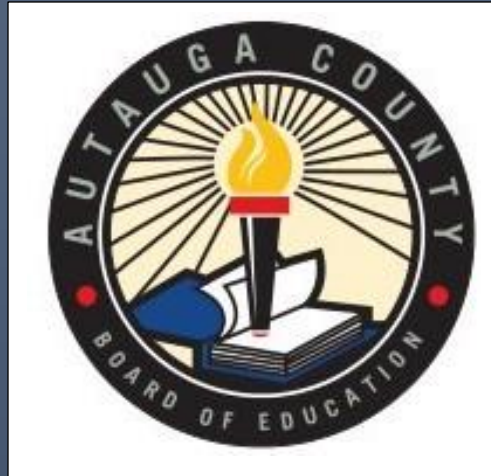# Autauga County Schools
K-12 Virtual Options

AUTAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS
153 West Fourth Street
Prattville, AL 36067

AUTAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS
Virtual Learning Options 2020-2021

Autauga County Schools (ACS) is committed to providing optimal learning experiences to all students. In response to the public health threat of COVID-19, ACS has created virtual learning options to ensure students engage in meaningful educational opportunities while school buildings are closed or while students are absent due to illness or quarantine.

Parents may choose the Virtual Classrooms as the primary learning environment for their child instead of the traditional in-person learning environment.

This document is designed to provide guidance and clarity on the virtual learning options for the 2020-2021 school year. It is comprised of four sections:

1. eLearning Days
2. Emergency Virtual Learning for Traditional Students Due to School Closure
3. Emergency Virtual Learning for Traditional Students Who Are Sick or Must Be Quarantined
4. Virtual Learning for Students Who Choose the Virtual Setting as Their Learning Environment

eLearning Days

The 2020-2021 school calendar for Autauga County Schools contains eight eLearning days. The days are as follows:

- September 18, 2020
- October 2, 2020
- November 23-24, 2020
- December 21-22, 2020
- March 29-30, 2021

Autauga County Schools' eLearning days are designed for students and teachers to participate in virtual learning from home or designated learning environment. Students and teachers do not physically report to the school building on eLearning days. Students access and complete assignments through the learning management system (Schoology and/or ACCESS). ELearning assignments are not intended to be busy work. Assignments should be meaningful and should directly align to state content standards. Teachers must have assignments posted at least 48 hours prior to the eLearning day and must provide students an overview of expectations for assignments. Assignments must be completed within the timeframe designated by each teacher. Assignments are graded and count as part of the student's final average for that grading period. Teachers are required to give feedback to students on eLearning assignments. At times, there may be students who do not have a device or Internet connectivity. In these cases, it is the student/parent's responsibility to inform the teacher of such issues. The teacher and the school administrator will address these issues as needed. There may also be times where a student encounters unexpected technical issues on an eLearning day. It is the student/parent's

responsibility to communicate such issues with the teacher. Again, the teacher and the school administrator will address these issues as needed.

Emergency Virtual Learning for Traditional Students Due to School Closure

Due to COVID-19, it is possible that schools may be required to close for a designated amount of time. In such cases, students and teachers will transition from the traditional classroom setting to a virtual classroom setting. To prepare for the emergency virtual learning, schools will implement the following:

1. Notification for school closures will be communicated as follows:
   a. The Superintendent will contact parents via School Messenger.
   b. The school principal will contact parents via School Messenger.
   c. Details of school closures will be posted on social media.
   d. Elementary teachers will call homeroom students and secondary teachers will call classes as designated by the school administrator.
2. On the first day of school, teachers must share their contact information with all students/parents. Teachers must also keep a list of student/parent contact information at school and at home.
3. All teachers will be trained on Schoology and/or ACCESS. These learning management platforms will be used to deliver daily instruction in emergency virtual learning conditions.
4. Teachers must have a minimum of three days of emergency lesson plans available in the learning management system and ready to deploy at all times.
5. On the first day of school, all teachers will make certain that students have login information to access the learning management systems. Teachers will instruct students on how to access the learning management systems and provide opportunities for students to practice.
6. On the first day of school, teachers will provide parents with instructions on how to access and utilize the learning management systems.
7. If a student does not have a device and/or Internet service, it is the student/parent's responsibility to communicate this to the teacher in a timely manner. For short-term closure (two-five days), teachers will be flexible and allow students with technology issues to complete assignments when school resumes in the traditional setting. For long-term closures, teachers must notify their administrators of students with technology issues. Each case will be handled individually according to the student's specific needs.
8. Work submitted during emergency virtual learning will be graded and will count towards a student's final average for that grading period. Grades will be given according the district's grading policy.
9. During emergency virtual learning, students are required to abide by district and state attendance policies and procedures. Students fulfill attendance requirements when they login to the learning management platform to access and complete their assignments.
10. Students and families should expect to be engaged in daily online learning with the quality of pacing and rigor used in the traditional classroom setting. In addition to instruction, there will be appropriate levels of practice for students, teacher monitoring of student progress and frequent communication between the teacher and students/parents.
11. Teachers will be available to students and parents during the regular school day hours.

Emergency Virtual Learning for Traditional Students Due Sickness/Quarantine

It is possible that a student must be out of school for an extended period due to COVID-19. The student may test positive for COVID-19 or may have been in direct contact with someone who tested positive. The student must then quarantine for the number of days specified by Autauga County Schools' COVID-19 Procedures and Protocols. In this situation, students will transition from the traditional classroom setting to the emergency virtual learning setting. Guidelines are as follows:

1. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school that student will be out for an extended time due to COVID-19. This information will only be communicated with teachers needing this information.
2. Teachers will post instructional guidelines and assignments to the student's learning management platform.
3. During emergency virtual learning, students are required to abide by district and state attendance policies and procedures. Students fulfill attendance requirements when they login to the learning management platform to access and complete their assignments.
4. If a student does not have a device and/or Internet service, it is the student/parent's responsibility to communicate this to the teacher in a timely manner. If the technology issues are not resolved, teachers will be flexible and allow students with technology issues to complete assignments upon returning to school. Each case will be handled individually according to students' specific needs.
5. Work submitted during emergency virtual learning will be graded and will count towards a student's final average for that grading period. Grades will be given according the district's grading policy.
6. Students and families should expect to be engaged in daily online learning with the quality of pacing and rigor used in the traditional classroom setting. In addition to instruction, there will be appropriate levels of practice for students, teacher monitoring of student progress and frequent communication between the teacher and students/parents.
7. Teachers will be available to assist students and parents during their regularly scheduled planning period.

Virtual Learning for Students Choosing the Virtual Setting as Their Learning Environment

Autauga County Schools offers eligible students a full-time virtual learning environment. This program was created in accordance with the Alabama State Department of Education to provide our students with high quality instruction in an online environment. Virtual learning classrooms are available to students enrolled in Autauga County Schools. Please see www.acboe.net for enrollment guidelines.

The following information is provided to allow families to make an informed decision about enrollment in a full-time virtual classroom and to inform them of the expectations for successful participation in Autauga County School's Virtual Learning Classrooms. Information included below is subject to change.

General Overview

In full-time virtual instruction classrooms, students are in their home or designated learning environment each day accessing their curriculum and instruction via the internet. Off-line activities and instructional materials may also be provided depending on the grade level of the student and each individual course of enrollment. Students work with the assistance of a responsible adult (learning coach) and their learning is facilitated, monitored and assessed by their teachers who interact with students via the internet, email, phone, web conference and text. Although families will have some flexibility in scheduling within the day, students are expected to work each school day, in each assigned class according to their learning plan. Students must maintain minimum pace and demonstrate mastery on individual assignments to be successful and remain enrolled. Participation in the full-time virtual learning classroom is a commitment by the student and entire family. Although students are working from home, the overall time spent engaged in school activities is similar to that in a traditional school environment. Virtual learning is a significant departure from traditional schooling and should be considered carefully by the entire family before enrolling in the virtual setting.

