

EARJ LOWER SCHOOL

PARALLEL DISTANCE LEARNING GUIDE

January 2021

Welcome to Parallel Distance Learning in the Lower School!

As we look ahead to the start of the second semester, we are conscious of the current reality in Rio and that some families may not feel comfortable returning to campus in the current context.. We highly value the power of choice for all families to make the best decisions for their health and safety based on personal preference. With this in mind, we are proud to offer again a comprehensive Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) program for families.

This is an option for those EARJ families who need an alternative to in-person learning from when our campuses reopen for the second semester. This guide supports Lower School students who may need to participate in learning from home at some point in the school year. You will see that it is organized by Grade level ranges to give you a detailed sense of what it will be like to be a student studying at EARJ in PDL.

We are confident that students in this model will be able to access the curriculum and connect with their peers from a distance. It is important that our PDL program helps students engage with their on-campus peers and teachers until the day when all students are back together on campus again.



Kirstin White
Barra LS Principal



Doreen Garrigan
Gavea LS Principal

Home-School Partnership

We know from experience that successful distance learning for our youngest learners needs consistent and active support from teachers and parents/caregivers. Communication and clear expectations will need to be transparent and consistent for student success.

We value the fact that we are able to offer the opportunity for families to choose what they believe is best for their children as we continue with a hybrid learning model. We continue to believe that the most important piece of advice we can give any Lower School parent is this: *Reach out to your classroom teacher, Counselor, or Administrator if you need support or guidance.*

So What is 'Parallel Distance Learning'?

Parallel Distance Learning (or PDL) is a program that allows students off-campus to participate in learning with their on-campus peers. Our PDL model is similar in some ways to the kind of Distance Learning that you may have experienced previously, but it is different in a number of important respects. The key thing to remember is that PDL helps students who are at home to participate in a full academic program with their peers and teachers at EARJ. The blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning will vary by grade level in the same way that a child's attention span and ability to work online differs by age and maturity. Your child's teacher will share with you an appropriate PDL schedule based on your child's grade level.

Parallel Distance Learning Schedule

Students in PDL will mirror the same schedule as their on-campus peers, which is a hybrid day schedule. This schedule will look a little different from full distance learning, but will be just as rich and full. For students in the AM session, they will follow the same schedule happening in class as well as complete (AS) learning assignments in the afternoon. For students in the PM session, they will follow the same schedule happening in the afternoon and also be expected to complete their (AS) learning assignments in the morning. Students will have the opportunity to access Specials classes during the week in either synchronous or asynchronous formats.

How will Parallel Distance Learning work with on-campus learning?

Each classroom in the Lower School is equipped with a set up for integrated on-campus and PDL learning. This shift in instruction is an exciting step for our students as they navigate seamless learning with peers both on and off campus. Technology tools ensure that students can interact through video, voice and messaging platforms in real time. This is achieved through classrooms equipped with high quality desktops, notebooks, webcams and sound systems. Students at home will be included in a real classroom environment with opportunities for face-to-face interaction during synchronous learning.

Entry, Exit and Movement in the Parallel Distance Learning Program

PDL is a model not only for families who do not feel ready to return to campus but also for any student who may need to be absent long-term from school, due to health or family reasons. Families who choose PDL must first sign a Community Commitment indicating their preference. Those who choose this model of instruction are encouraged to avoid frequent movement in and out of the model. To provide smooth transitions and maximize learning, families should follow the below guidelines to between PDL and on campus learning.

Students are welcome to participate in PDL in the following ways:

- A. Signed Community Commitment choosing Parallel Distance Learning to start Semester 2.
- B. Parent request to change learning mode from on-campus to PDL via email to LS Office and approval by the Principal. Please allow 24 hours for this request to take effect.
- C. Automatic enrollment in PDL in case of quarantine or exposure to Covid-19. Return to on-campus learning when cleared by School Nurses.
- D. Enrollment in PDL due to non-Covid- related illness of more than 2 days via email to LS Office informing duration to PDL due to illness.

Students who are enrolled in PDL will be enrolled in either morning or afternoon sessions based on scheduling considerations. If a family chooses to change models from PDL to on-campus learning, the first step is to reach out to the LS Principal for a conversation. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for the request, and a timeline for action to ensure a successful student transition. Please note, parents are required to sign a new Community Commitment before students can return to on-campus learning.

Parallel Distance Learning in Preschool

Preschoolers will participate in parallel distance learning in a mostly (AS) asynchronous format. We know that young children need to keep the critical connection between their peers and teachers, therefore one synchronous daily morning meeting session - and synchronous weekly check-ins - allow our younger learners to maintain contact with their on-campus teachers and/or peers. Daily learning activities, student feedback and continued progress monitoring will be done through the Seesaw platform.

| Students in Preschool |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families access (AS) asynchronous lessons and activities on Seesaw. ● Teachers/assistants support off campus students during a daily (S) synchronous circle time. ● Individual check-in sessions will be scheduled by the classroom teacher. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides some flexibility for parents (work, home responsibilities, lessons) ● Students continue to have consistent contact with their teachers/assistants ● Teachers continue building relationships with students/families, providing timely support. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Requires full-time parent/caregiver support in English. ● Opportunity for an on-campus preschool experience is delayed. |

Parallel Distance Learning in Kinder - Grade 2

PDL for students in KG-G2 will participate in a mix of daily (S) synchronous lessons with their teachers and on-campus peers, and asynchronous learning. Live sessions allow learning to continue in real-time and keep the critical connection between young learners, their teachers and peers. To reduce excessive screen time, some lessons will be assigned as (AS) asynchronous available via Seesaw. Students will also be supported with individual check-ins throughout the week in order for teachers and parents to partner in monitoring learning.

