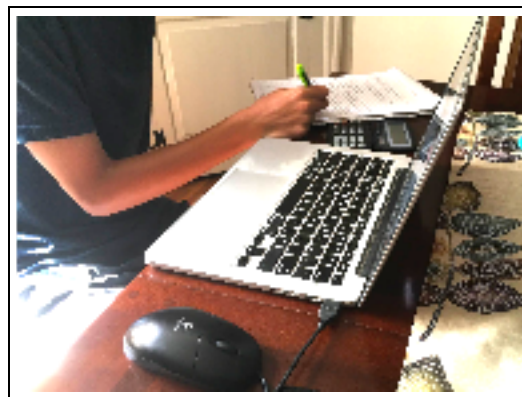




# MANHEIM TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT K-12 Virtual Academy

## Student/Parent Handbook



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Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Manheim Township School District Virtual Academy (MT Virtual Academy). This program provides K-12 virtual learning opportunities for Manheim Township families. We work in a collaborative effort with the Lancaster-Lebanon Virtual Solutions (LLVS) to provide new learning options for non-traditional learners. Our 300+ web-based K-12 academic courses meet the increasing demand for high quality student instruction that incorporate proven online learning practices. Enrolling in our virtual learning program means students will have the opportunity to experience flexible and non-traditional learning options. Students will learn from a rigorous standards-aligned curriculum with an emphasis on developing their communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, students can continue to be a member of the Manheim Township School District community and participate in school events, programs, and activities.

This handbook has been developed to provide you with an overview of the virtual academy, our support system, and important policies and procedures. Full and part-time virtual academy students remain enrolled in their local home school and therefore may use the school as a resource. This handbook will provide you with clear guidelines on both your responsibilities and the school district's responsibilities.

We look forward to working with you this school year. We are committed to supporting student success and we are dedicated to achieving that goal together. If you have any questions, we are here to help. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional assistance.

We look forward to working with you!

Best Regards,

*Jan Minnich*

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## **District Mission Statement**

*The Mission of the Manheim Township School District is to nurture and challenge for success.*

## **K-12 Enrollment Procedures**

Students and parents who are interested in pursuing virtual learning opportunities should first contact their assigned school counselor. He or she will schedule a time to discuss your options, while ensuring that your student meets all academic requirements to continue making progress towards grade level advancement and graduation (for high school students).

### ***Required & Recommended Skills***

When considering whether or not full time or part time virtual learning is a good fit, students and parents should consider the following:

- Does the student have good time management skills?
- Is the student able to advocate and ask for help when needed?
- Does the student have a basic comfort level with technology?
- Does the student have access to reliable internet services?
- Can the student (or parent) navigate minor technological trouble-shooting?
- Does the student have a designated work space where he/she can work without interruption?
- Is a parent or other adult available to assist the student and to monitor progress and pacing through online coursework? \*This is an especially important consideration for K-6 students.

If you answered “yes” to the majority of these questions, virtual learning may be a good fit for you. If you were split in your responses, secondary students may want to consider a part-time online experience to ease into the program and to develop skills in these areas before taking on a full time virtual schedule. (There is currently no part-time option available for elementary students.) Finally, if the majority of your responses were “no”, you may want to talk with your student’s counselor about a more traditional, face to face schedule where teacher support is more readily available and accessible.

Once the decision is made to enroll in one or more online courses, the parent, student, and counselor will work with the MT Virtual Academy Coordinator to build an appropriate schedule. Students will continue to attend all of their assigned face to face classes until they are notified of the start date for their virtual experience.

**IMPORTANT:**

Students will have 5 school days following the start of a course to decide whether to remain in the course or whether to withdraw. If the student decides to withdraw from a course, he/she will need to notify both the Virtual Academy Coordinator and his/her counselor. The student will be reassigned to a face to face class in order to keep pace with his/her academic progress towards graduation or grade level advancement. After 5 school days, the student will need to remain in the online course until its completion.

