



SOMERSET VIRTUAL CHARTER ACADEMY

STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Somerset Virtual Academy is to produce self-directed and responsible life-long learners through the delivery of a high-quality public digital learning program emphasizing communication processes, technologies, and techniques that will prepare students for the demands of the 21st century workforce.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Somerset Virtual Academy promotes a culture that maximizes student achievement and fosters the development of responsible, self-directed lifelong learners in a safe and enriching environment.

**The Mission, Vision, and Purpose Statements of Somerset Virtual Academy are reviewed and updated periodically by the Governing Board and stakeholders periodically upon the completion of each strategic planning cycle.*

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Somerset Virtual Academy, hereinafter referred to as “SVA,” has instituted admissions and enrollment policies and procedures. The purpose of SVA’s program is to make instruction available to students using online and distance learning technology in the nontraditional classroom. The program shall provide fulltime virtual instruction to students in grades 6 through 12.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to ensure students are eligible to participate in the Somerset Virtual Academy Instruction Program, the following criteria must be met. The school’s registrar will ensure that students are eligible upon receiving enrollment applications.

- (1) A student may participate in virtual instruction in the school district in which he or she resides if the student meets the eligibility criteria in subsection (2).
- (2) A student is eligible to participate in virtual instruction if:
 - (a) The student spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school in the state and was enrolled and reported by the school district for funding during October and February for purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program surveys;
 - (b) The student is a dependent child of a member of the United States Armed Forces who was transferred within the last 12 months to this state from another state or from a foreign country pursuant to a permanent change of station order;
 - (c) The student was enrolled during the prior school year in a virtual instruction program under s. 1002.45, the K-8 Virtual School Program under s. 1002.415, or a full-time Florida Virtual School program under s. 1002.37(8)(a);
 - (d) The student has a sibling who is currently enrolled in a virtual instruction program and the sibling was enrolled in that program at the end of the prior school year; or
 - (e) The student is eligible to enter kindergarten or first grade.
- (3) The virtual instruction options for which this eligibility section applies include:
 - (a) School district operated part-time or full-time kindergarten through grade 12 virtual instruction programs under s. 1002.45(1)(b) for students enrolled in the school district.
 - (b) Full-time virtual charter school instruction authorized under s. 1002.33.

(c) Courses delivered in the traditional school setting by personnel providing direct instruction through a virtual environment or through a blended virtual and physical environment pursuant to s. 1003.498 and as authorized pursuant to s. 1002.321(4)(e).

(d) Virtual courses offered in the course code directory to students within the school district or to students in other school districts throughout the state pursuant to s. 1003.498.

ENROLLMENT PERIODS AND ELIGIBILITY

Somerset Virtual Academy (SVA) is one of many Choice Options available to all students. Parents and students may apply to this program at any time. Parents can access the Somerset Virtual Academy (SVA) website to review eligibility criteria and enrollment process throughout the year. Students applying during the application period are notified by email or phone regarding their applicant status to SVA during the school's open enrollment period.

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IDENTIFICATION

Parent/legal guardian identification must be confirmed when student information is discussed. The parent/legal guardian must be present and produce identification for activities involving enrollment, withdrawals, and change of address and/or phone numbers. Only the parent/ guardian who enrolled the student may withdraw or transfer the student.

ELIGIBILITY

The student entering into 6 through 12 has spent the prior school year in attendance at a State of Florida public school and was enrolled and reported by a public school district or approved State of Florida Virtual School, and must reside within Miami-Dade County for funding during the preceding October and February Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) surveys §.1002.455 (2)(a) is eligible to participate in the program.

ADMISSIONS

Applicant Status:

1. Parents must apply online.
2. Information submitted online is verified and reviewed for eligibility according to the State and District rules and regulations. In addition, staff will review the District's online Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) to review the student's educational records. ESOL students will be considered at SVA if it is the appropriate placement. Students with an individual educational plan (IEP) will be considered based on whether the IEP can be implemented in a virtual program. Students that fail to meet the initial criteria will receive a letter of ineligibility. Eligible candidates will be notified regarding the orientation meeting.
3. After the online training, parents and students will sign a contract, fill out registration forms, and officially register their student into the school.
4. Parent and student must participate in an orientation course offered by SVA and the curriculum provider to ensure they understand the program. The training will cover the Learning Coach's role, the provider's registration process, Parent's and Student's responsibilities in a virtual school, and successful monitoring skills.

