



PITTSBURGH ONLINE ACADEMY STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Pittsburgh Online Academy

93 South 10th Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Phone: (412) 529-3510

Fax: (412) 894-2500

www.pghschools.org/onlineacademy



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SUPERINTENDENT'S WELCOME

Dear Pittsburgh Online Academy Families,



As we embark on the 2024-2025 school year, I am excited to share Pittsburgh Online Academy's (POA) School Handbook with you. This comprehensive guide is designed to provide essential information about our district's policies, procedures, and expectations, ensuring that we create a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment for all students. The school handbook is a valuable resource for understanding POAs daily operations, including attendance policies, academic standards, code of conduct, and extracurricular activities. We believe that clear communication and mutual understanding between the

school and families are crucial for student success, and this handbook is a key tool in fostering that partnership.

We encourage all families, parents, students, and caregivers to review the handbook thoroughly and discuss its contents with one another. Familiarizing yourselves with these guidelines will help reinforce the values and standards we uphold at POA.

An electronic copy of the school handbook is also available on the school's website.

Your involvement and support are vital to our students' success, and we are grateful for your partnership in their education. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any aspect of the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the main office.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We look forward to a fantastic school year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne S. Walters".



Dr. Wayne N. Walters
Superintendent

FAMILY WELCOME

Greetings Pittsburgh Online Academy Community,

Thank you for choosing Pittsburgh Online Academy (POA) for the 2024-25 academic year. We look forward to working with you and your family this school year. Our Academy currently serves students in grades 4-12.

Each year, we work with families to improve our program to better serve our students. We embed our mission of being a tuition-free, academically rigorous program to achieve our vision of becoming a world-class online school that prioritizes the social, emotional, and academic well-being of our students.

At POA, we pride ourselves on working closely with our families to develop relationships that benefit the whole child. We regularly engage with our families to ensure that questions, comments, and concerns are answered in a timely manner.

We hope that you and your family take every opportunity to familiarize yourself with the offerings at POA. As a Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) student, you can also participate in extracurricular and sports activities through your feeder pattern school, along with other exclusive District offerings and opportunities.

We created this handbook to assist your family with navigation through the school year. You can use the information contained in this handbook to learn more about important topics related to your education. Make sure you read each section carefully. You can always look back at the handbook if you have a question.

As a reminder, POA is a one-year educational placement. Families must reapply each year to remain in the program.

Do not hesitate to reach out to POA if you have a question, comment, or a concern.



We look forward to working with you and your family this school year!

Best regards,

The POA Team



Welcome to the 2024-25 school year! The following pages contain policies and procedures for Pittsburgh Online Academy. We rely on your commitment to read, follow, and abide by the policies and procedures to ensure your family success in online programming.

SCHOOL VISION AND MISSION

VISION

Pittsburgh Online Academy's vision is to be a world-class online program that prioritizes the social, emotional, and academic well-being of all students while infusing the 21st century skills necessary for every student to be college, career, and life ready.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide Pittsburgh Public Schools students in grades 4-12 with a tuition-free and technology-based program virtually. Academically rigorous courses are taught by certified teachers in a structured, yet flexible way that meets every student's individual needs.

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Pittsburgh Online Academy
Drop-In Support Center
93 South 10th Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203



MAIN OFFICE (412) 529-3510	TECHNICAL SUPPORT (412) 529-2224	FAX (412) 894-2500
SCHOOL EMAIL onlineacademy@pghschools.org		

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Communication between students, [parents/guardians](#), and school personnel is extremely important in a virtual school setting.

In the absence of regular face-to-face interactions, the primary methods of communication include messages, emails, and interaction through a virtual office in a web-based platform.

Students can easily access these communication methods from their GeniusSIS Dashboard. Parents receive regular updates and information regarding grading teacher office hours availability.

EMAIL

Students should check their email daily and reply to emails from school personnel. Email allows you to ask questions and seek additional help from teachers.

Remember to use proper English and grammar use. Additionally, an email message should communicate all the necessary information to your teacher.

Parents should actively engage in their child’s communication with school by reviewing their progress in the Genius SIS portal and other communications sent to the child by email.

VIRTUAL OFFICE

Students can regularly interact with their teachers in a virtual office. Here, you can work on a specific content area or ask for additional help.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of all virtual office opportunities and live lessons offered. These take place online, and involve text or voice chat with the course teacher.