## **K-12 MT Virtual Academy Program Overview**

The Virtual Academy Coordinator will collaborate with counselors, administrators, students, and parents to choose online courses that align with what the student's peers may be doing in the traditional classroom setting. The first priority when scheduling online courses is to ensure the student is taking courses that are required by the district or state. These courses will be plugged into a student's schedule before allowing the student to choose from a variety of electives.

Students are assigned course work based on what credits are needed to advance to the next grade level, meet Manheim Township School District graduation requirements, and continue annual progress towards graduation.

### ***ELEMENTARY STUDENTS***

Example of a typical K-6 student's full time schedule. Courses in K-6 are not credit based.

- **English Language Arts**
- **Science**
- **Math**
- **Social Studies**
- **Physical Education**
- **Health**
- **Electives** -which can include, but are not limited to: Art, Music, Family & Consumer Science, Technology, etc.

Most *elementary* online courses are semester-long, and students need to pass the semester to earn credit for the course.

### ***SECONDARY STUDENTS***

Example of a typical MS student's full time schedule. Courses at the middle school are not credit based.

- **English 7 or 8**
- **Science 7 or 8**
- **Math 7 or 8**

- **Social Studies 7 or 8**
- **Physical Education**
- **Health**
- **College & Career Readiness 7 or 8**
- **Electives** - which can include, but are not limited to: Art, Music, Family & Consumer Science, Technology, World Languages, etc.

Example of a typical HS student's full-time schedule:

- **English** – 4 Parts (1 Credit)
- **Science** – 4 Parts (1 Credit)
- **Math** – 4 Parts (1 Credit)
- **Social Studies** – 4 Parts (1 Credit)
- **Physical Education (Fitness)** – 2 Parts (½ Credit)
- **Other Required Courses** - Health (½ credit) & Personal Financial Literacy (½ credit)
- **Electives** – (1 ½ Credits) which can include but are not limited to: World Languages, Art, Music, Family & Consumer Science, Business, Technology, etc.

Most *secondary* online courses are divided into four parts (one per marking period), and students need to pass all four parts to earn credit for the course. Each *part* of the course consists of approximately 35-48 lessons, quizzes, and exams. Students typically need to achieve at least an 80% or higher on the daily lessons and 70% or higher on quizzes and exams to earn passing grades.

Secondary students (grades 7-12) have the option of enrolling in the MT Virtual Academy part-time. This means that some of their daily schedule would consist of face to face classes at Manheim Township Middle or High School, while the remainder of the day consists of online classes completed at home. Families interested in this option should reach out to their school counselor to discuss their student's needs. Mid-day transportation to and from school must be provided by the parent.

## **Daily Schedules**

Although online courses are delivered in an asynchronous format, allowing flexibility in when and where students complete their coursework, many students benefit from a structured daily schedule when working at home. This is especially true for elementary students.

Manheim Township School District recommends the following time parameters for students to be engaged in remote learning at one time. *Please note that these are only recommendations and may need to be adjusted to meet the needs of your student.* As a district, we encourage frequent breaks and suggest dividing your student's work between morning and afternoon sessions. Additionally, students may be reading or completing assignments, projects, and tasks while they are not on their devices as part of their learning experience. We know that many students learn best when they have an established routine and a consistent schedule. We encourage parents/guardians to create a daily/weekly plan that will work for their student.



Elementary (K-6): 1 hour per work session (with breaks)

Middle School: 2 hours per work session (with breaks)

High School: 3 hours per work session (with breaks)

<p><b><i>K-6 Example:</i></b></p> <p>8:00 am - Student begins work on ELA 8:30 am - Student takes break 8:45 am - Student finishes work on ELA 9:30 am - Student goes outside to play 10:00 am - Student works on Math 10:30 am - Student takes break 10:45 am - Student finishes work on Math 11:30 am - Student breaks for lunch 12:00 pm - Student begins work on Science 12:30 pm - Student takes break 12:45 pm - Student finishes work on Science 1:30 pm - Student goes outside to play 2:00 pm - Student begins work on Social Studies 2:30 pm - Student takes break 2:45 pm - Student finishes work on Social Studies 3:30 pm - Finish working for the day</p>	<p><b><i>7-12 Example:</i></b></p> <p>7:30 am - Student begins work on English 9:00 am - Student takes break 9:15 am - Student works on Math 10:45 am - Student takes a break 11:00 am - Student works on Science 12:30 pm - Student breaks for lunch 1:00 pm - Student works on Social Studies 2:30 pm - Student takes break 2:45 pm - Student works on Elective course 3:30 pm - Finish working for the day</p>
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Students should expect to work the equivalent of five school days per week (approximately 30 hours), however, they can spread this out over seven days of the week and all hours of the day or night.

