

# Distance Learning The ABA Way



# Mission

**ABA provides an international education of the highest quality to enable students to be confident, responsible, caring, life-long learners.**



# Vision

**ABA students achieve their maximum potential in an environment of intercultural understanding and respect, to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.**

# Values

**Communication  
Diversity - Inquiry  
Integrity - Knowledge  
Open-mindedness  
Reflection - Thinking  
Willingness to Take  
Risks**





# Our Community Partnership

Mitigating the risk of the spread of the virus and maintaining a safe environment inside the school relies on all of us to do our part outside the school. Our partnership with you has never been more critical as we navigate a global pandemic.

Our work together will control transmission, sustain our learning experience, and do our part to protect those most vulnerable to COVID-19. When we return to on-campus learning we ask all families to commit to these responsibilities.



# Welcome to our Distance Learning Plan

Our Distance Learning Plan is designed to provide uninterrupted and continuous student learning and allows us to toggle, as needed, between this plan and those for blended and face-to-face learning.

The safety of the ABA community—students, staff, families, and visitors—remains our number one priority and concern. As we continue to monitor and adhere to updated regulatory guidelines and recommendations, our plans may change.

At ABA we pride ourselves in providing the conditions for students to feel cared for, valued and to achieve their potential, whilst recognising that every student has an individual journey through education. We place great importance on providing a well-rounded education, inclusive of but not limited to the academics. We strive to develop the character of the young people in our care so that students demonstrate intercultural understanding and respect and are prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. These approaches and priorities continue no matter which learning plan is in place.

*It has certainly been a strange time for all and we are impressed with how the ABA staff, teachers, PTA, parents & children have adapted and supported each other. Such an amazing community to be part of.*

- Early Childhood parent

In our Distance Learning Plan, we will adapt and provide student support services, clubs and, where needed, personalised learning to provide a full education. For our plans to be successful, we will continue to work in close partnership with our ABA families.

## What should I expect between now and the start of school?

The first day of Distance Learning is **Tuesday, August 25th**. The Principals will communicate with parents and students and ensure everyone will be given plenty of time to understand the arrangements and prepare for the first week. We are all looking forward to starting the new academic year and welcoming both new and returning students.

New families will be contacted directly regarding the New Family Orientation.

# ABA Plans: Our three scenarios

In line with guidance from the Ministry of Education, ABA has developed plans for the three different scenarios below. Our plans are connected to our risk assessments and current risk status. Plans have been designed so that we can easily toggle between each different scenario.

When the **Face-to-Face learning** model is implemented, ABA can offer all activities and programmes with all staff and students on campus. Some safety precautions will be in place to reduce risk.

**Blended Learning** is when both in-person learning and distance learning are taking place. It defines a time when some students are learning from home (for health, safety, or scheduling reasons) and some students are attending school in person. During blended learning, a reduced number of students are permitted on the campus at any one time.

**Distance learning** is a term that describes a scenario in which students are learning remotely and classes are not permitted on campus. If we are unable to reopen the campus for the start of the academic year, or if we must fully shut down the school, we will implement our redeveloped, improved distance learning programme.

