



ST. ANSELM'S

ABB EY S C H O O L

Distance Learning Guide
for Students & Families

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INTRODUCTION

St. Anselm's Abbey School is a Catholic, Benedictine community that nurtures the spiritual, personal and intellectual development of young men with demonstrated academic achievement through rigorous study of the liberal arts and sciences, preparing them for the demands of college and a life of learning and service to others.

St. Anselm's Abbey School Mission Statement

As all of us at St. Anselm's Abbey School embark on the school's 79th academic year, we do so under circumstances that no one would have predicted a generation, a decade, or even a year ago. For a monastic school so deeply rooted in the value of togetherness and the importance of place, distance learning may at first appear to be an obstacle to our mission. And yet, as our faculty and students have discovered, distance learning is actually the tool that allows us to continue our mission in the face of a global emergency. Far from being shut down or debilitated by the ongoing pandemic, we have been stretched by it and pushed into new and exciting places.

This Distance Learning Guide is intended as an introduction to the school's approach to distance learning, a resource that families might return to as they navigate this new paradigm, and an affirmation of our efforts to rise to the challenges of this time with creativity and care. No matter the circumstances, St. Anselm's remains committed to academic excellence within our balanced, liberal-arts curriculum, to the Benedictine pillars of prayer and work, and to the formation of young men who will use their gifts to serve others.

Published August 2020

Acknowledgments: We are grateful to many colleagues in other schools and associations who have shared their approaches and guides to distance learning, especially Woodside Priory School (Portola Valley, California), the Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools, and the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington.

DISTANCE LEARNING TERMS & TOOLS

Distance Learning Methods

Synchronous Learning

Class interactions occur in real time, at the same time for all students. Students and teachers gather virtually, either in Zoom meetings or using other online communication tools, to engage in interactive, teacher-facilitated lessons.

Asynchronous Learning

Students work at their own pace within a given timeframe using learning materials provided by the teacher. Asynchronous work may take the form of homework, online assessments, message-board discussions, and more.

Key Technology Tools

This is a non-exhaustive list of the primary tools that St. Anselm's faculty use to facilitate distance learning.

Panther Portal: This is the school's learning management system (LMS), which is new to St. Anselm's in 2020-2021. The Panther Portal has a space for each course where teachers post announcements, assignments, and class materials. Teachers may also collect assignments through the Portal or through other means. Grades, including report cards at the end of a marking period, are communicated through the Panther Portal.

Access: Go to saintanselms.myschoolapp.com or click the "Panther Portal" link on the school website. Log in with the student's @saintanselms.org email address and school network password.

Google: Google tools used by students will include the following:

- **Google Drive:** cloud-based storage system
- **Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides:** web-based office tools for creating text documents, spreadsheets, and slide presentations
- **Google Classroom:** a learning management system that some teachers may use to supplement the Panther Portal, including to collect assignments and provide student feedback

Access: Sign in to Google with the student's @saintanselms.org email address. Select the option "G Suite Account" and enter the student's school network password.

Zoom: This is the primary video-conferencing software used by the school. Most, though not all, synchronous class meetings will take place over Zoom.

Access: Most class Zoom meetings will require students to be signed in to Zoom in order to access the meeting. When signing in, students should select the "Sign In with SSO" option, enter the company domain *saintanselms.zoom.us* and then sign in using their @saintanselms.org email address and school network password.

Outlook: This is where students access their school-provided @saintanselms.org email accounts. Students should use their school email address whenever emailing teachers or administrators.

Access: Go to *www.outlook.com*, click "Sign in" and sign in using the student's @saintanselms.org email address and school network password.

TIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Take ownership over your learning.

Distance learning requires students to be more self-sufficient and independent than regular, in-person school. Think about what you want to accomplish during distance learning, during the current semester or trimester, and during the school year as a whole. List a few goals for yourself - both tangible and intangible - and think about how you'll reach them. What motivates you? What (or who) keeps you accountable? When are you at your best as a student?

