

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN



Last Updated: 03/15/20

Sources: Sidwell Friends School
Fulton County Schools
Atlanta Public Schools

Distance Learning Plan

The Main Street Academy

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Mission

At The Main Street Academy, all students will receive a challenging and enriching education from a dedicated and student-focused staff in partnership with highly-involved parents. Students will leave The Main Street Academy with high expectations of themselves as they prepare for further education and become contributing members of their diverse communities.

Overview

The Main Street Academy is committed to delivering a vibrant educational experience for all students. Yet there are rare occasions when external circumstances will impinge upon the School's ability to operate the campus or a teacher's ability to deliver lessons on site. Under these circumstances, TMSA is compelled to develop alternate methods for teaching and student learning. For this reason, the following was developed to ensure the continuity of learning for our students.

The following distance learning plan outlines an approach to maintaining instruction and learning using digital and online resources in the event of an extended period of remote learning or campus closure. This document focuses on the distance learning platforms and approaches teachers will use to ensure continuity of student education should an event cause a disruption in campus operations.

Emergency Response Task Force

In the event of a major disruption of campus operations or urgent campus closure, the TMSA Governing Board and administrative team will convene to assess the situation and make recommendations for the School's response. The decision to close TMSA and initiate the distance learning plan will be made by the Governing Board and the principal in consultation with the Fulton County Schools.

Depending on the cause for closure, TMSA may be required to delay the initiation of the distance learning plan. For instance, in the event of a natural disaster such as a hurricane or tornado, TMSA may need to stabilize the infrastructure (i.e. information technology network, digital platforms, physical building, etc.) before we are able to initiate online instruction. In the event that there is no advance warning for campus closure, TMSA will communicate with families on the timing of the start of distance learning as early as possible. In the event of school closure, TMSA will communicate with students, parents/guardians, and employees via email, website, and social media.

The Main Street Academy Distance Learning Approach

We all recognize that distance learning cannot replicate the kind of learning experience that takes place in an engaging school environment. However, when such an experience cannot be possible, there are many alternative and effective approaches available to our teachers in order to continue instruction and to engage students in meaningful learning.

In a distance-learning mode, teachers make use of a range of technological tools and online platforms that are already available to them and their students, ensuring greater familiarity. By utilizing familiar tools, our students can adapt easily and smoothly to a distance-learning approach. Students continue to engage in learning by reading a range of texts and materials designed to develop critical reading skills as well as provide content knowledge in specific subject areas. Students also continue to develop math skills by solving problems on paper as well as using online platforms to submit work and receive feedback. While not an exact substitute for classroom learning, teachers can maintain productive and developmentally appropriate lessons using a broad range of resources, approaches, and methodologies.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

We understand that a shift to a distance learning approach will require our students and families to make adjustments. Yet a continued partnership with parents and guardians can play a vital part of ensuring the success of the plan. Below are some guidelines for parents/guardians to enable students to become successful at distance learning:

Establish a Regular Schedule for Your Child and Stay Engaged with their Learning: Once distance learning is initiated by TMSA, it will be important for parents/guardians to help students establish and maintain a routine and structure for their day, beginning with a regular bedtime and wake-up time each day. While some of our students may want to stay up late and sleep in, establishing a regular school day routine will help your child retain a sense of normalcy and stay engaged in learning. Be sure to help your child build in “breaks” during the school day, encouraging them to stand up and move around so they are not remaining sedentary throughout the day. Begin and close each “school day” with a brief check-in as well as checking in throughout the day at regular intervals to ensure that your child is successfully engaging in distance learning. Reach out to your child’s teacher or school counselor if you observe your child struggling to stay focused. Setting clear expectations with your child about regular school day hours will help your child maintain a schedule and stay on top of his/her school work.

Create a Study Space for Your Child: Productive learning relies on a conducive environment. We recommend that you create a separate, quiet space in your home for your child to study. The family room sofa with close proximity to a television or your child’s bedroom may not be the optimal place for your child to learn. We recommend that you choose an open area in the family living space (kitchen table, dining room, etc.) to avoid isolating your child and to allow parents/guardians to monitor your child’s

learning and screen activity. A room with strong wireless connection will also be important.