## When will our Distance Learning Plan be implemented?

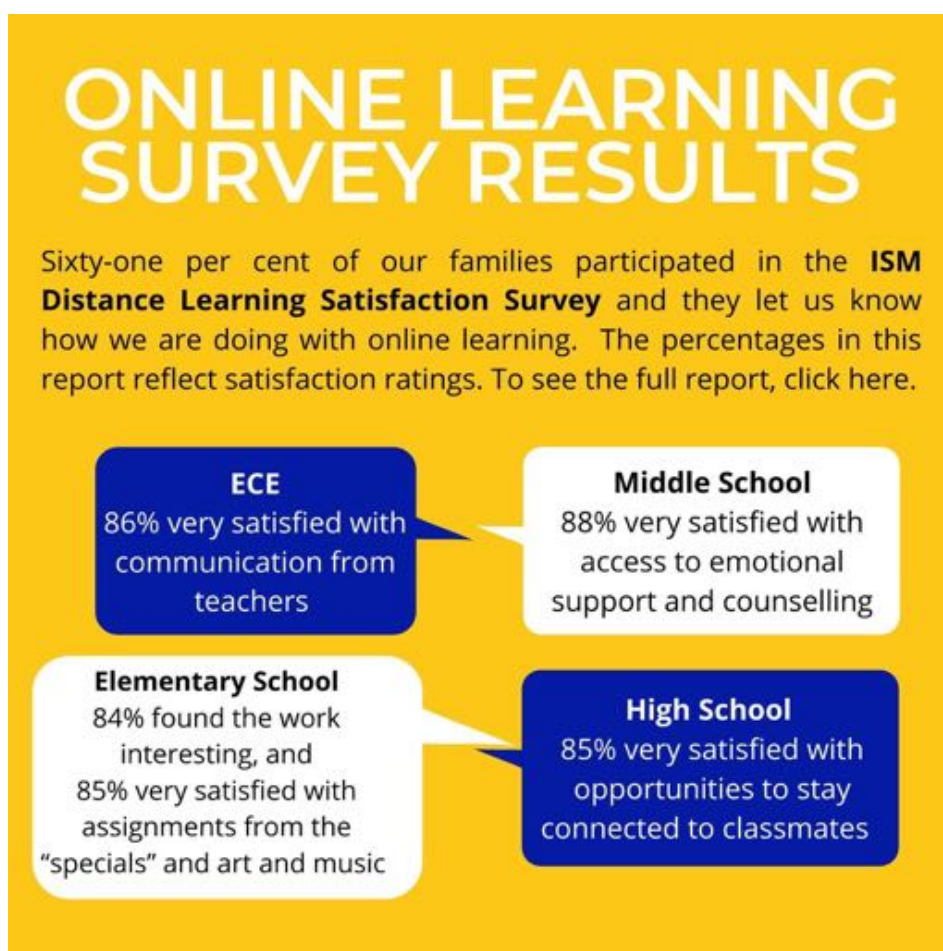
Our Distance Learning Plan is followed when our school campus is closed to students during the academic year. This decision may be taken by the Ministry of Education which is our current situation due to COVID-19 (as of August 11th 2020), or it could be that after completing our risk assessment, and if risk status is High, students will have to remain off-campus.

*I would like to thank you for the work that you, all the teachers and staff of ABA have been able to achieve since this epidemic started. Our children were able to continue with their studies seamlessly and they had all the support and encouragement they needed to complete their studies/diploma. The support still continues with additional studies of personal interests which we are so grateful for.*

- High School parent

## What did we learn from the previous school year?

In March 2020 when schools were closed we were able to transition to online learning within 48 hours. Teachers are typically trained to teach with children in classrooms, and we are proud that they were able to learn and adapt to distance teaching and learning so quickly so that we were able to provide continuity in learning.



Read the full survey results on our website. Click [here](#).

Before the end of the previous academic year, we conducted a parent survey and also received feedback from students in different areas of our school. The results of the survey showed **very high satisfaction with the continuity of learning online, opportunities for students to stay connected with ABA and friends and receive some extra help when needed**. We are also very proud of our Grade 12 Diploma and Grade 10 MYP students who achieved excellent results with the support of their teachers. That said, we are committed to school improvement and providing an enhanced Distance Learning programme.

## What's new and why is it better?

As a **community of learners**, we have reflected on the various ways we can move forward and improve our Distance Learning provision to create the optimal conditions for successful learning.

You will receive further information directly from the Principals regarding our Distance Learning programme, however, some of the key updates and improvements are:

- **Introduction of Google Meet** as our video conferencing platform which as a Google school helps us to integrate other online tools such as Google Classroom and offer more interactive lessons.
- Permission to have a restricted **number of teachers working from the ABA campus** during Distance Learning. This will enable us to have some live lessons being broadcast from classrooms, helping students to stay connected with ABA and in some cases view teacher demonstrations.
- Focus upon **upskilling** our teachers in Distance Learning, as a Google School there is a wealth of professional learning resources in this area.
- Planning lessons and tasks designed to promote **students' behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement**. Students will be **active** participants in their learning.

