



***VIRTUAL LEARNING***  
***PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK***  
***2020-2021***

# **Virtual Learning Handbook for Parents and Students 2020-2021**

**Marshall County Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. Marshall County Schools does not condone or practice discrimination in admission or access to, treatment of, or employment in, its programs or activities. Any person who feels he or she has been discriminated against may make an inquiry or file a complaint with Mrs. Jennie Carroll or Mrs. Julie Thomas, at 931-359-1581 or 700 Jones Circle, Lewisburg, TN 37091.**

## **Overview**

As we enter the 2020-21 school year, we undoubtedly face learning situations that will challenge our traditions and beliefs in the Marshall County Schools. Our district is committed to supporting our staff as they design and deliver instruction in a variety of educational environments and our families and their students as they choose the best learning situation for their families. MCS, in accordance with guidance from the Tennessee State Board of Education, has worked to offer a traditional, in-person option and a virtual option to our families.

Marshall County Schools (MCS) families will select the In-Person Learning option (at school) or a Virtual option as a response to COVID-19. Families exercising the virtual option (remote learning) will enroll their children at their traditionally assigned schools to participate in virtual learning. With either option, all students are expected to maintain satisfactory attendance and academic progress. This handbook is provided to outline the procedures and expectations for families who choose to enroll their students in the virtual learning program.

Due to Tennessee requirements for class sizes, the virtual option for remote learning allows families to enroll their students for 9-week periods at a time. If families choose to return to the in-person classroom option, they may do so at the conclusion of each nine-week grading period. Any special requests for a change in the learning environment will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Becoming a Student**

### **Registration**

Parents will complete the following agreement form and take it to their student's traditional school to enroll in virtual school:



# Virtual Learning Parent Agreement Form

The Marshall County School System believes that student learning is maximized by in-person instruction provided by an effective highly trained teacher. Online learning can be effective and is an option, but does not deliver the highest outcomes in student achievement for all students. However, we believe that under the current circumstances, students and parents should have the option for either in-person or online instruction. We believe that in-person and online instruction, assessment, feedback, curriculum, and pacing for all students should be both rigorous and closely aligned, no matter the path chosen. We also understand that adjustments and improvements will be made throughout the year to better serve the needs of our students and to increase student achievement.

By agreeing to the contents of this document and signing the form, I acknowledge that I am un-enrolling my child for PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE at \_\_\_\_\_ and enrolling him/her in the Marshall County Schools Virtual Learning program. I am also acknowledging that I have **adequate internet access at home, as well as an appropriate device with which my child can engage in virtual learning**. I will take my child's virtual learning seriously and will abide by the school's and teachers' expectations for parents and students to the best of my ability. The expectations of the virtual learning program include:

## INSTRUCTION

- Students must be engaged in instruction – lessons, activities, and work – for 6-1/2 hours a day (4 hours a day for Kindergarten students), per State Board Rule 0520-01-17 “Continuous Learning Plans for the 2020-2021 School Year”. This policy defines “instructional time” as the amount of instruction provided through synchronous (live) or asynchronous (separate time) sessions, or a combination of the two. To the extent practicable, instruction delivered remotely must be commensurate in quality, rigor, and effectiveness as in-person time.
- Teachers and schools may be using different methods and platforms to deliver the content and curriculum, so students must be willing to adapt to whatever type of virtual instruction their teachers are utilizing.
- Students will turn in assignments according to individual teacher's expectations and deadlines. If a student cannot complete that assignment for any reason at all by the time it is due, he/she should contact the teacher to get help or make other arrangements.
- If a teacher requests a virtual conference or a phone call with either the student or parent, the student and/or parent must follow up with the teacher within 24 hours to schedule the meeting.
- If students are struggling to grasp concepts or master learning objectives, they have a responsibility to communicate that to their teacher(s) so that teachers will know how they can further assist them.
- Students will still have to take end-of-course or end-of-year exams, including TN Ready state testing. **Teachers also have the discretion to ask students to come in at mutually agreed upon time to take tests, including but not limited to CFAs, Nine-Weeks Exams, Midterm Exams, and Final Exams.**

