

HARLAN COUNTY VIRTUAL LEARNING ACADEMY

Parents with student health concerns due to COVID-19 may choose a completely virtual option. Students are enrolled free of charge and complete all work online. Credits earned/courses completed will go toward earning an accredited diploma. Enrollment in the HCPS Virtual Learning Academy is a privilege. In order to remain enrolled a student must maintain a passing grade while participating and completing all assignments, activities, and assessments in a timely manner. Internet availability is required. Devices may be “checked out” if there is not one available in the home. Students must be available to interact with teachers from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM each day school is in session.

Benefits of Choosing the Harlan County Virtual Learning Academy:

1. Flexible learning programs based on mastery learning in performance as opposed to seat time in the traditional setting (Performance based coursework is permitted in Kentucky of under KAR 003:305)
2. **Students may be required to attend some classes virtually at the time and date they are offered** but other classes will be available and can be completed outside traditional school hours.
3. The virtual learner is a student in the Harlan County School District and may participate in extracurricular, athletic, social and academic opportunities
4. Breakfast and lunch is available at designated pick up sites

Limitations of choosing the Harlan County Virtual Learning Academy:

1. The Virtual Learning Academy option can't replace the quality of a caring and dedicated Harlan County teacher who builds a relationship with your child. We strongly encourage parents of primary students to consider the benefits of in-person instruction as well as the socialization of their children before choosing the virtual learning option.
2. Many socialization skills can't be replicated in a virtual setting.
3. **The services provided through the Virtual Learning Academy option may not be equivalent to services provided in the traditional classroom.**
4. Virtual Learning Academy students will **NOT** be exposed to **all** of the supplemental programs and services provided during the school day through programs such as Gear-Up, Save the Children, 21st Century and our Family Resource Youth Service Centers.
5. Vocational students can't participate in the Virtual Learning Academy. Most Vocational classes include a hands-on component which can't be replicated in a virtual setting.
6. Some elective classes such as JROTC, Culinary, band, choir, sports conditioning and agriculture include a hands-on component which can't be replicated in a virtual setting.
7. **Dual Credit classes are not an option through our virtual learning platform, Edgenuity. We do not have sufficient staff who are SACS accredited to teach multiple sections of dual enrollment classes (DC) to both in-person and Virtual Learning Academy students.**

8. Virtual Learning Academy students may be required to virtually participate in some of their classes at the actual time the class is scheduled using a Google Classroom platform.
9. Assistance will only be available from Harlan County teachers during normal school hours.

Curriculum:

K-12 students enrolled in the HCPS Virtual Learning Academy will receive instruction in various platforms depending on the specific grade and subject with Edgenuity being the primary virtual learning platform. Google Classroom may also be utilized by Harlan County virtual teachers in order to address students who may be struggling with a particular concept or who need additional supplemental instruction.

K-12 virtual students will receive instruction on a hybrid model which includes the delivery of instruction by dedicated virtual classroom instructors (Harlan County Virtual Teachers) using the Edgenuity virtual platform.

Students may be required to attend some classes virtually at the time and date they are offered.

Enrollment:

Enrollment for HCPS VLA DA will be limited and can only be done by completing the on-line application. Students who were unsuccessful with the virtual instruction platform during the 2020-21 school year will not be considered. Through our experience with the pandemic virtual learning platform, we recognize that a virtual learning environment is not the best environment for all students, but it is a good option for some students and families with continuing health concerns. Before applying to the HCPS VLA, the family must make sure this learning option is the right one for their child and that the student is equipped with the necessary skills to be successful in a primarily self-guided online learning environment.

Students who are considering enrolling in HCPS VLA should exhibit the following characteristics, either independently or with strong support from the parents/guardians:

- Self-motivated
- Ability to set and meet deadlines
- Ability to follow a schedule
- **Ability to participate in class assignments (8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)**

- Prior demonstrated success, or potential success, in a virtual learning environment
- Have access to the internet;
- Log-in and participate for the **duration** of the school day;
- Maintain regularly scheduled communication with assigned personnel;
- Submit assignments and take exams on the schedule designated by their instructor;
- Attend remediation sessions (if requested)/complete remediation lessons when academic expectations are not met;
- Comply with on-site testing requirements for district and state testing such as annual KY testing, ACT, etc.
- Will attend orientation session with school administration

In order for a student to enroll and remain in the Harlan County Virtual Learning Academy, families must:

1. **Ensure children have access to reliable internet;**
2. Be able to support their student(s) with login issues (be aware of how to log in and keep student login information handy);
3. Know how to contact the designated instructor with questions;
4. Attend any requested meetings/trainings regarding the online platform used by their students;
5. Attend any requested meetings and stay in contact with the school district/assigned teacher regarding the progress of their child(ren) and any updates or changes to the virtual academy option;
6. Create a realistic schedule and set up an adequate workspace for school work to take place;
7. Comply with on-site testing requirements for district and state testing such as annual KY testing, the ACT, and district benchmark testing (if requested)
8. Regularly monitor progress and assignment completion within the learning platform
9. Communicate with and respond to teachers and staff members on a regular basis.
10. Establish a distraction-free workspace within the home

Interested families must complete an application for each student they wish to enroll, commit to adhering to HCPS VLA expectations, and commit to staying enrolled for a minimum of one entire nine week or trimester period. A committee will review applications and families will be notified of the final enrollment decision. All committee decisions are final.

