



Marion County Virtual Schools 2021-2022

Virtual School Student/Parent Handbook

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**The following responsibilities and expectations are in addition to Marion County Schools policies.

Beginning in August 2021, Marion County Schools will offer an opportunity to its students to access instruction through a virtual school. Instruction at the virtual schools will align with all state and district standards and guidelines and will parallel with the rigor of the daily instruction delivered in our district school buildings. Although we cannot offer everything that is offered in our traditional schools, students in grades K-8 will receive what they need to be prepared for high school, and students in grades 9-12 will be able to access the courses they need for graduation and will be prepared for life after high school.

ACCESS TO VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

- Marion Virtual Elementary School (K-5) and Marion Virtual High School (6-12): Students will apply and if accepted, enroll in the appropriate Marion County Virtual School.

STUDENT ADMISSION AND VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

- In order to participate in virtual school, families must complete the MCS Virtual School application process and agree to all student and parent expectations. The deadline for MCS Virtual School application is June 15th, 2021, 5:00 pm CST. The application can be accessed online at MarionSchools.org or at the Marion County Board of Education.

STUDENT AND PARENT VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations:

- Students, along with a parent/guardian, will attend the virtual school's orientation.
- Students will complete a virtual study skills course prior to the start of school.
- Students will follow MCS Policy 6.313 Student Code of Conduct
- Students will follow the MCS Policy 4.06 and 6.311 when utilizing technology. Proper behavior, as it relates to the use of computers, is no different than proper behavior in other aspects of school activities. All users are expected to use the computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner. MCS reserves the right to monitor all technology resource activity.
- Students will be responsible for the content posted through their login and account activity. Sharing usernames and passwords with others or using other's usernames and passwords is strictly prohibited.
- Students will follow MCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship.
- Students will check Virtual Village and school emails daily.
- Students will adhere to all assessment policies for diagnostic, benchmark, and standards based assessments. (Students are required to be present for these assessments at a designated time and location).
- Students will attend virtual lessons and participate in asynchronous lessons daily (minimum of 5 hours per day).

- Student attendance will be recorded daily and entered into Synergy.
- Students will be active participants in virtual activities as directed.
- Students will submit assignments, as directed by the teacher.
- Students will advocate for personal needs and additional support when needed. Students are expected to meet the teacher policy regarding assignment submission, late work, and incomplete work. Students are expected to meet all deadlines.
- Students will be held accountable for meeting teacher virtual classroom policies.
- Students will attend mandatory in person assessment days, e.g. state testing
- Students will report any technical issues through the help email, MarionVirtual@mctns.net, as soon as an issue arises.

Parent Expectations: In order for a student to be a successful virtual learner, a true partnership must be established between the parent, student, and the virtual teacher. It is imperative that all contact information be kept current in Synergy. Virtual teachers will be communicating regularly with parents. Responsibilities of the parent are outlined below. These expectations must be agreed upon and followed in order for the child to participate in virtual learning through Marion County Schools.

- A parent/guardian, along with the child who will participate in virtual learning, will be required to attend the virtual orientation.
- Parents are expected to set up a dedicated learning space in the home – free from distractions and interruption.
- Parents are expected to set up and maintain a daily work schedule for the students in accordance with the class schedule.
- Parents are expected to check MCS platforms for assignments and grades.
- Parents are expected to provide schools and teachers with the most current contact information.
- Parents are expected to maintain open lines of communication with teachers and communicate any concerns or questions to the teacher. Teachers are expected to return communication in a timely fashion.
- Parents are required to complete an online orientation course prior to the start of the school year.
- Parents are expected to ensure that student is communicating appropriately with teachers and classmates.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the established classroom rules and expectations for virtual learning.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the students follow the MCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship.
- Parents are expected to support academic integrity by allowing students to work independently and by monitoring resources used.
- Parents are expected to monitor student work and ensure that assignments are submitted according to directions by the teacher. This includes due dates and format.
- Parents are expected to ensure that all MCS policies and procedures are followed. Students must understand they cannot use inappropriate or threatening language.

- Parents are expected to follow federal and state laws regarding student privacy and FERPA. This includes not recording lessons or sessions and not posting photos and videos on social media.
- Parents are expected to read, review, and follow the MCS Responsible Use Policy.

