PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIRTUAL STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to help the families of Prince George County Public Schools (PGCPS) navigate the components of virtual instruction. The continuum of in-person instruction to full virtual instruction will depend on the health of our students, staff, and community. Additionally, as we operate in a hybrid manner ALL students will be required to complete a portion of their assignments virtually. This document is intended to supplement each school's student/ parent handbook and provides tips and advice for parents to help monitor their child's educational progress, support their virtual learning, and ensure their online safety.

INSTRUCTION

As PGCPS students begin the 2020-2021 school year students will be taught either in-person or virtually. Please note that regardless of whether a student is in-person or virtual/remote ALL students will have a component of virtual/remote instruction.

VIRTUAL/REMOTE

The terms virtual and remote are used interchangeably to describe the type of instruction our students will be provided. Virtual instruction will be conducted either synchronously, asynchronous, and/or through learning modules. For more information specific to elementary and secondary schools can be accessed in the link below:

● **Return to Learn Instructional Plan**

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

PGCPS teachers will utilize Google Classroom as the learning management system. A brief Google Classroom tutorial can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

How to Use Google Classroom for Parents - YouTube
How to Use Google Classroom for Students - YouTube

SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION ("Live")

Synchronous or live instruction is the term used to describe when teachers and students interact virtually in real time. Zoom and Google Meet will be the primary platforms for teachers to instruct students virtually. Synchronous instruction will be recorded and available on-demand. Both of these platforms are free.

ASYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION ("On-demand")

Asynchronous or on-demand instruction is the term used to describe when a student completes their assignments independently and at their convenience. Examples of asynchronous instruction include but are not limited to the following:
- Completing assignments on Google Classroom
- Watching a pre-recorded instructional video from their teacher
- Utilizing online and digital instructional resources ie. Study Island, IXL, APEX, Virtual Virginia, Flocabulary, etc.

IN-PERSON

The term in-person represents students that have opted to attend school in-person 4 days/week. These students will attend school Monday-Thursday during normal school hours (relative to elementary or secondary). Students opting for in-person instruction will be required to participate in virtual/remote on Fridays. As stated above, this participation may be synchronous, asynchronous, and/or through learning modules.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Whether attending school in-person or virtually, all students will be assigned lessons to introduce new material, extend previously taught lessons, and remediate students in need of additional support. The PGCPS grading procedures and grading scale apply to all students. Due to the nature of the virtual classroom, some assignments normally completed in class may be required to be completed asynchronously or on-demand and outside of regular school day. Additionally, virtual students will need to submit assignments differently than in-person students. Methods of submitting completed work will vary among schools and teachers; however, it is important to communicate with your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty submitting assignments.

COMMUNICATION

The teachers and staff of PGCPS value positive and thorough communication. Additionally, we realize communication is two-way. To best support your child through these unprecedented times, we ask that you work in partnership with your child's teacher(s). Norms and expectations are important aspects of a positive parent-teacher relationship. The following are general communication norms we ask all parents to follow:

- Allow students to provide their teachers feedback commensurate with their age. Older students can be expected to better articulate their concerns directly with their teachers.
- Utilize your child's teacher as the first point of contact.

- Contact teachers when necessary and allow an appropriate response time. In most cases, you can expect a response to your email in 24 hours.
- Contact teachers and expect to be contacted during normal school hours. We realize

ATTENDANCE

VIRTUAL LEARNERS

Student attendance will be entered daily for each student that has been in attendance for any portion of the day as evidenced by any one of the methods indicated in the **Tracking Student Attendance in Various Instructional Delivery Models** below.