2. Manage your time and workload.

During distance learning, it's more important than ever to keep an eye on the clock and to be aware of how long different tasks will take to complete. Find time-management strategies that work for you, which may include setting alarms, creating schedules, and keeping track of time spent on your various classes and non-academic activities.

3. Strive for balance.

Success in school means more than just getting good grades. It's just as important to build and keep up friendships, to contribute positively to the communities you're part of, to develop talents and passions outside the classroom, and to maintain your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. When setting goals and putting together schedules, make sure to prioritize these other areas of your life along with academics.

4. Be an active learner.

As with everything in life, the students who get the most out of distance learning are those who put the most in. Along the same lines, the best classes are those where the teacher and students are all working hard, together, to make things meaningful and fun. Make a special effort to actually use all the tools your teacher puts in front of

you during distance learning, even when you think it might not make a big difference in your grade. Dive into class discussions, don't hesitate to volunteer, and ask good questions that keep the conversation flowing. And **take good notes** - even though you might be able to reference a teacher's slides and resources online, research shows that note-taking has huge benefits for helping you to remember what you've learned and to apply that knowledge later on.

5. Be a good digital citizen.

When everyone is sitting in their own home, it can be easy to lose sight of the fact that we're all one learning community, and that we have responsibilities towards each other and to the wider world. During distance learning, nearly all academic, extracurricular, and social interactions happen in the digital realm, and it's especially important to practice good digital citizenship during this time. Just a few important things to remember:

- Be mindful of your digital footprint and remember that anything you say or type online could be recorded and made public.
- Be thoughtful in how you treat others, realizing that attempts at humor or off-handed comments can easily be misinterpreted without real-life context.
- Be smart about the media you're consuming, and consider the source before taking anything at face value.
- Be safe in your online interactions, especially with anyone you don't know in real life. Guard your privacy and respect the privacy of others in your community, including fellow students and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

There have been a number of studies identifying “best practices” for students which may be helpful as you plan for this phase of virtual learning. Here are some suggestions to consider:

Help establish routines.

Establish a school day routine to follow during distance learning, ideally crafted by your son. Include physical and social activities as well as academic responsibilities. Stress the importance of consistency, posting this schedule if needed. Do what you can to support your son in sticking to this schedule, and make efforts to avoid conflicts with appointments and family activities.

Support independent learning.

After establishing a school day schedule, give your son as much freedom and independence as possible during the school day. Encourage him to make his own lunch, take breaks when he needs to, and work at his own pace. Allow him to make his own decisions just as if he were at school. Check in with your son at a designated time (weekly or bi-weekly) and have him show you his grades. If there is an issue of concern, consider asking, “what’s your plan?”

Define physical study spaces at home.

It’s a good idea for students to have a consistent space in which to work and study each day. This space should be free of distractions, such as TVs and other electronics, and should have a reliable internet connection and power outlets. Students may find it’s best for their study space not to be *too* quiet, as some background noise can be helpful to concentration. Consider a white board, calendar, and headphones (not necessarily noise cancelling). If a student is studying in his bedroom, check in occasionally and ensure he has a desk and chair at which to sit upright.

Maintain perspective.

It’s easy for students to feel they are under a microscope during distance learning. They, along with their teachers, are still new to distance education and may require some trial and error as they navigate this new version of school. Maintaining a sense of perspective, breathing room, and good humor will help students and families make the most of this time.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What's my class schedule during distance learning?

The distance learning class schedule is, in essence, the same as your in-person class schedule. Classes follow the regular 40-minute schedule between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm.

Remember that not all classes will meet synchronously (on Zoom or otherwise) during distance learning. With some exceptions, students should expect to have synchronous class meetings for between 4 and 6 class periods in a typical school day, with asynchronous learning activities provided for the other periods.

How do I know which class periods meet on Zoom?

Your Division Head or Form Advisor will provide this information at the beginning of distance learning. On occasion, a teacher may make changes to their schedule, including one-time exceptions due to holidays or other special circumstances. If you're ever unsure, email your teacher ahead of time to confirm.

