



Guide to Distance Learning



Mill Valley Middle School
Fall 2020

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Welcome

The saying goes “with adversity comes opportunity.” While we begin the 2020-2021 school year under an evolving and ever-changing landscape, we remain committed to navigating our year together, whether it be in distance learning, hybrid learning, or with all of us back on campus, as one community. This is an opportunity for us to all come together in support of the academic, social, and emotional needs of all our children, families and staff. We are truly all in this together, and we each play a role (students, families, teachers, administrators, counselors, administrative assistants, custodians, maintenance workers, instructional assistants, food service workers, etc) in supporting one another, and lifting each other up. Distance learning will look different from traditional learning. A hybrid model will look different than traditional learning. Being able to have all students on campus will look different than traditional learning. While learning will look different this year, we all share a common goal in working together through this global pandemic. All of us look forward to beginning our important work together, as we strive to provide the best possible education experience for our students.

This Guide to Distance Learning is designed to give students and parents the basic information they will need to navigate the distance learning experience at the middle school, and can be used as a reference. It includes information about the calendar, distance learning plan and policies, school policies, and student information as it pertains to distance learning. For more specific information please visit our webpage at www.mvschools.org/ms and the Mill Valley Middle School Student Handbook (contains all the general information)

Mission Statement

We strive to be a school where everyone feels welcome, safe, and accepted. We seek to inspire creative, healthy, thoughtful people who are motivated to contribute to the global community. We foster personal growth, critical thinking, technological literacy, and academic excellence with a commitment to high standards and support for all students.

Contents

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● MVMS Instructional Plan● Distance Learning Schedule● Google Classroom● Zoom Guidelines● Instructional (Digital) Platforms● Grading Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Attendance Policies● Aeries Parent Portal● Student Conduct● Addressing Student Conduct● Communication Platforms● Library Information
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MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Requirements and Guidelines

Our teachers will provide a rigorous, inquiry-based educational experience that meets the essential standards, inspires creativity, promotes independence, and prepares students for the next level. Distance learning will have required attendance, grades, consistent communication, and support will be provided for the whole child. We will also seek to build community as a school while we navigate distance learning together. The state requires 240 minutes of daily instruction and this may include combination of live instruction, independent work, homework, and/or assessments. Live interaction is required daily, and all students will receive daily interactions with their teachers. There will also be time set aside for teacher professional development and planning, outreach to students and families, social and emotional support, and community building.

California State Requirements for Distance (distance) Learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily live interaction • 240 min daily (20 hours weekly) instruction • Instruction is synchronous & asynchronous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance taken daily • Weekly learning/lesson plans • Traditional grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support systems for all students • Equal access to education • Professional Development for staff
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Instruction

The distance learning space will include both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous instruction is learning in real-time, with live interaction and instruction. Asynchronous instruction is when learning occurs independently and allows students to move at their own pace.

<i>Synchronous Instruction</i>	<i>Asynchronous Instruction</i>
<p><u>Community Building</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share-outs • Discussions • Breakout groups <p><u>Whole Group Lesson</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lessons • Introduce new concept • Breakout groups <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 feedback • Small group/Partner work <p><u>Celebrations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations • Showing work • Reflections on learning 	<p><u>Teach New Skills or Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded mini-lessons • Model strategy • Read alouds (recorded) <p><u>Personalized Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curate practice activities for students • Use hyperdocs to link a variety of resources for students to engage in <p><u>Project and Independent Practice Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry/Choice, Research/Investigate • Independent practice and reading <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Self-reflection • Review feedback

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

During distance instruction, all assignments, activities, directions, resources, and any instructional videos will be posted in Google Classroom. Teachers will create instructional (essential) standards-based assignments that encompass a progression of learning. This includes enrichment, engagement, intervention, remediation and exposure to new material. Teachers will be responsible for creating instructional activities that meet the needs of their students in order to prepare them for the next level.

Class Periods (Zoom)

- Students are required to attend all class sessions via Zoom (attendance will be taken)
- All students will meet with each of their classes three times per week for synchronous learning (this will be supplemented by asynchronous learning activities). All periods (zoom) will be 30 minutes long on Monday, and 65 minutes long Tuesday through Friday
- Teachers will provide students with the opportunity to connect, build relationships, engage in live instruction, support with assignments, extension activities, etc.

