



What is Distance Learning at Southmoreland Middle School?

Distance Learning Classroom Model: Distance learning involves students being educated without in-person interaction among their instructor(s) or peers. The learning process is often exclusively individual and asynchronous by providing students with access to appropriate educational materials and ensuring students receive daily opportunities to interact with their teacher(s). Instructors may use tech tools and online learning to facilitate instruction. Along with emphasizing the value of learning, distance learning encourages character growth in the areas of self-sufficiency, adaptability, and perseverance. Distance learning is a great opportunity to try personalized, project based learning, too. Students without internet access, limited internet access, or no technology device must inform the Middle School Principal, Mrs. Kuchar, so that an alternative form of instruction can be provided. Mrs. Kuchar's email address is:

kuchart@southmorleand.net

What are the goals of SMS COVID-19 Distance Learning?

- ❖ To minimize the disruption to academic progress caused by planned and extended school closures by making those out-of-school days as educationally productive and engaging as possible.
- ❖ To allow SMS students in grades 6 - 8 an opportunity to practice the kind of distance learning that is increasingly part of both college study and workplace training.
- ❖ Students and staff will continue to be connected to school and community throughout distance learning.
- ❖ Teachers will identify essential learning targets for the remainder of the school year to focus and condense learning opportunities.
- ❖ Staff will try new and innovative instructional approaches to grow students' love of learning and meet the needs of students during distance learning.

Flexibility is Essential

- ❖ Students will often have numerous commitments within the home during this time. Be flexible on due dates and work with students to complete the work.
- ❖ Please be mindful of requiring a specific time students have to post or discuss work during the workday. Instead, offer options to join Google Classroom, post "office hours" to engage with students, but for many students meeting a specific timeframe may not be possible. Offer opportunities to interact, but be mindful of student challenges and availability.

Students in grades 6 - 8 will have activities to complete on Choice Activity Boards throughout the course of the first two (2) weeks. Students can pace themselves as they progress through the week(s) worth of activities for each content area to enhance continual growth as learners. These Choice Activity Boards will be shared bi-weekly with students through Google Classroom. Students will select one (1) activity from two (2) itinerant classes per week. Itinerants include Coding, STEM, Art, Music, Chorus, Health, and PE.

Distance Learning Instructional Overview

Student Role

- ❖ Students are responsible for the work assigned during distance learning.
- ❖ Students will connect with teachers via school email and Google Classroom.
- ❖ Students can benefit from consistency and routine with a daily schedule, along with working in an area free of distractions, in order for them to focus on doing their best learning.

Students in grades 6-8 will complete assignments posted on Google Classroom, the district's distance learning platform. All assignments will be posted by 9:00 am on Monday with teachers available to answer questions via Google Classroom during posted "office hours". It is understood that students might have a wide variety of responsibilities at home during distance learning days and that some may not have access to the internet. Staff members understand this and will be flexible with those situations. However, the expectation is that students will complete the work in a timely manner as developed between student and teacher(s).

Students with disabilities will have assignments designed to meet the needs of IEP and 504 plans. Throughout distance learning, the classroom teacher will be the main resource for help on assignments and lessons. If a child ordinarily leaves the classroom and goes to another teacher for math, reading, or some other subject, then that teacher should design the distance learning assignment for that particular area. While a distance learning plan cannot completely replicate an in-session school day, efforts will be made to provide the support needed by particular students. For instance, if reading is a challenge for a student and the student has online access, the teacher may assign tasks on sites that will read text aloud.

Parent(s) Role

- ❖ Parent(s) should contact their child's teacher(s) regarding the expectation of distance learning. If required, special arrangements for students must be worked out prior to the first day, Monday, March 30, of distance learning. Families are asked to inform the teacher if they do not have internet access at home since access to Google Classroom and completion of assignments will be required.
- ❖ Parent(s), along with teachers and students, are asked to remember that distance learning days are designed to be flexible. If a child struggles with a concept or assignment and is unable to complete the work that day, parent(s) should remind their student to communicate with the teacher about how to meet the requirements.
- ❖ Parent(s) should contact teachers directly with any questions, concerns, or frustrations they may have regarding distance learning assignments.

Staff Roles During COVID-19

District Wide Staff Development: Google Classroom

This contracted time - Wednesday through Friday, 03/25 - 03/27, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., are Act 80 days. This time should be utilized to continue staff development goals in creating a Google Classroom and posting assignments by noon on Friday to begin distance learning with students on Monday, March 30. Teachers will utilize a Choice Board template to provide differentiated instruction for students. Email a PDF document of your Choice Board to Mrs. Conn to be printed for students who do not have access to the internet.

