



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZING DISTANCE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

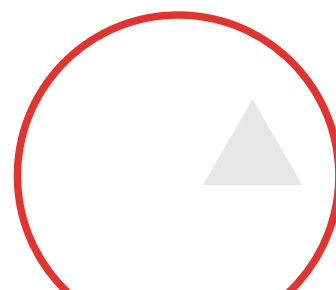


The switch to distance learning is a challenge for the entire educational system of our country, but the younger your students are, the more difficulties you may face as a teacher.

Realizing this, we've developed a list of recommendations that can help school teachers to organize their work under the current circumstances as effectively as possible and at minimal cost in terms of psychological resources.

1. Decide how many lessons per week should be conducted online, and how many lessons should be assigned as independent work on various educational platforms. It is recommended to distribute your hours approximately equally (for example, if you have 4 lessons a week, then it's preferable to conduct only 2 of them online). This is important not only because online lessons require significantly higher emotional engagement both from you and your students, but also because educational platforms provide abundant ways to personalize the learning process: for the teacher — to select or design the tasks meeting his/her students' needs, for the students — to learn how to work independently, manage their time, and get quick feedback. Nevertheless, we do not recommend that you give up online classes completely — children should see their teachers at least once a week to be reminded that the learning process is still ongoing.

2. Discuss with your colleagues what ratio between online lessons and independent work is appropriate for each grade during the day (taking into account the children's ages). We recommend no more than 1 online lesson per day in elementary school, no more than 2 in middle school, and no more than 3 in high school. Lesson duration for younger students is best reduced to 30 minutes.



3. Make all the preparations for an online lesson in advance. Set up your workplace; ideally, find a place with a plain wall or bookshelves as a backdrop, so that students are not distracted by the interior of your home. Open the software you need, your presentation, the assignments. Make sure that all messengers (including those on the computer) are in silent mode. Make arrangements with those who live with you so that you won't be disturbed during the lesson. Do not forget about your appearance — even though you and your students are at home, it's still a lesson, and, in the home environment, it is as important as ever to maintain a serious atmosphere.

4. Do not plan an online lesson as a solo performance. Students can find video lessons virtually on any topic and of any quality online — you do not need to record another one. Use your online lesson to pose a problem, to discuss complex questions relative to the topic, to evaluate the level of understanding of the material by the class and by individual students, to discuss what they've read or to do homework with them.

5. Start by discussing with your students the ways you will interact during the lesson:

a) limit the number of communication channels at any one time (e.g., now we're messaging in the chat application — now we are not, we're only discussing the topic; now we are working on a virtual board or in an exercise-book, now we are debating etc.).

b) agree on how you will understand that a student “has raised his/her hand” (if the class is small, you can track this directly through the video, but if there are many students, use icons provided by the platform).

c) ask your students to use their real names, not nicknames; in addition to creating a serious atmosphere, this will also help you know who is answering if, for example, the video signal is lost or if you unexpectedly forget a name.

6. Try not to correct children's behavior during the lesson. If you notice inappropriate behavior, discuss it with the student after the class and/or with their homeroom teacher. Many platforms allow the conference host to mute specific participants, but we advise you to discuss this option with your students in advance, so that these rules are not only clear, but also accepted by all the participants.

7. When preparing and conducting lessons, keep in mind that all your lessons are now open to the parents. Discuss with them the rules for their attendance (not to comment on what is happening, not to give hints or solve problems for the child, to help only with technical issues).



8. We recommend discussing with the teaching staff of your school the possibility of opting out of grading for the period of distance learning (at least in elementary school). Students may have an unstable Internet connection, difficult living conditions, and other good reasons not to complete their homework on time. Meanwhile, it is imperative that you review **all** the assignments completed by students and give them meaningful feedback about what still needs work and what's already been mastered. The assessment should be affirmative.

9. Remember to add a human touch to your online lesson. Ask students how they are doing, if they miss school, what they miss the most. Remember, this is not the easiest period for children either, and they **all** have very different study conditions at home. Try to be alert, speak loudly and clearly; also, you can (and should!) joke sometimes.

10. Communicate with your colleagues more often, share positive (and negative!) experiences and findings. You are not alone, and now more than ever you need support. Get in touch with your students' other teachers regularly and find out in advance which students will be attending your online lesson, so that you can adjust it accordingly.

