

Downingtown Cyber Academy
Downingtown Area School District



Student/Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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Introduction

The Downingtown Cyber Academy's online curriculum includes self-paced, rigorous classes using the latest instructional tools in a vibrant virtual classroom. DASD teachers, skilled in online instruction, help students master the skills they need to succeed.

Downingtown Cyber Academy students are still considered students in their local middle and high schools. This dual enrollment allows the students to participate in our wide variety of activities, music lessons, clubs, and after-school programs.

DASD Mission

The mission of the Downingtown Area School District, proud of our tradition of excellence, is to educate all students to meet the challenges of a global society by providing an individually responsive learning environment characterized by outstanding academic and personal achievements in partnership with family, students, and community.

DASD Vision

For our future, we want our students to be career and college-ready upon graduation. To be prepared for this challenge, our students will:

- Be self-directed, reflective learners who use data to foster learning and growth;
- Exhibit critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- Utilize technology in an appropriate manner to maximize learning;
- Act respectfully as responsible, contributing citizens of the local, national, and global society;
- Be innovators who use a wide range of techniques to elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate their ideas to improve and make the best use of their creative efforts;
- Collaborate with peers and communicate efficiently and effectively across a variety of situations and environments;
- Be conscientious and informed consumers, who are fiscally aware of and responsive to current economic situations;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of an economically and culturally diverse community.

Purpose

The Downingtown Cyber Academy aims to provide the best online learning environment to meet all K-12 Downingtown Area District students' individual needs through innovative, flexible, and engaging student-centered virtual learning experiences. Further, the Downingtown Cyber Academy empowers students to achieve academic and personal excellence.

Core Values

The Downingtown Cyber Academy values:

- Diversity
- Alternative learning environments, spaces, approaches

- Self-determination, student choice
- Empowerment
- Pursuit of happiness
- Individuality
- Teamwork among staff to support students
- Student flexibility

The Downingtown Cyber Academy Program

The Downingtown Cyber Academy provides courses for students in grades 6-12 that allow for self-paced and structured learning.

Full-time students in the middle school program work both synchronously and asynchronously; they must complete their schoolwork by the end of each week. All Downingtown Cyber Academy students have online calendars that allow them to see their coursework for the day, week, and marking period to stay on pace.

Full-time students in the high school program work asynchronously, but they must complete their schoolwork by the end of each week. All Downingtown Cyber Academy students have online calendars that allow them to see their coursework for the day, week, and marking period to stay on pace.

Online students in middle and high school are typically more able to take charge of their education by setting goals, working independently, and exploring their future options. However, they can benefit from the support of their parent(s)/guardian(s) in the following ways:

- Monitor students' attendance.
- Ensure that students work for approximately 5 hours of work *per course per week*.
- Verify that lessons and assignments are completed.
- Communicate with teachers or refer students to teachers for help when needed.
- Monitor student grades and attendance in Infinite Campus
- Communicate with the DCA Administrative Team and any additional support staff when needed.

Registration and Eligibility

Registration & Eligibility for the Downingtown Cyber Academy Grades 6-12

All Downingtown Area School District students in grades 6-12 have the option to enroll in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. The Downingtown Cyber Academy requires registration each year. Students will automatically be enrolled in their home schools each year and must reapply for the DCA. Parents of 6th-12th graders will register on the DCA registration page at dc.dasd.org.

Registration For Grades 6-12

Students who wish to enroll in the Downingtown Area School District must complete registration at the District Office.

For admission to any grade level, parents must present:

1. Birth certificate
2. Immunization record
3. Verification of residency
4. Transfer card (if coming from another school)
5. Academic records (report cards, IEPs, etc.) are appreciated at the time of enrollment so that correct assignments can be made.

Application for the Downingtown Cyber Academy

Students who wish to be full-time or part-time in the DCA should complete the following steps:

1. Be a registered student in the Downingtown Area School District.
2. Fill out an application for the DCA at dc.dasd.org.
3. Contact the school counselor to make course selections for the DCA.

After the add/drop period at the beginning of the school year, students will be allowed to transition into or out of the DCA at the start of Marking Periods 2 or 3.

Online Instructional Model

The Downingtown Cyber Academy provides course offerings for students that allow more flexibility throughout the week.

At the middle school level, teachers will provide synchronous sessions for direct instruction, group work, extra help, and community building. At the high school level, teachers will provide office hours via Zoom for targeted instruction and extra help.

Students can work during days and times that are convenient for them. All coursework is assigned on Monday and is due by the end of the day on Sunday. There are no coursework due dates during the week.

Curriculum Alternatives

Downingtown High School has developed unique and alternative opportunities for students to hasten their high school education, develop saleable skills, receive college credit, or explore career opportunities not included in the traditional school curriculum. These programs include Pupils Reaching Out (Senior Work Program), Early College Acceptance, Dual Enrollment, Independent Study, and Internships. These programs and enrichments are also offered: The Gifted Education, Seminar, Honors Courses, and Advanced Placement Courses/ Examinations. Details concerning these alternatives may be obtained from the Counseling Department. Arrangements for enrolling in one of these programs must be made through the student's guidance counselor.

