

# KCS CONNECT

*Fall 2020*

## Secondary Virtual Learning Program Student/Parent Handbook

**\*\*The following responsibilities and expectations are in addition to the base school student 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. **Families who choose the virtual option for their child's education must agree to remain in the program for the semester.** 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 6-8 will receive what they need to be prepared for high school, and students in grades 9-12 will be able to access the courses they need for graduation and will be prepared for life after high school.

### **ACCESS TO VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION**

**KCS students have 2 different methods in which they will receive virtual instruction:**

- **Virtual Online Instruction:** As much as possible, each secondary school will run a virtual school within the school. In this case, the student, while working virtually, will access coursework in a digital format from a certified teacher at the school. The student will check in with the teacher during the period in which the class is assigned. Some lessons will be synchronous (the teacher is 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). A teacher could also assign a student to Edgenuity, a third party online program which has been vetted by KCS and will be overseen by the teacher.

- **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. The QuEST courses have been developed by KCS teachers and vetted by the district office to ensure that they meet state and district standards and guidelines. 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 they are assigned to teach.

## **Student Admission and Virtual Participation Information:**

### **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 one semester.

## **STUDENT AND PARENT VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS**

### **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.
- 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 must maintain a log of usernames and passwords for all virtual learning platforms.
- Students will be expected to adhere to all assessment policies for diagnostic, benchmark, and Standards Based Assessments. (Students may be required to sit for these assessments at a designated time at the base school).
- Students will attend virtual lessons with teachers and/or participate in asynchronous lessons daily.
- Student attendance will be recorded daily and entered into Aspen.
- Students are expected to be active participants in virtual activities as directed by the teacher.
- Submit assignments as directed 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.
- Advocate for personal needs and additional support when needed. Students are expected to meet the teacher policy regarding assignment submission, late work, and incomplete work. Students are expected to meet all deadlines.
- Students will be held accountable for meeting teacher virtual classroom policies.
- Students will attend mandatory in person assessment days at the base school.
- Report any technical issues through the Tech Help Desk (865-594-1830) as soon as an issue arises. The help desk is manned from 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Monday - Friday.
- 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 a dedicated learning space in the home - free from

distractions and interruption (pets, siblings, television, etc...). This may include a quiet space, no movement behind the student, and appropriate background.

- Parents are expected to set up and maintain a daily work schedule for the student in accordance with the synchronous and asynchronous class schedule.
- Parents are expected to check KCS platforms (Canvas and ASPEN) for assignments and grades.
- Parents are expected to provide schools and teachers with the most current contact information (phone numbers, emergency contact, and address).
- Parents are expected to maintain open lines of communication (phone and email) with teachers and communicate any concerns or questions to the teacher. Teachers are expected to return communication within 1 business day.
- Parents are expected to attend two virtual parent-teacher conferences per semester.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student is communicating appropriately with teachers and classmates (email, chat feature, etc...).
- Parents are expected to adhere to the Civility Code KCS Policy [B-230](#).
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the KCS dress code. ([J-260](#))
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the established classroom rules and expectations for virtual learning.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the KCS grade-level expectations for [digital citizenship](#).
- Parents are expected to support academic integrity by allowing students to work independently and by monitoring resources used.
- Parents are expected to monitor student work and ensure that assignments are submitted according to directions by the teacher. This includes due dates and format.
- Parents are expected to ensure that all KCS policies and procedures are followed. Students must understand they must be properly dressed and cannot issue inappropriate or threatening language.
- Parents are expected to follow federal and state laws regarding student privacy and FERPA. This includes not recording lessons or sessions and not posting photos and videos on social media.
- Parents are expected to read, review, and follow the 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:

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

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

### **CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM**

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

If expectations are not followed, disciplinary consequences could include disciplinary action in accordance with 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/guardians have the legal responsibility to ensure that their child is fully participating in virtual school by monitoring their progress and time spent on daily course work. When a student is unable to participate in daily instruction, parent notes/doctor notes should be submitted. 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.

### **Counseling Services:**

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 counseling office. However, school counselors will also be available through the District QuEST Learning program.

### **Engagement**

All students participating in Digital Learning – either online or hybrid 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.
3. Should a student continue to be off track in the course even with an action plan, withdrawal from Digital Learning will be initiated, and the student will return to face to face instruction at school or secure a different school option outside KCS.

### **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**

All student schedules will be developed based on student-need and virtual offerings. Some students may take virtual courses through *both* the base school virtual online instruction program and the District QuEST Virtual Learning program. Virtual students are expected to engage in the learning process for at least 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week.

## **ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING:**

### **Assessments**

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.

### **Make-Up Work**

If a student must be absent from school for any reason, excused or unexcused up to ten (10) days, upon returning to school, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all assignments that were missed during the student's absence. The student must request make-up assignments within three (3) days after returning. Teachers shall set a reasonable time for the completion of the work. Failure of a student to initiate a request for make-up work within three (3) days will result in lost opportunity for credit for that assignment.

### **Progress Reports/Report Cards**

Families will continue to receive either a progress report or a report card every 4.5 weeks. These reports will be posted to the Family Portal.

## **Student Support Services (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. Families will have the option of virtual programming if they choose to not have their student attend in-person. More specific information about virtual student supports will be sent to families directly from the department of student supports.

- **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 identify alternative solutions if it is determined an accommodation or modification is not appropriate or successful in a particular setting. **Supporting Parents as Learning Coaches:** Administrators and teachers should 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**

The 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. The 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.

### **State and District EOCs/Testing**

Students who opt for virtual learning will be required to take all state and district level end of course exams. Exams will count 15% of final grade. Virtual students will report to the base school at a designated time to sit for the exams.

### **Glossary of terms**

**ASPEN** is the student information system used by Knox County Schools. The Aspen Family Portal is the online access point for important student information and teacher communication.

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

- Grades
- Upcoming assignments
- Attendance
- Progress reports/report cards
- State testing scores

Family Portal also allows you to email teachers and set automatic email notifications if a grade falls below a specific threshold.

Additionally, some teachers use the site to build classroom pages and to manage parent communication. These pages are accessed only by logging in and may include announcements, a course syllabus, dates for important assignments and links to classroom information.

**Asynchronous Instruction** is instruction provided by a certified educator to students who participate in instruction at a separate time from when the teacher delivered the instruction. This may include but not be limited to methods such as printed work materials, teacher-

assigned individual or group projects, audio- or video-recorded lessons, or online course modules, or other appropriate methods as determined by the district.

**Canvas** is the learning management platform used in Knox County that allows schools to deliver a virtual learning environment that meets the needs of the student and the school. Student assignments can be found in and submitted through this platform.

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

**Microsoft Teams** is the secure on-line platform that will be used in Knox County for teachers to communicate with students and parents and to deliver synchronous instruction.

**QuEST** is an acronym for Quality Education for Students using Technology. QuEST provides students who opt for virtual learning with on-line access to courses. These courses have been developed by Knox County teachers and uphold the state and district course standards. Additionally, students can take courses not offered at their base school through the QuEST program.

**Synchronous Instruction** is instruction provided by a certified educator to a student or students at the same time but not necessarily in the same place who engage in instruction while it occurs. This may include but not be limited to in-person instruction or telephonic, Internet-based, or other appropriate methods of communication as determined by the district and may include full-class or small-group instruction or one-on-one instruction between student and teacher.

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