

## International School of Stuttgart Distance Learning Handbook

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The ISS learning statement ‘Learning at the core of all we do.’ Is at the heart of any move to distance learning. We define distance learning as any learning that allows instructor, students, and content to be located in different locations so that instruction and learning occur independent of place and potentially time. The purpose of this document is to describe the expectations, procedures, and supports that will be implemented in the case of school closure as a result of our Emergency Response Plan and in accordance with an official mandate. These guidelines address both short and long-term closure scenarios. The primary goal is to maintain as much continuity of learning as is possible.

These guidelines apply to the following situations:

1. Short (1-2 school days) or long-term closure (more than 2 school days) where all faculty, staff, and students are not able to be on campus.
2. Short or long-long term absence of faculty and/or students, who are not ill, due to emergency circumstances.

From the date of closure or absence, faculty and students will have two working days to prepare for implementation.

In the event of any school closure, the International School of Stuttgart will provide distant learning education for its students. The continuity of learning will be aligned with the school’s Vision, Mission and Philosophy, as well as through the PYP, MYP and Diploma program expectations of the International Baccalaureate.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated by the school’s Leadership, Academic Council, and ICT teams throughout its implementation, and otherwise on an annual basis.

### **Contractual expectations**

Unless staff members and educators are ill, employees of the school will be expected to fulfil their responsibilities, albeit in modified form, to what is detailed in their contract in terms of contact hours of teaching and non-contact time for planning purposes.

### **Schedules**

The school will endeavor to match the online teaching commitments of educators with their regular schedule, to the facilitation of distance learning. This to ensure continuity of learning for its students.

### **Confidentiality**

Educators are to continue to follow and be mindful of the current best practice of child and data protection, to help ensure that distant learning is safe and secure. Follow the instructions and guidance from the IT office about the safety and use of online tools in addition to the Staff Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Communication**

Communication to students and colleagues is expected to be through the officially supported tools of communication as offered by the school, including email, Veracross, Microsoft Team, Toddle, SeeSaw and other approved online tools. In addition to the regular communication of learning to the community, educators will be expected to contact individual students, groups and classes of students with a frequency necessary for the delivery of online and distance learning tasks and activities, as well as learning feedback to students.

Colleagues are expected to daily monitor and respond to any requests or guidance from communications from their line managers, as well as keeping Principals and Program Coordinators informed of issues and challenges.

During closure periods, IT will open all teacher gradebook access to all teaching members of staff in Veracross to allow for efficient attendance and communication sharing.

### **Collaboration**

Educators are expected to use their non-contact time for on-line planning, preparation and collaboration with colleagues, as well as individual time for resourcing learning and to provide feedback for students on their completed learning tasks. Educators are to use the preexisting planning platforms for planning, as well as collaborative planning, ~~for example, Toddle in the Lower School Degerloch.~~

### **Hardware**

Educators to use ISS provided laptops and iPads, in addition to the ISS approved digital tools to communicate, plan and assess student learning

### **Absence/inability to work**

Colleagues who are unable to work due to illness, for example, are to follow the regular school procedure and call their section Principal from 0700-0715. Absences of more than three days will require an official medical note.

### **Learning Resources**

The International School of Stuttgart has a comprehensive bank of online resources and materials for its teachers and students. These resources are purchased and supported by the school. To ensure consistency of both pedagogy and content, educators are expected to utilize these resources and to restrict their use of third-party resources that are not recognized or supported by the school.

### **Students**

Educators are expected to have the same level of expectations of their students in terms of learning, organization, deadlines and commitment to their learning. Colleagues to create online learning and behavior expectations for their students and link them to existing in- school agreements.

### **Well Being and Learning Support**

Learning Resource Educators will coordinate and support teachers regarding the well-being of students and as well as providing support materials and resources to students through official ISS tools such as Veracross. They may also identify and share resources that support differentiation or develop resources requested by class/subject teachers, as appropriate. Learning Resource Educators will also participate in collaborative planning meetings with individual and groups of teachers.

### **Parents**

In the event of school closure, educators need to be mindful that parents may be more needful of clear and regular communication about what their child is expected to do. Educators are expected to continue to communicate as they would normally do so using the tools of communication as mentioned above, with additional communication as necessary. The International School of Stuttgart will offer a guide and reminder about communication for parents.

