

A parent's guide to online learning: supporting your AELO Swiss Academy remote student

Somewhere between the enrolment paperwork and the first Monday morning, every parent of an online student harbours the same fantasy. Their child sits at a tidy desk, sunlight dappling an open notebook, absorbing knowledge with the calm focus of a Swiss watch mechanism. Then reality arrives, usually wearing socks, and announces that the wifi is down, the mouse has vanished, and lessons start in four minutes.



Supporting a remote student at AELO Swiss Academy turns out to be less like being a teaching assistant and more like running a very small hotel. You manage the facilities, the catering, and the general mood of your one-star guest. The school handles the part you were probably most worried about: the actual teaching. Once you accept this division of labour, everything gets easier. Well, easier. Nobody sensible will promise you easy.

Your actual job description

Here is the role in plain terms. AELO Swiss Academy supplies the curriculum, the teachers, the lessons, the deadlines, and the grades. You supply the environment: a working laptop, a quiet corner, breakfast, and a functioning sense of time. That is the whole contract. Resist the urge to hover during a maths lesson, because two things happen when you do. First, your child stops asking the teacher questions and starts asking you, which defeats the point of having teachers. Second, you end up relearning percentages at nine in the morning, which no adult deserves.

The parents who thrive at this treat themselves as infrastructure. Infrastructure does not micromanage. Infrastructure makes sure the wifi holds, the pencils exist, and the human gets to class. When your student asks what the homework was, the correct response is a gentle nod toward the school's own platform, where assignments live in writing precisely so nobody has to rely on a fourteen-year-old's memory. You are the helpdesk, not the headmaster, and the helpdesk has office hours.

Building a classroom that doesn't eat your home

The first big decision is location, and it is genuinely a trade-off. A bedroom offers quiet and independence, which is wonderful for a self-driven fifteen-year-old and disastrous for a thirteen-year-old whose laptop camera will

somehow face the ceiling all term. A shared space offers light, supervision, and the comforting background noise of a household, at the cost of privacy and your own sanity during a recorded history lecture you will hear eleven times. Our compromise: start in the common area, earn privacy through reliability, and migrate to the bedroom once lessons are attended on time for a full month. Trust with a return policy.

Get the basics right and most small emergencies never happen. Screen at eye level, chair at a height where feet touch the floor, light coming from the side rather than behind the screen. Invest in headphones with a proper microphone, because built-in laptop mics broadcast the dishwasher, the dog, and your phone call about the boiler with the clarity of a confession booth. And if you own a cat, accept now that the cat will attend lessons. Teachers have seen worse.



A small kit prevents most day-one drama:

- Headphones with a microphone, tested before the first lesson, not during it
- A notebook and actual pens, because screens are for lessons, not for everything
- A water bottle, so hydration doesn't require a twenty-metre round trip through the kitchen
- Chargers, one per device, kept where the laptop lives and labelled with the aggression of a librarian
- A printed copy of the weekly timetable, stuck somewhere visible to the whole family

One ritual matters more than any gadget: the laptop closes at the end of lessons and physically moves somewhere else. When school and home share a postcode, which in this case means a wall, the boundary has to be made of objects and habits rather than geography. A closed laptop in a drawer reads as "school is done". A closed laptop on the pillow reads as "school lives here now", and that way lies doom.

The timetable is your friend, and it bites

Online schools live and die by their schedules. Lessons start at a fixed time, attendance is visible, and deadlines are real in a way that "I'll do it after dinner" is not. Swiss school culture prizes punctuality and structure, and the rhythm of an AELO Swiss Academy week reflects that. This is good news, because structure is the one thing a household can either amplify or sabotage, and sabotage is alarmingly easy before coffee.

Mirror the school's day at home. Wake-up times stay constant, including Fridays, because a teenager's circadian rhythm will happily drift three hours later every week if allowed, and by half term you have a nocturnal creature attending morning lessons from inside a duvet. There is a particular agony in watching your child join class two

minutes late, flustered and apologising, to a teacher whose punctuality is, let's say, culturally uncompromised. Once is a story. Every Thursday is a character trait.

