Student Handbook

Montgomery Virtual Program
ONLINE LEARNING FOR REAL WORLD STUDENTS

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What is the Montgomery Virtual Program?

Montgomery Virtual Program (MVP) is an online learning solution offered by the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) in partnership with local schools.

Students currently attending school districts, cyber charter schools, and non-public schools are eligible to take online courses on either a part-time or full-time basis through the MVP. Students may complete individual courses or entire programs of study online. By enrolling in MVP, students can earn a high school diploma from their home district/school, and retain the ability to participate in school activities offered by their district/school. Students can access their course content at any time, eliminating the need for travel and allowing for flexible scheduling options.

Courses offered through MVP allow students to work at their own pace with Pennsylvania-certified teachers while engaged in rigorous curriculum that follows the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

This handbook is a means of communicating a number of guidelines and procedures to students and families to ensure students receiving an education through MVP are accountable to similarly equitable standards as those students taking courses in a traditional brick and mortar setting. The following guidelines were developed to assure the academic and financial integrity in each of the participating districts/schools. Since the ever-changing needs of technology make it nearly impossible to anticipate every situation, districts/schools are assured the right to make decisions on an individual student basis.

Attendance and Course Compliance

ATTENDANCE

In compliance with [Chapter 11 of PA Title 22](#), MVP has established an academic calendar, which corresponds closely to students' home school district calendar. Due to the nature of MVP coursework, there is a great deal of student flexibility regarding participation in the academic program. In many cases, students will access the program beyond the traditional Monday to Friday academic schedule. Attendance is taken by MVP weekly by reviewing the graded work and progress on a daily basis and forwarded to local district/school for reporting purposes every two weeks.

MVP, district/school, and parents have the ability to track when a student logs into their courses, their time on task, the assignments completed, and a student's progress through a course. Students are required to log into and complete work in their courses at least five days per week. Students and their families have the flexibility to determine what five days during any given week. Attendance is calculated by tracking that students are logging into their account five days per week. Unexcused absences will be reported to a student's home school. Students who fail to participate in the online courses will be subject to the same attendance rules and laws as students in their home district/school.

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Course Deadlines:
Semester 1 Deadline: Mid-January

Semester 2 Deadline: Early June

*2nd semester deadline for seniors is based on home district/schools' graduation date.

COURSE COMPLETION

Most courses are designed to be semester-based courses. In order to obtain full credit for the course, students need to complete both Part A and Part B of each course. Electives and other courses such as the Health and Economics courses are structured differently.

If a student begins a course during a typical semester block (i.e. beginning in September or January), the course will need to be 50% complete by the end of the 1st or 3rd marking period. If a student enrolls in a course during a non-traditional marking period (not during semester starting dates), that student needs to complete the courses by semester end dates unless prior district/school approval is received.

For instance, a student enrolling in four (4) core courses and an elective during the month of November would have until approximately the middle of January to complete Part A of each of the courses and then could enroll in the Part B of each of the courses on schedule. It is imperative for full-time students to complete a minimum of three (3) to five (5) lessons per day for each course in order to maintain a consistent schedule towards course completion. Any student completing less runs the risk of not completing their courses.

GRADING & REPORT CARDS

Course grades are issued by the home district/school and report card procedures vary depending on each district/school. The course percentage is forwarded to the student's home district/school and that percentage will be converted to a grade based on the grading scale established by the home district/school.

Progress Reports are emailed several times throughout the semester to keep all stakeholders apprised of the student's progress.

Progress reports for students struggling are sent out as needed to each designated parent/guardian and School Liaison(s). School liaisons are also able to monitor student grades and progress at any time. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact an MVP or school representative with any questions regarding progress reports or if any accommodations that may be needed.

ADDING & DROPPING COURSES

Adding courses: If a student is taking a full-time course load, typically he/she will choose semester courses to begin the school year. Students should consult with his/her school counselor and the MVP representative to help determine which courses should be selected, based on interests, skill level, and a transcript evaluation. Courses may be added during the year, depending on the student's progress. If the student, MVP Coordinator, and/or school counselor feel additional courses are manageable and if approved by the home school district, additional courses may be added to the student's roster.