Stay in Communication with your Child's Teachers: Your child's teachers will maintain regular communication with parents/guardians. The frequency of the communications will depend on your child's age, developmental stage, and level of independence.

Encourage Independence and Allow for Productive Struggle: Stay engaged in your child's learning by asking them questions and having them share their thoughts while encouraging their independence so they can take ownership of their own learning. Some productive struggle is essential to learning, so we ask that parents allow their children to grapple with problems and come up with ideas for tackling them. Stepping in too quickly to help solve problems will deprive your child of the opportunity to learn, try new approaches, and gain greater independence and confidence. If your child becomes discouraged and/or overwhelmed by school work, please reach out to your child's teachers and the learning support team.

Help your Child Maintain Social Contact with Peers: It will be very important for your child to stay in social contact (through virtual means) with their friends and peers during school closure. Encourage your child to interact with friends through Facetime/Google Meet or through phone conversations. They can form study groups created by their teachers or informal groups that they develop on their own. Social interactions, even through virtual means, will help your child stay connected and feel a part of the TMSA community.

Encourage Physical Activity and Movement and Monitor Student Stress: Our physical education teachers will develop online instructional guides for students. Physical movement and exercise are vital to maintaining physical and mental health, reducing stress and anxiety, and improving concentration and focus for more effective learning and retention. Parents should monitor student stress levels and reach out to our school counselor, Kyri Harris (kyri.harris@tmsa.org) for advice as needed.

Academic FAQs

How will the School ensure that my child is continuing to learn?

Teachers have been working closely with administrators and academic technology team to develop lesson plans using online platforms and digital resources to ensure continuity of learning for students. Students will continue to be engaged with their teachers through a range of methods, and email communication. Teachers, School Administrators, and Student Support Services team will be available to communicate with students and parents on an ongoing and regular basis during the school closure to ensure that individual student learning needs are being met.

How will my child be graded?

All students in grades Kindergarten through 8 will continue to earn grades for their schoolwork. Teachers will ensure that meaningful learning is taking place and use a range of approaches to assess student learning and determine student grades. Grades will be entered into Infinite Campus. If you have problems accessing Infinite Campus, please contact Loretta Grissom, Data Manager, at loretta.grissom@tmsa.org

What resources are available to my child if he/she begins to face challenges with learning?

Teachers will make themselves available to speak with students and their parents directly as well as providing one-on-one support by Google Meet or phone. In addition to your child's teacher, Student Support Services are available to provide one-on-one support for your child, either by Google Meet or phone. If your child begins to struggle with learning, please reach out to your child's teacher and/or Student Support Services.

My child is becoming extremely anxious about the situation that has led to the school closure. What resources does TMSA have to support my child?

During the school closure, parents/guardians should monitor students' mental health and seek advice from our school counselor, Kyri Harris, or Hadiyah Johnson, school social worker.

TMSA Distance Learning Plan

The goals for TMSA distance learning plan are to keep our students engaged , so they can learn and grow, while also providing them with meaningful opportunities for connections and community. Rather than ask students to be tied to a screen for long periods of time, we will provide opportunities for them to read, write, share ideas , explore , create , play and move.

Each day, our students will receive a warm greeting from their classroom teachers, a “morning message,” and lessons/ learning missions from all their teachers (classrooms and specials), much as they would normally see on a regular school day.

Students and faculty members using The Main Street Academy equipment will only use it for school functions. Students and families should review and follow the technology use expectations. Many of our technology platforms (i.e., GSuite, i-Ready, etc.) are not device dependent, so families may choose to access the learning platforms through family devices, such as phones, laptops, etc. Email and website will be used for all major announcements from the school, the Governing Board and administration. Faculty and staff will continue to use email to communicate with families.