Course changes

Students are not allowed to change or drop cyber courses once the school year begins unless they are in jeopardy of failing a class. If a student is in danger of failing a course, the following steps must be taken before an administrator will consider a course change:

1. There must be a parent/student/teacher/counselor conference to address concerns and develop a plan to work together.
2. Students must show evidence of making an effort to improve (seeking extra help, peer tutoring, etc.).
3. There must be a follow-up parent/teacher/student/counselor conference to assess progress.
4. An administrator will review multiple sources of information and data.

For any approved course change after the mid-mark of the first marking period, the dropped course grades may follow the student into the new course.

Dropping Courses

Any student dropping a course after the first five weeks of the start date will receive a "Withdraw/Failure" for the year in the course.

Course Requirements

Daily coursework

Cyber classes are entirely online and contain asynchronous work. Schoology will contain the lessons students must complete for the week to remain on pace.

Although students have some freedom to work through the material at their own pace throughout the week, they must complete assignments by the end of each week. **Students should plan to spend approximately 5 hours on *each* one-credit cyber course and 2.5 hours on each .5-credit course per week.**

Zooms

In 6th-8th grades, Zooms will occur 3x per 6-day cycle for a core class and 1x per cycle for specials.

In 9th - 12th grades, Zooms will occur 2x per 6-day cycle for a 1-credit class and 1x per cycle for a .33 or .5 credit class.

If a DASD adjunct teacher teaches courses, Zooms will be held one time per week for 60 minutes for a 1-credit or core class and one time per week for 30 minutes for a .5 credit, .33

credit, or encore class. Students and parents will be notified about courses taught by DASD adjunct teachers.

Zooms are required for middle school students and are optional for high school students. Middle school students who cannot attend can have their families fill out a Personalized Learning Plan that makes Zooms optional; however, these students must watch the recorded Zooms and continue to maintain good standing in their classes.

Graduation Requirements - High School

High school students are expected to meet the same graduation requirements as the district high schools. Full-time cyber students will receive a high school diploma from either Downingtown West High School or Downingtown East High School.

Graduation from Downingtown High School shall be based upon the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade achievements. A student who fails to meet the requirements for graduation may not participate in class commencement ceremonies.

Keystone Exams

Keystone Exams are State-mandated end-of-course tests. Students must take the appropriate Keystone Exam after completing Algebra I, 10th Grade English, and Biology.

AP Exams

Students taking a cyber AP course can register to take the AP exam at their boundary high school. Registration information can be found on the district's website.

Attendance

22 PA. CODE CH. 11 sets forth the requirements for student attendance in public schools. Except as otherwise provided by law, compulsory school age is the period of a child's life from when the child enters school (which may be no later than at the age of 8 years) until the age of 17 or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first. Students in any PA cyber school must adhere to these minimum attendance requirements.

Attendance law defines truant as "3 or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law]." Habitually truant is defined as "6 or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law]." If a student is under the age of 17 and absent without an excuse for three days within any one academic year, a letter will be sent out detailing the three unlawful absences, inviting the parent/guardian into school for a meeting explaining the consequences of chronic truancy.

If a student accumulates six unexcused absences (or more) within any one academic year, the student will be referred to a school or community-based school attendance program or referred to Chester County's Children, Youth, and Families Department. A truancy citation may also be filed with the district magistrate.

Parents/guardians should check their child's attendance in Infinite Campus weekly.

Attendance Procedures

Attendance is a combination of measures that indicate a student is demonstrating adequate participation. This includes the following:

- Students must log their attendance every day for which they have a scheduled DCA class in Infinite Campus. Forgetting to log attendance is not a Board-approved acceptable excuse, so the absence will remain unexcused if students forget. We encourage students to set a reminder each school day to log attendance.
- Middle school students will be marked absent from their Zooms unless the parents/guardians have signed a Personalized Learning Plan.

If a student is absent due to illness or another Board-approved acceptable excuse, parents/guardians must send an excuse note to cyber_attendance@dasd.org within three school days.

School Day Schedule

DCA part-time Students will find their Zoom time(s) in their DCA Schoology Course(s) and Infinite Campus.

Two-Hour Early Dismissal

In the case of an early dismissal or late opening, teachers' Zoom times will be adjusted accordingly.

Keystone Testing Attendance

Excuses will not be granted for students during State-mandated Keystone testing as listed on the school calendar each year. Parents are also urged to encourage their employers to hold the "Take Your Child to Work Day" during the summer months so that students do not have to miss a day of school.

Excuse Procedures for Vacations or Trips

If students are traveling but can maintain their attendance in Zoom classes and complete their coursework, no further action is required. If students cannot attend Zooms or complete course work because of educational trips not sponsored by the school district or planned vacations

(family trips), they may be excused provided prior written notification is received from the parents/guardians and approval is granted by the DCA principal. Since regular class attendance is a critical component of a student's educational program, the educational benefits of the trip should outweigh the negative impact of the disruption of the student's academic program.

