

# Continuity of Learning and Community Plan for Parents and Students

In the event of continued shut down of school campuses, the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee (DOPT) Office for Catholic Schools offers the following *Continuity of Learning and Community Plan*. We intentionally adopted the word “continuity” as a means to bring clarity and focus to the experience of our teachers, students, and families as we finish the 2019-2020 school year. We will be avoiding terms like “distance learning” or “virtual learning.” We will refer to this experience to further the mission of Catholic education as “eLearning,” which will be engaging, electronic and exciting.

## Purpose

As Catholic schools, we help to foster the faith of community members while providing an invaluable service to our families. Our purpose is to provide continued academic and spiritual growth to students through eLearning and experiences. Although the campus is temporarily closed, “school” continues as we engage students with experiences that advance the planned learning program and help them to stay connected with teachers and classmates. These learning experiences offer authentic opportunities to focus on key concepts, knowledge, and skills in order to successfully earn final grades and complete grade level. They emphasize interaction and creativity, involving

a balance of on-screen and off-screen tasks that help connect to previous learning and the current curriculum.

The DOPT Continuous Learning Team, including the Superintendent and all PreK-12 administrators, has provided a framework with guidance and support materials for all diocesan schools to reference and adapt. We recognize that each school will have to make many site based decisions that are unique to their student population, staff, and resources.

The following common themes have emerged from the team’s work:

1. Continue on our mission of educating the whole person: academically, socially, physically, and—most importantly—in their faith, while integrating Christ across the curriculum.
2. Focus on essential learning for students—“Quality over quantity”.
3. Be flexible and ready to adapt when needs arise.
4. Emphasize relationships in this new learning environment.

5. Show empathy to others, having gracious assumptions towards others; people are having different life experiences than normal right now.
6. Decisions must support all populations of students.
7. Encourage the use of materials, resources, and platforms that are already in use, while providing training and support for all new resources and platforms.
8. Instructional models may be a blending of non-technology, face-to-face, and virtual platforms.
9. Establish a consistent and agreed upon framework of expectations, communication models, and practices that all stakeholders share.
10. Pray for and extend grace to all in these unique and trying times. Remember everyone processes differently; this is a traumatic situation.

### Superintendent Expectations

- Provide a periodic, optional virtual prayer opportunity (recorded and posted, possibly live) for the students and staff via RingCentral (Zoom) separate from a school's individual morning prayer. Examples could be Angelus, Examen, etc.
- Support principals and teachers in their instructional roles through increased presence on Glip (virtual communication system) for Professional Learning Community (PLC) communication and educational resource distribution.
- Support principals as they monitor eLearning.
- Host weekly optional virtual PLC meetings for teachers to share what is working and to encourage cross-collaboration and innovative teaching methods like team-teaching, multi-school seminars, etc.
- Compile and maintain a list of helpful resources to support eLearning.
- Setup optional virtual training opportunities with professional development providers and trainers coordinated through the Office for Catholic Schools that teachers can participate in remotely.
- Monitor system-wide unit and lesson planning, virtual instruction time, and grading to ensure continuation of learning occurs.
- Pray. We need your prayers and the prayers of our pastoral center staff, especially now.

### Principal Expectations

- Establish an IT team and communication process for community tech needs.
- Provide a regular message to staff and students and lead a daily prayer session for students and families.
- Monitor teacher unit and lesson planning, virtual instruction time, and grading to ensure continuation of learning occurs.
- Ensure that daily attendance is taken.
- Host a virtual faculty meeting at least once per week.
- Provide weekly updates to the superintendent on teaching and learning progress.
- Actively consult with other principals on best practices and collaborative opportunities.
- Provide weekly updates to the superintendent on other elements of school management (finances, enrollment, etc.).
- Provide weekly newsletter to parents. Plan for alternative coverage in the event of staff absences.
- Pray. We need your prayers and the prayers of your school community, especially now.