## **Academic Assistance**

### ***ELEMENTARY STUDENTS***

In addition to asynchronous lessons, synchronous sessions are done weekly and touch on all subject areas, with a main focus on Math and ELA. There are also assessments/benchmarks that pop up throughout the course that may require an additional synchronous session to occur. The weekly sessions are scheduled by the teacher, however - parents are able to reach out and request if they prefer to change things up and meet on a different day. The synchronous sessions are between teacher and student via Zoom so questions can be asked and answered, and so the student and teacher can build rapport.

## ***SECONDARY STUDENTS***

The Manheim Township Virtual Academy has face to face “home bases” for full time and part time virtual students located at Manheim Township High School and Manheim Township Middle School. This is a classroom in the building where part-time virtual students report to work on their online courses during class periods when they are not assigned to a face to face class. These rooms are staffed by Manheim Township teachers and paraprofessionals every period of the school day who can answer student questions and support students with content or technology questions.

Full-time students enrolled in the Virtual Academy may also take advantage of these rooms as a resource for academic or technological assistance or as a workspace during the school day. Students wishing to use this space will need to check in at the main office when entering the building and sign out when leaving. **Full time students who fall behind the prescribed pace will be expected to come onto campus in order to use the virtual classroom to catch up on their progress on course work.**

### **Supports for Students, K-12**

- Each student will be able to seek assistance from an online, on-demand tutor via LLVS. This tutor, available from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays, is a highly-qualified teacher who can provide additional assistance to aid the student’s learning. Students are also encouraged to speak with their online teachers via email and/or the course player software.
- The Virtual Academy Coordinator helps to monitor the student’s progress and coordinate assistance, if necessary.
- Students with special needs, gifted needs, or EL needs will work with a district case manager and the Virtual Academy Coordinator to ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are followed.
- All MTSD Virtual Academy students will be enrolled in a MTSD Virtual Academy Seesaw page (grades K-4) or Schoology page (grades 5-12). These pages will facilitate home-school communications, and they will house important documents, resources, and contact information for district staff should a need arise.
- Students and parents/legal guardians have continual access to student grades online through Schoology and Sapphire, and Manheim Township School District issues report cards on a quarterly basis. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their student’s counselor or the Virtual Academy Coordinator if they have questions or concerns regarding grades or progress in online courses.

### **Tiered Interventions of Support**

If a student repeatedly falls behind pace or struggles to make academic progress in his/her online course(s), the following may occur:

- Home-school communication
- Parent-teacher conference
- Face to face time with a school counselor
- Seat time in the Virtual Academy room to work on courses (secondary)
- Loss of the privilege to take virtual courses full time and enrollment in face to face courses

**IMPORTANT:** Students who are not successful in the virtual classroom may be required to participate in a conference with their counselor, principal, case manager (if applicable), and/or the Virtual Academy Coordinator to develop an individualized plan for academic success.

## **Attendance & Academic Eligibility**

### ***Attendance***

The attendance policy for full-time virtual students enrolled in the MT Virtual Academy includes required log in time and the demonstration of progress on daily/weekly assignments.

Students must log into the MT Virtual Academy network a minimum of five days per week and maintain an “on pace” status within each of their online courses to be considered “present” at school. The MT Virtual Academy school week is defined as Monday through Sunday; therefore, students will be able to schedule their work time throughout the week as they see fit. All weekly lessons should be completed by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. The Genius platform used to house online courses for MT Virtual Academy students will compute and communicate whether or not a student is “on pace” for completing the course on time.

