



Gloucester County Public Schools
Virtual Learning Program
Handbook

2015-16

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Welcome to GCPS Virtual Learning

Dear Students and Families:

Welcome to Gloucester County Public Schools' Virtual Learning Program. This handbook will answer questions about online courses and provides quick access to information.

Gloucester County Public Schools began offering virtual learning opportunities in 2005. The first courses, during the initial pilot years, were offered through Virtual Virginia, a platform sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). In 2008, GCPS students were offered opportunities to enroll in virtual courses for credit recovery. In 2009, GCPS offered its first virtual summer school and expanded further as an intervention/credit recovery tool. In 2011, the program expanded once again by offering virtual curriculum to homeschool children and families residing in Gloucester County.

Virtual courses and support programs offered by GCPS are delivered to eligible students through "Learning Management Systems" (LMS) that provide access to course content via the Internet and are available to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students engage in virtual lessons, participate in online discussion boards, communicate with online instructors, and submit assignments and other documents electronically. The virtual program supervisor, online teachers, and students monitor student progress and design individualized "learning pathways" for students to maximize learning opportunities.

Virtual learning is changing the scope of the educational process. Virginia recently passed [legislation](#) requiring all students who entered high school in the 2013-14 school year to complete an online course. Gloucester County Public Schools' Virtual Programs provide a variety of options enabling students to fulfill graduation requirements.

For more information, contact the following:

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Program Description and Goals

The Gloucester County Public Schools' Virtual Learning Program provides interactive, flexible, and alternative learning options to help meet the diverse educational needs of eligible students. It is intended to expand learning opportunities to students who require or prefer an approach to learning that is more independent and flexible than a traditional classroom environment.

GCPS Virtual Learning Program Goals are designed to offer opportunities for students to:

1. Study content areas which presently are not offered through the existing course catalog;
2. Participate in courses that might conflict with an existing course schedule;
3. Participate in an alternative, independent, self-paced instructional platform;
4. Accelerate or remediate learning;
5. Recover credit lost during a previous course attempt.

The GCPS Virtual Learning courses meet or exceed curriculum standards including the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). A Virtual Program Supervisor administers all virtual learning programs and student progress is monitored and facilitated by highly qualified Virginia licensed instructors. There are a variety of ways to contact your instructor and the Virtual Program Supervisor throughout the school year including telephone, e-mail, and personal meetings to answer questions and support your online learning experience.

Students enrolled in online courses are expected to participate actively in the virtual experience. They interact with talented instructors to help achieve their educational goals. Students experience opportunities to interact with other students, develop relationships with instructors and fellow students, and learn content and technological skills. Students are expected to manage their time effectively and keep current with all course assignments.

Faculty Contact Information

Name	Position	Office	E-mail
Wendy Wyatt	Virtual Learning Supervisor	804-693-2526	wwyatt@gc.k12.va.us
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Brad Jeffrey	Virtual Social Studies Teacher	804-693-1499	bjeffrey@gc.k12.va.us
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Virtual Learning Programs

Gloucester Online Academy of Learning (GOAL)

Gloucester High School students may apply to attend GOAL on a full or part-time basis. GOAL is a non-traditional learning environment utilizing online curricula. Enrollment is limited and eligible students are prioritized based upon grade level and credit recovery needs. GOAL is located in the T. C. Walker Education Center (TCWEC) and approved students may be assigned either to a morning or afternoon session, depending upon their school schedules. Division transportation to and from the GOAL program is provided for GHS and required of all GOAL students. Students assigned to GOAL must attend for the duration of the current school year. Grades are provided quarterly and students are required to make adequate progress in each course based on the expectation of 25% completion each quarter. Applications for GOAL are available in the GHS School Counseling office. School lunches may be purchased by students who attend the afternoon GOAL session.

Home-schooled Students

Students who are legal residents of Gloucester County may be eligible to enroll in Gloucester County Public Schools and participate in online curriculum provided by GCPS. Eligible students must apply for participation by the specified annual deadline.

