Danville Area Middle School

2026-27 SY ICA Program Handbook



Forging strong connections that nurture the whole student and empower them to reach their full potential!

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IRONMEN CYBER ACADEMY

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The DMS Ironmen Cyber Academy (ICA) Handbook provides a comprehensive guide for students and families, outlining the program's leadership, daily operational logistics, platform access, mandatory attendance policies with intervention steps (SAIP), and specific expectations for the ICA Lab.

**This handbook is intended to supplement the larger, more comprehensive DMS Program of Study & Student Handbook.*

Factors to Consider When Choosing the ICA

While the benefits are significant, success in a cyber program requires:

- **Self discipline**: Students must be more self-directed than in a traditional classroom.
- **Family Support**: A parent or guardian must be available to help monitor progress and maintain a consistent schedule.
- **Technology Reliability**: Consistent, high-speed internet and a reliable computer are mandatory.

Daily Logistics

The ICA program follows the DASD Academic Calendar as well as the daily school schedule.

Transportation & Access:

- **Bussing:** Available for all ICA students for the start and end of the school day.
- **Sign-In/Out:** If a parent/guardian plans to provide transportation for their ICA student, consistent drop-off and pick-up times must be arranged and approved by school administration.
- **DMS Specials:** Students have full access to in-person specials at DMS. Students will attend these in person during the scheduled class time. Students must be dropped off before and picked up after each class. They must attend these classes daily in order for attendance to count. Students may not work from home for these special classes.
- **Meals:** Breakfast and lunch are provided in the cafeteria.

Academic Platforms

Platform	URLs
Pearson Connexus	danville.lms.pearsonconnexus.com

ICA Instructors

The ICA program utilizes a blended instructional model. Ms. Kaitlin Huber serves as the dedicated ICA instructor, managing student enrollment in all Pearson Connexus classes and providing direct in-lab support, instruction, and pacing guidance within the cyber software.

In addition to the ICA Instructor's in-lab support, the program maintains specific instructors of Record for each subject (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, etc.). Instructors of Record are DMS subject-matter instructors who are responsible for the content and grading of the ICA courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to reach out to their cyber instructors frequently.

ICA instructors:

- **English/Math/Science/Social Studies/etc.:** Staffed by DMS subject-matter experts.
- **Lab Support:** The ICA Instructor is available in the lab to assist with content-specific questions and pacing.

DMS Testing Logistics

ICA students are required to take any and all standardized tests/assessments required by the school district. This includes PSSA and/or Keystone Exams.

Academic Grading System

Numerical grades are placed on progress reports and report cards. These grades correspond to the marking system shown below.

A	92 - 100 EXCELLENT
B	83 - 91 GOOD
C	74 - 82 AVERAGE
D	65-73 POOR
F	0 - 64 FAILURE

Report Cards & Progress Reports

ICA student progress will be provided to parents/guardians on a weekly basis. Course grades for ICA courses will be posted through the Sapphire Community Portal at the end of the marking periods. Parents/Guardians are urged to discuss each report card with their student.

If questions arise regarding the grades reported on a report card or progress report, the parent/guardian and/or student are encouraged to contact the ICA instructors or their assigned school counselor.

PIAA Eligibility

Danville Area School District will abide by PIAA eligibility requirements. Eligibility will be run every Friday. If an athlete is not passing two (2) or more classes, they will be ineligible for one week - Sunday through Saturday.

Wellness Checks (Act 20), Attendance & Academic Progress

Under Pennsylvania law (Act 20), all cyber learning programs are required to conduct a weekly, real-time visual and communication check-in with every enrolled student during any instructional week consisting of three (3) or more days. This check-in ensures student well-being, active engagement, and program compliance.

Weekly Wellness Check Student & Family Requirements:

- **Weekly Check-In:** Students enrolled in the Ironmen Cyber Academy must complete a weekly real-time visual check-in with their designated cyber teacher.
- **Written Notice for Missed Check-Ins:** If a student fails to complete their weekly check-in, official written notification will be issued to the parent/guardian.
- **3-Day Resolution Window:** Families have three (3) school days from the date of the written notice to complete the missing check-in.
- **Mandatory Conference:** If the check-in remains incomplete after three (3) school days, the district will immediately schedule a mandatory **Wellness Check Review Conference** to take place within one (1) school day. The purpose of this conference is to fulfill the visual check-in requirement, re-establish active communication, and determine any necessary student supports or interventions.

Questions & Further Information: Parents and guardians with questions or who wish to discuss the Act 20 weekly wellness check requirement in more detail are encouraged to contact Dr. Heaven Reinard, Assistant Superintendent, at 570-271-3268 or via email at hreinard@danvillesd.org

Alongside these required face-to-face meetings, a student's daily attendance continues to be actively tracked through their academic progression and pacing. Failing to attend these weekly check-ins or falling behind in coursework will result in unexcused absences. Consequently, missing Act 20 contacts or failing to maintain academic pace will immediately trigger the district's standard Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) intervention process.

