

DISTANCE LEARNING HANDBOOK

2020 – 2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

OUR LADY OF FATIMA SCHOOL
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LEARNING FROM HOME

On July 17, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom mandated that no school can open its campus for in-person instruction until the county where it's located is off the State of California's COVID-19 Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days. The Diocese of Fresno has applied for a waiver from the Merced County Public Health Department to allow Our Lady of Fatima School to open sooner. Until we receive a waiver or Merced County is off the State's "watch list," we must continue with online learning. While this was not our plan or preference for the 2020-2021 school year, OLF's dedicated team of teachers and support staff are determined to make distance learning the best possible experience for every student.

The purpose of this Distance Learning Handbook is to support our families with clear guidelines for attaining our common goals: consistent routines; clear expectations; frequent collaboration among students, teachers and parents; and rigorous online instruction that academically advances all of our students.

CREATE A CONSISTENT WORKSPACE

In your home, establish a quiet workspace for your student. If age appropriate, include your child in the process of creating and organizing this workspace so that they can practice decision-making and feel invested in the project.

ESTABLISH DAILY ROUTINES

Essential to a successful home learning environment is establishing a routine that works for you and your family. Children are familiar with this framework from school. In the classroom, teachers establish a routine to help students navigate their daily tasks.

During the school day, students have periods of direct instruction followed by time to complete practice tasks and explore the concepts presented in a lesson. This contributes directly to their developing concentration and, when appropriate, provides opportunities to collaborate and problem solve. Distance learning will mirror this format by having students live-stream with teachers for two or more sessions of daily instruction, with breaks to complete tasks and engage in other activities.

ATTENDANCE AND HOMEWORK

Teachers will take attendance at the start of every live instruction session, which will be more than once per day. Students will be marked absent if they are not present when the teacher takes attendance. Absence at two or more of the live meetings in a day will constitute a full day's absence.

Teachers will assign both practice work and work that must be submitted for assessment and grading. Assignments are due by 8 a.m. on the due date set by the teacher. Timely submitting assignments is just as important during distance learning as it is on campus, to teach our students to honor their commitments and respect deadlines.

STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF TASKS

To foster your student's sense of personal ownership in his or her learning, it is imperative that the student complete all assigned tasks even if the assignment will not ultimately be submitted to their teacher. Attending the live sessions, watching assigned videos, completing practice work and the like are essential to develop skills so that your student is prepared to complete assignments that will be submitted.

GROUP WORK

An important part of the learning process is a student's ability to work with his or her peers on projects and to participate in classroom discussions. Between the live class sessions, small group sessions and group assignments to be completed in collaboration with classmates, our teachers will maintain this crucial component of learning. As they would in the classroom, students will have opportunities to prepare projects and speeches to present to their teachers and classmates.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is imperative that the work submitted for assessment is completed independently by your student. Reviewing concepts with your child as he or she works on assignments is encouraged. But the work product ultimately turned in must be evidence of your student's own mastery of concepts. Do not allow others to complete the work just to get it done, meet a deadline or achieve a certain grade. Doing so diminishes our teachers' abilities to evaluate your student's learning. If your child is struggling with an assignment, contact his or her teacher for additional support.

CONNECTING WITH TEACHERS

Outside of live instruction, e-mail is the best way to connect with teachers. Monday through Friday, teachers will respond to e-mail within 24 hours. Our teachers are instructed to not use school e-mail over the weekend. Teachers can use video conferencing for one-on-one meets with students, as needed, but only if a parent or another OLF faculty member is also present.

RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Our parents and students often describe OLF as being part of a "big family." This period of distance learning will not diminish our special sense of community. Rather, each teacher will be mindful of nurturing regular one-on-one connections with each student. Beyond academic instruction, our focus is nurturing your student's social and emotional well-being. Our teachers will incorporate activities for physical education, religion, community service and other such projects to help students focus on community even when we're apart.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Following is a general guideline for the amount of instructional time your child should receive:

- 3 hours and 30 minutes per day for Kindergarteners
- 4 hours per day for Grades 1 through 3
- 5 hours per day for Grades 4 through 8

This time includes both teacher instruction and time to practice concepts and work on assignments. The balance between instruction and work time may shift from day to day, depending on the lesson. These instructional times for a distance-learning school day are similar to an on-campus day when accounting for social and transitional times, such as recess and lunch.

