



Government of
Northwest Territories

Northern Distance Learning (NDL)

A Guide for In-class Support Persons (ISPs)

OUR VISION

Students in small communities have access to equitable academic programming enabling them to:

- ▶ STAY IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITY
- ▶ MEET THE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL; AND
- ▶ PREPARE TO ENTER POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS DIRECTLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL



ISP GUIDE TO NDL

Active presence. The success of the NDL program depends upon students having an ongoing, patient and caring support person in their physical classroom who has high expectations of them. Learning at a distance can be isolating. This program tries to overcome this isolation through a number of policies and practices, but the key unwavering piece that helps the learners feel supported is your active presence. You are there to help students transition toward more confident and independent online learners, who are aware of their own needs, can advocate for themselves and recognize when they are struggling and how to get help.

Bridge. You are part of their journey. They aren't there yet. You act as the bridge between teachers and learners to help them progress along on this path.

"Having our students first achieve success at home, by taking and passing academic courses, builds their self-esteem. It gives them a feeling of success first at home, where they are most comfortable. It shows them they are capable and can be successful. These NDL courses prepare them and give them a glimpse of what it will be like to attend post-secondary studies. They are given an opportunity to work hard, study hard and be prepared for college or university." - School Principal

To ensure student success, you need to:

- come to class early to prepare the technologies and any materials provided by the teachers
- model active learning and engagement by possibly 'taking the course' with the students
- stay in class to act as an extension of the teacher
- monitor students' progress and unfinished assignments
- reduce distractions (i.e. cell phones, off-topic conversations)
- advocate for further or repeated explanations when students need it
- spend a minimum of two days after school helping students

REVIEW THE NDL PROGRAM

- Visit the NDL page at the Education, Culture & Employment (ECE) website (<https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/education-renewal/northern-distance-learning>) to see the following documents:
 - Guide for Parents/Guardians
 - Guide for Students
 - Guide for Principals
 - Guide for Teachers
 - NDL Fact Sheet
- Visit the NDL Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Northern-Distance-Learning-NDL-186226671747040186226671747040>

PREPARE THE WORKSPACE & MATERIALS

In consultation with the local principal, ensure appropriate workspace and materials are in place:

- **Network.** Before the first day of class, check to ensure that the workspace is equipped with the Mondopad(s) and functioning network. Ensure you have been trained on the use and troubleshooting of tools and equipment.
- **Phone.** Make sure the workspace is equipped with a telephone capable of making long-distance calls (this is needed when there are network difficulties), and make sure you know how to use it.
- **Camera.** Ensure that a document camera is in place and ready to use.
- **Supplies.** Ensure that students are provided with the textbooks and supplies they will need for each course, as identified by the NDL teachers in the spring. You should verify with the principal where these materials are, as they should have been ordered the year prior. Making sure that everything is ready to go will make classes run more smoothly.
- **Transition.** If the principal is new, there should be an NDL New Principal Transition and Orientation Sheet in the principal's office. ECE should have a copy if needed. It shows the names of the NDL students and their 1st semester classes.
- **Student Devices.** Communicate with the NDL Technology Coordinator during the first week of school about whether the number of Surface Pros required match the number of students in the classes. An inventory sheet should be with these NDL-provided devices and is to be maintained by the ISP. The devices are owned by NDL and are meant to be re-used as NDL students graduate. Lost, damaged, or stolen devices are the responsibility of the school to investigate and communicate about with NDL through the ISP and/or principal. Collect the Surface Pros from students not taking an NDL course in 2nd semester, and again at the end of the school year for summer storage.



SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Ensure appropriate supervision and support for NDL students

