

Distant Learning Plan

Mountain Oak School will begin the school year teaching through a distant learning format. Distant learning can take on various forms, but communication of directions is generally through phone, screen, or mail. In some cases, however, a hard copy of instructions, could be picked up from the school campus. The primary platforms used for our distant learning plan will be Google Classroom and Zoom. Google Classroom will be a space where packets, assignments, instructions, images, videos, and recordings are organized all in one place for convenience. Zoom will be used for live instruction. Instructions through a screen or phone has its limitations for younger children who may not be developmentally ready to receive information in this way. Hence, there is a greater burden on parents to provide emotional, physical, spiritual, and academic support for their children when operating under distant learning. On the other hand, it is also true that this format provides some advantages. Although it provides the form and structure that children need, there will also be more flexibility and freedom on when projects are worked on. Parents and their children can work on projects at their pleasure when it's convenient in their schedule to complete them before due dates. With this freedom, it's tempting for children to leave things for the last minute. We encourage parents to be mindful of this and pay attention to the teacher's pacing for projects and assignments that they give. In this way, assignments will not build up into an impassable mountain of material. We hope the information provided in this plan will be useful and make it easier for parents to plan and adjust to this format of learning.

We will start with the general skeleton of the schedule (please refer to the table for visual). Below you will find two tables. The first one is for the younger grades and the second one is for the older children. In order to maintain consistency and rhythm for when the children return to in-person instruction, we are starting the day at the ordinary start time of 8:15 A.M. for all grades. The younger children will begin with main lesson. Please ensure children come prepared with their materials ready (pencil, flute, books), dressed appropriately for school, and in an uncluttered, quiet space for live sessions. The 'main lesson' for younger children looks much different than those of the older children. Teachers, of these younger grades, may be using this time for conferencing with parents to answer their questions about projects to avoid too much screen time for their children. There will also be times when the teacher schedules live Zoom sessions so that the children can socially connect and get to know each other as a community. From 9:50 to 11:15 A.M. teachers will do small group work or schedule individual appointments for one-on-one interaction. Younger children will need more individual time with their teacher. From 11:25 to 11:55, 1st grade will be enjoying a movement or a farm class on alternating days via live Zoom (the movement class is optional for the kindergarten). These are important and fun classes for your child to attend. There will be both dynamic and static forms of movement, gardening activities, crafts and so forth that are important for young children to develop. It's important that the care giver is with the young child during any live conference with Zoom to help support the child who normally would have classmates for their support. We are aware that some young children will get headaches or feel uncomfortable with too much screen time. It's appropriate for parents of these children to attend the live Zoom class themselves to receive the material from the teacher, and, then, in their home, relay this to their child in-person. While 1st grade is doing the 'movement/farm class' grades 2-3 are taking a break or in a small reading

class. At 12 noon, the 2-3 grades will be doing movement/farm while the 1st grade is either in a break or in a reading class. This is the end of screen time for the younger grades, but will require additional off-screen time for completing the activities and projects their teachers assign. They will complete these activities according to the parents own schedule. Anytime your child is working on learning activities, it can be counted as instructional hours for the school. You will simply go into Google Classroom, following your teacher's directions, account for the instructional time your child is participating. These hours could also be on the weekends. The school can only count a kindergartener's attendance if they accrue, at minimum, 2 hours a day. Second and third graders need, at minimum, 4 hours a day to be counted present. Teachers will be available for questions during the teacher's office hours or through e-mail.