A request for an educational/family trip is subject to the following conditions:

1. Parent/Guardian must submit a written request (Board Policy Form 204 AG 11) to the DCA principal on the district form, which will indicate the days of absence, the destination of the trip; adult supervision; and the educational value of the trip.
2. If more than one child in a family is taking the trip, the request for all the children must be included in the trip request.
3. Parents must request at least three (3) days before the date of the trip.
4. No more than ten (10) school days each school year per student will be approved for an educational/family trip, which may be extended at the principal's discretion.

Please use this [FORM for Educational/Family Trip](#).

Requests for students to be excused for more than one (1) family trip will most likely not be honored during a school year. The principal will notify the parent/guardian of approval or denial of the request. The principal has the right to deny a request during the first ten (10) days, the last ten (10) school days, and during standardized testing (PSSA, etc.).

The principal has the right to deny a request during the school year when, in the principal's judgment, there is a pattern of excessive absence from school or the student is in poor academic standing. Unauthorized absences will be recorded as illegal, and students will not be permitted to make up work unless authorized by the principal. Work missed due to approved educational tours, or family trips may be made up, but the responsibility for the completion of that work will remain with students and parents/guardians.

After returning an approved educational/family trip, the teacher will work with the student and parent/guardian to "bridge the gap" of missed instructions. For logistical reasons, teachers cannot prepare individual daily lesson plans for each student on an educational/family trip. The student will submit all completed assignments to teachers upon return to school or as indicated on the assignment sheet.

Parents/Guardians are discouraged from making vacation plans during the school year. It is understood that there is occasionally the necessity of taking a family trip during the school year. Still, it is believed that frequent trips are an unnecessary detriment to the education of the student.

School Calendar

Students in the Downingtown Cyber Academy will follow the Downingtown Area School District school calendar, including vacations, snow days, and holidays.

The Downingtown Cyber Academy will also follow DASD's marking period schedule.

Student Services

Instructional Core Team

The Instructional Core Team consists of general education classroom teachers, school counselors, psychologists, ESL teachers, Prevention Specialists, DCA/school principal, and school nurses. When students experience difficulty academically, socially, and/or behaviorally, they are recommended to the Instructional Core Team at their home building by a classroom teacher, parent, or member of the Instructional Core Team.

The Instructional Core Team process involves the following steps:

1. Evaluate data that identify a student's need for academic, social, and/or behavioral support;
2. Determine the strategies needed to assist the student;
3. Plan and implement the intervention strategies through a continuum of services;
4. Monitor the effectiveness of the intervention strategies;
5. Continue intervention plan if the student experiences success as determined by the expected rate of improvement;
6. Alter the intervention plan if the student does not experience the anticipated rate of improvement;
7. Act as a liaison to communicate with other district and/or community services as needed; and
8. Communicate progress regularly with parents.

EL (English Learners)

The Civil Rights Act – Language Minority Compliance Procedures requires all school districts to identify and serve limited English proficient students. Part of this federal law requires that a Home Survey is completed and placed in the cumulative file for every student. If the parent indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, the child will be identified for screening by the ESL teacher. The screening will determine the need for direct instruction from the ESL teacher.

Gifted Support Program

The Downingtown Area School District offers a variety of special programs to meet the needs of students. The Gifted Support program has been developed to provide specialized learning experiences for students qualifying for such services under Pennsylvania Code Chapter 16 and

DASD requirements.

The Downingtown Cyber Academy is available to students identified as gifted as part of their regular education programming and/or to meet their needs as gifted learners. When the Downingtown Cyber Academy is utilized to provide enrichment, acceleration, or a combination of both as part of a GIEP, it is considered a change of placement, and the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT) must determine the student's readiness for online learning, the appropriateness of cyber instruction to meet the student's demonstrated needs, and the recommended course(s) before the student may begin. A Gifted Written Report (GWR) will be completed before the GIEP is revised to include cyber education as the district-provided gifted education service to meet the student's identified gifted needs.

Special Education Services

All DASD students may consider participating in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. Students who receive Special Education services to meet their needs through specially designed instruction must discuss cyber education at an IEP meeting. The team will determine the support needed to provide access to the student's program of study before beginning any cyber coursework. The student's IEP will be provided to the cyber teachers, who will ensure compliance with all required modifications and accommodations. The students will continue to have a DASD case manager if they transfer into the cyber program.

Each school has certified special education teachers to instruct students who require specially designed instruction to assist them with varying learning needs. In addition, select schools also provide specialized classes for Autistic Support, Life Skills Support, Emotional Support, and Multiple Disabilities Support. Special education services are provided in accordance with Pennsylvania Code Chapter 14. The school counselor can provide information about available support services and qualification procedures.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) or Student Assistance Service (S.A.S.)

School Board Policy #236 provides the guidelines to be followed by District schools to implement Student Assistance Programs. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning and, when the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent/guardian and student with information so they may access services within the community.

The Student Assistance Program/Service (SAP/S.A.S) shall assist in:

1. Identifying issues that pose a barrier to a student's learning and/or academic achievement.
2. Determining whether or not the identified problem lies within the responsibility of the school.
3. Informing the parent/guardian of a problem affecting the student's learning and/or

academic achievement.

