

# Dorchester School District Two Virtual Academy Handbook





## Table of Contents

<b>Mission, Vision, Purpose and Goals</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Is VA a great fit for all students?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Student Entrance Requirements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Information for VA students</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Expectations for VA Students</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Family Expectations for VA students</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>VA Course Offerings</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Registration</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>VA Roles and Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Virtual Academy Director.....	6
Building Principals.....	6
Site Liaison (designated Assistant Principal).....	6
School Counselor .....	7
Virtual Teachers .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Technology Support.....	7
<b>Special Populations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
ELL .....	7
IEP and 504 Guidelines.....	7
<b>Attendance</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Grading</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Grades four through five.....	8
Grades six through 12 .....	9
<b>Athletics</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Sample Student Schedules</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Dorchester School District Two Parent/Student Handbook</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Low County Virtual Information (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>EdOptions Academy Information (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Middle School Course Offerings</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>High School Course Offerings</b> .....	<b>14</b>



### Mission, Vision, Purpose and Goals

**Mission:** Dorchester School District Two leading the way, every student, every day, through relationships, rigor, and relevance.

**Vision:** Dorchester School District Two desires to be recognized as a “World Class” school district, expecting each student to achieve at his/her optimum level in all areas, and providing all members of our district family with an environment that permits them to do their personal best.

**Purpose:** The Dorchester School District Two Virtual Academy (VA) will provide a virtual pathway for students and families to access a local, teacher-led, virtual classroom environment.

**Goals:**

- Serve students virtually in a district virtual program.
- Provide a 100% virtual instructional model for students and families living in the Dorchester School District Two attendance area.
- Utilize Dorchester School District Two’s instructional practices in a virtual setting.

### Overview

Dorchester School District Two will offer a full virtual option student in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. Virtual courses will be offered through EdOptions Academy. Please refer to the information about EdOptions Academy on our website for additional details.

### Is VA a great fit for all students?

The structure of the VA may not be for all students. Families should spend time thinking about the benefits and drawbacks of an online school experience. This is a big decision that will commit you to online learning for an entire school year. If your child has struggled with eLearning days and/or virtually then committing to an entire year of virtual learning is not advisable. Students accepted into the VA who are not successful will be placed on an Academic Probation Plan. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress outlined in their Academic Probation Plan will be removed from the program.

Recommended for Virtual Learning	Not Recommended for Virtual Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am goal oriented. I plan my work in advance to meet deadlines.</li> <li>• I have good time management skills, and I can keep myself organized.</li> <li>• I push through when things get difficult.</li> <li>• I ask for help if I cannot figure out a solution alone.</li> <li>• I am able to complete my work independently.</li> <li>• I have a distraction free area where I can complete my virtual school work.</li> <li>• I am comfortable using a computer, and I have someone that can help me if I have technical issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need constant reminders to complete tasks, and I am not self-motivated.</li> <li>• I cannot keep myself on track and on time.</li> <li>• I give up easily when I have a problem.</li> <li>• I do not like asking my teacher, parent, or peers for help when I need it.</li> <li>• I struggle with learning independently, and I need frequent individual assistance.</li> <li>• I do not have a space conducive to virtual school work.</li> <li>• I am not tech savvy, and I do not have anyone I can ask/call if I need assistance with my device or the internet.</li> </ul>



### Student Entrance Requirements

- Students who opt for virtual learning in grade 6-12 will maintain enrollment in their Dorchester Two home school.
- In order to participate in the virtual program, families must complete the VA application and agree to all student and parent expectations.
- Participation is a **yearlong commitment** for all students for the school year.
- Students that were not successful or were truant the prior school year will not be allowed to participate in VA the following school year. Specific criteria to enroll into VA based on the previous school year's performance. Students must be in good standing in their academics and attendance. **Students must be promoted to the next grade to be considered for enrollment.**

After your application has been submitted, it will be reviewed for acceptance.

