



Roles & Responsibilities of School Personnel During Distance Learning

Many stakeholders will contribute to the effective implementation of this Distance Learning Plan. The roles and responsibilities of school personnel, students, and parents, are delineated below.

School Personnel Roles & Responsibilities	
Administrative Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and distribute Madison-Ridgeland Academy's Distance Learning Plan, or DLP • Establish clear channels of communications between faculty, staff, families, and students in the event of this DLP being activated • Support faculty and students/families shifting to a distance learning environment • Help teachers implement DLP and ensure <i>high-quality learning experience</i> for all students • Provide models and examples of outstanding distance learning units and lessons • Recommend new methods techniques for providing feedback to students • Support teachers as they design new methods to assess student learning
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students • Communicate frequently with your students and parents Provide timely feedback to support your students' learning • Reflect on the 10 Guidelines for Madison-Ridgeland Academy's Teachers shared earlier in the DLP and how you can implement them
Academic Counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate information about ACT Testing and Prep with Students • Serve as liaison for communication with students/families in crisis • Host Office Hours at set times for students to ask questions • Encourage students and parents to schedule meetings as needed
Special Subject Teachers/ Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with colleagues to find resources for high-quality distance learning experiences and research • Regularly check in with subject and classroom teachers to identify ways to support their design of distance learning experiences • Be available for teachers and students as needed for support
Technology Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and develop how-to tutorials, ensuring teachers, students, and parents have the necessary manuals to excel in a distance learning environment • Continually monitor the needs of teachers, students, and parents and troubleshoot their challenges, as needed • Be available in person or remotely to provide on-demand tech support help



10 Guidelines for Teachers During Distance Learning

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; and how to ensure students continue to collaborate and communicate with others. The ten guidelines provided below are intended to help teachers across all divisions reflect on challenges they'll confront in shifting to distance learning.

1—Walk the Talk of Know, Value, Care

Madison-Ridgeland Academy is committed to a challenging and purposeful college preparatory curriculum. However, before diving into curriculum and assignments, take the time to assess your students' mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. How are they doing? How are their families? Continue regular check-ins with your students as long as this DLP is in place.

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 should remember that each family's circumstances will vary and they should avoid assumptions about limitations or restrictions students are facing. Ask your students in grades 6th-12th and/or their parents to confirm their capabilities to carry out assignments whether their online access is reliable, or the student has sufficient internet access at their disposal. Open a dialogue with 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 Distance Learning Plan, teachers should continue using existing communication channels and learning management systems familiar to your students. Teachers should 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

One challenge confronting teachers will be how to best 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 assignments. It can also be 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 should attempt to bring some normalcy and routine to students' lives, teachers shouldn'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.

6—Provide space for personalized learning

Distance learning can provide opportunities for students to personalize what, how, and when they learn. School closure can also create opportunities for more authentic learning through research, virtual field trips, design thinking, gardening, cooking, or other interests. How might students be empowered to create their own learning pathways and experiences? How can they share these projects with the other students in your class?

7—Designers of experience; facilitators of learning

In shifting to distance learning, it is especially **important for teachers to think of themselves as designers of experiences and facilitators of learning** (as opposed to distributors of knowledge). Distance learning places a premium on a teacher's ability to think more deeply about how to introduce content, design experiences, and coach students with thoughtful, specific feedback. Teachers need to establish conditions where students have a clear sense of purpose, opportunities to express themselves, and experiences that allow them to work toward mastery. This will help students stay motivated and engaged in learning, even when they are not physically at school.

8—Design asynchronous learning experiences

When school is closed and students are spread across many time zones, teachers can still connect them asynchronously. For example, teachers can use familiar LMS discussion forums or tools like [Flipgrid](#) or [EdPuzzle](#) to allow for student responses and dialogue during set time periods, knowing that students might not all be online at the same exact time.

9—Design synchronous learning experiences

When it comes to student engagement and learning, relationships matter as much online as they do in person. You are encouraged to gather your classes for synchronous learning times via video chat using Google Hangouts (also known as Google Meet) or ZOOM. Be sure you communicate your class times with other teachers. Collaboration remains important and there are many ways teachers can foster it through synchronous learning.

