



WASHINGTON
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN



Kind. Confident. Prepared.
Bethesda, MD



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WASHINGTON EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Distance Learning Plan

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Our Mission: Washington Episcopal School inspires academic and personal excellence within a joyful learning environment to develop students who are kind, confident, and prepared.

Our Vision: Washington Episcopal School students stride confidently into the world, delight in it, and contribute to it.

OVERVIEW

Washington Episcopal School is committed to delivering an engaging and joyful learning experience for all students even when circumstances impinge on our ability to provide that experience on our campus.

As such, we have developed a distance learning plan to ensure the continuity of learning and personal growth for all of our students. Although distance learning cannot replicate the day-to-day experience our students are used to receiving on our campus, we will partner with students and parents to ensure that rich and meaningful learning experiences continue during this time.

Students will continue to engage with their teachers through a range of methods, including video, online discussions, email, and phone communication. Teachers, administrators, and the student support team will be available to communicate with students and parents on an ongoing and regular basis to ensure that individual student needs are being met.

The WES Distance Learning Plan (DLP) relies on the continuing partnership of our dedicated faculty, motivated and engaged students, and committed parents. While this is a time of uncertainty and challenge, it is also a time that provides us with the opportunity to deepen our commitment to each other and the value of a WES education.

As we look to provide a high-quality distance learning experience for our students, we have identified the following goals:

- Continuing our academic, social-emotional, and spiritual program for all Dragons,
- Maintaining teacher to student/family connections, and
- Ensuring a continued strong sense of community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

We realize that remote learning creates a dramatic change for students and their families, and that these kinds of changes and the responsibilities that go with them can produce extra stress for both children and parents. While of course our academic structures are important in this time, we also know that your role is to be a parent, not a teacher, and we want you to embrace the flexibility that remote learning allows. We know there will be some bumps in the road, and that is to be expected. We hope that you will be gentle with yourselves as we engage this new endeavor together, and we trust that alongside the challenges, there will also be gifts in this time for our community.

As you prepare to parent your child in distance learning, we offer the below recommendations for supporting your child's intellectual and emotional health:

- ❑ Make time for fun and shared activities with your children.
- ❑ Create a daily routine and schedule for your children. Perhaps blend a distance learning schedule with a home schedule. It is important for you to help your children establish and maintain a routine and structure for their day, beginning with a regular bedtime and wake-up time each day. Setting clear expectations with your children about regular school day hours will help them maintain a schedule and stay on top of their schoolwork.
- ❑ Set up your children's learning space in an area free of distractions. We recommend that you find a quiet space and create a learning environment that includes access to school supplies and internet access. We recommend Google Meet sessions take place in public spaces in your house (such as dining room, kitchen table, living room, family room, or den).
- ❑ Use a calendar to help your children keep track of classes, assignments, and responsibilities.
- ❑ Make sure to plan for breaks during the learning day. Learners can benefit from built-in transitions between "class" to help them reset for the next subject. Encourage your children to spend their break away from their screens and allow for physical activity and play.
- ❑ Check in with your children. Start their learning day with a check-in to ensure they are clear about the plan for the day, and then check in with your children throughout

the day to ensure they are on the right path. Close the learning day with a final check-in to see how the learning went and to plan for next steps.

❑ Keep the lines of communication open. It is important to let your children's teacher or division director know if they are having difficulty with their distance learning experience or being away from school. If your children are displaying signs of anxiety, touch base with your division's counselor or the chaplain. Likewise, teachers will communicate with you and your children on a regular basis.

❑ Support your children's independence as much as possible and let them grapple with the challenges of learning and solving problems. Productive struggle is essential to learning, so we ask that you allow your children to experience the struggle. Try to keep from quickly offering your help or providing the strategy you would use. Be positive about how your children are approaching the tasks and encourage your children to try different strategies to solve problems when they are stuck. Please let our teachers know if your children are struggling with content or completion.

❑ Help your children keep connected to the community and their friends. One of the most powerful aspects of our school is the connections between our Dragons. Make sure your child has the opportunity to communicate and connect with their friends. Even digital connections can sustain and support us through challenging times.

❑ Talk with your children about what they are thinking and feeling. Some resources for how to talk with children about the coronavirus include: "[Talking to Teens and Tweens about the Coronavirus](#)," The New York Times; "[Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)- A Parent Resource](#)," The National Association of School Psychologists; and "[How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus](#)," The New York Times.

❑ Make sure your children stay physically active and have opportunities for movement and play. Information and suggested activities will be forthcoming from our P.E. Department.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ELEMENTARY DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

Approach

Our goal for the Early Childhood and Elementary Distance Learning Plan is to ensure children, teachers, and parents remain connected and engaged in meaningful and fun activities that promote learning and further build upon the WES community experience. Teachers will provide opportunities that encourage students to explore, create, play, read, write, share ideas, and move. Building upon previously learned lessons and familiar routines, teachers will further encourage student independence and confidence. Each day will begin with a morning greeting delivered not only by homeroom teachers, but also by Division Directors and Specials faculty. Each Monday, homeroom teachers will post lessons involving reading, phonics (spelling and grammar for Grades 3-5), math, and writing. Additionally, Specials teachers will share activities and learning that may be completed throughout the week. Teachers will be available each day from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. via email, phone, or live conferencing through GoogleMeet. The focus will be to maintain ongoing and inclusive communication where students, parents, and teachers feel connected, valued, and appreciated.