Monday-Thursday, the ICA Instructor will open two (2) Google Meets in the Google Classroom each school day from 8:00-9:00 a.m. and 1:00-2:00 p.m. Cyber students that are not in the lab **MUST** attend **one** of these meetings weekly. The student must have the camera turned on and be present on screen. If a student does not check in at some point Monday-Thursday, the student **must come to school in person Friday before noon.**

Academic Progress

Students are expected to log in to the courses daily and make progress as outlined in the online pacing guide in the gradebook. Attendance is correlated with the completion of required coursework and student activity within the course itself. Students who continue to fail or fall behind will be required to come into the lab until grades are passing and within the recommended pacing guidelines.

Academic progress will be assessed at the end of each week. Percentages are calculated by the number of assignments completed divided by the total number of assignments due for all courses during that week.

For example, if all four courses had a total of 20 assignments for the week, 15 assignments must be completed in order to remain above 70% academic progress.

Unexcused/Unlawful absences will be assessed as follows:

- less than or equal to 70% progress = 1 day Unexcused/Unlawful absence for the week
- less than or equal to 30% progress = 2 days Unexcused/Unlawful absences for the week
- 0% progress = 3 days Unexcused/Unlawful absences for the week

Technical Support & Troubleshooting

Students who need technical support for the Pearson Connexus software while working on assignments may contact their ICA instructor.

Lab Expectations

To maintain a productive environment for middle school students, the following rules apply:

- Active Engagement: Students are expected to be quiet and actively working. The ICA Instructor is available for help, but the lab is a "work-first" environment.
- Technology: Students are to arrive in the ICA Lab fully prepared with a charged Chromebook.
- Cell Phones: In accordance with DMS policy, **cell phone use is <u>NOT PERMITTED</u>** in the cyber lab.
- Student Dismissal from ICA Lab: If a student is scheduled to leave the ICA Lab prior to the established dismissal time, a parent/guardian must inform the ICA Instructor in writing prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Middle School ICA students are **<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>** to walk home prior to end of day dismissal.

Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are significant academic integrity concerns in a cyber environment. ICA students are subject to all policies within the DMS student handbook and school district policies.

Plagiarism

Academic integrity consists of work that is honest and does not involve any deceptive or dishonest methods. Danville Area Middle School demands honesty that grows out of our respect for each other. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- ☐ Copying on a test or quiz
- ☐ Copying homework or other assignments
- ☐ Allowing someone to misrepresent your work by sharing an assignment
- ☐ Using internet sources, foreign language translators, cell phones, "cheat sheets," etc. for getting or giving answers on a test, quiz, or other assignment

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Using ideas, quotes or images without giving credit to the author and
2. Passing off another person's ideas as your own even if the ideas have been paraphrased or reworded.

The consequences for academic dishonesty at the Danville Area Middle School include the following:

1. Students who are caught cheating as a first offense may receive a failing grade on that assignment at the teacher's discretion. Parents will be contacted by the teacher. The infraction will be recorded in the student information management system.
2. Second offenses will result in a zero for the assignment. Parents will be contacted and made aware of the situation by the teacher. The Guidance Office will contact the parents to set up a meeting to discuss the incident with the teacher and administration. The infraction will be recorded in the student information management system.
3. Subsequent offenses will result in failure of the course for the marking period and/or removal from the course. All offenses will be on file and are cumulative until graduation.
4. Consequences for academic dishonesty may impact National Honor Society membership and could result in removal from the NHS.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Since its launch by OpenAI in late 2022, ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence software have inspired many questions related to academic integrity. Like most tools, ChatGPT (and other artificial intelligence products) can be used for purposes both good and bad. There are legitimate ways to use these tools for research, and there are ways to use them to cheat on academic work.

During some class sessions, DMS teachers may leverage generative AI tools to support learning, provide an opportunity to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and teachers and students will work through the implications of these evolving systems together, during classes. However, use of generative AI will be limited to exercises during class. DMS teachers will always indicate when and where use of AI tools during class is appropriate.

In contrast, students may not use AI tools to generate work for an assignment to be submitted for a grade, as this cannot be considered a substitute for developing the fundamental skills and expertise represented by the learning objectives of a course. Please note that generative AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct, but has been shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research and students should complete all graded assignments without any assistance from AI tools. Students are ultimately responsible for the content of the information they submit and may not attempt to pass off any work generated by an AI program as their own.

Students who use AI tools on assignments without permission, or improperly, are violating the academic integrity rules of Danville Area School District.

Thus, generative AI is a rapidly evolving technology, and the district will continue to monitor developments and incorporate feedback from our community to update our guidelines accordingly.

