Bulldog Cyber Academy Student/Parent Handbook

2025-26 School Year

Powered by
CAOLA

The Bulldog Cyber Academy offers online courses for students in grades 6 - 12 in partnership with CAOLA, the Capital Area Online Learning Association. Our cyber academy provides full and part-time learning options for Big Spring students.

Why choose Bulldog Cyber Academy?

- Students remain enrolled in the Big Spring School District and can earn a Big Spring diploma as a student in Bulldog Cyber Academy.
- School counselors assist in the course selection process and career/college readiness.
- Laptops are provided for students along with technical support.
- Students may participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and other school events such as:

Internships	Scholarships	Sports	Band
Musicals	Field trips	Mini-thon	School Dances

- The program offers core and elective course options.
- Our distance learning coordinator supports students virtually and in-person with first level technical support, training/orientation, progress, attendance, and communication of information.

Students enrolled in Bulldog Cyber Academy are successful when:

- They are motivated to take control of their learning.
- They ask questions and actively engage with their teachers.
- They talk with their family about their progress and grades.
- They stay on pace with completion of their assignments.
- They access the distance learning coordinator when they need additional support.
- They stay connected through events, sports, clubs, and other extracurricular activities.

Student Readiness

Students choosing to participate in online courses should first examine their personal skills and aptitudes for taking a class online. The following attributes will greatly contribute to a student's success:

a. Self-motivation - Students who can direct their own learning environment, fulfill course requirements, and achieve individual academic success.
b. Independent learner - The online environment enables students to learn at their own pace -- traditional, extended, or accelerated. While students will be completing work at their own pace, each course is designed to be completed within a semester/marking period and each student is expected to complete their coursework within that defined time frame.
c. Computer literate - Although it is not necessary to have advanced computer skills, students should possess a working knowledge of email, the Internet, keyboarding skills, Microsoft Office, and Google Suites.
d. Time management - The key to learning is to commit the time to learn and establish a structured routine.
e. Effective written communication skills - Students must use school email to communicate with their peers as well as the instructors. The ability to write clearly and formally to communicate ideas and assignments is very important to student success as well as a means to inform instructors of any concerns or problems.
f. Personal commitment - Students must have a strong desire to learn and achieve knowledge and skills via online courses. Making a commitment to learn in this manner is a very personal decision and requires a strong commitment to participate in order to achieve academic success.

Bulldog Cyber Academy Contacts

Contact	Position	Email
Nicole Donato	Director of Curriculum & Instruction	ndonato@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Joseph Sinkovich	Distance Learning High School Principal	jsinkovich@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Bradly Fry	Distance Learning Middle School Principal	bfry@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Luke Nerone	Distance Learning Coordinator	lnerone@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Adam Oldham	Big Spring High School Counselor - 9th and 12th Grades	aboldham@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Jocelyn Kraus	Big Spring High School Counselor - 11th Grade	jkraus@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Kylie Shaul	Big Spring High School Counselor - 10th Grade	kshaul@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Amy Craig	Big Spring Middle School Counselor	acraig@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Kristen Boles	Big Spring Middle School Counselor	kboles@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Leah Wilson	High School Attendance Secretary	lwilson@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Tanya White	Middle School Attendance Secretary	twhite@bigspring.k12.pa.us
Technology issues related to CAOLA/Genius Platform		717-732-8403 (option 3) caola-support@caiu.org
Technology issues related to the device		pstroup@bigspring.k12.pa.us

