



Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy

Distance Learning Plan

A resource for parents outlining the School's approach to maintaining educational continuity.

This is a living document. Updates may be made to this plan based on changing circumstances, teacher and parent feedback.

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Our Mission & Distance Learning Goals

MISSION

Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy provides a premier Catholic, bilingual education committed to developing the whole child to live a Christ-centered life through academic excellence and innovation. We strive to help students become well-rounded, self-disciplined and confident practitioners of the Catholic faith, with respect for themselves and others.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of MDJDA's Distance Learning Program is to keep our students engaged so they can learn and grow, while also affording them with meaningful opportunities for connection and community. We will provide opportunities for them to read, write, share ideas, explore, create, plan 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.

Our primary goal is to provide a high quality, rigorous Distance Learning Program that focuses on the whole child. MDJDA will continue to support students' academic progress and spiritual development by making distance learning days engaging and supportive, while being as flexible as possible for families.

MDJDA will provide a superior distance learning experience, where students continue to develop as bilingual and biliterate citizens through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

MDJDA will deliver daily live synchronous instruction. This will include whole group classes with all teachers, small group sessions with core teachers and one-on-one sessions with teachers and instructional aides.

MDJDA will provide parents with all the necessary textbooks and supplies so that their student can successfully continue learning from home.

Distance Learning Program 2.0

OVERVIEW

The Distance Learning Plan is designed to continue the delivery of our rigorous curriculum. We have carefully reviewed feedback and reflected on our experiences from this past spring to make improvements to our already robust distance learning program. MDJDA will deliver instruction through Zoom and continue the use of its various online platforms and resources. Students will have all necessary textbooks and supplies at home to facilitate learning.

For continuing families, the most notable changes are the following:

- To support families with multiple students enrolled at MDJDA, all students are on the same morning schedule.
 - All students start classes at the same time.
 - Their first break and lunch is at the same time schoolwide.
 - There will be differences in the afternoon schedule since every grade level has small group instruction and enrichment classes at different times.
- Enrichment classes are no longer by grade level, but by homeroom. This will make the classes more engaging and meaningful for the students.
- We have implemented a daily Social Emotional Learning (SEL) class schoolwide that is taught by the homeroom teacher each morning. This course will continue when we transition to hybrid, on campus learning.
- All students will participate in four enrichment classes via distance learning.
 - Students in TK-3 participate in Dance, P.E., Visual Arts and Library
 - Students in grades 4-7 participate in Dance, P.E., Visual Arts and Technology
- Mater Dei has hired a new full time librarian that will be supporting our students and teachers throughout the year.
- Students will have 1-1 sessions with their core teachers at least every other week.
- Individual sessions with instructional aides will still be available.
- Teachers in grades TK-3 will continue to stay logged on during the independent work time should students have questions or need support.
- All textbooks and supplies will be distributed to families prior to the start of the distance learning session in addition to having digital access to textbooks and resources.

ATTENDANCE

- The essential courses are the academic courses. These are the two daily courses for grades TK-5 and the three daily courses for grades 6-7.
- Teachers will be taking attendance during the academic courses.
- The first class of the day will start with prayer and pledge, followed by the Social Emotional Learning session with the homeroom teacher.
- While we highly encourage everyone to participate in the small group sessions, 1-1 sessions and the enrichment classes, as these will provide students with additional academic support as well as some non-academic time to express themselves, respectively, students are not required to attend these sessions.
- If a student will be absent from their academic class, please contact the homeroom teacher, as well as Ms. Figueroa or Ms. Barahona via email.

OTHER KEY AREAS

Spiritual Development and Support

Father Paul and Father Claude will be leading some live Family Faith Formation sessions in English and Spanish. These are not meant for the students on their own, but for the family or the student with a parent, so that we can continue to come together as a community of faith. We are also planning to livestream masses.