Academic Program

Instructional Staff: Certified teachers from Autauga County Schools will provide daily instruction via our virtual learning management systems.

Online Curriculum: All curriculum is aligned to the Alabama Courses of Study and is designed to prepare students for college, career and citizenship. Students will access the curriculum through a learning management system (Schoology and/or ACCESS).

Face-to-Face Sessions: Our teachers will provide opportunities for instruction, assistance, assessment and/or enrichment in a face-to-face environment at a predetermined location. Select face-to-face activities will be mandatory. Examples of mandatory sessions include, but are not limited to: orientation, academic assistance for struggling students, K-5 instructional activities, elementary portfolio reviews and required testing. Failure to participate in mandatory sessions could result in removal from the virtual classroom at the end of the semester or denial of reenrollment.

Synchronous Online Sessions: Our virtual classrooms offer students opportunities to participate in synchronous, live online sessions. Select sessions are instructional and will therefore be mandatory. Examples of mandatory sessions include but are not limited to: grade-level online lessons and small-group, intervention sessions. Each teacher will develop the schedule of events and topics to be covered. Failure to participate in mandatory sessions could result in removal from the virtual classroom at the end of the semester or denial of reenrollment.

Asynchronous Online Sessions: Teachers will provide asynchronous (recorded) online sessions for students. These lessons provide students with additional instruction or content to assist in their mastery of standards. Select sessions will be mandatory and students must view the recording and complete/submit all required assignments in the timeframe indicated. Failure to participate in mandatory sessions could result in removal from the virtual classroom at the end of the semester or denial of reenrollment.

Attendance: Virtual students must "attend" class daily in accordance with Autauga County Schools' calendar. Students fulfill attendance requirements when they log in to their classes daily. Autauga County School students are required to abide by district and state attendance policies and procedures.

Pace: Although there is flexibility within the school day, remaining on pace is essential to the success of virtual school students. Failure to remain on pace and/or attend mandatory face-to-face sessions could result in removal from the virtual classroom at the end of the semester or denial of reenrollment.

Virtual Classroom Requirements

Learning Coach: Every student, regardless of age and grade level, must be provided with adequate daily supervision and support by a responsible adult or learning coach. The l**earning coach** is the adult in the home or designated learning environment who assists the student with completing assignments and tasks. The amount of assistance depends on the student's grade level and the student's ability to complete work independently. The learning coach will establish the structure necessary for daily, focused participation in classes, will provide motivation and time management, and will regularly communicate with school staff to ensure the student has a positive and productive experience. The learning coach and/or parent/guardian will also be responsible for providing transportation to mandatory testing locations and/or required/optional activities. (Students with driver's license can provide their own transportation with a signed agreement.)

Proper supervision is a requirement for students of all ages in the virtual learning classrooms. At the elementary level, learning coaches must be available approximately 5 hours per day to monitor the student's computer access, engage the student in educational activities, facilitate learning activities, provide support with assignments and manage the receipt/use of instructional materials. Students and learning coaches will also be required to participate in activities with the instructor(s) online or via the phone. Depending on the student's performance, additional face-to-face activities may be required. It is a requirement that the learning coach be someone who is in the home or designated learning environment with the student every school day and engaged in the daily, educational activities. At the secondary level, the role of the parent/guardian and learning coach is no less important. Every student must be monitored closely to ensure regular attendance, appropriate participation and timely submission of assignments. Students need significant support throughout the school day from the learning coach. Virtual classrooms require regular communication between the teacher(s) and parent/guardian or learning coach regarding course progress and content mastery.

