

Distance Learning Program & Protocol

developed in collaboration with all MOMI teaching faculty
alongside peers and schools within the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

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2933 Baldwin Avenue
Makawao, HI 96768

Distance Learning Program

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Note: I have put things in italics throughout to simply share my thinking. As you prepare your own things from this template, you should delete the italicized stuff.

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Distance Learning Plan Philosophy / Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform and educate all Montessori School of Maui stakeholders about our Distance Learning Philosophy. We have prepared this document to illustrate our plans for ensuring the continuity of our educational program across all classrooms and departments should our ability to deliver it in typical fashion be hindered for any reason, including the COVID-19 outbreak. While certainly requiring innovation on the part of many to make the Montessori philosophy and hands-on methodology easily transferrable to the home setting, we believe we have provided a clear and consistent framework that affords substance and value to what we hope is life-long learning. By maintaining flexibility in our approach and in relation to each student, we believe the program defined herein will meet the variety of circumstances and needs that our students possess.

We have worked collaboratively to develop a forward-thinking program that supports our students and families. We have been proactive in our approach to anticipate student and faculty needs and understand that adjustments and modifications will need to be made as we continue to instruct and offer materials, lessons, and activities that align with our curricular standards. We also understand that as we learn too, enhancements to what we initially provide and how delivery occurs will need to change.

As we prepared for a potential roll out of our Distance Learning Program, we envisioned what our distance learning program should look like in practice. Part routine already, we believed it was imperative that program teams planned together so that similar expectations were afforded within particular programs, with differences being managed as necessary given the needs and abilities of particular students. You'll find that we included Resource teachers in our planning and preparations as what they afford our students is treasured and equally supports their minds, bodies, and spirits.

Our Distance Learning Program includes our own resources as well as those available online already. In part, and as you are well aware, we believe that affording students with varied opportunities and choice provides for excitement and creativity that is not always afforded in more traditional education programs. All outside resources have been vetted by faculty to the best of their ability in order to ensure that such resources support what has been taught and furthers learning in accordance with our lesson planning and curricular standards.

Days when distance learning is in practice are real school days for all students and teachers. In many ways similar to other in-person school days, the planning, preparation, and execution of distance learning plans requires the same of faculty. Not surprising too, they may also require more from either the student or the teacher. In any case, each will require hard work and 100% commitment by everyone.

Finally, 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; as well as how to design lessons and extension activities that are authentic and meaningful. We have attempted to formalize many of these processes in order to meet these needs systematically. In all cases, our commitment to you and our students is guaranteed. We hope that you recognize it in our efforts as we have worked to enhance and strengthen our MOMI community even during this unprecedented time.

Proposed Goals of the Distance Learning Plan

Maria Montessori's vision for the education of young people cannot easily be replicated through distance learning. Important characteristics of the methodology like the independence and interdependence among students and teachers that occurs naturally within the Montessori prepared environment won't happen virtually but important to recognize, learning still can. To make it happen, the faculty has found and will utilize new methods for providing instruction and care.

It is our hope that the Distance Learning Program that we have designed and will implement as necessary will encourage the students to think differently, to act creatively, and to embrace new challenges that are presented. As faculty problem solved to develop methods and means for delivering standards-based curricula, the follow goal-oriented questions remained at the forefront of their minds:

- How and through what means can we best provide remote learning experiences that ensure honest engagement by students in our age group?
- What should we remain mindful of in order to ensure that we are able to meet students' individual needs?
- What tools and / or resources can I utilize to help my students expand on what they've learned already?
- What talents do my students possess that they could use in order to learn in new and novel ways?
- How does what I am asking my students to do help them construct their own understanding?
- In what ways can I assess the efforts of my students so that it is meaningful for their continued growth and development?

Primary to our approach for distance learning is the belief that when confronted by unfamiliar circumstances, we need to think in differently. Like all matters that cause feelings of unease, how we choose to react to is important and can make the difference between our success or failure. As such, we believe that our asking critical questions and devising good, valuable goals is proactive. Undoubtedly, this will help us maintain a level of continuity for the students and their learning, remain engaged with one another, and connect in a way that furthers the growth of our community.

The Role of the Teacher in Implementing a Distance Learning Program

The role of the Montessori teacher within a classroom of learners is multi-faceted, although facilitating learning, and doing so within the prepared environment are two key aspects. Moving toward the design and implementation of learning experiences that occur virtually poses challenges to say the least. Nonetheless, the following ideas presented through collaboration with other independent schools expand on the questions posed above in *Proposed Goals of the Distance Learning Plan* and identify a few key elements that we have remained mindful of in preparing authentic lessons for the virtual world.

