Distance Learning Plan

A resource for parents outlining the School’s approach to maintaining educational continuity.
# Table of Contents

General Expectations ........................................................................................................... 4  
Technology Requirements & Expectations of Use ............................................................... 5  
Family Roles & Responsibilities ......................................................................................... 6  
Student Expectations ........................................................................................................... 7  
Frequently Asked Questions ............................................................................................... 8  
Distance Learning By Division
  • Lower School ................................................................................................................. 10  
  • Middle and Upper Schools .............................................................................................. 14  
Updated Middle and Upper School Distance Learning Norms ............................................. 16  
Distance Learning Research-Informed Strategies for Parents ............................................. 17  
Parent Resources ................................................................................................................ 21  

*Updated 9/04/20*
Our Mission & Core Values

Our Mission

The mission of St. Andrew’s Episcopal School is to know and inspire each child in an inclusive community dedicated to exceptional teaching, learning, and service.

— Approved by vote of the Board of Trustees June 7, 2010

Our Core Values

The core values of St. Andrew’s Episcopal School are institutional values: all students, faculty, staff, and alumni aspire to embody these values for the advancement of the school, community, and world.

Inspiring Community: Through spirit, diversity, and understanding
Dynamic Growth: Through challenge, creativity, and joy
Transformative Achievement: Through research, resilience, and innovation
Visionary Leadership: Through courage, integrity, and service

— Approved by the Board of Trustees, April 2018
General Expectations

Our goal for distance learning will be to mirror a typical in-person school day as closely as possible. To help accomplish that goal, we have set forth the following expectations for teachers and students:

- Each course will have a ‘live’ (synchronous) component using Zoom.
- Classes will begin on time and current policies around turning in work will be maintained.
- From time to time, some classes may be videos/instructions via Seesaw or Canvas that need to be completed asynchronously by students before their next class.
- All classes will be recorded by teachers. Students, parents, and guardians are not permitted to record or screenshot Zoom meetings.
- Students should give their best effort, exhibit their best online class behavior, and attend classes regularly, health permitting.
- Students must abide by the Honor Code and submit original work.
- Students should be familiar with the Community Norms for Discourse and Civic Engagement.
- Students may follow “free dress” guidelines during the distance-learning period (shoes will be optional, but no pajamas, please!).
- Students should have their cell phones in a different room during class time.
- To protect the privacy of community members, students and parents/guardians may not record classes or post materials to any social media platform from an SAES class. This includes screenshots, photos, videos, or files of any type.
Technology Requirements & Expectations for Use

• Lower School students will use a combination of Seesaw, Canvas, and Zoom to deliver synchronous and asynchronous learning.

• Middle and Upper School students will use Canvas (LMS) and Zoom, must use Chrome or Firefox as their browser, and they must be logged in with their school account.

• Students are expected to be courteous and respectful online and adhere to the technology code of conduct which they agreed to when they signed the handbook at the beginning of the year.
Family Roles & Responsibilities

**UPPER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Help your children manage their online learning by encouraging them to attend all classes and finish all assignments.
- Create a comfortable, distraction-free place for your children to work and attend online classes.
- Do not join your children’s online classes or be visible on your children’s screens during classes.
- Encourage your children to incorporate physical activity and healthy breaks from classes during the day, while practicing responsible social distancing.

**LOWER SCHOOL**

- Establish routines and expectations for your child.
- Take an active role in your child’s learning. Assist them in logging into the device and various applications, and walk them through instructions when needed.
- The lessons posted are intended for students to tackle independently or with teacher’s help, just as they would at school. While these students may need support accessing online materials, we encourage you to let your child work autonomously on the academic lessons and to direct questions to the teachers.
- Create a comfortable, distraction-free place to work.
- Partner with your child’s teachers and reach out should any challenges arise.
- Help your child to plan and turn in their work and keep them focused and on task.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and move outside, while practicing responsible social distancing.
- Abide by our Lower School Technology Contract regarding use of the school-provided device.
Student Expectations

When classes are being conducted on-line via Zoom, students are expected to follow these guidelines:

• Give your best effort and best online class behavior.

• You are expected to attend your classes unless your parent or guardian notifies Ms. Harmon (US), Ms. Egan (MS) or Ms. Seidel (LS) via email that you are sick. Teachers will take attendance at the beginning of each class.

