ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS - ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

In order to support the diverse needs of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) students, ACPS provides online learning courses (online courses that complement in-person instruction) and the ACPS Virtual Academy (a fully virtual school program) (Virtual) to ACPS students.

Definitions:

> **Online Learning -** taking a course or series of courses online. Online learning may consist of individual online courses or a fully virtual learning program.

> **Online Courses** - individual courses that are taken online

> **ACPS Virtual Academy (Virtual Academy)** - a fully online school program

> **ACPS Online Learning Program (OLP)** - the organizational unit which oversees ACPS's online courses and the ACPS Virtual Academy

Online Courses

Online courses may be taken during either the school day or after school and complement a student's in-person instruction. The following guidelines should be used when determining if an online course is appropriate.

- Online courses are designed to supplement in-person instruction. Online courses are typically taken when an in-person option is not available, would not fit in the student's schedule, or is necessary to meet graduation requirements.
- As a best practice, it is recommended that students should enroll in no more than two online courses per term during the regular school year. Exceptions must be approved by the OLP and the principal.
- Online courses must be academically appropriate for the student.
- Students, families, school leaders, and counselors should refer to the *"Profile of a Successful Online Student"* guidelines, available on the ACPS website, when considering if an online course is appropriate for a student.

All Virginia students are required to take an online course as part of their high school graduation requirements.

There is no minimum GPA required to enroll in an online course.

Only online courses and online course providers approved through the OLP are eligible for enrollment and academic credit.

The availability of certain courses may change from time-to-time during the school year depending upon provider availability.

47 Online courses are reflected in the transcript in the same manner as in-person courses.
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49 **Virtual Academy**
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51 Some students may benefit from participation in the fully online Virtual Academy for many
52 reasons including but not limited to health concerns, balancing school and work, or to meet
53 graduation requirements. Full-time virtual students remain ACPS students, remain tied to their
54 base schools, and are expected to complete the school year virtually unless the school determines
55 that returning to in-person instruction is in the student's best interest academically.
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57 Only full-time ACPS students are eligible to enroll in the Virtual Academy.
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59 Virtual Academy instruction is provided in the following formats:
60 ● Grades K-5 - Synchronous instruction
61 ● Grades 6-12 - Asynchronous instruction
62 ● All Virtual Academy students may request a meeting with their teacher for additional
63   support.
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65 The following guidelines should be used when determining if enrollment in the Virtual Academy
66 is appropriate.
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68 ● Appropriate support is available for the student (students in the Virtual Academy
69   frequently require more support from families than students in the in-person program.)
70 ● The Virtual Academy must be academically and socially/emotionally appropriate for the
71   student.
72 ● Students, families, school leaders, and counselors should refer to the *"Profile of a*
73   *Successful Virtual Student"* guidelines, available on the ACPS website, when considering
74   if enrollment in the Virtual Academy is appropriate for a student.
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76 Enrollment in the Virtual Academy must be requested by the family and renewed annually.
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78 **Costs**
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80 ACPS students are not charged tuition for enrolling in any online course or in the Virtual Academy
81 offered by the school division during the regular school year. However, tuition may be charged for
82 summer school programs at the same rate as in-person course offerings.
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84 **Supports**
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86 Students enrolled in online courses or the Virtual Academy frequently require organizational
87 support. This support is best provided as a collaboration between the family and ACPS.
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89 ACPS assigns a mentor to all students enrolled in an online course or the Virtual Academy to
90 support their course progress and completion.
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92 Students experience the greatest success when families and the mentor collaborate to encourage
93 students to meet course deadlines, help the student to set manageable and consistent progress goals,
94 and adjust goals depending on their needs.
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96 Students enrolled in online courses or in the Virtual Academy are provided unrestricted access to
97 the student help desk for technical issues.
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99 ● While students may access their online course at a time and place outside of the regular
100 school day, ACPS is not responsible for ensuring that non-division non-district computers
101 meet the minimum technical specifications.
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103 **Drops**
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105 In some situations a student may determine an online course is not appropriate.
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107 ● Students may withdraw from their online course within the first 10 calendar days of course
108 activation for any reason without academic penalty.
109 ○ Students enrolled in the Virtual Academy may drop individual courses within this
110 timeframe, but may not withdraw from the Virtual Academy.
111 ● A student who requests to drop an online course (or is administratively withdrawn for non-
112 performance) after 10 calendar days of course activation will receive a grade of W/P
113 (withdraw passing) if they are passing the course at the time of the drop or a W/F (withdraw
114 failing) if they are failing the course at the time of the drop.
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116 **Roles**
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118 Student success in online learning and the Virtual Academy is dependent on close collaboration
119 between ACPS and families, with each individual performing their role.
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121 **Student**
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123 The student is responsible for participating in determining if online courses or the Virtual
124 Academy is appropriate, completing all assignments and seeing needed assistance from the
125 family, teacher, and/or mentor. The student should:
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127 ● maintain a steady pace of submission of assignments as set forth by their online
128 teacher;
129 ● maintain open communication with their online teacher and mentor;
130 ● complete all course work and required assessments; and
131 ● meet all deadlines.
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133 Failure to actively engage in the online course may result in the student being withdrawn
134 from the course.
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136 **Family**
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138 The student's family is responsible for participating in determining if online courses or the
139 Virtual Academy are appropriate, assisting the student with organization and encouraging
140 the student to seek needed support from the teacher.
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142 **The ACPS Online Learning Program**
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144 The ACPS OLP is the division program responsible for the oversight, distribution, and
145 quality assurance of online learning opportunities for ACPS students. The OLP:
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147 ● Oversees the approval, distribution, and establishes quality assurance guidelines for
148 all online learning options made available by ACPS.
149 ● Provides schools with information regarding how the Virtual Academy may serve
150 students seeking a non-traditional educational path.
151 ● Provides schools with information related to the benefits of taking an online course
152 to supplement students' in-person instruction, to allow flexibility where possible,
153 and to prepare students for post-secondary opportunities in a digital world.
154 ● Provides training to school site facilitators in the division when ACPS students are
155 taking classes during the school day or from school based facilities.
156 ● Provides training and awareness programs to meet the needs of school leadership,
157 counselors, and other appropriate staff members.
158 ● Provides students with required supplemental course materials if applicable:
159 ● Assesses and evaluates student progress in accordance with the course for which
160 the student has registered.
161 ● Implements a common drop process for students enrolled in online courses
162 ● Provides the schools with information regarding course registration processes.
163 ● Ensures that school issued devices meet the technical specifications that are needed
164 for students to successfully participate in online courses.
165 ● Communicates with appropriate school staff regarding dates for course registration
166 throughout the year.
167 ● Creates online student accounts with applicable online providers and enrolls
168 students in the requested online course.
169 ● Assigns a mentor to each online enrollment.
170 ● The OLP works with each school's respective School Registrar and School
171 Counselors to ensure online courses are accurately scheduled and recorded in the
172 student information system and that proper grades and credit information is also
173 recorded in the student information system.
174 ● Considers requests for extensions.
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176 **School:**
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178 The school oversees the successful implementation of online courses and the Virtual
179 Academy. The school:
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181 ● Assists in educating students and parents regarding the availability of online
182 learning options made available by ACPS.
183 ● Follows the student enrollment guidelines as set forth by the OLP.