The faculty have designed and planned for experiences that account for developmental appropriateness. Not all students share the same limitations and challenges so it is necessary that we account for them and their unique circumstances. While online resources may be easily accessible to you and others, some students and families may not find it so convenient. Bottom-line, think about what platform is most accessible by the students and / or which may be best to support the learning outcomes you seek and use it.

By utilizing the formalized structures and formatted materials created, faculty can systematically bring normalcy and routine to distance learning outside of the Montessori classroom. That said, take advantage of new ideas and new means that encourage learning in this new environment.

Be reasonable and don't overly challenge yourself as faculty with newly discovered possibilities. While exciting perhaps, remaining mindful of individual student circumstances and other time-honored means for communication will be important as distance learning kicks off. Using what is familiar to our students, our families, and even yourself as a teacher should be extended. Everyone should remain aware that things may need to change from time-to-time, from lesson to lesson, or learner to learner. It's okay and knowing this upfront will ensure everyone a win.

The pacing of lessons and work will be important to think about as students and their families look to implement processes that seldom occur in the home, most certainly for our youngest learners. To this end, streamlining content, the presentation of lessons, and the breadth and scope of extension activities will all need to be accounted for. Important for planning too will be making considerations for the length of time that distance learning is implemented, necessitating a review of curricular standards and each child's progress toward meeting the identifiable outcomes.

Supporting Parents and Children

Helping students and families organize themselves during the initial stages and on-going implementation of our Distance Learning Program, or simply time at home, is important. As parents reviewing this document, learning helpful information relative to supporting your students in their work habits, with schedules, and their attention to the details will be valuable. Additionally, calendars will be utilized by the faculty to ensure routine and timely contact with students and families. The following ideas as presented through collaboration with other independent schools identify a few ideas that may help you to help your student.

Provide space for learning

Distance learning can provide opportunities for students to personalize what, how, and when they learn. To help them, we suggest the following:

- Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively and successfully
- Regularly monitor what your child's teacher sends.
- Support your child in putting forth his / her best effort on all work
- Do your best to help your student meet timelines, commitments and recommendations for work completion
- Be present and monitor your student's learning

Establish routines and expectations

Keep normal routines for your children, including bedtimes. (Don't let them stay up late.) 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.

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 and as age appropriate, ask your child what he / she expects to be learning today? What are their learning goals based on the schedule provided? How will they spend their time? What resources do they need? What support do they need, if any? Such conversations matter and they allow students to process what's next. Valuable even when distance learning is not in practice, they help students organize and set priorities. Remember, in this scenario that is new to everyone, these check-in routines need to be established early, before students fall behind or begin to struggle with the new expectations.

Take an active role in helping your student process and own their learning

In the course of a regular school day, your student engages with other students and adults all the time. These social interactions and opportunities provide immeasurable benefit. While some of these social interactions could be re-created on virtual platforms, others will not. Your student will learn best when he / she has opportunities to process all learning and activities with you.

Beyond the check-ins recommended at the start and end of each day, parents should regularly circle back and engage with the student about what he / she is learning.

Establish times for quiet and reflection

A huge challenge for families with one or more student will be how to manage all of everyone'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.

Support communication with the teacher

Teachers will communicate with parents through email, or other predetermined means as scheduled and as necessary. We ask parents to remember that teachers will be communicating with many of other families, and that communication should be essential and succinct. Parents need to be patient if teachers do not respond immediately. It will be an adjustment period for all.

Proposed Daily Schedule

Before 9:00AM	Wake Up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, clean room and workspace
9:00 – 10:00	Morning Activities	Mindfulness / Exercise
10:00 – 11:00	Academic Time	Per weekly teacher schedule
11:00 – 12:00	Resource Time	Art, Spanish, Living Classroom, Food Prep, Baking, Creative Expression
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 – 1:00	Outdoors time	Walking, Running, Chores
1:00 – 1:30	Quiet / Reading Time	
1:30 – 3:00	Academic Time	Per weekly teacher schedule
3:00 – 3:30	Outdoor time	Fresh air, physical play
3:30 - dinner	Free Choice	Building, Crafting, Quiet Time