| Students in KG - G2 |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students participate in selected (S) synchronous lessons with peers and teachers in class. (AS) Asynchronous assignments and resources are accessible on Seesaw. ● Scheduled check-in opportunities with teachers/assistants in order to monitor student learning from home. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student engagement and support during live (S) lessons from class. ● Students at home cover the same curriculum as their on-campus peers. ● Allows for some flexibility for students in different time zones. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potentially extended amount of screen time for this age group. ● Requires full time parent/caregiver support/supervision; working level of English is beneficial. ● Successful participation in (S) lessons depends on the child's readiness for time online. ● Socializing with peers is limited; possible impact on social/ emotional wellbeing. |

Parallel Distance Learning Grades 3 - 5

Students in Grades 3 - 5 will participate in parallel distance learning that is fully (S) synchronous and includes joining all core classroom lessons via online platforms. Students at this age have more capability to support longer periods of time online, therefore the expectation is that they will be in class in real time, during one of the half-day learning sessions. They will be assigned the same (AS) asynchronous learning assignments as their on-campus peers.

Students in G3-5

- Students attend a full program of (S) synchronous lessons remotely.
- Students are assigned the same (AS) asynchronous assignments as in-class peers.
- Student engagement and support during live (S) lessons from class.
- Students at home cover the same curriculum as their on-campus peers.
- Allows some flexibility for students in different time zones.
- Potentially extended amount of screen time for certain students.
- Parent/caregiver support and monitoring in English needs to be considered.
- Successful participation in (S) lessons depends on the child's readiness for time online.
- Socializing with peers is limited; possible impact on student social/emotional well-being.
- Challenging for students who have not yet developed independent work habits.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services in the parallel distance learning model will include daily (S) synchronous time when students will meet in small groups with the Learning Support Specialist or EALS Teachers. These sessions will occur during the (AS) asynchronous learning block, regardless if students are accessing PDL or attending lessons on campus. Students in need of additional academic support and/or in English language acquisition will attend these sessions.

If your child is receiving - or requires - additional support, the teachers will reach out to you in the same way that they connected with you and your child in Distance Learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

- My family is choosing Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) and I am worried my child will be upset when they see their peers back at school.

We encourage families to have open and honest discussions that are appropriate to each child's age about the decisions around returning to school. We will celebrate all learners as we return to campus and continue to work with students in PDL. Please reach out to the class teacher for LS Counselors for specific suggestions about how parents can support children's understanding during this time.

- We are currently living outside of Brazil and have a considerable time difference to deal with. How can my child successfully participate in PDL?

We remain committed to our families who are currently in different time zones. You can anticipate a structure of support with PDL. Since we anticipate a mixture of students on campus and at home, we will work with families on a case-by-case support basis.

- Will PDL put my child at a disadvantage in comparison to on-campus students?

Students who participate in PDL will participate in the same curriculum as their on-campus peers. The success of students in PDL is dependent on parent /caregiver support; EARJ will provide the necessary resources, tools and access for a full school experience. The key to success is for parents and teachers to communicate often. Please reach out with any concerns to your child's teacher.

- What if my child returns to campus but needs to remain home due to an unforeseen circumstance. What are my options?

If your child needs to remain home for a period of more than 2 days, it will be important to have a conversation with the LS Principal. The PDL model is available to support your child's learning should they need to remain home for an extended period of time due to illness or exposure to infection. You are encouraged to reach out to your LS Principal if you need further assistance or have additional questions.

- How will my child access PDL from home?

Your child will be given a class link to access daily (S) lessons. Each classroom will have technology infrastructure for your child to hear their teacher/classmates, interact during the lesson and participate fully. Classroom devices will display two views on your child's home device. One view will be of the class and the other will be of the teacher/whiteboard.

- How will my child communicate if he/she has a problem accessing learning during PDL?

If your child has technology issues, please do not panic! As soon as you are able to get back online, reach out to the classroom teacher and teaching assistant. They will support you with a plan for accessing the missed lesson or assignment.

Important Lower School Contacts

Please remember that the Lower School Handbook contains lots of helpful advice and information about school life. But, if you need to speak to someone about this Parallel Distance Learning Plan, please contact the most appropriate person below. Remember that for specific questions about your child's learning, please email your child's teacher directly.

All other inquiries should be via the following channels:

| Barra Lower School | | Gavea Lower School | |
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| Principal: Kirstin White kwhite@earj.com.br | | Principal: Doreen Garrigan dgarrigan@earj.com.br | |
| Assistant Principal Anna Cottrell acottrell@earj.com.br | | Assistant Principal: Liana Kelperis lkelperis@earj.com.br | |
| Counselor: Patricia Carmo pcarmo@earj.com.br | | Assistant Principal: Sue Loafmann sloafmann@earj.com.br | |
| Office Secretary: Ana Claudia Rotolli arotolli@earj.com.br | | Counselor: Rossana Manso rmanso@earj.com.br | |
| School Nurse: Mayra Wilbert mwilbert@earj.com.br | | Office Secretary: Cristiane Gomes cgomes@earj.com.br | |
| | | School Nurse: Natália Caldas ncaldas@earj.com.br | |
| Other Inquiries | | | |
| Student Support Services | Director of Student Support Services: Cody Alton calton@earj.com.br | | |
| Educational Technology: | Director of Educational Technology: Carlos Pinho cpinho@earj.com.br | | |