Is there a dress code for distance learning?

Students are required to wear a collared shirt during all video classes. Polo/golf shirts, button down shirts, flannel shirts, and any other kind of collared shirts are permitted.

How will grades be handled during distance learning?

Unless otherwise announced, the school's normal grading policies and practices will apply during distance learning.

How can I get extra help when I need it?

Just as with in-person learning, the best way to get the help you need during distance learning is simply to ask! Many departments and teachers hold regular office hours or help sessions on Zoom during 10th period or after school, while other teachers make themselves available as needed. To ask for help, you can email your teacher or speak to them directly at the beginning or end of a Zoom class session.

How can I handle several Zoom classes in a row?

It's important to plan ahead each day, and this is especially true on days when you have several back-to-back synchronous classes. Make sure you have the links to your Zoom meetings ready, along with any physical materials you'll need for class. Use your breaks wisely, knowing that you may not have opportunities for snacks and bathroom breaks during class.

What should I do if I have a long stretch with no Zoom classes?

When you have multiple asynchronous periods in a row, it's tempting to treat it as a break. Instead, use the opportunity to do asynchronous work and prepare for your next classes. The flexibility of asynchronous periods also gives you the chance to take short breaks, move around, and get in touch with classmates and teachers about upcoming projects or activities.

What are we doing about PE and Intramurals?

For all students taking PE and Intramural Athletics (Forms A-IV), the first period of each double-period class will be a synchronous activity on Zoom. The second period will be asynchronous. Students should be ready for physical activity during the Zoom session and find a space that allows them to stretch and move around.

What should I do if I'm having technical issues?

Email your Division Head and teachers of the affected class(es) if connectivity problems at home interfere with your ability to join a class or complete your work as scheduled. Contact the IT department (tech@saintanselms.org) with questions about accessing school resources, logging in to school learning platforms, etc.

Are there clubs during distance learning?

Yes, most student clubs continue to meet during distance learning. Club sign-ups will take place at the beginning of the semester as usual, and House points will be awarded for regular attendance. To join a club after the initial sign-up period, contact the club's faculty advisor or student leaders.

How do I find out about school events during distance learning?

Students can stay connected to the school by checking their St. Anselm's email, Panther Portal, and the school website regularly. Parents should make sure to read the weekly St. Anselm's Bulletin email, which is sent every Friday when school is in session. Important announcements are also made during Form advisory meetings, which are held periodically during 10th period.

What opportunities are there for prayer and spiritual growth during distance learning?

Each school day during distance learning, the school posts a daily morning prayer video, featuring a prayer, reading, and/or short reflection, on the St. Anselm's YouTube page, which is linked on the "Students" page of the school website. Additionally, the monks' morning Mass and evening Vespers service are streamed each day on the Abbey's Facebook page at fb.me/stanselmsabbey. (No Facebook account required.) Mass is streamed at 7:30 am weekdays, 8:30 am Saturdays, and 9:00 am Sundays, while Vespers is at 6:00 pm daily.

What should I do if I'm struggling to manage distance learning on my own?

It's normal to experience stress or anxiety during distance learning, both because of the isolation that comes with learning from home and because of uncertainty in the wider world. If you're feeling worried, nervous, stressed, or confused - whether about school, friends, or anything else - remember you're not alone, and ask for help. Students or parents are welcome to get in touch with our counselor, Ms. Marnell, directly any time at smarnell@saintanselms.org.

FROM THE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Distance Learning

From time to time, circumstances may require the School to shift instruction to a distance-learning mode, either in full or in a hybrid of distance and in-person learning. Successful distance learning requires hard work, diligence, patience, flexibility, and cooperation. The policies and guidelines set forth throughout this Student Handbook remain in full effect during periods of distance learning. This section details policies and expectations specific to distance learning, as well as long-standing policies that may be particularly relevant during distance learning. The School's approach to distance learning and hybrid learning will continue to evolve, and the policies laid out here may be altered or adapted as deemed appropriate by the administration. Failure to comply with the expectations set forth in this section may result in disciplinary action.

