

HYLA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Distance Learning Handbook

for parents and students

Even from a distance, we are still Hyla. Although we cannot be in the same physical space together, we can still learn, discuss, collaborate, inquire, solve, and create. We can do this in a way that is fun, interactive, respectful, kind, daring, positive, supportive, and creative.

We ask all Hyla students and parents to read through these guidelines. They will help you establish your own home plan for distance learning, set up student workspace, stay focused, and develop new habits and skills.

These guidelines also explain all the ways that Hyla will support students and parents during this time. After all, we're all in this together.

~All of us at Hyla

3.17.20



How We Support Students

Virtual Teacher Office Hours:

The daily schedule will include office hours for each teacher (via Zoom), some in the morning and some in the afternoon to allow flexibility for different family schedules. Teachers offer these designated times so that students can count on them being there in real-time to answer questions and connect. We will teach students about what Office Hours are and how they work. We understand that it will take time to adjust to a new system. We will support students by encouraging them to initiate conversations and advocate for themselves.

Support with Time Management:

We know that moving to a distance learning program requires a greater level of student independence and time management. Since they are at home, students won't hear a bell, or have teachers on the porch ushering them to class. We will support them to develop this skill. The first week of distance learning, students will receive two examples of different approaches to take with personal time management. We know this will be ongoing work. This is also an area where the school-parent partnership is so important. We recognize that distance learning requires parents to have a much higher level of involvement. We will support each other as we go. **Cooper illustrated the personal planner at the end of this document to help students build their day with healthy choices.**

How to reach teachers outside of office hours:

Open communication and partnership is so important to us – whether students are here on campus or learning from home. Students are welcome to reach out to teachers via Zoom and email during their office hours. They are also welcome to email teachers outside of those hours. Parents are welcome to email teachers to set up a time to talk on the phone or via Zoom. Students know teacher emails and parents can access teacher contact information on our website.

School Counselor:

During distance learning, our school counselor, Kris Rogers, is available during the school day for phone conversations. Parents and students are encouraged to email Kris to set up a time to talk.

Clean Crew:

For now, the cleaning will be metaphorical, but still important! We will begin every day in Clean Crews via Zoom. Clean Crew is a support system for small, multi-grade groups of students. This daily anchor establishes routine and predictability and therefore eases students into their day with relationships before learning. This is a time to check in and connect. It's a time for students to give feedback, a time to troubleshoot any problems, share school-wide announcements, encourage and listen, etc.

Tech Support:

Students and teachers should not hesitate to reach out to Vicki with any questions related to the technical aspects of distance learning. She is here to help.



Schedule

Essential elements of every day

Every day, the distance learning schedule includes:

- **Clean Crew:** this daily anchor establishes routine and predictability and therefore eases students into their day with relationships before learning.
- **Office Hours:** designated time for students to connect real-time with teachers via Zoom.
- **Real-time classes:** essential synchronous learning.
- **Independent work time & homework:** Outside of the daily school hours, students will have some homework. The first week, parents and students should expect 30 min of math, Spanish, and reading. Over time we will ease into a little more but with *no more than 2* hours of uninterrupted independent work outside of “class” time.
- **Breaks:** We built breaks into our schedule so students can get off the screen, move their bodies, grab a snack, and hopefully get a burst of fresh air. Breaks are a great time for “VENOWS”: parents and teachers alike can encourage students to use break time to get **V**itamin D, **E**xercise, **N**ourishment, **O**utside Air, **W**ater, and **S**miles.
- **Independent work time:** for homework, checking in with teachers during Office Hours, etc.
- **Academic enrichment classes:** from 1-2 PM on Mondays – Thursdays (see list of offerings below).
- **Electives:** from 2-3 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (see list of offerings below).

Daily Schedule

Note that items in green indicate the times when students are expected to Zoom in:

8:45- 8:55 AM	Clean Crew
9:00 AM – 12 PM	Real-time classes via Zoom (3 breaks included)
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch (synchronized with the BISD free meal program)
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Academic Enrichment Classes (see full list of offerings below).
	Independent Work Time
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Electives



Essential Tools & Technologies

Your new classroom: Google Classroom

Google Classroom is home base. This is your hub for all things related to learning at Hyla. If you're looking for something, this is the place to check. All Hyla students are already familiar with Google Classroom but it has expanded and now includes:

- Assignments for each classroom
- Resources for each class (articles, links, etc.)
- Expectations for Hyla Students

How we connect: Zoom

Students will use Zoom every day to check in with Clean Crew, attend class, and talk to teachers during Office Hours. This video conferencing tool allows us to create a virtual Hyla so that we can conduct direct instruction, one-on-one conversations with students and teachers, and even small group discussions. We know that there is no way to replace the dynamic environment of a classroom. But Zoom does allow us to maintain personal connections with teachers and peers, and that is always a vital part of our program, even in a digital format.

