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# Germantown Online Academy of Learning (GOAL)

**Student & Parent Handbook**

**2025-2026**

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**Dear Students and Parents,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Germantown Online Academy of Learning (GOAL). We look forward to an outstanding year of learning, growing, and serving our community.

This handbook will be your primary source of information regarding:

- Our expectations for students
- Our program and services
- The roles and responsibilities of students and parents in the online educational process

This edition includes information specific to GOAL and the online learning format. Students and parents are also responsible for following all GMSD policies, guidelines, and procedures, which can be reviewed in the [GMSD Student Handbook](#).

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you.

**Sincerely,**

Heather L. Fisher, Ed.D.  
Principal, Germantown Online Academy of Learning  
Heather.Fisher@gmsdk12.org

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## GOAL's Mission

**Growth** – Maximizing student growth through data-driven decision making

**Opportunities/Ownership** – Providing students with unique and supportive learning opportunities while cultivating student ownership of learning

**Academics** – Offering rigorous academic curriculum

**Leadership** – Developing individualized leadership skills to be competitive in future careers

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## GOAL's Purpose

Preparing our students for *their* tomorrow

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## School Overview

GOAL is a public virtual school serving grades 1–12. A public virtual school uses technology to deliver a significant portion of instruction via the internet in a virtual or remote setting.

GOAL combines a rigorous, technology-delivered instructional experience with highly qualified, Tennessee-certified teachers who hold high expectations for all students.

- **Schedule:** Semester course schedule; students will be enrolled in a minimum of 6 courses and a maximum of 7 courses per semester. We encourage students to keep up daily with course instruction and assignments. Students cannot work more than three weeks ahead in the curriculum. All courses must be 100% completed by the end of the semester.
- **Instruction:** All students will benefit from instruction and support through a professional learning community composed of TN certified course instructors, GMSD Learning Coaches, GOAL Administration and enriched by the daily support and encouragement of a parent/guardian.
- **Learning Format:** Students will be enrolled in 100% asynchronous online learning, which is available 24/7. Each course will have assignment deadlines outlined. Unless otherwise noted, late assignments will post an automatic zero. Once students submit the assignments and it is graded the revised score will be posted in Village Virtual .
- **Communication:** Course instructors are available during office hours via email and phone. GMSD Learning Coaches for grades 8–12 are available during designated office hours before or after school.

Parents/guardians must monitor student progress at least once a week by logging into the learning management system and reviewing grades and pacing.

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## GOAL Commitments

- The school will operate with the best interests of the student in mind.
  - Students, parents/guardians will be contacted on a regular basis.
  - Community events will be organized to foster social interaction.
  - Individual Education Plans and Free and Appropriate Public Education requirements will be followed to meet the special needs of each student.
  - The school will make every attempt to incorporate all stakeholders' feedback to make improvements.
  - The school will provide students with highly qualified teachers in a structured instructional format.
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## GOAL Student Expectations

GOAL students must adhere to [GMSD Student Handbook](#) guidelines and guidelines that are specific to the virtual setting. The following responsibilities and expectations are in addition to the [GMSD Student Handbook](#).

### Expectations of GOAL Students:

It is the expectation of GOAL students that course deadlines will be met. Students will keep on pace with all coursework. In the event that students have questions about their coursework, they need to set up times to meet with their teacher to go over questions.

In the event that a student is struggling, the student or parent needs to reach out to their teachers, their Learning Coach (grades 9-12), and/or Dr. Fisher. We are here to support you.

In the event that you are having technology issues or lacking internet access, notify Dr. Fisher and/or Caleb Wise immediately, so that you can receive assistance. Lacking internet service is not considered an excused absence, you'll need to coordinate a plan with Dr. Fisher to resolve this issue.

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# GOAL Student/Parent Responsibility Agreement

## Student Responsibilities:

1. Utilize a work-space free from distractions.
2. Login to student coursework for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day to be counted present for the day. *Students will need to work up to 6.5 hours per day to maintain appropriate grades/complete assignments.*
3. Meet deadlines for submitting assignments.
4. Maintain academic integrity.
5. Attend GOAL Morning Meetings, unless excused by Dr. Fisher.
6. Check grades weekly.
7. Communicate with teachers/GMSD Learning Coaches (9-12) when you have questions/need additional information.
8. Attend scheduled Learning Coach meetings, when required.
9. Keep up with course pacing in every subject, every day.
10. High school students will maintain a 2.3 GPA.
11. Develop and maintain an individual daily GOAL schedule.
12. Adhere to student handbook guidelines, policies, and procedures.
13. Complete Student Orientation Course on or before August 15th.
14. Complete all state testing requirements and district benchmarks, RTI, ESE, ELL sessions. Attend in-person assessments when required.
15. Follow all GMSD student handbook guidelines, policies and procedures and GOAL handbook guidelines and procedures.

