

St. Ferdinand Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook



Fall 2020

Beginning the Year in Distance Learning

This document outlines guidelines related to starting the school year in Distance Learning program at St. Ferdinand Catholic School. We reserve the right to make additions, amendments, and deletions at any time.

SAINT FERDINAND CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Remote Learning Plan Handbook

Based on the recommendation made by our local, state, and federal health officials along with the Department of Catholic Schools (DCS), St. Ferdinand is beginning the school year remotely. According to the correspondence from Superintendent Paul Escala sent July 17, 2020:

“All three counties served by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are currently on the state’s monitoring list and are likely to remain through August. The criteria for the return to in-person instruction is based on the state’s local health jurisdiction (LHJ) monitoring list. If a county is placed on the state’s monitoring list, the schools in that county will not be permitted to conduct instruction in-person. Once the LHJ has been removed from the state’s monitoring list for 14 consecutive days, in-person instruction will be allowed to resume – this is when we will return to campuses.”

In the spring of 2020, St. Ferdinand, like many other catholic schools, transitioned rapidly to distance learning and we all learned together how to navigate this new instructional landscape. Teachers did a great job in responding to the crisis and making sure that plans were in place to continue the learning process. There were many lessons learned over the period of three months. Teachers have been attending professional development over the summer to learn best practices in all subjects in online classes.

As we begin the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning, the teachers are confident that they will be able to build on what we learned during the spring and the summer and make adjustments and refinements for our school’s distance learning plan. Teachers have been preparing diligently for the new school year to ensure rigor in their classes every day.

What is Distance Learning?

According to the California Department of Education (2020), “distance learning means instruction in which the student and instructor are in different locations. This may include interacting through the use of a computer and communications technology.” Students receive instruction remotely through synchronous and asynchronous engagement. Synchronous learning occurs in real time using live lessons led by the teacher. Asynchronous learning happens on one’s own time using materials provided by the teacher.

Distance Learning Mission Statement

Saint Ferdinand Catholic School, guided by our Catholic-Christian faith and tradition, is committed to providing remotely, a challenging and dynamic curriculum designed to motivate academic growth through twenty-first century learning. Keeping our mission in mind, we will continue to support the students through Distance Learning with engaging lessons while being as supportive as possible for families.

Our distance learning plan is designed with the following key features:

- **Asynchronous** learning to ensure the opportunity to learn for all students based on schedule and connectivity
- **Synchronous** video conferencing to support learning and socio-emotional needs of students through social interaction with peers and teachers

Teachers will commit to monitoring and improving this plan throughout the time of its implementation in the Fall schedule until we resume on-campus learning. While Distance Learning does not replicate onsite learning, teachers will deliver powerful instruction based on a robust curriculum that allows students to meet expected grade-level standards in an online environment aligned with the mission of our Catholic schools.

Office Schedule

The office will be open from 8:00am – 4:00pm Monday through Friday. (8:00am to 12:00pm on campus)

Parents are expected to:

- ◆ make an appointment prior to an in-person visit to the office
- ◆ wear a mask the whole time they are in the office
- ◆ keep social distance of at least 6ft with others present in the office
- ◆ stay behind the protection screen at all times

Instructional Schedule

We have developed distance learning instructional schedules that take into consideration the traditional school schedule and developmental age. The online program will include, but not limited to, daily live sessions on Zoom or Google Meet, Google Classroom, a variety of videos created by teachers, various online programs, for example, MobyMax, Flipgrid, Khan Academy, and Seesaw. Teachers will communicate with parents each week to share the content that will be taught in class each day. The remote learning schedule for each grade will be in an addendum to the handbook.

These schedules will begin on Monday, August 31, 2020. On August 25 and 26, teachers will meet with the parents and provide them with all the supplies and devices. Parents will also be provided with all the login information needed for the devices. All questions will be answered during this time. August 27 and 28 will be used to orientate students and establish relationships. The teachers will discuss the expectations with the students and make sure that students understand the guidelines in the handbook. Parents will also fill out a few important forms at this time. It is recommended that parents and students read the Distance Learning Handbook before the scheduled time with the teacher so that the handbook agreement can be signed and returned to the teacher.

