to schedule it in so it gets done.

**Step 2: Sync up everyone’s schedule around the five daily prayers**

As much as possible, organize everyone’s schedule so that it revolves around the five daily prayers. If you work at home or you are a stay-at-home parent, make sure that you pray, eat, and work at the same time with your child/children as much as possible. This makes the day less chaotic and builds family togetherness.

If you cannot be home with your children while they are schooling online, you can still sync up by video chatting during lunch, or sending them texts that you are eating lunch or praying, and remind them that it’s time for them to do the same.

**Step 3: Check that school work is getting done at different points of the day**

Text or call in reminders to children to stay on track with their work throughout the day if they are old enough and have their own phones or devices. Younger children will need an adult who is physically present to sit and direct them to do the work. In two-parent households, this job should be shared as much as possible. For example, the parent at home during the day can manage the online learning, while the other parent manages homework afterschool.

In single-parent households, having an older sibling or other trusted relative or friend to help will make it more manageable, along with check-ins throughout the day by phone or text.

**Step 4: Follow-up at the end of the day**

A time should be set aside to review what was accomplished in school at the end of the day. After dinner is ideal for many families, but if that doesn’t work, then shortly after school might be preferable. Allot a minimum of ten to 15 minutes per child.

The focus should be on checking that in-class assignments were done, that homework is or will be completed, and that work that was due has been submitted to the teacher.

**Step 5: Check messages from teachers three times a day**

Set aside about 10 minutes a day three times a day to check messages from your child(ren)’s teachers: Once in the morning before work, once at lunchtime, and once before bed.

This will keep you updated on the day and/or the week’s plans, as well as any changes that have been made.

**Step 6: Join or start an online group for the parents in your child’s classroom**

Sometimes, the fastest way to get an answer about your child’s schoolwork is to ask another parent. Many parents have joined or started groups on platforms like WhatsApp to pool resources, clarify information about assignments, offer support, or deal with other issues. If you are not already part of this kind of a group, start one up with other parents in your child’s class or grade this year.

**Step 7: Make the most of the weekends**

Weekends are a time to rest, but to also catch your breath and make up any work that your child may have missed during the week. In addition, it’s a good time to look ahead and plan for bigger assignments. For example, if there is a big science project due in a month, weekends can be spent planning for it, buying materials, and doing research. It doesn’t have to be for long. One hour on a Sunday afternoon would be sufficient in the earlier weeks. But this helps avoid the stressful last-minute rush, or even worse, forgetting the assignment altogether.

Weekends can also be used to focus on subjects or assignments children are struggling with. Parents can coach kids or hire an online tutor to help.

**Step 8: Schedule in time to decompress and/or have fun**

Scheduling this in is crucial, as it ensures it gets done. And fun and/or relaxation is essential, given the [mental health effects](https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/facing-mental-health-fallout-from-the-coronavirus-pandemic) of COVID on all of us. This should be no more than 10 minutes daily, and longer on the weekends. It could even be part of routines like mealtimes or right after prayer, whether it’s sharing what we were grateful for that day at dinnertime, making a collective family Dua after Isha prayer, or kicking around a soccer ball outside before Maghrib prayer. Whatever activity you choose, make fun and/or relaxation an essential part of your online schooling schedule this year.

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[Managing Screen Time in an Online School year](https://www.soundvision.com/article/managing-screen-time-in-an-online-school-year)

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According to the [National Retail Federation](https://nrf.com/media-center/press-releases/coronavirus-could-push-back-school-spending-record-level-uncertain), back-to-school spending could reach over $100 billion for the first time in 2020.

* [Read moreabout Managing Screen Time in an Online School year](https://www.soundvision.com/article/managing-screen-time-in-an-online-school-year)



[Crafting your New Homeschool Schedule](https://www.soundvision.com/article/crafting-your-new-homeschool-schedule)

[ZAHIRAH LYNN EPPARD](https://www.soundvision.com/authors/zahirah-lynn-eppard)

New homeschoolers are approaching the beginning of this “school” year filled with anxiety. With conviction, they have made the decision to take the responsibility for their child’s day-to-day learning. However, they are not always sure how to go about accomplishing it.

* [Read moreabout Crafting your New Homeschool Schedule](https://www.soundvision.com/article/crafting-your-new-homeschool-schedule)



[Recognizing the Importance of Play](https://www.soundvision.com/article/recognizing-the-importance-of-play)

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As you work to develop schedules to manage time and learning throughout the day, be sure to factor in play.  Especially for young children, play is a primary vehicle for learning.

* [Read moreabout Recognizing the Importance of Play](https://www.soundvision.com/article/recognizing-the-importance-of-play)



[Five Ways Every Parent Can Help Children Improve Social Skills](https://www.soundvision.com/article/five-ways-every-parent-can-help-children-improve-social-skills)

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There is no way to overemphasize this important fact – as a parent you are your child’s first teacher. In this role there are huge responsibilities and plenty of opportunities. There are five significant ways every parent can help children improve their social skills.

* [Read moreabout Five Ways Every Parent Can Help Children Improve Social Skills](https://www.soundvision.com/article/five-ways-every-parent-can-help-children-improve-social-skills)



[The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning this School Year](https://www.soundvision.com/article/the-importance-of-social-and-emotional-learning-this-school-year)

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