

I. Our Philosophy

The George E. Peters Distance Learning Plan is designed to describe and explain the institutional protocols and learning procedures that will result in the event of an extended closure of campus. Consistent with our mission of being committed to providing quality education in a safe, Christ-centered learning environment, the goal of the GEP Distance Learning Plan is to ensure that our students maintain a high level of academic engagement, *even if we are not able to gather together physically on campus*. Our distance learning plan is guided by these principles:

1. Preparation: GEP understands that distance learning is a part of our “new normal,” therefore our planning is guided by the notion that the ability to deliver distance learning is one of our essential institutional functions. In all situations, our goal is to adapt and thrive.
2. Relationships: We believe that the value of community relationships are central to our distance learning efforts. In all of our academic and non-academic planning, we will prioritize the values of relationships and connection. The impact of an extended campus closure can be as disruptive to the social and emotional fabric of students’ lives as it is to their academic progress. Therefore during the use of our Distance Learning Plan, we will always prioritize the re-establishment of the nurturing relationships that are essential to the GEP experience.
3. Readiness: While during Distance Learning, our academic mission remains the same—high academic rigor—the effective use of distance learning tools necessitates a high level of faculty expertise. As part of GEP’s professional growth plan, we will prioritize the mastery and implementation of these tools by all members of our team.
4. Support: Depending on the reason for campus closure, some members of our community may be disproportionately impacted. As such stresses emerge, we’re committed to personalizing our response with care and sensitivity, and maximizing our support of students, families, employees, partners, and the wider community.
5. Structure: Structure offers clarity and support. Continuing with a structured daily approach, similar to what students are used to while in school, is important for distance learning. While this includes breaks, required time for physical activity, and time for connecting with teachers, it also includes regular academic time, homework, and the expectation that students will be engaged and on task.

In the event of the type of situation or crisis that may impede access to campus, the Principal will confer with the Allegheny East Conference Office of Education, and the GEP School Board to determine if the Distance Learning Plan needs to be invoked. In such cases, the Principal will alert

families and faculty/staff via email and/or robocall regarding the timeline of the Distance Learning Plan's implementation.

Circumstances will vary for the implementation of the Distance Learning Plan, and may include viral pandemic (like COVID-19), civil unrest, natural disaster, or extended disruptions due to seasonal weather like snow. For instance, if the school has a particularly snowy winter, the school may move to implement the Distance Learning Plan to avoid lengthy instructional interruptions. At the point where circumstances have stabilized for a return to campus, the Principal will alert the community of the re-start date. In many cases, these decisions will be made in conference with Allegheny East Office of Education, the GEP School Board and/or state and local authorities. Our campus reopening will be guided by a single factor: *Can we reasonably ensure the health and safety of our students and employees?*

During Distance Learning implementation, George E. Peters will use the Distance Learning Framework—described below in the Communications section—to lead our response to campus closure.

The remainder of this document describes the specific policies and procedures related to the Distance Learning Program and this document is regularly reviewed and revised, including during periods of extended campus closure where procedures herein may need to be adapted. Finally, in all situations, George E. Peters Adventist School will work to accommodate individual family/student circumstances as they relate to the capacity to access our distance learning program.

II. George E. Peters Community Norms

1. To maintain a serious, focused, and academic approach to learning students are **expected to:**

1. **Establish an office/workspace within the house that limits distraction and includes a desk, chair, lamp, and access to electrical outlets.**
2. **Have Google tools set up including: Classroom, email, and calendar. Notifications for these features are to be turned on.**
3. **Check email regularly throughout each school day and respond in a timely manner.**
4. **Closely follow the published daily schedule.**
5. **Be on time for synchronous appointments.**
6. **Ensure the background that will show up behind you is appropriate for school.**
7. **Enter each school day groomed and with the mindset of being on campus in appropriate attire: pants, shorts, tops, not pajamas.**
8. **Be prepared with the appropriate supplies: computer, earphones, textbooks, notebooks, calculator, writing implements.**
9. **Proactively reach out to teachers with questions and/or concerns.**

10. Abide by the community's academic integrity expectations: submit only original work, using only permitted materials and documented sources.