Each teacher will share her detailed weekly instruction schedule with families. In general, all live instruction will occur between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., with the online learning day ending earlier for younger grades and extending later for upper grades. OLF is still observing early release at 1:25 p.m. every Wednesday during distance learning. **Please note that scheduling is within each teacher's discretion and your student's daily/weekly schedules may change as distance learning continues.**

EXPECTATIONS BY GRADE LEVEL

PRIMARY GRADES: K-3

Students are expected to:

- Plan and organize work with guidance from parents
- Follow teachers' guidelines and meet academic expectations
- Participate in live instruction at scheduled times
- Work with integrity on assigned tasks—do your best!

Parents are invited to:

- Guide your child to set up a prepared work environment
- Establish a consistent routine and work schedule
- Follow along with teachers' suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts
- Provide opportunities for your child to share and present work to you

Teachers will:

- Prepare appropriate tasks and activities for your student to complete at home
- Provide parents with an outline of learning goals and expectations
- Provide live, direct instruction to students in accord with a consistent schedule
- Communicate frequently with parents and reply to e-mails within 24 hours Monday through Friday
- Offer frequent feedback to students
- Hold one-on-one check-ins with students on a rotating basis

INTERMEDIATE GRADES: 4 and 5

Students are expected to:

- Plan and organize work as independently as possible
- Follow teachers' guidelines and expectations
- Participate in live instruction at scheduled times
- Be their own advocate when assistance or further clarification is required
- Communicate directly with teachers via email

Parents are invited to:

- Guide your child to set up a prepared work environment
- Establish a consistent routine and work schedule
- Follow along with teachers' suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts
- Review your child's assignments
- Provide opportunities for your child to share and present work to you

Teachers will:

- Prepare appropriate tasks and activities for your student to complete at home
- Provide parents with an outline of learning goals and expectations
- Provide live, direct instruction to students in accord with a consistent schedule
- Communicate frequently with parents and reply to e-mails within 24 hours Monday through Friday
- Offer frequent feedback to students
- Hold one-on-one check-ins with students on a rotating basis

MIDDLE SCHOOL: 6-8

Students are expected to:

- Schedule their own workday
- Follow teachers' guidelines and expectations
- Participate in live instruction at scheduled times
- Be their own advocate when assistance or further clarification is required
- Communicate directly with teachers via email

Parents are invited to:

- Check in with your child each morning about their daily plan and time management
- Have daily conversations about work progress and set expectations that work will be completed timely

Teachers will:

- Provide daily and weekly work plans
- Provide live, direct instruction to students in accord with a consistent schedule
- Communicate frequently with parents and reply to e-mails within 24 hours Monday through Friday
- Offer frequent feedback to students
- Hold one-on-one check-ins with students on a rotating basis

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedure outlined in the Our Lady of Fatima School Parent/Student Handbook are still in effect during distance learning.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM RULES

When participating in a live session with your teacher and classmates, students must:

- Mute yourself except when given the floor to speak
- Virtually “raise your hand” for permission to unmute and speak
- Keep your video on, so that your teacher can ensure you are present and participating
- Avoid distracting backgrounds or actions
- Encourage each other with positive messages in chat or emojis if permitted by teacher
- Dress appropriately for attending class. Even though not in uniform, students are expected to dress and be groomed in a respectful and appropriate manner. The appropriateness of virtual classroom dress and grooming is at the discretion of the Principal.