### All Teacher Expectations

- Prepare and post a week's lesson plan to the school's Learning Management System

- (LMS) for students to view; adjust as necessary throughout the week.
- Each Monday morning by 7:30 a.m., each teacher must post (on their school's LMS) the plan for the classes that will be held that week for each course they teach. The plan must stipulate:
    - On what platform and at what time their class will be held each day.
    - When a videoconference is to be held, you must define the time that the class will "meet," reminding students that the lesson will be recorded and posted on LMS within 2 hours of its completion for those who were unable to be live during the class video conference itself.
  - Provide a live or recorded video message regularly for students.
  - Based on your current classroom schedule, send a message over your LMS to students at a minimum of as many times per week as your class is normally scheduled to meet with assigned content, work, and expectations for completion.
  - Keep in mind that we need to strike a balance between advancing in the curriculum and keeping student stress and screen time to a minimum. Remember that older siblings may be helping younger ones in the household.
  - Begin live classes and meeting times with prayer and serve as the spiritual leader of your class.
  - Provide the opportunity for your students to interact with their peers online. This might mean giving feedback on an assignment, making a collaborative response, hosting discussion boards, or beginning group sessions with a social connection and check-in. This can leverage technology to build stronger and deeper relationships.
  - Consider ways to focus on relationships and connections, not just content.
  - Provide students with writing/journaling opportunities that connect to service in the household or other experiences in their life that promote growth in their life skills and contribute to the well-being of the family and family relationships.
  - Continue to integrate the faith into lessons.
  - Create cross-curricular work when possible to maximize efficiency.
  - Create projects/choice boards that give students and families flexibility to complete the work and tap interest/motivation.
  - Incorporate activities that do not involve screen time into eLearning.
  - Create and communicate an alternate learning plan in the event that teachers or families cannot access the internet.
  - Serve as the point person for all home-room/house student questions as per principal directive.
  - Presume the best of your students and parents.
  - Host at least one virtual office hour each day for students to ask questions and receive assistance. Guidance counselors, ESE teachers, and teachers' aides should do the same. Having designated hours each teacher will be accessible online is recommended. This provides consistency and structure. However, be aware that some households will be sharing a device, so it is important that teacher availability is spaced out over the day so all students can have an opportunity to contact their teacher.
  - Check daily work required of students. Completed work counts as proof of attendance for record keeping purposes. Post grades and daily attendance on Powerschool according to principal expectations. Daily attendance will be determined based on assignments being submitted when due.

- Provide feedback on at least one piece of student work regularly and/or contact the parent regularly to check in. This can be done through Powerschool gradebook.
- Live Video Conferencing 1:1 with a student is NOT recommended. Please include two adults or two students for accountability and liability. Utilizing classified staff to be video partners on live calls would be an excellent idea.
- Provide each student in your homeroom/ house with a personal check-in weekly to discuss the status of learning for the week. Communicate with a guidance counselor and principal any concerns about specific students, weekly, at a minimum.
- Keep variables in mind when you plan your lessons considering students may have:
  - Multiple classes
  - Other responsibilities
  - Personal or family illness
  - Limited access to devices and internet
- Consult with other teachers both within the school and within your department and/or Professional Learning Community to find ways to share best practices and/or successful strategies for eLearning. Work together as a team. Design an alternative plan in the event of inability to provide instruction and contact your principal an hour prior to your class beginning.
- Adopt a growth mindset. Be bold and take the opportunity to try new things and take risks with content delivery. Administration will be here to support you through the successes and challenges.
- Pray. We need your prayers and the prayers of your students, especially now. Help them connect with God in these times and feed their spiritual growth. Offer interactive prayer/spiritual reflection when possible.

## Grade Level Specific Expectations

Having weekly assignments, video check-ins, and projects are all ways to assess learning. Once again, focus is on the critical standards needed for your content area in order to progress to the next grade level. Keep in mind that many families have limited data internet and one device which must be shared between multiple people.

The guidelines below are meant for any delivery model or learning activity and would encompass all subjects. Teachers may find that they have to scale back and adjust after their first week with going online. Give yourself and students plenty of grace during this time. Everyone is adjusting and many have multiple roles at home.

Our recommended guidelines for student commitment each day are as follows:

- Pre-K : 60 minutes/day
- Grades K-1: 90 minutes/day
- Grades 2-3: 120 minutes/day
- Grades 4-5: 150 minutes/day
- Grades 6-8: 180 minutes/day
- Grades 9-12: 220 minutes with a minimum of 120 minutes contact time per subject per week

Specials Teachers (Library, Music, PE., & Counselors) will work with classroom teachers to develop cross-curricular content to meet a variety of standards. Cross curricula work benefits students and staff, as well as parents by streamlining continuous learning (exempt high school). Specials teachers have a unique opportunity to engage students in physical movement and the arts to keep children engaged in fitness and creative explorations.

