



Distance Learning Plan



Developed: March 2020

Trafalgar Castle School Distance Learning Plan¹

This document is designed to describe the actions and approach Trafalgar Castle School will take during an extended campus closure due to COVID-19. It details how the school will support **Distance Learning** for students by providing a flexible distance learning framework with guidelines that can be implemented in a variety of circumstances.

The decision to close the school and implement distance learning was made by the Head of School, in consultation with senior management and the school's Board of Directors. The decision was based on the recommendation of the Chief Office of Public Health for Ontario.

Distance Learning will commence on Thursday, March 26, 2020 and will continue until the campus is re-opened.

We will provide parents and guardians with regular updates concerning dates and plans for re-opening.

Support For Boarders

We recognize the special needs of international boarders who may have challenges with online connectivity and time changes in their home country. The school will work directly with international students to ensure they have access to distance learning opportunities. No student (day or boarding) will be penalized academically for any issue resulting from the closure of the school.

Contact Information		
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¹ Elements of this framework are from the American International School in Japan Distance Learning Plan.

The Purpose of Distance Learning During School Closures

Distance Learning is not a substitute for classroom teaching that is rich with personal connection and opportunities for face-to-face collaboration. It can, however, provide an important continuation of learning and social-emotional connection to the school community during exceptional periods of time.

During a school closure, Distance Learning can help students:

- Establish regular daily routines;
- Continue learning in alternate ways;
- Maintain connection with teachers and classmates;
- Establish a sense of shared community;
- Feel supported during periods of possible stress.

When engaging in Distance Learning, teachers are asked to think differently about the opportunities and possibilities that may result from the challenging circumstances associated with any school closure. As teachers reflect on how to best design or redesign their units, lessons, or courses, we encourage them to consider the following questions:

- How can I leverage digital platforms to provide learning experiences rich in engagement, social interaction, and feedback?
- How can I help my students manage the worry, fear, or isolation they may be experiencing as a result of this emergency or crisis? How can I provide opportunities for students to share their concerns and support one another?
- What are the most important understandings and skills I can help my students develop at this time? How can I help my students construct their own understandings?
- What are the authentic learning opportunities that have resulted from this emergency or crisis? Where might my students' curiosity and motivation open other new possibilities?
- How can I design learning experiences that address the needs of different types of learners who need different kinds of support and guidance?
- How will I assess student learning in meaningful ways?

We recognize the importance of thinking differently about our priorities when responding to the challenging circumstances that necessitate a school closure. For this reason, we ask our faculty, students and parents to be open to new opportunities for students to learn in authentic, meaningful ways.

We also ask parents to remember that most teachers are not experts in Distance Learning and may require some trial-and-error before finding the right balance between online and offline learning experiences. Some teachers will feel more comfortable with new technology than others but we know that every teacher will do his or her best and rise to the challenge.

We recognize that our teachers and staff are also dealing with the stress of managing school closure and social distancing, and some will be caring for their own school-aged children. We can't anticipate every eventuality we will face during a school closure but will tackle challenges as they arise, and ask that everyone in our community demonstrate patience, mutual understanding, and consideration as we manage this unprecedented situation together.

We thank you in advance for your patience and partnership!

Lower School

The Director of Lower School, working with our teachers, will ensure Lower School families receive information and updates on a regular basis. **The roll out will take place gradually.**

The primary tools for communication between teachers and families will be newsletters via email and/or Google Classroom.

Learning materials, assignments, and resources will be uploaded to Google classroom for families in grades 4 through 8. Email communications will be sent to families, as required.

Students will have both off- and on-screen learning activities designed to engage Lower School learners in experiences that connect to the curriculum.

Learning tasks and activities will provide direction to families on how best to support student learning and the expected level of adult involvement. It is expected that students in grades 4 and 5 will need higher levels of support than students in grades 6-8, although each student will have a different ability to manage independent learning.

Grades 4 to 6 - Guidelines Only	
30 minutes	Reading
30 minutes	Writing
30 minutes	Mathematics
30 minutes	Science / Social Studies
15 minutes	French
15 minutes	Music / Community Time

Grades 7 to 8 - Guidelines Only	
45 minutes	Reading
45 minutes	Writing
45 minutes	Mathematics
30 minutes	Science
30 minutes	Social Studies
20 minutes	French
20 minutes	Music / Community Time

We understand that each family's situation will be different and that it may not be possible in all cases to provide the amount of support some students will require to complete work by Distance Learning. In such cases, families are encouraged to keep students engaged with books on tape, online learning videos, crafts, puzzles, educational games, and other opportunities for learning.

Daily physical activity is important and will help students focus on their work and manage any worries they may be experiencing.