Characteristics of the Virtual Learner:

Students who participate in a virtual school offered by Marion County Schools are held to the same academic standards as students who choose face-to-face instruction in any of our schools. Academic integrity must be maintained at all costs. Virtual students who choose to resort to plagiarism, cheating, or using social media to transmit any work will be subject to disciplinary action and parents will be contacted should a violation occur. If violations are repeated, the student could lose the opportunity to continue his/her education through the virtual program. For consistency across the district, the following definitions will be used:

Plagiarism, according to Harbrace Handbook, 15th edition, is defined as "presenting someone else's ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased." It includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Copying verbatim all or part of another's written work;
2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.

Cheating is defined as representing any other person's work or work from any source as your own.

CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of stealing and academic fraud. Students who are found guilty of plagiarism will have the option of either redoing the assignment within a specified period and accepting a grade letter drop or taking a zero on the assignment. Parents should be involved in making the decision.

If expectations are not followed, disciplinary consequences could include disciplinary action in accordance with MCS policy.

Device Use/Misuse:

Improper use of any computer or the network is prohibited. This includes the following:

- Use of racist, profane, or obscene language or materials
- Using the network for financial gain, political or commercial activity
- Attempting to or harming equipment, materials or data
- Attempting to or sending anonymous messages of any kind
- Using the network to access inappropriate material

- Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or the network
- Using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately
- Accessing of information resources, files, and documents of another user without permission
- Vandalism, any malicious attempt to harm or destroy district equipment or materials, data of another user of the district's system, or any of the agencies or other networks to which the district has access is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of district guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.
- Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited. Forgery or attempted forgery of documents or currency is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to create, copy or modify official documents or currency using district technology resources may be viewed as a violation of district guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in temporary or permanent removal of user access to MCS Virtual Schools.

Attendance

Parents/guardians have the legal responsibility to ensure that their child is fully participating in virtual school by monitoring their progress and time spent on daily course work. When a student is unable to participate in daily instruction, parent notes/doctor notes should be submitted. Excuses will be submitted via email to MarionVirtual@mctns.net. All virtual students are held to the same attendance policies/guidelines as students who are in traditional schools. See Marion County Board of Education Attendance Policy 6.200 regarding absence documentation. Daily attendance will be recorded by the number of minutes participating in virtual learning and pacing. The program will track the number of minutes spent participating each day. A student will be required to participate in the virtual program for 300 minutes each day. The student will also be required to meet pacing requirements. The meeting of pacing requirements will signify that the student is spending at least 90 minutes each day outside of the program working on instruction. The combination of minutes in the program and pacing will allow the district to determine daily attendance. Daily attendance will be maintained in Synergy. Synergy is set-up to track truancy issues and notify the Director of Attendance. The Director of Attendance will apply the district's attendance policy to virtual students in the same fashion as traditional students.

Counseling Services:

School counselors are available for students who choose virtual school. Once the student enrolls in the MCS virtual school, a counselor will be assigned to the student.

Engagement

All students participating in virtual school are expected to engage in the learning environment and content. Student engagement is measured through pacing in the course. If a student is not on

pace – they are not participating in online sessions, not completing or attempting assignments, a week behind in work completion, not responding to teacher communications – then the following steps will be initiated.

1. Parent/Teacher/Student Conference – digitally or on the phone – to determine areas of need
2. Should dis-engagement continue, then the Parent and Teacher will develop a two-week action plan for the student identifying the services necessary for the student to be successful.
3. Should a student continue to be off track in the course even with an action plan, withdrawal from Virtual School will be initiated, and the student will return to their traditional school or secure a different school option outside MCS.

Extracurricular Activities

Marion Virtual Schools will not offer any extracurricular activities. This includes but not limited to athletics, student organizations, proms, dances, field days, etc...

English Language Learner Services

Students enrolling for the first time in Marion County Virtual School will be provided a Home Language Survey as those students enrolling in an onsite school in the district. If any language besides English is listed on the HLS, the WIDA Screener (1-12) or W-APT (Kindergarten) assessment would be administered within the allotted amount of time depending on the time enrolled within the school year. If the student is identified as needing English Language Services, the parent, ESL Program Director, school administrator, and ESL teacher would meet to determine the best time within the student's schedule for services to be given and the best instructional model to meet the student's needs. This would be written into the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP would be evaluated every 4.5 weeks and updated. Daily instruction from a certified ESL teacher would occur virtually. If the student's ILP encourages him or her to work virtually with other English Learners, he or she would be allowed to work with those students. For students with lower English proficiency, one on one instruction would occur. At the end of the year, the student would be required to be on site for the annual WIDA 2.0 Assessment. Each year of testing, the student's scores would be evaluated to determine exit criteria or service model for the upcoming year. If the student exits ESL Service, the student would be considered transitional for four years and continued to be monitored every 9 weeks for academic success until becoming a Former English Learner.