Profile of a Graduate

	Bulldogs...
GLOBAL / EMPATHETIC CITIZEN	• Treat others as they would want to be treated • Recognize that all decisions impact others • Understand the rights and responsibilities of a citizen at the local, state, national, and global levels • Are informed citizens with an awareness of issues and events that impact people at local, state, national, and global levels • Make sensible financial choices
CREATOR	• Generate original ideas that serve a purpose • Utilize a design process to improve their own or others' ideas and work • Seek answers to questions or problems, explores ideas, and desires to learn • Develop their interests with a sense of purpose • Are capable of taking what was learned in one situation and applying it to a new situation
COLLABORATOR	• Work productively with others • Exercise flexibility to accomplish a common goal • Value individual contributions made by other team members • Establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships • Show empathy and compassion when working with others • Offer and accept feedback
CONTINUOUS LEARNER	• Set goals, manage time and work consistently to achieve them • Persevere through difficulties • Reflect on their work and experiences to gain useful insights for the future • Explore opportunities to expand and develop personal and shared interests • Recognize their own strengths and limitations • Manage their own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in a healthy way
CRITICAL THINKER	• Analyze information • Solve authentic problems • Uses reason and logic in a variety of situations • Make informed decisions and arguments • Ask questions that help find solutions • Make informed choices about personal behavior and social interactions
COMMUNICATOR	• Listen to understand • Communicate utilizing a variety of forms, including written, verbal, or through digital media • Communicate in any situation for a variety of audiences and purposes • Seek or offer support and help when needed • Participate in collaborative discussions • Understand the perspectives of others

Revised June 2025

Pathway Options to Meet State Graduation Requirements

1. **Keystone Proficiency Pathway**
   a. Achieve proficiency or advanced on all three Keystone Exams (Algebra 1, Biology and Literature)
2. **Keystone Composite Pathway**
   a. Achieve proficiency or advanced on at least 1 Keystone Exam, no score is below basic, and a composite score equal to or greater than 4452
3. **Career and Technical Education**
   a. Students must pass any classes for Keystone content if he/she was not proficient on the Keystone Exam. Courses include Algebra 1, Biology and English II.
   b. And one of the following:
      i. Industry-based certification
      ii. Successful completion of 2 years of CPACTC in the same program.
4. **Alternative Assessment**
   a. Students must pass any classes for Keystone content if he/she was not proficient on the Keystone Exam. Courses include Algebra 1, Biology and English II.
   b. And one of the following:
      i. ASVAB Score: 31
      ii. PSAT Score: 970
      iii. SAT Score: 1010
      iv. Accepted into a 4-year college or university
5. **Evidence Based**
   a. Students must pass any classes for Keystone content if he/she was not proficient on the Keystone Exam. Courses include Algebra 1, Biology and English II.
   b. And 3 pieces of evidence from the following options:
      i. 1 or more of the following:
         1. An AP exam score of 3 or higher
         2. Passing a college course while in high school
         3. Industry-based credential
         4. Enrolled in HACC or other 2-year school for dual enrollment
      ii. No more than 2 of the following:
         1. Proficient or Advanced on a Keystone
         2. Letter of enlistment with the military
         3. Compliance with NCAA II academic requirements

While students have different options for meeting the graduation requirements, all students are required to take the Keystone Exams to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. This act requires students to take the Keystone Exams for federal accountability.

Enrollment/Continued Enrollment Information

Students do best when they join CAOLA during key transition points in a school year. The best time to begin CAOLA is at the very beginning of the year. When that's not possible, we highly recommend waiting until the end of the first semester or at least the beginning of the next quarter. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on an individual student basis to determine an enrollment date. Decisions will be made with your student's best interest in mind.

Students interested in online course work must schedule a meeting with their counselor to determine if the course work is appropriate as well as determine an orientation with the distance learning coordinator and an official start date. **Attendance requirements will be maintained until the start date of the new placement.**

Newly enrolled cyber students are required to complete an in-person orientation with the distance learning coordinator to complete their enrollment. Students who are returning to cyber in a new school year need to meet with the distance learning coordinator during the first week of school for their orientation.

Students in the Bulldog Cyber Academy will continue in the program until a meeting with their counselor exits them from the program.

Students will declare their intention to stay in the cyber academy or return to in-person schooling at the end of the school year and keep their devices over the summer if they plan on remaining in the cyber academy for the next year.