Lower School Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Maintain a schedule (e.g., regular morning routine, regular bedtime, etc.)
- Find a quiet workspace where you can focus on your work
- Email your teacher if you need help or have a question
- Model patience, consideration, and support for others in dealing with the situation
- Be kind to your parents. We're all trying our best!

For questions about . . .	Contact
An assignment, homework	The teacher
A technology problem	Mr. Price
A worry or a problem	The teacher, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Garcia
A question, concern or just to say "Hi"	Dr. Foster

Upper School

Upper School students will participate in online learning that will follow the regular timetable. **Boarding students residing in different time zones will have access to recordings of each class and should review the lessons regularly.**

The school day will be adjusted to allow students more time to work independently while still providing the structure and routine necessary to support meaningful engagement.

DAILY SCHEDULE	
8:30 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.	Tutorial
9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Period 1
9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Period 2
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Period 3
11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Period 4
1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Faculty Check In

Structure of Online Classes

- Students will log-on through **Zoom** at the scheduled start of the period.
- Students are asked to have all required learning materials organized and on-hand prior to the start of class.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each period.
- Clear learning goals and an agenda for the lesson will be shared at the beginning of each class.
- The teacher may conduct an online lesson by sharing their screen to review a presentation, assign students to discussion groups through Zoom, or ask students to work individually on a task assigned through Google Classroom or email while they are on Zoom.
- Students are asked to be available and online for the entirety of the period, if possible.
- Assignments and homework will be assigned and posted in Google classroom or emailed to students..

Upper School Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Maintain a daily schedule (e.g., regular morning routine, get dressed, eat at regularly scheduled times, keep a set bedtime, etc.)
- Find a quiet workspace in your home where you can focus and participate online
- Log-on at the scheduled time, ready to learn
- Use your calendar to schedule online sessions and due dates
- Regularly check Google classroom and email
- Complete your assignments on time and with academic honesty
- Communicate with your teacher if you have questions or are struggling with an assignment
- Demonstrate appropriate online behaviour
- Model patience, consideration, and support for others in dealing with the situation
- Be supportive at home. We're all in this together!

For questions about . . .	Contact
A course, assignment, homework	The course teacher
A technology problem	Mr. Price
Learning accommodations	Ms. Garcia
An academic concern	Mr. Southwell or Ms. Taylor
University counselling and admissions	Ms. Knight-Johnson
A social-emotional concern or worry	Advisor, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Knight-Johnson
A question, concern or just to say "Hi"	Dr. Foster

Online Etiquette

- Turn off "alerts" during class time
- Do **not** have sidebar chat or IM conversations privately with other students during class

Parents / Guardians

The transition to distance learning will be challenging for families. Parents will need to think differently about how to support their daughter; how to create structures and routines that allow her to be successful; and how to monitor and support her learning.

Some students will thrive with distance learning, while others may struggle. The ten guidelines provided below are intended to help parents think about what they can do to help their daughter find success in a distance learning environment.

1. Establish routines and expectations.

From the first day Distance Learning is put in place, parents will need to establish routines and expectations. Please keep normal bedtime hours and ensure that your daughter is awake at a regular time. Getting dressed rather than spending the day in pajamas will help create a sense of routine and normalcy.

2. Establish a study space for your daughter

Your daughter may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may or may not be suitable for an extended period of time spent online. We encourage families to establish a public/family space that is **not** their daughter's bedroom.

Please ensure your daughter has access to a desk or table and firm chair that supports proper posture. Hours spent online sitting on a couch or in a bed will not be healthy.

3. Monitor your daughter's work

Teachers will communicate with parents through email, when and as necessary. The frequency and detail of these communications will be determined by your daughter's grade, maturity, and her degree of independence. For students in grades 5 through 12, information about assignments and learning expectations will be posted on Google Classroom.

Please ask your daughter to show you where her work is posted on Google classroom if you would like to see what is being assigned.

Your daughter's teacher will be in touch if she or he has any concerns, but we encourage you to reach out if you have any questions.

4. Begin and end each day with a check-in

Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. If you are not home with your daughter during the day, please check in with her over the lunch hour to ensure she is managing the Distance Learning without too much difficulty.

Not all students will thrive in a distance learning environment; some will struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines will help ensure your daughter does not begin to fall behind or struggle.

5. Find time for quiet and reflection

One challenge for families with multiple children will be how to manage everyone's needs, especially when children are different ages and have different learning expectations. There may be times when siblings need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Parents may wish to experiment with noise-cancelling headphones to block out distractions.

6. Encourage physical activity and exercise

Make sure your daughter is spending time outdoors (if possible) and is getting physical exercise. Distance Learning is more sedentary than active classroom learning. Even ten minutes of movement between periods will help students focus during class, and an end of day walk or workout will help both physically and mentally.