### Information for VA students

- After-school clubs and sports will be connected to the student's home school. Performing Arts programs, such as Band, Chorus, Orchestra, Dance, and Theatre that require a class during the school day as well as after school practices and performances, will NOT be available in VA.
- Dorchester School District Two will provide each student with a district device for their educational use. Families selecting VA must have home internet access so students can participate virtually from home. VA students are expected to participate in live virtual instruction daily. Students are expected to use the school district issued device to access virtual classes and assignments.
- High school students enrolled in VA may enroll in classes at the Dorchester County Career and Technical Center. Students must attend these classes in-person and provide their own transportation.
- Student will be required to report face-to-face for mandated state assessments, and may be required to attend face-to-face for other assessments as needed.

### Expectations for VA Students

- Schedule appropriate time for learning, using the time on task recommendations given by your teacher.
- Use Clever to access district resources and programs. It is your responsibility to know your usernames and passwords.
- Check Microsoft Teams daily to access classes, assignments, and resources.
- Follow District technology guidelines for device care and safety.
- Make sure you have an appropriate space free from clutter and distractions in order to learn and study.
- Be present and engage in online learning activities offered by your teachers.
- Submit all assignments on time.
- Agree to the Student/Parent Contract.
- Communicate with your teacher regarding learning needs. Do not wait for your teacher to contact you.
- Contact your teacher or the District website (Tech Link) for technology help.
- Stay motivated by rewarding yourself with favorite activities and stay in touch with your friends and classmate.



### Family Expectations for VA students

- In conjunction with their teachers, the parent/guardian must support their child through the virtual learning process by monitoring their engagement of instruction and their completion of assignments and assessments.
- Ensure that their child is present each day and if absent, ensure their child completes all make-up assignments.
- Confirm a homework environment for their child so they can successfully learn virtually.
- Maintain open communication with teachers and staff.
- Ensure your student knows usernames and passwords and encourage active participation.
- Create an appropriate learning space for your student that limits distractions.
- Ensure technology is accessible and utilized appropriately.
- Establish a contingency plan for internet delays and outages (e.g., identifying alternate locations with internet access, using backup computers, etc.).
- Maintain communication with your student's teachers and school personnel.
- Utilize District resources for support.
- Agree to and sign the Student/Parent Contract.
- Contact your student's teachers for assistance when needed.
- Engage your student in conversations regarding assignments and learning activities.
- Support emotional balance by providing time for physical activity and brain breaks.

### VA Course Offerings

In middle school all core courses will be offered. Related arts courses will be limited and may be asynchronous (not live). We will not be able to offer all high school courses. While we will be able to offer all required courses for graduation, we may not have sufficient enrollment to offer all elective courses or the content of the courses might not be suited to be taught virtually. Some course offerings may be offered asynchronous (not live). Review the course offerings below closely to ensure the VA program meets the needs of your student.

### Registration

All new and returning students to Dorchester District Two must also complete the online registration for their zoned school of residence in addition to completing the VA application.



## VA Roles and Responsibilities

### Virtual Academy District liaison

- Oversee the approval and distribution of online learning options and establish quality assurance guidelines for all online learning platforms available to DDTwo students.
- Coordinates with EdOptions Academy for middle and high school students
- Provide training and awareness programs to meet the needs of the school leadership and appropriate staff.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the online learning program for the district.
- Follow the district's policies and procedures for students enrolled in DDTwo Virtual Academy courses.
- Provide schools with information regarding course registration processes and any funding implications.
- Review overall student and course progress information.
- Review and analyze VA instructional data to make informed decisions.
- Work with Instructional Technology to assure devices meet course requirements and have appropriate plugins installed.
- Regularly communicate updates to all stakeholders.
- Act as liaison for the school with all other approved online providers.
- Work the VA and school-based staff to provide an orientation for parents and students.

### Building Principals

- Designate a school level VA Site Liaison.
- Collaborate with the district level coordinator and school-based team to meet the scheduling needs of each student enrolled in VA.
- Verify final grades are recorded on student transcripts.
- Ensure site-based compliance with guidelines and policies for online learning.

