



**PERSEVERANCE  
PREP**

# **Student & Family Handbook Distance Learning Addendum**

Perseverance Preparatory School prepares students in grades 5-8 through rigorous academics, targeted instruction, and service learning for a life of ethical leadership and scholarly success.

*2020 -2021*

As a result of COVID-19, Perseverance Preparatory School (“Perseverance Prep”) has transitioned to a distance learning through our school website, Perseverance Virtual Classrooms, for an undetermined period of time. Officially, the Perseverance Prep will remain in this state until a safe return to campus is possible.

This document is an addendum to the Perseverance Prep 2020-2021 Student & Family Handbook (the “Handbook”) to address policies specific to distance learning, and it will be in place until our return to campus. Some of the policies included herein are intended to complement the Handbook, some are intended to reinforce the Handbook, and some are intended to replace their corresponding policy in the Handbook. Context should make these distinctions clear; but if there are any questions, please reach out to the school office (408-600-2057 and [info@perseverancprep.org](mailto:info@perseverancprep.org)).

## Table of Contents

<b>A Note to Our Families on Distance Learning</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Academics</b>	<b>2</b>
Academic Behavior Code	2
Grading and Evaluation	2
Altered Weekly Schedule	2
Attendance and Tardiness	3
Course Materials	4
Video Conferencing	4
Supply List	5
Technological Needs	6
<b>Student Supports</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>6</b>
Information for Students	6
Information for Parents	6
Visits to School Building	7
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Special Circumstances</b>	<b>7</b>

## A NOTE TO OUR FAMILIES ON DISTANCE LEARNING

As announced in August 2020, Perseverance Prep has committed to beginning the 2020-2021 academic year with distance learning; and will continue along that path until relevant state and local authorities deem it safe for schools to return to in-person instruction.

Distance learning is a huge paradigm shift from in-person instruction. We know that the road ahead will have challenges; but we are in a unique position to overcome those difficulties and thrive.

Our team is retooling our curriculum to be accessible and productive in online classes, with an appropriate balance of synchronous class time and asynchronous activities to balance high impact student learning with student health and wellness and required non-academic responsibilities. Our staff continues to seek ways to optimally and equitably support our students while at home, and the Perseverance Prep administration has crafted distance learning policies that we think will best serve all Perseverance Prep students.

That being said, it is important to acknowledge the challenges distance learning will put before our students as well, and acknowledge that those challenges will look different for every Perseverance Prep student. While at home, our students will have more responsibility for their education because teachers won't always be able to pick up on their puzzled look or glance over their shoulder to quickly determine how their coursework is going. Moreover, we recognize our students may have greater distractions and increased non-academic responsibilities while at home.

As such, we need your help to ensure our students find ways to make online learning work for themselves while also prioritizing their health, safety and wellness. For most, this will mean:

- Creating a daily routine, with significant protected time for school work;
- Finding a low-distraction physical space within your home;
- Being particularly mindful of their coursework and upcoming assignments;
- Regularly checking for course announcements and other communications from teachers;
- Reaching out to their teachers and other school staff when they face issues - academic or otherwise; and
- Establishing informal support structures (e.g., a set of study partners).

We have no doubt that our students are up to this challenge. Our team promises to be there every step of the way to guide and encourage them, and we count ourselves fortunate to have you as partners in that work.

Thank you,

Ms. LeeNatali,  
Executive Director

## ACADEMICS

### Academic Behavior Code

Perseverance Prep maintains a strict Academic Behavior Code which will be adhered to during the period of distance learning. Please review it (available in the 2020-2021 Student & Family Handbook).

In a typical classroom setting, there are many built-in norms that naturally encourage students to remain academically honest. In an online course, many of these barriers are removed; and the temptation to cheat can be strong. As a result, it will be even more imperative that students self-monitor their academic progress, hold themselves accountable to the appropriate conduct, and be honest with the level of their own understanding. To do otherwise deprives themselves of a true learning experience.

### Grading and Evaluation

During the COVID-19 crisis, Perseverance Prep moved to an A, B, C, no credit grading system. As we resume distance learning in the Fall 2020 semester, we will continue with an A, B, C, no credit grading system. Should a student earn multiple no credits during trimester or at the halfway mark, it will trigger an immediate conversation with the teacher, parent, and the Executive Director.