7. Watch out for stress or worry

Distance Learning is put in place in response to an emergency or health care risk. For some students, this situation will cause worry and anxious feelings. Parents whose daughters may be prone to worry are encouraged to monitor her exposure to media reports and to check in regularly to ensure she is managing any concerns. Please reach out if you are worried about her well being.

8. Monitor how much time your child is spending online

Despite our desire to support our students' learning during a school closure, we do not want students staring at computer screens for 7-8 hours a day. Please consider having screen-free evenings to balance the extra time your daughter will be spending online.

9. Set rules around social media

During a regular school day at the Castle, student use of cell phones is discouraged and monitored during classes. Distance Learning will create added challenges for teachers and parents as students will likely connect online with greater frequency. It is important that parents are aware of their daughter's use of social media, and we encourage families to have reminder conversations about acceptable online behaviour. It is very common for small social disagreements to blow up easily in an online environment, particularly when there is less adult monitoring.

10. Find time for togetherness

It is likely that the novelty of being away from school will wear off very quickly for some students and nerves may become frayed. Make time for activities with your daughter that break up the monotony, whether it's baking cookies, playing a board game, or doing a jigsaw puzzle. This will be particularly important the longer social distancing continues.

Parent / Guardian Roles and Responsibilities

- Encourage your daughter to maintain a daily schedule (e.g., morning routine, get dressed, eat at regularly scheduled times, keep a set bedtime, etc.)
- Find a quiet workspace where she can focus and participate online
- Ensure she is following the class schedule
- Check her Google classroom and/or email
- Monitor her completion of assignments
- Communicate with her teacher or Advisor if you have questions or concerns
- Support her in positive online participation and use of social media
- Encourage her to get exercise and fresh air during the school day
- Model patience, consideration, and support for others in dealing with the situation
- Remember that you can only do so much. We understand.
- Please know that the school is here for you!

For questions about . . .	Contact
A course, assignment, homework	Teacher
A technology problem	Mr. Price
Learning accommodations	Ms. Garcia
An academic concern	Mr. Southwell or Ms. Taylor
A social-emotional concern or worry	Advisor, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Knight-Johnson
Reporting your daughter's illness	Nurse Michelle
A concern, question, or just to connect	Dr. Foster

Faculty

We recognize that a school closure will place pressure on faculty who may have to balance the needs of students with the needs of their own family members. Our faculty are caring professionals who will do their best to ensure that students are engaged through high quality Distance Learning. Faculty and school administration will work together to support our students, families and one another.

Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish clear learning goals for each online session
- Use creative and varied tools and technology to support student learning
- Develop assignments that can be completed with a level of independence appropriate to the student's grade
- Provide timely, formative feedback
- Ensure necessary learning supports / accommodations are in place
- Monitor student online participation and completion of assignments
- Communicate any concerns to parents and school administration
- Model patience, consideration, and support for others in dealing with the situation
- Get daily fresh air and exercise whenever possible
- Be sure to take care of your own needs and those of their families
- Remember that support is available -- please reach out

A concern, question, or just to connect	Dr. Foster
A course, assignment, homework	Mr. Southwell or Ms. Taylor
A technology problem	Mr. Price
Learning accommodations for students	Ms. Garcia
Student concern	Mr. Southwell, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Garcia
Reporting a student illness	Nurse Michelle
Reporting a teacher illness	Mr. Southwell, Ms. Taylor, Nurse Michelle

School Administration

The Head of School and school administrators will ensure the safety and security of students, faculty and staff, and will work to support the school community through the period of closure and prepare for a smooth and safe transition back to school once the closure is lifted.

School Administration Roles and Responsibilities

- Liaise with government and public health officials and the Board of Directors during the period of school closure
- Communicate regularly with families, students and faculty/staff to ensure up-to-date information is available at all times
- Provide the resources and training required to support Distance Learning
- Be available to families, students, and faculty to answer questions and address concerns
- Check in with our faculty daily to ensure they are well
- Model patience, consideration, and support for others in dealing with the situation
- Retain our sense of humour and remember to take care of ourselves and one another!

Questions and Answers

When will the School reopen?

We will reopen the school as soon as the public health order is lifted.

What is happening with classes?

Distance Learning will begin on Thursday, March 26 (Day 1). More information will be communicated to students on Monday, March 23rd.

What if my daughter becomes ill and can't complete her course work?

As with any extended student absence, the school will work with the student and her family to ensure that required course work is completed. In Lower School courses, teachers will

ensure that students focus on the necessary core knowledge once they are recovered and may indicate what assignments can be waived. In the case of Upper School courses, extensions can be provided to allow students more time to earn the credit. In exceptional cases, credit courses may be extended beyond the end of the school year.