### Site Liaison (designated Assistant Principal)

- Collaborate with district level and school-based teams to oversee students and work to ensure course participation and completion.
- Monitor students' progress reports.
- Act as the liaison with the parents and students. The Site Liaison is the primary contact for parents and students.
- Collaborate with designated counselor to assist students in registering for AP/IB exams, etc.
- Organize and implement proctoring/monitoring for face-to-face exams.
- Serve as a liaison with school administration and keep building administration informed.



### School Counselor

- Provide information to students, parents/guardians and local school staff regarding VA offerings, scheduling, and registration.
- Determine courses needed by students based on scheduling and other needs.
- Provide requested information and other documentation to VA staff.
- Work with faculty and staff to determine whether there is a match between students' needs and the use of online courses.
- Assist secondary students in registering for VirtualSC courses, when applicable, and provide approval in a timely manner.
- Monitor grades and ensure that the proper grade and credit information for online courses are recorded in the student's record at course completion.
- Ensure EOC test grades are calculated into the student's final course average and recorded per state guidelines.
- Coordinate the securing of student services as needed, including the proctoring of any face-to-face exams that may be required.
- Notify VA Coordinator immediately in writing if it appears the student will need to drop a course. (Note: VA will adhere to the SC Uniform Grading Policy.)
- Ensure all faculty and staff are aware of the IEP/504 procedures for communicating accommodations pages.

### Technology Support

- VA will utilize the Instructional Technology Department for technology support.
- DDTwo Tech and Professional Development Coaches

## Special Populations

### ELL

The school-based team will consult with the family and ESL teacher prior to enrolling. The team will determine if the student has sufficient English language proficiency to be successful in the VA and will advise concerning the appropriate accommodations for the student.

### IEP and 504 Guidelines

Online learning opportunities may be an option for children who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or receive accommodations from 504 Plans. Dorchester School District is limited in the ability to meet all needs of some students with IEP's due to the nature of the online courses provided by EdOptions Academy. Enrollment may be considered at the student's annual IEP or 504 meeting. A student's IEP goals will be reviewed to determine appropriateness of Virtual Academy enrollment.



## Attendance

South Carolina Department of Education and Dorchester School District Two policies will be followed for attendance and tardies.

### *Lawful/Excused Absences*

- The absence is caused by the student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others.
- The absence is due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- The absence is due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.
- The absence is due to school activities that are approved in advance by the principal.

### *Unlawful/Unexcused Absences*

- The absence of the student without the knowledge of his/ her parent/legal guardian.
- The absence of the student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent/legal guardian.
- Suspension(s) are not to be counted as an unlawful/ unexcused absence for truancy purposes.

### *Removal from the VA Due to Attendance*

- Students who accumulate seven unexcused absences will be removed from the VA program. Parents can return the child to their face-to-face school, apply to a homeschool association, or apply to a virtual charter school(s). Keep in mind that virtual charters use grades and attendance in admission decisions, so if removed from VA for attendance then it is highly unlikely they will admit your child to their school.

## Grading

### Grades four through five

In fourth and fifth grades, students are graded using the following scales:

Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 and below

Grades in Fine Arts/Health and Wellness will be reported as follows:





- E = excellent
- S = satisfactory
- N = needs improvement
- U = unsatisfactory

### Grades six through 12

The South Carolina uniform grading scale will be implemented in grades six through eight in all content areas including the arts and health and wellness.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 and below

## Athletics

Student-athletes who wish to attend an NCAA Division I or II college or university must ensure courses offered using a digital curriculum for initial credit and credit recovery meet NCAA guidelines. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has very strict guidelines regarding credit for courses taken online, such as courses offered by Dorchester School District Two. Many online courses ARE NOT APPROVED by the NCAA. Be sure to consult with your high school's athletic director and your school counselor to determine if the online course is approved for credit by the NCAA.