4. Making recommendations to assist the student and the parent/guardian.
5. Providing information on community resources and options to deal with the problem.
6. Establishing links with resources to help resolve the problem.
7. Collaborating with the parent/guardian and agency when students are involved in treatment through a community agency.
8. Providing a plan for in-school support services for the student during and after treatment.

The S.A.S. team is composed of faculty members who have a special ability to relate to young people and who have expressed an interest in helping students deal with personal problems. In addition, members of the S.A.S. team have taken special training to assist them in providing these services to students. To contact any S.A.S. member, talk with the student's teacher or school counselor.

Multi-tiered System Of Supports (MTSS)

A District initiative includes the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Support or MTSS. This is a process used to identify students at specified grade levels who are struggling in school and then provide differentiated instruction and intervention to address their needs. Part of the process involves screening all students three times per year to identify students who are at grade level (Benchmark or Tier 1), slightly below grade level (Strategic or Tier 2), and well below grade level (Intensive or Tier 3), as measured by screening assessments such as AIMSweb or Review 360.

Following the screening assessments, students' individual Tiers are identified, and an instructional plan is implemented. Tier 2 and Tier 3 students will be grouped for additional teacher-guided instruction designed to improve their skills.

Throughout the intervention plan, Tier 2 and Tier 3 students are progress monitored to determine if growth is occurring due to the intervention. During and following the intervention program, results from the progress monitoring will be reviewed to determine the success of the intervention. Following a specific intervention period, students may move to a different tier, remain in their current tier, continue to receive the same intervention plan, or stay in their current tier and receive a different intervention program. The decision will be based solely upon the results of the progress monitoring data that has been collected over the intervention period.

Parental involvement is key to a student's success. Therefore, communication with the parent/guardian will be made as deemed necessary to ensure student success and progress.

School Counseling Services

DCA students retain a home school counselor. Counseling services are available for educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, career information, study strategies, social-emotional concerns, and home or school concerns. Appointments may be made through the home school Counseling Department at any time.

Withdrawal Procedures: When moving from the district, families must give at least one week's notice to the School Counseling Office. Adequate information is necessary to complete withdrawal forms and to prepare your child's school records.

Services From Outside Agencies

CHESTER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT – Vision and hearing assistance is provided through teachers/therapists from the Chester County Intermediate Unit.

AUSTILL– Students who require services in speech, occupational, and/or physical therapy receive assistance from Austill. Specially trained therapists provide instruction according to the needs of the child. Students with speech and expressive language, OT, and/or PT concerns are referred to the Instructional Support Team. This referral can originate from the school or home.

Recording Devices

To accommodate special needs as required by State and federal law, certain students in your child's classroom might have the right to audio record, or to receive teacher-made audio recordings of discussions that occur during instructional activities. These recordings could include the voice of your child. The child making the recording or for whom the recording is made will use the recording solely to support their ability to access and retain educational information. The recording will be destroyed when it is no longer necessary for that purpose. Recordings shall not be maintained by or otherwise considered educational records of the District for any purpose. The use of audio recordings in the classroom will be limited to students with disabilities who are unable, as a result of their disabilities, to record information independently in written form when such information is required to aid memory or learning and when audio recording is identified as an adaptation or accommodation on the individualized educational programs (“IEPs”) or Section 504 accommodation plans of such students. The audio recording device shall only be used when necessary to capture spoken or written information in the classroom that non-disabled peers would be expected to record in written form. The use of audio recordings shall be for the student’s sole use for the educational use stated in their IEP and shall not be shared with any third party. All recordings are the property of the Downingtown Area School District. The use of such recordings for any purpose or in any manner other than as described in these guidelines is strictly prohibited. All recordings will be erased or destroyed when no longer necessary for educational purposes and shall not be maintained as, or otherwise considered, educational records of the District for any purpose.

Please note that this is in addition to the daily/class Zoom recordings provided to students in

their Schoology course for a limited period.

Grading & Reporting

Grades

Students and parents can check grades in Schoology or Infinite Campus. Students' letter grades will be calculated using the Downingtown Area School District's grading scale.

| GRADE | GRADE % | GRADE POINT | GRADE POINT AVERAGE | OTHER MARKS |
|-------|----------|-------------|---------------------|---|
| A | 90 - 100 | 4 | 3.6 - 4.0 | O = Outstanding S = Satisfactory U = Unsatisfactory M = Medical X = Excused I = Incomplete WP = Withdraw Passing WF = Withdraw Failing |
| B | 80 - 89 | 3 | 2.6 - 3.5 | |
| C | 70 - 79 | 2 | 1.6 - 2.5 | |
| D | 60 - 69 | 1 | 0.6 - 1.5 | |
| F | 0 - 59 | 0 | 0 - 0.5 | |

To pass a course for the year, a student must achieve a 60% average as his/her/their final grade. Any student who receives an "I" (incomplete) is required to address the incomplete within two weeks of the end of the marking period. If the incomplete is not removed within that time, the "I" will be changed to "F." Since an incomplete grade may be established at any time during a marking period, it is the responsibility of the student and teacher to make provisions to remove the "I" within the specified period.