Time-based Method	
Virtual - Online	Remote - Other
- Virtual presence for a synchronous online lesson - Login time to a learning management system - Activity log on a learning management system - Total time log on a learning management system - Phone call or real-time online chat - Timestamp for posts or submissions	- Submission of a time log - Phone call - Face-to-face meeting (may be an option for divisions have students come in for packet or work collection/drop-off)
Task or Product Based Method	
Virtual - Online	Remote - Other
- Participation in a synchronous online lesson - Demonstrated evidence of engagement with peers for collaborative work - Engagement on a discussion board - Email exchange - Phone call - Submission of task or assignment "View" tracker for asynchronous online lesson	Submission of task, product, or assignment

Below are general expectations for virtual families to follow:
- Students are expected to log in daily. Connectivity issues should be reported via email to the teacher or by telephone to the attendance clerk at the respective school.
- Parental contact must be made for a student who fails to log in for 3 consecutive days. That contact can be made via telephone call, text message or email and record of such contact must be maintained by the teacher.

- If a student fails to log in for 10 days total, an attendance conference must be held and documented.
- All other attendance policies and procedures remain active.

The VDH recommends that students that are absent due to COVID-19 illness, related quarantine or social distancing not be dropped from school enrollment in order to allow for continuity in education. Therefore, the state has waived the requirement that a student be withdrawn from the roll after 15 consecutive absences as found at 8VAC20-110-130, if such student is known to be absent due to illness or quarantine due to COVID-19.

Virtual students' attendance will be reconciled by teachers each Friday.

IN-PERSON LEARNERS

For in-person students, attendance will be recorded daily in accordance with the Attendance Policy (JED, JFC) and Appendix F of the Encouraging Positive Student Conduct and Safety Handbook for Prince George County Public Schools Revised August 2020. On the day of virtual learning (Friday) - the methods listed above in Tracking Student Attendance in Various Instructional Delivery Models will be used for recording attendance. Please note that in-person students with greater than 12 absences may be transferred to virtual/remote learning.

STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

All policies and procedures defined in the Prince George County Schools' Student Code of Conduct apply to virtual instruction, including attendance, behavior, academic integrity, dress code (**when videoing with others**), and the acceptable use policy.

When participating in synchronous instruction, intervention, or enrichment student must adhere to the following, unless otherwise instructed by their teacher:

- Students must use their real name when creating a Zoom/Google Meets account
- Students will address staff and peers in a respectful manner.
- Students will refrain from using the private chat option to chat with other members of the class. The chat function is only to be used to communicate directly with the teacher.
- Students must enable their video for the duration of the synchronous ("live") lesson and are not permitted to change the virtual background.
  Note: students whose parents/guardians DO NOT consent to having their child's photo taken will turn their child's video off.
- Students will remain on mute unless they are asked to answer a question or have a comment.

- Students are to raise their "virtual hand" and wait to be recognized when responding to a question or comment.
- Students will avoid using all uppercase letters; this is often considered to be equivalent to shouting.
- Students are prohibited from taking and/or sharing stills or videos of other students and their work.

Additionally, students participating virtually in an asynchronous lesson should minimize the at-home distractions. The following are tips to minimize distractions:

- Clear the room of playful pets or noisy siblings.
- Minimize background noise by turning off the TV and radio.
- Silence cell phones

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE & APPROPRIATE USAGE

The safety and privacy of our students is of utmost importance. Even when students are positive digital citizens and implement the tools learned during their technology education courses there is a certain level of risk when using the internet and/or social media. PGCPS understands the benefits to using the internet and social media; however, we make intentional efforts to educate our students on the dangers of the internet and social media. The following are suggestions for parents/guardians to encourage positive online habits and decrease their child's digital footprint.

- **Be a Role Model**
  - Discuss the benefits and risk of technology devices with your children and model good habits. Good habits include locking your device, keeping it charged, and handling it with care.

- **Maintain Internet Provider Parental Controls**
  - Become familiar with your internet providers parental controls
  - To find your parental controls for your child's device simply Google "Parental Controls" and search for your specific device.
  - Know your WiFi password and how to change it, or disable it to encourage your students to "unplug" when needed.

- **Develop Instructional Habits**
  - Establish and maintain "school hours".
  - Discourage the use of the schools' devices for games and entertainment.
  - Students should see the schools' device as their "work" device.

- **Supervise Browsing**
  - Consider having your children use their device in a central location where parents/guardians can actively monitor the sites students are visiting.
  - Do not condone the use of a device on their own behind closed doors.