Procedures

Lesson & Activities

Starting Tuesday morning, March 31, lesson plans and activities for that full week will be posted to the Distance Learning section on the WES website. Each week following, plans will be posted by 8 a.m. on Monday morning. Parents will be notified by email that lesson plans have been posted. The lesson plans will provide information on materials needed as well as how best to share assignments to receive feedback from teachers.

Providing contact, support, and feedback

Teachers will use video conferencing tools such as Google Meet, FaceTime, etc. to connect with students and families to support learning and social-emotional wellbeing. Additionally, teachers may hold “mini-meets” (with small groups of students) as well as whole class meetings to enable “live” connection and maintain the sense of classroom community. You can expect a check-in at least twice a week from one of your children’s teachers.

Students will also be invited to share their learning through photographs, pictures, screenshots, and, for Grades 4 and 5, through Google Classroom.

Teachers will collate some of these pictures on the class webpages of Blackbaud so that learning and experiences can be viewed by the classroom community.

Teachers will be available throughout the “school day” from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. They will regularly check their emails during this time and will arrange a time to talk directly and support students or parents as needed.

Technology for Grades 3-5

Grades 3-5 students have been allocated an individual device plus charger (either iPad or Chromebook) to engage in distance learning activities at home. Students and families should refer to the Responsible Use Policies to ensure safe and appropriate device use. Students may not use their devices for non-academic purposes, or without permission from a teacher or parent. We strongly recommend that when a student is using a device, they do so in a public space with adult supervision.

Kind, Confident, Prepared

As we transition to the Distance Learning Plan, we will continue to expect and support positive behavior, kindness, and respect. Grades 3-5 students are expected to use their devices appropriately and safely.

Teachers will indicate on the lesson plans, the materials needed to complete learning tasks successfully, and children should be encouraged to try their best. However, we also recognize that managing and organizing learning at home may create additional anxiety for some children. If they have difficulty completing or understanding any of the assignments, please let your teachers know.

Weekly Schedule Template

- [Early Childhood DLP Weekly Schedule](#)
- [Elementary DLP Weekly Schedule](#)

Technology Information (How to videos)

- [Google Meet How To by Mr. Foster](#)
- [Google Meet How To from YouTube](#)

MIDDLE SCHOOL DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

Approach

Aligned to the core principles of a WES education, the Distance Learning Plan for our middle school students is designed to foster independent learning that is rigorous, creative, and adaptive. Our goal is to shift the learning model in response to the need for distance, but to maintain the strong and significant connection between student and teacher, student and peer, and family and school. WES students will continue to connect with faculty and classmates through the guided use of personal technology (Chromebooks) and highly-curated platforms (Google Meet, Google Classroom) and programs. Distance learning in the middle school will require flexibility in lesson delivery and access to our faculty, as well as a willing spirit of adventure.

The Distance Learning Weekly Schedule, posted for each middle school grade, will provide guidelines for a daily work plan that includes a remote morning meeting by advisory group, lesson and activity times, as well as unstructured check-in times (or “office hours”) with each classroom teacher.

Distance learning at WES will provide the entire middle school community—students, faculty, and families—an unprecedented opportunity to explore independent learning as well as a new model of collaboration. Together, we continue to grow in confidence and preparation with a spirit of innovation!

Procedures

Morning Meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Every weekday morning at 8:45 a.m., middle school students will login to their WES accounts on their Chromebooks for a morning advisory meeting. The meeting will take place using Google Meet, and will be hosted by the student’s advisor and attended by all members of the advisory. Each morning, students will share in an advisory greeting, plan setting, question-and-answer session, and a fun or mindfulness activity. These meetings will last approximately 10 minutes.

Lessons and Activities

Starting Tuesday morning, March 31, lesson plans and activities for that full week will be posted to the Distance Learning section on the WES website. Each week following, plans will be posted by 8 a.m. on Monday morning. Students will be notified by email that lesson plans have been posted. Students can view each class’s weekly lesson plan

separately via a link on their Grade page. It is very important that middle school students check their student Gmail accounts at least twice daily. This is not a practice that many of our students are accustomed to, so it is helpful to remind them to check for any emailed directions or comments from teachers.

Students should also review two documents at the beginning of each week: first, the Middle School Distance Learning Weekly Schedule, then, the Middle School Office Hours Schedule. The first document serves as a “daily schedule” to follow, and the second is a list of times that teachers are available for drop-in conversations via Google Meet. This will serve to help each student create a “plan” for the day: what classes to work on, how long to work on them, and when they can reach out to a teacher for help.