If a student is marked absent, he/she may present a written excuse within 3 school days from a parent/guardian to explain the absence. Students should refer to the MT Student Handbook for additional information about what is considered to be an excused or unexcused absence.

### ***Academic Eligibility***

For secondary students to participate in a school-related extracurricular club or athletic team that meets after school, full-time students must meet academic eligibility requirements, be in good standing with weekly attendance, and remain on pace with their daily coursework. Part-time virtual students will follow the expectations for attendance outlined in the MT Student Handbook. Academic eligibility checks are not required for K-6 students.

Please refer to the MT Student Handbook for specific attendance and academic eligibility guidelines and procedures.

- [Manheim Township High School](#)
- [Manheim Township Middle School](#)
- [Landis Run Intermediate School \(Gr. 5-6\) Handbook](#)
- [Elementary \(K-4\) Student Handbook](#)

The Virtual Academy Coordinator, counselors, and principals will use the following chart to determine whether or not a student is “present” for attendance and academically eligible to attend daily and weekly athletics or extracurricular practices or contests.

Student is...	On pace or ahead of pace in ALL courses, passing courses, AND logged into all courses a minimum of 5 days per week	Student is considered to be present (all 5 days) and is daily/weekly academically eligible.
Student is...	Behind pace in one or more courses AND/OR not passing two or more courses, AND logged into all courses a minimum of 5 days per week	Student is considered to be present (all 5 days), but is not daily/weekly academically eligible.
Student is...	Behind pace in one or more courses AND/OR not passing one or more courses, AND logged into courses fewer than 5 days per week	Student is absent for the number of days not logged in, and is not daily/weekly academically eligible.

If a student is marked absent, he/she may present a written excuse within 3 school days from a parent/guardian to explain the absence. Students should refer to the MT Student Handbook for additional information about what is considered to be an excused or unexcused absence.

## **Helpful Tips & Best Practices for Online Learning**

1. At Manheim Township, we value parent involvement and engagement with their student’s learning in both the traditional and online environment. Parents/Guardians of the MT Virtual Academy students have a unique opportunity to participate in the education of their children. We encourage parents to participate in information/orientation sessions or parent-teacher conferences set up by the district.

2. It is helpful to establish a regular “school workplace” and “school work time” in the home for students to complete their online course work. This helps students to distinguish between school work time and leisure time.
3. Parents should monitor student’s computer use to ensure that computer equipment and software are used for educational purposes and in accordance with school policy.
4. Use the school calendar and the due dates within the online courses to help students pace themselves. Because students are still learning the skills associated with time management, organization, and self-discipline, it is often a good idea to map out assignments as well as identify specific times and days when a student plans to work on certain assignments or course materials.

### ***Other Important Parent Information***

- Please notify the school immediately of any change in the parent’s or student’s contact information or academic status and maintain contact with the MT Virtual Academy through email and telephone. The MT Virtual Academy relies heavily on email communications to update parents, so it is critical that both an accurate email account is on file in your student’s records and that parents are responsive to emails received from the MT Virtual Academy. Frequent home-school communication is paramount to the success of students in our online learning environment.
- Please provide your student with transportation as needed to participate in standardized testing, *mandated assignment catch up time*, or other school activities. If you need assistance with transportation, please contact your school counselor for help making arrangements.

### ***Other Important Student Information***

- Students are expected to adhere to all policies, regulations, and procedures outlined in the MTSD student handbook in addition to the MT Virtual Academy Handbook. Please reach out to the building principal for a copy of the student handbook if needed.
- Prior to enrolling in virtual courses, students will be asked to complete an online pre-assessment to help families determine whether or not online learning is a good fit. Students may also participate in a district pre-assessment to ensure appropriate Math or ELA placement.
- In cases of illness or absence, be proactive and contact online teachers and the MT Virtual Academy Coordinator. This helps students to keep up with assignments and stay on pace.
- Students are required to attend all state and school mandated assessments such as the PSSA Testing schedule for grades 3-8 and Keystone Testing for grades 9-12 at their home building. Principals and counselors will be in touch with all MT Virtual Academy students regarding the dates, times, and locations of the required assessments.
- Students must comply with the district and state’s graduation requirements, including adherence to the Pathways for Graduation.
  - [PDE Pathways for Graduation](#)

- Students should plan to log in a minimum of five times per week, and complete a minimum of 5 lessons per week per course.