- **Set a Device Curfew**
  - Set a consistent time for the device to go to its charging spot for the night.
  - Choose a spot that is easily supervised and out of his/her bedroom. This will improve sleeping habits.

- **Explore Browsing History and Device Chats**
  - Set the expectation that your child should not delete his/her browsing history until it is checked by a parent or guardian.
  - Remind them that nothing on their school-issued device is private to them and can be viewed by you, their teacher, or administrator.

INSTRUCTIONAL DEVICES

PGCPS families were provided an opportunity via a survey in June to inform the school system of their instructional preference and whether they had access to a device at home. Parents/guardians that completed the survey and indicated that they needed a device were given priority. Additional devices will be provided to students when available. The following are the Terms of Student Usage for students accepting a PGCPS device.

- Students will abide by all policies outlined in the Prince George County Public Schools Student Conduct and Safety Handbook.
- Students acknowledge that any issued device is the property of Prince George County Public Schools. It is yours to use, but it is owned by the school division. You will return the device to Prince George County Public Schools upon completion of the school year and/or at the request of your school administrators. Failure to return the device, for any reason, will result in a $250 charge.
- Students will adhere to the usage agreement each time the device is used.
- Students will bring devices to school charged daily.
- Students will charge the devices at home after school hours, and chargers are not to be brought to school.
- Students will make available for inspection by any school administrator or teacher any messages, files or other activity sent or received on their PGCPS-issued device.
- Students will report to responsible school personnel any incidents of inappropriate electronic communications transmitted in any form using PGCPS-owned technology.
- Students will not, in any way, deface the device or adhere stickers directly on the device.

- Students will not share school owned devices.

If loss or damage occurs to the equipment, students and their parent or guardian agree to pay up to $250 in repair or replacement fees for the device. Replacement device chargers are available from the school division for a $25 fee. The replacement fees are intended to promote good habits and responsible handling of PGCPS-issued devices. Devices reported as stolen outside of school require that parents notify police and send an official police report to their school administration.

HOT SPOTS

In addition to instructional devices, Hot Spots may also be available (pending availability) to families that completed the June survey and indicated they did not have access to the internet. The following are the Terms of Student Usage for those being issued a PGCPS Hot Spot:

- Students will abide by all policies outlined in the Prince George County Public Schools Student Conduct and Safety Handbook.
- Students acknowledge that any issued device is the property of Prince George County Public Schools. It is yours to use, but it is owned by the school division. You will return the device to Prince George County Public Schools upon completion of the school year at the request of your school administrators. Failure to return the Hot Spot, for any reason, will result in a $50 charge.
- Students will adhere to the usage agreement each time the device is used.
- Students will report to responsible school personnel any incidents of inappropriate electronic communications transmitted in any form using PGCPS-owned technology.
- Students will not, in any way, deface the device or adhere stickers directly on the Hot Spot.
- Students will not share Hot Spots.

If loss or damage occurs to the equipment, students and their parent or guardian agree to pay a $50 fee for the Hotspot device. The replacement fees are intended to promote good habits and responsible handling of PGCPS-issued equipment. Devices reported as stolen outside of school require that parents notify police and send an official police report to their school administration.

ACCESSIBILITY

For our virtual students in need of internet access that have not been provided a hot spot, the following locations have free "guest" Wi-Fi:
- N.B. Clements Junior High School (front parking lot)
- J. E. J. Moore Middle School (front parking lot)
- Prince George High School (student parking lot)
- Prince George County Libraries

- ○ Burrowsville
- ○ Carson
- ○ Disputanta
- ○ Prince George

The guest Wi-Fi at these locations will enable students to access, download, and upload assignments and coursework. Even if you have access to the internet in your home, these options are also available to decrease the data demand for your family.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Even prior to COVID-19 and the need for virtual instruction, PGCPS has intentionally embedded the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for Computer Technology. The following table outlines the categories of standards taught at each grade level. Elementary aged students are taught the standards in conjunction with other subjects, and our secondary students are taught these standards through health classes, and elective courses specific to technology education. As students' progress from kindergarten through the twelfth grade these standards become more age appropriate and increasingly complex. For an in-depth guide to the Virginia technology standards visit
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/computer_technology/index.shtml