### Altered Weekly Schedule

During school closure at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, we found that students thrived with synchronous learning and a daily routine of teacher-student interaction. Additionally, we understand that prolonged periods of back-to-back synchronous sessions via video conferencing are not always productive. In order to mitigate these issues, we have redesigned our weekly schedule to optimize the amount of live synchronous learning and asynchronous independent work that students have each week.

#### Distance Learning Instructional Schedule

Full Distance Learning Monday-Thursday				
	Tran	Niles	Bermudez	Cirino
8:00-8:45	ELA A	ELA A	ELA A	5th Grade Social Studies B
8:45 - 9:30	ELA B	ELA B	ELA B	5th Grade Social Studies A
9:30-10:15	PREP	PREP	PREP	Prep
10:15-11:00	Math A	Math A	Math A	6th Grade Social Studies B
11:00-11:45	Math B	Math B	Math B	6th Grade Social Studies A
11:45-12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:15-1:00	Science A	Science A	Science A	7th Grade Social Studies B
1:00-1:45	Science B	Science B	Science B	7th Grade Social Studies A
1:45-2:30	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep
2:30-3:00	Advisory A	Advisory A	Advisory A	Advisory A
3:00-3:30	Advisory B	Advisory B	Advisory B	Advisory B
3:30-4:15	Prep/Office Hours *	Prep/Office Hours *	Prep/Office Hours *	P.E. (5th and 6th grade)

**\*5th and 6th grade will have PE on Mon/Wed, 7th grade on Tues/Thurs**

**Distance Learning Instructional Schedule**

<b>Full Distance Learning - Friday (Minimum Day)</b>				
	<b>Tran</b>	<b>Niles</b>	<b>Bermudez</b>	<b>Cirinceo</b>
<b>8:00-8:45</b>	Math A	Math A	Math A	Prep
<b>8:45 - 9:30</b>	Math B	Math B	Math B	Prep
<b>9:30-11:00</b>	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours
<b>11:00-12:00</b>	Town Hall	Town Hall	Town Hall	Town Hall
<b>12:00-12:30</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:30-2:30</b>	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development
<b>2:30-4:00</b>	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

The Perseverance Prep Operations team will work directly with families of students who receive special education services to discuss the class schedule and how/when services will be provided. While in distance learning, services will continue to be provided in accordance with students’ IEPs.

Students who are identified as needing additional help in Math and ELA will have additional time scheduled for support in those subjects.

It is important to note that a few things about this schedule:

- Prior to the first day of school, all families and students will be notified which Cohort and schedule they are assigned to.
- Fridays are minimum days and include instruction for math, office hours with academic assistance and Town Hall assemblies or other similar school-wide events.
- While the schedule controls for the number of possible synchronous sessions in a single day, instructors will also be assigning asynchronous course work to accompany those sessions.
- Students should expect the following daily asynchronous assignments:
  - ELA - Daily Class Novel Reading and Reflection (50 min/day)
  - Math – Daily Independent Math Practice (30 min/day)
  - Math – Weekly Exit Ticket (20 min/week)
  - Science – Monday/Wednesday Reading and Video (30 min/day)
  - Science – Weekly Exit Ticket (20 min/week)
  - Social Studies – Tuesday/Thursday Reading and Reflection (20 min/day)
  - Social Studies – Weekly Exit Ticket (30 min/week)
- Changes to this schedule may be necessary from time-to-time, as dictated by the school calendar.

We anticipate resuming a more traditional schedule when we return to in-person instruction. However, please keep in mind that we may have phased return to school that begins with a hybrid model with physical distance requirements before we are allowed to return to full -in-person instruction.

## Attendance and Tardiness

Please reference Perseverance Prep's full attendance policy in the Handbook. There is an expectation that students will attend all synchronous class sessions scheduled by their instructors and be present, on time and ready to work and engage. Therefore, **attendance will be taken while distance learning and unexcused absence and tardy points will be given, per policy.**

Students will also be expected to virtually attend or participate in activities or events in which student presence is required, e.g. Town Hall, Advisory, staff programming and general assemblies, unless otherwise stated or communicated.