All teachers will use Google Classroom as the platform for communicating classwork to students and families. Any additional platforms will be linked within the Google Classroom platform. The writable application will be used for writing projects. Google Meet or Google Hangout will be used for video conferencing in small or large groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Team

- Establish clear communication channels to all stakeholders
- Provide ongoing updates to families and faculty/staff
- Support all stakeholders in the distance learning plan
- Support teachers in implementing high quality instruction and feedback in a distance learning model
- Provide models and examples of strong distance learning units , lessons and projects
- Be a model of flexibility , optimism , creativity and openness

Classroom Teachers

- Collaborate with other members of the team as well as specials teachers to design daily distance learning experiences for students
- Foster a sense of community and connectedness between and among students and families
- Provide students /families with timely communication and feedback
- Leverage technology to allow for personalized and differentiated learning
- Be a model of flexibility , optimism , creativity and openness

Specials Teachers & Media Specialists

- Collaborate with classroom teachers to provide weekly learning opportunities for children at each grade level.
- Be mindful of and creative about the resources/tools families have in their homes
- Develop a bank of activities and projects for children to engage in:
 - PE: Develop a bank of exercise , physical activities and challenges /competitions for community members
 - Science , Arts, and Languages: Develop a bank of activities for classroom teachers to share with families each week. When possible consider interdisciplinary connections
 - Math Coaches and Media Specialist : Develop a bank of activities and challenges /competitions for classroom teachers to share with families each week. When possible, consider inter-disciplinary connections.
- Provide students/families with timely communication and feedback
- Be a model of flexibility, optimism, creativity, and openness

Reading & Math Coaches

- Communicate regularly with classroom teachers to provide instruction for students who receive accommodations and small group setting
- Support students scaffolding and modifying lessons
- Support teachers in differentiating lessons
- Communicate regularly with students and families who receive accommodations to support learning
- Provide supplementary materials for students who may benefit from additional practice to shore up skills, gaps, skills tips and strategies
- Be a model of flexibility, optimism, creativity, and openness

School Counselor, Social Worker and Nurse

- Provide faculty and families resources to meet their needs
- Monitor wellness for faculty and families
- Provide interventions and resources for faculty and families as needed
- Be accessible to the community
- Be a model of flexibility, optimism, creativity, and openness

Technology Staff

- Develop tutorials for faculty/staff about how to use the tools provided
- Develop tutorials for families to problem solve common technology challenges
- Be available as a help desk for all faculty, staff, and families to provide on demand support
- Continually monitor the needs of faculty/staff and families and provide ideas, inspiration, and trouble-shooting support
- Be a model of flexibility, optimism, creativity, and openness

Student and Families

All students are expected to participate in distance learning during the school closure. Any learning activities or assessments not completed will need to be worked on outside of the scheduled time. In exceptional circumstances or illness, parents of students who are unable to participate should notify the teacher and school as they would for any school absence, and those students will be given special consideration.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish a daily routine for your school work
- Find a comfortable, distraction-free place in your home where you can work
- Check Google Classroom each day to learn about your assignments and activities
- Complete all daily assignments
- Put forth your best effort
- Do your best to meet deadlines
- Communicate with your classroom teachers and the learning support team as needed

Family Roles and Responsibilities

Because of the age of your children, we ask that families play a significant role in ensuring that their children stay ahead of the learning and reach out proactively should they run into any challenges.

- Establish routines and expectations for your child
- Establish beginning and end-of-day check-ins with your child
- Help them create a comfortable, distraction-free place to work
- Monitor communications from TMSA and your child's teachers
- Partner with your child's teachers and reach out should any challenges arise
- Help your child to plan out their work for the day and check in to keep them focused and on task
- Help your child "turn his/her work in" through the channels laid out by the teacher
- Take an active role in your child's learning and assist them in walking through instructions when needed
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and move outside
- Take advantage of opportunities to engage your child in the arts or other creative pursuits
- Be mindful of your child's physical and emotional health
- Reach out to counselors, learning support, etc. as needed
- Monitor your child's screen time
- Set clear rules around using technology for social interactions and monitor their usage
- Be a calm presence for your child
- Be a supportive partner of teachers and TMSA
- Be a model of flexibility, optimism, creativity, and openness

Suggested Learning Time Frame

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade | 90 Minutes Per Day

3rd Grade – 8th Grade | 120 Minutes Per Day

Assignments Due Date

All assignments are due within 72 hours. Please be mindful of due dates posted in Google Classroom.

Teacher Availability

All teachers will be available via Google Hangout or Google Meet at 9 am – 10 am and 1 pm – 2 pm on school days. Teachers will respond to emails and Google Classroom questions within 24 hours.