Eligible students must be of legal age to attend school, must reside legally in the attendance zone for their local GCPS school, and must complete an application in order to participate in the Home Based Virtual School Program. Homeschooled students must enroll in their zoned GCPS public school to be eligible for participation. Advanced approval is required from the Virtual Learning Supervisor as well as the Director of Student Services.

The school principal has the ultimate authority over decisions regarding student eligibility for online course enrollment. The counselor is responsible for enrolling students in an online course. The Supervisor of Virtual Programs is responsible for creating the online course, student account and enrolling students in the required course(s) as directed by the building principal and counselor. The Supervisor of Virtual Programs is responsible for reporting final grades to the counseling department. The facilitator is responsible for monitoring student progress.

Students and parents are required to sign a learning contract affirming their understanding of and agreement with the policies, procedures, and expectations for Virtual Learning established by this policy, the zoned school, and the school principal. A student's failure to abide by these policies, procedures, and expectations may result in removal from the Virtual Learning Program. Parents of students enrolled in virtual coursework also are expected to monitor their student's progress on a daily/regular basis to ensure the student is making adequate progress.

Virtual Virginia

Virtual Virginia is an online learning program developed by the Virginia Department of Education. Students identified as Early College Scholars (ECS) are able to enroll in courses at no cost. Those not identified as ECS also may enroll, although a tuition fee may be assessed. Virtual Virginia also offers a variety of world languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, Latin, and Spanish. These courses may be offered with approval from the student's counselor and administrator.

In 2015-16, Virtual Virginia is piloting a full-time online learning option for eligible high school students in grades 9-12. Students must be enrolled at Gloucester High School in order to eligible to participate.

Enrollment

Only the school counselor may enroll a student in the GCPS Virtual Learning Program. The school counselor or designee registers the student in the student management system and then notifies the Virtual Learning Administrator to ensure the student is enrolled in the appropriate online learning program. Students are enrolled in courses on a space-available basis.

Students enrolled in virtual courses are expected to complete the course within the specified time frame. Students may not withdraw from an online course and enroll in the traditional, face to face course at Gloucester High School. Students enrolled in courses through *Virtual Virginia* will incur a \$75 withdrawal fee if they withdraw from a course after twenty-one (21) calendar days from the first day of the course.

Attendance

Students enrolled in the Virtual Learning Program are expected to begin their coursework on the first day of school and complete their coursework by the last day of school in accordance with the current GCPS school calendar. Students are expected to log into each of their courses at least once each school day; if a student does not login, he or she may be considered absent for the day. Online students are required to follow current GCPS attendance policies and expectations.

Students are expected to remain on task, meet all course and assignment deadlines, and seek help from the teacher/facilitator when needed. Students have access to the Learning Management System 24 hours per day; therefore, it is expected that students make adequate weekly, monthly, and quarterly progress. Students are expected to work at least one hour per course per day. Students are expected to complete 25% of their online course during each nine week quarter. In order to complete 25% per quarter, students will need to complete 2-3% each week and 12-13% per month.

Virtual Teacher

Students participating in the GCPS Home School program are assigned highly qualified, licensed virtual **teachers** who strive to foster independence, responsibility, student engagement, and community in the online environment. Students participating in GOAL are assigned a course **facilitator** who monitors student progress and provides assistance as needed.

Training

After a student is enrolled in a virtual course, the Virtual Program Supervisor will schedule and deliver training for students and parents.

Costs/Fees

There is no cost to participate in GOAL or the full-time Virtual Virginia programs; however, students participating in the part-time Virtual Virginia program may incur a withdrawal fee, or a tuition fee if the student is not identified as an 'Early College Scholar.' There is no fee to participate in the part-time world language courses offered by Virtual Virginia. School Counselors can provide more specific details regarding associated costs.

Testing

Any student enrolled in a virtual course with an associated End-of-Course (SOL) test is required to participate in state-mandated SOL testing at the local school. For high school courses, successful completion of an SOL assessment is required for verified credit. Students enrolled in grades 3 – 8 are also required to participate in state-mandate SOL testing at their zoned school. Students enrolled in a virtual Advanced Placement course have the option of annual AP test participation.

