



## **Distance Learning Plan 2020-2021**

This Distance Learning Plan is a dynamic document that describes how The Hillside School will approach instruction during times when in-person attendance is limited or suspended. Our goal is to provide distance learning for our students in the context that we continue to deliver our mission at the highest level. The Hillside School Distance Learning Plan has been informed by parent survey responses, established in accordance with *The Hillside Health and Safety Plan* for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year and correlates with the The Hillside School Student/Parent Handbook.

### **DISTANCE LEARNING INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES**

Distance learning takes place whenever students are not able to attend in-person learning in the school building.

The students' physical, mental and emotional health and safety are high priorities.

Synchronous and asynchronous methods of instruction are offered to give students a balanced approach to learning.

Faculty accept a high level of autonomy and responsibility with a high level of support from administration.

### ***DEFINITIONS***

***Asynchronous:*** Class interactions happen via online platform without real time interactions. Students independently engage with digital and nondigital tools and materials to complete work at their own pace, typically within a given timeframe.

**Synchronous:** *Class interactions happen in real time at the same time and facilitate a sense of community. Students virtually attend class together via video conference, livestream or chat.*

## COMMUNICATION

The Hillside School understands that frequent communication is a key component of a successful distance learning plan.

**STAFF:** Hillside staff members will largely communicate through email to our constituent groups. The Connect 5 system will be used in urgent situations.

**FACULTY:** Teachers and specialists will communicate with families in a variety of ways: emails, phone calls, Google Classroom, Zoom for Education, video recordings and Veracross. Teachers will schedule weekly office hours.

**PARENTS:** Parents are encouraged to communicate through email with their child's teacher. There is also an option of leaving a phone message at the school. Office staff will check and route the messages daily.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLES	ACTION STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR
<b>Administration and staff</b> will	Create and distribute Hillside's Distance Learning Plan  Maintain communication within the school community  Support faculty, students and families during this time of distance learning  Trust the professionalism of teachers and help them to implement the Distance Learning Plan  Communicate with families any disruptions to the plan, including teacher unavailability  Establish what families can expect of The Hillside School*
<b>Classroom teachers</b> will	Develop relationships with students and their families

	<p>Differentiate instruction with an emphasis on the process of learning and executive skills</p> <p>Create a flexible, adaptable environment for academic learning</p> <p>Provide feedback to students on assignments including their use of strategies and executive skills</p> <p>Create a Google classroom</p> <p>Create a consistent, weekly schedule</p> <p>Conduct and record class and individual Zoom meetings</p> <p>Provide each student with weekly, individual instruction</p> <p>Publish office hours</p> <p>Enforce expectations for student appropriateness within the distance learning structure</p>
<p><b>Specialists will</b></p> <p>Art Teacher</p> <p>Guidance Counselors</p> <p>Library Media Specialist</p> <p>Science Teachers</p> <p>Speech and Language Pathologist</p> <p>Technology Integration Specialist</p>	<p>Develop relationships with their students and their families</p> <p>Differentiate instruction with an emphasis on the process of learning and executive skills</p> <p>Create a flexible, adaptable environment for academic learning</p> <p>Create a Google classroom</p> <p>Create a consistent, weekly schedule</p> <p>Conduct and record weekly class Zoom meetings</p> <p>Provide each student with individual instruction as needed</p> <p>Publish office hours</p> <p>Enforce expectations for student appropriateness</p>

	<p>within the distance learning structure</p>
<p><b>Students will</b></p>	<p>Set yourself up for success and take charge of your learning</p> <p>Identify space in your home where you can work productively</p> <p>Regularly check Google classroom for assignments and feedback from teachers</p> <p>Practice your executive skills and learning strategies</p> <p>Do your best to participate in instruction and complete your assignments</p> <p>Self-advocate and communicate with your parents and teachers</p> <p>Comply with Hillside’s expectations for technology and online behavior</p>
<p><b>Parents/Guardians will</b></p>	<p>Be willing to be flexible and adapt to a changing environment</p> <p>Establish routines and expectations to help your child get into “school mode”</p> <p>To the extent possible, define the physical space for your child’s learning</p> <p>Monitor communications from your child’s teachers**</p> <p>Encourage brain breaks and physical activity and times for quiet and reflection</p> <p>Be clear with your child about school and family expectations regarding online interactions and social media</p>