Computer Technology Standards
● Basic Operations and Concepts ● Social and Ethical Issues ● Technology Research Tools ● Thinking Skills, Problem Solving, and Decision Making ● Technology Communication Tools

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

As part of the technology education curriculum, our students are provided in-depth lessons on digital citizenship beginning in the third grade. PGCPS believes that just as students need to be taught how to make a positive contribution to their school families and greater community, they also need to be taught how to make a positive contribution to their digital communities. A student's digital community can be as small as his/her classroom and/or as large as social media and the World Wide Web. The following table provides the technology standard as they relate to digital citizenship.

Grades Taught	Standards

Grades 3-5	**Demonstrate digital citizenship by actively participating in positive activities for personal and community well-being**.
	
	A. Communicate respect for people when participating in group online learning activities.
	    ● Identify ways in which online communications are different from face-to-face communications.
	    ● Demonstrate online etiquette when communicating with others.
	B. Explore the potential of the Internet as a means of personal learning and the respectful exchange of ideas and products.
	    ● Participate in the creation of digital projects that involve communicating with others.

Grades 6-8	**Demonstrate digital citizenship by actively participating in positive activities for personal and community well-being.**
	
	A. Communicate respect for people when participating in group online learning activities.
	    ● Demonstrate online etiquette when communicating with others.
	    ● Demonstrate an understanding of cyberbullying and strategies for stopping a cyberbully.
	B. Explore the potential of the Internet as a means of personal learning and the respectful exchange of ideas and products.
	    ● Participate in the creation of digital projects that involve others working together toward a common goal.
	    ● Demonstrate the ability to identify diverse perspectives on issues.

ACCEPTABLE USE

In addition to general technology instruction and instruction specific to digital citizenship, all PGCPS families are informed of the divisions Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The AUP is the division policy (File: GAB-R/IIBEA-R) that provides guidelines for the appropriate use of technology. The AUP is on pages 11-17 in the PGCPS Student Conduct and Safety Handbook. These handbooks are provided to each family upon entry into PGCPS and at the beginning of each school year. Additionally, parents/guardians are required to sign and return the last page of the Student Conduct and Safety Handbook indicating that they have read and reviewed the contents of the handbook. To see the policy visit www.pgs.k12.va.us , click on "Parents", choose "Forms & Documents", scroll down and click on "Acceptable Use Policy".

ANNUAL FORMS & DOCUMENTS

The following is a list of annual forms and documents that are sent home with students on the first day of school. For our in-person students, these forms and documents will be sent home with students as usual on the first day of school and need to be returned as soon as possible. For our virtual students, we have set up the following link for parents to access the annual forms and documents. Please note that regardless of your child's instructional status (virtual or in-person) the following forms must be signed and returned. Parents of virtual learners can access and complete the following three documents in the [Tyler SIS Parent Portal](.).

- Acknowledgement of Parent/Student Responsibility
  - Located in the back of Encouraging Positive Student Conduct and Safety Handbook
- Proof of Residency/Residency Investigation Form
- Emergency/Health Card

The following annual documents and forms are for you information and do not necessarily require a signature. The documents below that require a signature have been specified.

- [Free/Reduced Lunch Application](.) ([e form completion](.) if applicable)
- Compulsory Attendance
- Policy Manual Statement
- Health Services Information
  - Scoliosis
  - Head lice
  - Eating disorders (grades 5-12)
- Family Life Education (sign and return to opt out)
- School Closing Information
- Letter from Transportation re: penalty for return of students (preK-2 only)
- Professional Qualifications of Teachers in Title 1 Schools (if applicable)
- Service Animals (if applicable)
- Standards of Accreditation Information
  - Learning Objectives
  - Standards of Learning
  - Graduation Requirements