



**DISTANCE  
LEARNING PLAN  
SY 2020-21**

AUGUST 5, 2020



# Introduction to Khalsa Montessori School's Distance Learning Plan

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We are committed to making sure that students continue to experience the care and commitment of our faculty and the routine of daily learning, even in the event of school closure. We must acknowledge that our approach to distance learning cannot replicate the magic that happens when school is in regular session (the invaluable social interactions and mediation, real-time, in-person feedback, community and extracurricular events, and so on). However, we do contend that quality learning can occur from a distance.

The purpose of this document is to describe the actions Khalsa Montessori School will take to continue instruction either in the event of an extended campus closure or to provide learning for students whose parents have chosen the remote learning option for the first half of the school year. We endeavor in our Distance Learning Plan (DLP) to accomplish three goals K-8 within a flexible framework:

- Live Student-Teacher Contact Time
- Remote Content Delivery
- Remote Monitoring of Student Progress/Student Assessment

It is our intention with the DLP that we continue to live our mission, vision, and strategic plan, which together assert that, in order to prepare our students to respond to an ever-changing world, learning remain responsive, adaptive, personalized, and relationship-based. The act of creating this DLP provides us with a unique opportunity to reinforce what we assert through our founding documents.

The School Director will periodically send email updates to parents and faculty/staff apprising them of any pertinent information about when Khalsa might reopen for regular classes or when remote learning students can return to school. As with the decision to close campus, the decision to reopen school for regular classes will be made with close consultation with the school's Board of Directors.

The purpose of this DLP is to detail Khalsa's approach to distance learning, the channels we will use for communication, the online platforms we will employ by division, the roles, responsibilities, and expectations Khalsa has for faculty, parents, and students, guidelines for how parents/guardians can support their children's learning, and a host of other priorities and considerations tailored to make the best of challenging circumstances.

*We extend our gratitude to the American International School in Japan and 'Iolani School, on whose plan our plan is modeled.*

# Technology Systems to Support Distance Learning at Khalsa

With regard to the school’s core technological and communications systems, Khalsa offers the following FAQs to describe how we will communicate and manage learning in the event this DLP is implemented.

## How will Khalsa communicate with parents, students, and faculty/staff during remote learning periods or in the event of an extended full campus closure?

Khalsa will continue to use the same channels it employs for normal day-to-day communications with parents, students, and faculty/staff. All of these systems are remotely accessible and will function for any reasons a student has to remotely learn. The table below describes these systems:

Channel	Audience	Description & Access
Email	Faculty, Staff, Parents, Students	Email will be used for all major communications and announcements, including those from the School Director and division deans. Faculty will also use email to communicate, although they will use other platforms to interact with their students as well.
Google G-Suite	Students across Upper Elementary and Middle School	Google G-Suite (including Gmail, Docs, Classroom, etc.) will continue to be the platform used by teachers at these levels.
Zoom	Students across Primary, Lower, Upper Elementary and Middle School	Zoom is an online video conferencing platform that allows for live group meetings and subsequent breakout sessions multiple times each school day, hosted by teachers.
Work Packets and/or Printables	Primarily students in grades K, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary	Primary and Lower Elementary teachers will continue to use printed work packets as a way for students to demonstrate effort and mastery. These packets will be ready for pickup every Friday (for K and Lower Elementary) and as per need by Upper Elementary. Completed work packets should be returned as per teacher communicated timeline.
Cycle Study Guides	Students in Middle School	These are printed outlines of syllabus and work for 5 week cycles that will be provided to students in a color coded format.
Public Website	General public	Khalsa will maintain general information on its operating status for the public at <a href="http://www.khalsamontessori.org">www.khalsamontessori.org</a> .
Facebook closed group	Parents and Staff	Each class as well as administration will post any pertinent information, including appropriate photographs with classrooms’ in action. The parent consent form will be utilized to ensure appropriate permission.

**How will Khalsa ensure that students have access to these tools from off-campus?**

Most of our technology tools are not device-specific, which means students will be able to access learning through parental devices, phones, etc. In the event that a parent doesn't have access to devices, please contact the school so that appropriate support to prevent any delay in learning may occur.

# Eight Distance Learning Guidelines for Teachers

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*The transition to distance learning will not be simple or easy. Teachers will need to think differently about how to communicate, give instruction, and provide feedback, how to design lessons and assignments that are authentic and meaningful to a Montessori experience, and how to ensure students continue to collaborate and communicate with others. The eight guidelines provided below are intended to help teachers across all levels reflect on challenges they'll confront in shifting to distance learning.*

## **1—At Khalsa, we know our students and they know we care**

Khalsa's commitment is to nurture relationships and demonstrate deep care for our students and one another. Your students may be stressed or worried. Before diving into curriculum, take the time to assess your students' mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. How are they doing? How are their families?