The virtual office may be used for direct instruction related to a specific subject or may be used for non-subject-specific student enrichment and skill development. Virtual office hours will be published and regularly updated.

POA STAFF

POA staff commit to providing you and your family a world-class educational experience that aligns to our espoused mission and vision. Parents and students can learn about POA staff during their orientation.

Do not hesitate to reach out to the POA team at any time if you have questions, comments or concerns. We rely on your feedback to continually improve and refine our program.

Dr. Shemeca Crenshaw | Principal | screnshaw1@pghschools.org

Dr. R. Levi MtJoy | Project Specialist | rmtjoy1@pghschools.org

GRADING TEACHERS

POA Grading teachers facilitate and grade the course content for POA students. Our highly-qualified teachers teach in their specified certification area

A published listing of the POA grading teachers' office hours schedule will be published and updated regularly. Students can use this opportunity to receive one-on-one or small group support or ask questions about their coursework.

As a reminder, grading teachers are available to students Monday – Thursday. Students can easily access their grading teacher's office hours by clicking on the "Virtual Office" icon on their Genius Dashboard. If you or child need assistance accessing the virtual offices, please contact POA.

HOMEROOM & SCHEDULE

POA students are required to attend homeroom daily, Monday-Friday at their grade-level specified time. Expectations for Homeroom include:

- Being on time
- Active engagement through video, chat, and participation in discussions
- Completing any district required activities or tasks
- Appropriate netiquette, including being scholarly, respectful, and polite
- Openly discussing progress with homeroom facilitator
- Participating in breakrooms as assigned

Students access their daily homeroom on their main GeniusSIS dashboard under "Important Links" by clicking on the POA homeroom link.

HOMEROOM SCHEDULE

Grade Level	Homeroom Time	Facilitator
4	8:00 am – 9:00 am	Dr. MtJoy
5	8:00 am – 9:00 am	Dr. MtJoy



6	8:00 am – 9:00 am	Dr. MtJoy
7	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Dr. Crenshaw
8	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Dr. Crenshaw
9	10:00 am – 11:00 am	Dr. Crenshaw
10	10:00 am – 11:00 am	Dr. Crenshaw
11	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Dr. MtJoy
12	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Dr. MtJoy

SCHOOL AND PPS CALENDARS

CALENDER

POA follows the Pittsburgh Public Schools calendar regarding school days, reporting periods, holidays, breaks, and closures. Parents are expected to review the district's published calendar and encouraged to check the website to find up-to-date information regarding school delays, closures, etc.

POA also provides families with a monthly calendar that outlines engagement, enrichment, and other scheduled event opportunities. These opportunities align with the district's Family & Community Engagement policy and include enrichment opportunities for students, Student Voice & Council meetings, Parent & Community Council sessions, and other district

2024–2025 District Calendar

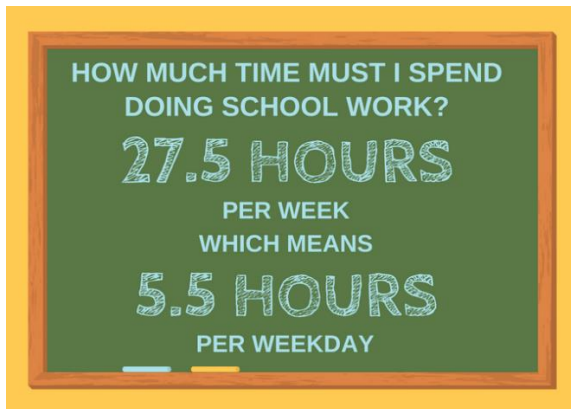
Commencing August 26, 2024 and concluding June 10, 2025






ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

[PPS POLICY 204](#)



Daily attendance (following the District calendar) and an average of 5.5 hours of instructional activities per day are required for students attending Pittsburgh Online Academy.

Attendance will be monitored by a daily login to the learning management system and by attending daily homeroom.

The instructional hours will consist of online and offline activities, and will be monitored by Pittsburgh Online Academy administration. Teachers and administrators will monitor timely progress toward course completion.

Due to the nature of POA, there is a great deal of student flexibility regarding participation in the academic program. In many cases, you can access the program beyond the traditional Monday through Friday academic schedule.

A student's academic time will be measured and calculated by the hours that they actively spend engaged in the instructional learning program and by submitting assignments. Parents can monitor completion of assignments and activity through the student dashboard.

