



# 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 forced to close due to bad weather, illness outbreak or KHDA forced closure. The school will do its utmost to always stay open in these situations and the decision will always be based on a risk assessment. However, there are times when the school is forced to closed.

This policy ensures that:

- Students have access to an education and school support whilst the school is closed.
- Parents are aware that a policy is in place and students in all year groups have a plan for virtual learning.
- Teachers are clear about what the expectations are in terms of planning work, delivery of learning and the providing of feedback.
- Processes are in place to support teacher and student wellbeing.
- Year Group and Subject Leaders are continually reviewing their subjects to ensure that Distance Learning can be accommodated with the resources available.
- Safeguarding Leaders ensure that Distance Learning training is part of their training programme.
- Senior Leaders continually review the provision regularly to ensure all staff are trained and skilled in order to deliver virtual learning programmes.

## Introduction

Whilst it is challenging to replicate school conditions at home, virtual learning does provide us with an opportunity. Distance learning is widespread at degree and master's level, while working on projects with colleagues who are in different countries is common in the worlds of business and industry. It is rare that we have the opportunity to prepare students for these versions of technological development, learning and working, which will become very important to them in later life. As highly skilled IB learners, EISM will embrace the challenges that distance learning poses and appreciates the opportunity to develop independent learning skills.

## Platform and Tools

EISM uses a variety of learning platforms as part of their day-to-day teaching and learning practices. During a school closure, these applications can be easily adapted to provide a virtual learning platform to ensure that teachers can set work and provide guidance and feedback to students. At EISM, we use the following tools:

<b>EY 1 – Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2 - 6</b>	<b>Year 7 - 13</b>
Seesaw	Seesaw	Managebac

## School Roles and Responsibilities

### Leadership Team

- Create and distribute EISM Distance Learning and Unexpected Closure Policy.
- Establish clear channels of communications between faculty, staff, families, and students in the event of this policy being activated.
- Support faculty and students/families in moving to a distance learning environment.
- 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 your students' learning
- Note student absence and record on Google Form.
- Provide guidance and support for students to aid in monitoring and supporting 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, make teachers/ form tutors aware of these competitions.
- Art, Design (HS), Drama and Music – Staying mindful of the resources and tools families may not have in their home develop a bank of projects and activities for students and share these with classroom teachers and families. In Primary School, these activities will be shared with both the classroom teachers and with families via Seesaw.
- Communicate regularly with your students and provide timely feedback.
- Note student absence and record on Google Form.
- Provide guidance and support for students to aid in monitoring and supporting 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, either in the curriculum or with additional targeted learning needs
- 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 for students to aid in monitoring and supporting 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 teacher differentiate lessons and activities for the students on your caseload, if 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 you can support students and contribute to the students learning experience.
- Monitor student learning and provide feedback to students, as requested by the teachers and teams you support.

### Librarian

- Collaborate with colleagues to find resources for high-quality distance learning experiences and research
- Regularly check in with subject and classroom teachers to identify ways to support their design of distance learning experiences

### School Counsellor

- Serve as liaison for communication with students/families in crisis
- Maintain bank of social-emotional lessons
- Create developmentally appropriate videos regarding self-regulation, anxiety and/or wellness strategies that students can practice during this time of Distance Learning.

- Create counselling lessons that students could complete “at home” based on the current curriculum.
- Tailor recommendations to the specific crises: Does the time of year affect the planning; Do the events of the crisis require any special handling; and What are talking points for teachers or advisors?
- Host Office Hours at set times for students to access counselling sessions virtually. Students, parents, and guardians encouraged to schedule these meetings as needed.

#### Careers Counsellor

- Ensure continuity of the processing of student files for college applications.
- In collaboration with the MYP and DP co-ordinator, support school advocacy with colleges, College Board, IB and other external bodies to ensure campus closure and its effects are understood.
- Host Office Hours at set times for students to call in and access support virtually. Encourage students, parents, and guardians to schedule these meetings as needed.

#### IB Co-ordinators

- 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 and support member of your team and provide guidance regarding the implementation of quality curriculum, intervention, and assessment.

### Students Roles and Responsibilities

- 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 online platforms (Managebac, SeeSaw, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from your teachers.
- Follow the expectations set by the school and administered by the teacher when using Zoom.
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work
- Do your absolute best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates
- 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).

<b>For queries or questions about...</b>	<b>Contact</b>
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 McKinstry (PS) or Mr Glenn (HS)
Other issues related to distance learning	EY – Year 1: Ms Rami Year 2 – Year 6: Ms Shariff Year 7 – Year 11: Mr Higgins Year 12 & 13: Mrs Branicki Tolchard
Any issues related to learning	Primary School Mrs Bridges or Mr Wade High School Mrs Robson or Mr Williams
Any issues related to wellbeing	Year Leader (HS) Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms McKinstry (PS) or Mr Glenn (HS) School Counsellor Ms. Sumatee Sahni

## Parents 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.
- Keep your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions.