Resources:
https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/technology/aitools/academicintegrity/index.html
https://provost.harvard.edu/guidelines-using-chatgpt-and-other-generative-ai-tools-harvard
https://oai.missouri.edu/chatgpt-artificial-intelligence-and-academic-integrity/

Middle School ICA Learning Model

ICA LEARNING MODEL	
Full-Virtual Model	**Designed for students who desire flexibility and acceleration in their Danville Middle School experience.** – Minimum of 4 core courses required (English, Math, Social Studies, Science) – Students must attend weekly Google Meet for attendance and maintain academic progress – All campus visits require signing in/out via the ICA Lab/Main Office

Enrollment Periods & Process

In order to maintain consistency in all learning models at DMS, Open Enrollment periods have been established for the upcoming school year. Please refer to the table below.

ICA Enrollment Periods
Prior to the upcoming School Year
End of Marking Period 1
End of Semester 1
End of Marking Period 3 (at-home only due to spring state assessments)

ICA Enrollment Process

When students desire to enroll in any ICA cyber model, a consultation meeting will need to be scheduled. Consultation meetings should include: a parent/guardian, the enrolling student, an administrator, the school counselor, the ICA instructor, and a Special Education Case Manager (if applicable). The purpose of the consultation meeting is to discuss perceived barriers to in-person learning, potential solutions to those barriers, and review ICA programming and expectations. Placement decisions should be based on what's best for the student. The virtual setting may not be the appropriate placement for a student to make progress.

Once ICA enrollment has been agreed upon by all parties, enrollment in Pearson Connexus will take place, and the student can begin coursework in short order. Additionally, the guidance counselor will add ICA courses into the Sapphire Student Information System.

Steps to Enrollment

1. ParentGuardian contacts DMS regarding interest in the ICA. A guidance counselor is notified. The counselor will initiate the consultation meeting with the appropriate individuals as listed above.

2. Once a decision is made regarding the placement of a cyber student, the ICA Instructor will assign cyber courses as well as schedule an enrollment meeting with the new cyber student and the parent/guardian.

3. A 2-3 school day waiting period will take place prior to the student's start date in the cyber program to allow for account creation, teacher communication, and schedule modification.

NOTE: Cyber students may only un-enroll from the program at the end of each marking period.

Access to DMS Events and Resources

All DMS Ironmen Cyber Academy (ICA) students have full access to all Danville Area Middle School (DMS) events, activities, and organizations. This includes, but is not limited to, athletics/sports, clubs, dances, and pep rallies.

To keep students and families informed, the ICA Instructor will send home periodic reminders about upcoming activities. Parents/Guardians are also strongly encouraged to sign up for SchoolStatus Connect messaging to receive timely updates and information.

Cyberbullying & Digital Citizenship Policy

The Danville Area School District is committed to providing a safe, positive, and respectful learning environment for all students, whether in-person or online. In accordance with Board Policy 249 (Bullying/Cyberbullying) and the Pennsylvania Public School Code, cyberbullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated within the Danville Ironmen Cyber Academy.

What is Cyberbullying?
Cyberbullying defined by district policy includes any severe, persistent, or pervasive intentional electronic conduct directed at another student or staff member that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or substantially interferes with a student's education or emotional well-being.

This applies to all electronic communications, including but not limited to:

District-issued Chromebooks, email accounts, LMS message boards, live virtual class chats, and video conferences.

Outside online communications (including social media, personal messaging, and online gaming platforms) if the behavior impacts the school environment or disrupts the educational process for any DASD student.

Reporting & Disciplinary Consequences
Students who experience or witness cyberbullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident immediately to a cyber teacher, school counselor, or building administrator. Reports can also be submitted confidentially through the district's Safe2Say Something platform.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension, loss of district technology privileges, referral to counseling services, and, if appropriate, notification of law enforcement.

DMS Ironmen Cyber Academy (ICA) Program Agreement and Consent

Administration
Thomas Hiravi
Principal
thiravi@danvillesd.org

Maggie Roberts
Assistant Principal
mroberts@danvillesd.org

Office Administrative Assistants
Rebecca Noles
rnoles@danvillesd.org

Denise Calvin
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District Webpage
https://www.danvillesd.org

By providing your signature below, you confirm that you have read and fully understand the requirements set forth in the DMS Ironmen Cyber Academy (ICA) Program Handbook.

This signature acknowledges your agreement to do the following:

- Adhere to all policies regarding academic progression, including maintaining a minimum 65% passing grade in all courses.
- Understand the mandatory attendance requirements complying with Pennsylvania state law (Act 20 / Section 1327.4), mandating weekly virtual wellness check-ins and the consequences of failing to do so, which will trigger the Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) and/or truancy process.
- Agree to all ICA Lab expectations, including the specific rules for device usage and sign-in/sign-out procedures.
- Acknowledge that failure to meet any of the outlined program requirements, including academic pacing and attendance, may result in the student's removal from the ICA program and return to in-person learning at DMS.

Student (Print): _____ **Sign:** _____

Date: _____

Parent (Print): _____ **Sign:** _____

Date: _____