

EARJ UPPER SCHOOL

PARALLEL DISTANCE LEARNING GUIDE

January 2021

Introduction to Parallel Distance Learning in the Upper School

This guide outlines the Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) options available to EARJ Upper School families who choose to remain at home when on-campus learning resumes. It also serves as a guide for students who may need to participate in learning from home at some point in the school year. Organized by grade level ranges, the guide outlines what the options look like and include the key benefits and key considerations for students/families.

As we move closer to the reopening of our EARJ campuses, we are conscious of the reality that some families may not yet be ready for a return to campus given the current context of the pandemic in Rio de Janeiro. We respect the decision that all families will make on whether to return to campus or not and with this in mind, we have developed a comprehensive Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) program to support you in making your decision.

We remain committed to supporting all students, regardless of whether they are learning from a distance or on campus and this comprehensive plan will allow our distance learners to successfully access the curriculum and connect with their peers. Our Parallel Distance Learning program will serve as a bridge between our distance learners and their on-campus peers and teachers for as long as it is required.

Sincerely,



Howard De Leeuw
Gavea US Principal



Scott Little
Barra US Principal

How will Parallel Distance Learning work concurrently with On-Campus Learning?

Each classroom in the Upper School is equipped with a set up for integrated on-campus and PDL learning. This shift in instruction is an exciting next 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

EARJ's Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) is a model built for flexibility to fully support the continued education of any EARJ student who may need to be absent from school due to health reasons for an extended period of time. For this reason, any student enrolled in Hybrid on-campus learning who needs to miss school for health reasons will be automatically supported through the Parallel Distance Learning Program until he/she can return safely to campus.

Students who are enrolled in PDL will attend classes on a daily basis according to their regular timetable. If a family chooses to change models from PDL to on-campus learning, they will be required to notify the school and sign a new Community Commitment form before students can return to on-campus learning. Similarly, if a family chooses to change models from on-campus learning to PDL, they will also be required to notify the school and to sign a new Community Commitment letter.

Parallel Distance Learning Grades 6- 8

Off-campus students in Grades 6-8 will participate in parallel distance learning that is fully (S) synchronous and includes joining classroom lessons via online platforms. Students will be assigned the same (AS) asynchronous learning assignments as their on-campus peers. The expectation is that students are participating in class in real time according to their schedule of classes.

Grade 6-8	
Description	Remote synchronous access to live, on campus instruction.
Key Benefits	Maintain continuity regardless of disruptions in the number of students allowed on campus. Direct daily instruction provides meaningful instruction and opportunities for teacher feedback. More direct parental engagement in your child's classes and expectations for learning. Ability to learn in a non-classroom environment may be more suitable for some students who are easily distracted. Effective approach for independent learners who require infrequent direct teacher support.
Key Considerations	Challenging for MS students still developing independent work habits or strong executive function skills. Lack of in-person social engagement with peer groups, that is key to the middle school years. Limited opportunities for participation in clubs and activities. During a full level 1 re-opening of campus, students would not be able to participate meaningfully in certain on-campus classes, such as PE or Drama. Challenging for students who may require extra language or learning support.

Parallel Distance Learning Grades 9-10

Off-campus students in Grades 9-10 will participate in parallel distance learning that is fully (S) synchronous and includes joining classroom lessons via online platforms. Students will be assigned the same (AS) asynchronous learning assignments as their on-campus peers. The expectation is that students are participating in class in real time according to their schedule of classes.

Grades 9-10	
Description	Remote synchronous access to live, on campus instruction.
Key Benefits	Allows students to be more focused on their courses and provides fewer distractions. Immediate feedback is provided. Transfers more responsibility for learning and organization to students. Students access Google Classroom and have almost everything they need for their online schooling, including course calendars, online lessons, and supplemental resources, all available in the same place. Effective approach for independent learners with a high level of engagement and initiative.
Key Considerations	Challenging for G9-10 students who may require extra language or learning support. During a full level 1 re-opening of campus, students would not be able to participate meaningfully in certain on-campus classes, such as PE or Drama. Limited opportunities for socialization or participation in clubs and activities. Limited opportunities for collaboration. Technological disconnect from classroom learning which may make the acquisition of higher level learning outcomes more difficult. Challenging approach for learners still developing self-management skills.

Parallel Distance Learning Grades 11- 12

Off-campus students in Grades 11-12 will participate in parallel distance learning that is fully (S) synchronous and includes joining classroom lessons via online platforms. Students will be assigned the same (AS) asynchronous learning assignments as their on-campus peers. The expectation is that students are participating in class in real time according to their schedules.

