

Billings Public Schools Virtual Learning
Student & Family Handbook
Grades 6–12
2026–2027 School Year

Welcome to the Billings Public Schools Virtual Learning

The Virtual Learning program provides students with the flexibility to complete coursework online while earning credits that meet Montana accreditation standards and Billings Public Schools graduation requirements. The program is designed for students who are motivated, organized, and prepared to take ownership of their learning while receiving support from teachers, counselors, administrators, and families. Success in virtual learning requires commitment, communication, and consistent engagement. This handbook outlines the expectations, procedures, and resources available to help students succeed.

Virtual Learning is a privilege-based educational option. Students who do not maintain attendance, engagement, academic integrity, or satisfactory progress may be returned to their neighborhood school at the discretion of the administration.

Program Mission

The mission of the Billings Public Schools Virtual Learning program is to provide a flexible, high-quality educational option that maintains rigorous academic standards while supporting students in achieving their academic and post-secondary goals.

Program Staff

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Billings Multilingual Academy
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BPS Virtual Learning 6-12
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8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (MST),
Monday–Friday

Students and families are encouraged to contact Mr. Buckner whenever assistance is needed.

Enrollment Requirements

Intake Meeting Required
Prior to enrollment, all students and parents/guardians must participate in an in-person intake meeting with Virtual Learning staff. Please call or email Mr. Buckner to schedule an intake meeting.

During the intake meeting:

- Program expectations will be reviewed.
- Attendance requirements will be explained.
- Academic integrity expectations will be discussed.
- Technology requirements will be reviewed.
- Students and parents/guardians must sign the Virtual Learning contract.
- Students will receive instructions for accessing Courseware and Google Classroom.

Enrollment is not considered complete until the Virtual Learning contract has been signed by the student and a parent or legal guardian.

Courseware

Courseware is the online learning platform used by Billings Public Schools to deliver instruction, assignments, assessments, grades, and pacing information for students enrolled in the Virtual Learning program.

Students access Courseware through Clever using their district-issued Chromebook and school login credentials.

Courseware allows students to:

- Complete assignments and coursework
- View grades and progress
- Access study guides and instructional materials
- Complete quizzes and tests
- Monitor due dates through the Courseware Calendar
- Communicate regarding assessment access

Technology Requirements

All students enrolled in the Virtual Learning program must:

Use District-Issued Equipment

- Use a Billings Public Schools Chromebook.
- Log in through Clever to access Courseware.
- Use district-provided accounts and credentials.
- Personal devices are not supported by Billings Public Schools.

Google Classroom is used for:

- Daily attendance check-ins
- Announcements
- Communication
- Program updates

- Additional resources

Chromebook Checkout and Return
All Virtual Learning Chromebooks must be checked out from the Virtual Learning program at the Lincoln Center.

Upon withdrawal from the program, graduation, or completion of enrollment, Chromebooks must be returned directly to the Virtual Learning program at the Lincoln Center.

Failure to return district-issued equipment may result in fines, fees, or restrictions consistent with district policy.

Chromebook replacement fee: $405
Chromebook charger replacement fee: $35

Internet Access
Students are responsible for maintaining reliable internet access capable of supporting online coursework.

Technical Support
Students experiencing technical difficulties should contact their instructor as soon as possible.

Student Expectations
Enrollment in the Virtual Learning program is a semester-long commitment.

Time Commitment
Students should plan to spend:
- A minimum of 4–7 hours per course per week
- Approximately one hour per day per course
- Time working Monday through Friday

Students taking six courses should expect schoolwork comparable to a traditional school day.

Academic Responsibility
Students will:
- Manage their time independently
- Follow Courseware pacing guides
- Monitor progress through the Courseware Calendar

- Complete all coursework by established deadlines
- Take ownership of their learning

Communication

Students will:

- Check email regularly
- Respond promptly to teacher communications
- Contact the teacher when assistance is needed
- Request that quizzes and tests be unlocked when ready

Email is the primary method of communication within the program.

Assessments and Final Exams

Students must:

- Complete required study guides before assessments are unlocked
- Earn a minimum score of 80% on required assessments
- Complete coursework honestly and independently

Final Exams

All students enrolled in the Virtual Learning program are required to complete final exams in person under the supervision of school personnel AT THE LINCOLN CENTER.

Final Exam Requirements

- Students must schedule final exams with Virtual Learning staff.
- Students must earn a minimum score of 80% on the final exam to earn course credit.
- Students are allowed a maximum of 120 minutes per final exam.
- Only handwritten notes and handwritten study guides may be used during testing.