## Parent Responsibilities:

1. Provide a work-space free from distractions for your student.
  2. Maintain internet/network requirements for system operations or alert Dr. Fisher if you do not have internet access (temporary). Recommendations or space will be provided for your student to continue working on their coursework.
  3. Check grades/student pacing of assignments a minimum of once per week.
  4. Oversee that your student is logged into their coursework daily. *Students will need to work up to 6.5 hours per day to maintain appropriate grades/complete assignments.*
  5. Oversee that your student completes assignments when they are due.
  6. Provide Parent note/Doctor note if/when your student is unable to attend a daily GOAL homeroom session unless your child has been excused by Dr. Fisher. Excuse notes need to be submitted within 5 days of absence(s).
  7. Assist your student in developing an individual daily GOAL schedule.
  8. Communicate with teachers/GMSD learning coaches when you have questions/need additional information.
  9. Oversee student attendance, assignment submission, Morning Meeting attendance.
  10. Oversee that your student completes the Student Orientation Course by August 15th.
  11. Ensure your student reports to a location designated by GOAL to complete required State assessments, district benchmarks, and universal screeners.
  12. Be available during the instructional day, to supervise/support your student as needed.
  13. Read and adhere to the following [School Board Policy 4.213](#).
  14. Follow all [GMSD Board policies](#) and GOAL policies and procedures.
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## Academic Support

- **Tier 1 Instruction** – Individualized instruction from course instructors, office hours, and availability to address student needs
- **Tier 2/Tier 3 Intervention** – Additional support from an interventionist with progress monitoring for students not making appropriate progress
- **Learning Coaches** – For grades 8–12, opportunities to meet with a GMSD teacher before or after school to discuss grades, study skills, and staying on track. Seniors work directly with Dr. Fisher on graduation requirements. Grades 1–8 meet regularly with the interventionist and Dr. Fisher.

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## Device and Internet Requirements

All GOAL students will be provided GMSD-issued devices to complete coursework. Devices will be distributed before the first day of instruction and returned on the last day of the instructional calendar. Parents/guardians must provide internet access for students. If internet access is unavailable, please contact Dr. Heather Fisher.

Students are expected to follow all GMSD technology policies. All devices must be used for educational purposes only. Parents are responsible for ensuring that students have reliable internet access and an appropriate workspace for online learning.

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## Use of Device and Internet

- The GMSD Acceptable Use Procedures should be followed at all times.
- A student who violates any GMSD acceptable use policy or procedure will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Students have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using the district's network, devices, Internet access, email system, or other technological resources owned or issued by the district. This applies whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, including personal use. Users should not assume that files or communications created, transmitted, or displayed using district technological resources, or stored on servers or on the storage mediums of individual devices, will be private. The district may, without notice, (1) monitor, track, and/or log network access, communications, and use; (2) monitor and allocate file server space; and (3) access, review, copy, store, delete, or disclose the content of all user files, regardless of medium, the content of electronic mailboxes, and system outputs, such as printouts, for any lawful purpose. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, maintaining system integrity, security, or functionality, ensuring compliance with District policy and applicable laws and regulations, protecting the district from liability, and complying with public records requests. District personnel shall monitor online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned device.

[GMSD Blended Learning Procedures & Guidelines](#)

[GMSD Student Handbook](#)

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## Bullying & Cyberbullying

GOAL maintains a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and cyberbullying. Incidents will be addressed according to GMSD policy and may result in removal from the program.

**Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment** - An act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property
2. Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property
3. Causing emotional distress to a student or students
4. Creating a hostile educational environment

Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, nationality, origin, color, gender, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

**Cyber-Bullying**- A form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, web sites or fake profiles.

**Hazing** - An intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities. "Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

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## Homeroom Excusals

GOAL students are expected to attend homeroom Monday-Thursday. During homeroom announcements are made and students have the opportunity to interact with each other. In the event that a student needs to miss homeroom, the parent or guardian will need to email Ms. Jodi Carnathan ([Jodi.Carnathan@gmsdk12.org](mailto:Jodi.Carnathan@gmsdk12.org)).

Students may be excused for illness, if they have earned an incentive point to be excused, or with Dr. Fisher's permission.

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## Attendance

Students attending GOAL are required to comply with the compulsory attendance requirements set forth in TCA 49.6.3007

- All students attending GOAL must complete 6.5 hours of instruction available each instructional day.
- Students are expected to keep up with their course pacing and course deadlines as part of their attendance.
- Students are required to attend homeroom meetings each morning
- In the event that a student is absent, unable to attend homeroom or complete coursework, the parent will need to provide an excuse letter.
- If an excuse letter is not provided, the absence is considered unexcused.
- After ten (10) days of absences (excused or unexcused) a doctor's note will need to be provided for student absences.

### Attendance Intervention Tiers - Addressing Truancy

In accordance with GMSD policy 4.213: GOAL implements a three-tier approach to truancy. Students receive warning letters at day three (3), day five (5), day ten (10), and day fifteen (15) when unexcused absences have been accrued.

#### First Tier:

Parents receive warning letters, once a student has missed three (3) unexcused days of school.

Following five (5) days of unexcused absences a student begins Tier One attendance. A parent/student/ school designee conference will be held. The student will continue Tier One intervention for the remainder of the school year.