Students in **grades 7-12** are required to complete 495 hours of instruction or instructional activities per semester, or 990 hours for the entire academic year.

Students in **grades 4-6** are required to complete 450 hours. Hours of study include work completed on and off the computer.

Students in **grades 7-12** will be responsible for working 27.5 hours per week on their classes. Students in **grades 4-6** will be responsible for working 25 hours per week on their classes.

To report an absence, parents/guardians must contact Pittsburgh Online Academy staff within three days of the student's absence. Only absences due to illness, medical appointments, bereavement, religious holiday/instruction, and weather emergency will be considered 'Excused'.

Unacceptable reasons for absences, lateness or early dismissals include babysitting, running errands, shopping, missing the bus, participating in private lessons or hobbies, weather conditions, or over sleeping. All other absences (unless Principal-approved) will be considered 'unlawful' or 'unexcused'. Excuses for



absences exceeding 10 cumulative school days must be from a licensed treating physician or be approved by the School Principal or his/her designee.

For a complete description of attendance and truancy policies in Pittsburgh Public Schools, please see the PPS Student Code of Conduct for more information.

ACADEMICS

LIFE AS A POA STUDENT

Establishing and maintaining a successful online learning environment from a student's home is a significant responsibility. Students are required to complete all assignments, quizzes, and tests without any unauthorized assistance.

Student Success

Student success begins with four basic pillars—maintaining pace, staying in touch, maintaining grades, and honoring rules. What success looks like as a POA student:

Finishing On Time	Maintaining Pace
Having my needs met	Staying in Touch
Having a good GPA	Maintaining grades
Earning teacher and peer respect	Honoring Rules

EVERYDAY SUCCESS

These pillars of online learning success reflect your dedication to do your best in every class:



maintain pace

- Work one hour per weekday if in a full-year course, and two hours per day if on a block schedule
- Check your progress on BVA's Pacing & Percentage Calendar

stay in touch

- Check your email daily!
- Visit the Virtual Office to see your teachers and support liaisons
- Attend webinars and special events that connect you to other students

maintain grades

- Attempt assignments again, whenever it's allowed
- Ask teachers to explain their feedback so you can improve next time
- Come to the VO to review tough concepts

honor rules

- Read and follow the policies of BVA and your school district
- Mark your calendar with important dates
- Treat fellow students, teachers, and school property with respect and care



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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

[PPS POLICY 226](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity means honesty about who is doing your work – and it must be you doing it. Students are expected to uphold a high level of Academic Integrity. The following actions, or inactions, will not be tolerated:

1. Cheating

Cheating is using or attempting to use any prohibited materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. Students should use the following guidelines to prevent possible claims of cheating:

- A student must not use another person as a substitute when taking an examination or quiz.
- Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit more than once without the permission of the current instructor(s).
- Students must not allow others to conduct research or prepare any work for them without advance authorization from the instructor.
- A student must not alter any grade or score in any way. Students must not falsify or invent any information or data in an academic exercise including records, reports, statistics, and citations of information sources.

2. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Knowingly helping or attempting to help another student cheat.

3. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is attempting to represent the words or ideas of another person as one's own. Examples include:



- Failure to acknowledge the source of borrowed words or ideas.
- Improper paraphrasing without citations.
- Failure to include a bibliography or other list of works that were consulted in the preparation of the assignment, such as every book, article, and/or information source used.

4. Artificial Intelligence

The nature of tools available makes Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools readily available. The use of generative AI is strictly prohibited at POA, including but not limited to completing class writing assignments, projects, and essays.

Students in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (Board Policy 226) could face academic and/or disciplinary consequences that include a failing grade for the specific assignment, test, or course, assignment to Supervised Study Support, or suspension/expulsion from the Pittsburgh Online Academy.



ATHLETICS

[PPS POLICY 119](#)

POA students can participate in athletics offered at their feeder pattern school. Parents are encouraged to learn about the offerings at their local school. For more information, please contact POA.