184   ● Provides testing venues for students when a face-to-face assessment is required.
185   ● Enters course grades that students earn on student report cards and transcripts.
186   ● Collaborates with the OLP to assign a mentor to those online courses and students
187   in the event that students take part of their regular school day to access their online
188   course.
189   ● Requests extensions if necessary.
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191   **School Counselors**
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193   The school counselors ensure students are enrolled in courses that meet their unique needs.
194   School counselors:
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196   ● Provides information to students, parents/guardians and staff regarding OLP
197   offerings, scheduling, and registration.
198   ● Determines courses needed by students based on scheduling and on other needs.
199   ● Provides requested information and other documentation to the OLP contact.
200   ● Determines whether there is a match between students' needs and the use of online
201   courses.
202   ● Provides the student and family with the current Online Learning Contract.
203   ● Completes the Online Enrollment Request Form and attaches the completed Online
204   Learning Contract.
205   ● Ensures that proper grade and credit information for online courses are recorded in
206   the student information system.
207   ● Reviews student progress information.
208   ● Notifies the OLP if it appears that the student will need to drop the course within
209   ten (10) calendar days of the student being enrolled in the course.
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211   **Mentor**
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213   The mentor role is vital in providing students with support for online coursework both
214   during and after the regular school day. The mentor works directly with the student to
215   provide encouragement and weekly monitoring. The mentor:
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217   ● Assures computing devices meet course requirements and have appropriate plug-
218   ins installed.
219   ● Works with the OLP to provide an orientation to online learning for students and
220   families.
221   ● Monitors the student's progress and works together with the OLP to maintain
222   contact with the online teacher as needed.
223   ● Checks weekly with the student to determine student progress and provide support
224   as needed.
225   ● Proctors face-to-face exams.
226   ● Takes regular attendance for students taking an online course during the school day.
227   ● Communicates with the OLP and various vendor technical support personnel as
228   needed.

229 ● Communicates with the OLP to provide feedback on the course, instruction, and
230 satisfaction level of the students and parents/guardians.
231 ● Participates in necessary training to have a clear understanding of expectations of
232 individual vendors and technologies.
233 ● Enters quarterly and final grades in the school division's grade recording system.
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236 Established: May 14, 2015
237 Amended: May 9, 2024
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240 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-212.2, 22.1-212.23, 22.1-212.24,
241 22.1-212.25, 22.1-212.26, 22.1-212.27, 22.1-215, 22.1-253.13:4, 22.1-296.1,
242 22.1-296.2, 22.1-296.4.
243
244 Cross Refs.: DJF   Purchasing Procedures
245   IGBG   Off-Site Instruction and Virtual Courses
246   IGBGA   Online Courses And Virtual School Programs