Communication: Communication to students and parents/guardians or learning coach is vital to the success of our students. It is necessary that current telephone numbers and email addresses are provided for school records. Families are required to monitor the communication on a regular basis in order to stay informed about opportunities, deadlines and requirements. Student communication with teachers will be through the internal email system located within our course platform. A personal email must be provided for each learning coach and parent/guardian. It is essential that students and parents/guardians monitor email accounts each school day, read communications from teachers and respond accordingly.

Technology: Parents or guardians are responsible for providing their own computer. Required items are: 1) dedicated workspace; 2) proper internet connection; 3) computer (tablets or phones will not be sufficient); 4) printer; 5) scanner or mobile device to capture images of assignments for uploading; 6)

headphones, microphone, and webcam to participate in online discussions; 7) student supplies (list distributed by each teacher)

School Day / School Calendar: Although students are working from home, the overall time spent engaged in school activities is similar to that in a traditional school environment. Although students have access to curriculum 24 hours per day, seven days a week, students are expected to work in courses each school day, at minimum. The established schedule must provide adequate time to complete all coursework to remain on pace, accommodate synchronous activities and provide adequate time to work with teachers during the hours of a regular school day. Autauga County School's virtual classrooms follow the traditional school calendar. Students and teachers will follow the same semester start and end dates and holidays.

Mandatory Testing and Progress Monitoring: Students participating in the virtual classroom environment are enrolled in Autauga County Schools and are therefore required to participate in all district and state mandated testing and progress monitoring. Transportation to and from the testing site is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Time, dates and location of test administration will be communicated well in advance. Families will be required to participate according to the schedule provided.

Integrity of Online Courses: It is essential for the success of the student that all coursework be completed by the registered student and that it is an original creation. All work submitted by the student must have been created/completed by the student. Utilizing online sources to copy and paste work is not acceptable. If necessary, disciplinary action will be taken according to policies outlined in the Autauga County Schools Policy Manual.

Transportation Requirements: At various times each year, students will be required to attend face-to-face meetings or schedule test session. By choosing the virtual classroom, the family is committing to providing transportation when necessary. A lack of transportation is not grounds to be excused from mandatory, face-to-face activities.

Orientation

Ideally, we would like to have orientations session so that families and teachers could meet one another in person. However, due to COVID-19 guidelines, we are uncertain if this meeting can occur. Information will be shared as plans are updated.

Additional Information

IEP/504/EL Students: Prior to enrolling all students in the virtual learning classroom, school leadership teams (504/IEP/EL Teams) will determine if the virtual learning environment is appropriate for the individual student based on individual needs. IEP/504/IELP plans will be reviewed as part of this process. Determination will be made on an individual basis.

Gifted Students: Students in grades 3-6 will receive virtual gifted services.

Extracurricular Activities: Virtual students may participate in extracurricular activities and clubs at their base schools. Students must meet membership criteria as set by the base school organization in order to quality for participation in the club or activity. Virtual students may participate in athletic programs at

their base schools. If a base high school <u>requires</u> its athletes to take specific athletic or weight training classes, then participating virtual students will be required to take these classes on campus as well.

Electives: For secondary (Grades 7-12) students, some electives are offered virtually, and some electives are only offered in person in the traditional setting. Band, ROTC, Driver's Education and Varsity Athletics are only offered in the traditional setting. Students must come to the school in person to participate in these classes. Parents are responsible for providing transportation if the student is unable to drive him/herself. Also, students attending classes at the Autauga County Technology Center must attend in person at the traditional setting. Other electives may be provided virtually. If you have questions about a specific elective other than the ones listed above, please contact your child's base school.

On Campus Activities: Anytime a virtual student is on a campus, he/she must abide by the district dress code and follow all school rules. Failure to abide by these rules and expectations may result in disciplinary action. Severe violations may result in suspension, expulsion, legal action and/or removal from the virtual classroom. Students enrolled in virtual classrooms are never to be on a school campus without permission of the school administration, unless participating in an event that is open to the public.