Academic Program Weekly Outline- March 30 – April 3, 2020

Monday/30	Tuesday/31	Wednesday/1	Thursday/2	Friday/3
Mindfulness Daily Language Daily Math	Exercise (PE) Daily Language Daily Math	Mindfulness Daily Language Daily Math	Exercise(PE) Daily Language Daily Math	Mindfulness/PE Daily Language Daily Math
Language Extension (Name/Lesson)	Math Extension (Name/Lesson)	Language Extension (Name/Lesson)	Math Extension (Name/Lesson)	Language Extension (Name/Lesson)
Art	Spanish	Living Classroom	Art	Spanish
Research, Story Writing, Creative Expression, History, Science, Cultural Studies	Research, Story Writing, Creative Expression, History, Science, Cultural Studies	Research, Story Writing, Creative Expression, History, Science, Cultural Studies	Research, Story Writing, Creative Expression, History, Science, Cultural Studies	Research, Story Writing, Creative Expression, History, Science, Cultural Studies
Journaling/Reflection/ Clean Up	Journaling/Reflection/ Clean Up	Journaling/Reflection/ Clean Up	Journaling/Reflection/ Clean Up	Journaling/Reflection/ Clean Up

Please know, I appreciate that each of you may elect to communicate with your children and families differently. The means by which you choose matters little me, in fact it's about the only thing I don't really care about unless you don't communicate. As you've heard me say, our consistency within classrooms and between programs is key. If we look together even as we are all trying to figure things out, we look together. Know what I mean?

I understand too that some of you would rather not share your direct contact. No problem. Ultimately, I don't know if you can voice chat over HobNob, Class Dojo, Blooms, or whatever else you may use but there are certainly a number of things out there—share with one another your failsafe and comfortable communication means. You may even elect to create a free account on Zoom, WeChat, WhatsApp strictly for these purposes and at this time. Obviously, you can turn off notifications and when contact is not initiated by you, you won't even know you have it.

Regardless of what you choose, you should create a schedule.

Communication Protocol and Schedule- Home / School Partnership- Week 1

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:15/30	Kaia B	Everett R	Ashton P	Jace B	Follow-Up to Anyone
8:30-8:45/9	Niko B	Rylie C	Bowen P	Kanaloa C	
9:00-9:15/30	Ella C	Jaxson C	Levi R	Sydney C	
9:30-9:45/10	Pearl H	Ikaia G	Boston R	Charley D	
10:00-10:15/45	Kuahiwi J	Cirae M	Gabriella S	Manu D	
10:45-11/15	Jack L	Fletcher N	Rocco S	Noa M	
11:15-11:30/45					

**You may elect to tell parents you will flip this schedule each week, essentially having a Week 1 and Week 2 Schedule. You'll need to identify that each week when you send details of expectations Sunday/Monday. What the flipping would provide is that on Week 1, particular kids would be contacted Monday and Wednesday, on Week 2 Tuesday and Thursday. Maybe too complicated but it would help avoid four days of lag time between teacher-family contact.*

You should probably suggest too that if kids or parents have questions, they should save them for the phone call or send an e-mail. Tell them, "I will respond to you as soon as I am able given my schedule to check-in and coach others, as well as my continued efforts planning

for this distance learning effort and your successful achievement.” *(Know that I’m giving you words because undoubtedly, we will have parents thinking that you’ll have all the time in the world when not at school.)*

Lesson Plan Template- Format (Primary)

Distance Learning Planning Assignment Document
Department: Primary

Academic Program Weekly Outline- March 30 – April 3, 2020 (Change the underlined dates)

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Lesson/Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Directions-	

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Lesson/Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Directions-	

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Lesson/Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Directions-	

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Lesson/Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Directions-	

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Lesson/Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Directions (see attached)-	

Lesson Plan Template- Format (Lower / Upper Elementary / Middle School)

Distance Learning Planning Assignment Document
Department: Lower / Upper Elementary / Middle School

Academic Program Weekly Outline- March 30 – April 3, 2020 (*Change the underlined dates*)

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Video / Link- NA?	
Directions-	
Anticipated Outcomes-	
Rubrics- (<i>If applicable</i>)	

Date Assigned- _____	Date Due- _____
Assignment/Project Title- _____	
Video / Link- NA?	
Directions-	
Anticipated Outcomes-	
Rubrics- (<i>If applicable</i>)	

Closing

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and newfound efforts to support your child(ren) as we work to implement this new Distance Learning Program. Certainly, your feedback will be important as we continue our efforts. Please take advantage of the schedule provided by your child's teacher and enjoy this moment. Inconvenient for sure as it's outside everyone's normalcy, it valuable and has merit for all.