Grades 11-12	
Description	Remote synchronous access to live, on campus instruction.
Key Benefits	Maintains contact and pacing for DP classes, and meets mandatory hours required for DP courses. Transfers more responsibility for learning and organization to students. Greater flexibility for students to work at their own pace and to review work as needed. Effective approach for highly, motivated independent learners with excellent self-management skills.
Key Considerations	Possible Brazilian Diploma compliance issues Difficult to replicate DP mock exams environment that provides important practice for the May exams. Difficult to ensure assessments are done in compliance with academic honesty guidelines. Limited opportunities for socialization or participation in clubs and activities. DL less effective than in-person instruction in responding to individual student conceptual challenges Challenging for learners lacking motivation or who have organizational and time management issues.

Student Support Services: Learning Support and Academic Language Support (EALS)

Our Student Support Services team is dedicated to helping every student who needs a little more support in their learning. This includes students who may be struggling academically (Learning Support) and students who need support with acquiring English (EAL Support). We understand that the Parallel Distance Learning option might present some unique learning challenges for some students. Please know that we are there for every single student.

Student Support Services in the parallel distance learning model will mirror the same structure as their other classes. Students in Learning Lab or EALS class will participate in parallel distance learning that is fully (S) synchronous and includes joining classroom lessons via online platforms. Students will be assigned the same (AS) asynchronous learning assignments as their on-campus peers. The expectation is that students are participating in class in real time according to their schedules.

The Home-School Partnership During Distance Learning

We are introducing a brand new model of education in which our students will navigate a school experience that moves between in-person and online interactions. We know from experiences to date that successful distance learning in the Upper School requires the supervision, guidance and support of parents and that Parallel Distance Learning will also require this same level of support.

We value the fact that we are able to offer the opportunity for families to choose what they believe is the most appropriate approach for their children as we move to a hybrid schooling model. We continue to believe that the most important piece of advice we can give any Upper School parent is this: *please contact us if you have any questions.*

Guidelines

The following practical guidelines are designed to provide support for you and your child in their learning:

Ensure that your child has access to a suitable device at home and a stable internet connection.

This sounds easy but sometimes it definitely is not! The wifi drops, your other child won't share the laptop. But it is such an important and fundamental aspect of Parallel Distance Learning.

Make sure your child has a good study environment, ideally in an accessible area.

Believe it or not, not all children like to work at a desk. Ask them where they feel most comfortable when they are studying and then help make it happen. Think about how it can be a protected space for them, especially where noise is concerned. Make sure that there is enough light and ideally fresh air.

It is not advisable to allow your child to be isolated in their bedroom for hours at a time while online.

One of the wonderful things about childhood is that it is a time of exploration. But that exploration has to be safe. The internet is wonderful for all sorts of reasons, but it is also a place of danger. If you need help or advice on how to keep your child safe online please reach out to the Class teacher.

Keep talking and stay involved.

One of the most important things you can do for your child is to be there. We appreciate that this is not always possible for working parents. But there are many ways you can be there for them in their learning. *Check in* on them, but try to avoid *checking up* on them. Keep the conversation going with the teacher so you feel confident that things are on track.

Health and wellbeing don't just happen.

We live at a time when health and well-being - mental as well as physical - should be at the forefront of our thoughts. Make sure that your child has scheduled regular breaks during online study; plan activities to help your child exercise; staying hydrated is critical (drink!), as is nutrition (eat!).

And remember: *if in doubt, please reach out!*

Frequently Asked Questions

- My family is choosing Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) and I am worried my son/daughter will be upset if they see their peers have made the decision to return to campus.
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 or 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 son/daughter 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 and student initiative and engagement; 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 time, it will be important to have a conversation with the US Principal. The PDL model is available to support your child's learning should they need to remain home for an extended period of time or for an unforeseen reason. You are encouraged to reach out to your US 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 synchronous lessons. Each classroom will have technology infrastructure for your child to hear their teacher/classmates, interact during the lesson and participate fully. The plan is for classroom devices to 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. They will support you with a plan for accessing the missed lesson or assignment. Please consult Rediker and/or Google Classroom for information about what is being covered in class.

Important Contacts

Please remember that the [Upper School Handbook](#) contains lots of helpful advice and information about school life. 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 the subject teacher directly.

All other inquiries should be via the following channels:

Barra Upper School		Gavea Upper School	
Principal: Scott Little slittle@earj.com.br		Principal: Dr. Howard De Leeuw hdeleeuw@earj.com.br	
IB Diploma Coordinator: Deborah Dale ddale@earj.com.br		IB Diploma Coordinator: Flavia DiLuccio fdiluccio@earj.com.br	
Counselor: Andrew Russo arusso@earj.com.br		MS Counselor [6-9]: Marcia Orenstein morenstein@earj.com.br	
Secretary: Ana Morelli amorelli@earj.com.br		HS Counselor [9-12]: Rebecca Joslin rjoslin@earj.com.br	
Other Learning 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		