## ATTENDANCE

- Online attendance is the delivery of instruction and assignments by the teacher, completion of assignments by the student, with grades and feedback provided from the instructor to the student. K-4 students must have at minimum a 50/50 split with 50% being direct interactive instruction from the teacher. 5-12 students must have at minimum a 25/75 split with 25% being direct interactive instruction from the teacher
- Students must log in to their classes, complete assignments, and communicate with their teachers. Attendance will be taken through teacher contact or using the Google platform. Teachers will notify schools of student absences.

- Marshall County Schools Attendance Policy (6.200) still applies to students attending virtually, including the three-tiered truancy procedures. If a student is absent from virtual learning, the parent must submit a note or medical excuse for the absence to the school within three days of the absence or the absence will be considered unexcused. Students will have the opportunity to make up any missed assignments. It is the student's responsibility to arrange make-up work with their teacher.
- If satisfactory attendance is not met, the student will no longer qualify for virtual learning. At three unexcused absences, Tier I interventions will begin. Continued unexcused absences will ultimately result in removal from the Virtual Learning Program and/or a referral to Marshall County Juvenile Court.

**REMOVAL, WITHDRAWAL, OR TRANSFER**

- If a student is removed from the virtual learning program for any reason, he/she will be expected to re-enroll for physical attendance at his/her school.
- Failure to re-enroll for physical attendance within 10 school days or withdraw from the Marshall County School System and into a homeschool or other state-approved school will result in the student being considered truant and cited to court.
- If a student wants to withdraw from the virtual learning program and the Marshall County School System altogether, a parent of the student must go to the student's school building and file normal withdrawal and transfer paperwork.
- **Any student who is beginning the school year in the virtual learning program or chooses to enroll in the virtual learning program upon enrollment in the Marshall County School System has 7 days to request in writing to re-enroll for physical attendance. Requests must be directed to the school principal. After 7 days enrolled in the virtual learning program students may only request transfers back into the physical school building at the end of each Nine Weeks Period. If a student is in the virtual learning program, he/she must remain in the program until at least the end of that Nine Weeks Period, unless the student is withdrawing from the Marshall County School System.**

I understand that if I do not abide by the content and expectations laid out in this document, my child may be removed from the virtual learning program by my child's school principal.

Student's Name/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please Print)

*Homeschooling* and *remote learning* are not the same. To be clear, homeschooling is a program offered by the state of Tennessee at any time. Homeschool students must unenroll from Marshall County Schools. Any student within the MCS attendance area who has previously been a homeschooler may re-enroll in MCS to take advantage of the virtual learning option. The MCS virtual option (remote learning) is a continuation of the Marshall County Schools curriculum for enrolled MCS students.

If a student new to the area arrives after the school year begins, parents requesting virtual learning will complete the registration process during the enrollment process. Placement in the virtual learning program will be dictated by space availability and scheduling at the time of the request.

## **Registration Process**

New student orientation for remote learning will be conducted by each individual school. The student and at least one parent/guardian must participate in the orientation. Parents will be notified of scheduled orientation sessions for which they can register. Students and parents must fully complete the orientation, or they will be reassigned to the in-person learning environment.

Complete understanding of the 2020-21 virtual learning option will be crucial to ensure student success in the remote learning environment, and Marshall County Schools is committed to providing a high degree of support and resources for students and families.

## **Expectations**

### **Students**

- Participate each school day in virtual learning lessons with teachers.
- Report any technical issues to the librarian of the student's school of record as soon as the issue arises.
- Be actively engaged in the learning environment and content by staying on track with assignment completion and deadlines.
- Attend required in-person assessment days at your school.
- Online interactions with classmates and teachers will be positive and constructive.
- Continue to follow all online and technology expectations in the MCS Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Plan and maintain a virtual learning schedule for the child.
- Set up a dedicated learning space in the home.
- Maintain open lines of communication by phone and email with teachers.
- Support academic integrity by appropriately assisting your child with assignments or projects.
- Ensure your child is submitting assignments on time as directed by the teacher.
- Plan for transportation to attend mandatory testing sessions at the school.
- Communicate any issues or questions directly to the teacher by phone, Remind, or email.
- Read, review, and follow the MCS Acceptable Use Policy.