DRESS CODE

[PPS POLICY 221](#)

Students are expected to wear appropriate clothing at all times while at the Drop-In Center. Clothing must not be of any style, length or fit that is of a provocative nature. Revealing attire that permits the exposure of undergarments or private body parts is prohibited. This prohibition shall be in effect during regular school hours and at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

[PPS POLICY 216](#)

Pittsburgh Online Academy is a cell phone free zone. We understand that students often travel with their cellular and other electronic devices. These devices should remain away at POA when in attendance at the Drop-In Center. Remember that Pittsburgh Public Schools:

- Generally prohibits electronic devices from being visible, used, or turned on by students during the school day in District buildings and on District property.
- Does recognize that the unique needs of each environment may warrant school level electronic device restrictions.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

[PPS POLICY 119](#)

STUDENT LIFE AT POA

Pittsburgh Online Academy offers many of the same opportunities as traditional brick-and-mortar schools. Students can also participate in extracurricular offerings through their feeder-pattern neighborhood school. For more information about participating, please contact POA.

Enrichment Opportunities

Monthly opportunities allow you to grow socially and academically. Follow our calendar online to view upcoming events.

Student Council



All students are encouraged to take an active role in student council and to seek out civic and service learning. *Civic learning* allows you to respond to social, environmental, and economic challenges. *Service learning* includes any activity where you design a solution to meet a specific need in your community.

GRADING

[PPS POLICY 209](#)

REPORT CARDS

The report card is the most familiar way of communicating student progress. Report cards are issued four times during the school year at approximately nine-week intervals. The letter grades A, B, C, D and E are used to indicate academic progress. Please review the PPS Grading Scale and GPA Conversion charts below for more information on

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percent	Regular Weight	PSP Weight IBMYP	AP/CAS/IB
A	90-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	80-89	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	70-79	2.0	2.5	3.0
D	60-69	1.0	1.5	2.0
E	50-59	0.0	0.0	0.0

GPA CONVERSION

Percent Earned	Grade	Grade Points
90% or above	A	4.0
80-89%	B	3.0
70-79%	C	2.0
60-69%	D	1.0
59 or below	E	0.0

HONOR ROLL

Students who achieve a grade point average of 3.00 to 3.49 attain Honor Roll status. Those who achieve a grade point average of 3.5 to 4.00 are High Honor Roll students. Students who attain Honor and High Honor Roll will be awarded a certificate and recognized. In



In addition to the Academic Honor Roll, students who demonstrate respectful and responsible behavior earn Citizenship Honor Roll. A goal of Pittsburgh Public Schools is to produce outstanding citizens; therefore, students who achieve all outstanding marks in citizenship will be recognized.



GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS/HS ONLY

PPS POLICY 211



Pittsburgh Public Schools' **future-ready graduates** are life-long learners who are academically prepared, fundamentally capable, and globally and civically engaged to complete a two- or four-year college degree or workforce certification and can contribute to the local and global community.

Guiding Belief Statements:

1. All students can achieve.
2. The core work of the district is to ensure that all students are prepared to be life-long learners in college, career, and the local and global community.
3. We can raise the achievement of all of our students and eliminate racial disparities.
4. All students will have equitable access to effective teachers, rigorous, culturally-relevant, and high quality curriculum.
5. The curriculum and instruction will include rich and differentiated learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom.
6. Academic and non-academic skills and knowledge contribute to student character, integrity, and success.

7. Inclusion of parents and the community is a critical component to the success of our students.

Graduation Requirements

To earn a Pittsburgh Public Schools diploma, students of the Pittsburgh Online Academy must successfully earn a total of 26.5 credits during grades 9 through 12.

In addition, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Pennsylvania Keystone Exams.

Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on these assessments will be able to complete an alternative assessment pathway as outlined through Act 158 Compliance requirements.

A student earns 0.5 credits for each semester course in which he or she has a passing grade (D or better).



PPS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SUBJECT	Non-CTE Students	CTE Students
Literacy/English Language Arts	4.0	4.0
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics required)	4.0	3.0
Mathematics (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, required)	4.0	4.0
Social Studies (Civics, World History, US History required; the 4th credit may be satisfied by a level 3 or above world language class)	4.0	3.0
Academic Electives: World Language (minimum 2 years recommended), Arts Electives, Career Development Electives, and/or Physical Education Electives)	7.5	.5
Health (Health 1, Health 2, required)	1.0	1.0
Physical Education	2.0	2.0
Career and Technical Education Program	0	9.0
Graduation Project	Not Required	Not Required
Total Units:	26.5	26.5



HOMWORK PROCEDURES

[PPS POLICY 115](#)

POA students are expected to complete assignments embedded within the learning management system. PPS defines homework as any independent work planned/approved and assigned by the teacher to be completed by the student with or without support outside of the regular classroom without the immediate and direct supervision of the teacher.