Application Process:

1. Family submits an application using the on-line application. **The application must be submitted by August 8, 2021. NO application for the first term will be considered after August 8th.**
2. A committee consisting of Principal, Counselor, a core subject teacher, and a SPED teacher (if applicable) will review the received applications and determine admission based on the rules, guidelines, and rubric for admission. The committee will take into consideration extenuating circumstances to make final decisions.
3. The school will notify parents/caregivers of acceptance or denial prior to the start of the term.
4. Parents and students must sign the Parent/Guardian Contract

Criteria and Expectations:

- **All students registering for HCPS VLA commit to attend the VLA for a minimum of an entire term (Nine Weeks or Trimester).**
- Students who have been retained for the upcoming year are not eligible for HCPS VLA.
- Students with a history of truancy are not eligible to apply for HCPS VLA.
- Students with and Individual Education Plan (IEP) must have recommendation of least restrictive environment from the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC).
- Enrollment in the HCPS VLA is a privilege and to remain enrolled a student must maintain a passing grade while participating and completing all assignments, activities, and assessments in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in:
 - A written warning stating the student is behind and must improve grade while maintaining participation and turn in all required assignments, activities and/or assessments.
 - If progress is not made within two weeks, a student is then placed on probation, which means the student must attend in person, and all VLA privileges could be revoked.
- Technology access and communication between teachers and students/parents are critical components for online instruction. Students must have reliable high-speed Internet service to participate (ability to stream a video without buffering, ability to stay joined to class, etc.). If more than one student in a home will be enrolling in HCPS VLA, then the Internet service must be able to support all students being online at the same time. **If technology issues persist and become a barrier to learning and/or students or parents quit answering the door, phone, phone messages, or email when the teacher/school tries to communicate, the student will be required to resume in-person instruction and the HCPS VLA won't be available as an option for them..**
- The student must have access to a reliable device with a webcam and microphone such as a Chromebook, laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. A Smartphone will not count as a device. They must be able to create, complete, and submit projects and assignments. If more than one student in a home will be enrolling in HCPS VLA, then each student must

have access to his or her own device. The district will provide a device for those students who need one if a contract agreement is signed and followed.

- HCPS VLA students are expected to complete and submit all assignments by the due dates, and their progress shall be monitored on assignments. Students who are not making adequate progress and are not meeting assignment deadlines may be put on probation and may be removed from the HCPS VLA program.
- Students may be asked to participate during scheduled live (synchronous) sessions. This involves use of the webcam and microphone at the teacher's request, responding to the teacher's questions and discussion prompts throughout the class, actively listening to directions and explanation of content, asking clarifying questions, and using the chat feature when appropriate. This means students should not be doing other tasks, driving, participating in other activities, or using other devices or electronics during scheduled meeting times.
- The expectation is that students will not have a job that requires work during school hours.
- The regular HCPS grading scale is the same as the HCPS VLA grading scale.
- Grade checks will be performed weekly.
- Parents/guardians should provide a space in the home for students to have a distraction-free learning environment during the HCPS VLA sessions. Since the area behind the student may be visible to others when the camera is on, it is the family's responsibility to make sure the student is in a location that does not divulge any information they don't want to share.
- Parents who wish to change their child's placement (traditional vs virtual or virtual vs traditional), may do so by notifying the child's school at least 2 weeks prior to the end of the nine week or trimester period.
- Parents may choose to re-enroll their child in traditional learning (in school setting) at the end of the term.

Why must my child stay enrolled in the virtual learning academy through the end of the term?

- Staff Allocations: Requiring students to remain enrolled in the virtual academy for an entire term allows the district to effectively allocate the number of staff needed for virtual instruction and traditional instruction.
- Grade Level Progression: Due to curriculum pacing guides, requiring the students to remain in the virtual academy for a full term (nine weeks or trimester) will help the student make adequate progress before potentially moving back to a traditional in school learning setting.
- Transition Time: The term end provides a natural pause for instruction. The transition offers the opportunity for the district to plan for adjustments in the number of students enrolled in virtual and face-to-face instruction. It will also provide time for students and parents to plan for the transition to a new educational setting.

- Consistency: Having a consistent schedule, whether virtual or face-to-face is important for students' mental health and well-being.

Additional Supports/Considerations:

- IEP's and 504 plans will be implemented by qualified personnel. Related IEP services will be delivered via video conferencing (Zoom, Google Meets, etc.) and/or a blended services model.
- Students will be assigned a teacher/facilitator. The teacher/facilitator assists with questions, tutoring and other needs that may arise.
- Students enrolled in the Harlan County Virtual Learning Academy may access the school counselor, gifted/talented services, mental health provider, school nurse, Family Resource/Youth Service Center, and other support programs. However, access to all of these services may be limited due to the nature of virtual instruction/interaction.
- **HCPS VLA students will have access to all required state curriculum and coursework to meet the minimum grade level and graduations requirements. Electives and special course offerings will be more limited than they are in a traditional in-person school setting.**
- HCPS VLA students are allowed to participate in sports, extra-curricular activities, and after school events if they choose. However, grade checks and all KHSAA rules apply.
- HCPS VLA students must fully participate in all required local, state, and federal assessments. Students may be required to report to an on-campus site to complete the assessment. Appointments for these assessments will be scheduled and communicated with the parent/guardian and student.
- All truancy laws shall be followed for virtual students.