For the older grades, there will be a longer day and more instructional time required. The older grades begin with a 'practice class' at 8:15 A.M. Again, please ensure children come prepared with their materials ready (pencil, flute, books), dressed appropriately for school, and in an uncluttered, quiet space for live sessions. The practice session will be designed based on the needs of the children. Teachers might work with them in small groups, do one-on-ones, teach a whole class. They might choose to teach math, language, or a combination of math or language. They might utilize it as work time for students while using break out groups to work with students one-on-one. They might also use the time for painting, sculpting, or drawing. Another practice session for the older grades is scheduled for 11:25 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Each class will have 8 practice sessions during a 5 day week. Some days they may have a Farm or Movement class instead of a practice class. The older grade specialty classes will not be combined in order to facilitate smaller cohorts. During practice sessions, reading specialists, the title one teacher, and special education teacher will be working with small groups of students. For the older children, main lesson will be from 9:50 to 11:15 A.M. Teachers might provide small snack breaks in-between classes as needed. There is a lunch break built into the schedule before their afternoon Spanish and reading classes. All students are required to attend each of the sessions. Projects will be worked on during practice times and/or at their convenience during off-screen time according to their personal schedule. All time spent on assignments by your child, should be recorded and documented on Google Classroom by the parent for your teacher to count you for attendance. A minimum of 6 hours of day for instruction is required for older children to be counted present. Additional days can be counted if work is done on the weekends. Teacher's will be available to answer or clarify directions during their office hours or through e-mail. For the older children, it's imperative that projects are closely following the teacher's pacing guide to keep the child from falling behind.

Parent Communication

Communication is always important in any school at anytime. During Distant learning it's even more important to keep in touch with your teacher for guidance and mentorship. Remember that during distance learning it is more important than ever for teachers and parents to work together as a team, collaborating with each other to help all the children develop and succeed. Because it's difficult for teachers to assess or gather feedback from students during Zoom sessions, you play a valuable role in giving the teacher feed back on what your child is or is not succeeding at. Your teacher can be a valuable resource in given you ideas on how to help your child when your feedback is given in open and honest ways. This is a wonderful time for you to come to know your teacher in deep and lasting ways. Teachers will have regular office hours when you can

contact them. If those hours are not convenient, please use e-mail. Teachers will also hold regular evening Parent Meetings via Zoom (every 2-4 weeks). Please be sure to attend these meetings when possible. They can be a chance for you to not only connect with the teacher, but with the parents of other children in the class. These parents may have wonderful insight on what is working for them and share struggles so you don't feel so alone during this difficult time. Please, be patient and understanding with yourself, your child, and your community as we work through this difficult and uncertain time. Always work in creative and positive ways with your child by providing flexible adaptations and creativity to this format of learning. This can help them be more self-reliant and independent learners. Please refer to your teacher's back-to-school letter for their contact information and office hours.

Student Communication

Teachers will be giving feedback to their students on the projects and assignments they are asked to complete. The students might be asked to give a report on Zoom or read a writing of theirs. The teacher may or may not collect these assignments, but after being shared during a live Zoom session, teachers may write an e-mail to the student to give them feedback on their project. Math assignments turned in will not all be graded. The teacher will grade randomly selected assignments for feedback, but will be returned within 48 hours. The younger children can be given feedback through their parents. In the classroom, feedback on assignments is almost instant, but in distant learning it's more difficult for the teacher to receive and give feedback. This is where parents are a tremendous value to the teacher and their child. If you observe your child struggling with a concept, please notify the teacher immediately so feedback can be more seamless and efficient. If your child needs to be absent during distant learning, please contact your teacher and Rose Ybarra in the office (928-925-0908 or attendance@mountainoakschool.org)

Safe Space

During distant learning, the school is providing, for both younger and older grades, a safe space for children who are Exceptional English Learners, have special education accommodations, or whose care givers at home both work and cannot find any other child care options. These children will be provided a computer for them to attend Zoom sessions on school grounds. The child will be required to bring their own snacks and lunch for breaks. They will be supervised by an adult, but may not always be a certified teacher. Parents will still need to regularly communicate with their child's teacher, track their child's progress and instructional hours, and work with them on their school work at home when their schedule permits. The children will be required to follow all health protocols as required by in-person instruction: wear a mask inside, maintain 6 foot distancing, and washing hands frequently. Children in Kindergarten should arrive at 8:15 and be picked up at 12:00 noon. All others should arrive at school at 8:15 A.M. and be picked up at 3:00 P.M. If during the day, your child shows symptoms of illness, they will be placed in a sick room and you will be called. You will need to pick up your child immediately. If your child is eligible for the safe space, you will be required to provide two back up contacts to call in case we are unable to contact you. Provide this information to Rose Ybarra in the front office (928-925-0908 or attendance@mountainoakschool.org).

