



PROVIDENCE SCHOOL

Zoom, Google Classroom, and Remote Learning

Tips & Tricks for Students and Parents

We know you're a pro at this point, but in case you might benefit from the following, here it is—our greatest tips and tricks for being a successful distance learner!

1. Get Out of Bed, Get Dressed, Bring Your Best

Such an easy one to do, but such an easy one to let slide. This is similar to our reasons for dress code under normal circumstances. As I heard one pastor say recently, "It's hard to look in the mirror wearing sweats and a baseball cap and a tank top and tell myself I'm an effective leader!" Bring your best game with the things you can control, and your mind will find it easier to fall into step.

2. Use Different Places in Your House

One teacher suggested using different places in your house for different activities. The living room, the balcony, the backyard. It's not quite the same as moving around campus to different classrooms, but it helps break up the scenery! Also, many people recommend *not* doing your schoolwork from your bed or bedroom, so that's something to consider. But we do get the fact that a smaller house with multiple people might just have no other quiet space at all.

3. Find Your To-Do List

With every assignment guaranteed to be on Google Classroom these days, you want to know where to find the bottom line. If you haven't found it already, click on the Classroom menu at top left, and look for "To-Do". Every assignment from all of your classes will show up in one place. Magic! (Note that this won't show any general announcements from a teacher—you still have to look in each Classroom for those.)

4. Email Notifications

In the same Google Classroom menu, under Settings, you can control whether you are getting the email notifications. If you have it turned on, you'll get told with an email every time anything happens (fine control over which kinds of communications is also found there). If you turn it off because your Inbox is getting choked out, just be aware you'll have to dig in to each Classroom to see what's happening.

5. Use the Feedback Gestures

If you want strongly visible feedback, you can applaud or give a thumbs up using “Reactions” at the bottom of your Zoom screen. If you want even more options, find them in the “Participants” sidebar. You can give a yes, no, go slower, or even ask for a coffee break! These are handy if your teacher favours keeping all microphones muted.

6. Permanent Meeting ID and Password

Teachers should be using a Permanent Meeting ID (PMI) with a Password. Once you get their number and password, it won’t change! You could save all of your teacher contacts in one place. Some teachers have also put their PMI and password in their Google Classroom banner.

7. Be on Time (Which Means Be Early)

A former colleague once quoted, “To be on time is to be *late*. To be *early* is to be on time.” Type in that meeting ID two or three minutes early, and just keep working on other things while you wait for the teacher to open the room. That’s good professionalism. And while we’re not taking attendance at this point, if we make the change you’ll definitely want this habit!

8. Where Did That Assignment Go Again...?

You remember that the teacher wrote something about “Napoleon”, but you can’t find it in the long list of Google Classroom assignments. Just hit Ctrl-F on Windows or Command-F on Macs and search for the word. Simple but effective!

9. The Power to Mute (or Not)

You know about muting yourself. If the teacher is allowing you to unmute, the quick keyboard shortcut is Alt-A on Windows or Command-Shift-A on Macs. And if you are muted, you can quickly say something and go silent again by holding the Space bar and releasing when done.

10. Communication is Key

A lot of things have changed, and it’s changed for all of us. But the most essential thing hasn’t—communication. If you don’t know where to find something, ask. If something is not clear, tell us what. If you get writer’s block, reach out and talk through it. If you’re having a rotten day, talk to a trusted adult. It’s hard to go wrong if you stay in touch.