• Stay in contact (your teachers and advisors will be checking their email during the week daily during school days).

• Additional expectations for students and teachers for video conferencing via Zoom:
  a. Ensure that the surroundings are free from noises and distractions.
  b. Wear attire appropriate for school (dress code not required).
  c. Students should enter the room with video turned on and microphone turned off. Do not use virtual backgrounds or other names besides your own in video identification.
  d. Teachers will provide other guidelines at their discretion regarding use of the chat and hand-raising feature, and may communicate other expectations regarding participation.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR AVAILABILITY

During in-person learning, students have the opportunity to drop by and see the counselor at their convenience. These conversations are considered to be confidential in order to create a trusting relationship between counselor and students. Similarly, during distance learning, we would like students to feel free to contact the counselor as needed to make a virtual appointment. The counselor would contact the student’s parents in the following situations:

Self-harm

High-risk behavior (substance use, reckless driving, etc.)

Eating disorders

Depression or suicidality

Relational violence (at home or with a peer or romantic partner)
Who do I contact if I have a question?

In the Middle and Upper School, please contact individual teachers if you have concerns about classwork. Other general questions about your student should go to advisors or your child’s grade dean. In the Lower School, your first point of contact should be homeroom teachers. If you have a technology related issue, please email our Technology Department at laptops@saes.org. If you have a general question about distance learning, please contact your Division Head - Head of Upper School Ginger Cobb (gcobb@saes.org), Head of Middle School Aaron Hill (ahill@saes.org), Co-Head of Lower School Judy Kee (Grades 1-5 - jkee@saes.org) and Co-Head of Lower School Jordan Love (Preschool - Kindergarten - jlove@saes.org).

How will the School ensure that my child has continuity of learning?

Teachers and school leaders have worked closely to finalize a distance learning plan that will ensure continuity of learning. Utilizing Canvas (our Learning Management System for K-12), Seesaw in preschool grades, and other technology platforms, like email and video conferencing, our teachers will remain in contact with every student with an open line of communication to parents. Our campus is closed, but school remains open.

What resources are available if my child faces challenges with distance learning?

While we may not be together physically, all of the school’s resources remain available to our students. The Education Center, College Counseling, our School Counselor, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Chaplain Isaacs and Chaplain Slater all will be hard at work supporting our students. At the same time, the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning will continue to provide resources and strategies to support our teachers and school leaders.
If my child is sick on a distance learning day, what should my family do?

Just like on a normal school day, a parent should notify Ms. Harmon (US), Ms. Egan (MS), or Ms. Seidel (LS) if their child is sick. Because all of the classes are being recorded and archived through the end of the third trimester, students will have the opportunity to watch classes at a later time when they are feeling better to catch up without having missed that classroom instruction.

Does my child who is a senior need to worry about graduation requirements?

St. Andrew’s teachers and administrators are committed to supporting every student in meeting their graduation requirements. We will make decisions about adjusting graduation requirements as circumstances necessitate. Rest assured, the School is committed to helping the Class of 2021 successfully graduate.
GOALS

The goal of the Lower School Distance Learning Plan is to keep your children engaged so they can learn and grow, while also affording them meaningful opportunities for connection and community. We will provide opportunities for them to read, write, share ideas, explore, create, play, and move. Perhaps most importantly, we will continue to provide them a sense of community and normalcy with a structured school day that continues the planned learning program.

Due to the developmental stages of our youngest learners, parents will need to assist your child with distance learning. For example, assist in logging into the device and various applications, in addition to walking through directions when needed.

This version of the Distance Learning Plan includes a full-day of programming for Lower School students that included expanded synchronous classes that include art, science, music, PE, and Spanish as well as small group instruction and more optional moments of community connection.

For Preschool through Pre-K, teachers will provide materials for academic lessons in addition to suggested activities to allow students to continue cognitive, physical, and social-emotional skill-building. Some lessons will be delivered through videos that the teachers create and some may include time on learning apps that have been preloaded onto school-issued iPads. Students will participate in two synchronous lessons each day, one homeroom and one special subject area. Learning engagements will balance academic goals with playful, inquiry-based explorations. There will be additional social-emotional skills and community building time in the afternoon during lunch bunch gatherings and closing meetings to connect and reflect on the day’s learnings. Teachers will also provide afternoon office hours for small group meetings and individual conferencing with parents and students.