## **2—Evaluate your students' conditions for distance learning**

While most students will have reliable online access at home and the necessary devices to shift to distance learning, others will not. Teachers will remember that each family's circumstances will vary and they should avoid assumptions about limitations or restrictions students are facing. Ask your students and/or their parents whether their online access is reliable and what devices the student has at their disposal. Open a dialogue with students and families and avoid assumptions that all students' circumstances are the same.

## **3—Stick with the familiar**

Especially in the first weeks after moving to this DLP, teachers will continue using existing communication channels and learning management systems. In other words, **stick with what's familiar to your students**. Teachers will remember that while many students will thrive with distance learning, others will struggle. In the event that the school remains closed for a longer period of time, it may become necessary to explore new or different learning platforms that provide different experiences.

## **4—Less is more**

Teachers will try their best to streamline content and elevate the most essential learning for students. In other words, teachers need to take a less-is-more perspective, including the pacing of lessons and volume of assignments and assessments. It is hard to know exactly how long school closure might last, which makes longer-term planning difficult.

## **5—Seize the moment; embrace new opportunities and possibilities for your students**

Years or decades from now, how will your students remember the emergency that resulted in school closure? While distance learning attempts to bring some normalcy and routine to students' lives, teachers won't ignore the opportunities resulting from school closure either. Teachers might require students to keep a daily journal or diary for the duration of the crisis. Personal journaling and/or other creative writing assignments can help students process their thoughts, worries, and emotions, particularly in times of crisis. Students might use other media as well, including video, drawing, painting, and music. Moreover, the crisis might also provide other real-life opportunities to study scientific phenomena associated with the crisis, how the media is reporting the incident, how governments are responding, and many other opportunities to seize the moment and design new learning transdisciplinary experiences for our students

## EIGHT DISTANCE LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS (CONTINUED)

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### 6—Design asynchronous learning experiences

When students are learning from various locations, teachers can still connect them asynchronously (not all students at the same time). For example, teachers can use response sheets from take home packets or other appropriate tools to allow student responses and dialogue during a set time period, knowing that students might not all be online at the same exact time.

### 7—Design synchronous learning experiences

When it comes to student engagement and learning, relationships matter as much online as they do in person. Students may be able to gather for synchronous learning times via Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. While we can't guarantee whole class experiences, teachers will try their best to provide developmentally appropriate synchronous learning.

### 8—Think differently about assessment

Assessment is one of the most challenging adjustments for teachers new to online learning. While meeting state mandated guidelines for benchmark assessments, distance learning will also be viewed as an opportunity for students, individually or collaboratively, to complete writing assignments, design infographics, make video presentations, or complete oral assessments via video chat. Teachers are encouraged to **think differently about the frequency and end goal of assessment** instead of forcing a traditional assessment method that doesn't fit distance learning. Thinking differently about assessment will positively influence the experience for students, leverage the strengths of distance learning, and prevent frustration on the teacher's part when traditional methods do not work.

*The guidelines above are modeled directly on the DLP of the American International School of Japan and 'Iolani School, with our gratitude.*

# Ten Guidelines for Parents Supporting Distance Learning

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*The transition to distance learning may be challenging for families. Parents will need to think differently about how to support their children; how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful; and how to monitor and support their children's 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 children find success in a distance learning environment.*

## **1—Establish routines and expectations**

From the first day Khalsa implements its DLP, parents need to establish routines and expectations. Khalsa encourages parents to set regular hours for their children's school work. Upper Elementary and Middle School students should plan to follow their regular schedule, in addition to attending and participating in their individualized Zoom meetings. For Lower Elementary students, we suggest students begin their studies at 9:00 a.m. with at least a half hour devoted to physical activity in the morning (keeping in mind Phoenix temperatures). Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your Upper Elementary and Middle School-aged students, too. (Don't let them stay up late and sleep in!) Your children should move regularly and take periodic breaks as they study. It is important that parents set these expectations for how their children will spend their days starting as soon as distance learning is implemented, not several days later after it becomes apparent a child is struggling with the absence of routine.

The School will require students to attend and participate at least twice daily. This attendance will be level specific and each parent will receive this information from their child's specific classroom teacher or administrative staff tasked with level specific communication. This attendance is IMPERATIVE for attendance calculation by the Department of Education.

## **2—Define the physical space for your child's study**

Your child 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, as will be the case if this DLP is implemented. We encourage families to establish a space/location where their children will learn most of the time. This should be a public/family space, not in a child's bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible.