Enrolled Status:

After students are officially registered at the school, their courses are scheduled. Students are photographed for a picture identification card to be used at testing facilities and various meetings.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

SVA monitors student attendance, participation, and performance to ensure that students meet compulsory attendance requirements and are making progress toward successful completion of the course or program as specified in the program's attendance policies.

Virtual students are expected to attend and participate in their online education courses as they would attend and participate in a traditional classroom course.

If there is no activity or login from a student in one week, the teacher may contact the student and/or parent. Unless prior communications have been received from the student, parent, or home school regarding the student's absence, a student who fails to log in and participate in his/her online course for twenty (20) days may be dropped from the course. **If a student does not log in to course for seven (7) consecutive days for any reason, it is his or her responsibility to notify the teacher.**

Attendance is measured by time logged in, contributions made through communication via discussion threads, e-mails, Drop Box, chat sessions, video conferences, and/or through the submission of assignments, projects, and tests. Each time a student enters a course, participation is automatically recorded and the length of time in each area is noted. A student is expected to complete a formal activity, assignment, or assessment in order to be marked present in that class.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to maintain an appropriate pace throughout the course and take care to not fall behind. He or she must be proactive in giving their best effort to attain proficient grades in each class at all times.

If the student has difficulties with the course, assignments, or with time management, he or she should contact the teacher for support and guidance.

Attendance

Somerset Virtual Academy follows the Miami Dade County Public School's policy on attendance. A Somerset Virtual student who is of school age is required to attend school regularly during the entire school term according to Compulsory School Attendance F.S. 1003.21. Student attendance must be verified by the school district; therefore, students are expected to login every school day and complete the appropriate work for each class.

Attendance record keeping is provided to Somerset Virtual Academy by the provider, who must maintain an auditable management system that records the student participation in the virtual instruction. Attendance may be recorded using the number of days a student receives instruction through a virtual program. Somerset Virtual Academy must report days present and days absent annually. The sum of the days present and days absent must not exceed 180.

Official school attendance is determined by the information collected by the provider submitted to SVA and reported to the district on a weekly basis. On the student's schedule, each student will reflect a homeroom period, which will be used to report the official school attendance. For students present fewer than the total numbers of days in the quarter, those absences are recorded beginning with the last day of the quarter. The school must enter such information into the school districts information database and will be reflected in the student's report card.

Only absences as specified in the *Student Attendance Reporting Procedures PK-12 Handbook* may be recorded as excused. SVA may use disciplinary actions for excessive absences including being placed on probation, reported to the Federal and State Compliance Office for truancy, and withdrawal to the student's boundary school.

Due to the nature of virtual instruction, Somerset Virtual students are not confined to attend school or access their course work at a specific time of the day. Therefore, the parent/guardian should monitor their student's daily online clocked hours, the daily schedules, assignments, quizzes and tests to assure their student does not fall behind pace during the semester. The schools official calendar will determine the official start and end of the terms.

Parent Responsibilities

Each time a student spends time online in their courses, time accumulates into hours of attendance. The parent shall be responsible for their child's school attendance as required by law. If the student is absent for any reason, parents must ensure that the child completes make-up assignments for all absences from their teachers upon return to their online academic program. If a student has excessive absences of more than 15 days, the parent is responsible to appear before the Attendance Review Committee at the scheduled time to provide information relating to their child's absences and to support prescribed activities.

Parents must monitor their student's time in school:

Students in grades 6-12 must attend at least 900 hours (six hours per day of instruction/ class) a year. By the end of the week, the student must have clocked in at least a total of 30 hours. Parents must log in everyday to clock in the student's time off line, and monitor the daily assignments. Each course (six courses per semester) must have earned at least 6 hours per week.

Parents must monitor their student's assignments and assessments:

In lieu of the daily presence of a face-to-face teacher, parents should take the lead in guiding the students through the curriculum, submission of work samples, assignments, practicing FSA assimilations, online class sessions, producing projects, reviewing for quizzes and tests, as well as making sure they participate in the state tests.

Successful Virtual Student Responsibilities

The goal of every child should be that of a "model student." A model student is expected to be present at school each and every day, follow scheduled courses, and demonstrate appropriate behavior and a readiness to learn. Student's responsibilities as defined by Board Policy 5200 - Attendance:

Attend classes one hundred and eighty (180) days each school year or the number of instructional days prescribed for the school the student attends. Students in grades 6-12 must clock in 30 hours a week of virtual instruction, five hours per subject.