## **Remote Learning Teachers**

- Communicate daily with students.
- Design and implement instruction.
- Communicate lesson and learning outcomes.
- Provide feedback to assigned student work.
- Assess skills and standards through formative assessments.
- Communicate regularly with students and parents through Google Classroom, Synergy Gradebook, email, Remind, and other learning platforms.
- Take daily attendance.

## **Academics and Academic Honesty**

### **Academics**

Each school will provide an orientation to its virtual learning classes.

Grades K-12 will use Google Classroom as the primary learning management system for remote instruction. To fully cover the required curriculum, students should expect to spend 32.5 hours per week engaged in online learning for their full class load as required by the Tennessee State Board of Education. This may include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. All instruction will be aligned to the Tennessee State Standards.

The required hours for virtual learning engagement include Google Meet interactions with teachers and classmates, synchronous and asynchronous video instruction, reading, completion of tasks and assignments, writing, experiments, homework, and other activities. This is not designed nor intended to be sitting in front of a screen for all of these hours.

Students may complete assignments at their own pace which could impact their engagement times.

Each teacher is available to students via email, Google platform, or during onsite appointment times.

### **Assessment for Learning Loss and Special Services**

Due to the Spring 2020 closure, MCS is planning to assess all K-12 students in the core academic subjects with a variety of tools when school resumes. These may include daily formative assessments to determine academic gaps from the previous year, start-of-the-year checkpoints from the state, DIBELS, easyCBM, and others. District staff, school administrators and instructional facilitators will support teachers as they determine students' individual academic positions and supplement with additional instructional resources as needed. This important process will occur for both in-person and remote option students. Special services (discussed in this manual) will be offered as determined necessary by the school in consultation with parents.

## **Academic Honesty Expectations**

Marshall County Schools insists on strict standards of academic honesty in all courses. Academic honesty applies to all students in all classes (traditional and remote learning). Violations of these expectations will not be tolerated and may be grounds for dismissal from the remote learning program. Schoolwork must be based on a student's original ideas, while fully acknowledging the work of others. Teachers will provide guidance on when and how to use acknowledgments and how to paraphrase. Examples of failure to follow the Academic Honesty Expectations include:

- Plagiarism: the act of passing off someone else's work as your own;
- Fabrication of data: manufacturing data for a table, chart, survey or similar requirement;
- Collusion: supporting academic dishonesty of another student, as in allowing work to be copied or submitted by another;
- Also including, but not limited to, any other behavior that creates an unfair advantage: taking unauthorized material into an assessment environment, disrupting an assessment by misconduct, any effort at passing on information related to an assessment, failures to comply with assessment instructions, impersonating another student, stealing assessment materials.

## **Attendance**

### **Requirements and Verification**

Per the Tennessee State Board of Education and Continuous Learning Plan Policy, Marshall County Schools will track and report daily attendance. Every student must participate in remote learning every instructional day.

Absences during remote instruction will be noted, and any resulting attendance interventions administered, according to the School Board Attendance Policy. Schools shall seek and receive daily visual, verbal, and/or written verification of student participation in instructional time. Attendance expectation accountability includes the following:

- Teacher phone contact with the student
- Teacher phone contact with a parent or legal guardian
- Virtual instruction attendance log through Synergy
- Student work completion through virtual platform or work packets
- Other virtual formats initiated through the school system

## **Course Progress and Grading**

### **Course Progress and Academic Support**

The student has the sole responsibility to complete the work for his or her courses. MCS teachers will remotely support and/or tutor students as needed over the course of the academic term. Any student who needs support should inform the teacher and participate in virtual office hours/tutoring.