## **3—Monitor communications from your children's teachers**

Teachers will communicate with parents through email, when and as necessary. The frequency and detail of these communications will be determined by your children's ages, maturity, and their degree of independence. When you need to contact teachers, please remember that teachers will be communicating with many students as well as other parents and that communications should be essential, succinct, and self-aware. We also encourage parents to have their children explain the online platforms (e.g. Zoom, Google G-Suite) their teachers are using.

## **4—Begin and end each day with a check-in**

Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. In the morning, ask what is your child learning today? What are their learning targets or goals? How will they spend their time? What resources do they require? What support do they need? This brief grounding conversation matters. It allows children to process the instructions they've received from their teachers. It helps them organize themselves and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents (that's normal!), but they should nevertheless. Parents should establish these check-ins as regular parts of each day. Not all students thrive in a distance learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines need to be established early, before students fall behind or begin to struggle.

## TEN DISTANCE LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS (CONTINUED)

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### **5—Take an active role in helping your children process and own their learning**

In the course of a regular school day at Khalsa, your son or daughter engages with other students or adults dozens if not hundreds of times. These social interactions and opportunities for mediation include turning to a peer to exchange a thought or idea, participating in small or large group discussions, asking questions for clarification, collaborating on group projects, and countless other moments. While some of these social interactions will be re-created on virtual platforms, others will not. Human beings learn best when they have opportunities to process their learning with others. Beyond the check-ins recommended at the start and end of each day, parents should regularly circle back and engage with their children about what they're learning. However, it's important that your child own their work; don't complete assignments for them, even when they are struggling.

### **6—Establish times for quiet and reflection**

A huge challenge for families with multiple children will be how to manage all of their children's needs, especially when those children are different ages and have different needs. There may be times when siblings need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Parents may even experiment with noise-cancelling headphones (no music necessary!) to block out distractions.

### **7—Encourage physical activity and/or exercise**

Make sure your children remember to move and exercise. This is vitally important to their health, wellbeing, and to their learning. It is important for parents to model and encourage exercise! Think also about how your children can pitch in more around the house with chores or other responsibilities. Don't let your children off the hook – expect them to pitch in!

### **8—Remain mindful of your child's stress or worry**

It is imperative for parents to help their children manage the worry, anxiety, and range of emotions they may experience. Difficult though it may be, do your best not to transfer your stress or worry to your children. They will be out of sorts, whether they admit it or not, and need as much normal routine as parents can provide. Please reach out to your child's teacher should he/she experience high levels of stress or worry.

### **9—Monitor how much time your child is spending online**

Khalsa does not want its students staring at computer screens for 7–8 hours a day. We ask that parents remember most teachers are not experts in distance learning and therefore give them the grace of time to find the right balance between online and offline learning experiences. Teachers will periodically check in with you to assess what you're seeing at home and what we need to adjust. We thank you in advance for your patience and partnership!

### **10—Keep your children social, but set rules around their digital communication**

Khalsa asks parents to monitor their children's use of digital communication. Remind your children to be polite, respectful, and appropriate in their communications and to represent your family's values in their interactions with others. A student's written words and tone can sometimes offend or cause harm to others.

*The guidelines above are modeled directly on the DLP of the American International School of Japan and 'Iolani School, with our gratitude.*

# Roles & Responsibilities During Distance Learning

Many stakeholders will contribute to the effective implementation of this DLP. The roles and responsibilities of students and parents are delineated below.

## Student Roles & Responsibilities

- Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences (e.g. following your daily schedule or establishing an 8:00 a.m. start)
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively and successfully
- Regularly monitor online platforms (Zoom, Google Classroom, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from your teachers
- **For All Remote Learning Students: Attend class meetings via Zoom according to your class schedule.**
- **Zoom Class Expectations:** When attending a zoom class, students must
  - Show up a few minutes before meetings and be prepared.
  - Dress in school appropriate clothes
  - Sit at a desk or table (not on a bed or couch)
  - No eating or other activities (such as playing with pets) that are distracting to the goal of the meeting.
  - Communicate and behave with the same respect and consideration you would use in the classroom
- **Some Zoom Lessons May Be Recorded** in order to provide additional resources for students and to monitor behavior
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work
- Do your best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates
- Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or require additional support
- Collaborate and support your Khalsa peers in their learning
- Comply with Khalsa’s policies, including expectations for online etiquette
- Proactively seek out and communicate with other adults at Khalsa as different needs arise (see below)

	Contact
a course, assignment, or resource	the relevant teacher
a personal, academic or social-emotional concern	your assigned teacher
other issues related to distance learning	School Director, Karen Paxton  karenpax@khalsamontessori.org

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES DURING DISTANCE LEARNING (CONTINUED)

### Parent/Guardian Roles & Responsibilities

Provide support for your children by adhering to the 10 Guidelines for Khalsa's Parents:

- Establish routines and expectations
- Define the physical space for your child's study
- Be organized about your child's learning environment and transitions by monitor communications from your children's teachers
- Begin and end each day with a check-in and ask your child questions about what they are learning
- Pick up any school provided packets or kits in a timely and responsible manner
- Set expectations and consequences around your child's completion of school work in a timely manner
- Establish times for quiet and reflection
- Encourage physical activity and/or exercise
- Remain mindful of your child's stress or worry
- Monitor how much time your child is spending online
- Keep your children social, but set rules around their digital communication
- **Approach your child's online experience at Khalsa in a trusting and positive way**

For queries about ...	Contact
a course, assignment, or resource	the relevant teacher
a personal, academic or social-emotional concern	your child's teacher
other issues related to distance learning	School Director, Karen Paxton karenrpax@khalsamontessori.org

# KG and Elementary School Priorities & Considerations

- The primary tool for communication between teachers and families is email.
- The primary tools for communication between teachers and students is Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. **Students are required to attend Zoom class meetings; attendance will be taken.**
- 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 K–2 will need higher levels of support than students in grades 3–8.
- **Parents should consult the email from their child’s grade level teacher for instructions on how to access distance learning resources.**

## Approximate Time Frames for Daily Learning to be supported by Parents

Kindergarten to Second Grade	
20–25 minutes	Reading (Social Studies connections as appropriate)
20-25 minutes	Writing
20–25 minutes	Mathematics
20–25 minutes	Science / Cultural
Third to Sixth Grade	
25–30 minutes	Reading
25-30 minutes	Writing
25–30 minutes	Social Studies
25–30 minutes	Mathematics
25–30 minutes	Science / Cultural
All Lower Elementary Students	
Yoga and Spanish	Teachers will provide a range of activities that continue to support the current program

# Lower Elementary Virtual Schedule

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For meeting access codes or more information, contact your child's guide.

Tentative LE Weekly Schedule						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	All Days
8:00 - 9:00	Outside Physical Activity Time					
9:00 - 10:00	Math 1	Language 1	Geometry 1	Cultural 1	students gather work to turn in at packet pickup	<b>Any time child is not scheduled for a meeting should be spent on follow-up/packet work</b>
10:00 - 11:00	Math 2	Language 2	Geometry 2	Cultural 2		
11:00 - 12:00	Math 3	Language 3	Geometry 3	Cultural 3		
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch & Recess					
1:00-1:30	read-a-loud with Assistant					
1:30 - 2:30	Writer's Workshop B	Writer's Workshop A	Reading Groups	Specials / Office Hours	Class Meeting	

# Middle School Priorities & Considerations

- The primary tool for communication between teachers and families is email.
- The primary tools for communication between teachers and students is email and Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. **Students are required to attend Zoom class meetings; attendance will be taken.**
- Teachers will also share resources using the Google Suite of tools (Gmail, google drive, google docs, google classroom, google sites) or the online platform they have chosen to use for their course.
- Learning experiences are designed to be completed independently or in collaboration with other students. Tutoring is not recommended, nor should a parent/guardian be too involved.
- Resources vary by class and lesson, but will include links to videos, graphic organizers, and scanned material to read and engage with, independent research material via online sources or our library databases, and reading materials including e-books.
- Students are encouraged to be proactive in reaching out to teachers when they have questions or assignments are unclear.
- Teachers are always available to support students with academic, social, or emotional needs. Please initiate contact by email.

## Approximate Time Frames for Daily Learning to be supported by Parents

Grade Level	Approximate Time per Class
Grades 7-8	40 minutes
Flex Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent &amp; self-directed</li> <li>• For the sake of learning</li> <li>• No timelimit/requirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read for pleasure</li> <li>• Be active</li> <li>• Explore personal interests/passions</li> <li>• If it is safe...               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore local sights</li> <li>- Seek out social interaction</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Middle School Virtual Schedule

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## *Monday – Thursday*

9:00am – 9:20am	Community Meeting
9:20am – 9:40am	Group Lesson (Social/Natural/Personal Worlds)
9:40am – 10:00am	Language Lesson
10:00am – 11:20am	Group Work (Teachers will monitor designated break-out groups)
11:20am – 12:00pm	Spanish (pending) - <i>Mon &amp; Wed</i> Yoga - <i>Tues &amp; Thurs</i>
1:30pm – 2:00pm	Math Lesson
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Teacher Office Hour ( <i>Tues &amp; Thurs only</i> )

## *Friday*

9:00am – 9:20am	Community Meeting
9:20am – 10:20am	Group Presentations
10:20am – 11:20am	Model UN
11:20am – 12:20pm	Social Hour/Lunch (optional)
1:30pm – 2:00pm	Math Lessons (when needed, to be announced prior)