

Google has an answer to keeping your work and school life at home on time amid COVID-19 pandemic: Family Bell

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There are many things about doing school at home that aren't much like being at school. No lines of cars with kids dragging oversized backpacks,

no recess games and no bells to alert students when to get to class.

For people who like visual and audio cues for when to get kids in front of their computers for class, like those iconic [school](#) bells,, Google introduces the new "Family Bell," feature today.

It's part of the Google Assistant, whether on phones and tablets with an app or the connected speakers and display units.

Family Bell is a reminder that can set to announce when it's time for the class, "take a break, settle in for reading time, have a snack or even for bedtime," notes Lilian Rincon, Senior Director of Product Management for the Google Assistant.

The Assistant can be personalized to include the names of your kids for the tone, which has a unique tone, unlike a reminder. Display units like the Nest Hub Max will also get a visual.

And if you've got connected [smart lights](#) in your home, the Family Bell can sync with them and flash unique light colors in red, orange and yellow in time with the bell announcement.

To use the Family Bell feature, users will operate it on the Google Assistant app, and look for a blue button to click it on and set up, or use the [voice command](#) "Hey, Google, create a Family Bell," on your smart speaker.

For school time to start, the Google audio commands are "Hey Google, start the school day!" or "Hey, Google, school's in session!"

No more yelling across the house

Another new feature is the ability to broadcast and reply to messages

from the smart speaker just to specific rooms or devices, which was previously impossible. If you wanted to broadcast before, it would echo from every device connected, even if you wanted to alert just one area.

So when I'm working in my bedroom office, my husband can broadcast a message to me by saying, "Hey Google, broadcast to the bedroom, 'breakfast is ready!'" says Rincon.

She adds that this has been one of the most requested features for the Google Home system.

To use it, set up the feature in the app, and use the command "Hey Google, Broadcast to [room name] [message]."

For example, you could say:

"Hey Google, [broadcast](#) to the living room, it's time for homework."

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