Downingtown Area School District Report Cards

Report card grades are loaded into Infinite Campus at the end of each marking period. Letter grades are used to designate a pupil's progress.

All DCA students will receive grades on their report cards for all four marking periods, each worth 25% of the final grade. The only grade that will appear on a student's transcript is the final average for the year.

Students and parents can check grades in Schoology or Infinite Campus. Students' letter grades will be calculated using the Downingtown Area School District's grading scale.

Honors cyber courses and AP cyber courses are given the same weight on a student's GPA as the traditional honors and AP courses.

Honor Roll

Students earn placement on one of the Honor Rolls by meeting these criteria:

- **Distinguished Honors** - A's in all courses.
- **High Honors** - A's in at least 2 majors and more than half of all courses B's in the remaining courses. No C grades are permitted.
- **Honors** - A's in at least two courses (one must be a major). A maximum of one C, and the remaining grades must be B's.

Student Recognition

As per Downingtown Area School District Policy 214, and the associated administrative guidelines approved on June 12, 2013, DASD will use a Latin, college-style honors system and no longer use the designations of valedictorian and salutatorian. Such a system shall recognize all students with weighted GPAs of 4.40 or higher as summa cum laude, all students with weighted GPAs between 4.20 and 4.39 as magna cum laude, and all students with weighted GPAs between 4.00 and 4.19 as cum laude.

Graduation Requirements

All students must score Proficient or Advanced on all three (3) Keystone Exams in Biology, Algebra I, and English Literature and meet the following credit requirements:

| CREDITS | SUBJECTS |
|----------------|---|
| 4 | English (9, 10, 11, 12) |
| 4 | Social Studies (9, 10, 11, 12) |
| 3 | Science |
| 3 | Mathematics - Must include Algebra and Geometry courses |
| 1 | Additional Math, Science, or World Language |
| 1 | World Language |
| 1.66 | Wellness – Must include Freshman Wellness (0.5 Cr), Health (0.5 Cr), and Physical Education (0.66 Cr) courses |
| 0.34 | Graduation Project |
| 6.0 | Electives – additional courses to be drawn from all areas |
| 24 | Minimum Credit Requirements |

The Downingtown Area School District Graduation Project provides each student with the opportunity to go beyond the traditional educational program. By transferring learned skills to self-selected areas of physical, intellectual, or artistic interest, students will: expand personal knowledge – apply learning to practical, real-life situations – explore career paths – and become lifelong learners.

College Entrance Recommendations

A. Most colleges have the following minimum course requirements:

1. English – 4 years
2. Mathematics – 4 years – Engineering students should have Trigonometry, Math Analysis, and Calculus.
3. Science – 4 years – 2 lab sciences
4. Social Studies – 4 years
5. Foreign Language – 2 years minimum of one language. Some colleges require three or four years.
6. Electives – Colleges recommend electives be chosen in parallel areas offered in college, such as fine arts, humanities, etc., in preference to non-academic offerings.

Note: Some colleges do have a fine arts requirement for admissions.

B. In selecting students, most colleges consider the following:

1. Grades
2. College Board (SAT) scores or ACTs.
3. Teacher recommendations.
4. Counselor recommendations.
5. Extra-curricular activities/activity resume

Characteristics of a Successful Cyber Student

With the freedom and flexibility of blended and cyber courses comes responsibility. Online work takes real commitment and discipline to keep up. Students should be willing to log in to classes every school day.

Students should have the following characteristics (or be willing to work on them) if they want to participate in this cyber program. They should

- Be self-motivated and a self-disciplined individual.
- Enjoy working independently.
- Be willing to ask for help.
- Have good time-management skills.

- Be able to meet deadlines for schoolwork.
- Communicate any questions or concerns to the teacher, either online or face-to-face.
- Feel comfortable expressing themselves in writing using standard English.
- Like to get things done today and not tomorrow.
- Not miss the daily face-to-face interaction with instructors and classmates.
- Be persistent even when confronted with obstacles.
- Be willing and able to commit to at least five hours per week per course.
- Agree that online courses can be more challenging than face-to-face classes.
- Have reliable Internet access.
- Be comfortable in a "virtual environment" - email, sending attachments, online discussions, etc.
- Be unafraid to try new things.

Student and Parent Expectations

Communication

One of the critical components of a successful online experience is good communication. Both students and parents need to know the best avenues to address concerns they feel are essential concerning their total educational experience at school. Solutions to problems can usually be quickly addressed when communication channels are straightforward and the communication itself is confidential.

Students should report any issues related to course selection or registration to their school counselor.

If issues cannot be resolved with the teacher or counselor, students should contact the DCA Administrative Team at cyberacademy@dasd.org as soon as possible.

Phone Messages

Students/Parents who wish to speak with teachers over the telephone should call and leave a message on their extension provided at the start of the school year. Teachers will be notified electronically and will return the call as soon as possible. A general rule of thumb is that a response will be provided within 24 hours.

Email Messages

Students/Parents are encouraged to send teachers emails with questions or concerns; however, an immediate response is seldom possible. Teachers check their emails during the day when possible. A general rule of thumb is that a reply will be provided within 24 hours.