Begin finalizing third quarter grades. Missed assignments due to attendance at or near the time of school closure should not impact a student's quarterly grade. A student's grade should not vary greatly from previous quarterly grades, without just cause. If you have specific questions, contact Mrs. Kuchar.

General Education Teacher Role

- ❖ Teachers are available to students and parents for virtual check-in during scheduled "office hours" for a minimum of three (3) hours per day, Monday - Friday. This **MUST** be posted daily. Consider offering varying times for "office hours".
- ❖ Monday - Friday, from 7:30 a.m. - 9:55 a.m. daily, is an opportunity to complete clerical duties and meetings as scheduled by administration. Every attempt will be made to schedule meetings at least one day in advance.
- ❖ Teachers will post assignments by 9:00 a.m. per scheduled instructional day and be available to students during posted "office hours"
- ❖ Teachers will plan and deliver standards based learning activities.
- ❖ Teachers should be mindful of the amount of work given to students as they will often have many responsibilities in the home and also numerous classes to cover.
- ❖ Teachers will touch base with students -- especially those who are falling behind, not checking in, or not submitting work.
- ❖ If a student is showing consistent problems such as failure to check-in or submit work, contact Mrs. Meyer and Mrs. Kuchar with concerns.
- ❖ Meet virtually with students on 504 plans to ensure access and progress toward meeting academic standards.
- ❖ Meet virtually with Special Education students in collaboration with case managers to ensure access and progress toward meeting academic standards.
- ❖ Continue adhering to all student IEP and 504 requirements and supporting ALL students.

Special Education Teacher Role

- ❖ Special education teachers will conduct daily check-ins with general education teachers to determine what assignments and learning activities are being assigned to students and determine what accommodations and supports need to be provided.

- ❖ Special education teachers will provide services (reading, writing, math, social skills, etc.) based on IEP goals and objectives.
- ❖ Familiarize students with Google Classroom, so students will be able to access and complete any online assignments.
- ❖ Develop a plan or daily schedule to ensure students have access to IEP services once distance learning begins.
- ❖ Continue due process procedures with Individualized Education Plans, Evaluation, and Reevaluation Reports.
- ❖ Gather Progress Monitoring Data for Progress Reports.
- ❖ Ensure paraprofessional support for students engaged in distance learning in the regular and special education setting.
- ❖ Follow guidance from Mr. Novickoff to ensure distance learning is providing services of the student's Individualized Education Plan.

SMS Week 1 Plans: Social Emotional Support and Set Routines

- ❖ Develop and send welcome letters posted on Google Classroom to all students. This can be the same for all courses.
- ❖ Introduce the learning tools (online learning resources) that you will use in the distance learning model.
- ❖ Develop behavior and distance learning expectations for all classes (for example, etiquette posting in Google Classroom).
- ❖ Explain "office hours" concept and advisory check-in time for students with questions. Note that your scheduled "office hours" may not be the same as the sample teacher schedule below.
- ❖ Review Google Classroom expectations for completing distance learning work and for checking in as a student.
- ❖ Familiarize students with Google Classroom so they will be able to access and complete any online assignments.
- ❖ Provide a timely plan, posting work for the day by 9:00 a.m.
- ❖ Plan for self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration for age and individual learning needs.
- ❖ Anticipate time requirements recognizing students learn at different paces, especially in an independent setting.
- ❖ Customize learning opportunities with a focus on supporting troubleshooting for students with digital challenges.
- ❖ Communicate with colleagues to ensure common expectations, communications, and protocols.
- ❖ Teachers monitor and communicate student "attendance" concerns, reaching out to students, parents, and Mrs. Meyer.

Choice Board Packets

ALL teachers will use one of the attached Choice Board templates for student assignments and activities.

This will provide the opportunity for students to select three (3) of the activities to be completed in content area classes during our first two (2) weeks of distance learning. Students will select one (1) activity from two (2) itinerant classes per week. Itinerants include Coding, STEM, Art, Music, Chorus, Band, Health, and PE.

Distance Learning Schedule

Sample Daily Teacher Schedule Days: March 30 - April 4, 2020	
7:30 - 9:55 am	Clerical Work (Planning Lessons, Responding to Emails, Checking Assignments) and Attending On-line Meetings as scheduled by Principal
9:55 - 12:00 pm	Instructional Opportunities and Advisory Check-in
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch and Teacher Preparation
1:00 - 3:00 pm	Instructional Opportunities and Advisory Check-in