Some important attendance policies are highlighted here:

- Teachers will take attendance at the beginning of class and report it to the main office for recording in Powerschool;
- Teachers will submit student attendance period by period;
- Any absence, excused or unexcused, will be reported and recorded in Powerschool by the main office;
- Pre-arranged absences need to be approved by a parent and communicated to the main office a minimum of 24 hours in advance;
- Illness needs to be reported immediately to the main office by the parent/guardian and no later than 9:00 AM on the day classes will be missed;
- Parents/guardians should report absences to the Attendance Office via the 24-hour voicemail and/or email (408-600-2057 or [mmartinez@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:mmartinez@perseveranceprep.org)).

## Course Materials

Perseverance Prep-owned materials (e.g., chromebooks, textbooks, novels) may be provided to students for their use in courses during this time. These materials are the property of Perseverance Prep, and Perseverance Prep will charge for anything damaged, lost or not returned.

Guidelines for the distribution and return of these materials will be issued in communications separate to this document. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the Operations Manager (408-600-2057 and [mmartinez@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:mmartinez@perseveranceprep.org)).

## Video Conferencing

Video conferencing and live group chat sessions are essential components of the learning process and help improve the connectedness of our school during distance learning. As with the use of social media, students are required to adhere to school policies pertaining to these areas in the Handbook, and to observe the following regarding the distance learning environment:

- Students must be punctual to the live conferencing sessions scheduled by the teacher. Teachers will be monitoring attendance and students may be receiving class participation grades.
- Ensure your technology works properly and frame the camera correctly.
- Good online manners are vital to a productive and supportive online learning environment. Students

are to meet school expectations in the live online session as expected in the regular in-person class, especially because the SESSION MAY BE RECORDED.

- Do not **spam** your classmates. Spamming occurs when you or your instructor or classmates receive numerous unwanted messages. To avoid spamming your class members, do not send email to the entire class when it is unnecessary and do not send commercial advertisements or electronically forward "chain mail" to your classmates.

The following student principles apply to all distance learning activities, including video conferencing:

- We respect each other's voices and time by using our own voices to positively resolve conflicts within our Community by referring classroom conflicts to our teachers to be resolved after class.
- We preserve a positive learning environment by supporting all of our Community and raising our hands or using the chat feature to ask questions or add comments in our discussions. When not speaking, we keep our microphones muted but cameras on.
- We understand the power of language, so we use the appropriate language for the occasion and location in our Community, including speaking and writing in complete sentences.
- Show trust and pride in our ability to care for our Community, by celebrating when other students succeed and always asking if we can help when they struggle.
- Value our class space and time by limiting distractions - putting away cell phones and other devices during class.
- Advocate for our needs while being conscious of other needs in our Community.

Perseverance Prep utilizes Zoom as our primary video conferencing software - which allows us to meet face-to-face with our students. As a paid subscriber, Perseverance Prep has access to Zoom's latest security features. You can read more information about Zoom's built-in privacy and security settings on their [website](#).

Zoom's Terms of Service prohibits minors from creating accounts; however, they may join Zoom meeting sessions as participants. Teachers will provide the appropriate links to join these sessions as needed.

In Zoom sessions, we recommend that students...

- find a space in their home with good lighting but minimal objects in the background. A table, with a blank wall behind them works great for this.
- utilize Zoom's virtual background feature. Most computers allow participants to set a virtual background that obscures anything behind the individual.

Teachers may record any synchronous sessions to be used by students who miss a class for a valid reason (e.g., a pre-arranged absence) to catch up when they have the time. ***A Perseverance Prep waiver must be on record permitting those individual students to be recorded.***

## Supply List

For the 2020-2021 academic year, all students are required to have the following:

1. Chromebook computer- (to be loaned by Perseverance Prep for any student who requests)
2. Webcam (often built-in to the chromebook)
3. Microphone (often built-in to the chromebook)

4. Reliable high-speed internet access
5. Pencils
6. Erasers
7. Notebooks (1/subject)
8. Sharpener
9. Pack of 4 highlighters
10. College-ruled paper

Recommended:

1. Headset/earphones (to be loaned by Perseverance Prep for any student who requests)
2. Calculator
3. Colored pencils
4. Markers

Perseverance Prep will provide an initial set of supplies to students, including pencils, pens, notebook, and highlighter. However, we recommend maintaining additional supplies at home for student use.