Counseling Support

Mr. Smith is certified in Trauma informed Care and is currently completing a credential in School Counseling. He will be offering office hours for students who need 1-1 support during these difficult times. Both teachers and parents can refer students to Mr. Smith for counseling and support.

Art, Dance and P.E.

For art class, please have the supplies next to your child so that they can easily access their materials during the class.

For P.E. and Dance, make sure the students are wearing comfortable clothes and have an open space in which to work out or dance. Please also make sure they have a water bottle with them.

DISTANCE LEARNING SCHEDULES

Homeroom teachers will be sharing with parents one document that includes the links for all the live classes for their grade level. Parents will be able to find all the links in one place.

Teachers will also be sharing a weekly newsletter clarifying what the students will be doing in their live classes and what's expected of them during the independent work time. Teachers will work with the students, so that little by little they become more independent (based on their grade level).

The link below shows the general schedules for each grade level.

- Teachers will formulate lessons in the six core subject areas: English Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, Math, Science, Religion and Social Studies.
- The daily assignments will have a balance of onscreen and offscreen tasks that help connect to previous learning and the current curriculum. Students will be able to see their daily assignments on OTUS.
- By 3 p.m., students should complete their daily to-do list, being mindful of taking brain breaks, which ideally includes physical activity and/or exercise.

[DISTANCE LEARNING SCHEDULES: MASTER SCHEDULE](#): Click here to view the master schedule as well as the various schedules by grade group.

First Week of School

While the distance learning master schedule shows the schedule that MDJDA will be implementing for the duration of the Distance Learning program, there will be a special schedule implemented the first week of school. During the first week of school, all students will have a one-on-one session with their homeroom teacher. These 20 minute sessions will allow the teacher to meet individually with each student. This will help the students and teachers start to build a positive relationship, therefore living up to our motto of "your student will be known, your student will be loved." During these one-one sessions, teachers may also help the students set goals for the first quarter. The four-day, first week of school will include whole group sessions with each core teacher, small group sessions and these one-on-one sessions with teachers. Enrichment classes will start the second week of school. The first teacher newsletter and schedule with links to live classes will be shared on Friday, August 14.

[Distance Learning Schedules: First Week of School](#)

Master Schedule TK-7

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
8:30-8:45	Social Emotional Learning Block in Homeroom				9:00-9:45	Homeroom Class
						TK-7
8:45-10:00	Class 1				10:00-10:45	Enrichment Classes
	8:45-9:30 Live Class L1					4B, 6, 7A, 7B
	9:30-10:00 Independent Work				11:00-11:45	Enrichment Classes
	BREAK					5A, 5B, 4A, 4B
10:15-11:30	Class 2				12:00-12:45	Enrichment Classes
	10:15-11:00 Live Class L2					5A, 5B, 7A, 7B
	11:00-11:30 Independent Work					
	LUNCH				1-1 Sessions with Teachers	
12:10- 1:15	TK-K Small Group Sessions / Enrichment				10:00-12:15	
12:15- 1:15	Grades 1-2: Small Group Sessions					
	Grade 3: Enrichment Classes				1-1 Sessions with Aides	
12:15-1:30	Grades 6-7: Class 3				8:30-4:30 (optional)	
1:15-2:15	Grades 3-5: Small Group Sessions					
1:20-2:05	Grades 1-2 Enrichment Classes					
2:20-3:05	Grades 4-7 Enrichment Classes					
1:30-3:30	1-1 Sessions with Teachers					
2:30-5:00	1-1 Sessions with Aides (optional)					

DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE

Our [Distance Learning Website](#) is a great source of information. There you can find all of our previous communications related to distance learning along with tabs for: Faith Life, Socio-Emotional Health, Technology Support, Tips for Online Learners, our Video Series and the Master Schedule.