Parents play a vital role in their child's remote education. Parental support and encouragement are critical for students working in online courses or completing work packets with videos. Parents shall ensure access to the necessary technology to support digital learning. Monitoring of a student's progress will be a key component to student success and should occur at regular intervals during the day and week.

MCS teachers will make several individual contacts with students and parents during the academic term, but ultimately the student must take the initiative to complete the online work to stay on track for completion. Students who fall significantly behind or who struggle with completion may be required by the teacher to attend tutoring or academic support sessions to develop the skills needed to ensure their completion of the content.

In the event that a student isn't making sufficient academic progress or is not on track to complete the online work, or his or her attendance or behavior doesn't meet the expectations for MCS Virtual Learning, he or she will be required to meet with an administrator. Failure to fulfill the contract expectations may result in dismissal from MCS Virtual Learning and the return to in-person learning.

### **Grade Monitoring, Report Cards, and Progress Expectations**

Student progress will update weekly in the Synergy Portal and contains academic progress and attendance information for each class. Parents must monitor their student's progress in each course. All parents have access to a Synergy Portal account.

### **Grading Scale**

Grades 2-12 use the following grading scale as approved by the MCS Board of Education. This is the uniform grading policy required by the State of Tennessee.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Grade</b>
<b>A</b>	93-100
<b>B</b>	85-92
<b>C</b>	75-84
<b>D</b>	70-74
<b>F</b>	69 and below

Advanced coursework in grades 9-12 will be calculated with additional percentage points included for the semester average. A student must take the related AP Exam or SDC exam to receive the additional points. Depending on the course taken, the following percentage points will be assigned:

- Honors Courses – three percentage points;
- Local and Statewide Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment Courses – four percentage points; and
- Advanced Placement– five percentage points.

K-1 students' grades are not on a traditional A - F scale, but instead reflect a level of mastery for each skill. Grading for K-1 will be assessed and monitored using a standards-based skills checklist.

Final grades for each grading period will indicate progress towards mastery of the skill and/or standard. During the school year, K-1 students may be required to attend school on scheduled days for assessment purposes.

### **TN Ready/TCAP (Grades 3-8)**

TN Ready/TCAP scores for math, ELA, science, and social studies will be included in students' final grades as 15% of the student's final average for the year. MCS uses the state-approved cube root methodology to determine scores. **TCAP Exams will be administered in person at a designated testing location.**

### **End of Course Exams/EOC (High School Only and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra I)**

All students will be required to take the state End of Course examinations, unless the Tennessee Department of Education waives testing, (Integrated Math 1, Integrated Math 2, Integrated Math 3, English 1, English 2, Biology 1, and US History) and the EOC results will represent 15% of the semester grade. Students enrolled in Statewide Dual Credit (SDC) Courses will be required to take the SDC exam at the end of the course. **SDC and EOC exams will be administered in person at a designated testing location.**

### **Final Exams (High School Only)**

For courses requiring a final exam, students may be required to take the exam in person at a designated testing location.

## **Student/Parent Support and Guidelines for Special Services**

Marshall County Schools will continue to provide appropriate services for our special populations. Below, you will find a description of special services provided by MCS to our students who are learning in the remote environment. Specific service plans will be developed in coordination with families after enrollment in the remote learning option.

### **English as a Second Language/ILP**

Upon initial enrollment in the Marshall County Schools, the parents of all students will complete the Home Language Survey. Students requiring screening in grades K-12 will be screened using a WIDA screener (WAPT for kindergarten and WIDA Screener for grades 1-12) or a TN Department of Education approved screener. If your student qualifies for ESL services, you will be contacted with additional information. Any returning English Language Learner who has not tested English Proficient (using the state's exit criteria for the spring 2020 WIDA Access test) will continue to receive ESL instruction during the 2020-21 school year.

