KCS CONNECT
Fall 2020

Elementary Virtual Learning Program
Student/Parent Handbook

Beginning in August, 2020, Knox County Schools will offer an opportunity to its students to access instruction through a virtual program. We realize that many families have been impacted medically, physically, and emotionally by the COVID-19 pandemic and believe that their children's education could be better met through a virtual platform. Virtual instruction will align with all state and district standards and guidelines and will parallel with the rigors 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-5 will receive what they need to be prepared for their further education.

ACCESS TO VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

KCS Students have two different methods in which they will receive virtual instruction.

- **Virtual Online Instruction** – As much as possible, each elementary school will run a virtual school within the school. The student is at home accessing course work in a digital format. Students will continue to be enrolled in their school and taught by a certified teacher from that school. Some lessons will be synchronous (the teacher delivering a lesson or the students are participating in discussions through Microsoft Teams), and some lessons will be asynchronous (students working independently accessing work created by the teacher through Canvas.)

- **District QuEST Virtual Learning program** – Students may be assigned to the District QuEST program when their assigned school is unable to accommodate their virtual instruction at the school level. Students will continue to be enrolled in their zoned school but will be taught by a certified teacher for their grade level or course subject. There will be communication between the QuEST teacher and the zoned school throughout the duration of enrollment. All teachers who teach the QuEST courses through the Virtual Learning program are Knox County employees who are certified in the grade level or course that are assigned to teach. Virtual teachers will follow the KCS curriculum and state standards.

STUDENT AND PARENT VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Student Admission and Entrance Requirements
- Students who opt for virtual learning will maintain enrollment in their KCS base school. Students who have been granted a transfer will maintain enrollment in the school in which they were granted a transfer.
- In order to participate in virtual programming, families must complete the KCS Virtual application process and agree to all student and parent expectations.
- Students participating in virtual learning will agree to participate for at least one semester. Students may not return to their base school until the second semester.

Student Expectations:
- Students, along with a parent/guardian, will be required to attend the base school's Virtual Orientation.
- Students must adhere to the KCS Policy J-260 Dress Code.
- Students are expected to follow KCS Policy J-191 Misbehaviors and Disciplinary Options to provide a safe and respectful environment for teachers and students.
- Students are expected to follow the KCS Policy I-220-3 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. KCS reserves the right to monitor all technology resource activity.
- Online students will continue to follow and maintain all expectations contained in the KCS Responsible Use Policy (Knox County Schools Procedure I-220-3). Students are responsible for the content posted through their login and account activity. Sharing or using usernames and passwords with others or using other's usernames and passwords is strictly prohibited.
- Follow KCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship.
- Students are expected to check Canvas or other teacher communication formats daily. Teachers will provide scheduled office hours - minimum of two hours per week.
- Students will be expected to adhere to all assessment policies for diagnostic, benchmark, and Standards Based Assessments. (Students may be required to come to their base school for these assessments at a designated time).
- Students will attend virtual lessons with teachers and/or participate in asynchronous lessons daily.
- Students are to be an active participant in virtual discussions as instructed by the teacher.
- Students are to submit assignments as designated by the teacher. Assignments may be assigned with flexibility to submit weekly. (Example: Saturday by midnight)
- If a student fails to complete an assignment and there is no communication within 5 school days, then the students shall earn a failing grade for the assignment.
- Students must attend mandatory in person assessment days at your school.
- Students must maintain the pace of the course.
- It is expected that students keep online interactions positive and constructive.
- Report any technical issues through the Tech Help Desk as soon as an issue arises.
- Students will maintain best practices for virtual learning sessions.

  Best practices for virtual learning sessions
  - Consider the environment behind you that can be seen in video chats and ensure there are no inappropriate images, materials, etc. for school.

- Mute audio when entering chats.
- Mute audio when not speaking.
- Be appropriate and respectful in your actions.
- Listen to the educator or individual speaking.
- Stay engaged throughout the lesson or activity.
- Ensure that all work is your own. (See Characteristics of the Virtual Learner)

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 ASPEN. 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 Knox County Schools.