Important Dates

[District Calendar 2025-2026](#)

Quarter Ends @ 3 PM on the following dates:

1. Quarter 1: October 31, 2025
   a. Halfway point is September, 26
2. Quarter 2: January 16, 2026
   a. Halfway point is December 5
3. Quarter 3: March 27, 2026
   a. Halfway point is February 20
4. Quarter 4: (Grades 9, 10, 11) June 4, 2026
   a. Halfway point is May 1

State Testing Windows
1. Middle School PSSA Testing Window 2025-2026
   a. English Language Arts: April 20-24, 2026
   b. Mathematics and Science: April 27 - May 1, 2026

2. High School Keystone Testing Windows
   a. Keystone Exam Window January 5 -16 2026
   b. Keystone Exam Window May 11-22, 2026

Grading

    a. At the end of the marking period and/or course, all missing assignments will be registered as a zero and the grade will be calculated accordingly.

    b. For HS students all parts before the final part grades will be rounded up to at least a 50%. Final part grades will be recorded as earned and not rounded to 50%.

    c. Students and guardians may access student grades at any time via Genius.

    d. Grades will be posted in Aspen at the end of each quarter.

Athletic / Extracurricular Eligibility

    a. All students taking online courses through the Bulldog Cyber Academy are considered students of the Big Spring School District and must follow all policies and procedures as outlined for Big Spring students. This includes the policy for athletic eligibility. Eligibility reports will be given to the Office of the Athletic Director each week in accordance with District policy (Thursdays at 3PM).

    b. Grades will be calculated based on work completion to date and meeting the pacing requirements of the courses. Assignments not completed within the spacing guidelines will be marked as a zero for eligibility purposes. If you have questions regarding athletic/extracurricular eligibility, please contact Mr. Penner, at 717-776-2440, or your school counselor.

Student Responsibilities

Students pursuing a cyber education have expectations and policies that must be followed. Students are expected to:

    a. Attend an orientation meeting prior to the start of a new school year.

    b. Participate in-person for State Assessments during the assessment window communicated as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

    c. Attend any additional in-school meetings and sessions as requested by the distance learning principal, distance learning coordinator, or school counselor.

    d. Agree to follow all policies outlined in the Bulldog Cyber Academy handbook and the Big Spring High School student handbook or the Big Spring Middle School student handbook.

    e. Follow the pacing guide for each course and complete assignments on time.

    f. Check school email and CAOLA messages at least once a day.

    g. Contact the distance learning coordinator with questions or problems while taking a course.

    h. Practice academic integrity.

    i. Complete the Google Form sent by the distance learning coordinator to meet attendance requirements for the day. An email will be sent by 7:30 AM and the Google Form needs to be completed by 1:00 PM.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/guardians of students using online learning have a unique opportunity and responsibility to participate in the education of their students. Parents/guardians are expected to:

a. Directly supervise their student's education at home.
b. Provide a physical environment conducive to their student's educational needs.
c. Create and follow a structured routine each school day.
d. Check school email and CAOLA messages at least once a day.
e. Obtain the information needed to log in to the parent portal by contacting the distance learning coordinator.
f. Obtain the name and contact information for their student's online teachers.
g. Log in to the parent portal in Genius at least weekly to monitor their student's progress. If parents are unsure of their login information, please contact the distance learning coordinator.
h. Attend informational sessions offered by the district.
i. Assist their student in complying with all rules, policies, and procedures of the school.
j. Assist their student in the submission of all forms, applications, and documents to the school in a timely manner.
k. Instruct their student on the correct procedure for daily attendance to ensure their student is in compliance with attendance requirements. (See Attendance Policy for additional information.)
    i. Any absences need to be accompanied by proper documentation to the student's school office as per Big Spring School District attendance policy.
l. Monitor their student's computer use to assure that computer equipment and software are used for educational purposes and in accordance with school policy.
m. Work with their student, distance learning coordinator, and online teachers to ensure successful completion of the curriculum within the required timeframe.
n. Assure that all work submitted by their student was completed solely by that student.
o. Notify the school of any change in student's contact information.
p. Notify the distance learning coordinator regarding technology problems.