All students needing ESL services will receive them through either on-site or remote instruction according to state and federal guidelines. Student testing and other sources of student performance will be used to establish learning goals and to create an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that is reviewed and updated each four and one-half weeks. Virtual instruction will be provided through Google Classroom which may include synchronous or asynchronous assignments, instructional videos, activities to be done with family members, and/or live video chats with instructors.

## **Special Education/IEP**

Students with disabilities will be provided with special education instruction and related services per the student's Individualized Education Plan to the maximum extent possible. All accommodations and modifications agreed upon in the IEP will be monitored and adjusted to the virtual learning platform. IEP meetings will be held via teleconference or video conference. Questions regarding testing or special education programming should be directed to the Special Populations Department at the MCS Central Office. Parents may be asked to bring their child to their school or an agreed upon location for specialized services.

## **504**

Services for students with a 504-accommodation plan will be provided by both the remote learning teacher and in any in-person assessment sessions at the student's traditionally assigned school. The 504 team will work collaboratively with parents and caregivers to determine the services needed in the virtual learning environment. Section 504 meetings will be held by video and tele-conferencing. Questions regarding evaluating and identifying students suspected of having a disability under Section 504 should be directed to the school counselor at the traditionally assigned school or the Supervisor of Special Populations at 931-359-1581.

## **Homeless**

The Marshall County Public Schools Homeless Education Program will continue to provide McKinney Vento Educational Services to students. Services will be provided remotely via phone calls, emails, and online meetings. The Homeless Education Program will ensure all necessary information is posted on our website and widely shared through Remind.

## **Homebound**

Students who have been learning under the Homebound option with MCS will continue to receive these services.

## **School Counseling**

School counselors at each school will regularly schedule check-ins with students learning at home under the virtual option. Additional mental and emotional health services will be available to families by contacting the student's traditionally assigned school counselor.

Specialized Crisis Services staff assess and evaluate children and youth, up to age 18 who are experiencing a mental health emergency. If your child or youth under age 18 is experiencing a crisis, please call the statewide crisis line at 855-274-7471 or the regional phone number at 866-791-9222. To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call 877-237-0004.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential, support for people in distress as well as prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text "Home" to 741-741.

## **Secondary Academic Counseling**

Career and post-secondary guidance is available to every middle and high school student in the county. Counselors are assigned to students to provide guidance to register for high school classes aligned to their post-secondary plans, assistance with college or technical school registration, FAFSA assistance, and access to scholarships.

Each student's transcript is analyzed for gaps in classes and alignment to student's post-secondary goals. Counselors assure that students are on-track for graduation with the necessary credits. Credit recovery is available for students who are credit deficient. Seniors who have not taken the ACT or SAT are enrolled in the senior retake opportunity.

Each school has a communications platform which can be readily accessed by families, students, and staff. All schools have web pages with information about upcoming deadlines, college and career readiness events, FAFSA support, and scholarship opportunities. Guidance personnel will monitor and update the website and links regularly to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Each school has a plan in place to incorporate college and career planning activities into instructional and non-instructional time. Students from all three high schools can attend the College Night at Marshall County High School. Each high school provides an ACT Boot Camp before the spring junior ACT and before the senior fall re-take ACT.

School personnel communicate with parents, students, and staff via their web pages, Remind communication, and emails. Office hours are scheduled for academic counseling in traditional and virtual settings.

## **On-Campus Participation in Classes and School Activities**

### **Academics on Campus**

Students may also attend tutoring or one-to-one conferences with teachers and may at times be required to devote academic time on campus at their traditionally assigned school with teachers due to a lack of progress. All campus visits during and after school hours will be by appointment only. During all meetings or events that students attend on campus, all Marshall County Schools policies will be in effect, and students are expected to follow the policies. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school to access face-to-face programming.

To ensure safety and security, all remote learning students will report to the main office to sign-in and sign-out. They will also be required to comply with school safety protocols.

### **School Events**

All students attending school events will be required to comply with school safety protocols.