## **Technological Needs**

Perseverance Prep is able to provide some resources for technology needs - including hardware. The main office will be contacting families to determine their technology needs for fully accessing distance learning.

In order for remote learning to be effective, it is important that each household has the proper devices. As a result, families who need a device may be able to borrow a device from Perseverance Prep. Families who check-out Chromebooks or other devices in this way will need to sign a user agreement accepting responsibility for any damage to the devices. We expect Chromebooks and other devices borrowed in this way to be returned to school when requested. Fees may apply if Chromebooks or other devices are returned damaged.

In addition, we will be working to support our students and families to navigate the technology necessary to access our distance learning program. As a result, there will be technology support. Perseverance Prep will also be sharing technology troubleshooting guides with you at the start of the school year. For questions about technology resources, agreements and support, please contact the main office.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Information for Students**

Students are expected to regularly check their Perseverance Prep email, Google Chats, Google Classrooms, and other online platforms in use by the school. Teachers will assume that any communications or announcements posted to these platforms have been seen by the student.

We strongly recommend that students download the Google Hangouts app on any mobile device they regularly use and then set up email and/or push notifications.

## Information for Parents

Parents can actively monitor school activity and receive regular updates by signing up for Class Dojo. Perseverance Prep will provide detailed instruction for Class Dojo during orientation and the first week of school.

Our regular family communication will include:

- Ongoing Class Dojo updates - 100% of parents to be enrolled with Class Dojo
- Monthly School Newsletter - Distributed via school website and Class Dojo
- Weekly Class/Subject Matter Updates - Weekly agenda with class assignments distributed via Class Dojo and posted in Google Classroom
- Weekly Advisory Phone Calls - Each Friday, homeroom teachers will call their students families for a personal connection and check-up
- Parents can sign up for daily emails from Google Classroom

In order to get in contact with a teacher, we recommend email. Please find our teacher emails below.

Mr. Tran- [atran@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:atran@perseveranceprep.org)

Ms. Niles- [lniles@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:lniles@perseveranceprep.org)

Mr. Bermudez- [jbermudez@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:jbermudez@perseveranceprep.org)

Mr. Cirineo- [jcirineo@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:jcirineo@perseveranceprep.org)

## Visits to School Building

While Perseverance Prep typically encourages parents to visit school buildings, during this time of distance learning, parents and guardians are encouraged to use electronic media, i.e., phone, e-mail, text, video conference, etc... to conduct business that otherwise might be done in the school building. In an effort to limit potential exposure for students, staff and visitors, visitors to the school will be restricted to the school office or other designated spaces and subject to a COVID-19 screening. In addition, all potential visitors will be asked to register with the main office prior to visiting the school.

## DISCIPLINE

Perseverance Prep's Student Discipline policy is one way to ensure the safety and welfare of each member of our community. Students are responsible for Perseverance Prep's Student Discipline policy while under the jurisdiction of the school, meaning while they are on campus, coming to or from campus, representing Perseverance Prep off-campus, or while distance learning. While many infractions that could only take place if a student on campus would not apply during distance learning, all other discipline policies will be enforced during distance learning, including the appropriate sanctions that would be incurred if found responsible for a policy violation. Please take care to review all aspects of the discipline policy in the Handbook, including those that would involve inappropriate behavior occurring online or during "live" remote instruction.

Should a policy violation be suspected in which a disciplinary hearing must take place, the hearing will be conducted virtually. Proper notification and procedures will be followed, per the Handbook. If a student is found responsible for a policy violation, appropriate sanctions, per the Handbook, will be administered.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

We recognize that many of our students face unique challenges during distance learning. While many situations may be remedied by engaging with one of the above support systems, if you are experiencing any special circumstances, please reach out to the front Office (408-600-2057 and [aleenatali@perseveranceprep.org](mailto:aleenatali@perseveranceprep.org)). We are committed to working with each student to determine the best path forward during this time.