### **Support and advice for Educators.**

Educators are to follow their regular lines of communication for support and to seek advice from their IB Program Coordinators, Principals and other line managers, as appropriate.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

No single team or person can provide all of the support and training needed to help the community adapt to distance learning. Distance learning is a collaborative team effort where various members of our staff and faculty work together in order to ensure that continuity of learning can take place, that students, families, and teachers are supported, and that these goals would take priority over others.

Strategic Leadership Team and Academic Council

- Whole School strategic decision making and managerial oversight

#### Director of IT and IT Team

- ensure that ISS systems and accounts are functional
- support with questions of GDPR
- prioritize the necessary services and supports required for online learning

#### Director of Communications and Digital Learning and Digital Learning Team

- ensure that stakeholders know which tools are available and how to use them
- prioritize the necessary services and supports required for online learning
- collaborate with program leaders and teachers in identifying tools and strategies to best meet program and learner needs
- support effective home-school, as well as internal communication efforts

#### Librarians

- support teachers and students with research needs
- prioritize the necessary services and supports required for online learning
- collaborate with program leaders and teachers in identifying tools and strategies to best meet program and learner needs

#### Program Coordinators

- Collaborate with any teams and staff necessary to provide the most effective program implementation possible
- Support teachers in planning for distance learning
- Support in the development of templates, schedules, and other logistical tools and structures that support teachers and students

#### Subject Coordinators

- Support teachers in planning for distance learning
- Provide ideas of resources and strategies that teachers can use

#### Counselors and EAL teachers

- Serve as a liason between students/families and school if necessary
- Support the social/emotional aspects of being in a distance learning situation
- Support teachers in helping their students in extreme circumstances
- Remain in close contact with the families/students who are on IEPs or beginner EAL
- Share resources that support differentiation in distance learning situations

#### **Available formats for online support**

- Live Teams Chat
- email
- Special Support Channel in each divisional Team
- Webinars and 'streaming'
- Recorded tutorials
- Online Resources(Veracross portal and ZenDesk)
- Helpdesk (ZenDesk)

#### **Feedback mechanisms**

All those responsible for ensuring continuity of teaching and learning should implement regular feedback measures whereby they can gauge the success of their actions and gain ideas for improvement. Simple tools to use would be Microsoft or Google forms, and formal and informal methods are encouraged.

## Distance Learning Guidelines for Staff

The ISS mission puts a clear focus on ‘Learning at the core of all we do.’ This focus remains at the heart of any move to ‘distance learning’ which is any learning that allows instructor, students, and content to be located in different locations so that instruction and learning occur independent of place and potentially time. The purpose of this document is to describe the expectations, procedures, and supports that will be implemented in the case of school closure as a result of our Emergency Response Plan and in accordance with an official mandate. These guidelines address both short and long-term closure scenarios. The primary goal is to maintain as much continuity of learning as is possible.

These guidelines apply to the following situations:

2. Short (1-2 school days) or long-term closure (more than 2 school days) where all faculty, staff, and students are not able to be on campus.
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From the date of closure or absence, faculty and students will have two working days to prepare for implementation.

### **General Staff Communication Expectations for all Distance Learning environments**

Teachers should be available to students online during school hours

- Veracross will continue to be used for taking attendance and assigning classwork and assessments, and grading, according to divisional expectations.
- For grades 6-12, brief lesson plans for each lesson should be posted using the ‘Lesson Plan’ feature, including the template information.
- For both lower schools teachers will communicate with families on the Veracross class website, informing them of the daily/weekly schedules and participation expectations.
- Teams will be used by teachers to hold live online classes. In the Upper Schools these will be held according to normally scheduled class time. Teams provides opportunity for scheduled online classrooms, agreed upon and scheduled live chat and video sessions for planning and collaboration, or for informal discussions as initiated by individuals.

Teachers should monitor relevant ISS communication channels such as email, Veracross portals and Teams

- Every class in Veracross, EY – grade 12, has an associated Class Website. Teachers responsible for those classes are expected to post an overview of the week using the ‘**Post**’ feature.
  - Maintaining regular communication with families is essential
- Divisional Teams sites are available for communication and collaboration as warranted.
- Teams is not a tool for communicating with parents however, parents will have access to this tool through their children
- Third party tools should not be used for communications.