Teachers will...

- Post all assignments, directions, resources, or instructional videos in Google Classroom
- Monitor all assignments, provide feedback for students (varies depending on class)
- Respond to student emails and inquiries in a timely manner
- Provide synchronous instruction 3 times a week (30 minutes on Monday, 65 minutes on Tuesday-Friday) for each period
- Office hours, and any other information pertinent to the course will be on each teacher's webpage

Student Expectations

During distance instruction, attendance is mandated by the state of California and all students are required to "attend school." Students are responsible for completing the instructional activities assigned by each of their teachers throughout the week. Additionally, students are required to attend all Zoom class periods. During these class periods, teachers will be able to connect with their students, answer questions, deliver instruction, or clarify and guide students through an activity. Any student who is unable to make a Zoom class period must contact the teacher. Students will also receive feedback for completing work (as determined by the teacher).

Students will:

- Complete and submit instructional activities and assignments as assigned by individual teachers
- Attend all Zoom class periods and adhere to Zoom policy
- Use the "Asynchronous learning time" to complete all assignments and submit them
- Contact teachers with questions on instructional activities at any time during the week
- 30 minutes of daily independent reading

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Weekly Schedule

Students at MVMS will have six periods of live instruction during the day on Monday (30 minutes each), and three (longer) periods of instruction during the day on Tuesday through Friday (65 minutes each). These class periods will be synchronous learning. Afternoons will be asynchronous learning time for students to work on/complete any assignments and/or activities introduced, discussed, reviewed, or assigned during the class (Zoom) periods. Additionally, students may use the time for independent reading, iReady math and English practice. Teachers will be available in the afternoon for any additional help/support (between 1:15-2:50) on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. After each period meets on Monday, periods 1-3 will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while periods 4-6 will meet on Wednesdays and Fridays. Art, Music, and PE will split the 30 minutes for A Day/B Day on Monday, giving each class 15 minutes to introduce the expectations of the week.

During regular periods in remote instruction, students will participate in whole group, small group, and individual learning. Students will also be assigned instructional activities and/or other projects and assignments they can complete during asynchronous learning time. Additionally, Wednesdays will be an “early release” so our teachers can meet, plan, and collaborate. In order to provide a robust, rigorous, and meaningful remote learning experience for our students, it is important we build-in time for teachers to work together.

Distance Learning Schedule

Mill Valley Middle School 2020-2021 School Year

Weekly Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:40-9:00	Panther Community	Panther Community	Panther Community	Panther Community	Panther Community
9:00-9:30	Period 1 A/B	Period 1A	Period 4A	Period 1B	Period 4B
9:35-10:05	Period 2 A/B				
10:05-10:20	Break				
10:20-10:50	Period 3 A/B	Period 2A	Period 5A	Period 2B	Period 5B
10:55-11:25	Period 4 A/B				
11:25-12:10	Lunch				
12:10-12:40	Period 5 A/B	Period 3A	Period 6A	Period 3B	Period 6B
12:45-1:15	Period 6 A/B				
1:15-2:50	Students Asynchronous Teacher Office Hours, & Support	Students Asynchronous Teacher Office Hours, & Support	Students Asynchronous Staff planning & Collaboration	Students Asynchronous Teacher Office Hours, & Support	Students Asynchronous Teacher Office Hours, & Support

Panther Community	Asynchronous, Office Hours, Support	Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live schoolwide sessions Morning music Morning announcements Words of wisdom Team building activities Read “The Howler” (once a week) Admin and counselor Led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asynchronous learning Teachers available for office hours and students support Independent Reading Social and emotional support Counselor check-ins and groups School Clubs (TBD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes meet on Monday A Day class meets first 15 min of Monday class, B Day class second 15 minutes Early Release Wednesday for Staff Planning and Collaboration

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Google Classroom

Google Classroom will be the main vehicle for the delivery of all instructional content, resources, and the housing of all assignments. Teachers will utilize Google Classroom in ways that are conducive to full distance learning, a hybrid of in-person and distance learning, or all in-person learning at the school site. Clear guidelines and common practices have been established for the utilization of Google Classroom across grade levels and content areas, however, students will be responsible for understanding the specific policies and customizations around each teacher's Google Classroom.