Conferences

A conference may be initiated by either the student, parent, or teacher. When requesting a conference, please call the teacher, or send an email directly to the teacher. In this manner, a

mutually convenient time can be established for the conference. Please do not expect a discussion with a teacher unless prior arrangements have been made.

In addition, “Parent-Teacher Conference Days” are scheduled at various times during the year. However, you may request a conference in the spring if deemed necessary.

Acceptable Use

All students are required to follow DASD’s acceptable use policy.

Discipline

Students are expected to behave in an orderly and respectful manner. Routine discipline matters will be handled by teachers or other responsible adults (aides, monitors, etc.). The consequences of breaking established rules or procedures could include the loss of certain privileges or special events, detention, etc. Serious behavior problems will always be referred to the principal and could result in suspension from school. Our school-wide rules are as follows:

1. Be respectful of yourself and others by using kind language, online etiquette, and appropriate behaviors.
2. Be responsible for your materials and work and follow directions.
3. Be safe with digital tools and online use.
4. Be a leader of yourself through achieving personal and academic goals.

Code Of Student Conduct

Please access the Downingtown Area School District Code of Student Conduct through www.dasd.org. The Code of Student Conduct provides District information regarding attendance, bus and playground rules, internet policies, and student discipline and can be found in Board Policy 200 Series under the Policies section of the School Board ribbon on the District website.

Academic Honesty

The Downingtown Cyber Academy’s success relies on all community members’ combined efforts: teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Nowhere is this combined effort more critical than ensuring the integrity and fairness of the school's academic program.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of learning conducted fairly and ethically. All community members share responsibility for creating an environment in which academic integrity is expected.

Academic dishonesty occurs when students attempt to gain academic credit or recognition to which they are not entitled or assist others. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- copying, or allowing the copying of, any portion of someone else’s work.

- gaining or giving unauthorized prior knowledge of assessments (tests, quizzes, etc.) or providing such knowledge to others.
- transmitting or receiving information related to graded work content, whether through text, voice, images, or another medium.
- copying or allowing someone to copy answers on a test or quiz.
- preparing or using outside information during a test or quiz without authorization.
- misrepresenting situations for academic gain, including as a ploy to receive additional time to complete graded work.
- falsifying data or sources in graded work.
- collaborating with others beyond what a teacher allows.
- allowing another person to complete assignments or assessments.
- committing intentional or unintentional plagiarism--the stealing or using others' words, original ideas, or work by:
 - a. Using three or more words from another source, including those obtained from the Internet, in a research assignment or any writing task, without quotation marks and a citation indicating the source of the words.
 - b. paraphrasing or summarizing the ideas of another source without a citation.
 - c. copying any part of another student's work, including homework
 - d. including someone else's diagrams, illustrations, figures, music, audio, videos, photographs, models, mathematical statements, tables, images, or other media without proper citation.
 - e. using online translators or interpreters, or translating or interpreting software in completing your work without proper acknowledgment.
 - f. copying the structure or organizational pattern created by another writer.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

Whenever a student violates the Downingtown Cyber Academy Academic Integrity Policy, these procedures will be followed:

1. The teacher will document the violation and report it to the DCA Administrative Team.
2. The DCA Administrative Team will review the student's disciplinary record and determine whether the violation in question is the student's first (or subsequent) offense.
3. The teacher will confer with the student and will contact the student's parents. The purpose of the teacher-student conference is to review the Academic Integrity Policy, clarify why the work or behavior in question constitutes a violation of it, and help prevent future violations.
4. An appropriate penalty for the offense will be imposed. Consequences for first-time may include (but are not limited to) an assignment for the student to review academic resources to avoid plagiarism or other academic violations. As a condition of completing the assignment, students may redo the assignment for credit based on teacher discretion.

Consequences for subsequent violations may include (but are not limited to) any of those above as well as the following:

- The student will earn a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to make it up.
- A teacher may decline to write a letter of recommendation or report it in a letter. A teacher may also rescind a recommendation after it has been sent.
- The DCA Administrative Team may request a conference with the student, teacher, parent, and counselor.
- The administration may take additional disciplinary action.

Dress Code for Zooms

The Downingtown Area Schools are primarily concerned with three important issues:

- 1. Safety Standards** - Personal appearance styles and all items of apparel and accessories must conform to minimum safety standards to not endanger the well-being of any pupils or any person within the school environment.
- 2. Health and Cleanliness** - Clothing and dress should be conducive to promoting personal health and cleanliness. The children are permitted to wear shorts of a conservative length. "Short-shorts" and midriff tops are unacceptable. Straps on tank tops should be as wide as an adult finger.
- 3. Non-interference with the Educational Program** - Apparel and accessories must be appropriate to the time and place. A pupil's total appearance does not result in any degrading or distracting consequences that would interfere with the educational process within the school environment. Shirts, hats, etc. with inappropriate, obscene, or suggestive language or graphics cannot be worn during online classes. We may request specific clothing appropriate for the event on special occasions, such as field trips or Field Day. A breach of the Dress Code, as outlined above, may result in any of the following: 1) Parent called to address appropriate clothing; 2) Child dismissed from synchronous online learning for the remainder of the day; 3) Suspension.