ISS expects all teachers to follow the instructions from the IT office with regard to the safety and use of online tools in alignment with the Staff Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Structures and Routines for all Distance Learning**

Faculty should endeavor to adhere to these guidelines as they develop teaching and learning experiences according to the expectations for their divisions:

- Less is more. Be mindful that distance learning, and online learning, takes more time. Don’t anticipate the same pacing and attention spans as you would do for your in class lessons and projects.
- Keep it simple. Especially in the early days, stick with tools and routines that you and your students know. Take away, rather than add activities. Make sure activities can be done independently.

- Keep it consistent. Build and use a designated structures for your communications and lessons, using the ISS templates provided. If at all possible, don't include surprises that deviate from the structures.
- Keep it personal. Whenever you can include video, chat, live classroom, or other strategies that encourage periods of social interaction, and where you also can remain 'human' to your students.
- Consolidate. Plan ahead and pull together instructions and content into one place, at regular intervals. Don't randomly add instructions or keep adding resources once a plan has been posted. You could consider having a designated online area for 'Must do' and 'can do' resources to help with this.
- Be flexible. While you may need to have deadlines, especially for assessments, be extra flexible and responsive to the needs of the students and their families during this time. In some cases it might not make sense to offer summative assessments during a distance learning experience and teachers can opt to provide more formative assessment experiences for students.
- Give choice. The more you provide opportunities for students to have some choice over how they can complete assignments, and create open-ended assignments with clear objectives, the higher the motivation and maximization of the opportunities inherent in distance learning.

### **Specific Distance Learning Expectations for Lower School Staff**

#### **For 1-2-day closures:**

Activities and Home Learning tasks are provided and communicated through [Veracross class websites](#)

#### **For 3 days or more:**

Teachers will provide further differentiated activities such as Reading A-Z, BrainPop, Mathletics, learning logs and other resources as provided through the ISS Learning Commons website.

Units of Inquiry learning can be provided through specific assignments that can be done at home. These may include diaries, journal entries, poetry and storytelling, reading and book reviews. A balance of screen-based activities and 'real world' learning tasks and activities that can be handwritten or recorded for example, would help to provide a needful balance and practice between digital and paper-based learning

Teachers must provide guidance for parents/caregivers to carry out learning tasks with their child.

### **Specific Distance Learning Expectations for Upper School Staff**

For 1-2 Day Closures: Teachers should prepare, organize classes on Teams and connect with students to ensure communication lines are set

For 3 days or more teachers will implement the Distance Learning program

- Summative assessment may be unavoidable, and teachers are asked to consider strategies to limit risk of academic honesty infringements
  - Ideas include personalizing assessments, incorporating assessments into online class time, using 'open book' timed tests, using randomized test questions, or developing open-ended tasks that allow for choice of how to demonstrate mastery.
- In order to succeed, students will more than ever be dependent on teacher feedback. This feedback should be given regularly and in a variety of ways that do not always have to be formalized.

IB External or standardized assessments may be cancelled or rescheduled in accordance with recommendations from the IB.

## Distance Learning Guidelines for Students and Parents

The ISS mission puts a clear focus on 'Learning at the core of all we do.' This focus remains at the heart of any move to 'distance learning' which is any learning that allows instructor, students, and content to be located in different locations so that instruction and learning occur independent of time and place. Our aim is for students and teachers to keep a balance of their learning time online and offline and to inspire challenge and support everyone learning in an authentic, non-traditional manner. The purpose of this document is to describe to the community the expectations, procedures, and supports that will be implemented in the case of school closure as a result of our Crisis Management Plan. These guidelines address both short and long-term closure scenarios. The primary goal is to maintain as much continuity of learning as is possible.

These guidelines apply to the following situations:

1. Short or long-term closure (more than 2 days) where all faculty, staff, and students are not able to be on campus.
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### Expectations for Students

#### *Early Years (EY 3- KG)*

- It is not required, though strongly suggested, that teacher-developed learning engagements are completed.
- Play, reading to, with, and by your children, simple counting, letter play and creative activities should take priority.

