

## Learning During Pandemic-Required School Absences

### FAQ

#### ***Will my child get stuff to do at home if we have to be absent?***

If your child is a youngest- or middle-grouper, their day is full of experiences with materials, not traditional work that can be photocopied or emailed. However, if your child is in kindergarten, there are some ways that we can send homework that would reinforce the concepts they have learned at school with materials that will provide additional practice. A packet or bundle of these activities will be prepared for kindergarteners upon request—parents, please email your Lead Teacher with your preference.

Elementary schooling is required in Indiana, and elementary students have a variety of foundational skills they have learned and are practicing to internalize and increase accuracy. Therefore, elementary students will be sent work to complete during their absence if they are well enough to do so. More about this is described below, and details depend on the length of absence.

#### ***Do I have to help my child do school activities at home?***

The activities that are sent home are designed to be able to be completed independently, with minimal parent support required. Your child may need help gathering some simple materials and organizing a quiet place to work, but these will not be new concepts that need you to teach lessons. Practice in the classroom allows teachers to observe a child's level of mastery and independence with concepts, and we can intervene and support if a child needs a lesson repeated. At home, if your child is "stuck" and you are unsure how to help or not available, assure them that a teacher will work with them individually when they return to school. Ask them to try their best, use their problem-solving strategies, and do what they can. They can set this work aside to go over with a teacher. We know that parents are often very busy while their children are home unexpectedly.

#### ***Will my child have live online classes?***

For absences of one week or less, your child will take home practice activities for current concepts. Your child has many concepts they are practicing at any given time, and we will prepare work for the repetition needed to help solidify these concepts while they are away. These will be assignments they have had the needed lessons for. However, if you find that your child is stuck, please encourage them to strategize and do their best, and please know that if they bring it back incomplete, we will provide review lessons and extra support when they return.

For absences over one week, we want to make sure children are not only receiving the repetition of concepts they need, but are getting feedback for revisions or essential lessons/support to help them grow during this prolonged absence. Therefore, in addition to the practice work we send home we would like to provide 30 minutes of live individual or small group learning for each child each week. Lead Teachers will contact parents to arrange this meeting. Your child may need support setting up/using the needed technology. We would also ask that children submit work to teachers as they finish it. Teachers will use their review of this work, feedback from the student, and the classroom lesson schedule to prioritize the best use of

the thirty minutes. This live time would be used for individual conferencing on completed work that has been submitted (for revisions), giving new lessons if appropriate, or supporting students with work they feel “stuck” on at home.

***How do we get stuff? How do we turn stuff in?***

If possible, some materials cannot be sent digitally and a pick-up of assignments would be best. If that is not possible, we will send what we can electronically. Additional items that come up while the child is absent may also be sent to parents electronically.

For one-week (or less) absences, families can submit completed work as it is finished, or students can just bring it back upon their return, and feedback/support will be given when they are back in class. For longer absences, please help students submit completed work regularly. To turn completed work into teachers, students may need some tech support from parents. This can be once a day or once every other day to accommodate parents' availability. If work can be typed, it should be completed on the student's school portfolio drive (they will know their Google log-ins), and can be shared with teachers through Google Docs. Classrooms may also have SeeSaw to submit pictures of handwritten work or art, and if not a picture can be sent to teachers via email.

***Will my child fall behind if they have to stay home?***

It is true that Montessori pedagogy is built upon in-person experience with hands-on materials, which makes sending home meaningful work difficult. Please know that we will do what we can to provide practice while absent, and also be working with them and observing their work upon their return to provide any extra support, lesson repetition, or missed lessons they need to be back on track if needed. If absences begin to have a larger impact on your student's development, the teacher will reach out to you to discuss an action plan. For most children, though, some extra support upon their return with the Montessori materials and multi-sensory experiences will be able to balance an absence.