Teachers will...

- Use the stream for announcements and comments only (no classwork)
- Organize topics in "Classwork" by week, starting with "Week 1: August 20-21, Week 2: August 24-28." There may be additional "Topics" for things like units, Resources or supplemental information.
- Clearly communicate to students when instructional activities and assignments are due
- Create due dates on work that will only be used on assignments and/or activities that are required to be turned in or marked as done.
- Include instructions for all assignments in the assignment post and not solely as separate attachments (detailed instructions can be included separately, but the steps to complete the assignment should be included in the assignment post)
- Title assignments in Aeries the same as the assignment in Google Classroom

Students will...

- Be a self-advocate and know how their teachers want questions to be asked
- Familiarize themselves with and understand each teacher's practices and policies
- Know and understand when each instructional activity and/or assignment is due
- Check Google Classrooms and MVMS Grade Level Google Classrooms regularly
- Turn off all Google Classroom notifications other than notifications of private comments on individual assignments
- Monitor, check, and respond to school email daily
- Check Aeries for missing work and class progress

Parents will

- Familiarize and understand each teacher's practices and policies
- Guide and support children as needed
- Know student's MVSD Google account login and password information
- View Google Classroom Tutorials on our webpage and/or attend live education sessions
- Periodically check Aeries Portal (not Google Classroom) for records of missing work and class progress (grades updated every few weeks)
- Understand that Google Classroom and Aeries are not directly linked; if there is a question about missing work, require students to show evidence of work completion in Google Classroom
- Have students contact teachers with any questions about grades and assignments

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Zoom

Zoom is Mill Valley Middle School's primary (and supported) video conferencing tool for "live" interaction (and instruction) with teachers. Its purpose is to create a learning-centered environment. Students are expected to behave as if this were a regular classroom setting, in a mature and responsible manner. All school rules, teacher guidelines and expectations apply.

General Guidelines

- The introduction of new content and standards may be introduced during a live Zoom session
- Sessions may also be used for connecting with students, providing extension activities, answering any questions, or clarifying instructional activities
- Any pre-recorded video files, audio files, or written instructions, instructional activities will be posted in Google Classroom
- Parents and students are not permitted to externally record, nor will teachers record any Zoom session without the expressed consent of the teacher and principal

Class Sessions

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Guidelines & Expectations</i>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a quiet space for class with all necessary materials, that is free from distractions for yourself and others• Access the Zoom codes in Google Classroom• When on screen, be seated and participate as though you are in a traditional classroom setting• Camera should be on at all times• Teacher and/or school approved virtual backgrounds may be used• Backgrounds may not be changed (during that period)• Place yourself on mute when not talking• Join the class session with your first and last name only• Attendance is required (if unable to make a session, contact teacher)• Posting, streaming, screen shots, screencasting, or otherwise sharing or commenting on any element of an online class is prohibited• Privately commenting to other students in the class, or otherwise distracting others in the class is prohibited• Attempting to disrupt the teacher or other students in the class is not prohibited
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expect that child will attend all class sessions, and that the child is to communicate with the teacher if they are unable to participate• Students who are absent are to communicate with the school and teacher to receive any missed work• Ensure that child has a quiet space to attend the class• Classes are for students only• Encourage child to communicate any feedback to the teacher• Please be patient and understanding as we are all in this together

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Grading Policy

We will return to our traditional grading policy for the 2020-2021 school year under all scenarios (distance learning, hybrid schedule, full open). Students will receive traditional grades and credit for completing all their work. Teachers are expected to update gradebooks every few weeks, except 6th grade Wheel and A/B classes, which will be updated every six weeks. Teachers will be communicating specific grading details for their classes directly to students. There will be some assignments, projects, and tests that may take longer to grade due to the nature of the assignment and/or the volume of assignments submitted. Midterm progress reports and end of trimester (official) report cards. Parents will be notified when report cards are ready and that you should log in to the portal to check midterm or final term grades.

