



Distance Learning and Unexpected School Closure Policy

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Rationale

Emirates International School Meadows (EISM) is committed to providing students with the best possible education during the academic term when the school is required to close due to adverse weather, an illness outbreak or a KHDA-directed closure. EISM will make every reasonable effort to remain open, with decisions based on an appropriate risk assessment. However, circumstances may require the school to close.

This policy ensures that:

- Students continue to have access to education and school support during a closure.
- Parents understand the arrangements in place for distance learning across all year groups.
- Teachers understand expectations for planning, delivering learning and providing feedback.
- Processes support student and staff wellbeing.
- Year Group and Subject Leaders regularly review provision to ensure distance learning can be delivered using available resources.
- Safeguarding Leaders ensure that distance learning is included within relevant safeguarding training.
- Senior Leaders regularly review provision to ensure staff are trained and equipped to deliver high-quality distance learning.

Introduction

Whilst it is challenging to replicate school conditions at home, distance learning provides opportunities to develop independence, digital competence and collaboration. These skills are increasingly important in further education and the workplace. As IB learners, EISM students are encouraged to embrace the challenges of distance learning and develop effective independent learning habits.

Platform and Tools

EISM uses a range of learning platforms as part of everyday teaching and learning. During a school closure, these platforms enable teachers to set work, provide guidance and give feedback. The principal platforms are:

EY 1 – Year 1	Year 2 - 6	Year 7 - 13
Toddle	Toddle	ManageBac

School Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Team:

- Create and distribute EISM Distance Learning and Unexpected Closure Policy.
- Establish clear communication channels between staff, families and students when this policy is activated.
- Support staff, students and families in moving to distance learning.
- Support teachers in implementing this policy and ensuring a high-quality learning experience for all students.

Classroom Teachers:

- Develop high-quality student learning experiences.
- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students.
- Deliver high-quality student learning experiences.
- Communicate frequently with your students and, as needed, with their parents.
- Provide timely feedback to support students' learning.
- Record student absence using the relevant form or system.
- Provide guidance and support to monitor and promote student wellbeing.

Specialist Teachers:

- Develop high-quality student learning experiences.
- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students.
- Deliver high-quality student learning experiences.

- Physical Health Education – Develop a bank of exercises, physical activities and competitions for students and share these with teachers/form tutors.
- Art, Design (HS), Drama and Music – Develop accessible projects and activities, taking account of resources families may not have at home. In Primary School, activities will be shared with classroom teachers and families via Toddle.
- Communicate regularly with your students and provide timely feedback.
- Record student absence using the relevant form or system.
- Provide guidance and support to monitor and promote student wellbeing.

English as an Additional Language Teachers:

- Develop high-quality student learning experiences.
- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students.
- Deliver high-quality student learning experiences.
- Provide supplementary learning activities for EAL students, including targeted support where required.
- Communicate regularly with students on your caseload and/or their parents to ensure they are successful with distance learning.
- Monitor the progress of students on your caseload and provide timely feedback.
- Provide guidance and support to monitor and promote student wellbeing.

Learning Support Teachers:

- Communicate regularly with the subject or classroom teachers who teach the students on your caseload.
- Develop high-quality student learning experiences.
- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design distance learning experiences for your students.
- Deliver high-quality student learning experiences.
- Offer to scaffold or modify assignments, as necessary, for students on your caseload to support subject or classroom teachers.
- Support subject or classroom teachers to personalise lessons and activities for students on the caseload, where required.
- Communicate regularly with students on your caseload and/or their parents to ensure they are successful with distance learning.
- Provide supplementary learning activities for students on your caseload who may benefit from additional practice to close academic and curricular gaps.

Teaching Assistants:

- Communicate regularly with classroom teachers to identify ways to support students and contribute to their learning experience.
- Monitor student learning and provide feedback to students, as requested by the teachers and teams you support.

Librarian:

- Collaborate with colleagues to identify resources for high-quality distance learning and research.
- Regularly liaise with subject and classroom teachers to identify ways to support distance learning.