Technical Assistance

Students should notify their virtual instructor immediately if technical problems persist. Each of the GCPS schools may have computers available for students in the Media Centers, and the virtual lab at Gloucester High School may be available after school hours, as well. Be sure to ask in advance for assistance or other arrangements.

Grades

Grades are based on a 100-point scale in accordance with GCPS grading policies. Students are able to monitor their progress and grades independently within the Learning Management System (LMS). Teachers and facilitators are able to provide official progress reports upon request. The final grade will be made available to the counselor when the student completes the online course. Students are required to complete all course assignments, including any midterm and/or final assessments, as provided in the online course syllabus.

Online Assignment Policy

Time management skills and self-discipline are necessary for the timely submission of assignments—and required for a successful online learning experience. All assignments will have a due date published in the course calendar. Online learning courses provide students with the flexibility of scheduling their time and daily routines; however, students are expected to login on a daily basis and make adequate progress in their coursework. Students are expected to complete assignments in accordance with the calendar provided at the beginning of the school year, but may request alterations to the schedule if needed. All requests are considered individually. This policy is intended to help students recover if they fall behind in a course but is not intended to allow repeated tardiness in work submission or to allow students to fall behind in the coursework.

Occasionally, an extenuating circumstance may prevent a student from completing a course by the assigned completion date. Students may appeal for deadline extensions by submitting a written request to the virtual school administrator that details and explains why a student was unable to complete assignments on time and any required steps that the student will take in an effort to receive a deadline extension. The virtual administrator will consult with the parent, school counselor, and school principal (or designee) to determine the merit of each appeal. Appeals are considered individually.

Overdue Activities

GCPS virtual learning instructors notify parents and counselors when a student falls behind in coursework so that each is informed; this proactive approach is intended to facilitate support to students having difficulty achieving success in the online course.

Academic Integrity

Virtual students are required to commit fully to academic integrity. Student participation requires adherence to the following set of expectations:

- Each student is expected to verify that the work on each assignment is his or her own.
- The instructor must approve in advance any collaboration with another classmate on any assignment.
- Students may not plagiarize in any form.
- Students may not permit others to copy his/her work.
- Students may not misuse content from the Internet and must adhere to the GCPS Acceptable Use Policy.
- Students are expected to store coursework on a public or shared network drive.

If a student plagiarizes work in any manner, the student is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with GCPS policies. Consequences may include but are not limited to a grade of zero for that assignment, removal from the course with a failing grade, or other consequences.

Accessing Courses

Students can access online courses by following these steps:

1. Compass Learning www.thelearningodyssey.com
 - a. Enter your username and password (Usernames and passwords are provided during the orientation session at the beginning of the school year or from the instructor upon enrollment.) You will see your course(s) on the home page when you successfully login.

If students have trouble accessing courses, they should notify their teacher, administrator, or Virtual Learning Supervisor immediately.

Technology Access and Requirements

Students participating in virtual courses onsite at a Gloucester County Public School will be provided with equipment required to participate in the online course.

Students eligible to participate in their online course from home or other remote location will be required to provide their own equipment, including a computer, access to the Internet, Internet Service Provider, etc. Gloucester County Public Schools is not responsible for providing equipment or Internet access. In addition, Gloucester County Public Schools is not required to provide technical services for personal equipment used to participate in online courses; it is the responsibility of students and families to ensure that their personal equipment complies with the Learning Management System used to provide the course content for their student.

Student Code of Conduct

All students enrolled in virtual courses are required to adhere to the GCPS Student Code of Conduct and other program requirements. Failure to adhere will result in disciplinary action; repeated or continuous disciplinary incidents may result in course failure and/or dismissal from the virtual learning program.

Acceptable Use of Technology

All students and staff are expected to conduct their communications in a professional and respectful manner. Inappropriate language or behavior will result in disciplinary action and possible termination from the online course at the discretion of the school administrator and the GCPS Virtual Learning Supervisor. Each student will acknowledge his/her willingness to abide by Acceptable Use Policy (see Appendix B) and the procedures outlined therein will apply to all online courses.