Request the make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardiness from teachers upon return to school or class within three (3) days. It should be noted that all class work, due to the nature of instruction, is not readily subject to make-up work.

Complete the make-up assignments for classes missed. Failure to make-up all assignments will result in lower assessment of the student's academic progress and/or effort grade.

Participate in all Florida 6-12 assessments.

Complete all required school days, assignments, quizzes, tests, and projects prior to the end of each semester.

ACADEMIC GRADING PERFORMANCE SCALE

GRADE	LETTER VALUE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	GRADE POINT VALUES
A	90 - 100 %	Outstanding	4
B	80 - 89 %	Good	3
C	70 - 79 %	Satisfactory	2
D	60 - 69 %	Minimal; Improvement Needed	1
F	0 - 59%	Unsatisfactory	0
I	0	Incomplete (Secondary Only)	0

The academic grades in all courses are to be based on the student's degree of mastery of the instructional objectives and competencies for the course. The determination of the specific grade a student receives will be based on careful consideration of all aspects of each student's performance such as coursework, supplemental projects, virtual tests, and other online assessments. Progress reports and report cards will serve as the primary means of communicating student progress and achievement of the standards for promotion.

Medication Policy

These guidelines have been prepared for school personnel who will be designated to administer medication to Somerset Virtual Academy (SVA) students both at remote site testing centers and sites approved through our mutual cooperative agreement. The intent of these guidelines is to meet the requirements stipulated by Florida State Statute 232.46.

F.S. 232.46

Administration of medication by school district personnel

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Nurse Practice Act, chapter 464, school district personnel shall be authorized to assist students in the administration of prescription medication when the following conditions have been met:

- (a) Each district school board shall include in its approved school health services plan a procedure to provide training to the school personnel designated by the principal to assist students in the administration of prescribed medication.
- (b) Each district school board shall adopt policies and procedures governing the administration of prescription medication by school district personnel. The policies and procedures shall include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:

1. For each prescribed medication, the student's parent or guardian shall provide to the school principal a written statement which shall grant to the principal or his designee permission to assist in the administration of such medication and which shall explain the necessity for such medication to be provided during the school day, including any occasion when the student is away from school property on official school business. The school principal or his trained designee shall assist the student in the administration of such medication.

2. Each prescribed medication to be administered by school personnel shall be received and stored in its original container. When the medication is not in use, it shall be stored in its original container in a secure fashion under lock and key in a location designated by the principal.

(2) There shall be no liability for civil damages as a result of the administration of such medication when the person administering such medication acts as an ordinarily reasonably prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.

Prior to giving medications, the person administering medications should read and be familiar with this medication handbook.

All medications shall be administered by the school principal or his/her designee.

Medications may be administered by the school principal or his/her designee when there exists an illness or disability that requires maintenance-type medication and when failure to take prescribed medication could jeopardize the student's health and when the medication administration schedule cannot be accommodated before or after school.

If the parent/guardian has completed the Medication Authorization Form correctly and has met the requirements of the District, it is the obligation of the school to see that the student is medicated at the appropriate time indicated on the Medication Authorization Form.

Only the parent/guardian should deliver medications and pick up unused medications.

Every attempt must be made by the student's parent and physician to have medications administered at home during non-school hours. When this is not possible, a completed Medication Authorization Form ((FM-2702E) must be provided for **each** medication to be administered during school hours.

1. At time of registration, each parent/guardian will be asked to disclose the use of prescription medication by the student. During the year, a student that experiences the need to receive prescribed medication must:

1. Notify the school immediate
2. Complete the appropriate forms
3. The school shall notify all appropriate testing centers and off site locations.

No medication may be administered by school personnel unless the parent presents the school with a completed Medication Authorization Form, signed by the physician and parent.

- a. The Medication Authorization Form must be **renewed each school year** and placed in the student's cumulative folder. A copy will be sent to the designated test center or gathering site affiliated with SVA.
- b. Any changes in the type, dosage or frequency of medication administered will require a new Medication Authorization Form to be completed.
- c. The Medication Authorization Form must be current. Place expiration date in red at the top or bottom of the Authorization Form. This makes a quick reference.
- d. For medications that are terminated, draw a line through the authorization slip. The Medication Authorization Form should be filed in the student's Cumulative Health Record (*HRS-H Form 3041*).