Students complete homework in order to:

- Reinforce learning through practice, application, integration and /or extension of knowledge and skills.
- Develop study skills, work habits, and a sense of personal responsibility so that the student may become an independent learner.
- Foster students' personal development in areas such as time management, responsibility, perseverance, and self-confidence.
- Stimulate imagination, originality, and creativity.
- Enhance home / school communications and provide for increased curriculum understanding.
- Encourage a follow up of worthwhile school activities into permanent leisure interests.
- Involve families in the learning process of their children.

HEALTH SERVICES

[PPS POLICY 206](#)

Kristi Crawford | School Nurse | kcrawford1@pghschools.org

EMERGENCY CARE FORM

Parents must complete an updated emergency care form every academic school year.

DENTAL & HEALTH EXAMINATIONS

Each student shall receive a comprehensive health examination upon original entry, in sixth grade, and in eleventh grade conducted by the school physician, or in accordance with an approved modified schedule or manner of examinations.

Each student shall receive a comprehensive dental examination upon original entry, in third grade, and in seventh grade, conducted by the school dental hygienist or dentist.

A private health and/or dental examination conducted at the parents'/guardians' request and expense will be accepted in lieu of the school examination. The District will accept reports of privately conducted physical and dental examinations completed within one (1) year prior to a student's entry into the grade where an exam is required.



The school nurse shall administer to each student vision tests, hearing tests, scoliosis tests, other tests deemed advisable, and height and weight measurements, at intervals established by the District. Height and weight measurements shall be used to calculate the student's weight-for-height ratio.

Parents/Guardians of students who are to receive physical and dental examinations shall be notified in advance and encouraged to be present. The notice shall encourage the parent/guardian to have the examination conducted by the student's private physician or dentist at the parent's/guardian's expense to promote continuity of care. Such statement may also include notification that the student may be exempted from such examination or screening if it is contrary to the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs. The District shall provide the notice described in the paragraph to the parent/guardian in their preferred language.

For All Parents and Students:

- Make sure immunizations are up-to date.
- Review hygiene tips to prevent the spread of infections.
- Establish a bedtime and wake-up time to ensure adequate and consistent sleep.
- Develop a routine for homework and after school activities.
- Eat breakfast each day at home or at school.
- Help make appropriate clothing choices (for example: wear comfortable and safe shoes)
- Keep an open line of communication with your child to ensure that he/she remains safe at schools. If a concern arises, such as bullying, contact the appropriate school officials immediately.
- Get involved! Sign up for the parents organization (PTA/PTO), school Wellness Committee, and mark events such as back-to-school night and parent/teacher meetings on the calendar.

For Parents Who Have Students with a Health Concern:

- Make your child's health concern known to the school and school nurse.
- Introduce yourself and your child to the school nurse.
- Bring current signed healthcare provider orders to the school nurse.
- Develop an individualized healthcare plan or other educational plans as needed (for example: 504, IEP) together with the school nurse and other appropriate school officials.
- Give permission for the school nurse to communicate with your family's healthcare provider by signing a release form.
- Provide parent/guardian contact information and update the school with any changes.
- Confirm the school's disaster/emergency plan. Make sure your child has his/her medication and/or medical devices (for example: EpiPen, asthma inhalers, insulin, etc.).

EXTERNAL RESOURCES:



- **Address:** 425 First Avenue, 4th Floor (entrance is on Cherry Way), Pittsburgh, PA 15219
- **Phone:** (412) 578-8062
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday: 1 to 8 p.m.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

[ACCEPTABLE USE FORM](#)

Introduction

We are pleased to offer our students at Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) a safe, stable, relevant and productive technical experience with the use of all district technologies. The district aims to provide a rich set of technical capabilities that are unique to each learning community.

Misuse of PPS equipment may result in the withdrawal of this privilege at the school's discretion. Intentional or neglectful disregard for equipment resulting in damage or loss will be the responsibility of the student and their family, and will be handled on a case-by-case basis where financial penalty is only applied when mutually agreed upon by the district and family.

Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of permission to use district equipment which could have academic repercussions. We ask that each student and family take the use of district equipment seriously as the benefits of a contemporary learning environment have a wide range of benefits for the learner, as well as the learner's family and school community.