As the plan currently stands, only students in specific 7th and 8th grade Math classes will attend synchronous or “live” classes. These classes, days, and times are noted on the Weekly Schedule. These classes will be recorded, so that students who cannot be present at the scheduled time can view them later in the day.

Teacher Support

The middle school faculty will be available to support students via email and Google Meet conferencing everyday from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Faculty “Office Hours” provide a set time during the week for students to plan on checking in with a specific teacher, but when students have questions or challenges, they are strongly encouraged to reach out via email immediately.

Through the use of student email, Google Docs, Google Classroom, and the virtual conferencing software Google Meet, students will be sure to receive timely feedback and learning support directly from their teachers.

For the first two weeks of our Distance Learning Plan, the main focus of student effort should be on acquiring a familiarity with the feel of a distance-school day and completing assigned work to the best of their ability. Each teacher will offer clear guidance on which assignments or finished products will count for a grade, or as a formal assessment. All work begun on March 31 will count toward the 4th-quarter grades for the school year.

Technology

Each student in middle school has one Chromebook (laptop) and a power supply cord (charger). The school Chromebooks are to be accessed for school-related work only. Students were reminded before leaving for break that all Acceptable Use Policy rules, which they agreed to in a signed document at the beginning of the school year, are in

effect during the Distance Learning period. Chromebooks are monitored by software that allows teachers to view student screens at any time. Screens can be monitored by faculty during the hours of 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. during the school week. We strongly recommend that student Chromebook use occurs in a public place in the home, and the use of headsets for privacy and noise reduction are acceptable. When students are using Chromebooks, they must be logged into the Chromebook using their WES student account and password only. They will not be able to login to Google Meets or other online platforms unless they are logged in properly. Use of another personal login identity for school-related work is strictly prohibited.

Expectations for Virtual Meetings

It is essential that middle school students understand that a virtual classroom is identical in behavior expectations to a school classroom. Students engage positively in a virtual meeting by:

- Logging in promptly, via teacher invitation, using a code or url;
- Entering the virtual meeting space prepared for the lesson, activity, or meeting with books, paper, writing utensil, any other materials requested by the teacher;
- Entering the virtual meeting space prepared for the lesson, activity, or meeting properly attired (WES free-dress-acceptable clothing); and
- Following a simple but necessary code of conduct regarding the use of virtual meeting platforms (such as Google Meet) which encompasses all aspects of the WES Honor Code.

Weekly Schedule Template

- [Distance Learning MS Weekly Schedule](#)
- [Distance Learning MS Office Hours](#)

Technology Information (How-to videos)

- [Google Meet How To by Mr. Foster](#)
- [Google Meet How To from YouTube](#)

STUDENT SUPPORT

Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Support

WES prioritizes our students' and families' social, emotional, and spiritual health, and we are committed to providing support for both you and your children as you guide your family through this time.

Our chaplain, Kristen Pitts, and our counselors, Allison Klothe and Debbie Weinberger, are available to support you and your children. If you are in need of conversation or resources to support your family, please reach out to them. They are here to help.

There will also be a variety of community supports available during distance learning. We will be offering a weekly Chapel service every Wednesday at 2 p.m. via Facebook Live for families to participate in from home. We have also launched a [Chaplain at WES](#) Facebook page, where Chaplain Kristen will share 5 Minute Family Chapel videos, live storytime, resources, and opportunities for community connection. Allison and Debbie will be providing resources through this page as well. You can also expect a weekly Chaplain's Corner in the NeWES with reflections for adults and resources for your family.

Again, our student support team is here to help your family navigate the challenges of this time. Please reach out to Allison (aklothe@w-e-s.org), Debbie (dweinberger@w-e-s.org), or Kristen (kpitts@w-e-s.org) with any questions or concerns you may have.

Learning Support

We value the importance of differentiating our online learning to meet the needs of all students. WES teachers are your child's first resource if students are experiencing difficulties accessing the instruction. Teachers will make themselves available to speak with students and parents directly. Additionally, our learning specialists, Ali Lackey (alackey@w-e-s.org) and Jaquie Hunter (jhunter@w-e-s.org), will be working closely with the teachers and providing direct support for students through Google Meet.

QUESTIONS AND CONTACTS

| For Questions About . . . | Contact . . . |
|--|--|
| ...the distance learning program generally. | Please contact your division director at Mary Lee Nickel: mlnickel@w-e-s.org Zoe Hillman: zhillman@w-e-s.org Kristin Cuddihy: kcuddihy@w-e-s.org |
| ...the lesson, an assignment, how I am doing in a class, or how I will be assessed on my learning. | Please contact your teacher. |
| ...technology problems. | Please contact Andy White, our IT Administrator, at awhite@w-e-s.org . |
| ...illnesses or absences or reasons for not being able to attend to lessons. | Please contact your teacher. |
| ...something that is not listed here, and I don't know where to go. | If your question is not answered here, please start with your Division Director who will know where to get the information you need. |

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to our colleagues in AISGW schools and the Seattle Academy for sharing their experiences in developing effective strategies for remote learning.