2. Family School Partnership

A successful family-school partnership is important for a student's success, and this holds true in a distance learning environment as well. Here are some suggestions for how best to approach distance learning as a family, recognizing that each family's circumstances may differ.

- Maintain a regular schedule for your child as much as possible. This includes getting up and going to bed at normal times, getting dressed in the morning and ready for the day like any school day, maintaining a healthy diet, and taking set breaks throughout the day.
- Balance independence and support with distance learning expectations. Students will need to work through problems that they encounter as they dig into their work, so it is important for adults to resist the temptation to jump in and solve their challenges right away. Equally important is being a support for your child should they begin to become discouraged or disorganized with their work. Should that occur, please speak with them about the importance of reaching out to their teachers for guidance and support and how best to do so.
- Encourage balance and wellness. While there will be academic expectations during a campus closure, your child's health and well-being remain a top priority. Our approach to distance learning includes required athletic expectations as a rough proxy for their athletic experience here at school, because we strongly believe this serves their overall wellness. The fact that we are in a distance learning setting does not lessen – and perhaps increases – the importance of that part of our program. Students should know that this time matters, even though they are not in class on campus. In addition, help ensure students are maintaining social connections with peers virtually or on the phone, that they are taking breaks outside and getting fresh air throughout the academic part of the day, and that you communicate any concerns about their wellness to school counselors, teachers, or principal as appropriate.
- Help reinforce George E. Peters Adventist School's expectations for online behavior. Being a good citizen, one who is honest and respectful, both in person and online, is an expectation articulated in our handbook. We ask your partnership with that in reminding them about the fundamental importance of character.

3. Distance Learning Acceptable Use Policy

1. When in synchronous class sessions, each participant's full face should be in view.
2. When in synchronous class sessions or meetings, cell phones or other private means of communication should not be in use unless directed by the teacher for educational purposes.
3. Chat functions within a videoconference should be used for the educational benefit of the class.
4. Students are to disconnect promptly when a video meeting ends. If an individual is unaware of their camera or microphone being on, community members are expected to let them know.
5. Without express and written permission from the Principal, users (including students) may not record, screenshot, share, re-post, or otherwise capture or disseminate digital content created via any of our distance learning platforms. Only representatives of the school may capture or post such content. Failure to comply with this directive may result in disciplinary action.
6. Each platform that George E. Peters is employed for teaching and learning has specific user agreements. Families should review these agreements.
7. Students may not manipulate digital apps or use digital tools in a manner that disrupts classroom objectives.

III. Communication

1. Distance Learning Leadership Framework:

1. The IT Specialist is available to offer technical support to students, families, and colleagues.
2. Our Faculty and Staff meet weekly to ensure that our academic and non-academic operations continue to flow smoothly.
3. Depending on the circumstances, the Principal may appoint specific task forces or advisory groups to assist the school.
4. In the case of extended closures the Advisor for Student Government will be responsible for working with student leaders to offer creative ways to keep our spirits high, our laughter mechanisms functioning, and our minds and bodies balanced.

2. Whom to Contact

Questions about a particular assignment or class	Classroom Teacher
Notifications about a child's absence from Virtual Class.	Classroom Teacher

Questions or concerns about the virtual learning experience	Principal Classroom Teacher
Issues with technology platforms or student devices	IT Specialist
Student and Family Support	Principal Classroom Teacher

3. How will George E. Peters Adventist School communicate with parents, students, and faculty/staff in the event of an extended campus closure?

GEP will continue to use the same channels it employs for normal day-to-day communications. Email will always remain the primary mode of communication, and when appropriate, the communication may also be posted on the website and various social media channels. Urgent messages may be sent via RenWeb.