In an emergency situation, a Medication Authorization Form can be faxed to the physician and returned by fax to the school. The school will update the forms according to their receipt and the centers will be updated accordingly. A copy should be made of the form, as fax copies fade. An original must be obtained from the physician and include parent/guardian signatures.

Administration of Medicine to a student

Every time a medication is given, all school personnel/ employees will use the universal medications safety precautions, known as ***The Five Rights of Medication Administration: the right to drug, the right dose, the right time, the right route (mouth inhaler, suppository, etc.), and the right student.***

- Always wash hands before administering medications.
- If there is any question concerning the medication, contact the parent, physician, or pharmacy **before** administration.
- Medications are to be brought to school by the student's parents or guardians.
- Medications are not to be transported on a school bus, unless student is accompanied by trained personnel.
- Non-prescription (over the counter) medication must be received in its **original container** and labeled with the student's name. A completed and signed Medication Authorization Form must accompany each over the counter medication.
- Prescription medication must be received in a **pharmacy labeled** container with the following information:
 - a) student's name
 - b) physician's / nurse practitioner's name
 - c) pharmacy's name and phone number
 - d) name of medication

- e) directions concerning dosage and administration
- f) date of prescription
- g) expiration date

- A Student Medication Log (FM-7115) shall be maintained at each school site to document the administration of each site.

Storage Labeling and Disposal of Medications

Medications must be stored in a locked cabinet in the health room clinic. If medication must be refrigerated, it should be stored in a sealed box in a locked refrigerator in the health room clinic.

Medication **must be kept in the prescription container** in which it was dispensed with date, dosage, name of drug, student's name, physician's name, pharmacy name and phone number clearly marked.

The cap of the container should always be replaced tightly to prevent exposure to air and bacterial growth.

Medication that changes color, appearance, or has an odor, should not be given notify the parent(s) immediately.

Refrigerated medications **should not** be kept in the refrigerator door.

Food should not be stored in the same refrigerator as medications.

For medication that is no longer being given, a note must be sent home to parents to pick up unused medications.

Unused medications should not be disposed of at school.

No medication should remain in the school's locked medicine cabinet at the end of each school year except for the year round schools. See procedure for proper disposal of medications.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

([Http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/901](http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/901))

All students enrolled in **Somerset Virtual Academy** are students of **Miami-Dade County Public Schools** and subject to applicable policies and M-DCPS Student Code of Conduct, where parents are given the website listed above to refer to for the code of student conduct policies.

As a virtual education student, there are additional rules and expectations regarding proper internet etiquette in order to protect all students. Internet access is required for all students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses,

we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. We especially appreciate partnering with parents to teach responsible Internet use. Please review the following **rules and expectations** carefully:

- **Students are responsible for good behavior** on the network. Always use a computer in a way that shows consideration and respect. It is not acceptable to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- **We take integrity and authenticity of student work** very seriously. Do not cut, copy, or plagiarize Internet content or the work of your online classmates. Teachers do utilize technologies to check for authenticity. Copying, knowingly allowing others to copy from you, and/or misusing Internet content could result in removal from our courses and other disciplinary action.
- **Security is a high priority**, especially when the system involves many users. If you can identify a security problem in the school's computers, network, or Internet connection, notify a system administrator.
- **It is illegal to create harmful computer viruses.**
- **Email is not private.** Never say anything via email that you wouldn't mind seeing on the school bulletin board or in the local newspaper.
- **Beware of emails from anyone, particularly adults you don't know**, asking for personal information, attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact. Alert your teacher of any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- **Email with your online classmates should be course-related.** It is prohibited to send unwelcome email to your online classmates.
- **Email addresses that use profanity or may be construed as offensive, shall not be permitted for correspondence.** Administration reserves the right to determine if student email addresses are inappropriate. When necessary, students will be asked to use an alternative email address or be refused participation in courses.
- **Protect your password.** Keep it secret from anyone except your parents.
- **Administrators will cooperate fully** in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet access. In the event there is a claim that you have violated this policy, you will be provided with notice of the suspected violation and have an opportunity to present an explanation. Any violations may result in removal from course(s), as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via our computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of SVA and, as such, is subject to disclosure to the parent, parents, administration or other third parties. Consequently, SVA expects both students and staff to abide by the school's Internet usage policy:

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Abuse of internet platforms and tools provided by the school in violation of school policies will

result in disciplinary action. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Sending or posting confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the organization
- Violating copyright law
- Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the organization or initiate unwanted Internet services and transmissions
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person
- Refusing to cooperate with a security investigation
- Using the Education Portal for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling
- Jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems
- Sending or posting messages that disparage another organization's products or services
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization
- Sending anonymous e-mail messages
- Engaging in any other illegal activities

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

What is academic integrity?