Guidelines: General Use

- DO NOT Change the local configuration of the desktop, laptop or tablet
- DO NOT deface or change the physical appearance of any district device
- DO NOT use any logon and password other than your User Account
- Users are not allowed to do the following unless given permission by an administrator:
 - Store and/or install files on the laptop including Freeware, shareware, public domain, or any other software
 - Install and / or play personal music, videos, or games
 - Use unauthorized programs installed on the laptop
- Report any damage – accidental or not, immediately
- DO NOT attempt to bypass PPS security or content filtering at any time.
- Food and drink may not be consumed next to or near a device at any time.



Guidelines: Network Use

The network is provided for students to conduct research, complete assignments, communicate, and collaborate with others. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Access is a privilege - not a right. As such, general school rules for behavior and communications apply and users must comply with district standards and honor the agreements they have signed. Beyond the clarification of such standards, the district is not responsible for restricting, monitoring or controlling the communications of individuals utilizing the network. Web content is filter using industry standard precautions, but ultimately the responsibility of using the internet rests with the student. If at any time a student feels that they have accessed something in error or accident that they question, they should raise the concern with a teacher or administrator.

The PPS Office of Information and Technology may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on the district server, or on this computer, will be private. Participating in any of the following is prohibited and may result in recommended expulsion:

- Infiltrating computer system security for testing or troubleshooting without the Network Administrator's permission
- Accessing, modifying or tampering with information or files which you do not have permission
- Intentional introduction and/or distribution of virus programs to workstations or servers.
- Intentional tampering with another's laptop, files, and/or projects.

Security

Students and parents should be aware of the following:

- All PPS equipment and systems are subject to monitoring for safety and use, while using district systems and equipment there is no expectation of privacy.
- Certain offenses carried out through the Internet could result in the involvement of State or Federal authorities. PPS will cooperate fully with those authorities if necessary
- District equipment use will be logged by PPS for all system functions – web histories, installed or attempted installed software and receipts of email/web correspondence.
- Video camera and audio functionality will be enabled.

Damage

Accidental damage of any kind to a laptop device will incur a \$100.00 insurance deductible. Intentional damage or malicious intent to tamper with the equipment will incur a \$1000.00 insurance deductible to cover the replacement cost of the laptop.

As a trusted user of your laptop, we expect that you will:

- Never eat or drink near your laptop.
- Only use your laptop for school-related assignments.
- Keep your laptop away from animals and in a dust-free environment.
- Avoid extreme temperatures (hot or cold).
- Only clean your computer with a microfiber cloth.

In addition to laptops, we ask that the same proper care be given to chargers. Only use the charger as needed and remember to:

- Always unplug your charger from the plug, not the cord
- Do not leave your charger plugged in for extended periods of time.

If you are in need of immediate technical support, please call the POA technical support line at [412-529-2224](tel:412-529-2224) for assistance. Most technical issues can be solved over the phone. If needed, the laptop may need physically handed in to assess the problem.



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

A parent or guardian can reach out to POA if they believe you could benefit from any of the district-provided services, such as guidance counseling, social work services, health services, special education services, or crisis intervention.

Intervention Support

Teachers and Administrators will monitor academic progress and performance through daily, weekly, and interim reports. Parents and students will receive special notification for failing grades or lack of timely course progression.

A tiered intervention process will be used to support students in making the necessary improvements to their grades and/or progress. The three tiers include:

Tier 1 –

- Monitor and Adjust At-Home Performance – Virtual Office hours participation

Tier 2 –

- Assigned to Supervised Study Support / Drop-In Center

Tier 3 –

- Return to Home School with transitional support

After receiving notice of failing grades or lack of timely course progress, a parent meeting will be held to discuss adjustments to the in-home learning environment (e.g. setting a time schedule for each course monitored by parent).

If the recommendations are not followed or prove to be unsuccessful and the student fails to demonstrate improvement to his/her grades and/or progress, then the student will be required to report to POA at 93 South 10th Street for Supervised Study Support. Once the student demonstrates acceptable progress, the student may return home to complete their course work. During this intervention, the student's equipment may be confiscated.

Students that do not attend Supervised Study Support could face truancy and/or transfer to their home feeder school. The student's progress or lack thereof will be reported to the local Magistrate. Parent communication and involvement is essential throughout the intervention process.

Student Assistance Program

Your child may benefit or be recommended by staff for the Student Assistance Program (SAP). SAP is a systemic process using techniques to mobilize school resources to remove barriers to learning.