Distant Learning Resources

If parents need technical support with acquiring internet, obtaining computers, or setting up parental safe guards, please contact the school for assistance.

Supply Pick up Dates

Parents can pick up supplies their teacher leaves for them from the office window from 9 to 12 o'clock daily. Please wear a face covering and maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more.

Instructional Content

Teachers during distant learning will follow the same curriculum they ordinarily would during in-person learning. The delivery of the content and how it's brought to the child has merely changed. We will try to minimize its disadvantages and maximize its advantages. Distant learning allows teachers to use resources they might not ordinarily have in the classroom. Students have greater support in their learning from their care givers. This opportunity can help your child learn to be self-reliant, resourceful, and responsible. In designing their lessons, teachers will keep in mind the overall philosophy of Waldorf and the mission of the school. It celebrates the individual creativity of each child by providing rigorous academic and artistic programs which give the tools and confidence for each child to make their own successes. This specifically includes the following principles:

- Acknowledging and developing the whole child.
- By modeling and developing a curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.
- By providing curriculum that is relevant to their age of development.
- By developing critical thinking, problem solving, and technical skills.
- By developing interpersonal and leadership skills.
- By developing their appreciation for the arts and sciences.
- By fostering their individual self-reliance and sense of community.

Individual class teachers will be sending out a back-to-school letter to inform you of their expectations, daily rhythms, and distant learning requirements. They will also provide to you an overview of how the Waldorf curriculum they plan to bring through the head, heart, and hand meets your child's developmental age. It will be important for you to read their letters for you also to get a picture of why they are bringing what they bring. Throughout the year you may be inspired to supplement or support your child with this knowledge especially while we are in distance learning.

Screen Time

Teachers are being given the technological tools for them to make distance learning as developmental, meaningful, and creative as this format permits. We know, however, that it will never equal all the benefits of being in-person. We know that there are detrimental **effects** to the overuse of screen time for young children. The **American Academy of Pediatrics** recommend that for children older than 2 years, limit media to 1 hour or less per day of *high-quality* programming, shared use between parent and child to promote enhanced learning, greater interaction, and limit setting, offer *no* screens during meals and for 1 hour before bedtime. With these studies in mind, instructional time will not be in front of a screen the entire time. The younger the child is, the less screen time will be required. Students will be given, along with

direct instruction on screen, projects and meaningful assignments to be completed at home with also access to their teacher when they have a question. Please monitor your child, especially younger children, for how the computer screen is effecting them. If they need less screen time, please inform the teacher and work out a schedule for your child to complete their assignments while fulfilling their required hours and reducing some of their current screen time mode. During this time you may also consider reducing the amount of other media they may be viewing and spend as much time in the outdoors as much as possible.

Title 1 Math, Special Education, and Reading Specialists

During distant learning, children who qualify for special needs will be accommodated according to their individualized educational plan (IEP) or 504 plan as designed by their teacher.

Parent Orientation

We will hold a parent orientation meeting for back-to-school on August 14th at 5:30 P.M.

Conclusion

We are hoping distance learning will be a brief period as we reevaluate and assess new evidence that supports safe in-person instruction. In the meantime, please be open to supporting your child(ren) in distant learning. There are positive learning experiences to be gained from a technological distance if you remain open, flexible, and creative. One positive thing you can teach your children during this time is the role fear plays in distancing ourselves from one another. Even when in-person, children and their peers can remain distant and aloof from one another if they are afraid of each other. It might not be sickness, but instead hurt feelings or egos that keep friendships from forming. Fear, whether rationally grounded or not, is the primary reason for divisive and separate communities. When children fear failure or have anxiety when around others, they cannot be vulnerable and ask questions. When teachers are afraid of being judged, they are less personable and warm. Intellect is afraid of the irrational, primitive subjective feelings and closes them off. Feelings are afraid of the lifeless, banal objective intellect and avoids it. Both stay separate from the other because of fear. Truth is revealed, however, when both the intellect and feelings work together, but we have to eradicate fear before that can happen. COVID-19 affords us the opportunity to talk about fear, and the role it plays in separating us from one another and nature. It can also teach humility. We are powerless against the forces of nature, even a small germ such as COVID-19. It can help our children realize the need to rely upon the ever present help of spiritual worlds if their courage is not to fail them. I hope we can rally together as a community, learn the lessons of this age, and defeat the forces of separation by coming together *even* while distant learning. Let's be careful not to impose a fear of or distaste for technology on our children at this time but merely a healthy respect for its limitations. Someday we want them to be skilled users of the computer and indeed use it as a tool for connection and love.