<b>For queries or questions about...</b>	<b>Contact</b>
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 McKinstry (PS) or Mr Glenn (HS)
Other issues related to distance learning	EY – Year 1: Ms Rami Year 2 – Year 6: Ms Shariff Year 7 – Year 11: Mr Higgins Year 12 & 13: Mrs Branicki Tolchard
Any issues related to learning	Primary School Mrs Bridges or Mr Wade High School Mrs Robson or Mr Williams
Any issues related to the wellbeing of your child	Your child’s Year Leader (HS) Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms McKinstry (PS) or Mr Glenn (HS) School Counsellor Ms. Sumatee Sahni
Any issues related to safeguarding	Heads of Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Leads Ms McKinstry (PS) or Mr Glenn (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 room to work in with a table and chair and where there are limited distractions. This should ideally not be a student’s bedroom if it is a live Zoom session.
- Have their cameras turned on and microphones muted until instructed otherwise.
- Students must sign into their learning platform using their school email address and full name if required.
- Are appropriately dressed for any live lessons.
- Have access to the internet, ideally through a computer rather than a tablet or phone,
- Have learning materials readily available, also ensure that age-appropriate writing materials are available
- Ensure your child/ children are supported by an adult to supervise and offer support.
- Have completed their work to the best of their ability and, if support is needed, contact the teacher.

## **Safeguarding**

The references in the Safeguarding and BYOD/ eSafety policy applies to distance learning.

## **Attendance**

If a student does not participate in activities for more than two days, a teacher will contact parents. If the student continues to disengage with activities, and if there is no reply from parents, the teacher will inform the Heads of Pastoral who also acts as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

## **Safeguarding Reporting**

Safeguarding files are kept in school during the distance learning period and are accessible by the Principal and/or DSLs. DSLs are responsible for monitoring any existing cases and the school's Counsellor will continue to provide interventions and support to students during the distance learning period. For any safeguarding concerns, teachers should contact the DSL by phone and provide a verbal account of the concern. The Teacher reporting and DSL will complete the concern form and the DSL will then take the appropriate action. For any parents reporting safeguarding concerns, parents should contact the Principal or DSLs via email.

## **Virtual classrooms**

- All communication between students and teachers should be through one of the school-based learning platforms only and use school email addresses
- Staff can use both audio and video calls for contacting parents. For students, this should take place via email or messaging on a school-based platform.
- For virtual classrooms, students and staff should be in a 'common' space (living room, dining space).
- Staff interaction during a virtual classroom session must always remain professional.
- Any videos posted should be professional and the school's professional school conduct policy should be adhered to.
- Teachers must monitor and reporting any students that are posting inappropriate messages on any of the school learning platforms.
- DSLs and Senior Leaders should be able to join Zoom meetings/lessons and request to be invited.

## **Wellbeing**

The school's counsellor will be available for regular counselling sessions, which will be conducted online via Zoom. Notes should be taken by the counsellor and permission should be sought from the parents in writing via email before conducting these sessions. The counsellor will also support to our families in providing relevant information in reference to student wellbeing and supporting their children at home.

The school's counsellors and SLT will also provide activities for staff wellbeing. Senior leaders will also ensure systems are in place for line managers, at all levels, to communicate with their teams and raise any concerns they may have.

## **Distance Learning provision in Primary School**

Known Closure (knowledge of closure the day before)

- Following early notification of school closure Homeroom teachers will post a 'DL Day' slide on Seesaw for students to follow. The slide will note the timetable for the day. The timetable will identify which lessons will begin on zoom and which will be Seesaw based, as well as the link required for zoom sessions.
- Homeroom teachers can add any notes to the 'DL Day' slide, including referring students/ parents to the appropriate specialist Seesaw class.
- Specialist teachers will use their Seesaw class to share zoom links and Seesaw activities. All specialist lessons will begin with a zoom starter.
- The number of zoom sessions should reflect the curriculum areas covered during the usual timetable. There will be a minimum of 3 x 20-minute sessions delivered by the Homeroom Teacher throughout the day (the number of sessions and timings could vary for EY).
- All of the above is subject to the teacher having access to power, the internet and are not at risk of

danger in any way, e.g. flooding.

Unknown Closure (knowledge of closure the morning of)

- Following notification of school closure teachers (Homeroom & Specialist) will post learning activities on Seesaw following the timetable for the day.
- There will be a minimum of 2 x 20-minute sessions delivered by the Homeroom Teacher throughout the day (the number of sessions and timings could vary for EY).
- Teachers will also be available online for support.
- The sharing of this information could be delayed while teachers return home from school to avoid a risk of danger.

### **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.
- All lessons will be taught using the Zoom Platform. Codes will be shared on Managebac Calendar for students to access. This allows for a maximum of 40 minutes of teaching before the session ends. The session can be re-joined immediately afterwards.
- Practical lessons will not be offered in ICT, Art, Music, Drama and PHE but instead there will be theory tasks available for students to take part in. These may support current unit of learning or be a bespoke project-based activity to support students during school closure.
- All of the above is subject to the teacher having access to power, the internet and are not at risk of danger in any way, e.g. 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 at 8am with a mix of hybrid learning. During form time 7.40am teachers will post activities which students can complete independently for P1 and 2. Period 3 onwards will then be a live Zoom lesson for all students.
- If staff are returning home school after an early closure live lessons may be delayed but activities will be available on Managebac until the teacher arrives at home to begin Zoom sessions.
- Practical lessons will not be offered in ICT, Art, Music, Drama and PHE but instead there will be theory tasks available for students to take part in. These may support current unit of learning or be a bespoke project-based activity to support students during school closure.
- The sharing of this information could be delayed while teachers return home from school to avoid a risk of danger.

### **Links to other policies**

Assessment

Academic Honesty

EAL

Inclusion

Learning & Teaching