Attendance Policy

State Law provides that parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their student(s) attend(s) school. Students enrolled in Bulldog Cyber Academy are expected to follow the school calendar, which is based on the minimum required 180 days per year. Students in grades 6 - 12 who do not report to a building for in-person instruction will digitally check-in with the district each school day by completing a Google Form.

a. Level 1 Attendance - Check your email Monday through Friday and complete the Google Form sent by the distance learning coordinator to meet attendance requirements for the day. **Email will be sent by 7:30 AM and the Google Form should be completed by 1 PM.** Absences will be determined by whether or not students are completing their daily Google Form. If a student does not complete the Google Form between 7:30 AM -1:00 PM they will be marked absent.
b. Level 2 Attendance
    i. Students that are not passing 2 or more courses at the end of a quarter will be placed on level 2 attendance.
    ii. Attendance on level 2 is based on the individual student's pacing guide.
    iii. An in-person or virtual meeting with parents, student, distance learning principal, distance learning coordinator, and school counselor will be held to develop a plan to support student success.
c. Any absences must be accompanied with proper documentation to the main office of the home school as outlined in District policy.
    i. Big Spring High School - Mrs. Leah Wilson, lwilson@bigspring.k12.pa.us
    ii. Big Spring Middle School - Ms. Tanya White, twhite@bigspring.k12.pa.us

d. Students may complete coursework throughout the week, including weekends, for maintaining adequate progress.
e. Any log in issues or concerns regarding progress in online courses should be communicated to the distance learning coordinator immediately to ensure a rapid response and to avoid attendance issues.
f. Additional information on attendance policies, including truancy, can be found in the high school and middle school handbook. Both handbooks may be accessed on each school's webpage.
g. College Visitations, Military Physicals and/or Job Interviews
    i. Students may submit a request for an excused absence to visit a college, go for a job interview or take a military physical. A maximum of two excused absences per school year (i.e 2 college visitations, or 2 job interviews, or 1 college visitation and 1 job interview) will be approved if the appropriate form is signed by a parent/guardian and submitted at least 2 days prior to the day of absence. Forms are available in the office or posted on the school web page.
h. Educational Trips
    i. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may submit a written request on the Educational Trip form for up to five days of excused student absence per school year. The request must be submitted at least two days prior to the day of absence and is subject to administrative approval. Other exceptions and additions to this policy may be made by administrative personnel based upon circumstances associated with the educational trip. Students who plan to attend the Farm Show on a school day may request one day of excused absence under the Educational Trip Policy on a Farm Show Permission Form which must be submitted for approval at least 2 days prior to the day of absence.

Bulldog Cyber Academy Learning Center High School Room 230

The learning center is a resource available to support their success in online learning.

a. The learning center is a resource available to all cyber students every day from 7:30 AM to 2:51 PM.
    i. Students should notify the distance learning coordinator to schedule days attending the learning center.
b. It is recommended that students stay at the BCA room for at least a half day.
c. Participation in Flex or clubs is dependent on adequate progress and time spent in the building.
d. Students who are taking a credit-recovery course will be pulled for at least one flex a week to stay on track.
e. Transportation may be arranged, if needed.
f. Breakfast and lunch may be purchased in the cafeteria or students may choose to bring their own.
    i. Breakfast - no cost
    ii. Lunch - $3.00
g. Students must sign-in at the office if they arrive after 7:30 AM.
h. Students leaving before 2:51 PM must have a parent note stating the time they are permitted to leave or parents will be required to sign the student out in the office.
i. Students attending Cumberland Perry Area Career and Technical Center may attend the learning center after returning from CPACTC. Students should eat lunch, attend advisement, and then report to the learning center.
j. Students may request support on study skills, organization, time management, etc.
k. Students not on pace for course completion and/or failing a course(s) will be encouraged to come into the learning center for support.

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

a. Copying assignment/test and submitting as his/her own.
b. Allowing one to copy or provide someone with assessments or materials which are submitted as his/her own.
c. Unauthorized possession of teacher materials.
d. Sharing the content of assessments with other students verbally, in writing, or through any other means, if the work was meant to be done individually.
e. Communication via electronic means: cell phone, email, shared documents, etc. for the purposes of collecting/disseminating information to submit as his/her own during prohibited times (i.e. exams, quizzes, assessments).
f. The use of Artificial Intelligence(AI) will fall under the standards based on "Academic Dishonesty" listed in this section.

Plagiarism

"According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means: to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; to use (another's production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward."
(http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/).