Add one small ritual of your own: a ten-minute Sunday evening check-in. Look at the week ahead together, note the deadlines and any assessments, and put them somewhere visible. Ten minutes on Sunday prevents approximately forty minutes of Wednesday panic, which is the best exchange rate available in parenting.

The long middle: motivation after the novelty wears off

Every online student moves through three phases. Weeks one to three bring novelty and enthusiasm, plus your child explaining the platform to you with alarming confidence. Then the honeymoon ends and the long middle begins, usually around week five or six, when school starts feeling optional and the bed starts feeling academic. This dip is normal. It is weather, not climate, and treating it like a crisis makes it worse.

What works is routine over willpower. Celebrate process, not just results: "you started your essay without being asked three times this week" lands better than any speech about the future. Keep a done-list on the fridge where finished tasks accrue visible evidence. Let small natural consequences teach what lectures cannot, because one missed quiz stings briefly and instructs permanently, whereas confiscating every pleasant object until the house resembles a penal colony instructs only resentment. And skip the comparisons to how hard things were in the old days. Nobody has ever been motivated by that.

The deeper truth about motivation is that it follows action rather than preceding it. Waiting to feel motivated before opening the books is like waiting to feel hungry before cooking. Set a twenty-five-minute timer, open the document, and the feeling usually shows up five minutes in, late as usual, pretending it was always coming.

Screens, spines, and eyeballs

Let's be honest about the arithmetic: [color blindness pilot license](#) a full day of online lessons plus evening homework means a lot of screen time, and the goal is not zero screens but deliberate offline pockets. Between lessons, enforce five minutes of actual movement, stairs, garden, stretch, anything vertical. Teach the 20-20-20 rule from optometry: every twenty minutes, look at something about six metres away for twenty seconds. It sounds trivial. Your eyes will disagree, gratefully.

The bed is not a desk. The beanbag is not a chair. I have watched a child attend a full morning of lessons in a posture that would make a physiotherapist weep openly, and the bill for that arrives in the neck, not the inbox. Reserve evenings for paper, sport, cooking, or staring vaguely out of windows, all of which are underrated academic technologies.

The social question

The biggest real trade-off of remote schooling is not academic. It is the disappearance of corridor friendships, the idle chatter where teenagers actually bond. An online school can schedule group work and discussion, and AELO Swiss Academy does, but no platform fully replaces a shared cafeteria. So treat the social side as a family project rather than hoping it resolves itself.

Sport clubs, music lessons, volunteering, a local friend who appears at the door at four o'clock demanding noodles: all of it counts, arguably more than it would for a brick-and-mortar student, because the online schedule leaves genuine room for it. Siblings do not constitute a social circle, though they can be conscripted for badminton. And learn your child's baseline, because a contented introvert and a quietly lonely teenager look

remarkably similar on paper. "How was school" yields nothing. "Who did you work with today" and "what made you laugh in class" yield actual intelligence.

Teacher communication without becoming that parent

The golden rule: the student writes first. Teach your child to email the teacher directly, specific, polite, naming the assignment, describing exactly what went wrong. You proofread once, they send, and they learn that adults in authority respond to clarity, not to sighing. A day or so for a reply is normal when teachers work asynchronously with many students, so resist the urge to escalate after four hours.

When you do write, assume good faith and ask specific questions. Our most instructive saga involved a "missing" essay that had been submitted to the wrong folder; the teacher located it in ninety seconds once asked kindly. "Can you help me understand something about the feedback on Maya's essay?" opens doors. "This grade is outrageous" welds them shut. Escalation is a ladder: student email, then parent email, then a call. Climb it in order, and only when the previous rung has genuinely failed.

Exams, honesty, and the second browser tab

Assessment at home has its own texture. Some work is open-book, some is sat under remote supervision, and every school spells out its arrangements precisely, so read AELO Swiss Academy's guidelines rather than guessing, because they will be exact. Your role is a judgment call between two failure modes. Policing every keystroke corrodes trust and makes you the proctor nobody hired. Hosting a casual cheat festival teaches a lesson far worse than any failed test.

Our house rule: the exam happens in the room where