## Dorchester School District Two Parent/Student Handbook

All students enrolled in the VA are students of Dorchester School District Two, and all district policies and procedures outlined in the District Parent/Student handbook apply to Virtual Academy students. Please review the handbook by clicking the link below:

[Dorchester School District Two Parent/Student Handbook](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

***What grades does the DDTwo Virtual Academy serve?***



The DDTwo Virtual Academy will serve students in grades 6th through 12th grade.

***Why aren't you offering a virtual option for elementary aged students?***

The early childhood and elementary school years , Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, are paramount in building foundational skills in reading, writing, and math as well as skills in peer relationships and social-emotional development. As a school district, our belief is that these foundational skills are most effectively taught with face-to-face instruction.

***Does my child have to be a resident of Dorchester Two to be a part of the VA?***

Yes. You must be residing in the Dorchester Two School District to participate.

***Will every student that registers during this window be accepted into VA?***

No, please review the entrance requirements. Students have to have been successful in eLearning/virtual learning and/or demonstrate they are academically able to learn virtually. Students with truancy/attendance concerns will not be accepted.

***How much does the program cost?***

There is not an additional cost for students who enroll in the DDTwo Virtual Academy. The only cost to families is the regular registration cost of \$20 and the technology fee of \$20.

***Do I need a computer or other textbook resources?***

Yes, Dorchester School District Two will provide an electronic device to students enrolled in the DDTwo Virtual Academy. There will be a pick-up date for parents to receive student devices and any other supplies needed for instruction. A technology and resource tutorial will be required for both parents and students. Students are required to use the device issued by Dorchester Two.

***Do I need internet access?***

Students will need reliable internet access. High speed internet is highly recommended as this provides the most reliable connection and best quality for video and streamed content. If your family does not have high-speed internet, local internet providers have low cost options for qualifying families.

***What academic support systems are in place for virtual students?***

Your student's teachers will be available via email, office hours, scheduled class, or individual scheduled sessions. Your student's teachers will provide live virtual academic instruction and support and learning opportunities. Additionally, teachers, school counselors, mental health counselors, school psychologists, and administrators will provide social-emotional support regularly.

***Can a student with an IEP or 504 attend the DDTwo Virtual Academy?***



Yes, your child's IEP or 504 team will meet to review and identify individual services and supports necessary to meet your child's unique needs.

***Will Gifted and Talented services or advanced courses be offered in the DDTWO Virtual Academy?***

Yes, we will offer Gifted and Talented services to students who qualify. We will also offer honors courses at the middle/high level for students meeting the appropriate criteria. We will offer some Advanced Placement courses based on student course requests.

***Are all courses offered in the DDTwo Virtual Academy?***

Due to the nature of virtual learning, some courses will not be offered virtually.

***Will attendance be taken?***

Yes, South Carolina regulations regarding mandatory daily attendance will be followed.

***What calendar will the program follow?***

The DDTwo Virtual Academy will follow the normal school calendar and observe all holidays. All DDTwo schools are part of the state's eLearning initiative meaning instruction will continue even if the district is closed due to emergency closure.

***Do I have to commit for the entire year?***

Yes, those opting for instruction through the VA are required to commit for the entire school year.

***Will families be given an opportunity to withdrawal or enroll into VA at the semester?***

No, enrollment in the VA is a full school year commitment.

***Why do we have to commit so early?***

Staff and resources are allocated based on student enrollment. In order to accurately assign staff and resources to the VA and in-person classes, the district must determine the needs for both instructional models. This is done in advance during the budgeting and staffing process for the school year, which is currently in progress.

***What does asynchronous and synchronous learning mean?***

Synchronous learning happens in real time/live. This means that you and your instructor interact at a specific, set time. Asynchronous learning happens on your schedule. While your teacher will provide materials for reading, lectures/labs/tutorials for viewing, assignments for completing, and exams for evaluation, you can access and satisfy these requirements on your own schedule, so long as you meet the expected deadlines.