School Counsellor:

- Act as a liaison for students and families experiencing a crisis.
- Maintain a bank of social-emotional learning resources.
- Create developmentally appropriate resources on self-regulation, anxiety and wellbeing strategies for use during distance learning.
- Create counselling activities that students can complete at home, aligned with the current curriculum.
- Tailor recommendations to the circumstances, considering the timing and nature of the closure and providing appropriate guidance for teachers and advisers.
- Offer scheduled virtual office hours for counselling support and encourage students, parents and

guardians to arrange meetings as needed.

Careers Counsellor:

- Ensure continuity of the processing of student files for college applications.
- In collaboration with the MYP and DP Coordinators, liaise with colleges, the College Board, IB and other external bodies to ensure the impact of school closure is understood.
- Offer scheduled virtual office hours for students and families to access support as needed.

IB Coordinators:

- Remain in contact with the IBO.
- Communicate information from the IBO to teachers, parents and students, as it becomes available.
- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to support the design of distance learning experiences for your students in accordance with policy expectations.
- Collaborate with and support team members, providing guidance on high-quality curriculum, intervention and assessment.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences.
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space at home where you can work effectively.
- Regularly monitor online platforms (ManageBac, Toddle, email, etc.) for announcements and teacher feedback.
- Follow the expectations set by the school and administered by the teacher when using an online platform.
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work.
- Meet timelines, commitments and due dates to the best of your ability.
- Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or require additional support.
- Proactively seek out and communicate with other adults at EISM as different needs arise (see below).

For queries or questions about...	Contact
A subject, assignment, or resource	Your classroom or subject teacher
A personal, academic or social emotional concern	Your classroom teacher or form tutor (HS) Year Leader (HS) Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms Venske (PS) or Mr Armstrong (HS)
Other issues related to distance learning	EY – Year 1: Ms Kavya Year 2 – Year 6: Ms Lee Year 7 – Year 11: Ms Trull Year 12 & 13: Mr O'Shea
Any issues related to learning	Primary School Mrs Mckinstry or Ms Marshall High School Ms Marston or Mrs Murphy
Any issues related to wellbeing	Year Leader (HS) Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms Venske (PS) or Mr Armstrong (HS) School Counsellor Ms. Sumatee Sahni

Parent Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish routines and expectations.
- Define the physical space for your child's study.
- Monitor communications from your children's teachers.
- Begin and end each day with a check-in with your child/children.

- Take an active role in helping your children process their learning.
- Establish times for quiet work and reflection.
- Encourage physical activity and/or exercise.
- Remain mindful of your child's stress or worry.
- Monitor how much time your child is spending online.
- Support appropriate social interaction while setting clear expectations for social media use.

For queries or questions about...	Contact
A subject, assignment, or resource	Your child's classroom or subject teacher
A personal, academic or social emotional concern about your child/children	Your child's classroom teacher or form tutor (HS) Your Child's Year Leader Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms Venske (PS) or Mr Armstrong (HS)
Other issues related to distance learning	EY – Year 1: Ms Kavya Year 2 – Year 6: Ms Lee Year 7 – Year 11: Ms Trull Year 12 & 13: Mr O'Shea
Any issues related to learning	Primary School Mrs Mckinstry or Ms Marshall High School Mrs Marston or Mrs Murphy
Any issues related to the wellbeing of your child	Your child's Year Leader (HS) Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms Venske (PS) or Mr Armstrong (HS) School Counsellor Ms. Sumatee Sahni
Any issues related to safeguarding	Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms Venske (PS) or Mr Armstrong (HS)Principal Mr. Ian Ward

The Home Learning Environment

It is important that students are supported at home during the distance learning period.

Parents can help by ensuring that students:

- Have a quiet workspace with a table and chair and limited distractions. For live online sessions, this should ideally not be a student's bedroom.
- Have their cameras turned on and microphones muted until instructed otherwise.
- Sign in to learning platforms using their school email address and full name, where required.
- Are appropriately dressed for any live lessons.
- Have reliable internet access, ideally through a computer rather than a tablet or phone.
- Have the necessary learning and age-appropriate writing materials readily available.
- Are appropriately supervised and supported by an adult, according to their age and needs.
- Complete work to the best of their ability and contact the teacher if support is required.