Exceptional Education Services

The district will comply with all federal and state laws, rules and regulations for eligible students with disabilities. Special education services will be delivered by licensed special education teachers. IEPs will be reviewed upon eligible students' enrollment in virtual school to determine if the school change necessitates an IEP meeting. IEP direct services for skill deficits and related services will be delivered through zoom and/or in-person depending on the student's needs. Eligible students will be progress monitored in their skill deficit area(s) the same as eligible students enrolled in traditional schools. Progress reports will be provided on the same schedule as eligible students in traditional schools. IEPs will be updated annually and re-evaluations will be completed every three years as required by state and federal rules and regulations. IEP accommodations and modifications will be determined through IEP meetings and will be

delivered in the virtual environment. The district will provide supplemental aids and services as determined by IEP teams. Extended school year services will be considered for virtual students the same as for students in traditional schools through the IEP team meeting. Eligible students will be served in their least restrictive environment, the same as students in traditional schools. Students with disabilities will participate in required testing with accommodations determined by the IEP team. If at any time a non-eligible student demonstrates a possible disability and need for special education services the district will initiate a student support team meeting with a parent/guardian in attendance to discuss and/or proceed with a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for a disability and special education services.

Section 504

- Marion County Schools will continue to provide families the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the 504 process. Staff will work with families to determine if virtual or in-person meetings are appropriate. MCS will make every effort to balance parent preference and public health guidelines.
- **Delivery of Services and Support:** Teachers and case managers will work with families to provide access to the general curriculum and enable student progress and growth. Services for students will be addressed in collaboration with families on an individual basis.
- **Accommodations:** Accommodations are provided regardless of the educational setting. The 504 team will work collaboratively to identify alternative solutions if it is determined an accommodation is not appropriate or successful in a particular setting.

Schedules

All student schedules will be developed based on student-need and virtual offerings. Virtual students are expected to engage in the learning process for at least 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week.

Probation/Removal from Virtual School

The virtual school setting requires discipline by the student and extensive support from the parent or guardian. Due to the setup of virtual school, Marion County Schools will be closely tracking student success. Students who are struggling in virtual school will be placed on probation. The student will be removed from virtual school if they do not meet the guidelines of probation.

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING:

Assessments

Teachers will provide a variety of assessments to determine student mastery of the course content. Assessments may include but are not limited to, the following: discussion-based assessments, essays, project-based, and formative assessments.

Make-Up Work

If a student must be absent from school for any reason, excused or unexcused up to ten (10) days, upon returning to school, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all assignments that were missed during the student's absence. The student must request make-up

assignments within three (3) days after returning. Teachers shall set a reasonable time for the completion of the work. Failure of a student to initiate a request for make-up work within three (3) days will result in lost opportunity for credit for that assignment.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Families will continue to receive either a progress report or a report card every 4.5 weeks. These reports will be posted to the ParentVUE. They will also receive weekly progress reports from Village Virtual LLC.

State and District Testing

Students who opt for virtual school will be required to take all state and district level assessments. Exams will count 15% of final grade. Virtual students will report to a designated site at a designated time to participate in the testing.

Glossary of terms

SYNERGY is the student information system used by Marion County Schools. The Synergy ParentVUE is the online access point for important student information and teacher communication.

This secure site provides an easy way to view student academic information including:

- Grades
- Attendance
- Progress reports/report cards

Asynchronous Instruction is instruction provided by a certified educator to students who participate in instruction at a separate time from when the teacher delivered the instruction. This may include but not be limited to methods such as printed work materials, teacher-assigned individual or group projects, audio- or video-recorded lessons, or online course modules, or other appropriate methods as determined by the district.

FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This act is a federal law that protects student privacy.

Virtual Student is a student in Marion County Schools who chooses to access his/her education through electronic means