Role of the Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a vital role in the student's learning in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. The parents/guardians are responsible for many academic aspects of the student's virtual learning program that contribute to a student's success, including but not limited to

- viewing Infinite Campus every week to check attendance for full-time students.
- establishing an appropriate location for learning.
- helping students to establish a daily routine for working on the lessons for their subject.
- keeping students motivated.
- monitoring student comprehension and grades in Infinite Campus.
- communicating frequently with the teachers or the DCA Administrative Team.
- encouraging students to complete assignments and to turn in work.

- notifying online teachers and the DCA Administrative Team when students are struggling or experiencing academic or personal issues that might inhibit academic achievement.

Additional Information

Transfers to Buildings

Students who wish to join the DCA or return to the brick-and-mortar from the cyber program will only be allowed to do so at the beginning of a marking period. No transfers are permitted after the start of the third marking period unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the Principal.

Course Materials & Obligations

Most of the course materials for the cyber courses are digital and available within a student's course. Teachers will direct students to pick up any necessary analog material for a course (books, equipment, etc.) at a student's home building or the Central Administrative Building.

- Textbooks are issued in usable condition. Students are expected to cover all textbooks. Reasonable damage is expected due to daily use; however, excessive damage will result in fines. Students must pay for all lost or defaced books.
- Obligations: An obligation is a debt owed to the school by a student for various reasons, such as unpaid charges, library fines, or lost or damaged textbooks. Students are expected to fulfill all obligations immediately upon notification from the teacher. Students will be banned from participating in any school activity (sports, dances, concerts, etc.) until all obligations are met.

Students must return the material upon completion of the course.

Equipment

Students will need internet access at home to complete their cyber courses. Our students should use the laptop provided by the Downingtown Area School District's 1:1 program.

Homelessness

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to aid homeless persons. The Act defines "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted, amending McKinney-Vento. Categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal law are as follows:

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- (iv) "migratory children" who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in the circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) above. The term "migratory children" means children who are (or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are) migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, to obtain (or accompany such parents or spouses to obtain) temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work; and
- (v) "Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.

If you believe that you fall under one of the above-mentioned categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of federal law, contact your school counselor or the district's Home and School Visitor / Homeless Student Liaison.

(Basic Education Circular, December 2016)

Student Records / Transfer Of Records

The official student records are maintained in the students' home school offices and are the school district's property. Typically, these folders contain documents for which parents have copies: report cards, attendance, conference reports, and samples of children's work. If a parent wishes to review the contents of their child's cumulative record folder, they may do so by arranging for a conference with the guidance counselor or principal. Before changing schools, a transfer of records card must be completed by the home school office. Please provide the home school office with adequate advance notice so that correct forms will be available. Upon notification from the receiving school, we will immediately forward copies of all student records to the new school.

ONLINE REGISTRATION VERIFICATION: The online student registration verification portal will open sometime in July. Parents will receive an email notifying them that the portal is open. Please verify the information ASAP. If there are changes to residence or legal custody agreements, these documents will need to be scanned and submitted to the school for filing purposes.

Wellness Policy

The Downingtown Area School District [School Board Policy No. 246-AG-9](#) on Student Wellness addresses concerns around student obesity, nutrition, exercise, and overall wellness. A summary of the Policy is below. For more detailed information and questions and answers, please refer to the Health and Wellness page on the District website:

<https://www.dasd.org/departments/pupil-services/wellness>

Athletics

Check out the DASD Athletics website here-<https://www.dasd.org/departments/athletics>

Activity Fee Information

<https://www.dasd.org/departments/business/activity-fees>

NCAA Eligibility

<https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

Field Trip Policy

A **field trip** is defined as any trip by students away from school premises. Students on field trips are subject to the rules and regulations established in the Code of Student Conduct, including the Dress Code. The district may assess fees for participation in field trips. Credit card payments shall be accepted following Board policy.

Field Trip Chaperones

Parents/Guardians, other adult volunteers, and/or district employees who serve as chaperones on in-person or virtual field trips are subject to Board policies, administrative guidelines, and rules and regulations pertaining to their conduct and responsibilities.

When serving as a chaperone for district field trips, all adults are prohibited from using tobacco products in the presence of students, consuming alcoholic beverages, and using illicit drugs during the duration of their assignment as chaperones. For the safety of all children leaving school premises and in accordance with Board policy, the Superintendent may direct that appropriate screening processes be applied to ensure that adult chaperones for field trips are free of criminal history and convictions for any offenses involving children.

As per Downingtown Area School District Policy 121 - Field Trips and 231 – Social Events, chaperones leaving school premises shall be required to provide the following:

1. An original criminal history report (Act 34) – every 5 years
2. An original child abuse history clearance (Act 151) – every 5 years
3. Proof of a Tuberculosis Exam (one time only)
4. Self-reporting forms submitted annually

Please refer to the district website: www.dasd.org – Human Resources – Employment to access the necessary forms.