When school is given a green light to have on-campus classes, we plan to go back on a hybrid plan. According to this plan, we will have on site classes from Monday through Thursday and remote learning on Friday. Each grade level (except 6th and 7th) will be divided into two groups. *Group A will attend the school campus on Monday and Wednesday. Group B will attend school in-person on Tuesday and Thursday. 7th grade will attend in-person classes on campus on Monday and Wednesday whereas 6th grade will attend on Tuesday and Thursday.*

Instructional Guidelines for all students

A. *TK through first grade are going to use **Zoom** as their online platform whereas second grade through 8th grade teachers are going to use **Google Meet** or **Zoom** for live sessions.*

In these live sessions, students will be expected to:

- ◆ attend each class as scheduled (*students who do not attend class will be marked absent*).
- ◆ attend each class for the entire time (*cannot leave early without permission*).
- ◆ come to class on time (*10 minutes late - marked tardy, more than 10 minutes – half absence*).
- ◆ wear uniform red/white polo shirt with free dress bottoms during all live sessions
- ◆ be seated at a desk or a table throughout the duration of class in a well-lit room
- ◆ have their meals/snacks and use restroom, before class session begins or during breaks

- ◆ keep the video ON and audio on mute (*unless the teachers wants it unmuted*) all through class
- ◆ be polite to each other by raising their hand to ask permission to speak
- ◆ have all materials ready and devices charged or plugged into a power source before class starts
- ◆ have the least amount of distractions around them (*pets, toys, phones, siblings, etc.*)

Rationale for these guidelines:

In the third trimester of 2019-2020 school year, it was observed by the teachers that students who did not attend classes regularly, developed gaps in their learning because they were missing too many classes. It was evident by the late work that was being turned in. Students who do not keep up with weekly instruction and assignments tend to become overwhelmed because they had too much missing work to catch up on. Teachers will regularly reach out to the parents if their child is missing classes without informing the teacher.

Assignment Guidelines

B. For Grades TK through 8, all assignments online will be posted in ***Class Dojo/Google Classroom*** for the students. Assignments will be in, but not limited to, ***Google Docs, Google Forms, Khan Academy, and MobyMax.***

Students will be expected to:

- ◆ complete all assignments on time.
- ◆ follow all directions for each assignment in all subjects
- ◆ ask questions in live sessions to get clarification on assignments
- ◆ check email every day to make sure no messages from teacher are missed
- ◆ follow late work policy* (this will be at the discretion of each teacher)

**In grades 5 through 8, there will be 10% deduction of grade for each day it's late to 4th day. After that assignment will not be accepted and the grade will be a '0'. (Please check with your teacher in grades TK-4 for each teacher's varied individual late work policy)*

Parents of student(s) who are missing work will be informed via email. A plan will be put in place to provide the students with the support needed to be successful. If there is no improvement, students with failing grades will be put on a conditional academic contract. They will be provided with a deadline to improve their grades.

Attendance

Student attendance will be taken daily. Teachers will take via live video conference. There also needs to be some evidence of completed student work in order to be marked "present" for the day. Teachers will record attendance by 3:00pm and record it in Gradelink. If your child is unable to participate in the day's online sessions due to illness or other reasons, please make sure that you email your child's teacher so that your child's absence is excused.

Communication

Communication will primarily be sent through two systems:

- ◆ Gradelink - Our Student Information System (SIS) is used to manage student records of the school and communication with families.
- ◆ Zoom/Google Meet - Each classroom will be using a Learning Management System (LMS) to communicate and organize student learning. Teachers will communicate with students through this platform. *Google Classroom, Seesaw, Flipgrid, Class Dojo, Google Docs, Google Forms, Khan Academy, and MobyMax.*

- ◆ Weekly schedules will be emailed to the parents and students on Sunday afternoon providing enough time for the students to be prepared for the week. In grades 2 through 8, daily assignments will be posted in Google Classroom during class.

Parents are asked to communicate with teachers via email. Please remember that the teachers' priority is time with the students. Teachers will respond to all parent queries within 24 hours. Teachers will also hold virtual office hours, the purpose of which is for students who need help, parents who want to speak with the teacher, connection and relationship building.

The virtual office hours for remote learning period are as follows:

◆ TK/K	2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Appt. Only)	Monday through Thursday
◆ 1 st Grade	1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Monday through Thursday
◆ 2 nd Grade	2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Monday through Thursday
◆ 3 rd Grade	2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Monday through Thursday
◆ 4 th Grade	1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Monday through Thursday
◆ 5 th Grade	1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Monday through Thursday
◆ 6 th – 8 th Grade	2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Monday through Thursday

Communication from Administration

The Principal will communicate with the parents weekly. The communication may be in the form of an email or video message. Parents will be consistently updated on the current situation and the decisions made by the Archdiocese and the school

Picking Up Resources and Orientation

We have established a schedule for school families to pick up books and other supplies on August 25 and 26. The office will share a Sign-up Genius link with all the parents by the end of next week. Teachers will be available on both days to provide all supplies (Textbooks, devices, login information, packets in primary grades) to ensure that students have access to needed materials. This will include information regarding how students will connect on the first day of school. All the materials will be reviewed with the students during the first week of school.