***If we register for VA, will my child be required to go into a building to complete assessments?***

Yes- middle school students must take SC Ready, PASS, and other assessments in a school building. Additionally, high school students must take the PSAT, ACT, SAT and Ready 2 Work assessments in a school building. High school and 8th grade students that are enrolled in a class with an End of Course (EOC) exam must come into the building to take the exam (Algebra 1, Biology, US History, English 2). Students that are English Language Learners will have to come into a school building to complete the ACCESS assessment. Elementary students are also required to come in for state and other assessments throughout the year.

***Will my child be a student of the VA or a student of their current home school?***

VA is a program of the Dorchester Two School District and is not a separate school.

Students will remain enrolled in their home school in PowerSchool and can participate in their home school's extracurricular activities and athletics occurring after the school day has ended.

***Can students participate in extracurricular activities?***

Yes, students may participate in after school extracurricular activities at the school where they are enrolled. Transportation to participate in extracurricular activities, special programs, events, and athletics is the responsibility of the parent. High school students will also be able to participate in out of school activities such as prom, graduation, etc.

***Are DDTwo Virtual Academy courses NCAA approved?***

Student-athletes who wish to attend an NCAA Division I or II college or university must ensure courses offered using a digital curriculum for initial credit and credit recovery meet NCAA guidelines. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has very strict guidelines regarding credit for courses taken online, including courses offered by Dorchester School District Two. Many online courses ARE NOT APPROVED by the NCAA. Be sure to consult with your high school's athletic director and your school counselor to determine if the online course is approved for credit by the NCAA.

***Can my student graduate from Dorchester District Two?***

Yes, all DDTwo Virtual Academy students will remain fully enrolled in their regular school, which means seniors will graduate from their zoned high school. Students will receive a high school diploma from their home school.

***How does a virtual student workload compare to a regular classroom?***



Every effort will be made to maintain relevant and appropriate workloads, but virtual learning often requires more independent work and attention from students to balance the absence of a structured classroom. Students will be provided schedules to assist in scheduling specific times for daily tasks.

### ***What will my student's schedule look like?***

Please refer to the Virtual Academy website for information on Edoptions schedules for grades 6-12.

### ***Do students need to attend scheduled sessions, or can they work at their own pace?***

Students need to attend their daily scheduled classes online as attendance will be taken daily for each course. There will be class and course requirements for all students. Students will participate in virtual whole class, small group and/or individual meeting opportunities. Scheduled classes and support opportunities are available and may also be scheduled individually based on student's needs. Students may also complete assignments independently at their own pace but must maintain appropriate progress and meet all deadlines.

### ***What are the grading requirements?***

All DDTwo Virtual Academy courses will follow the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy regarding grading and Dorchester School District Two's Board Policy.

### ***If my child is already enrolled in the Virtual Academy this year, are we required to apply for enrollment again this year?***

Yes, enrollment in the Virtual Academy is made on a yearly basis. Current Virtual Academy students must apply for the Virtual Academy every year to be considered for enrollment.

### ***How do I enroll my student in DDTwo Virtual Academy?***

Applying for enrollment in DDTwo Virtual Academy is a two-step process.

- Step 1: Parents may apply for the DDTwo Virtual Academy. Completing the application does not guarantee your student will be enrolled in the Virtual Academy. All decisions will be made on case-by-case based on the enrollment criteria. Parents/Guardians will be notified of acceptance or denial into the program.
- Step 2: Once the school district registration window opens for 2021-22, all new and returning students to Dorchester District Two must also complete the online registration for their zoned school of residence



## EdOptions Academy Information (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)

[What is EdOptions](#)

[EdOptions Parent Letter](#)

[EdOptions Student Success Zone](#)

[EdOptions Teacher Interaction Video](#)

### Middle School Course Offerings

[EdOptions Courses offered 6th-8th.xlsx](#)

\*Courses are subject to changed based on enrollment and offerings provided by EdOptions Academy.

### High School Course Offerings

[EdOptions Courses offeres 9th-12th DD2.xlsx](#)

\*Courses are subject to changed based on enrollment and offerings provided by EdOptions Academy.