What if my daughter's teacher becomes ill?

The school will endeavour to ensure that students have access to course material even in the absence of a teacher. An extended teacher absence may require the school to modify lessons and assignments. Information about any teacher absence will be communicated to students and families as soon as the school is aware and has made arrangements for continued learning.

What is happening with activities, field trips and excursions?

All field trips, co-curriculars, athletics and excursions have been suspended for the foreseeable future. This includes the Grade 7 & 8 Science Fair, Cohort 21, the Business Etiquette Dinner, and the CISMFC concert at Roy Thomson Hall.

In addition, the MATE Robotics trip that was originally scheduled for Thursday, May 7 to Sunday, May 10 is cancelled. The New York Long Weekend trip is also cancelled.

Will the School closure impact my eligibility to graduate?

Trafalgar Castle School will support students in continuing learning through Distance Learning.

Lower School students will be supported in their learning through activities, projects and assignments. Teachers will work with families to ensure students are engaged and developing essential skills.

Upper School students will be supported to work towards successful completion of their Ontario Secondary School program. Upper School students must participate in Distance Learning and complete all requirements for each course in order to be granted credit.

At this point, we do not know how the Ministry of Education will manage the requirement for Community Service hours. We will communicate with students as soon as more information is known.

Will the closure impact my university acceptance?

The School will report final grades to universities and colleges as required. We understand that this can be a stressful time for Grade 12 students under normal circumstances, and appreciate the added pressure of this exceptional event. Ms. Knight-Johnson will work

individually with each Grade 12 student to ensure she is supported through to the end of the year.

Will school be extended into summer months?

There is currently no plan to extend the school year into the summer months.

Are academic and university counselling available during this period of school closure?

The Post-Secondary Information night and other information sessions for families will be rescheduled and, if necessary, held via video conference. Ms. Knight-Johnson will provide families with further details when more information is known.

Ms. Knight-Johnson will continue to work with students on course selection for September. We plan to complete our timetable for the 2020/2021 school year by May of this year, and will be able to inform Upper School students of any course conflicts.

What is happening with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)?

The OSSLT has been cancelled. The Ministry of Education has stated that the OSSLT will not be a requirement for students graduating in the 2019-2020 academic year.

What is happening with Advanced Placement courses and exams?

AP courses will continue via Distance Learning and 45-minute at-home exams will be allowed for the 2020 examination period. Content covered on the exams will be limited to the first 75% of the course. The specific units to be covered for each course may be found [here](#). Dates for the exams will be published shortly and we will keep students informed.

Live AP review classes are being arranged by College Board and may be used to supplement students' ongoing AP classes. The courses begin Wednesday, March 25th. More information may be found [here](#).

I am in Grade 11 and want to write the SAT. Can I still write?

College Board has cancelled all upcoming SAT exams. We will communicate further information as it becomes available.

BOARDING STUDENT INFORMATION

Is my Student Visa still valid? If I leave Canada, can I return?

The Government of Canada rescinded its March 16th directive that prohibited study permit holders from returning to Canada. As of March 18th, any student with a valid study permit may return to Canada. Any restrictions on travel or on re-entry to Canada would be due to other reasons unrelated to the student's study permit.

I am a boarding student and have returned home. What should I do?

At this time, boarding students who have returned home should remain with their families and participate in Distance Learning. We will communicate with you around your return once the government lifts the order closing schools. Please do not book return airfare without confirming your travel details with Ms. Holland.

I am an international boarding student and am still in Canada. Should I plan to return home?

International students are encouraged to speak with their family to decide if they should return home, understanding that restrictions on international travel may be put in place in the near future. If you leave Canada, you will be supported through Distance Learning.

I am an international boarding student and am unable to return home. Will I be able to stay in boarding?

The School will welcome back boarding students who cannot make alternate arrangements. Ms. Holland and Ms. Garcia will work individually with students to determine the required date of re-entry. Students may return to boarding on Monday, April 6th. In exceptional circumstances, an earlier return date may be possible. The school will ensure that no student is left without a place to stay.

While staying in boarding, students will be required to follow social distancing protocols and will not be permitted to leave the campus except for essential matters (e.g., to fill prescriptions). Weekend leaves and visitors are not permitted.

Boarding staff will support boarders with Distance Learning and will work to ensure they are provided with a safe and reassuring environment.

INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS

Will May Court and Trafalgar Day still take place?

We will continue to monitor the situation and resume all annual events once authorized by public health authorities.

When will the Castle resume facility rentals?

Trafalgar Castle School is suspending all events and facility rentals until further notice.