Living in the miracle of the moment,

Steven Cook

Mountain Oak School

scook@mountainoakschool.org

Schedule for Younger Grades (K-3)

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|--------------------|
| 8:15-9:40 | Main Lesson | Main Lesson | Main Lesson | Main Lesson | Main Lesson |
| 9:50-11:15 | Practice + Title 1 | Practice + Title 1 | Practice + Title 1 | Practice + Title 1 | Practice + Title 1 |
| 11:25-11:55 12:00-12:30 | Move k-1/2-3 RdSp Move 2-3/ k-1 Rd Sp | Farm 1st 2-3/RdSp Farm 2-3 k-1 RdSp | Move K-1 2-3/RdSp Move 2-3 k-1/RdSp | Farm 1st 2-3/RdSp Farm 2-3 k-1/Rd Sp | Spanish 1-3 |

Schedule for Older Grades (4-8)

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| 8:15-9:40 | Practice 5,7-8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED | Practice 4-6, 8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED | Practice 4-7 RdSp/Title 1/SPED | Practice 4, 6-8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED | Practice 4-6, 8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED |
| 8:40-9:40 | Farm 6 | Farm 7 | Farm 8 | Move 7 | Move 8 |
| 9:50-11:15 | Main Lesson + SPED (4th) | Main Lesson + SPED (4th) | Main Lesson + SPED (4th) | Main Lesson + SPED (4th) | Main Lesson +SPED (4th) |
| 11:25-12:30 | Practice 5-8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED Farm 4 | Practice 4, 5, 7, 8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED Move 6 | Practice 5, 6-8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED Farm 5 | Practice 4-6,7,8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED Move 4 | Practice 4,6,7,8 RdSp/Title 1/SPED Move 5 |
| 12:30 - 1:30 | Break | Break | Break | Break | Break |
| 1:30 - 2:30 | Practice Title 1/RdSp Spanish 8 | Practice 4-5 Title 1/RdSp Spanish 6-7 | Practice 4-7 Title 1/RdSp | Practice 6-8 Title 1/RdSp Spanish 4-5 | Practice Title 1/ RdSp |

Note: Arminio Etsuko will be planning and creating a handwork packet complete with instructions and supplies. She will also be creating and posting videos to accompany her instructions. She will be helping out with sanitation in the Safe Space and setting individual appointments with her students when necessary.

Table Definitions:

K-1= kindergarten through 1st grade; 2-3= combined 2nd and 3rd graders; 4-5= combined 4th and 5th graders; 6-7= combined 6th and 7th graders; 8= eighth graders.

Teachers' subject and grade:

| Teacher | Grade/Subject |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Marcee Gilson | Kindergarten |
| Sarah Green | 1st Grade |
| Amy Zitzer | Combined 2-3 |
| Cal Seabaugh | Combined 4-5 |
| Chris Newell | Combined 6-7 |
| Abigail Poirier | Eighth Grade |
| Pamela Craig | Reading Specialist (RdSp) grades 1-3; Title 1 language grades 4-8 |
| Kevin Glover | Title 1 Math |
| Leslie Daniels | Movement (Move) |
| Melissa Slayton 'HoneyBee' | Farm and Spanish |
| Arminio Etsuko | Handwork |
| Laura Urquhart | Special Education (SPED) |
| Liesl Laduke | Occupational Therapist (OT) |
| Lori Strahan Prouty | Paraprofessional |
| Sharon McFeely | Pedagogical mentor |
| | Counselor |