For Kindergarten through Grade 5, homeroom and special subject teachers will engage with students through synchronous whole class lessons throughout the school day. Small group conferences and independent work time are incorporated into the lessons. Midday provides time for fitness and lunch bunch gatherings. A dedicated afternoon time is set aside for office hours, small group meetings, and individual teacher student conferences. The school day will end with a community gathering in the form of a closing meeting. Homework will include classwork/project completion and reading.
SCHEDULE (PRESCHOOL - GRADE 5)

d(click here to see the daily schedule Preschool – Grade 5)

Each school day will begin with a virtual morning meeting. Students will experience synchronous homeroom subjects (reading, writing, math, and social studies) and special subjects along with optional fitness breaks and lunch bunch. The school day will begin at 8:30 a.m. (Grades 1-5) or 8:45 a.m. (Preschool - K) and offer time for small group instruction, individual meetings with teachers and a weekly chapel.

The virtual day will take place via Zoom and recordings of each class can be found in Seesaw (PS/PK) and Canvas (K-5). By 5 p.m., students should complete and upload their assignments, being mindful of taking brain breaks, which ideally includes physical activity and/or exercise.

As always, faculty and administrators are available via email if you would like to schedule a conversation.
DIGITAL RESOURCES AND DEVICE MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

DIGITAL RESOURCES

• PS-PK

Whether students are on campus or distant learning, teachers will upload a daily schedule to Seesaw, outlining synchronous lesson times/Zoom links and accompanying activities or assignments if applicable to Seesaw, an app that has been preloaded onto iPads.

• Zoom meeting links for all synchronous lessons will be posted in the Inbox tab under Messages.

• Recordings of Morning Meeting and synchronous homeroom and special subject lessons will be posted to the Activities tab.

• Homeroom teachers will post daily assignments and activities on the class Seesaw.

• Contact Alyssa Morris if you need assistance.

• Help Center Tutorials

  • How do I add to my child’s journal?

  • How do I message a teacher?

  • Help Center

• K-Grade 5

• Each student is provided with a school-issued iPad pre-loaded with apps. Keyboards for Grades 2-5, and chargers are also supplied by the school.

• Teachers and students utilize Canvas, a Learning Management System (LMS) to manage their assignments.

• Homeroom teachers will upload a daily schedule so students who are learning from home know when to plug into synchronous lessons and grade level meet and greets.

• Students will use Zoom to engage with their teachers and classmates for instructional lessons and activities.
DEVICE EXPECTATIONS

• Preschool

  • A school-issued iPad will be distributed to each student in preschool for use at home during hybrid and distance learning.

  • Open your child’s Seesaw app/account before 9:00 am each school day. You can access it via the app, or app.seesaw.me.

  • On the right side of the screen, click on Inbox. Look for the announcement about that day’s Zoom meeting links.

  • Click the link to join the Zoom meeting for each synchronous class.

  • Be sure to put your device on mute. This makes it easier to hear the teacher. When it is your child’s turn to share, you will be able to unmute.

  • Check back daily on Seesaw for news, announcements, and activities.

  • Email your child’s homeroom teacher if you have any questions about daily meetings or activities.

• Pre-K through Grade 5

  • All devices have been preloaded with the relevant apps and have filters installed.

  • The purpose of iPads is for the intended student to use it for educational purposes. Messaging and use of school email are for school purposes.

  • Care for the iPad includes keeping the case on always, carrying it with two hands, and placing the device and charger in a safe place that is a common area (living room, etc).

  • A Lower School Technology Contract will be shared at the beginning of the school year. This contract is a way to build mutual understanding of how it will be used in the home environment. The contract will provide a way to set clear boundaries for you and your child.
**Middle and Upper School Distance Learning**

**GOALS**

The goal of the Middle and Upper School Distance Learning Plan is to run school as close to a typical, in-person day as possible to provide the best academic experience while staying connected as a community of learners. This connection extends beyond academics to clubs and other school-related activities that will allow them to connect during community time (Tuesdays and Fridays from 2:30 -4:30 p.m.) via Zoom and from time-to-time on campus if conditions allow. We will employ technology resources we currently use day-to-day (Canvas, Zoom, laptops) to connect, extend, and deepen learning.