#### Second Tier:

Following ten (10) days of unexcused absences a student begins Tier Two intervention, a conference will be held with the parent, student, Student Services designee and School designee. The student will continue Tier Two intervention for the remainder of the school year.

- An attendance contract will be developed
- The student will need to meet with GMSD school counselor
- Other supports/services may be implemented

#### Third Tier:

Following fifteen (15) days of unexcused absences a student begins Tier Three intervention, a conference will be held with the parent, student, Student Services designee and School designee. Student absences will be reported to Juvenile Court, Shelby County. The student will continue Tier Three intervention for the remainder of the school year.

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## Eligibility

### Requirements for Returning GOAL Students and Out of District Students:

1. Student participation in a virtual education program shall be at the discretion of GMSD.
2. Student eligibility and participation requirements for the GMSD virtual education program are as follows:
3. Maintaining a 2.3 GPA at the High School Level
4. The student doesn't require credit recovery for the upcoming school year.
5. Students must have a passing grade in core classes/ and/or all credit bearing classes for the year.
6. High school students must be on track to graduate with their cohort.
7. The student must maintain an appropriate attendance record with less than five (5) unexcused absences per school year.
8. A parent/guardian will be available during the instructional day.
9. The student must have access to reliable internet to complete daily assignments. (Not having Internet access is not considered an excused absence.)
10. The student must participate in required in-person state testing/district assessments.
11. The student must complete required district benchmarks when assigned during the year.
12. The student must be promoted to the next grade level in order to remain enrolled with GOAL.

Students must maintain academic progress, meet attendance requirements, and adhere to GOAL policies to remain enrolled. Failure to meet eligibility criteria may result in removal from GOAL.

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## Interventions

Students who fall behind academically or fail to meet attendance requirements will be placed in intervention. Failure to improve may result in removal from GOAL.

### Students Struggling to Maintain Eligibility:

The following intervention strategies will be implemented:

- Required Weekly Meetings.
- Required in-person completion of work, until core courses and/or credit bearing courses are passing.
- Other interventions as determined by GOAL administration.

### Removal of Students Who Fail to Maintain Eligibility Requirements:

If a student fails to maintain the eligibility requirements, the following process will be implemented:

- Ongoing communication between school administration, parents, students.
  - A formal letter will be sent to parent/guardian regarding decision made.
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## Honor Statement

A virtual learner must accept the responsibility for ensuring the integrity of all school work. It is expected that the work you complete is completely and solely your own. Violations of the Honor Code will result in the same consequences for virtual students as for traditional students.

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## Honor Code

1. Students will not plagiarize any part of published materials, essays, or the work of another.
2. Students will not give or receive aid on quizzes, tests, reports, projects, exams, or any other assignments for which a teacher does not explicitly permit peer collaboration.
3. Students will not copy or allow their work to be copied.
4. GOAL Administration will uphold standards of honesty and integrity.

### First Offense-Honor Code Violation

The first time a student is determined to have plagiarized or cheated, the student will receive a grade of zero for the assessment temporarily, and a WebMail message from the teacher outlining the offense and the steps the student can take next to regain credit. Once the student shows understanding of plagiarism, cheating, and the subject matter, the student may regain up to full credit by re-submitting the assessment or equivalent. If a student's first Honor Code violation occurs on a final exam, the student will receive a zero for the questions related to the violation and not be able to revise any of the work that had the violation.

### Second Offense-Honor Code Violation

The second time a student is determined to have plagiarized or cheated, he/she will receive a grade of zero for the entire assessment and a WebMail message from the teacher outlining the offense, and steps that the student can take to regain credit. The student must arrange a time to meet with the teacher synchronously to review and show understanding of the Honor Code and subject matter. Once the student demonstrates understanding, the student may regain partial credit, up to 50% of the assignment's total score. If a student's second Honor Code violation occurs on a final exam, the student will receive a 50% reduction of their total test score and not be able to revise any of the work that had the violation. For example, if the student earned 80% on the final, including a zero for the question(s) in concern, the student receives a score of 40% for the final.

### Third and Subsequent Offenses-Honor Code Violation

The third time a student is determined to have plagiarized or cheated, he/she will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. If a student's third or subsequent Honor Code violation occurs on a final exam, the student will receive a zero for the full test and not be able to revise any of the work that had the violation. Such repeated offenses will result in a student losing eligibility to attend GOAL for the upcoming school year.

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## **Inclement Weather**

In the event that GMSD is required to close due to inclement weather, Germantown Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) will be closed. Attendance won't be taken when school is closed, but it is strongly recommended that students maintain deadlines. We aren't able to black out days for inclement weather. Morning Meetings will not be required when school is closed.

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## **Special Populations**

The individual needs of students with an IEP, 504 or ILP will be addressed. A meeting will be held with teams (IEP team, teacher/parent/student) to review plans, accommodations and allowable programs/services. Development of IEP's, 504's, and ILP's are team decisions.

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## **Failure to Complete Coursework**

In the event that a student falls behind in coursework, the student will need to attend GOAL *in person* until grades improve and the required work is completed.

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[Virtual Education Policy 4.213](#)

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