Aeries Portal

Each parent should receive an email to the parent email address in our Aeries student database. It will provide the link and login information for you to access the portal. If you are receiving email posts through ParentSquare, then we have your current email address. If you used the Aeries Parent Portal in 2019-20, you continue to have portal access for the 2020-21 school year. If you are new to Mill Valley Middle School, you will receive an email to set up your Aeries Portal parent account. Once you have an Aeries Portal login and password, you can access the parent portal via the website <https://portal.marinschools.org/MillValley>, or you can download the Aeries Portal app on a mobile device. If you have more than one MVMS student, they will automatically be added to your portal account - you have only one parent portal account.

Parents should use the portal judiciously and understand that teachers are not expected to grade and upload assignment scores on a daily or weekly basis. When checking the portal, we ask you to do so **with** your child, as it allows you to have a conversation with your him/her about their current progress. If there are questions about current progress in a class, we encourage students to reach out to teachers first. Note: Grades and progress will be updated and accurate in the Aeries Portal, whereas Google Classroom is used for the delivery of instruction and collection of assignments. Aeries Portal and Google Classroom are not directly linked. If there is a question about missing work, parents should require students to show evidence of work completion in Google Classroom, and students should ask teachers questions about any grades or assignments.

Attendance Policies

During distance learning, Zoom sessions, and in-person learning on campus (hybrid or full open), students are expected to be punctual and attend all classes and/or Zoom sessions on regularly scheduled school days, unless ill or excused for another explained absence. All teachers will be required to take attendance every period. It is important to students' education that they attend all classes and/or Zoom sessions with their teacher. If students are unable to attend a Zoom session, they are required to contact the teacher. Whether we are in remote learning, hybrid, or full open model, parents will be required to notify the school prior to 9:00AM of their child's absence. Please see the student handbook for additional information on attendance.

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Student Conduct

Being Kind, Respectful, Honest, and Truthful

Mill Valley Middle School students are expected to maintain a welcoming and safe learning environment for everyone. Students are to respect themselves by working hard, the adults (teachers, administrators, and staff) who work to ensure students' well-being, and their peers, by understanding and accepting others. ***Any form of cyber and/or online bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.***

Being Safe and Responsible

All students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner while in a classroom zoom session and when working independently on instructional activities. Students are to create a learning space at home that is free from distractions. Making inappropriate, rude, or disrespectful comments in a classroom Zoom session, Google Chat, Google Hangouts Meet, or any other communication platform toward any staff or students will not be tolerated.

Arriving to Classroom Zoom Sessions on Time

All students are expected to attend regular classroom Zoom sessions as scheduled, and to login to each classroom Zoom session on time. Arriving to the Zoom session on time is essential to learning and academic achievement. Additionally, students are expected to know and understand all their teachers' classroom Zoom expectations as well.

Using iPad & Technology

The 1:1 program develops the 21st century learning skills of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. All students are issued an iPad and are expected to use the device in an educational manner as directed by their teacher, and to adhere to the 1:1 iPad Program Agreement

Dressing for Learning

Mill Valley Middle School students are expected to dress appropriately for the learning environment. While in a classroom Zoom session, it is important to show respect to themselves, peers, adults, and teachers by wearing clothing that is activity appropriate and conducive to learning.

Personal Electronics During Distance Learning

All personal electronic devices are to be turned off (not silent or vibrate) at all times during the classroom Zoom session, AND stored away from the student's home learning area.

Committing to Academic Honesty

MVMS is committed to encouraging students to assume academic responsibility for their own ethical behavior, and working to achieve their personal best. Academic honesty means not copying, plagiarizing, cheating, or using information unethically in any way. Students are expected to do their own work at all times, and understand that plagiarism and cheating will adversely affect grades.

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Addressing Student Conduct

The Mill Valley Middle School administration and staff make every attempt to create a safe and positive online school environment free from disruptions that interfere with teaching and learning activities. During this time, all MVMS rules, expectations, and guidelines are still in effect. We expect our students to continue to be: 1) Kind and Respectful; 2) Safe and Responsible; 3) and Honest and Truthful. All MVMS policies listed in the Behavior Agreement, Student Handbook, and 1:1 iPad Program Agreement are in effect.