*I am glad that ABA has risen to the challenge and delivered and in the time frame that it has, kudos to all ABA staff and teachers for what they do.*

- Middle School parent

*We are further incredibly grateful for our children's teachers, like yourself, who seemingly effortlessly transitioned, guided, supported and continue to actively engage our children using online learning platforms. We are taking every opportunity to tell others about the excellent job you guys at ABA are doing. We are so proud of our school and our teachers!*

- High School parent



The **High School** distance learning programme will run from 8am-3pm, and will include:

- **Additional revision** sessions will be available that students will be expected to join.
- All High School classes will continue to have a **Google classroom** which parents can also view.
- High School students will have a **live and interactive** video-conference with their teacher for at least two sessions, per subject, per week.
- Video conferencing, however, will be for a maximum of 40 minutes at a time for any 70-minute lesson, giving students a minimum 30 minutes break between video-conferences to complete tasks set, or to **take a break from screen time**.
- **ASAs, Clubs and CAS activities** will go ahead wherever possible during breaks.
- **After-school revision sessions** will occur between 2pm and 3pm (except Tuesdays).
- Students will **meet with their Learning Mentor** as a group once a week. This will be an opportunity for Mentors to run through our Personal, Social and Emotional well-being programme as well as Core activities for the Diploma students.
- Over a two week period, Learning Mentors will check in with each of their students **one to one**, to discuss work, progress and how their learning is going.
- Teachers will always **strive for clarity** to improve student understanding and greater success in Distance Learning.

*With the pandemic and schools being closed, as parents, we were skeptical of the way forward for Grade 12 students. But it's truly commendable that everything was in place and completed smoothly. This wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of yourselves and the teachers.*


- High School parent

*A good teacher is a blessing and I feel blessed that two of my children went to ABA and had the opportunity to be taught by some of the best teachers there.*

- High School parent



The **Middle School Distance Learning!** will have scheduled learning interactions/engagement, 5-days a week, from 8:00am-1:00pm, student support until 3:00pm and:

- Continue to **provide routine** and sense of normality for students,
- Provide connection with the community in order to **sustain morale and emotional well-being.**
- Provide a **continuum** of active learning and interaction.
- Ensure open **lines of communication** with all stakeholders.
- Foster conditions for students to **find success** in their concept-based learning journey across all eight MYP subject groups. 
- Be synchronous by having a **dedicated Google Classroom** for each subject group and grade level.
- Ensure support for students between 1:00pm - 3:00pm when they will/may **independently explore, develop and extend their learning** (asynchronous learning).
- Have **MS Connects!** every Tuesday which focuses on the MS advisory program that supports our students socially and emotionally,
- Have dedicated teaching teams and **smaller advisory groups,**
- Ensure every student has a **one-to-one connection** with their advisor over every two weeks,
- **Ensure every student** has a one-to-one connection with their subject group teachers every four weeks.

*I just want to add how thankful I am to the teachers who have chartered this new course online - for making it engaging and interesting. Some have put in so much effort and, as a parent, I really salute them.*

- Middle School parent

*I'd like to thank all the middle school faculty members for all their hard work and dedication in keeping the classes going daily. It is so heartwarming to hear the children and their teacher's voices chatting.*

-Middle School parent

The **Early Childhood and Elementary School** distance learning programme will run from 8.00am - 2.00pm, and will include:

- Scheduled **live interactive lessons** for EC and Elementary students, including at least two small group learning opportunities per week
- Live lessons from each of their **specialist areas**
- Live whole class meetings focused on **social-emotional learning** and connection with teachers and classmates
- A published **weekly class schedule** with all live lessons identified
- Increased clarity about daily “must-do” tasks, with **individualised feedback** from teachers
- A range of **choice-based enrichment** tasks offered beyond the required learning engagements
- The **option** to **order a school formatted iPad** for students in any grade: ES iPad purchase plan (orders close on 16th August)
- Previously purchased school iPads reformatted via a **drive and drop service**
- The option of online **After School Activities** for students in Grades 3-5



*ABA is top-rate. The interactive classes truly engaged my kids and the teachers' ability to adapt to the various kids in the class was outstanding. Additional support was always on offer for their reading, math problems or feelings. As a parent, the teachers' materials and instructions were always organized and communicated promptly so it was easy to know what to do each day. My kids woke up each morning eager to start their learning and chat with their classmates.*

- Elementary School parent

*Thank you so much for the remarkable behind-the-scene efforts you've done and continue to do for the online education to take place and the chance for the children to continue their education during these surreal times.*

- Elementary School parent

*Congratulations for a successful and challenging year. The hard work that you and your team has done to provide our kids with high quality education at ABA is greatly appreciated.*

- Elementary School parent

# What are each of our responsibilities?

ABA strives to provide education of the highest quality enabling students to achieve their potential during Distance Learning. As members of the ABA community, we are all expected to 'walk the talk' of our Mission, Vision and Values (MVV).