Obtaining clearances does not guarantee a parent or guardian will be selected to chaperone a field trip. Field trip supervision requirements will be followed as indicated in Downingtown Area School District Administrative Guideline #4 of Policy #121 – Field Trips. Examples of chaperones include parents or guardians of students who attend field trips and are not Downingtown Area School District employees.

Procedures:

Clearances must not be dated more than one (1) year before the date of submission.

Clearances will be submitted directly to the building principal for review and approval.

Clearances with any remarks from the reporting agency must be forwarded to the

Superintendent's designee for final review:

No individual will be approved to serve as a chaperone if the criminal history or child abuse reports/clearances required by these guidelines evidence an offense that would preclude such an individual from being employed in a Pennsylvania public school under Act 34 or Act 151.

Medication/Medical Condition

If a student with a specified medical requirement is participating in a field trip, arrangements shall be made in advance to transport, dispense, and/or administer approved medication. All medications and supplies must be sent from home. Send only a single dose of medication for the trip in the original container, and give it to the teacher for your child to self-administer.

Health and Medical

Emergency Contact Information

At the beginning of each school year, every student will receive an Information Verification sheet which must be verified by a parent and returned to the School's Office. Addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts will be asked to be verified for accuracy. **If changes occur with telephone numbers of persons to contact during the year, please notify the school. Your cooperation is appreciated.**

Physical Examinations

The home school physician gives physical examinations to any new Pennsylvania students. Parents will be notified of examination dates. Parents may elect to have these examinations done by a family physician. A Commonwealth of Pennsylvania school examination form may be obtained from the school nurse for this purpose.

Transportation (For part-time DCA)

School bus service is provided through the contractors in accordance with the transportation policies of the DASD. Policy and Administrative Guidelines #810 provide details regarding walking zones, procedures for requesting a transportation change, alternate bus assignments due to child care, and bus stop and bus riding rules.

Students are assigned to a bus and bus stop location as part of the registration process. Confirmation of bus number and stop is emailed to parents in late August. Long-term requests for changes in the bus stop or bus route must be directed, in writing, to the Supervisor of Transportation, in the DASD, 540 Trestle Place. These forms may be obtained in the school office.

Change of Address / Telephone / Email

Any change of address, email, or telephone number should be reported to the home school office as soon as possible after the change.

Care of Textbooks

Students are encouraged to care for books properly. They are reminded that the books they are using this year must be used by students in the future. It is the responsibility of each student to pay for books that are lost or damaged.

Notice of Non-discrimination

Downingtown Area School District shall not discriminate in their educational programs, activities, or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or any other legally protected classification. This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Information relative to special accommodation, grievance procedure, and the designated responsible official for compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be obtained by contacting the Director of Human Resources, Downingtown Area School District, 540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335, phone number 610-269-8460.

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over eighteen years of age ("eligible students") certain rights concerning the student's education records. Please review Board Policy 216-AG-3 on our website regarding the sharing of student directory information. If you would like to opt out of your child, you must notify the school district in writing by September 30, 2020. Please email or mail all requests to opt out directly to your child's school.

Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Book | Policy Manual |
| Section | 200 Pupils |
| Title | Bullying/Cyberbullying |
| Code | 249 |
| Status | Active |
| Adopted | November 9, 2011 |
| Last Revised | November 11, 2020 |

Purpose

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:^[1]

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or in any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.^[1]

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.^[1]

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be

maintained in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good-faith reports of bullying.

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[2][3]

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative guidelines are reviewed annually with students.[1]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1]

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention, or education programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to all students.[1][4][5]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website.[1]

Education

The district may develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively

responding to, intervening in, and reporting incidents of bullying.[1][6][7]

Consequences for Violations

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:[1][5][8]

1. Student conference.
2. Parental conference.
3. Referral for counseling.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
5. Detention.
6. Suspension.
7. Expulsion.
8. Referral to law enforcement officials.

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

2. Pol. 103

3. Pol. 103.1

4. 22 PA Code 12.3

5. Pol. 218

6. 24 P.S. 1302-A

7. Pol. 236

8. Pol. 233

20 U.S.C. 7118

Pol. 000

Pol. 113.1

Chapter 15 Annual Notice



DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335, phone 610.269.8460, fax 855.329.3273, www.dasd.org

ROBERT J. O'DONNELL, Ed.D. SUPERINTENDENT

Annual Notice to Parents

SUBJECT: Implementation of Chapter 15

22 Pa. Code Chapter 15

In compliance with state and federal law, the Downingtown Area School District does not discriminate against protected handicapped students. Also in compliance with state and federal law, the Downingtown Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the building principal of your student's attendance area.

CHESTER COUNTY EMERGENCY RESOURCES

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

911

Valley Creek Crisis Intervention (Mental Health Emergencies)

877-918-2100

610-280-3270

Valley Creek Crisis (Warm Line – non-emergencies)

866-846-2722

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

CHILD LINE (Child Abuse Hotline)

800-932-0313

Crime Victim Center (Sexual Assault Hotline)

610-692-7273

Crime Victim Center (Information)

610-692-7420

POISON CONTROL

800-222-1222