Plagiarism is considered a similar offense to Academic Dishonesty and thus shall be treated in a similar fashion.

Plagiarism shall include but not limited to: copy/paste sections of someone else's work into one's own paper, project or similar document without proper citation; utilizing internet sources without proper citation; paraphrasing without proper citation; utilization of another person's written, oral or programming language without proper permission and citation. Students' unsure of how to avoid plagiarism should consult their content teacher or the distance learning coordinator.

Consequences of academic dishonesty or plagiarism on assignments:

- **First assignment = warning**
- **Additional assignments in the same course = a zero for the assignment**

Online Supervision and Monitoring

a. School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks, which includes personal computers, in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and will furnish evidence of inappropriate activity to law enforcement.
b. Parents must monitor their student's compliance with these standards. Students who violate these standards may face disciplinary measures, and/or legal action.

Hardware, Equipment & Internet Access

a. Bulldog Cyber students will use their district issued devices to participate in the program. If additional equipment is needed for the program (i.e. printer, earbuds, etc.) it can be requested at the time of enrollment in the program or via the student's counselor.

b. High speed internet connections are the responsibility of the family to establish prior to enrollment within the coursework. In addition, maintenance of the internet connections is the family's responsibility as well. Any absences due to internet connection must be communicated to the school immediately and a note must be submitted within three school days to excuse the absence.

c. Reimbursements for internet connection is provided by the Big Spring School District at forty dollars ($40) per month. If your internet connection is insufficient, you may request an internet hotspot provided by the district in lieu of the reimbursement.

    i. Failure to provide Internet connection will impede your student's progress. This will result in a termination of the online format and the student will be re-enrolled in "traditional" class offerings.

d. To log in to the Capital Area Online Learning Academy (CAOLA) site (site for coursework) the student must access the internet and go to: https://caola.caiu.org. At this point, the student must log in to the courseware using the login credentials provided to the student by their school counselor (different from laptop login). It is recommended students use a Google Chrome web browser for accessing CAOLA. e. Upon graduation or the student's withdrawal / termination of cyber schooling, all equipment must be returned to the Big Spring School District within two weeks (ten business days) of the student's final day. Damaged or missing equipment will be the financial responsibility of the family.

Learner and Family Policy and Procedure Acknowledgement

Certain standards are expected of students enrolling online courses. This contract and policy makes both the student and the parents/guardian aware of the standards expected of students enrolling in such courses. Parents/Guardians enrolling their students into CAOLA courses acknowledge that they have read and understand the policies, procedures, and information included in this handbook and will abide by them.

As a student taking a CAOLA course, I am aware that:

1. Certain standards are expected of me, as a student, and inappropriate use of the Internet of any kind will not be tolerated.
2. Inappropriate language or messages will not be tolerated.
3. Because of the technology, anything I do in the course could be retrieved and printed by the teacher, administrator, or technology staff at any time.
4. Course procedures that must be followed are:
   a. Students must communicate with their teacher on a regular basis.
   b. Students must appropriately use information within the course.
   c. Students must maintain academic honesty.
   d. Students must follow the Big Spring School District's Acceptable Use Policy and all other rules as specified by the teacher. (For full policy details, please visit the District website.)
5. I will contact my teacher or distance learning coordinator with concerns, or for assistance.
6. I will review the school's Student and Parent Handbook for additional information.

If students do not or cannot abide by the above listed rules, the following procedures will be followed: The Big Spring School District, the student, and his/her parents/guardian will be notified of the infraction. In the event of severe misconduct, the student will be removed from the course or program.

As a parent of a student taking a CAOLA course, I am aware that:

1. Student grade reports and progress are available online to me through my Genius log in.
2. Cyber student marking period and semester grades are posted in Aspen each quarter.
3. It is my responsibility to monitor my student's progress, achievement, and attendance.
4. It is my student's and my responsibility to report any issues to the appropriate parties as noted in this handbook.
5. A cyber program is one that requires significant parental support.
6. I am responsible for securing and maintaining high speed internet access.

I have read and I understand the contract and policies of online courses and agree to abide by the rules of this contract.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____