Email:

Students will continue to check their email and use it to communicate with teachers daily. Students should also get in the habit of checking email regularly.

Your home workspace:

Consider your workspace at home an essential tool in distance learning.

- **Consider the space itself:** Choose an area that will be your workplace, ideally a table/desk, that is near an outlet so you can charge your devices. Make sure there is enough light so that teachers and classmates can see you through the camera on your laptop/computer. Be mindful of what is behind you because it will be visible to classmates and teachers.
- **Make a sign:** Come up with a way to tell other people in your home that you're at school – perhaps a sign on your door or near your workstation that says, "Class in Session." This helps others know you need to focus. You can also print out the daily schedule and show it to family members, so they know when school is in session for you.
- **Remove distractions:** tv, phones, pets, etc.
- **Gather materials and have them ready and within reach:** school supplies, charger, pencils, all the supplies your parents picked up at school.



Expectations for Students:

At Hyla, community expectations are not delivered to students top down, but are collaboratively generated *with* students. We will continue this practice in an online setting. During morning Clean Crew check ins, students will generate their own list of agreements and expectations for each other.

Here are some foundational guidelines that will position our students for success. We ask students to attend to these good habits during distance learning:

Guidelines for student behavior:

- Distance learning *is school*. Communicate, act, and show up as if you were in the same physical space of Hyla:
 - Be on time
 - Dress as you would for school
 - Try your best
 - Ask questions
 - Be in a place that helps to maximize your learning (a chair, table, not a bed, etc.)
 - Sit up (don't lie down)
- Keep the focus on learning.
- Be present:
 - Take care of your needs (bathroom, snacks) before/after class.
 - Remove distractions (phones, pets)
 - Use a photo or avatar. This is a simple step that creates a sense of connection between people working together virtually. Even if you are answering questions asynchronously, just "seeing" the other person feels better than just a generic icon (anonymous giraffe).
- Be patient with your teachers and with each other.
- Be kind:
 - Be aware of other people's surroundings, how they can be different from yours, and don't judge.
 - Be aware that during distance learning you are literally in another person's home. Consider yourself a guest in another person's home and act accordingly.
 - Use your words carefully, thoughtfully, and intentionally as you would in person.
- When speaking:
 - When using Zoom, we keep our audio on "mute" unless we're actively speaking to the group. We'll all need to get into the habit of turning the "mute" button on and off. Be aware of the amount of airtime you take.
- Take initiative:
 - Dive in! There's so much learning ahead of us!
 - Take advantage of teachers' Office Hours, reach out to them for help and to connect.
 - As with all things in life, you'll get more out of this the more you put in.



Parent Involvement

Distance learning is another chapter in our ongoing partnership in education. Here are three things we ask all parents to do during distance learning:

1. **Please continue to tell us if your child will be absent – email Carrington.**
2. **Please read these guidelines with your children and support them at home.**
3. **Keep at it! Scaffolding with a gradual release leads to independence and success.**
We know that more time will be needed at the beginning of this process and that what happens at the beginning of something new sets the tone for what is to come. Together, our goal is to move students towards independence in this new learning environment – and luckily that is exactly what middle schoolers crave and need. Let's work together to provide early support so they can build that independence. Teachers and staff are prepared to be a major part of the support system, but what parents can do at home is:
 - Make sure that student space is ready for learning (distractions removed)
 - Ensure that all technology is easily accessible and working.
 - Resist scheduling other activities during school hours
 - When students get stuck, frustrated, or have questions, encourage them to reach out to teachers for support – because self-advocacy is part of the learning, too.
 - Practice patience with them and with yourself. May the force be with you.





2020 SPRING OFFERINGS:

Distance Electives & Academic Achievement Classes

A NOTE TO STUDENTS:

We are excited to share our new Distance Elective and Academic Enrichment offerings! Here's what you need to know:

- **Everything listed here is optional:** We ask students to read through the options and carefully consider what makes sense for their schedule. There are a few different things to consider when deciding what to sign up for: which classes you want to take, how many new things to add to your schedule, and how to prioritize the work in your core classes. The goal is to land on a schedule that is the "just right" balance of fulfilling, manageable, challenging, and fun.
- **Use the new personal planner:** You can use the personal planner that Cooper illustrated to help you decide. Ask your Clean Crew teacher for a copy.
- **Academic Enrichment Offerings:** These new academic offerings are a great choice for students who want to stretch beyond the academic core subject classes. These multi-age classes are a chance to dig in and engage with new material. To get the most out of each class, we ask that students make a strong commitment to regular weekly attendance and active engagement.