## Parent Expectations

- Support the community and prayer life of the school.
- Set up a workspace and work time for your child.
- As part of a conscious effort to continue to develop your child's life skills, be sure your child makes positive contributions to household work and family life. Schools will be reinforcing the students' need to make positive contributions at home.
- Students are expected to attend all live classes and/or sessions. During these live sessions, students will be required to turn on their device's camera so the teacher is able to see the student during class. Students need to check-in to class as specified by the teacher no later than 5 min into the class or they will be marked absent. Students MUST remain signed into the class for the entire block or until the teacher releases them to do class/group work.
- If a student leaves in the middle of a class, the student MUST notify the teacher by email that he or she student is leaving the session and why. A parent email must follow to report the absence.
- Continue to report absences per your school's guidelines. Students are expected to attend all live classes and/or sessions. If a student is not able to attend a scheduled live class and/or session, then the parent needs to consider this as an absence and report it to the school accordingly. If a student is absent for a live class and/or session, then he or she is expected to watch the recording of the live session and complete the work as soon as possible. Please refer to your school's policy regarding excused and unexcused absences.
- Schools' absence make-up policies apply to eLearning.
- Behavior considered to be distracting to class meetings and/or other students or not following the directives for virtual classroom management by the teacher, can be written up for classroom disruption or insubordination per the school's code of conduct and discipline policy. Parents will be notified if there is a discipline issue with a student.
- Work with your teacher on developing a routine for your child. Appropriate and consistent bedtimes, meal times, and school work times are very important to success. If you are struggling with developing a routine for your child, please reach out to your child's teacher for suggestions and help.
- Be sure your child eats breakfast and other meals.
- School policies for homework and academic integrity still pertain.
- Don't take over your child's work for him/her. School policies on student original work and academic honesty will still apply.
- View your child's work and grades in Powerschool and your school's Learning Management System.
- Presume the best of the teachers and school leaders.
- Please follow the appropriate chain of command if an issue arises. Please contact your child's teacher first with any concerns. Matthew 18:15 "If your brother\* sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother."
- If you have multiple school-aged children, stagger their work times as much as possible.
- Be sure your child gets exercise daily.
- Schools are not expecting faculty/staff to share personal cell phone numbers. Please contact your child's teacher through school provided contact information.
- If contacting the teacher after their

scheduled office hours, allow time for the teacher to respond.

- We're here to work with you. We are all in this together.
- Pray. We need your prayers and the prayers of your family, especially now. Make it a priority to connect with God during these times to feed your spiritual growth.

## Student Expectations

- Adhere to your school's Honor Code/ Handbook and the diocesan eLearning pledge.
- Set up a workspace and work time for yourself.
- Follow your school's free dress policies when attending live sessions.
- You are expected to attend all live classes and/or sessions. During these live sessions, you will be required to turn on your device's camera so the teacher is able to see you during class. Check-in to class as specified by your teachers no later than 5 minutes into the class or you will be marked absent. You **MUST** remain signed into the class for the entire block or until the teacher releases you to do class/group work.
- If you leave in the middle of a class, you **MUST** notify the teacher by email that you are leaving and why. A parent email must follow to report the absence.
- Absences will still be recorded by the school. If you are not able to attend a scheduled live class and/or session, then your parents need to report your absence to the school per school guidelines for reporting absences. If you are absent for a live class and/or session, then you are expected to watch the recording of the live session and complete the work as soon as possible. Please refer to your school's policy regarding excused and unexcused absences.
- Schools' absence make-up policies apply to eLearning.
- Continue on your path to successfully completing this school year by striving for academic excellence and earning grades in order to complete your current grade level.
- Complete and submit your work on time.
- Do your own work.
- As part of a conscious effort to continue to develop your life skills, be sure to make positive contributions to household work and family life. School will be reinforcing your need to make positive contributions at home.
- School policies for homework and academic integrity still pertain.
- Communicate if you have any questions or concerns. Ask for help if you need it.
- Be considerate of others in online discussions.
- Behavior considered to be distracting to class meetings and/or other students, or not following the directives for virtual classroom management by your teacher, can be written up for classroom disruption or insubordination per your school's code of conduct and discipline policy.
- Continue to follow your school's Acceptable Use Policy and be exceptional digital citizens.
- Remain hopeful knowing your teachers are doing all they can to move your education forward in an excellent manner.
- Obey the Fourth Commandment.
- Remember you are not "at home" during eLearning but "in school". Your job is to learn. This is an opportunity to learn a new skill set and grow in responsibility in this new model of learning.
- Assuming you are not using your cell phone as the classroom device, it should be silenced and put away during eLearning. Limit your distractions.

- Pray. We need your prayers and the prayers of your family, especially now. Make it a priority to connect with God during these times to feed your spiritual growth.