**SCHEDULE**

(click here to see the daily schedule Schedule)

Each course will have a “live” (synchronous) component using Zoom. Attendance will be taken and reported for each class. All classes will begin on time according to our daily schedule (Day 1 - Day 5) and all current policies - late work, deadlines, etc. - will be maintained. All classes will be recorded and we expect them to be archived through the end of the trimester. Students will receive a calendar invite through their school email that will contain the link to each class.

From time to time, some classes may not meet online. Videos with assignment instructions will be shared for those classes via Canvas and are to be completed by students before the next online class meeting.

Morning meeting will take place for the Middle School on Mondays and Fridays and for the Upper School on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Advisory will meet three times a week. The advisor may want to meet as a group or schedule individual meetings with their advisees during those times. There will be office hours three times a week as well as clubs and Middle School PE twice a week and Chapel on Fridays.

As always, faculty and administrators are available via email if you would like to schedule a conversation.
DIGITAL RESOURCES AND DEVICE/TECH MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

• Zoom will be used for video conferencing for each class.

• Students must check their St. Andrew’s email account and Canvas several times daily.

• Students must check their St. Andrew’s Google calendar each day for live class links.

• Students must use their school Google account with Chrome or Firefox as their browser and be logged into that account and connect it to Canvas.

• Students are expected to be courteous and respectful online and adhere to the technology code of conduct which they agreed to when they signed the handbook at the beginning of the year.

• Students are required to keep the camera on in live sessions unless teachers give permission to students to turn their camera off. Students and families should feel comfortable communicating with a teacher in advance should they need to have their camera off during a class.

• Students should take turns, contribute, and ask questions in class discussions.

• Students should use chat appropriately and be mindful that their classes are being recorded.

• School-provided laptops will have all of the apps and technology capable for any needs during distance learning. Students are expected to use their school computers during this time for compatibility.
MIDDLE AND UPPER SCHOOL DISTANCE LEARNING NORMS

When attending classes, students should:

• Sit-up while in class - no lying down.

• Make sure their face is visible and immediately recognizable. Please do not bring masks or costumes to class.

• Not wear or display clothing with any inappropriate logos, words or symbols.

• Have their camera on at all times during class unless the teacher asks or gives them permission to turn it off.

• Use their own school-issued computer for distance learning. Do not share computers.

• Not ask friends to join classes or advisor period. Do not share the class links for Zoom Meetings with anyone who is not a part of that class.

• Be aware that teachers are now able to use DYKNOW.

• Have their cell phones away during class time, preferably in another room.

• Remember that classes start on the hour - please be on time.
Distance learning is not a new method of teaching. As a result, there are plenty of research-informed strategies that the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning has complied to help support parents and students.

Monotask, not multitask
Help your child monotask. This means, no phone, Netflix, video games, or Gchat during class time. They should not have non-academic applications, windows or browser tabs open on their laptop during online class sessions. Encourage your child to set their phone to “do not disturb” and put it in another room while working — they can check it during breaks in the school day.

A good study environment aids good studying
Set up a good study environment. Your child should not do online classes in bed, and ideally not in their bedroom. Try to avoid spaces where there are distractions. Try to avoid spaces with clutter because many students find this distracting. Your child should not listen to music while “doing” an online class. However, music while studying is an interesting question. It seems to help some students on some tasks (perhaps because it might reduce anxiety), but hurts others. Listening to music is not bad per se, but your child needs to find out what works for them.

Strong self-advocacy is always crucial — now even more so
Encourage your child to be a strong self-advocate and communicate with teachers when they have questions or concerns, or even then they just feel they need to check in with their teacher and chat. This can be done by email or by requesting a one-on-one virtual meeting on Google Meet (ask during an online class or by sending them a short email). If at any point they are wondering, “what should I do now?,” just ask.

Everyone benefits from help with scheduling
One thing that might happen in the course of this distance learning experience is that your child may be given more projects and longer tasks that require more independent work. Balancing the demands of several projects at once is something that many students of all ages find challenging. Help your child break down and schedule tasks for asynchronous projects. If necessary, help them monitor their progress, help them decide if switching strategies might aid their progress, or help them determine whether a satisfactory end point has been reached.
Support your child’s metacognition

Metacognition aids learning. You can help by asking questions, such as:

- What are your big learnings or takeaways from the day?

- What’s challenging? / What do you have questions about? / What don’t you understand yet? (and suggest they reach out to the appropriate teacher by email, one-on-one check in, or writing down their question(s) to ask in the chat of their next Google meeting).