The core of the program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community alcohol and drug and mental health agencies. SAP team members are



trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and to make recommendations to assist the student and the parent. When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team will assist the parent and student so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer to treatment; but they may refer for a screening or an assessment for treatment.

There are four phases to the student assistance process:

- **Referral** – Anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about someone’s behavior -- any school staff, a student’s friend, a family member or community member. The students themselves can even go directly to the SAP team to ask for help. The SAP team contacts the parent for permission to proceed with the SAP process.
- **Team Planning** – The SAP team gathers objective information about the student’s performance in school from all school personnel who have contact with the student. Information is also collected from the parent. The team meets with the parent to discuss the data collected and also meets with the student. Together, a plan is developed that includes strategies for removing the learning barriers and promoting the student’s academic and personal success to include in-school and/or community-based services and activities.
- **Intervention and Recommendations** – The plan is put into action. The team assists in linking the student to in-school and/or community-based services and activities. The team might recommend a drug and alcohol or mental health assessment.
- **Support and Follow-Up** – The SAP team continues to work with and support the student and their family. Follow-up includes monitoring, mentoring, and motivating for academic success.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS/PROCEDURES

[PPS POLICY 212](#)
[PPS CODE OF CONDUCT](#)

Code of Student Conduct

Pittsburgh Public Schools is committed to providing every student with the opportunity to attend school in an environment that is safe, free of violence and drugs, and conducive to learning. This goal is of the highest priority because excellence in education cannot be achieved unless schools and classrooms are safe and orderly.

The Code of Student Conduct was developed so that all students, staff and parents of the District fully understand the expectations for student behavior while in attendance in our schools, while attending school sponsored activities or while riding on transportation systems serving our school district.



Sexual Harassment Policy

Pittsburgh Public Schools considers sexual harassment in the work and educational environment to be inappropriate and offensive. It will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

This policy, adopted in May 1995 by the Board of Directors, is intended to help students and non-students recognize, understand, prevent and take corrective action to address sexual harassment and other inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature in the workplace and in instructional settings.

This policy applies to conduct during and related to the operation of the schools, school sponsored activities, and all District business.

VISITOR POLICY

[PPS POLICY 1104](#)

Visitors

Visitors can include parents, guardians, community members and others who are not members of the school staff.

Scheduling of Appointments

Persons wishing to visit a school shall make arrangements in advance with the school office in that building. The principal has the prerogative to approve, disapprove or reschedule the visit for a more appropriate time. There may be times when parents/guardians want to meet with the principal and/or teachers without the opportunity to schedule an appointment. Principals will attempt to accommodate these requests, but the parents/guardians need to understand that the timing may prevent fulfilling that request.

Reporting to the Office

School visitors are required to register at the school's main office and state the purpose of their visit. All visitors are required to sign-in after entering the school building. Upon completion of the visit, visitors are expected to sign-out.

ADDITIONAL PPS DISTRICT POLICIES

- Please click on the link below to learn more about our District's Code of Conduct
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- Please click on the link below to learn more about our District's Non-Discrimination Policy
- [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
- Please click on the link below for information about Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
- [Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)



- Please use the link below to find out more about Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Protected Handicapped Students (504), and Services for Gifted Students: [PSE \(Special Education\) / Child Find Annual Notice \(pghschools.org\)](http://pghschools.org)

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

INCLUDED ATTACHMENTS

- Family Responsibilities
- Abbreviated Acceptable Use Policy
- Equipment Agreement



FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES



Parents or Guardians that wish to enroll their child in the Pittsburgh Online Academy must acknowledge and agree to the following responsibilities and expectations:

1. The family will maintain a home learning environment that supports academic progress.
2. The family will provide age-appropriate supervision to effectively monitor safety and attendance/participation.
3. The student will meet or exceed all expectations for minimum login time.
4. The student or parent/guardian should contact the Pittsburgh Online Academy staff immediately to report any technological concerns that prevent the student from successfully completing his/her assignments.
5. When in attendance at school events or participating in online studies, students will abide by all district policies and adhere to Pittsburgh Public Schools Code of Conduct.
6. Students are required to attend school in person for Orientation, Intervention (if assigned), Study Groups (if assigned), and State Testing.
7. Students that are not meeting minimum login times and/or demonstrate unacceptable academic performance could potentially be assigned to report to the school's physical location at the Pittsburgh Online Academy school building for Intervention and Support. Students that do not meet the requirements of the Intervention could face removal from the program, and be transferred to their feeder school.
8. Students and families understand and agree to the school and district expectations that are included in the Pittsburgh Online Academy Student Handbook, the Code of Student Conduct (available online), and the District Info Source (available online).