## Student Guidelines for Online Etiquette:

As an online student, communication is a bit different than in a face-to-face setting. We pride ourselves in providing several opportunities for social interactions, but the difference is that most communication is via written text in an online environment. Because this means you are missing body language cues and immediate feedback from your “listener,” it is very important to understand some common rules for good online etiquette. This ensures that the message you intend to convey is received correctly.

**1. Be respectful.** While it is easier to say hurtful or disrespectful things without standing face-to-face with someone, it is important to remember that your classmates and teachers are real people who are affected by the words you say and write. It is essential to keep in mind the feelings and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online either.

**2. Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points.** It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Have you ever sent a text message with good intent but your recipient thought you were being rude? If so, then you've experienced this firsthand. By being cognizant of strong language, you can identify potential confusions before sending messages. Tip: Read everything out loud before you send it.

**3. Be careful with humor and sarcasm.** Certainly, you shouldn't avoid being funny. We love to see your personality shine through in online classes. Many of our teachers are exceptionally funny too. As mentioned in Rule #2,

make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude. Emoticons and smileys can be helpful when conveying humor or sarcasm so that it is read correctly. Just remember to keep the smiley faces away from academic papers.

**4. Yes, grammar and spelling matter.** While texting, textspeak can be great for your friends. In an educational setting (even online) however, keep it formal. Your written communication should be professional and reflect proper writing style. Save written shortcuts and less than stellar grammar for parent-approved social media, if you must, but follow grammar rules for school.

**5. Cite your sources.** Whenever you are sharing an idea that originated from someone else (even if it is not word for word), it is good practice to cite that source. This applies to discussion forums too. If you read a great thought in your text, share it, but be sure you let your audience know where you saw it first.

**6. Don't post or share (even privately) inappropriate material.** Enough said there. Nothing is truly private online.

**7. Be forgiving.** Remember that not everyone will know these rules before posting. Try to be understanding of others when they struggle with written communication. It is very different from simply talking to a person face-to-face.

**8. Consider others' privacy.** Ask for permission if you want to forward someone's email messages to third parties. Keep in mind that all private email mail is considered copyrighted by the original author.

**9. Think before you hit the send button.** Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Grammar and spelling errors reflect on you, and your audience

might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences.

**10. Brevity is best.** Be as concise as possible when contributing to a discussion. Your points might be missed if hidden in a flood of text.

**11. Stick to the point.** Contributions to a discussion should stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents.

**12. Do not type in all caps.** Typing in caps is considered shouting or screaming online. Various studies on the topic reflect that it is more difficult and takes longer to read text that is typed in all caps.

**13. Frivolous email.** Don't forward jokes, "chain letters" or unimportant email to other students without their permission. Not only does it fill up their mailboxes but may offend people who do not share the same sense of humor or who are tired of these types of email.

## Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee Scholar's eLearning Pledge

In his message for the 48th World Communications Day, Pope Francis said that technology is a "gift from God." The Pope challenged the Church to use this tool to promote the faith, asking how communication can "be at the service of an authentic culture of encounter?"

The Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee (DOPT) is committed to academic honesty and integrity with its eLearning community. In order to foster one's intellectual and character development, independent thought, and respect for the thoughts of others must take place. All forms of cheating, plagiarism, disruption, or inappropriate conduct are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Parents will be notified if there is a discipline issue with a student.

In the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, we use information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways.

## Scholar's eLearning Pledge

1. I pledge to seek the truth and to love all that is good and beautiful.
2. I will strive to achieve clarity of thought, nobility of character and purity of heart.
3. I will pursue my education with diligence, humility, and sincerity; embracing excellence and renouncing mediocrity, and encourage others to do the same.
4. I will treat my teachers and peers with the utmost dignity and respect in all of my communications.
5. I will honor myself and my family by giving my best effort daily, in my school work and contributing at home.
6. I will honor God by developing the gifts He has given me, completing my own work to the best of my ability.
7. Above all, I will aspire to the wisdom of a life lived in faith, hope, and charity; fulfilling my destiny as a child of God.

Thank you for your support and effort in this time of trial. We appreciate all you are doing and are here to assist you in any way we can.

Yours in Christ,

Mike Juhas, Superintendent

Source documents: Academy of the Sacred Heart, New Orleans—Continuation of Learning and Community Plan; Kansas Department of Education—Continuous Learning Task Force Guidance; Immaculata-LaSalle High School, Miami—Virtual Learning Student Guidelines; Holy Innocents School, Long Beach—Scholar's Pledge