Beginning April 27

Each class happens once a week on Monday - Thursday
1-2 PM

- **Distance Electives:** Every day there is a choice of exercise, something creative, and something new to learn.

Beginning April 20

Each Elective happens once a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday
2-3 PM



2020 SPRING OFFERINGS:

Distance Electives & Academic Achievement Classes

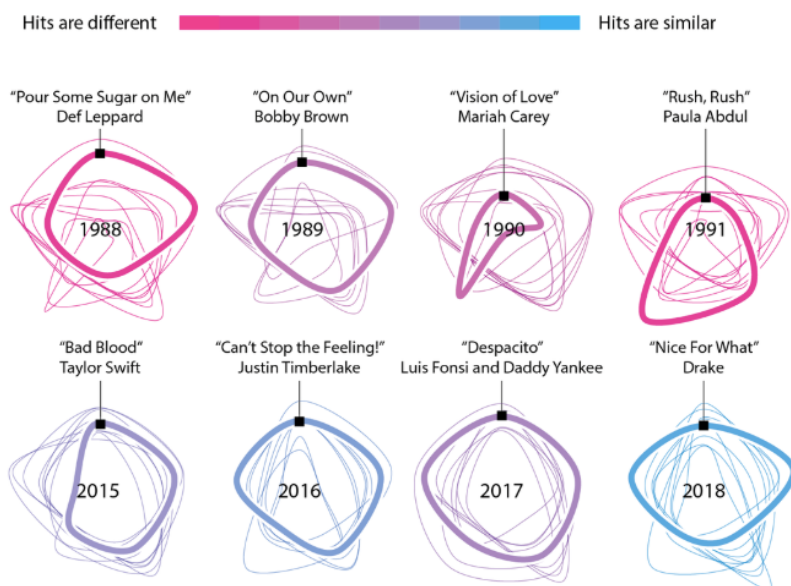
MONDAY:

Academic Enrichment: What's Going on in this Graph? *Alex*

1-2 PM

They say a picture is worth a thousand words... but what about a graph? Everywhere we turn, data is telling and weaving stories about our world. The ability to work with, understand, and use data has become an essential life skill and requirement for an ever-expanding range of jobs and careers. Data is everywhere around us.

In this elective, we will explore a variety of graphs included in articles published in *The New York Times*. You will get to participate in discussions about your observations with other Hyla students and you will engage in an online conversation with middle and high schoolers from around the nation and the world! We will hear from scientists, statisticians, and article authors about what message they hoped their graph would convey and their process for deciding to demonstrate an idea using a graph. (Spoiler alert: No x and y axes required for these graphs!)



Elective: Let's play chess! *David*

2-3 PM

This is for new and old players alike. If you're new to the game, we can help provide guidance for learning skills. If you'd like to just play with other students from Hyla, we'll utilize an excellent website that allows us to pair players...and maybe even make tournaments! Come on in, play it out!

Elective: Pie in the Sky Video *Jeff*

2-3 PM

This spring, you can help make Hyla's weekly Pie in the Sky video as part of the production crew that will help shoot and edit the videos. Photographers, voice artists, iMovie ninjas - we need you!

Elective: Zumba! *Kate*

2-3 PM

Let's dance and be silly together. We will use videos and have guest teachers. A great way to move your body!



2020 SPRING OFFERINGS:

Distance Electives & Academic Achievement Classes

Tuesday:

Academic Enrichment: Kitchen Chemistry! *Alex*

1-2 PM

Chemistry is all around you in the kitchen! Ever had a baking project totally fail? Have you ever wondered why you need certain ingredients to make your favorite cake, cookies, or bread? We're going to explore some kitchen chemistry and find out some answers to these intriguing questions through experimentation. You can join the experiment with us, or you can watch, learn, and share your ideas.

Elective: no electives on Tuesday - staff meeting

Wednesday:

Academic Enrichment: Hyla Book Club Returns! *Emelio*

1-2 PM

"Reading—the best state yet to keep absolute loneliness at bay." William Styron said that. Sounds like wise words for these times, right? Books have been keeping me company while quarantined, but I miss reading with you all! Let's get a Hyla book club going and make sure loneliness stays at bay. Together we'll decide on a book to read, and we'll meet once a week to talk about it! I'll come with some suggested titles, but if you have a book you've heard about and are dying to read, all suggestions will be considered. Can't wait to read something wonderful with all of you wonderful people.