Channel	Audience	Description & Access
EMAIL	Faculty, Staff, Parents, Students, Board Members	Email will remain the main communication channel for all major announcements. Faculty and staff will also use email to communicate, although they may use other approved platforms to interact with students and each other as well.
Class Dojo	Parents, Students, Teachers	Platform used to communicate between parents and teachers.
Google G Suite	All Students	Google G Suite (including Gmail, Docs, Classroom, etc) will be the platform used for teachers. For video conferencing in small or large groups, teachers and students will use Zoom.
Zoom	Faculty, Staff, Students, and special events with students and parents.	Zoom will be used primarily for virtual staff and faculty meetings. It will also be used to host special events that require more control than the G Suite can offer, e.g. Q&A sessions, virtual events such as Town Hall, Back to School Night,

		Parent Orientation and more.
gepeters.org	Public at large, prospective families, current George E. Peters Community	George E. Peters will continue to make approved information publicly available on its website.
Phone	Faculty, Staff, Parents and Board Members	The Principal may be contacted via school phone (if campus is accessible).

IV. Distance Learning for Academic Continuity

High impact distance learning requires George E. Peters Adventist School employs best practices we've learned from 20th Century Learning and emphasizes work that promotes student ownership. Each teacher will work to establish conditions where students have a clear sense of purpose, opportunities to express themselves, and experiences that allow them to work toward mastery. This will help students stay motivated and engaged in learning, even when they are not physically at school. In distance learning, faculty will be designing and delivering synchronous (face to face) instruction and asynchronous work (student-driven, independent, self paced, etc). These two components will be planned and delivered in coordination, rather than viewed as class time and homework. Students can and will learn content in asynchronous activities. The following offers a sampling of instructional technology used by faculty to aid instruction. The list is not comprehensive as new applications become available daily.

Instructional Components	What does it look like?	What tools do we use?
Engagement	Brainstorm Ask Questions Access Prior Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Doc • Google Classroom • Flipgrid • Socrative • Zoom • Class Dojo
Exploration	Research Watch Videos Read Articles Offline Task Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Search • Google Classroom • Google Slide • Write, Draw, Reflect
Explanation	Synchronous Sessions Asynchronous Independent Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom • YouTube • FlipGrid • Vimeo • Prezi

Elaboration	Make Connections Apply learning to new or novel situations Explain How Student-Created Study materials and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Docs • Google Slides • Prezi • FlipGrid • Quizlet • Kahoot
Evaluation	Formative Assessments Quizzes Video Reflections Digital Exit Tickets Student Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IXL • Accelerated Reader • Star Assessments • Kahoot • Flipgrid • Google Forms • Socrative • iMovie • Classmarkers

V. Distance Learning Framework

In George E. Peters' Distance Learning Plan, faculty will typically offer synchronous five days per week, and asynchronous classes as needed. The schedule of days for these meetings is determined by the teacher and will be shared in advance with the students.

1. Typical Schedule

1. 8:30 am - 3:30 pm, same class order daily

1. Students are encouraged to use this framework as a guide for their day;

Time	Class
8:30 - 8:45	Worship
8:45 - 9:30	Class 1
9:30 - 10:15	Class 2
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 11:15	Class 3
11:15 - 12:00	Class 4
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:45	Class 5
1:45 - 2:00	Class 6
2:00 - 2:45	Class 7

2. Typical Instruction

a. Synchronous instruction (Face to Face, F2F)

- 5 synchronous meetings per week with the full class or small groups within the class to be scheduled via Zoom. Zoom Meetings can be scheduled within the class period framework or “after hours” when faculty have extenuating circumstances
- F2F meetings are posted at the beginning of the quarter so that students and parents can plan accordingly.
- In most cases, faculty are available for one to one and/or small group intervention or enrichment.

b. Asynchronous Instruction (independent work, student-led work)

- Faculty will post clear instructions (i.e. a daily agenda, task description and/or and class notes) in Google Classroom for asynchronous lessons.
- Faculty will post assignments with clear due dates and instruction
 - Each assignment will provide comprehensive instructions for the task(s) and for how students should submit completed work.

c. Attendance:.

