

# **General Distributed Learning Policy**

## **Parent Agreement to Policies**

Parents must read and agree to the policies and guidelines before a student will be considered for enrolment. A signature indicating agreement with these policies is required upon registration, and from time to time thereafter.

## **Student Agreement to Policies**

Students must read (or be read) the Principles of Behaviour or have these policies explained by an adult. The Principles of Behaviour apply to distributed learning students in many contexts. For example, students will communicate with other people online, in a blended learning program, or in the context of pursuing educational objectives in their community. Each student must be willing to abide by all school policies and guidelines in an age-appropriate manner. The signature of a student may be requested from time to time in acknowledgement of an understanding and willingness to abide by the policies and guidelines.

## **Nature of the Distributed Learning Program**

The Bioregional Education Association operates a distributed learning school – Oak and Orca School – DL. The program is also known as Hands-On Home-Learning for a Sustainable World.

This program is made available through a partnership with the Victoria International Development Education Association. It is our aim to provide a home-learning program that parallels the on-site school program. The program will be student-led, experiential in nature, and will encourage projects and inquiry.

The distributed learning program provided will be individualized by the teacher. The teacher supports personalized learning at home by creating a learning plan based on learner and family interests, providing individualized instruction, and personalizing learning opportunities. Additionally, the teacher's role includes assessing and reporting on student learning based on provincial learning standards. Resources and learning activities will be provided electronically for students to use.

Students are encouraged to learn through projects and experiences of their own choice through an inquiry-based model. Students will also be able to participate in individualizing their learning by choosing from the available learning activities.

Participation in the community and getting involved with learning groups, volunteer opportunities and community events is encouraged. Families are encouraged to make regular use of their local library as both a resource and a learning opportunity.

Parents are responsible for assisting students with learning activities, as needed or as requested by the teacher. It is our hope that families will provide a learning environment comparable to the open classroom. A manual will be provided to assist in this process.

Families enrolled in the distributed learning program will abide by all the school policies as they apply to a home-learning or partial home-learning program.

### **Regulatory Authority**

The Oak and Orca School (DL) is a K-12 independent school authorized under an agreement with the Inspector of Independent Schools. The school operates within the [Standards for Delivery of K-12 Independent School Distributed Learning in British Columbia](#).

### **Communication**

Conferences between families (parent and student) and their designated teacher occur on a regular basis, in person, by telephone, or by internet video. The conference is the basis for the teacher to determine the child's needs, develop an individualized program of study and deliver it to the child. Communication by conference or by email must occur weekly.

In addition to the conferences, families will need to provide evidence of work completed by the student as requested by the teacher. These work samples must demonstrate learning in a variety of subjects and must be submitted weekly.

The teacher must be provided with opportunities to conference with the learner in a child-appropriate way. We acknowledge that it may take time for some students to feel comfortable conferencing with the teacher. Family conferences with the student joining in are a suitable starting point to develop trust.

Video conferencing over an internet connection is the best way to conference directly with students. If this is not possible, conferencing can occur by phone. From time to time, a representative of the school may visit a family to identify the student, assess skills, and ensure progress is being made as reported. Arrangements will be made with the family in advance of any visit.

## **Electronic Communication and use of the Internet**

Electronic communication between teachers and families will be monitored through a common email address. Emails are randomly scrutinized and regularly scanned for suitability of content. This is to ensure professional relationships are maintained throughout the program. Teachers are not permitted to use their personal email or other web-based communication tools with families in relation to school business of any kind with the exception of planning community events and marketing.

Oak and Orca does not require any student-student interaction, but may offer these opportunities from time to time. Parents will be responsible for supervising any electronic communications between their child and other learners in the program.

Parents are responsible for their child's use of the internet in the home. We recommend direct supervision as well as ongoing education about the appropriate use of internet sources, social media, video and audio conferencing, and internet chat rooms.

Students must treat others with respect online following the behaviour guidelines and discrimination protection policy. Teasing, taunting, intimidation, and discrimination will not be permitted. If the school learns of any inappropriate communication between students in any Oak and Orca programs, the situation will be dealt with swiftly. Students may lose their privileges if Oak and Orca accounts are being used in a way that is deemed inappropriate and if the School cannot find another way to prevent indiscretions.

## **Submissions**

Families are responsible for submitting weekly samples of student work in a variety of learning areas. As requested, the family may be required to submit forms, questionnaires, information and additional student work. These work samples are used to track and assess student learning. Items chosen by the child or requested by the teacher must be copied and mailed or scanned and emailed to the school in a timely manner.