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding and BYOD/eSafety policies apply to distance learning.

Attendance

If a student does not participate in learning activities for two or more days, the teacher will contact the parents. If disengagement continues and parents do not respond, the teacher will inform the relevant Head of Pastoral/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Safeguarding Reporting

Safeguarding records remain accessible to the Principal and DSLs during distance learning. DSLs will

monitor existing cases, and the School Counsellor will continue to provide appropriate interventions and support. Staff must report safeguarding concerns promptly to a DSL and provide a verbal account; the reporting member of staff and DSL will complete the relevant concern record, after which the DSL will take appropriate action. Parents should report safeguarding concerns to the Principal or DSLs by email.

Virtual classrooms

- All communication between students and teachers must take place through approved school platforms and school email addresses.
- Staff may use audio or video calls when communicating with parents. Communication with students must take place through approved school platforms or school email.
- During virtual lessons, students and staff should participate from an appropriate shared or common space where possible.
- Staff interaction during a virtual classroom session must always remain professional.
- Any videos posted must be professional and comply with the school's professional conduct expectations.
- Teachers must monitor and report students who post inappropriate messages on school learning platforms.
- DSLs and Senior Leaders may join online meetings or lessons for monitoring and safeguarding purposes.

Wellbeing

The School Counsellor will remain available for regular online counselling sessions. Appropriate notes will be maintained and parental permission obtained in writing before sessions take place. The counsellor will also provide families with relevant guidance to support student wellbeing at home.

The School Counsellor and SLT will also support staff wellbeing. Senior Leaders will ensure that line managers maintain regular communication with their teams and provide opportunities to raise concerns.

Distance Learning Provision in Primary School

Known Closure (knowledge of closure the day before)

- Following advance notification of a school closure, Homeroom teachers will post a 'DL Day' slide on Toddle outlining the day's timetable and identifying synchronous and asynchronous lessons.
- Homeroom teachers may add relevant notes to the 'DL Day' slide, including links or directions to the appropriate specialist Toddle class.
- Specialist teachers will use their Toddle class to share online links and Toddle activities. All specialist lessons will begin with an online starter.
- The number of online sessions should reflect the curriculum areas covered during the usual timetable.
- All provision is subject to staff having safe access to electricity and the internet and not being placed at risk, for example due to flooding.

Unknown Closure (knowledge of closure the morning of)

- Following notification of a same-day closure, Homeroom and Specialist teachers will post learning activities on Toddle, following the day's timetable, by 8:00am where possible. Publication may be delayed where staff need to travel home safely.
- There will be a balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Distance Learning Provision in High School

Known Closure (knowledge of closure the day before)

In the event of a known closure of the school we will offer the following (where possible):

- All staff will migrate learning to online.
- The school day will begin at 7:40am with a Form period.
- A message will be posted on ManageBac for all students to inform them of the changed learning style.
- Where possible, lessons will be synchronous. Access links will be shared through the ManageBac calendar.

- ICT, Art, Music, Drama and PHE may be delivered asynchronously. Activities may support the current unit of learning or be bespoke project-based tasks appropriate to the closure.
- All provision is subject to staff having safe access to electricity and the internet and not being placed at risk, for example due to flooding.

Unknown Closure (knowledge of closure the morning of)

In the event of an unknown closure of the school we will offer the following (where possible):

- The school day will begin with Form Time at 7:40am. Teachers will post independent activities for Periods 1 and 2, with live online lessons beginning from Period 3 where possible. This may be delayed where staff need to travel home safely.
- If staff need to return home following an early closure, synchronous learning may be delayed. Asynchronous learning will remain available on ManageBac until live sessions can begin.
- ICT, Art, Music, Drama and PHE may be delivered asynchronously. Activities may support the current unit of learning or be bespoke project-based tasks appropriate to the closure.

Links to other policies

Assessment

Academic Honesty

EAL

Inclusion

Learning & Teaching

Programme Integration