## ACADEMIC LEARNING

The goal is to provide the best distance learning experience while staying connected as a community of learners. Students will have opportunities to develop strong, caring relationships with adults, to think deeply, to connect with their peers and get excited about learning. Based on what is essential for students to know and do, teachers will blend synchronous and asynchronous tools to provide a balanced instructional approach.

Well-designed technology is an essential educational component at The Hillside School. Students receive direct instruction on the use of the technology tools and have opportunities to practice under the guidance of the Technology Integration Specialist and the Classroom Teacher.

<b>ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
<b><i>Bookshare</i></b>	“An Accessible Online Library” that removes “reading barriers with ebooks in audio, braille, large font and more.” Bookshare has over 600,000 fiction, nonfiction and textbooks.
<b><i>Co:Writer</i></b>	The writing assistant program assists with word prediction, speech recognition and language support.
<b><i>Dictation Software</i></b>	Various dictation programs are used to enable students with Dysgraphia to verbalize their thoughts and use the power of technology to create the text version for them.
<b><i>Learning Ally</i></b>	Learning Ally is a provider of audio versions of fiction, nonfiction, and textbooks. It promotes independence, aids in comprehension, models fluency and expression and identifies unknown words.
<b><i>Snap &amp; Read</i></b>	Reads accessible and inaccessible text aloud. It works across Google Drive, websites and PDFs and provides dynamic text leveling. Additional tools such as annotation and bibliographer are available.

<b>PROGRAMS/RESOURCES</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
<b><i>Audacity</i></b>	This program allows the user to record audio tracks through their computer's microphone. This would include voice recordings, music they created, etc. Many students use the program to record podcasts and voiceovers for slide and video presentations.
<b><i>Destiny</i></b>	"Destiny Library Manager is a complete library management system that can be accessed from anywhere, 24/7, helping to strengthen the crucial bond between the library, the classroom and home." Destiny is also a research tool and can be used to find "good" websites and materials. They have been vetted by Follett the company that created Destiny
<b><i>Flipgrid</i></b>	"Flipgrid is a simple, free, and accessible video discussion experience for PreK to PhD educators, learners and families."
<b><i>Glogster</i></b>	Glogster is a multi-media, interactive poster that allows students to express ideas by combining images, graphics, audio, video and text on one digital canvas.
<b><i>Google Classroom</i></b>	Google Classroom is a service provided by Google. Using Classroom, teachers can connect with students to aid in streamlining distribution of assignments and materials, It also helps with organization such as putting all assignments in one location so that students can find them quickly. Teachers can use Classroom to quickly communicate with students and to allow students to share resources with each other. This is particularly helpful with collaborative work.
<b><i>Nessy</i></b>	Nessy programs are designed to help students of all abilities in first through sixth grade learn to read, write, spell and type, especially those who learn differently.
<b><i>Padlet</i></b>	"Padlet is a software people use to make and share content with others."
<b><i>Productivity Suites</i></b>	Google Drive provides students with the opportunity to create word processing documents, slide presentations and numerical spreadsheets.
<b><i>Readworks</i></b>	Readworks is a website that differentiates reading passages to assist children in building their reading comprehension.
<b><i>Screencastify</i></b>	Screencastify is a Google Chrome Extension that allows teachers and students to create a video from their computer. Teachers can

	use it to create educational content and students can use it to show their thought processes, etc. They can screen cast their computer screen and/or include video from their webcam at the same time. Recordings are saved to Google Drive.
<b>Typesy</b>	A comprehensive typing curriculum with over 400 lessons. It uses videos, game mechanics and muscle memory to build a student's keyboarding ability.
<b>World Book Online</b>	An online encyclopedia that includes articles, images, videos, a text-to-speech option and many other reference tools.