- A parent/guardian, along with the child who will participate in virtual learning, will be required to attend the base school's Virtual Orientation.
- Parents are expected to set up and maintain a daily work schedule for the student, including participation in virtual class meetings
- Parents are expected to set up a dedicated learning space in the home - free from distractions and interruptions (pets, siblings, television, etc.)
- Parents are expected to check KCS platforms (Canvas and ASPEN) for assignments and grades.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the KCS dress code. (J-260)
- Parents are expected to adhere to the Civility Code KCS Policy B-230.
- Ensure that the student follows the established classroom rules and expectations for virtual learning.
- Ensure that the student follows the KCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship.
- Maintain open lines of communication (phone and email) with teachers. Attend two virtual parent-teacher conferences per semester.
- Ensure that the student is communicating appropriately with teachers and classmates (email, chat feature, etc.)
- Communicate with the teachers who are supporting the student at home and a point of contact during the day.
- Parents are expected to support academic integrity by allowing students to work independently and by monitoring resources used.
- Parents are expected to ensure students are submitting assignments as directed by the teacher.
- Parents are expected to communicate any issues or questions promptly to the teacher.
- Parents are expected to ensure the student attends mandatory testing/conference/check-in sessions at the school.
- Parents are expected to make arrangements to pick up needed devices, supplies and resources from the base school. Maintain these devices, supplies and resources and return to the base school at designated time.
- 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 KCS Responsible Use Policy (Knox County Schools Procedure I-220-3)

Characteristics of the Virtual Learner:

Students who participate in a virtual learning program offered by Knox County schools are held to the same academic standards as students who choose face-to-face instruction in any of our middle and high 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. Please see the handbook from the student's base school for expectations and consequences. 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:
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> 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 of part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.
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> *Cheating* is defined as representing any other person's work or work from any source as your own.
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> **CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM**
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> 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 KCS policy and the base school's Student Handbook.

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 KCS Virtual Instruction.

Attendance
Parents and guardians have the legal responsibility to ensure that their students are 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. All virtual students are held to the same attendance policies/guidelines as students who are in traditional schools. See Knox County Board of Education Attendance Policy (J-120) regarding absence documentation. All Virtual Learning students will follow the BOE approved school calendar and attend the same number of days as students in their base school.

School Counselors
School counselors are available for students who choose virtual learning. Once the student enrolls in the KCS Virtual Learning program, a counselor will be assigned to the student. Since the students are still enrolled at the base school, parents and students can always contact the school for assistance. However, school counselors will also be available through the DIstrict QuEST Learning program.

Engagement
All students participating in Virtual Learning – either online or QuEST models – 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.
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English Language Learners
The ELL Department is dedicated to providing ELs with instruction in English language development and support services. This instruction may take place either in a classroom setting or via an on-line platform. Students may also utilize digital resources that are designed to increase English language proficiency and literacy. Regardless of the manner of delivery (on-line or in person), the ELs' instruction will be delivered in accordance to WIDA Standards and will be based on the student's English language proficiency level.

In addition to direct instruction, ELs will continue to receive appropriate accommodations and modifications in all content areas. To ensure that the instructional accommodations and modifications

are appropriate to the ELs' English proficiency and literacy levels, content teachers will have access to utilize the district's on-line ELL platform to monitor the ELs' progress and to identify instructional strategies.

All active/waived ELs will have an individualized learning plan (ILP). This plan is developed through collaboration with the ELL and content teachers, and with input from the parent, student, and other personnel as needed. The ILP will be shared with content teachers and updated every 4.5 weeks. Parents may receive information regarding their child's ILP, or provide input to the ILP in person, via email, telephone, or video conferencing.

Schedules

Kindergarten students are required to participate in virtual instruction a minimum of 4.5 hours per day. First through fifth grade students are required to participate a minimum of virtual instruction 7 hours per day. Participation in virtual instruction includes: whole group and small group Microsoft Teams meetings, individual work on Canvas, and group work on Canvas (synchronous or asynchronous).