Technology Support

Students in 5th through 8th grade will use their laptops (Chromebooks/Macs) for their online classes and to complete their assignments. Grades TK through 4 will use their iPads for the online sessions, reinforcement, and enrichment. All iPads will be equipped with Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Flipgrid, Seesaw, Kahoot!, and Socrative. TK through 2nd grade will also have Class Dojo and Spelling City. Teachers will provide the login information as well as class codes necessary to enroll or log into the accounts. Teachers will also be available to provide support for parents who seek help in accessing the accounts and logging in. All the students will be provided with a school email that will be used for all school related assignments and programs. Over the summer, all iPads have been updated, apps downloaded and restrictions set. The Macs should be updated to MacOS Catalina. Chromebooks were also updated. In grades fifth through eighth, students will be required to enroll in Google Classroom, Khan Academy, Mobymax, Flipgrid and Educreations. The login information will be provided to the students on August 25 and 26.

Any questions regarding technology and devices will be answered to the best of our ability. If a borrowed or rented device is damaged and is out of warranty, parents will be responsible to get it fixed before it is returned

to the school. Parents are requested to make sure that students are careful with all their devices and that the students do not eat or drink near the devices. Any liquid is not a kind friend to the devices and repairs are expensive. So please ask your child to be careful with all devices!

Norms for a Distance Learning Environment

As suggested by Archdiocese of Los Angeles:

Norms for a Distance Learning Environment	
Student Expectations in a Distance Learning Environment	Parent Supports in a Distance Learning Environment
When engaging with online resources and platforms ...	
<p>Student are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only access online educational websites and apps that are approved and provided by your teacher. • Report something that is inappropriate by telling your teacher and/or parent about the situation. • Be respectful when posting comments. • Submit assignments/posts that reflect your personal best work. • Only share your classroom content and account information with your parents. 	<p>Parents should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the educational websites and apps that have been approved for use by your child. • Bookmark websites and apps to make them easily accessible for your child. • Support your child with logging in. • As much as possible, allow your child to independently complete the work so that the teacher has an accurate representation of his/her understanding. • Ensure that students are not accessing non-approved websites or apps.
When participating on a Zoom or Google Meet....	
<p>Engaging on Zoom or Google Meet is similar to participating in a classroom environment. Students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit at a desk/table with minimal distractions around you. • Mute yourself when you join the meeting. • Listen with your whole body, eyes on the speaker, ears listening, body calm. • Share/respond when invited to by the teacher in a strong, presenter voice level. • Leave the meeting when instructed by your teacher. • Respect teacher and classmate privacy by not recording or screenshotting images or content. 	<p>When your child is engaging on Zoom or Google Meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child find a quiet space with minimal distractions. • Allow your child to independently participate. • Monitor your child’s online interactions.

Here are additional tips adapted from <https://www.acs-schools.com/parents-guide-distance-learning>

Establish routines and expectations

It is important to develop good habits from the start. Create a routine and talk about how it’s working overtime. Chunk your days into predictable segments. Help students get up, get dressed and ready to learn at a reasonable time. Keep normal bedtime routines, including normal rules for digital devices.

Choose a good place to learn

Set up a physical location that's dedicated to school-focused activities. Make sure it is quiet, free from distractions and has a good internet connection. Make sure an adult monitors online learning. Keep doors open, and practice good digital safety. Ensure that all needed materials are nearby.

Stay in touch

Teachers will mainly be communicating regularly through our online platforms and virtual learning environments. Make sure everyone knows how to find the help they need to be successful.

Help students 'own' their learning

No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or to be educational and content matter experts. Provide support and encouragement, and expect your children to do their part. Struggling is allowed and encouraged! Don't help too much. Becoming independent takes lots of practice.

Begin and end the day by checking-in

In the morning, you might ask:

- What classes/subject do you have today?
- How will you spend your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?

At the end of the day you might ask:

- How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
- What did you discover? What was hard?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?
- What can we do to organize you for tomorrow?

Encourage physical activity and exercise

Living and working at home, we will all need some room to let off steam. Moving (independently and together as a family) is vital to health, wellbeing, and readiness for learning.

Manage stress and make the most of an unusual situation

We are going through a time of major upheaval to our normal routines and ways of life, and there's a great deal of anxiety in the world right now. Emotions may be running high, and children may be worried or fearful. Parents may be stressed as well, and children are often keenly aware of trouble. Children benefit when they get age-appropriate factual information and ongoing reassurance from trusted adults. In these circumstances, it's often possible to reframe challenges as opportunities.

Monitor time on-screen and online

Distance learning does not mean staring at computer screens seven and half hours every day. Teachers will aim to build a variety of on-line and off-line tasks. Work together to find ways to prevent 'down time' from becoming just more 'screen time.' Podcasts and audiobooks (many free through library apps) are great options.

Connect safely with friends, and be kind

Help your children maintain contact with friends through safe online technologies. But monitor your child's online use. Remind your child to be polite, respectful and appropriate in their communications, and to follow school guidelines in their interactions with others. Report unkindness and other problems so that everyone maintains healthy relationships and positive interactions.