- ✓ Academic integrity is an ethical code, whereby the student guarantees that all work submitted is the student's own work.

Why is academic integrity important?

- ✓ When students submit an assignment that is not their own original work, there are two issues involved:
 - Students are earning credit for learning material for which they have not demonstrated mastery.
 - They may be violating the policies of the school.

What are some examples of academic integrity violations?

- ✓ There are two kinds of academic integrity violations. One is "plagiarism" and the other is "cheating."
- ✓ **Plagiarism** - To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source. Some examples are, but not limited to the following:
 - Copying and pasting a report from the Internet and representing it as your own work
 - Copying any other work and not properly citing authorship

✓ **Cheating**

- To influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice
- To practice fraud or trickery to violate rules dishonestly
- Providing questions/answers/ work to another student
- Receiving questions/answers/work from another student

Ensuring Academic Integrity

- ✓ Somerset uses a variety of tools to ensure the integrity of student work.
 - **Plagscan.com** - This Internet tool compares student work against a variety of databases. The Learning Management System is now integrated with Plagscan.com, and most work is automatically uploaded to the system. This database compares students' work against other students' work, as well as work found on the Internet.
 - **Academic Integrity Database** - Database of student integrity incidences or violations. This database is used to monitor the number of student integrity issues.
 - **Teacher Expertise** - Instructors have extensive classroom experience. Their expertise is often a guide in identifying the level of originality in student work.
 - **Discussion Based Assessments** - Each teacher regularly conducts discussion-based assessments with his or her students. These conversations occur at specific intervals as well as randomly in a course and are included in the assessment component of each course. The teacher discusses individual student work and extends the conversation to allow the student to demonstrate mastery of the content and to verify the authenticity of the student's work.
 - **Academic Integrity Reporting Policy** - Community members, guidance counselors, parents, and students can call or email any academic integrity-related issue anonymously.

Consequences of Violation of this Policy

A variety of consequences will be administered when students are caught cheating or plagiarizing. These consequences range from resubmission of an assignment up to expulsion from coursework. Additionally, final grades may be rescinded if a student is found to have cheated or plagiarized after the grade has been posted to a transcript.

- ✓ **Students** are responsible for submitting their own, original work and are expected to:
 - Read and sign the Student/Parent Acknowledgement Form as part of the enrollment process
 - Participate in a welcome call during which components of our academic integrity program will be discussed
 - Ask any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating if they are not sure
- ✓ **Parents**, as partners in supporting student learning, are expected to:
 - Read and sign the Student/Parent Acknowledgement Form as part of the enrollment process
 - Participate in a welcome call during which components of our academic integrity program will be discussed

- Ensure that their student’s work is authentic and original
 - Monitor, via their guardian account, various academic integrity tips from the IM
 - Ask any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating if they are not sure
- ✓ **Teachers**, as stakeholders in ensuring the highest standards of academic integrity, are expected to:
- Act as a resource for student questions
 - Submit various assignments in the Plagscan.com database
 - Coordinate any academic integrity issues with the Instructional Leader
 - Verify student mastery of content through discussion based and authentic assessments
 - Participate in any mandated trainings or staff development
- ✓ **Instructional Leaders** are expected to:
- Support academic integrity in each course they oversee
 - Ensure that all teachers participate in academic integrity initiatives
 - Support the administration of consequences
 - Provide support to the instructional staff in the implementation of these policies

STUDENT CODE OF HONOR

A student should NEVER:

- Share their Username and Password with anyone other than their Parents
- Use anyone else’s Username and Password
- Obtain or assist anyone to obtain unauthorized access to the network
- Post their or anyone else’s personal information (i.e. address, email, telephone, etc.)
- Post private messages sent to them

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

Students attending the virtual charter schools are public school students of M-DCPS, and accordingly will follow the District’s *Code of Student Conduct*. Students will be expected to abide by the Sponsor’s Code of Student Conduct incorporating all applicable district policies, procedures, and student expectations for behavior. The school will follow guidelines and procedures related to discipline, suspension, and dismissal, as the school district is the only entity with the authority to dismiss a student.