Your signature verifies that you have read, understand and agree to the rules and guidelines of this program as included above and in the Pittsburgh Online Academy Student Handbook, as well as the School District's Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____ 26 _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (please print): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____



ABBREVIATED ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The complete set of board policies surrounding Network Usage, Computer Usage, and Information Security can be found on the district website. Below are the highlights of the Acceptable Use policy for the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The following types of usage are specifically prohibited and if performed will subject the user to certain consequences, including but not limited to loss of access and/or other disciplinary and/or legal actions:

- Use of the network to facilitate any illegal activity including “hacking.”
- Use of the network and/or its resources for commercial or for-profit purposes.
- Use of the network and/or its resources for non-work or non-school-related work.
- Use of the network and/or its resources for product advertisement or political lobbying.
- Use of the network and/or its resources for harassment, hate mail, discriminatory remarks, bullying and offensive or inflammatory communication.
- Unauthorized or illegal installation, downloading, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials, i.e., plagiarism.
- Use of the network and/or its resources to access obscene, pornographic material, or other material harmful to minors.
- Use of inappropriate language or profanity on the network and/or its resources.
- Use of the network and/or its resources to transmit material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients, including but not limited to spam.
- Use of the network and/or its resources to intentionally obtain or modify files, passwords, and data belonging to other users, internal or external to the District’s network.
- Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms (i.e. identity theft).
- Copying, loading or use of unauthorized or pirated games, programs, files, data or other electronic media.
- The creation of links to other networks whose content or purpose would tend to violate these guidelines.
- Attaching rogue devices or applications to District resources.

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It should be noted that all District computers, leased or owned, are the property of the District and are to be utilized as a tool to assist in education and job duties. No right of personal usage extends to the end-user in regards to private property.

The District shall not be responsible for restoring any personally installed applications or data deemed as having no educational value. The District reserves the right to re-image any District-owned/leased computer at its discretion. The School District shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from a user’s ability or inability to access the Internet.

This policy in no way affects the duties and/or responsibilities of a School District pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the PA Guidelines for Dissemination of Student Information,



PITTSBURGH ONLINE ACADEMY LAPTOP EQUIPMENT AGREEMENT

All PPS Online Academy students will be provided with a laptop and related equipment (collectively “equipment”) which the School District has leased through Brandywine Virtual Academy. By taking possession of the equipment, the student and his/her parent or guardian acknowledge the following:

- The equipment is to be used for school-related purposes only and the use of such school-issued equipment is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in loss of the use privilege, discipline and/or legal action.
- Equipment is loaned for use by the Pittsburgh Online Academy student only.
- Equipment includes Internet filtering software and may also include non-video device tracking software.
- The student’s right to use the equipment shall terminate upon the student’s disenrollment at Pittsburgh Online Academy or the end of the 2024-25 school year (so that regular maintenance and updates can be completed). The equipment shall thereafter be returned to the School District within three (3) days.
- The loaned laptop and equipment are in satisfactory operating condition upon receipt.
- The equipment must be maintained in the condition in which it was received from the District.
- The student and/or parent or guardian shall take all reasonable precautions to protect the equipment, and agree to inform the District of any loss or damage to the Property from any cause, except normal wear and tear, within three (3) days of the loss or occurrence of damage.
- The District may take appropriate legal action to recover loaned equipment that it has reason to believe is either lost or damaged.

Your signature verifies that you have read, understand and agree to the rules and guidelines of this program as included above and in the Pittsburgh Online Academy Student Handbook, as well as the School District’s Acceptable Use Policy. **Parents/ Guardians shall bear responsibility for the cost of the \$100.00 insurance deductible applicable on the loss, or causality to, and student computer. A \$1000.00 deductible will be applicable for lost or intentionally damaged equipment. This deductible shall be paid at time of service. Students will not receive new/ refurbished equipment until the deductible is paid.**

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (please print): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Name (please print): _____

Equipment Issued: Laptop Power cord Dell Computer Case Mouse Headset

Make, Model: _____

Serial Number: _____