A student's file will be considered up-to-date at any time that it contains evidence that all communication and submissions required and requested at that time have been received. This file does not form part of the permanent record, and is kept only by the teacher for purposes of assessment and tracking of the student's progress. It is not available for viewing in any manner by any party. At the parent's request, some items may be returned after the teacher has completed his or her assessment. For confidentiality reasons, items will be returned only to the same parent who has provided them, and not to any other party.

In order to verify the author of any submission, the teacher may contact the learner or parent at any time with supplementary questions and assessment requests. The teacher must follow-up

to the point that s/he is satisfied that the learner is the author of any submission to be used for assessment purposes. Authentication may take the form of video interviews over an internet connection, phone conversations, in-person assessment or testing, etc.

Submissions sent to the school will be assessed and where appropriate, feedback will be provided. Any submission can be resubmitted at any time within the school year if additional work has been completed or additional information is provided. The purpose of all assessment and feedback is to support the learner's ongoing progress, track the degree of progress through ministry learning standards and individual goals, and provide summaries of learning. In the grade 10-12 program, submissions may also be graded.

### **Activation Evidence**

Activation evidence must be in place by Sept. 30th (1st deadline) or Feb. 10 (2nd deadline).

All students must be active according to Ministry expectations by the deadline in order to receive the benefits of the program including communication with a teacher, expense budget, loans, etc. Evidence of significant learning is required in this process prior to the deadline for Ministry funding to be sought for the student. The minimum requirements are listed below for K-7, 8-9, and 10-12.

K-7 – learning experiences must be in place including most learning areas by the deadline. The student must have engaged in significant learning before activation is possible. This is evidenced by communication in most learning areas and submitted work samples from a variety of learning areas including at least one core area: English, Math, Socials, or Science.

8-9 – learning experiences must be in place including most learning areas by the deadline. The student must have engaged in significant learning before activation is possible. This is evidenced by communication in most learning areas and submitted work samples from a minimum of four learning areas including at least one core area: English, Math, Socials, or Science.

10-12 – a plan must be in place for each course by the deadline. The student will not be activated in any course until 5% of the learning standards for that course have been achieved and the teacher has evidence to support the belief that the student is capable and willing to complete the course according to the plan.

### **Grading**

This is an ungraded program from Kindergarten to grade 9. No grades will be given for any student work unless graded feedback is formally requested by an older learner to help them

prepare for high school. (The parent is not involved in requesting graded feedback - if a parent desires graded feedback, a different DL school should be selected from the many graded options available in BC.)

In grade 10-12 courses, grades are provided as required by the Ministry. Course grades are based on the graded feedback provided for individual submissions meeting learning standards, assessments of learning by certified teachers and various forms of testing.

### **Learner Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

Learner safety is of paramount importance. If a family requests to use third party facilities to education their child, best practice assumes that criminal record checks are completed for all employees of the facility who work in the vicinity of the children using the facility. Criminal record checks must be completed for any individuals instructing children as part of their learning program with Oak and Orca. Prior to registering the student and agreeing to pay for any third party course, lesson, team, etc., the school will receive confirmation of the criminal record check policy of the organization.

Emergency preparedness is taken seriously by all schools, and distributed learning schools are required to support families in preparing for such emergencies in the home and community. To this end, the school provides emergency preparedness activities and resources and recommends that all students practice for emergencies as they would if attending an on-site school. Drills are recommended several times per year for this purpose.

### **Child Protection**

Anyone suspecting that a child has been or is likely to be physically or sexually abused by any person is legally bound to report his or her suspicion to a child protection social worker. A designated staff member will be knowledgeable on procedures and questions associated with reporting child abuse and will always be available to discuss any situation. [The BC Handbook on Child Abuse and Neglect](#) will be used to inform action and training.

### **Conditions of Continued Enrolment in Distributed Learning**

Students and parents must continue on an ongoing basis to be willing to abide by the policies and guidelines of the school. Students must remain active in the program, including weekly submissions and communication requirements.

At any time, after consultation with the parent and student, the School may decide to deregister a student under the following circumstances:

1. The student demonstrates enduring behaviour or attitudes that detract from the quality of life experienced by students, staff, or members of the outside community where learning is taking place.
2. It becomes clear that the student or parent is unable or unwilling to abide by school policies.
3. The family is unable to remain active in the program, in particular with respect to weekly submissions and regular communication.