In the virtual environment, however, there is a set of non-traditional types of misconduct that must be regularly monitored and, if not hopefully eliminated altogether, then disciplined in a swift and rigid manner. Accordingly, in addition to district applicable policies, the Code of Conduct incorporates expectations of conduct specific to participation in a virtual instructional program. For example, Internet access is required for all students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses, we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. Accordingly, below are rules and expectations intended for the virtual environment:

- **Students are responsible for proper behavior** on the network. Always use a computer in a way that shows consideration and respect. It is not acceptable to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- **We take integrity and authenticity of student work** very seriously. Do not cut, copy, or plagiarize Internet content or the work of your online classmates. Teachers do utilize technologies to check for authenticity. Copying, knowingly allowing others to copy from you, and/or misusing Internet content could result in removal from our courses and other disciplinary action.
- **Security is a high priority**, especially when the system involves many users. If you can identify a security problem in the school's computers, network, or Internet connection, notify a system administrator.
- **It is illegal to create harmful computer viruses.**
- **Email is not private.** Never write anything via email that you wouldn't mind seeing on the school bulletin board or in the local newspaper.
- **Beware of emails from anyone, particularly adults you don't know**, asking for personal information, attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact. Alert your teacher of any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- **Email with your online classmates should be course-related.** It is prohibited to send unwelcomed emails to your online classmates.
- **Email addresses that use profanity or may be construed as offensive, shall not be permitted for correspondence.** Administration reserves the right to determine if student email addresses are inappropriate. When necessary, students will be asked to use an alternative email address or be refused to participate in courses.
- **Protect your password.** Keep it secret from anyone except your parents.

Administrators will cooperate fully in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet access. In the event there is a claim that you have violated this policy, you will be provided with notice of the suspected violation and have an opportunity to present an explanation. Any violations may result in removal from course(s), as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

Academic Integrity means that all work submitted is created by the student and is an original representation of the student's work. When students submit an assignment that is not their own original work, there are two issues involved: 1) Students are earning credit for learning material for which they have not demonstrated mastery and 2) They may be violating the law. There are two kinds of academic integrity violations Plagiarism and Cheating.

Parents, as partners in supporting student learning are expected to:

- Review Code of Conduct and sign the academic integrity statement as part of the

- enrollment process
- Participate in a welcome call or course orientation that includes components of our code of conduct
- Ensure that their child's work is authentic and original
- Monitor, via their guardian account, various academic integrity tips
- Ask any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating if they are not sure

Teachers, as stakeholders in ensuring the highest standards of academic integrity are expected to:

- Act as a resource for student questions
- Submit various assignments in the Plagscan.com database
- Coordinate any academic integrity issues with the Instructional Leader
- Verify student mastery of content through discussion-based assessments and authentic assessments
- Participate in any mandated trainings or staff development such as “coffee chats,” focus groups, or other opportunities

Instructional Leaders are expected to:

- Support academic integrity in each course they oversee
- Ensure that all teachers participate in academic integrity initiatives
- Support the administration of consequences

Violation of Academic Integrity Policy - consequences range from resubmission of an assignment up to suspension from coursework. Additionally, final grades may be rescinded if a student is found to have cheated or plagiarized after the grade has been posted to a transcript.

Cyber-bullying - is an issue of conduct taken quite seriously by the school. Cyber-bullying, which is the use of the Internet and similar technologies to hurt and/or harm other people, has been a pervasive problem, especially among contemporary children and adolescents and can have extraordinarily deleterious effects on students, ranging from low self-esteem to poor academic achievement to severe mental and emotional problems even leading to suicide. In order to combat this serious problem, the school's administrations, faculty, and staff prepare an introductory lesson educating students about the nature and consequences of cyber-bullying and how they can avoid and stop it. Beyond this proactive intervention, the school also closely monitors all discussion boards, student-to-student emails, and peer interaction that takes place through the Internet or other related technologies. Teachers are also trained (during professional development sessions) on how to identify potential cyber-bullying and are required to report to school administration any potential examples of such abuse.

