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

The success of the NDL program depends upon the students having an ongoing, caring support person in their physical classroom. 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 towards 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. 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.

PREPARE THE WORKSPACE & MATERIALS

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

Before the first day of class

- Check to ensure that workspace is equipped with the Mondopad(s) and functioning network. Ensure you have been in-serviced on the use and troubleshooting of the tools and equipment.

- 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.

- Ensure that a document camera is in place and ready to use.

First day

- Ensure that students are provided with textbooks and supplies as per course requirements made available by the NDL teachers in the spring. You should verify the requirements with each NDL teacher involved. Making sure that everything is ready to go will make classes run much more smoothly.

- Communicate to the Inuvik-based NDL Coordinator during the first week of school about whether the number of Surface Pros required, match the number of students in the classes. A maximum allocation of 10 is projected in the event a school has 10 NDL students. The devices are owned by the school and are meant to be re-used as NDL students graduate.

After course ends

- 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.

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:
  - The NDL Program Guide
  - Guide for Parents/Guardians
  - Guide for Students
  - Guide for Principals
  - Guide for Teachers
  - NDL Factsheet

- Visit the NDL Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/Northern-Distance-Learning-NDL-186226671747040/) for current images
SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Ensure appropriate supervision and support for NDL students.

- 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 teacher must be in place to perform your duties.

- Ensure you are maintaining communication with teachers, Program Support Teachers (PST), 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.

- At the beginning of the semester, share the student support forms with students so that 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 to 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.

- Early in the semester, meet with your students and the PST and ask about their learning preferences. You can use a learning preference survey to help structure this conversation if needed. Ask the BDEC NDL Coordinator if a previous electronic survey is available. This will help you to support the students in structuring their learning environment, and in self-advocating regarding their needs when appropriate.

- Ask the School-based Support Team (SBST) to share information regarding your students’ inclusive schooling needs and CPP (Career and Program Planning) processes. These should be kept up to date and coordinated with local school support teams and NDL teachers. It is a teacher’s responsibility to update and attend to students’ inclusive schooling needs (called SSOPs or Student Support Plans), but as the ISP, you are an advocate for the student, and therefore should be aware of their particular needs to best support their learning. If you notice that a student is struggling with a particular aspect of their learning, you can discuss this with their teacher or PST to see if accommodations are needed.

- 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.

COURSES

NDL offers 19 different courses

ELA (10-1, 20-1, 30-1) • MATH (10C, 20-1, 30-1) • SCIENCE 10
SOCIAL STUDIES (10-1, 20-1, 30-1) • BIO (20, 30) • PHYSICS (20, 30)
CHEMISTRY (20, 30) • ART (10, 20, 30)

NOTE: Some courses, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Art courses will be offered on a rotation schedule and may not be offered every year. Course lists will be available each March when students register.
COMMUNICATION

• You are the teacher figure for the student, parent and other contacts at the school. When students are struggling, you need to reach out to them and if necessary, contact their parents, and/or their NDL teacher to let them know what is happening and 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.

• You are the point person for parent contact. 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. You can then communicate this information back to the parent and/or put them in touch with the NDL teacher directly.

• NDL is a new process 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.

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

• Contact the local 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 (differentiation for example)

• Contact the BDEC NDL coordinator:
  • At the start of each semester
  • With questions regarding technology or internet
  • With questions regarding work responsibilities

POST-SECONDARY BRIDGING EXPERIENCE (PBE)

Some ISPs may be asked to chaperone NDL students during a week-long event that takes students to a post-secondary institution for an immersive experience.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

AUGUST
Arrive in Community

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER
Orientation to school, local staff, classroom, and technology through the BDEC NDL Coordinator

SEPTEMBER
Orientation and Introduction to NDL and teachers

SEPTEMBER
Meet students and parents & discuss needs and supports

Formally support improved attendance and achievement; use the Student Support Attendance Form and Student Appeal Form

JANUARY & JUNE
Exams

Meet with returning students and parents to review successes, challenges and goals