10—Think differently about assessment

Assessment is one of the most challenging adjustments for teachers new to distance learning. Distance learning should be seen 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 end goal to performance 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.

10 TIPS for Parents During Distance Learning

The transition to distance learning will 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 Madison-Ridgeland Academy implements its Distance Learning Plan, parents need to establish routines and expectations. We encourage parents to set regular hours for their children's school work. We suggest students begin their studies by 9:00am. Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your MS- and HS-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.

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. 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. Above all, it should be a space where parents are present and monitoring their children's learning.

3—Monitor communications from your children's teachers

Teachers will communicate with parents through email and Canvas, 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. Madison-Ridgeland Academy wants parents to contact their children's teachers. However, we ask parents to remember that teachers will be communicating with dozens of other families, and that communications should be essential, succinct, and self-aware. We also encourage parents to have their children explain the Learning Management Systems (e.g. Canvas, Google Meet, ZOOM) 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 your child what are you 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.

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

In the course of a regular school day at Madison-Ridgeland Academy, 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 you 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. 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

Help your child/children manage the worry, anxiety, and range of emotions they may experience. Difficult as 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.

9—Monitor how much time your child is spending online

Madison-Ridgeland Academy 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 that it will require some trial-and-error before we find the right balance between online and offline learning experiences. Division principals or 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 social media interactions

There's always excitement when school closes for weather days. This excitement will fade quickly when students start missing their friends, classmates, and teachers. Help your children maintain contact with friends through phone conversations, Facetime, or even writing letters and sending through "snail mail"! Please also monitor your children's social media use, especially during an extended school closure. Older students will rely more on social media to communicate with friends. Social media apps such as SnapChat, and Instagram are not school sanctioned channels of 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 offend or cause harm to others

Guidelines for Students During Distance Learning

1. Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences (e.g. 9:00am start)
2. Regularly monitor online platforms (MyBackPack, Canvas, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from your teachers
3. Identify a comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively and successfully
4. Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best
5. Do your best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates
6. Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or require additional support
7. Collaborate and support your peers in their learning
8. Comply with Madison-Ridgeland Academy's Acceptable Use Policy, including expectations for online etiquette

For Questions About...

Contact

Assignments, classes, or grades

the classroom teacher

An academic or college concern

MS – medwards@mraps.org

HS - lcrosswhite@mraps.org

A technology problem

Technology Department

Director – jblack@mraps.org

HS – tcamp@mraps.org

MS – mstampely@mraps.org

Other Concern

Building Principal

MS – rhailey@mraps.org

HS – gself@mraps.org

Middle School

Middle School Priorities & Considerations

- The primary tools for communication between teachers and families will be MyBackPack, Canvas, and email.
- Teachers will either link materials linked in Canvas or share materials directly to each student's MRA email account.
- Students will have both off- and on-screen learning activities designed to engage the middle school learner.
- 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 or scanned material to engage.
- Students are encouraged to be proactive in reaching out to teachers when they have questions or assignments are unclear.

Middle School: Approximate Time Frames for Learning All MS Students (Grades 6, 7 & 8)

50-60 minutes Math

30-40 minutes English

30-40 minutes STEM

30-40 minutes Social Studies

30-40 minutes Electives/Rotation

50-60 minutes Flex Time: Read for Pleasure, Explore Personal Interests/Hobbies, Be Active Outdoors

High School

High School Priorities & Considerations

- The primary tools for communication between teachers and families will be MyBackPack, Canvas, and email.
- Teachers will either link materials linked in Canvas or share materials directly to each student's MRA email account.



- 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 or scanned material to engage.
- Students are encouraged to be proactive in reaching out to teachers when they have questions or assignments are unclear.
- The academic counselor is always available to support students with academic needs and/or college counseling.

High School: Approximate Time Frames for Learning

50-60 minutes English

50-60 minutes Math

50-60 minutes History

50-60 minutes Science

40-50 minutes Electives

50-60 minutes Flex Time: ACT Prep, Explore Personal Interests/Hobbies, Research College Choices, Be Active Outdoors