Violations - As is the case with the gradation of cyber-bullying, the severity of the offense is the prime determiner in deciding the appropriate consequence. Again, depending on the violation, the school will follow the Sponsor's guidelines for possible consequences adapting these to a virtual setting as necessary. For example, possible actions may include but are not limited to:

- **Written and verbal warning** and notification to the parent.
- Placement on “**temporary conduct probation.**” A student's online academic network activities will be monitored for the duration of the student's current course(s) and the course(s) the student takes in the subsequent term.
- **Suspension** from the program for a specified period of time. When a student is suspended, he or she is temporarily removed from class (the Learning Management System) or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is determined by the school

Principal (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record. During a period of suspension as defined by the school Principal, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of the LMS is restricted. Student access to Web Mail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or the entire LMS may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to the LMS and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to Web Mail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

When a violation has occurred, a report, including the date, time and circumstances of the alleged act, will be submitted. This report includes a description of the actions of all parties involved, names of witnesses available and documentary evidence that supports the charge. Students wishing to report a violation should file the report through the teacher. Upon receipt of the report, the school will determine if a policy may have been violated by the student. If there is sufficient information, the student and parent will be contacted in writing informing the student of the charges in sufficient detail, including the time and place the alleged violation occurred and the penalty that would be appropriate if the student did in fact violate the policy. A parent conference will be scheduled at that point to discuss the matter with the school principal.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Frequent student-teacher communication in the virtual learning environment requires commitment above and beyond the traditional workday by staff in a brick and mortar environment, as communication is the critical element to the success of the program. Instant Message (IM) communication and email are considered essential and are expected on a regular basis. Voice to voice communication is expected, at a minimum, during the initial start as well as at the end of the term. SVA makes the following commitments to its students, parents and schools:

- All email, voicemail and instant message communication will be responded to within 24-48 hours during the workweek.
- Teachers will establish office hours and post them within the virtual classroom. During those hours, teachers will be available to answer phone calls, emails, and instant messages. Each request for correspondence will be answered in as timely of a fashion as possible with a minimum turnaround target of 24 hours. No response to a student/parent contact shall exceed 48 hours from the time of initiation.
- Teachers are expected to talk personally with each student and their parent at least once a month as well as at the beginning and end of the term.
- Teachers will update course announcement pages frequently.
- At the beginning of the course, each student will receive a Welcome Call / Orientation from their teacher as well as required monthly calls.
- Teachers will provide targeted and timely feedback to students on submitted assignments and completed assessments within a period of time not exceeding 72 hours.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

As a parent/guardian of a virtual school student, it is very important to understand the responsibilities associated with that role. With the many distractions students have today, it can be difficult for some students to set aside time to work on courses when not in school. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to encourage the student to manage their time in an effective way. Teachers will keep the parent/guardian apprised of the student's progress and will initiate contact if they fall behind in their coursework.

Parents are expected to supervise and monitor their student's progress throughout the duration of the course. This can be accomplished by accessing the parental account periodically to monitor student progress.

Parents should support Academic Integrity. Academic Integrity is one of our core values and one of the most important areas of focus as a learning organization. Students with Academic Integrity make decisions based on ethics and values that will prepare them to be productive and ethical citizens.

You may contact your child's teacher directly via email and/or instant messaging to answer questions about the course that you may have. When a parent/guardian has a concern about the child's performance or behavior, the parent/guardian should set up a conference with the child's teacher.

Parents/guardians should also be aware of the course progression plan that their student is following and use that to help plan for the child's academic and educational future.

PRIVACY POLICY

SVA will abide by **student privacy guidelines** inspired by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of the federal government of the United States. The following persons have access to student records:

- Principal
- Administrative Team
- Professional Staff (Teachers, Guidance Counselor, the General Counsel)

All students are provided a unique password to access online courses. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her password in confidence.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

SVA's admission and enrollment policies and procedures comply with anti-discrimination provisions.

SVA does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, physical, mental, emotional, learning disability or handicap in its education programs.

Furthermore, the criteria for admission to a program or course shall not have the effect of restricting access by persons of a particular race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or marital status.

Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or marital status against a student or an employee is prohibited.

BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

Somerset Virtual Academy prohibits harassment between members of the SVA community, including communication of any form between students, SVA faculty and/or staff, and any third parties directly or indirectly related to the SVA Academic Network.

SVA is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which students, faculty, and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally and socially. Such an atmosphere must be free of intimidation, fear, coercion and reprisal.

It is an expectation that all students and employees shall use all equipment and programs for the intended educational purpose. SVA is committed to protecting its students and employees from bullying, harassment or inappropriate uses of computers or programs to participate in bullying behavior. Bullying and Harassment **will not be tolerated** and shall be just cause for disciplinary action.

Conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

Bullying, harassment, and cyber stalking are defined as inflicting physical or psychological distress, and/or communicating words, images or language using electronic mail that causes emotional distress and for which there is no legitimate purpose.