## **Withdraw, Transfer, and Dropping/Adding a Course**

### **Withdraw from the Virtual Academy and the District**

Students participating in the full-time MT Virtual Academy may withdraw from the program and the district, provided that the parent/legal guardian indicates in writing the reason for withdrawal, the name and location of the public or private school that the student will attend, and the expected exit date from the program.

Parents may initiate withdrawal from the program by contacting the student's counselor and building principal. The school will contact the parents/legal guardians to ensure proper withdrawal paperwork is completed and meets all district standards. Upon completion of withdrawal, any and all equipment issued by the MT Virtual Academy must be returned to the district in the same condition that it was given to the student(s).

### **Transfer to Another District**

Students taking online courses may continue with their school work if they transfer to another LLVS member school district and follow all applicable guidelines of that school district's policies, procedures and regulations. Parents must contact both the current school and new proposed school district in order to make these arrangements for their student(s) to continue with online coursework.

Students enrolled in the full-time Virtual Academy who expect to be away from the home of residence for three (3) or more consecutive weeks must fill out a temporary transfer of location form. This form must be submitted to the student's counselor no less than one (1) week before the expected transfer event is to occur. The local school has the authority to accept or deny any requests for location transfer(s). Students are expected to continue with their schoolwork regardless of their temporary location(s). Students with location transfers are still required to participate in any/all state required assessments.

### **Dropping/Adding a Course**

#### ***ELEMENTARY STUDENTS***

Elementary students are required to enroll in four core courses: Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science. They are not able to drop one of these core courses. Students will also be required to enroll in Health/PE. Students will work with their counselors to take additional electives based on student interests.

Parents have **five calendar days** from the enrollment date of an elective course to notify their student's counselor and the Virtual Academy Coordinator that they intend to drop an online course for their

student. The **five calendar day** window starts from the day of enrollment in each course and includes weekends.

If parents choose to drop an online elective course, they need to make arrangements through the school counselor to explore options for a different online elective.

### ***SECONDARY STUDENTS***

Students have **five calendar days** from the enrollment date of the course to notify their counselor and the Virtual Academy Coordinator that they intend to drop an online course. The **five calendar day** window starts from the day of enrollment in each course and includes weekends.

If a student chooses to drop an online course, he/she must make arrangements through the school counselor to explore options and limitations based upon graduation and credit load requirements. Options could include enrolling in a different online course or take a face to face course, unless he/she has already earned enough credits to advance grade levels and remain on pace for graduation.

Students will not be able to drop a virtual course if it results in them carrying fewer credits than the minimum required. 9th-11th grade students are required to carry 6 credits, and 12th grade students are required to carry 5 credits.

**If a student is registered in a course, but has not completed any assignments within the first five (5) calendar days, the student will be dropped from the course and assigned to a traditional/face-to-face course to ensure the student has the minimum number of required credits required for his/her grade level.**

## **Technology**

Students enrolled in the MT Virtual Academy may be provided with an iPad or laptop computer and all applicable hardware, including but not limited to: computer, computer case, mouse, keyboard, microphone/headset, and any software necessary to successfully complete online course requirements. *All resources remain the property of the Manheim Township School District and fees may be charged for repair or replacement of damaged equipment that falls outside of normal “wear and tear.”*

The use of district-provided hardware and software is governed at all times by [Manheim Township School District Policy #815](#) - “Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources.”

Students and parents/guardians can contact the Manheim Township Tech Media department at (717) 560-1500 or by emailing at: [techmedia@mtwp.net](mailto:techmedia@mtwp.net) if they have questions or concerns.