#### *Primary Schools (Grades 1-5)*

- Follow the daily plans posted by teachers
- Join scheduled online sessions
- Upload or otherwise share assigned work as instructed

#### *Upper Schools (Grades 6-12)*

- Follow the regular academic and homeroom class schedule
- Be online in Teams Virtual classroom at the beginning of scheduled class
- Adhere to deadlines and any expectations set by teachers
- Monitor Outlook emails (issev.de), Veracross, and Teams classroom daily
- Respond to teachers and fellow students as needed and/or requested
- Communicate proactively with teachers for support and guidance
- Collaborate with and support peers as needed
- Comply with the ISS Acceptable Use Policy (TCUP)
- Adhere to Academic Honesty expectations
- Endeavour to balance your own screen-time and ask for support if needed
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space so that you can work effectively and successfully with minimal distractions.
- Taking breaks, being active, and getting plenty of rest.

### Expectations for Families

The transition to distance learning will be challenging for families. Parents will need to think differently about how to support their children; how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful; and how to monitor and support their children's learning. Some students will thrive with distance learning, while others may struggle. The guidelines provided below are intended to help parents think about what they can do to help their children find success in a distance learning environment.

- Monitor communications through email and Veracross
- Help students to establish routines and understand expectations
- Ensure students have a dedicated space that is well lit, quiet, with no distractions.

- Check-in regularly with child, ideally at the start and end of a learning task, and at beginning and end of each 'school' day
- Encourage a daily routine of physical activity and exercise
- Be an advocate and support if your child is feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or disconnected
- Monitor and help to ensure a screen-time as needed
- Communicate with the school when child is not able to attend scheduled classes online
- Especially in the MYP and DP years, be aware of deadlines and help to ensure that these are met
- Support primary school students in their online activities use of school tool

Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. In the morning, ask the following:

- What is your child learning today?
- What are their learning targets or goals?
- How will they spend their time?
- What resources do they require? What support do they need?

This brief grounding conversation matters. It allows children to process the instructions they've received from their teachers. It helps them organize themselves and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents, but they should nevertheless. Parents should establish these check-ins as regular parts of each day. Not all students thrive in a distance learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines need to be established early, before students fall behind or begin to struggle.

**For Questions About:**

A piece of work, task clarity, resources, learning activity or class:

Contact the teacher of the class

A technology-related question or issue:

Email [itsupport@issev.de](mailto:itsupport@issev.de)

A personal, pastoral or academic concern:

Contact the divisional Educational Psychologist or Learning Resource specialist

Academic or program/curriculum concerns:

The PYP, MYP, DP or program coordinator

Data Protection:

Email [dpo@issev.de](mailto:dpo@issev.de)

Other issues related to distance learning:

Contact Division Leader or School Director

This portion of the policy applies to all the ISS staff, students and parents/guardians of ISS students, and/or anyone who partakes in the ISS distance learning activities and will be referred to as Distance Learning Participants in the further text.

Distance Learning Participants should only use ISS approved communication tools for online communication and collaboration, as described in this policy. When unclear if a tool can be used for online communication, you can get in contact with the ISS Data Protection Officer at [dpo@issev.de](mailto:dpo@issev.de). Use of social media for purposes of online communication and distance learning, such as Facebook, WhatsApp and similar is forbidden.

Distance Learning Participants are strictly forbidden from recording live online interactions and sharing of those interactions, unless such interactions have been approved by the Leadership team during a time of closure. All such videos must conform to the ISS published [Child Protection Policy](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), and/or [Professional Code of Conduct](#).

In the case that there are concerns about these policies being violated, Distance Learning Participants should immediately contact a member of the ISS Leadership Team, school psychologists, or in cases of ISS staff, their direct line manager. Contact personnel is listed below, and their contact information can be found in Veracross Faculty and Staff directory ([Faculty and Staff Directory for Parents](#) | [Faculty and Staff Directory for Students](#))

- Paul Morris – Degerloch Lower School Principal
- Melanie Schmitz – Degerloch Lower Educational Psychologist
- Sarah Kupke – Head of Sindelfingen Campus
- Anuradha Jain – Sindelfingen Educational Psychologist
- Mary Jane Martin – Degerloch Upper School Principal
- Kiri Luther – Degerloch Upper School Educational Psychologist
- Damir Tejjic – Director of IT | Data Protection Officer
- Timothy Kelley – Director

When conducting Distance Learning live sessions, participants should maintain the privacy of such sessions by not conducting them in public places, broadcasting, or in any other way breaking privilege and confidentiality of such communication.