Non-digital learning materials are essential for a variety of subjects, as well as particular students. Teachers and/or office staff will communicate details regarding the pick-up of non-digital learning materials at The Hillside School.

During the **HYBRID** schedule, live distance learning classes will be  
 Daily for all students in order to conduct mixed age group Math and Specialized Reading classes  
 Comprised of a minimum of two Zoom meetings on full distance learning days  
 Recorded to accommodate families' schedules

During the **DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY** schedule, live instruction will be  
 Provided for the duration of two to three hours daily via Zoom  
 Classroom teachers: approximate total of 1 hour  
 Specialists (6 per week): 30-45 minutes  
 Specialized Reading and/or Math: 30-45 minutes  
 Available on a 1:1 basis each week by the classroom teachers. Topics or content determined based on the needs of the student  
 Recorded to accommodate families' schedules

\*Parents and guardians can expect:

- Frequent communication from your child's teacher(s)
- Differentiated instruction for each student
- Consistent use of Google Classroom and Zoom
- Documented attendance in every class
- Variety of assignments and instruction from your child's teacher(s)
- Prompt responses from the school leaders
- Written and verbal support from the educational professionals at Hillside
- Adherence to professional ethics

Faculty and staff can expect from parents and guardians:

- Respect and support for their expertise as educational professionals
- Communication which reflects open-mindedness
- Agreement to observe the constraints of a teacher's time and resources
  - School hours are 8:30am-3:30pm
  - Office hours will be scheduled 3 times per week based on the teacher's schedule
- Spirit of collaboration with all faculty and staff

### **ATTENDANCE**

\*\*The Hillside School has the responsibility to collect and measure student attendance, regardless of the instructional model, during distance learning. Based on guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, when students are learning remotely (regardless of whether it's synchronous or asynchronous) the school must assess whether or not the student engaged in the assigned learning activity and have evidence of completion.

- Attendance will be documented during all synchronous classes
  - Communication between parents and faculty is essential when students are unable to attend these classes
  - Timely submission and evidence of the completed assigned learning activities contribute to the designation of either "present" or "absent"

The Hillside School will operate according to the yearly school calendar.

### **ASSESSMENTS**

Experts are advising educators to focus on informal, formative assessments: well-designed activities, questions or short quizzes that "assess" the few, most critical things. A few examples of the way teachers may require students to show their understanding include:

- Discussion based assessment through teleconferencing or recorded video
- Project based learning with multiple checkpoints
- Taking pictures or videos

Formative assessments will be the best tool in the upcoming year for checking for understanding, adjusting instruction to meet students' needs and giving feedback. Research supports a focus on student learning rather than performance; it's important that schools lean on the side of support and learning rather than competition to forge a positive learning environment. More details on assessments will be forthcoming.



## **ONLINE LEARNING AGREEMENTS AND PERMISSION FORMS**

Video conferencing is a way for students to meet with their teachers and classmates. Students are expected to follow behavior standards in the following categories: Be On Time; Be In a Quiet Place; Be Prepared; Presentation; Recording; Participation; Chat Responsibly; Communication; Be Respectful. A detailed presentation by the Technology Media Specialist, supported by all faculty and staff, will take place in every class and then be available for additional viewing by students and their families. Prior to engaging in online learning, it is essential for all students and parents to complete and return to the school the following forms:

**TECHNOLOGY POLICIES AGREEMENT FORM & MEDIA POLICY/STUDENT OWNED DEVICE POLICY**

**THE HILLSIDE SCHOOL DIGITAL MEDIA USE AGREEMENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS & STUDENTS**

**THE HILLSIDE SCHOOL WEBSITE USE PERMISSION FORM**