Where possible, help your child bring in prior knowledge from experiences they have had in the past. And help them make connections, again where possible, between their work and the things in the real world. We tend to overestimate how automatically students make these connections, so help them.

Emotion and cognition are interlinked

Emotion and learning are intertwined, both in your child’s brain and in their everyday experience of school. Having an emotional well-being check in can help — if they are feeling stressed with school, giving them space to offload those feelings can help them focus on learning. They can talk to you, talk to a friend, or even write or draw.

Relationships help buffer stress, so staying socially connected is an important part of being a successful student during distance learning. But take note of the monotasking vs. multitasking commentary above, and separate out social time from work time.

Exercise, diet, and sleep help reduce stress as well as improve overall health. Going for a walk or run, while practicing responsible social distancing, can be tremendously beneficial for overall well-being and learning.

Research suggests that mindfulness and meditation techniques can benefit students of all ages. There are many free online resources, such as the apps recommended earlier in this plan. Even if your child is a skeptic, attempt to get them to try a few things out and to see if they can find something that works for them.

Play is important for students of all ages. Make time for play.

Do things that aren’t on screens in leisure time.

Stanford University’s Denise Pope, who Dr. Ian Kelleher presented alongside at SXSW last year argues that every child needs PDF time, as this helps both well-being and learning: Play time; Down time; and Family time.
Five Insights from our research on distance learning at SAES in spring 2020

1. In MS & US the amount of class time and number of classes a day seems to be just right, so we kept it the same. LS added synchronous special subject classes to the weekly schedule in place of asynchronous activities. While some students seemed to be doing better with distance learning than in-person school, for most it was more demanding. We have created an online schedule that includes a challenging academic curriculum and which is also designed to support each child’s well being. We are very cognizant that to help each child flourish this year we need to balance challenge and well being.

2. Our schedule includes 3 types of work time, and this balance helps support learning: (1) Online face-to-face time that includes activities like direct instruction, discussion, group work, and students presenting to the class. (2) Online time where students are practising or doing an assignment independently, but the teacher is there to immediately answer any questions that come up. (3) “Asynchronous” work where students are working independently, but there is no live online class. Teachers are available during scheduled office hours, and at other times that can be scheduled, to offer additional support.

3. Non-academic time in the day is important to help balance the added demands of online school and to create social connection. In the US and MS we have made more time for clubs to meet, to create spaces for students to chat and hang out – this was a successful part of our LS schedule in the spring. Teachers are aware that incorporating social interaction into their classes is important to help boost motivation, well being and learning. In addition, online school deliberately ends earlier than in-person school to limit the amount of time students spend on screens, to give students adequate time for the “asynchronous” work in courses and schedule one-on-one Zoom calls with teachers if needed, and to do activities that are not-school at all but which bring them joy or satisfaction – reading, hanging out with friends, music, art, cooking, sports, service.

4. Online school is hard. Many bits of evidence from the surveys pointed to this. To help we have included many non-class-time elements, including home room and advisor time, assemblies, chapels, club time, PE/fitness time, time for one-on-conversations with teachers, and time for outside-of-school activities. All these pieces help create a more balanced, supportive, enjoyable school day that in turn increases students ability to perform well in their classes.
Balancing predictability and iteration. There is a significant extra cognitive load with online school. A predictable schedule helps reduce unnecessary cognitive load. The online and hybrid schedules have been designed to mirror each other as much as possible. In both schedules, days in the week are designed to follow a similar pattern, but with some variability in what goes in which “slot” in order to reduce boredom. The rotation of classes starts anew each week, so the weekly flow of classes is the same. Predictable will help students, teachers and parents. But we will continue to collect evidence on how the new schedule is working, and may iterate at times to help produce a stronger schedule that does an even better job of supporting each child’s learning and well being. Some of these changes will simply be instructions to teachers on how to use the time, for instance. Others may be more structural. We understand the importance of clear and timely communication, and will keep you well informed.
Parent Resources

For many of us, finding the right way to talk about coronavirus with our families and easing the anxiety it has caused has been demanding. Here are some resources that may be of help over the next few weeks.

The Center for Transformative Teaching Distance Learning Blog: Parent Tips

How to talk to your children about Coronavirus


Parenting in the time of Coronavirus

Overestimating, Underestimating: 5 ways to help teens manage anxiety about coronavirus

Meditation Apps for Kids