Technology Requirements & Expectations for Use

- All students will need a device to access synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- The device should be charged and ready for use each morning.
- MDJDA will use OTUS (our Learning Management System) and Zoom (videoconferencing) to deliver synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- MDJDA uses a variety of platforms to access digital textbooks and provide supplemental learning opportunities. These include STMath, Smarty Ants, Achieve 3000, and RAZ Kids, among others. Students need to be able to access all these platforms on their device. Teachers will share login information for each of the digital platforms with parents and students at the beginning of the school year.
- Parents can access teacher newsletters and recorded lessons on OTUS. Parent newsletters will also be shared via email. All parents will need to create a Parent OTUS account. In grades 2-7, students will also be logging in to OTUS. Please note that this is different from the parent account.
- Students are expected to be courteous and respectful online. All students must follow the Distance Learning Norms specified in the Student Expectations section.
- If you have two or more students enrolled in the school, but don't have a device for each student, [please complete this form to borrow a device](#) for the duration of Distance Learning.
- Email your child's homeroom teacher if you have any questions about daily meetings or activities.
- Contact helpdesk@mdjda.org if you need assistance related to technology, digital platforms and supplementals. Our distance learning website has additional tutorials.

Helpful Tutorials and Links

- [How do I create an OTUS parent account?](#)
- [How to Login to OTUS as a student?](#)
- [Technology Support: Tutorials on Distance Learning Website](#)

General Expectations

To help accomplish our Distance Learning Program goals, 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.
- Independent work may include videos/instructions via OTUS that need to be completed by students before their next class.
- All classes will be recorded and posted on OTUS.
- Students should give their best effort, exhibit their best online class behavior, and attend classes regularly, health permitting. All students must follow the Distance Learning Norms specified in the Student Expectations section.
- Students may follow "free dress" guidelines during the distance-learning period, although MDJDA tops are strongly encouraged.
- Students are expected to be courteous and respectful online.

Family Roles & Responsibilities

- Calmly establish routines and expectations for your child.
- Create a comfortable, distraction-free place for your child to work and attend online classes.
- Ensure students have a good breakfast each morning, are dressed appropriately, presentable, and join the class on time.
- 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, ensure they have all necessary textbooks and supplies. This will be especially important the first few weeks of school. They will slowly become more independent.
- Partner with your child's teachers and reach out should any challenges arise.
- Help your child to plan and turn in their work to keep them focused and on task.

Student Expectations

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When classes are being conducted online via Zoom, students are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Give your best effort and be on your best online class behavior.
- You are expected to attend your classes unless your parent or guardian notifies Ms. Figueroa or Ms. Barahona via email that you are sick. Teachers will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Be on time for class and have all necessary supplies.
- Be dressed appropriately, well groomed and presentable. No pajamas.
- Use your full name on Zoom. For security purposes only individuals showing the full name of the student will be allowed to enter the class.
- Even at a distance, remember to always be kind, always try your best and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

DISTANCE LEARNING NORMS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Students are required to keep the camera on in live sessions and the microphone muted unless given permission by the teacher to speak.
- Students should take turns, contribute, and ask questions in class discussions.
- Students should use the chat feature appropriately and be mindful that their classes are being recorded.
- Students are expected to eat during breaks from classes but not during classes as a courtesy to others and also to protect their devices from potential damage.

DISTANCE LEARNING NORMS: GRADES TK-5

When attending classes, students should:

- Sit-up while in class — no lying down.
- Make sure their face is visible and immediately recognizable. No masks or costumes.
- Dress appropriately. No pajamas.
- Have their camera on at all times during class.
- Remain on mute, unless the teacher asks the student to turn on the microphone.

DISTANCE LEARNING NORMS: GRADES 6 & 7

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. No pajamas.
- Have their camera on at all times during class unless the teacher asks or gives them permission to turn it off.
- Remain on mute, unless the teacher asks the student to turn on the microphone.
- Not ask friends to join classes. Do not share the class links for Zoom with anyone who is not a part of that class.
- Have their cell phones away during class time, preferably in another room.
- Remember that classes start on time— please don't be late.
- Remember you are pioneers, you are the leaders of the school and our younger students look up to you, be a positive role model for all learners.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I contact if I have a question?