### **Participation in Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

All students selecting the virtual learning option may participate in athletics and extracurricular activities for which they are eligible. When participating on campus, all students will be required to comply with school safety protocols.

# Technology Device and Internet Access

## Technology Device and Internet Accessibility

Technology devices will be available for all students in grades K-12 and will be issued by each student's traditionally assigned school. While efforts will be made to issue similar devices across the district, some school-level variation may occur. All students will only be issued a technology device upon acceptance of the Marshall County Schools Acceptable Use Policy and the return of the MCS Insurance Policy form.

These devices can be used with or without internet access at home. However, access to Google Classroom, Synergy, etc. will require connectivity. Teachers have been trained in using these devices to integrate technology into their curriculum through digital resources, collaboration, and Google Meet/Classroom. A schedule for digital device pick-up will be communicated by each traditionally assigned school.

If determined a device needs replaced or repaired, the student should take their device to their home school immediately. Every effort will be made to provide a replacement device at that time. In the event that a replacement device is not available, the device will be repaired and available for return to the student as soon as possible.

## Responsible Internet Use and Digital Citizenship

The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the school system. The use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network.

Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material that is protected by a trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

- Privileges: The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The school system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. Also, system administrators may suspend privileges at any time.
- Net Etiquette: Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Avoid offensive or inflammatory speech.
  - Be courteous and polite.
  - Use appropriate language.
  - Profanity or obscenities are not permitted at any time.
  - Do not use the network in any way to disrupt the work of others.
  - All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.
  - Users may not quote personal communications without the author's consent.
- Vandalism: Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet, or other networks that are connected to the Internet backbone. This includes but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- An exception to terms and conditions: These terms and conditions reflect the entire agreement of the parties and supersede all prior oral and written agreements and understandings of the parties.

With expanded access to electronic information, the availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses, we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. We especially appreciate partnering with parents to teach responsible Internet use. Students who are in violation of responsible Internet use may be put on academic probation or dismissed from MCS Virtual Learning.

For more information about Marshall County Schools and the technology resources available to students, please visit the Marshall County Schools web page.

## **State and Local Testing**

All MCS students, including both traditional (in person) and virtual learning option students, are required to participate in the state and local assessments as required by law. These include all state TCAP and EOC assessments, local checkpoint assessments, ACT, and any other assessments deemed necessary by school or district leaders. All state assessments may be required to be taken on campus during the regular testing window.

### **ACT (High School Only)**

It is a Tennessee requirement that all juniors (11<sup>th</sup> grade) take the ACT at school or provide proof that they have already taken the ACT. The ACT is a state test and administration protocols are set forth by the producers of the test. In recent years, the state of Tennessee has provided a senior make-up day the year following the junior ACT; however, that opportunity is not guaranteed to be provided to students and is dependent upon the state Department of Education.

Due to the closure of schools in spring 2020, seniors in the Class of 2021 will be required to take the ACT during the fall semester in order to meet graduation requirements. **Currently, the ACT test day is set for September 22, 2020.** This is subject to change. Students will be required to take the ACT test at school on the designated day per ACT policy.

### **TNReady Testing (Grades 3-12 Only)**

State testing is required for all subjects, unless waived by the Tennessee Department of Education, in grades 3-8 and the following high school subjects: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English I, English II, U.S. History, and Biology. For the purposes of state testing, the testing schedule will be set and delivered to parents two weeks prior to the first day of testing. All state testing will be completed at each student's traditionally assigned school. Students are not allowed to miss scheduled tests or to re-schedule tests unless a significant documented emergency occurs.

### **Accommodations**

Students who have an active IEP, 504, or ILP will receive accommodations as stated in their most recent plan.

## **Removal or Dismissal from Program**

If a student is removed from MCS Virtual Learning for any reason (plagiarism, attendance, behavior, lack of academic progress, failure to engage in any work for ten school days, etc.), parents will be notified in writing of the removal. If the student does not begin attending school using the traditional option, the student may be considered truant and referred to court.