Any action by a student or parent deemed inappropriate will be fully investigated by the appropriate school administrator.

Consequences for students for actions that violate the policy on bullying and harassment shall be determined by the administrative staff and may include:

- Student/teacher/parent conference
- Suspension of email privileges
- Removal from access to courses

NETIQUETTE POLICY

Students are responsible for proper behavior while online. Students must always show consideration and respect when participating in SVA classes. Obscene, profane, or threatening language online as well as offline will not be tolerated.

Students should be cautious about email messages from anyone, particularly adults asking for personal information, attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact. Students

should disclose to teachers any message received that is inappropriate or that causes uncomfortable feelings.

Any distribution of unsolicited email to online classmates is prohibited. All course interaction between teachers, parents, students, and stakeholders will be logged. Email messages to online classmates should be limited to welcome correspondence that is course-related. SVA administrators will cooperate fully with any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the Internet.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

SVA will determine the appropriate disciplinary actions for student violations of the code of conduct as they arise. The severity of the offense is the prime determiner in deciding the appropriate consequence. Possible actions may include but are not limited to:

- Written and verbal warning and notification to the parent.
- Placement on “temporary conduct probation.” A student’s online academic network activities will be monitored for the duration of the student’s current course(s) and the course(s) the student takes in the subsequent term.
- Suspension from the SVA program for a specified period of time.

When a violation has occurred, a report, including the date, time and circumstances of the alleged act, will be submitted. This report includes a description of the actions of all parties involved, names of witness’s available and documentary evidence that supports the charge.

Students wishing to report a violation should file the report through the teacher. Upon receipt of the report, SVA will determine if the student may have violated a policy. If there is sufficient information, the student and parent will be contacted in writing informing the student of the charges in sufficient detail, including the time and place the alleged violation occurred and the penalty that would be appropriate if the student did in fact violate the policy.

MINIMUM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE COURSE PARTICIPATION

Browser Plug-ins

- Sun Java 1.4.2 JRE or higher
- Sun Java 3D 1.3 or higher - Required in some courses
- Flash 9.0 or higher
- Shockwave (Operating System Dependent)
- Acrobat Reader 7.0.9 or higher

PC Requirements

- Pentium III (500 MHz minimum, higher recommended)
- Minimum of 10 gigabytes free HDD space
- 128k internet connection. A broadband connection is strongly recommended.

- Windows 2000, XP, or Vista
- Microsoft Office, Open Office or Goggle Docs (Some Business courses require Microsoft Office which will be notated within course registration)
- 512 MB Ram
- 12x CD-ROM (CD/DVD Recommended – Some courses require CD/DVD which will be notated within course registration)
- Display setting 1024x768 resolution
- Printer required
- Internet Explorer version 7.0 or higher ([Click here to download](#)) or Firefox version 2.0 or higher ([Click here to download](#))
- Students need a method to save work to a portable medium (Floppy, Zip, CD, USB)
- Audio: Sound card with speakers, microphone or headset
- **America Online and KOL are not recommended**

Macintosh Requirements

- Power Mac G3 (350 MHz)
- OSX
- Microsoft Office, Open Office or Google Docs (Some Business courses require Microsoft Office which will be notated within course registration)
- Students need a method to save work to a portable medium (Floppy, Zip, CD, USB)
- 256 MB Ram
- Minimum of 10 gigabytes free HDD space
- 12x CD ROM (CD/DVD Recommended)
- 128k internet connection. A broadband connection is strongly recommended.
- Display setting 1024x768 resolution
- Printer required
- Safari browser ([Click here to download](#)) or Firefox version 2.0 or higher ([Click here to download](#))
- Audio: Speakers and microphone or headset
- **America Online and KOL are not recommended**

STUDENTS & PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SVA makes every effort to ensure that all our electronic and information technology is accessible people with disabilities. At a minimum, we strive to maintain compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, 29 U.S.C. Section 794d. If you have difficulty accessing any portion of our content or platforms, or would like to request a specific accommodation, please contact us at support@aveteaching.com.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Students will be provided with professional technical support throughout the course as needed. SVA is committed to providing technical assistance within 24-48 hours of a request for assistance.

To access technical support log in to (<https://ave.freshdesk.com>) or submit a help desk request through the Student Information System (<https://ave.maestrosis.com>) or Learning Management System (<https://sva.brainhoney.com>).

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