Disruptive or disrespectful behavior or dress code violations may cause a teacher to remove a student from that day’s virtual classroom. If this occurs, the Principal will be notified and parents contacted.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES OWNED OR ISSUED BY SCHOOL

- Electronic devices owned or issued by the school are to be used only for academic purposes.
- Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in their use of the school’s equipment or network.
- OLF reserves the right to review a student’s electronic devices, files or messages including, without limitation, emails, photos, texts, videos and other applications, when school officials have reasonable suspicion that such search will reveal a violation of law or school policy.
- Users are permitted to log on only to their own school-issued account. Sharing of account information is prohibited and may result in your account being disabled.
- Students are prohibited from adding, copying, deleting or altering any operating system or applications and/or system setup or equipment configurations of devices owned or issued by OLF.
- All students must agree to follow the **Acceptable Use Pledge** (page 7).
- Students who violate these any rule related to the use of technology during distance learning or a school-issued device are subject to discipline as outlined in our Parent/Student Handbook, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

ACCEPTABLE USE PLEDGE

By accepting a loaned iPad or Chromebook from Our Lady of Fatima School, I agree:

1. I will use my device in appropriate, educational ways, and meet Our Lady of Fatima School's expectations as outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.
2. When using my device, I will use appropriate language in all emails, messages, chats, journals, blogs and every other form of communication related.
3. I will not create or encourage others to create discourteous, profane or abusive content.
4. I will not use electronic communications to spread rumors, gossip or engage in any other activity harmful to other persons. I understand that my device is subject to inspection by school officials at any time, without advance notice, and remains school property even in my possession.
5. I will take care of my device and ensure its safety from harm, damage or theft.
6. I will never loan my device or give my password to another person.
7. I will not let anyone other than my parents or guardians use my device.
8. I will keep food and beverages away from my device, and always wash my hands before using my device.
9. I will clean the screen **only** with a soft, anti-static cloth and will not use any water, sprays or cleaners.
10. I will not disassemble any part of my device or attempt any repairs. I will contact the Principal to assist with any technical issues.
11. I will not place decorations (such as stickers or drawings) on my device or its cover, or do anything to permanently alter the appearance of my device in any way.
12. I will not remove or deface the serial number or other identification on any device.
13. I will be financially responsible for all damage or loss caused by my neglect or abuse of all school-issued devices in my possession.
14. When directed by the school, I agree to return my device with its case, power cord and any other parts in good working condition.

FAQs

When and how can I reach my child's teacher?

E-mail remains the best way to contact a teacher. If you want to speak with a teacher, please use e-mail to arrange a time for a phone call.

When can I expect a response?

Monday through Friday, expect to hear back from teachers within 24 hours. Teachers are instructed to not use mail over the weekend.

How much communication can I expect from the school?

OLF will produce a weekly newsletter that will be e-mailed to you. The school will send e-mails and update the COVID-19 page of our website if/when there are significant updates impacting our school operations. Frequency of communication from your child's teacher will vary by grade.

If we encounter an issue with school-issued devices or technology, who do we contact?

Contact Principal Karen Forte at kforte@olfdof.org.

Can teachers individually tutor students online?

No, OLF teachers cannot individually tutor students. Teachers will be connecting with families on a "class level," and sharing suggestions, feedback and expectations on an individual or small-group basis. One-on-one video conferencing with your child's teacher may be scheduled, as needed, but only if a parent or another OLF staff member is also present.

If a student doesn't participate in live instruction, is it considered an absence?

Teachers will take attendance at the start of each live session. Students will be marked absent if they are not present when the teacher takes attendance. Absence at two or more of a student's live sessions in one day will be considered a full day's absence.

We do not have a printer. What should I do?

Parents and students will find it necessary to have printed materials across all grade levels. As remote learning may consider for some time, your family should consider purchasing a printer.

Do students have to wear uniforms for distance learning?

No, students are not required to wear uniforms while our entire K-8 student body is distance learning from home. This may change if/when we return to a scenario where some of our students are on campus and some choose to continue distance learning.

What support will OLF provide to parents who both work full-time?

Unfortunately, we are presently unable to provide on-campus childcare for K-8 students. We understand the challenge this presents for many families. When possible, relying on immediate family is best to limit exposure to those outside your immediate household. We also suggest coordinating with other OLF families who may be able to help share childcare arrangements.