## **ABA Faculty are responsible for:**

- Providing the best distance learning experience possible for this situation
- Supporting families in the development of their independent learning skills
- Providing effective feedback and support on learning engagements
- Providing extra-help times outside of the class at a mutually convenient time.
- Maintaining attendance and assessment records

## **Families are responsible for:**

- Assisting child(ren) with ensuring they are ready for online learning interactions on time and ensuring device is charged
- Creating a comfortable, distraction-free place for your child(en) to work and attend online learning interactions,
- Communicating with your child(ren)'s teacher/advisor/mentor of any absences,
- Encouraging your child(ren) to unplug and engage in some form of physical activity, while practicing responsible social distancing.
- Communicating with your child's teacher/advisor/mentor if you are concerned about their well-being or assigned learning activities
- Monitoring your child's screen time, we want children to have a balance. If your child is spending most of their time online, check-in to see what they are doing as students may switch task into social media platforms etc.

## **Students are responsible for:**

- Engaging in classes; this includes having video ON unless requested not to
- Giving your best effort while practicing digital citizenship,
- Attending classes unless your parent or guardian notifies your teacher/advisor/mentor of any absences for any reason
- Staying in contact (your teachers and advisors will be checking their email daily during school days).
- Checking email at the beginning and end of each day,
- Dressing appropriately - (wear an ABA shirt, if available - no PJs),
- Demonstrating your learning in different ways,
- Respecting yourself and your teachers by being honest (academic honesty) in your work.

## What about Student Support Services during Distance Learning?

Our Student Support Services team will continue to provide support for diverse learning needs. This will include our Counsellors providing information on transition (particularly for those new to ABA) and one-to-one online support for students and advice for parents. How can parents support children with transition and Distance Learning?

Due to Covid-19, returning to school this year may be more challenging for your child. Now that we know we will be beginning with Distance Learning, many children may have worries or concerns about what school will look like, who their teachers will be and how they will be able to connect with their peers. Also, many will be feeling excited as they are moving to a new grade level, getting back into their classes or possibly they are new to ABA. To help your children with this transition and their emotions and to help them and your family to feel as prepared as possible for the first day of school:

*Teachers have been doing a wonderful job communicating with their students and giving them positive feedback which boosts their confidence and encourages them to do better and better. A big round of applause for all the teachers in ABA for their dedicated effort in online teaching.*  
- Elementary School parent

- Talk with your children about how they are feeling about returning to school. Ask open-ended questions.
- Ask them what they need to help support them in returning to distance learning. Listen to them and provide reassurance if they are feeling worried, nervous or scared
- Create a plan to help them feel prepared from day one. Have their schedule printed and become familiar with their daily school routine and teachers. Ensure that they have a clear, quiet space to work and access to all supplies needed such as pencils, pens, calculator, paper, computer, etc.
- Connect them (safely) with a few friends from school if possible before the first day.
- Discuss wellness and discuss a few ideas of how they will take care of themselves and how you will help support them with this. For example, exercising, connecting with friends, eating well and quality family time
- One week before: return children to their normal school bedtime and wake-up time to help encourage healthy sleep habits and routine.



### **How can students access resources from the library?**

At the end of last academic year we did a drive-through drop-off to collect library books and other school resources. At the start of our Distance Learning programme, we will do this in reverse by organising a drive-through for families to pick-up resources. The process of drop-off and pick-up will continue through the period of Distance Learning. You will hear more about this from our librarians.