Suggested schedules based on state recommendations for content areas and Tom Cronin PE bill requiring 60 minutes of physical activity per week.

Kindergarten	Time
Literacy	1.25 hours
Encore	45 minutes
Math	45 minutes
Lunch	30 minutes
Science/Social Studies	30 minutes
Additional Physical movement activity	15 minutes per week
Recess	15 minutes
Intervention/Enrichment	30 minutes

1st – 2nd	Time
Literacy	2.50 hours
Encore	45 minutes
Math	75 minutes
Lunch	30 minutes
Science/Social Studies	60 minutes
Recess	30 minutes
Additional Physical movement activity	15 minutes
Intervention/Enrichment	30 minutes

3rd - 5th	Time
Literacy	90 minutes
Encore	45 minutes
Math	90 minutes
Lunch	30 minutes
Science/Social Studies	90 minutes
Recess	30 minutes
Additional Physical movement activity	15 minutes
Intervention/Enrichment	30 minutes

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING
Teachers will provide a variety of assessments to determine student mastery of the course content. Assessments may include discussion-based assessments, essays, project-based, and formative assessments.

Late Work
The procedure outlined below describes the approach to late work in our virtual learning program. If questions about late work arise, please communicate with your teacher.
- Late work may not be accepted more than two weeks after the due date.
- It is important to note that this policy is intended for work that is infrequently late. Consistently handing in late work is not acceptable.

Students must not assume teachers will repeatedly accept late work without prior approval. At times circumstances out of our control, such as illness, weather-related events, family issues, or other major events, would require an exception to this policy. If this is the case, talk to your teacher. Always make every effort to contact your teacher prior to turning in late work, if possible, or as soon as possible after. Continued failure to turn in work on time could result in a lowered grade.

Making-up assignments. 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
Every child must receive a report card each nine weeks. Children receiving special education services must receive an IEP Progress Report each nine weeks that indicate progress toward goals and objectives outlined in the IEP. The special areas teachers will provide music, physical education and art grades to you in advance. Interim reports will be sent home at 4½-week intervals

Student Support Services (Gifted & Talented, Special Education, 504)

Special Education
Our department is committed to providing free and appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities. During this public health crisis, we will continue to work with families to meet the needs of our students while following public health guidelines. When a family chooses to access virtual programming for their student, we will work with them to set specific plans for service delivery. Each student should have a Virtual Delivery Plan.

- **Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meetings:** Knox County Schools will continue to provide families the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the IEP process. Staff will work with families to determine if virtual or in-person meetings are appropriate. KCS will make every effort to balance parent preference and public health guidelines.

- **Delivery of Special Education and Related Services:** Teachers and service providers will work with families to prioritize services that provide access to the general curriculum and enable student progress toward IEP goals. Services for students will be addressed in collaboration with families on an individual basis.

- **Accommodations and Modifications:** Accommodations and modifications are provided regardless of the educational setting. The IEP team will work collaboratively to determine the most appropriate accommodations or modifications in the virtual setting. General educators and special educators should collaborate regularly with families to ensure accommodations and modifications provided are appropriate in the virtual setting.

- **Supporting Parents as Learning Coaches:** Administrators and teachers will provide training and support in the following areas:
  - Using technology including individual student devices and virtual schooling platforms
  - Providing specific student modifications and accommodations to support learning
  - Utilizing visual supports
  - Managing behavior through positive strategies and techniques

Section 504
Our department is committed to providing access to educational opportunities for students with physical or mental disabilities. During this public health crisis, we will continue to work with families to meet the needs of our students while following public health guidelines. When a determination regarding the learning/medical needs are made, we will work with students and their families to set specific plans for accommodations and/or services. Our department will work with schools to ensure all students are provided access and prohibit discrimination according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- Knox 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. KCS 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.

Tennessee State Testing

Online students will be expected to take all state exams associated with their grade level or chosen course work. All state exams will be taken on campus at times scheduled by the school within the required testing windows. State exams include Aimsweb benchmarks, TNReady, EOCs, etc.