Elective: Vamos a Comer *Kiplinn*

2-3 PM

Curious how to make food from Spanish speaking countries? No cooking experience necessary! We'll look at recipes like mangú, pan de yuca, tostones and would love to hear what food, dessert or beverage you're excited about preparing. Watch and converse with Kiplinn and Jonathan, (our special Dominican guest) as they prepare these foods in the kitchen. Speaking Spanish strongly encouraged.

Elective: Quarinsanity *Chris*

2-3 PM

Has your physical fitness socially distanced itself from you? Is your ability to break a sweat in quarantine? Do you need some motivation delivered to you? Join me on Wednesdays as I stream a Zoom version of our well-known *Insanity Workout*. I will screen share the workout and you can join in the comfort of your own home. Bring family along! There's no need to turn on your own video, so you can sweat in peace. Just be there to motivate one another to stay in shape. Workouts are about 45 minutes long and you WILL sweat!

Elective: Online Board Games *Emelio*

2-3 PM

In this time of cold distance, let us simulate the warmth and analog joy of tabletop gaming! Join us to play digital board games together. We'll melt the feelings of distance away, together.



2020 SPRING OFFERINGS:

Distance Electives & Academic Achievement Classes

Thursday:

Academic Enrichment: History and the Human Experience *David*

1-2 PM

In the midst of the historic shutdown of American society, we have an opportunity to think about and discuss profound topics of the human experience. We have so much to learn from history and from thinkers today. Each week, we'll focus on a documentary, podcast or reading and explore those presented ideas within a seminar discussion. Unlike a lecture, the goal of this is to inspire, contribute to and participate in interesting and intellectual conversations with your peers. We'll share reactions, feelings, thoughts, and questions in response to a weekly shared resource. In order to get the most of the discussions, students should plan on watching/listening/reading to the shared resource prior to our conversation.

- **Action item:** The first topic that we will look into next Thursday at 1pm is immigration. Please listen to this [Hidden Brain episode \(#47\)](#) prior to Thursday's class and be ready to discuss.

Elective: Yoga *Kim*

2-3 PM

Earth Day Yoga - Let's continue to celebrate the earth with our yoga practice. Stand tall and majestic in Mountain Pose, reach deep and root in Tree Pose! Join today's practice and we will highlight some of the poses that honor Mother Earth and her inhabitants.

Elective: Spring Photo Challenge *Alex*

2-3 PM

SO many signs of spring out there! Can you even believe it? If you like taking photos on nature walks and are up for a little scavenger hunt, join us! I'll share a few subjects for you to look for and photograph. Then, you can post your top two faves to enter to win the Hyla Spring Photography Challenge

Elective: Draw & Chat *Kate*

2-3 PM

Draw and chat: let's draw and chat and share our favorite tunes together.

Friday

No academic enrichment or electives cases – instead grade-level hangouts happen at 2 PM.



PERSONAL PLANNER

DATE:

SCHOOL DAY

What do I need for a great day?



AFTER SCHOOL

Take care of yourself and do what makes you happy!



GET FRESH AIR



PLAY!

SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY

UNPLUG

SLEEP!

EAT WELL

QUIET TIME



GLOSSARY

Add your own activities! To get you started, here some ideas for different parts of your day (drawings by Cooper!)

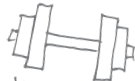
EXERCISE



WALK OR RUN



RIDE A BIKE



WEIGHTS



KAYAK



DANCE



PLAY DISC GOLF WITH A GARBAGE CAN

CARVE OUT QUIET TIME



Journal



PET

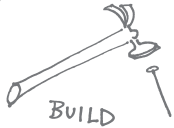


PRACTICE AN INSTRUMENT

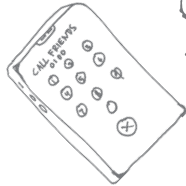
PLAY



BAKE



BUILD



PAINTING



DRAWING

UNPLUG



SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY



WATCH THE SUNSET



GARDEN



CHORES



BE A HELPING HAND



WATCH A MOVIE



PLAY GAMES

GET FRESH AIR



CLIMB A TREE



SMELL THE FLOWERS



LOOK AT THE STARS

EAT WELL



EAT AN APPLE



GLASS OF WATER

LOTS OF SLEEP



SLEEP