### **How can my child remain fit and healthy during a period of Distance Learning?**

We are aware of the worry of providing lessons online and the amount of screentime for students; we will do our best to maintain a balance. Our Physical Education and Health teachers will provide fitness programmes and live lessons for grades K1-12. This will also include opportunities for our Diploma students who do not normally have Physical Education in their Face-to-Face learning programme at ABA.

### **Will my child still be able to participate in after-school activities?**

We are proud of our After School Activities programme. Teachers will offer a wide variety of clubs to students as part of our Distance Learning Plan. These will be communicated by each area of our school.

### **What about field trips, travel and sports teams?**

Unfortunately during a period of Distance Learning, our risk status is high. This means that all field trips and overnight travel will be postponed for all areas of our school. We will re-evaluate these opportunities when there is a change in our risk status.

### **What about Student Support Services during Distance Learning?**

Our Student Support Services team will continue to provide support for diverse learning needs. This will include our Counsellors providing information on transition (particularly for those new to ABA) and one-to-one online support for students and advice for parents.

### **Can parents access the ABA campus?**

During the period of Distance Learning, parents are not permitted on the campus. Meetings with teachers or other staff members will take place online. If a parent needs to come in person to the Business Office, then this can be by appointment only. Any parent doing this will have their contact details noted, temperature taken and must wear a mask at all times.

For payments, if you do not want to come to campus, you can make them directly with National Bank of Oman using:

A/C No.: 1016 331823-001, SWIFT CODE: NBOMOMRXXX.

If you opt for direct remittance to NBO account, please inform us via our email id: [businessoffice@abaoman.org](mailto:businessoffice@abaoman.org)

## How will ABA communicate with families?

In normal times our preferred method of communication at ABA is face-to-face. However, during Distance Learning we will use the channels listed below.

Channel	Audience	Description and Access
Email	Faculty, staff, parents and students	Email will be used for all major communications and announcements, including those from the Head of School and Principals. Faculty will also use email to communicate, although they will use other platforms to interact with their students as well.
Text Message	Faculty, staff and parents	We will use this to communicate specific, important and time-sensitive information such as school closure.
GSuite	Students across all divisions	Google GSuite (including Gmail, Docs, Classroom, Meet, etc.) will continue to be the platform used by all teachers. For video conferencing, we will use Google Meet.
SeeSaw	Early Childhood and Elementary School students	Early Childhood and Elementary School teachers and students will continue to use Seesaw and other apps they are already familiar with.
Google Classroom	Grade 5, Middle and High School Students	Grade 5, Middle and High School teachers and students should use their Google Classroom classes for sharing and assessing assignments as well as general communication for the whole class.
ABA Portals	Parents and students	The ABA Portals are accessible via <a href="http://www.abaoman.org">www.abaoman.org</a> . Through these Portals, users can access general school information, extra-curricular programmes, event listings, calendars, administrative messages, directories and statements of official school policy.
ManageBac	Middle and High School Students	Teachers and students use ManageBac to submit IBDP work and communicate on IB external requirements, like the Extended Essay.
ABA Public Website	General public	ABA will maintain general information on COVID-19 here: <a href="http://www.abaoman.org">www.abaoman.org</a>

*Thank you so much for the great support and great job you are offering in this special time. Your efforts and teachers' efforts are greatly appreciated.*

- Elementary School parent

## Who is available to help?

For queries about...	Contact
Individual students, courses, resources, assessments etc.	The relevant teacher
Technology-related issues	helpdesk@abaoman.org
Personal or social-emotional concerns	The relevant counsellors: EC and ES: codriscoli@abaoman.org MS: canthony@abaoman.org HS: ahostetter@abaoman.org
University and college applications	dbarker@abaoman.org
Other issues relating to distance learning	The Principal or Assistant Principal from the relevant area of our school.  <b>Early Childhood and Elementary School</b>  scook@abaoman.org ebanatwala@abaoman.org  <b>Middle School</b>  kbowin@abaoman.org mbarker@abaoman.org  <b>High School</b>  swalker@abaoman.org gessex@abaoman.org
Health or medical concerns	nurse@abaoman.org
School fees and business matters	businessoffice@abaoman.org

*The Elementary teachers have been exemplary! During these unprecedented times, all of them have been doing their best to connect with the students and try and make learning interactive and engaging for the kids.*

- Elementary School parent