Netiquette

Internet etiquette will help students behave and communicate online in an efficient, effective, and courteous manner.

Glossary

Term	Explanation
Asynchronous	Learning that does not occur at the same time. Students are able to login and complete assignments at various times. An example of asynchronous learning is the use of a discussion board.
Blended Learning	Traditional learning activities and experiences combined with online learning activities and content.
Core Curriculum	The planned instruction in a content area, which is central and usually mandatory for all students in a school, such as English and Math.
Credit Recovery	Students who have been enrolled in a credited course but fail to earn a passing grade are able to re-take the course in an effort to earn the credit required for graduation.
Desire 2 Learn (D2L)	This is the LMS that is currently used to provide curriculum in the blended courses.
Diagnostic Test	A test administered in order to gauge student knowledge and progress in the content area.
Facilitator	A person responsible for leading or coordinating the work of a group of students. Facilitators are also expected to monitor student progress in the online course.
Home School Student	A student, who is classified as a home school, by the GCPS division, is able to complete their course work from a location other than the zoned school building.
Homebound Student	A student, who is classified as a home bound student due to extenuating circumstances, by the GCPS division, is able to complete their course work from a location other than the zoned school building.
Initial Credit	A first time course in which a student is working to receive credit in order to meet graduation requirements.
Intervention	Additional assistance provided to enable a student to experience success in the content area.
Learning Coach	A person identified as working with the student to ensure success and adequate progress in an online course.
Learning Management System (LMS)	The platform in which online curriculum is delivered.
Online Learning	Education in which instruction and curriculum are delivered over the Internet.
Progress Monitoring	Observing student progress in assigned courses.
Remediation	Additional assistance provided to enable a student to experience success in the content area.
Standards Aligned	Curriculum that is aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL).
State Standards	Standards set forth by the state department of education outlining student progress in a given school year and content area. Also known as Standards of Learning (SOL).
Synchronous	Learning that occurs at the same time. Students are expected to be online at a given time and participate in a live learning activity. An example of synchronous learning is a live chat session.
Teacher of Record	The instructor who is hired to facilitate the online learning for a particular course or student. The teacher of record is hired by the school division and must be certified in the state of Virginia. The instructor is recorded in the student management system and is linked to the student for standardized testing and state reporting.
Virtual Learning	Education in which instruction and curriculum are delivered over the Internet.
Virtual Virginia	A virtual learning program developed by the Virginia State Department of Education offering students the opportunity to take online courses in content areas not readily available in all school divisions.

Learning Management Systems:

www.thelearningodyssey.com Compass Learning is the LMS that will be used primarily with students enrolled in the credit recovery program. It will also be use with students in grades 6 – 12 who are enrolled in the Online Learning Academy.

www.virtualvirginia.org This is the link to the Virtual Virginia website used by students enrolled in Virtual Virginia courses.

Online Learning Articles:

http://www.inacol.org/press/docs/nacol_fast_facts.pdf iNACOLFast Facts About Online Learning

<http://www.worldwidelearn.com/education-articles/benefits-of-online-learning.htm> “Why Do Students Like Online Learning?”

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/overview/reid.html> “What Every Student Should Know About Online Learning”

Role of the Virtual Learning Supervisor

- Research and recommend appropriate LMS for GCPS students and staff
- Facilitate training and information to staff, parents, and students regarding online learning opportunities
- Provide training for staff
- Create and maintain LMS accounts for staff and students
- Work with principals to provide support for families and students involved in online learning
- Work with Assistant Superintendent of Instruction to determine appropriate professional development
- Facilitate online teacher staff meeting
- Work with school staff to implement online learning in a blended environment
- Communicate with division personnel to ensure all stakeholders know what is available for students and staff in regard to online learning

Role of the Student Services Director

- Ensure students and families qualify for home school virtual learning opportunities
- Work with Virtual Learning Supervisor to provide information to eligible families and students regarding online learning opportunities

Role of the homebound instructor coordinator

- Contact the Virtual Learning Supervisors when a student has been found eligible for home bound services requiring the use of online curriculum
- Ensure that final grades are provided to zoned schools as students complete courses to ensure proper credit is awarded
- Work with students and families to ensure adequate progress is being made in all virtual courses