## **Student Services**

The Manheim Township School District and the MT Virtual Academy are required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to ensure educational services to students with disabilities. Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) will be accommodated within the courseware. Students with Gifted Support Services (GIEP) or 504 Plans will receive appropriate accommodations through their coursework. Parents who believe their child is eligible for special services should contact the Manheim Township School District for further assistance. The MT Virtual Academy will work with the parent and student to ensure proper procedures are followed with appropriate results. Adequate communication between the student, his/her case manager, his/her school counselor, the MT Virtual Academy Coordinator, and the student's online teachers will ensure the student receives the proper modifications outlined in his/her IEP and/or 504 plans.

## **Grading**

Students are assessed on a multitude of criteria, including: assessments, quizzes, essays, tests, participation, and forum discussions. Students and parents have immediate and continuous access to grades by logging into the Genius system. Grades for assessments and tests will be posted within 36-48 hours from the date of completion. Grades will also be imported into Sapphire on a regular basis for student and parent access.

At the high school level, student GPA and class rank will be calculated by the local school district.

Report cards and progress reports will be distributed by the student's school.

## **Career Exploration & Career Portfolios**

All Manheim Township students, including those enrolled in the MT Virtual Academy, are required to meet all of the Career Education and Work Standards required by the state of Pennsylvania. This includes the maintenance of a Career Portfolio.

### ***ELEMENTARY STUDENTS***

- Elementary students will work closely with their school counselor and participate in Nearpod lessons that will help to cover the appropriate College & Career standards. The school counselor will check in throughout the school year to help students collect evidence and upload artifacts into their Career Portfolio.

### ***SECONDARY STUDENTS***

- If a student has never taken a virtual course previously, full-time virtual students will automatically be enrolled in a Cyber and Digital Citizenship course as soon as they enroll.



- Additionally, any high school student who completes more than four credits online in one year will also be required to enroll in a Career Exploration course designed to help meet the Career Education and Work Standards and to collect artifacts for the student's Career Portfolio.
- High school students will receive .25 credits for the Cyber and Digital Citizenship course and .25 credits for the Career Exploration course which will be added to their progress toward graduation.
- Full-time virtual students will work with their counselor to ensure that assignments completed in these two courses or in other related courses are uploaded into their Career Portfolio so they meet the district's graduation requirements.
- Students and parents will meet annually face to face with their counselor and the Virtual Academy Coordinator to check progress on their Career Portfolio and other graduation requirements.

## **Testing Policies**

### **K-12 Grade Assessments**

#### **Mandated State Testing**

Students are required to participate in all school and state mandated assessments. Students will communicate with their counselor regarding the date and time that they are to arrive at the local school building to take specified assessments.

### **Secondary Assessments**

#### **Proctored Exams**

Students enrolled in the MT Virtual Academy may be required to take proctored exams each year at their local school. Students will communicate with their counselor on the date and time that they are to arrive at the local school to take specified assessments.

#### **Advanced Placement Exams**

Students wishing to take AP exams must work with the appropriate school personnel to determine date, time, and location. The cost of the AP exams is solely the responsibility of the student and parent/legal guardian.

## **SAT**

Students wishing to take the SAT exam(s) must work with their school counselor to determine date, time, and location. The cost of the SAT exams is solely the responsibility of the student and parent/legal guardian.

## **Keystone Exams**

Students taking Biology, Algebra 1, and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature will be subject to the end of unit Keystone Exam as required by the state of Pennsylvania. The exam for all Keystone courses taken the first time will occur in May of that year, while credit recovery could either be in either December or May of that year. All information regarding the Keystone Exams will be communicated by the student's counselor and/or principal.

## **Code of Conduct**

All MT Virtual Academy students are subject to all of the expectations defined in the Manheim Township Student Handbook & Student Code of Conduct including cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity.

## **School Board Policies**

For additional information, please refer to the following MTSD Board Policies:

[Policy 130 Homework](#)

[Policy 146 Student Services](#)

[Policy 217 Graduation Requirements](#)

[Policy 249 Bullying/Cyberbullying](#)

[Policy 815 Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices](#)



## **MT Virtual Academy Handbook Sign-Off Form**

*We have read, understand, & agree to abide by the MT Virtual Academy Handbook in its entirety.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name(s)      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature                Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature(s)      Date