- A student absence is considered excused if it adheres to the guidelines outlined in our Student-Parent Handbook
- The George E. Peters Office will communicate home and/or convene the student support team if a student is not meeting attendance expectations.
- Attendance is recorded daily by each teacher in each synchronous class.

d. Classroom Teacher Virtual Office Hours

- Faculty will maintain published standing office hours when they are accessible to their students for extra help.
- Meetings are scheduled via Zoom.
- Faculty will be available to respond to questions via email or Zoom.

e. Students with Special Needs

- Students with IEP's and/or 504's will meet with parents and teachers quarterly, to discuss the students education plan.

f. Grading

- To maintain consistency and clarity for students and faculty alike, George E. Peters will continue with traditional standard grades during distance learning.
 - Measures for academic intervention remain in place: tutoring, tutorial, progress reporting, faculty/parent/student meetings.
 - Flexibility remains paramount as teachers assist students with time management, slipups in schedules, or issues related to devices or connectivity.
 - Teachers retain the autonomy to offer students opportunities for improvement.

g. Assessment

- Blended and alternative forms of assessment will be implemented
 - Formative to collect in-process evaluations of student comprehension, progress, and need for clarification during a lesson or unit
 - Academic integrity guidelines remain in force for all types of assessments.
 - Projects, presentations, collaborative work to engage students with the subject matter and with one another.
 - Summative to assess the outcomes of learning at the end of a unit.

VI. Extra Curricular Activities and Events

During times of campus closure, George E. Peters is committed to maintaining those activities that build interpersonal connection and reinforce a sense of community purpose. In addition to academic programs, this includes offering opportunities for involvement in Choir, Virtual Field Trips, Student Government, NJHS, Weekly Chapels, Honor Chapels, Christmas Programs, Black History Programs and the various school-wide events that are such a big part of what students, faculty, and families share together outside of the classroom.

To that end, synchronous meetings for student organizations will be regularly scheduled by their faculty advisors, following a period of adjustment to the new routines of academic study in distance learning.

Depending on the reason for campus closure, it may be possible for fundraisers, community events, and other gatherings to take place at an off-campus venue. In cases where that is not safe or not feasible, faculty advisors will work in coordination with student leaders and school administration to determine whether an event might be (a) canceled, (b) postponed, or (c) reconceived in a manner that fulfills the original intent of the scheduled activity. All such decisions must be approved by the Principal in conjunction with the Allegheny East Office of Education.

Supporting Faculty and Staff Families

During times when George E. Peters' Distance Learning Plan is enacted, we know that many of our faculty and staff will be caring for other family members while maintaining their duties for the school. With this in mind, we support faculty in scheduling classes, meetings, or office hours outside of the typical distance learning schedule.

We are asking you and your student(s) to approach distance learning with a growth mindset (remember, things you can't do now are really things you can't do YET). We recognize that students learn differently and some may have challenges in this new learning environment. Encourage them to keep trying, to utilize their resources (teachers, peers, tutorial videos, etc).

IX. Financial Policies

The implementation of George E. Peters Distance Learning Plan is considered part of the regular operations of the GEP School, and the school continues to be governed by the policies and procedures outlined in the school's enrollment agreement and our parent-student handbook.

Should the school face an extended campus closure, the George E. Peters School Board will work closely with the Principal and Business Manager to determine if there are pathways to minimize the impact of the closure on families. In cases where a family's economic circumstances are significantly affected by an extended campus closure, the family should immediately reach out to the school's Business Office.

While distance learning will not be able to fully replicate the experience found in George E. Peters classrooms and campus on a daily basis, our faculty and staff will continue to engage students in a variety of ways and will, through this process, explore with them new and creative ways for delivering academic experiences.