Students may not use:

- Electronic devices
- Internet resources
- Artificial intelligence (AI) tools
- Assistance from other individuals

Final Exam Timeline

Once a student completes all coursework within a course, the student has **two (2) weeks** to complete the required in-person final exam. Failure to complete the final exam within two weeks may result in:

- Lock-out of District-issued devices
- In-person requirements
- Delayed course completion
- Delayed awarding of credit
- Additional interventions

Students are expected to schedule final exams immediately upon completing coursework.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is essential to maintaining the integrity of the Virtual Learning program. The following actions are prohibited:

- Copying another student's work
- Allowing another person to complete coursework
- Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to complete assignments or assessments
- Using websites that provide Courseware answers or assessment content
- Sharing assessment questions or answers
- Plagiarism in any form

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty *(offenses are cumulative)*

First Offense

- Zero on assignment or assessment
- Opportunity to redo work within the same semester
- Parent/student meeting required

Second Offense

- Zero on assignment or assessment
- No opportunity to redo work
- Parent/student meeting required

Third Offense

- Loss of credit in the course
- Possible removal from the Virtual Learning Program
- Parent/student meeting required

Attendance Requirements

Attendance in the Virtual Learning Program is based on participation and engagement. Students must complete BOTH of the following each school day:

Daily Attendance Requirements

□ Complete the Google Classroom attendance check-in

□ Log into Courseware between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Students who do not complete both requirements will be marked absent.

Excessive Unexcused Absences
Students who accumulate **five (5) unexcused absences** will be assigned to attend **In-School Suspension (ISS) at the Journey Center**.

Students will remain assigned to the Journey Center until they are caught up in each enrolled course and demonstrate adequate engagement in the Virtual Learning program.

Additional attendance concerns may result in truancy referrals, parent conferences, removal from the program, or return to the neighborhood school.

Progress Monitoring
Students are expected to remain on pace with their coursework throughout the semester.

Courseware Calendar
The Courseware Calendar provides:

- Assignment due dates
- Assessment due dates
- Course pacing expectations
- Progress monitoring information

Students should review the Courseware Calendar daily.

Assignment Deficiency Review Process
Students are expected to remain current in all courses.
A student may be considered significantly behind when they are:

- Ten (10) or more assignments behind in any course; or
- Demonstrating insufficient progress toward semester completion.

Intervention Step 1
Mr. Buckner contacts the student and parent/guardian to discuss concerns and establish a plan for improvement.

Intervention Step 2
Mr. Hill contacts the student and parent/guardian to discuss continued concerns and review expectations.

Intervention Step 3
Formal parent/student meeting with Virtual Learning staff to establish an intervention plan and determine whether continued enrollment is appropriate.

Intervention Step 4
Removal from the Virtual Learning program and return to the student's neighborhood school. The district reserves the right to accelerate this process if student engagement places successful course completion at risk.

Six-Week Progress Reviews (Grades 6–8)
Middle school students enrolled in the Virtual Learning program will participate in progress reviews at the end of each six-week grading period.

Students who are behind pace in one or more courses at the conclusion of a six-week grading period may be returned to their neighborhood school for in-person instruction.

Because middle school students benefit from consistent structure and teacher support, maintaining on-pace progress is required for continued participation in Virtual Learning.

Parent/Guardian Expectations
A strong partnership between families and school staff is essential for student success. Parents and guardians are expected to:

Support Daily Learning
- Ensure coursework is completed Monday through Friday
- Establish a structured learning environment
- Help students maintain consistent schedules

Encourage Communication
- Encourage students to ask questions
- Encourage students to seek help when frustrated
- Support regular communication with instructors

Monitor Progress
- Review grades regularly
- Monitor Courseware Calendar deadlines
- Ensure students remain on pace
- Follow up when progress concerns arise

Support Academic Integrity
Parents should ensure:

- Coursework is completed by the student
- Students are not using unauthorized resources
- Students understand expectations regarding AI and plagiarism

Maintain Communication
Communicate with:

- Virtual Learning staff regarding attendance and academic concerns
- School counselors regarding activities, athletics, clubs, graduation, scheduling, and post-secondary planning

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Graduation Requirements
Virtual Learning students remain responsible for meeting all district graduation requirements. Students should work closely with their counselor to ensure:

- Graduation requirements are met
- Credits are earned in the proper sequence
- Postsecondary plans remain on track

Course Availability
Some courses may not be available through the Virtual Learning program, including:

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses
- Dual Credit courses

Student Activities and Athletics
Students enrolled in the Virtual Learning program remain Billings Public Schools students and may participate in:

- Athletics
- Clubs
- Activities
- School dances
- School-sponsored events
- Graduation ceremonies

Students should coordinate participation through their neighborhood school.

Important Dates
The following dates are updated annually and will be communicated by the district.

First Semester

- Semester completion deadline
- Final exams completed in person

Second Semester – Seniors

- Senior completion deadline

Second Semester

- Semester completion deadline
- Final exams completed in person

Final Exam Window

Students should complete final exams within two weeks of finishing coursework and no later than district-established semester deadlines.

Students are responsible for meeting all published deadlines.

Tips for Success

Students who are successful in virtual learning typically:

✓ Log in every school day
✓ Follow a consistent schedule
✓ Check email daily
✓ Stay on pace with assignments
✓ Use the Courseware Calendar
✓ Complete study guides thoroughly
✓ Ask for help early
✓ Communicate with teachers regularly
✓ Maintain academic honesty
✓ Take ownership of their learning

Student and Parent Acknowledgement

Enrollment in the Billings Public Schools Virtual Learning program indicates that the student and parent/guardian have read, understand, and agree to follow the expectations and procedures outlined in this handbook and the Billings Public Schools Virtual Learning contract.
Success in Virtual Learning depends upon consistent engagement, communication, academic honesty, attendance, and a commitment to meeting program expectations.

Together, we can make the Virtual Learning program a successful educational experience for every student.