Expectations of Students

General Expectations During Distance Learning

- **Routines:** Students are encouraged to find a distraction-free workspace for their daily academic routine. They should have a copy of their course schedule close at hand and keep track of which periods will meet synchronously (either via Zoom or otherwise) and which periods are reserved for asynchronous work.
- **Assignments and Homework:** Students should anticipate a similar workload during distance learning as they would receive during regular in-person instruction. Assignments will be communicated primarily via the Panther Portal site, as well as during synchronous class meetings and via email.
- **Communication:** Students are expected to check their St. Anselm's email accounts regularly (at the beginning, middle and end of each school day, at a minimum) as well as online learning tools including the Panther Portal. Students will be held responsible for information shared via these channels. Students are urged to

communicate proactively with teachers regarding any missed classes or assignments, or difficulties they may be having.

- **Digital Citizenship:** Students should review the section of this Handbook on good “Digital Citizenship” (pages 33-34). They should bear in mind that they will be held fully responsible for their actions and words in the virtual environment, and they are expected to show respect for their classmates, teachers, and all cultures and viewpoints.

Zoom Classes

- **Punctuality:** Students should be logged on and ready to begin class with all necessary materials close at hand before the start of their class period. Teachers may admit students through the “waiting room” feature. Students are encouraged to allow sufficient time to deal with technical issues before class.
- **Dress Code:** Students must wear a collared shirt during Zoom class meetings (button-downs and polos are acceptable). Hats or other headgear are not permitted.
- **Cell Phones and Other Devices:** Except as directed by the teacher, students should have cell phones and other electronic devices put away during class.
- **Camera and Microphone:** Students should have their cameras turned on and be seated upright with appropriate lighting. Microphones should generally be muted except when the student is speaking.
- **Avoiding Distractions:** Students should take care to avoid distracting movements and backgrounds during classes. Eating is not permitted. Students who choose to use the virtual background function should limit their selections to school-provided background images.
- **Recording:** Students may not record any portion of school Zoom meetings, including audio recordings, video recordings, and screen shots, without the express prior permission of the teacher leading the meeting.
- **Participation:** Just as in a classroom setting, students should wait to be called on before speaking. The chat function on Zoom is to be used for practical academic purposes and is not a tool for socializing during class.

- **Following Instructions:** Above all, students should follow the particular instructions and expectations set forth by their individual teachers regarding conduct on Zoom, including the use of Zoom functions such as screen sharing, chat, and annotation, among others.

Attendance

Just as in a classroom setting, students are expected to attend every class throughout the school day. If there is an unexpected absence, parents or guardians should contact the Division Head and main office by 7:55 a.m. If an absence is anticipated, an email should be sent from a parent or guardian explaining the circumstances of the absence at least one day in advance to the appropriate Division Head and the main office. Students should also follow up with teachers individually to make arrangements for missed work, preferably in advance, or after the absence when needed.

If a student is unable to attend a synchronous class due to technical difficulties, he should contact the teacher(s) of the impacted class(es) as soon as possible by email. If technical issues persist for multiple days, the student or his parent should notify the Division Head to coordinate make-up work.

Academic Integrity

The distance-learning setting requires an additional layer of independence and trust. Students should review the School's policy on Academic Integrity (found on page 16 of the *Student Handbook*) and are expected to follow it in spirit and letter during distance learning. Instances of cheating – including but not limited to plagiarism, copying the work of classmates, allowing others to copy work, and the use of unauthorized resources during assessments – will be taken seriously and dealt with in the same manner as during regular in-person instruction. Unless otherwise stated, all quizzes, tests, and similar assessments should be considered closed-book and should be completed without the assistance of outside resources or help from classmates. Students are strongly encouraged to clarify any questions regarding academic integrity with their teachers in advance.