



A Guide for Completing Schoolwork, Assignments, and Studying at Home

The preventative measures the colleges and universities in Nova Scotia are taking in preparation for the impact of COVID-19 include shifting to another form of teaching and working with students.

It also means students will need to complete schoolwork and study at home, or if students continue to live on campus this could mean staying in your dorm on campus.

You have already received information from the PASS Program about the continuation of your support. This document provides some helpful guidelines for students and their guardians because when students need to do schoolwork or study at home, it can affect everyone in the home. Or, if you have to stay in your room in residence this can affect you as well.

Some students have pets at home, so for some students' pets may be a distraction, but for other students' pets may help. Since pets live at home and are part of the household, these guidelines include them as well. 😊

What happens when colleges and universities are not holding in-person classes and schoolwork, assignments & studying needs to be completed at home?

This becomes a time of change and transition for post-secondary students with autism and for many people, change and transition can be hard. However, students themselves and their parents/guardians can still prepare for and work with this change. These guidelines provide some tips on **completing schoolwork, assignments and studying at home**.

This guideline will include:

1. Tips for students (pg. 2)
2. Tips for parents (pg. 6)
3. A checklist (pg. 8)



TIPS FOR STUDENTS: You can ask your Specialist or Guardian to help you with all tasks listed below 😊

1: HAVE A DESIGNATED STUDY/WORK AREA

- **A clean, organized space** (ex: a kitchen table or a desk)
 - Try to avoid doing your schoolwork/studying on your couch/bed if possible – this is an easy way to accidentally take a nap!
 - Keep your work area clean and organized with schoolwork close by, pencils/pen, paper, laptop, etc.

When you keep your work area clean, you spend more time working and less time searching!

- **No noise/distractions** (ex: TV's, music, kitchen appliances running, etc.)
 - If you like white noise while working, find a “white noise” playlist on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, etc. to play softly while you work! This can help some students focus.
- **Good lighting** (ex: sunlight, a table lamp or desk lamp, etc.)



2: DECIDE IF YOU NEED HELP GETTING ORGANIZED

- **Ask your parents/guardians**
 - Can someone in your house help you? If so, ask them if they could help you get organize your schoolwork and study area.
 - You can look at pictures or organized desks online if you need too.
- **Ask your Specialist**
 - You can send your specialist a text/email to help you organize your schoolwork and study area
 - You can take a picture of the space you want to use as your study area and send it to them by email or text
 - You can talk to them on the phone/Facetime/Skype as well and they can help you get organized

3. PLAN AND DO YOUR WORK

- **Decide what schoolwork (assignments, quizzes, readings, etc.) needs to be done first.**
 - If you have a calendar or a schedule, decide what homework or assignments need to be completed first
 - Make a list of due dates for homework/assignments
 - Make a list of dates of exams, etc.
 - Complete assignments in order of what needs to be submitted first
- **Decide what needs to be done next.**
 - Once you complete homework or an assignment, look at your course list and figure out what is due next, and then move on to that homework/assignment



- **How much time will you need?**

- This can get tricky.
- Depending on the size/length or percentage weight of the homework/assignment you may need to put more time into some assignments than others

For example, if an assignment is worth more than another assignment, it may be more important to do or start that one first.

- **When will you do your work?**

- You should make a **consistent** schedule for completing your coursework--This will help you stay organized, get your work done and reduce anxiety!
- Having set days/hours during the week to complete your coursework will help you stay organized, stay calm and stay on track!

- **Who can you contact if you have a question?**

- It is important to know how to contact your professors.
- Perhaps making a list of professor's emails will help if you have a question regarding coursework!
- Some professors have "teaching assistants", or "TAs". They can help you with questions regarding coursework as well. Find out what courses have TAs and add their emails to the list.

4. PLAN BREAKS, SNACKS, MEALS, AND TIME TO TALK TO OTHERS

- It is **VERY** important to plan consistent breaks.
 - Have a rest
 - Go to the bathroom
 - Play a game
 - Watch TV
 - Have something to eat (snack, meals, etc.)
 - Chat with other people in your house/text your friends



- Spend time with your pet (if you have one)
- Go for a walk if it is nice outside—even it is just in your own yard

Breaks are important after you have worked hard. They are a nice reward and refresher! They help with focus, attention span, and anxiety!

5. IT IS OKAY TO FEEL ANXIOUS OR STRESSED

- A sudden change in how you do your schoolwork can be challenging and hard--You may feel stressed or anxious, but that is **okay!**
- Making the transition from doing your schoolwork AT school to doing everything at home means you might need to learn some new skills – but this is good!
- Learning new skills surrounding “change” will help you for other transitions that may happen in the future!
- **You are not alone!**
 - For some students, your parents/guardians/siblings may be home to help you
 - For all students, your specialist can be contacted in different ways (phone, email, video chat (Facetime, Skype, Zoom, etc.)).
 - Your specialist will also reach out to you to see how you are doing and if you need their help! 😊



TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. ENSURE YOUR STUDENT HAS A DESIGNATED WORK/STUDY AREA

- Help ensure the student has a good place to work
 - A clean, organized space (ex: a kitchen table or a desk)
 - Encourage students to avoid doing schoolwork on their bed/couch. This is an easy way to avoid accidentally taking a nap or getting distracted!
 - No noise/distractions
 - No TV/music in the background
 - No running kitchen appliances/washer or dryer or anything that could be distracting
 - Some students, however, do well with “white noise”. Perhaps they could find a “white noise” playlist on Spotify/Apple Music/YouTube, etc. to play while they complete coursework
 - Good lighting
 - Sunlight
 - Table lamp/desk lamp

2. HELP WITH ORGANIZATION

- Ask the student if they need help organizing their workspace, coursework, binder, etc.

3. HELP THEM PLAN, SUPPORT AND PRAISE

- Students are encouraged to plan and schedule their work



- Help them plan what to complete/study first
- Encourage them to have a consistent schedule for completing coursework
- Encourage them to reach out to professors/TAs/their specialist or other sources of help when they need to do so
- Praise is key! Praise them when they complete a chunk of assigned work.
- Encourage breaks! This is key for help with focusing, attention span and reducing anxiety! Breaks can be (but are not limited to):
 - Having a rest/nap
 - Going to the bathroom
 - Play a game
 - Watch TV
 - Get something to eat (a snack, mealtime, etc.)
 - Chat with other people in the house/text their friends
 - Spend some time with their pet (if they have one)
 - Go outside for a walk if it's nice out outside

4. IT IS OKAY IF THEY FEEL STRESSED OR ANXIOUS

- During this time of change and transition, students may find this challenging and hard
- They will need to develop and learn new skills surrounding “change”. These are skills that they can generalize in the future with other changes to come!
- **They are not alone!** Their specialist is available for help and support and can be contacted during certain hours. (The specialist will let the student know when and how they can be contacted)



CHECKLIST

You can check off what you have accomplished
Your specialist can even help with this too 😊

- Designated a study space
- Organized study space
- Have a list of due dates/exams (and I know where the list is)
- Know what to do first
- Know what to do next
- Know how much time to spend on each assignment
- Know who to contact if I need help
- Know how to contact my specialist
- Know that I am not alone 😊