Role of the building principal

- Work with Virtual Learning Supervisor to ensure the implementation of the LMS with building staff and students
- Ensure that an adequate space is provided for students working on virtual courses, i.e. lab environment, access to computers, and the Internet, etc.
- Provide support for teachers implementing virtual learning opportunities in the traditional classroom

Role of the building counselor

- Enroll students in virtual learning courses within the SIS as required
- Work with Virtual Learning Supervisor to ensure students are properly enrolled in the appropriate LMS and that grades are provided and entered to ensure proper award of credits for individual students

Role of the instructor

- Monitor adequate student progress is being made on a consistent basis
- Work with Virtual Learning Supervisor to implement best practices are implemented
- Provide assistance to students on an individual basis as needed
- Communicate with students, families, VL Supervisor, and Counselor regarding student progress
- Grade assignments as needed
- Provide additional preparation for state tests as needed

Role of the facilitator

- Monitor adequate student progress is being made on a consistent basis
- Work with Virtual Learning Supervisor to implement best practices are implemented
- Provide assistance to students on an individual basis as needed
- Communicate with students, families, VL Supervisor, and Counselor regarding student progress

Role of the learning coach

- Work with individual student in the home to ensure adequate progress is being made on a consistent basis.
- Communicate with the instructor regarding student progress and level of understanding
- Communicate with VL Supervisor
- Provide quiet study place for student
- Provide transportation to and from zoned school as may be necessary

For additional information, please contact Wendy Wyatt, Instructional Supervisor for Virtual Learning, by calling (804)693-4882, or by e-mail wwyatt@gc.k12.va.us

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LEGAL REFERENCES: 18 U.S.C. §§ 1460, 2256
20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688
29 U.S.C. § 794
42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-2000d-7
47 U.S.C. § 254

34 CFR part 106

8 VAC 20-131-10 et seq.
8 VAC 20-131-30
8 VAC 20-131-110
8 VAC 20-360-10
8 VAC 20-360-20
8 VAC 20-680-10
8 VAC 20-680-20

Code of Virginia, as amended, §§ 16.1-260, 18.2-251, 18.2-308.1, 18.2-308.7, 18.2-372, 18.2-374.1:1, 18.2-390, 19.2-83.1, 19.2-389, 22.1-70.2, 22.1-78, 22.1-200.1, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:2, 22.1-253.13:3, 22.1-253.13:4, 22.1-253.13:7.C.3, 22.1-254, 22.1-254(D), 22.1-254.2, 22.1-277.08, 22.1-277, 22.1-277.2, 22.1-279.1, 22.1-279.3, 22.1-279.3:1, 22.1-279.6, 22.1-296.1, 22.1-296.2, 22.1-296.4, 22.1-307, 22.1-315, 63.2-1515, 54.1-2957.02.

Guidelines and Resources for Internet Safety in Schools, Virginia
Department of Education (Second Edition October 2007)

Superintendent's Memoranda No. 36 (Mar. 3, 2000) and No. 39 (Feb. 20, 2004).

CROSS REFERENCES:

GAB	Acceptable Computer System Use (Also IIBEA)
GAB-E	Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement (Also IIBEA-E)
GAB-R	Acceptable Computer System Use (Also IIBEA-R)
GBA	Harassment and Retaliation (Also JFHA)
GCDA	Effect of Criminal Conviction or Founded Complaint of Child Abuse or Neglect
IGBG	Homebound, Correspondence, and Alternative Means of Instruction
IGBGA	Online Courses and Virtual School Programs
IIBEA	Acceptable Computer System Use (Also GBA)
IIBEA-E	Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement (Also GBA-E)
IIBEA-R	Acceptable Computer System Use (Also GBA-R)
IKA	Grading
IKF	Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements
JB	Equal Educational Opportunities and Non-Discrimination
JFC	Student Conduct
JFC-R	Student Code of Conduct Manual
JFHA	Harassment and Retaliation (Also GBA)