- **Your role.** You are essential to student success in this program, which requires you to be in class, on time, every day, and be available for extra help after school. This means you cannot be excused or removed from those duties to perform other tasks out of the NDL classroom. If you are absent, a substitute must be in place to perform your duties.
- **Communicating.** Ensure you are maintaining communication with NDL teachers, principals, and parents regarding student progress, supports, and attendance. While taking attendance is the NDL teacher's responsibility, ISPs will be asked to record students who come late.
- **NDL support forms.** At the beginning of the semester, share the student NDL support forms with students so they have seen them and know what they are for. As the need arises, ensure you are using the *Student Support Attendance Form* and *Student Appeal Form* as necessary. These are intended to help students see how their attendance is impacting their ability to be successful. This is a tool to help students on their path to self-regulated learning.
- **Principal support.** If you need support for behaviours that require disciplinary action, work with the school principal; NDL administration can provide advice, but does not carry disciplinary authority or take disciplinary action. Building good relationships with students will go a long way with classroom management.
- **Student Support Plans.** Early in a course, NDL teachers become aware of any support plans (called "Student Support Plan [SSP]") that exist for students in the NDL program. It is the teacher's responsibility to attend to and update these students' inclusive schooling needs in collaboration with the local Program Support Person (PST). NDL teachers may involve you in assisting the application of SSP supports for their courses. You can always ask the local PST for advice if you're unsure what role you play in providing the supports mentioned by the NDL teacher. Overall, you are an advocate for NDL students and are increasingly aware of particular student learning preferences, needs and potential learning supports. If you notice that a student is struggling with a particular aspect of their learning, you can discuss with their NDL teacher how to support that learner's needs.
- **Collaboration.** Learning together is a foundational principle of student learning and success in NDL. This means that part of your role is to encourage students to actively engage with classmates both in your classroom and on the screen. This could mean discussing their understanding, helping one another, sharing ideas, working on activities together, etc. Learning to speak up and share ideas is part of their development as self-regulated learners.

"If the ISPs had more understanding of the course, they could provide more well-rounded help." - NDL Student

If your school has two NDL classrooms (endpoint) and only one ISP, you are in charge of both. Some tips to manage both:

- **Student independence.** Gather the students and explain that, when you are not with them, their independence is crucial to the NDL program; it mimics how they must partly depend on their own resources and partly on supports when they are at a post-secondary institution.
- **Student strengths.** Near the beginning of the course, identify a student in each classroom who can 'keep the ball rolling' while you're absent until you return.
- **Summaries.** Some past ISP-teacher strategies have included the teacher repeating the assignments at the end of the class; this will not only accommodate what you missed in the other class, but could also benefit shy students who don't want to ask a question because they think 'everyone else already knows the answer.'
- **Cheat-sheet.** An ISP has suggested you ask the teacher for a cheat-sheet of the objectives/concepts for the week.

COURSES

**Northern Distance Learning
offers 19 courses**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (10-1, 20-1, 30-1)
MATH (10C, 20-1, 30-1) • SCIENCE 10
SOCIAL STUDIES (10-1, 20-1, 30-1)
BIOLOGY (20, 30) • PHYSICS (20,30)
CHEMISTRY (20,30) • ART (10, 20, 30)

NOTE: NDL offers all 19 courses each year, eliminating the practice of only offering some courses every two or three years.

COMMUNICATION

- **The ISP is a local NDL presence.** After the principal, you are NDL's primary *local* educational support. When students are struggling, the NDL teacher may meet with you and ask you to reach out to the student in various ways. If necessary, contact their parents/guardians, and/or the principal to let them know what is happening and ask how to best support them. You will be in a good position to help the parent and NDL teacher meet when it is necessary or beneficial.
- **Communication liaison.** In some cases, you could become the point person of contact to parents. If a parent gets in touch with you to ask about their child's progress, you must alert the NDL teacher that a parent is looking for an update. Helping them connect, and advising on the various methods of communication, would be useful.
- **Technology liaison.** You can help make it easier for parents of NDL students to interact with their teachers using the NDL technology, especially if parents want to come to school and enjoy the use of the NDL network during a parent/teacher conference.
- **Service outside regular class time.** NDL is a new program for most of the students and parents. Don't assume that they know how everything works. You may find that students are not familiar with working outside of the class period. Keep the communication lines open so you can offer services right after class or school for students struggling with completing assignments and projects.