The Referral Process

Mill Valley Middle School staff have the authority to refer a student to the administrators for misconduct. A student may receive a discipline referral for doing something that requires his/her removal from any online class (Zoom or Google Hangout) instruction for their safety, the safety of others, bullying or inappropriate language during the use of technology, for the purpose of maintaining online classroom order. Referrals can be issued for any violations under the use of technology and/or online presence, including, but not limited to:

- Willingly doing something that endangers or could endanger other people
- Using obscene language or gestures
- Making remarks that are racist, homophobic or hate-motivated
- Continual disruptive misbehavior in online classes after earlier attempts to redirect student have not changed inappropriate behavior
- Sharing passwords for Zoom or Google Hangouts or any online platform.

Administrative Actions & Restorative Practice

Efforts are taken to educate the student about the school rule being broken and to guide the student in making better choices about his/her behavior in the future. Parents/guardians are notified when a student has been referred to the administration for incidents which result in a consequence.

Interventions include, but are not limited to, the following progressive consequences:

- Student conference with the administrator via email and/or phone call, including a possible first warning.
- Restorative Assignments developed in partnership with the referring teacher that will count towards their overall grade
- Parent/student conference with the administrator via Zoom or phone call.

One of the ways we educate students about their behavior is through Restorative Practices. Our main goal is for students to change their behavior. This type of intervention is done in lieu of traditional consequences, and parents are also involved. When students are referred to the administration for the behavior, restorative practices are usually given. These practices (or consequences) may include research assignments, letters of apology, and counseling

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Communication Platforms

During the course of the school year, we have a number of communication platforms used to communicate events, information, announcements, celebrations, and all things related to our school community to students, staff, and families. Please see the description of each platform and the expectations of administration, teachers, students, and families

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Description</i>
Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use by teachers and administrators to post announcements for students
Parent Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary communication tool for information to families
MVMS Webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides the most current and up-to-date general information
Weekly Howler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly newsletter to staff, students, and families

Communication Roles

<i>Group</i>	<i>Role</i>
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep students and teachers informed on a weekly basis ● Inform parents on regular basis ● “The Weekly Howler” posted on Wednesdays (Google Classroom, Parent Square, MVMS Distance Learning Webpage) ● Update the webpage ● Parent and community messages sent via Parent Square ● Daily bulletin and morning announcements
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post all Instruction Activities (videos, directions, files, etc) in Google Classroom ● Respond to all student and parent emails within 2 (school) days ● Any school wide announcements (clubs, celebrations, etc.) can be posted in “The Weekly Howler” and/or sent to Annette for the bulletin
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check Google Classroom (grade level group) daily for any announcements ● Read “The Howler” every Wednesday ● Check email twice per day for any communications from teachers
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure all phone and email is updated with the school district ● Read all communications from the school ● Check website regular updates ● Monitor Google Classroom and Aeries Portal with child

MVMS Guide to Distance Learning

Social and Emotional Support

We understand these are trying times and unique circumstances for all. While our teachers are working hard to deliver the best possible education to students, our counselors will continue to reach out to students and families who are in need of additional support. Caring for one another, focusing on our social and emotional well-being, and taking opportunities for self-care is now more important than ever. Please know that counselors, administrators, and teachers are here to support students families in any way. If students are struggling with academics, experiencing higher than normal stress, feeling isolated from their friends, or are needing a space to talk, our counselors are readily available. [Click here](#) to be directed to our distance learning counseling resources webpage.

Community Building

Building relationships and coming together as a community is important under any circumstances, but now more than ever. In addition to providing a robust and academically rigorous education, social and emotional support, we remain committed to building community and further building our relationships with students and families. We will be exploring different ways to come together and build such relationships as we begin and transition into the new school year. We will be sure to utilize all the tools and resources available to us to continue to find ways to connect with one another (Panther Community Time), Zoom Assemblies, clubs, grade level sessions, Weekly Howler, Back to School Night, Parent Education Nights, Principal Chats, etc.)

MVMS Library Resources

The library continues to offer resources for every subject area, through e-books, audiobooks, online encyclopedias and BrainPop. Students access resources through Destiny Discover, the MVMS Library homepage and/or the MVMS Library Google Classroom. All students are expected to sign up for the library's Google Classroom using their school email account. (Join code: ebpz64k) [Click here for the MVMS Library homepage](#), which includes instructions on how students check out e-books,, along with login information for online encyclopedias. The library's Google Classroom offers students a place to request books, watch video booktalks with the teacher-librarian and ask for help finding something good to read. The MVMS library book club is a great way to connect with other students and teachers each week via Zoom.