Your first point of contact should be homeroom teachers. They are your partners in the education of your child and are here to support you. If you have a technology related issue, please email our Technology Department at helpdesk@mdjda.org. If you have a general question about distance learning, please contact Mrs. Oseguera.

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. Figueroa or Ms. Barahona if their child is sick. Parents should also contact the homeroom teacher. Because all of the classes are being recorded and posted on OTUS, 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.

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

Mrs. Oseguera and Mrs. Torres, along with teachers, have worked closely to finalize a distance learning plan that will ensure continuity of learning and commitment to our dual language program. Our language allocation plan ensures that students participate in whole group, small group and individual sessions with all their teachers in the two languages. Utilizing OTUS (our Learning Management System), Zoom, and other technology platforms, like email and video conferencing, our teachers will remain in contact with every student, and have an open line of communication to parents.

In addition, teachers have been participating in professional development opportunities during the summer related to distance and hybrid learning. They have worked on identifying essential standards and developed curriculum maps for the school year that will address grade level content standards. One of the main roles Mrs. Torres serves is that of an instructional coach to the teachers. She supports teachers in their curriculum development and instructional practices. Mrs. Torres meets with each grade level team



once a week to ensure lessons are aligned to essential standards and that progress is made at each grade level towards meeting grade level standards. Mrs. Oseguera and Mrs. Torres collaborate to support teachers and provide them the resources necessary along this process so they can in turn support the students accordingly.

What grading practices will the school implement during distance learning?

MDJDA utilizes Standards Referenced Grading. Standards Referenced Grading (SRG) practices separate what students know and can do from how they behave and other non-academic indicators. Therefore, grades reflect what students have learned and are able to do, not when or how they learned it. Academic grades will be based on students' current levels of performance toward meeting grade-level standards. Grades will provide accurate, specific, and timely feedback designed to improve student performance. Grades will include opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and continue to demonstrate their performance level as they grow in their understanding. Parents can monitor student progress via OTUS.

How will teachers provide effective and appropriate feedback in a virtual learning environment?

MDJDA recognizes the critical role of feedback in student learning. Steven D. Levitt, "The key to learning is feedback. It is nearly impossible to learn anything without it." In this new virtual environment, we will need different tools and ways of thinking about feedback. Formative feedback is essential to learning. It needs to be specific, understandable, timely, ongoing and consistent. Most importantly, feedback moves the student towards a learning goal. Teachers will provide feedback during small group instruction, and one-on-one sessions. Teachers will meet one-on-one with all students regularly during the duration of the distance learning program.

Research-Informed Strategies for Distance Learning

Distance learning is not a new method of teaching. As a result, there are plenty of research-informed strategies that MDJDA has compiled to help support parents and students.

Monotask, not multitask

Help your child monotask. This means, no phone, Netflix, video games, or online chats during class time. They should not have non-academic applications, windows or browser tabs open on their device during online class sessions. For the older students, 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 middle school 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 Zoom (students can 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 if necessary suggest they write down their question(s) to ask in the next class meeting. They can ask the teacher directly, they can ask the question in the chat box to the teacher, or you can reach out to the teacher via email where a one-on-one check in could be scheduled). 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 think about this through your daily conversations with 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 process those feelings can help them focus on learning. They can talk to you, talk to a friend, or even write or draw.

Relationships help reduce 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* comment 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 and our counseling corner on our [Socio-Emotional Wellness](#) as part of our Distance Learning Website has several resources related to mindfulness for younger students.

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, argues that every child needs PDF time, as this helps both well-being and learning: Play time; Down time; and Family time.

THANK YOU

By working together we will help our students have a positive learning experience from home. The theme of Distance Learning is flexibility. We understand that everyone's situation is different. You know what works best for your family. After reviewing this document, think about what routines and structures you may need to put in place at home to support your child's transition to a more structured daily schedule. Thank you in advance for your flexibility, patience and support.