"The ISP works better for me when I am having a tough time keeping up with work, and allowing me to create a better schedule for school work, and to balance out school with other activities." - NDL Student

Contact parents:

- At the start of each semester
- To discuss student supports, goals and progress
- When concerns arise regarding attendance or progress

Contact the principal:

- At the start of each semester
- For regular check-ins to update student attendance and progress
- When concerns arise regarding attendance or progress

Contact the NDL teacher:

- At the start of each semester
- To clarify expectations for assignments and activities, or with tutoring questions
- To discuss concerns about student needs
- When concerns arise regarding attendance or progress

Contact NDL staff:

- At the start of each semester
- With questions regarding technology or internet
- With questions regarding work responsibilities

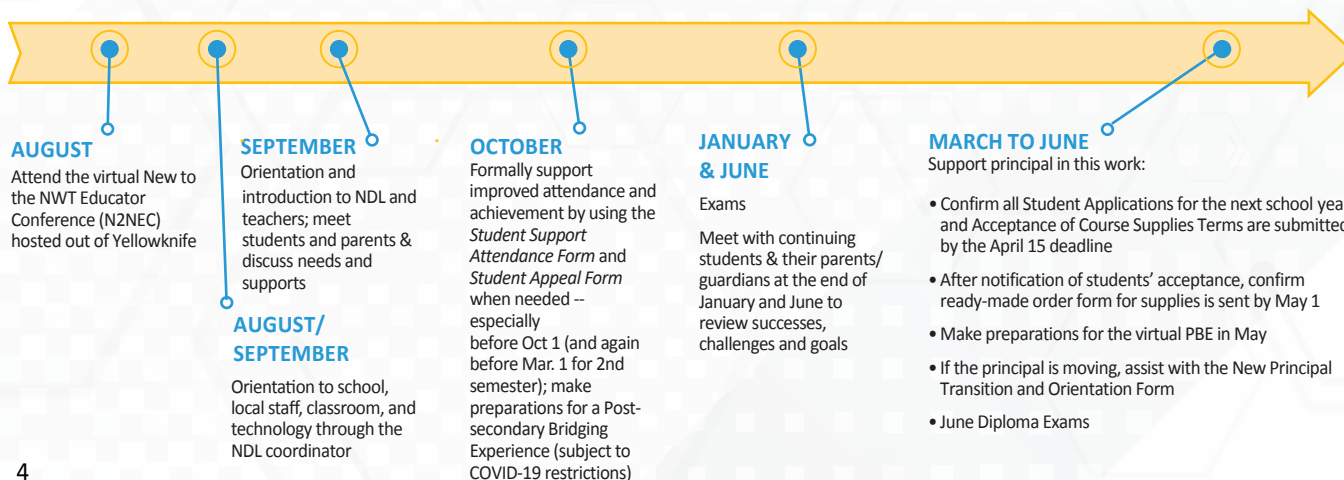
"The ISP was a huge asset to our school as the main contact person, checking in with students so they felt supported."

- School Principal

POST-SECONDARY BRIDGING EXPERIENCE (PBE)

PBE is a week-long event that takes students to a post-secondary institution for an immersive experience. Some ISPs may be asked to chaperone. COVID-19 has temporarily changed this event to a virtual experience.

YEAR AT A GLANCE



SUPPORT FOR THE ISP

The role of an ISP can be challenging since many of you are only able to come for one year. Relationships are key to progress in education, and relationships take time. NDL would like to support you in your important role by offering live and on-demand in-servicing. The hope is that online meetings between ISPs and NDL leadership will:

- Increase your sense of connectedness and belonging to other ISPs and the larger NDL network
- Advance the effectiveness of your work by having opportunities to learn more about the NWT education system
- Help you adapt to the cultural context of the community where you are now working.

For more information, ISPs should contact ndl@gov.nt.ca and/or Ed Hartley at ehartley@bdec.nt.ca

"For the new students, the monitor provided them with an 'e-learning package,' which contained tips on time management, creating a schedule, reducing distractions and stress management. Similarly, they were given a sheet with instructions explaining how to access Moodle, email, etc. If something similar can be put in place officially for incoming students, it would reduce the shock of the drastic change in learning environment and format." - School Principal

These meetings will also help you understand and manage the supports your students require, including:

- ISP health and well-being supports
- Professional documents and on-demand resources for ISPs
- Narrated digital presentations on Moodle and Canvas:
 - ISPs and Student Supports
 - Northern Distance Learning Overview
 - Education in the Northwest Territories
- Membership in an online ISP community space
- Live professional events for ISPs
- Participation in the New to the NWT Educator's Conference (N2NEC)
- Bi-monthly web-conferences commencing with September's orientation between NDL leadership and ISPs

***The ISP page on Moodle will carry the links and dates for the above resources and events.**