Dropping courses: The student or parent must notify MVP and their school counselor if they wish to drop a course. There are no deadlines for dropping a course; however, you may receive a non-passing grade. Due to a 14-day (calendar days) grace period with our vendors, it is essential that students contact MVP and your school councilor as soon as possible regarding your desire to drop a course. Any student who has not completed assignments in a course within the first 14 days of participation in MVP may be dropped from that course.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If a parent/guardian (Home Liaison) would like to discuss withdrawal of their student from MVP, the withdrawal procedure requires an initial email notification by the parent/guardian to MVP and the school counselor. MVP will provide information about the various options available to meet the needs of the student. The student is also required to inform the home district/school of their withdrawal from the MVP program. An MVP Coordinator reserves the right to deny a student re-entry after withdrawing or being withdrawn for academic/attendance truancy.

Home Liaisons (HL)

Each student enrolled in MVP is required to have a parent/guardian to partner with the program in order to ensure the student's accountability for work completed at home. The Home Liaison (HL) may be a parent/guardian or someone that the parent/guardian designates.

The requirements for the HL vary with the age and motivation of the student and involve a commitment that goes beyond a traditional school setting.

Students in lower grades (K-8), students with lower motivation levels, and students with special needs require more home supports and direct involvement. The HL is an integral part of each student's success. Without the full commitment of the HL, at all grade levels, a student's academic success could suffer.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOME LIAISON (HL)

The HL is the essential link between the teachers and the student and agrees to the following responsibilities. He/She must:
- Attend a mandatory orientation with student after enrollment
- Regularly access email to review and attend to student progress or grade issues
- Arrange for the Internet, high speed when possible, to be connected before enrollment and allow a sufficient amount of time on the Internet to complete a day of school work.
- Provide supervision for the student when he/she is logged in to the online courses.
- Agree to log into the online vendor site to view student's attendance and progress, daily assignments, and profile. Home Liaisons should be familiar with the student's work, and be able to assist where necessary.
- The HL MUST provide student transportation to local district/school for state mandated testing.

Standardized Testing

PSAT/SAT/ACT

PSAT, SAT, and ACT are NOT given at the MCIU. Students must register online for these exams through the appropriate provider. The tests are administered several times a year at various school districts throughout the state. PSATs are only administered one time per year (usually in October).

PSSA AND KEYSTONE EXAMS

Pennsylvania State System Assessments (PSSA) and Keystone Exams tests are required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. PSSAs are for student in grades 3-8, while Keystones are for high school students after they have taken Algebra 1, Biology, and a Literature course. Testing will be conducted at the district and each student will be required to take the exams during the designated testing window at their home school district.

Student Accommodations

STUDENTS WITH IEPS

If a student enrolled in courses through MVP has an IEP, the accommodations and IEP recommendations will need to be monitored through personnel at the home school district. Students will either be monitored by a teacher of record through the school district or the district will contract with an outside agency to ensure all IEP recommendations are being met. If there are any questions about this, please contact MVP.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

It is the responsibility of the home district/school to provide any additional instructional support if necessary. Districts/schools may offer different and varied levels of instructional support for struggling students which could include student tutors or teacher support. If a student and/or parent/guardian feels special accommodations are needed because the student is failing a course, it is the responsibility of the student and/or HL to contact a MVP representative or local school liaison in order to try and schedule assistance if available. If remediation is available, in all cases, it would be provided at the school district; and therefore, the student and/or HL

would be responsible for arranging such transportation.

Graduation Requirements

COURSE SELECTION

Each student needs to follow his/her home district/school's graduation guidelines and course requirements in order to graduate. The core courses should follow the same sequence as offered by the home district/school, unless prior approval is obtained. When an exact course match is not available, the best possible alternative course will be selected to maintain course fidelity. The number of credits to graduate is strictly dependent upon the home district/school's requirements in which each student resides. Online elective courses may or may not correspond with the courses that are offered by the school. Whenever possible, each student is asked to help select elective courses; however, the school has the right to deny elective courses.

GRADUATION TIMELINE

Students will need to be enrolled in the appropriate number of courses to maintain enough credits to meet graduation requirements. If a student does not take enough courses to meet the school minimum, fails a course, or is unable to complete a course, the student will not graduate at the expected graduation date. Taking online courses is a non-traditional form of education and allows for flexible scheduling. It requires organization, time management skills, and intrinsic motivation. The completion of the course work becomes the student's responsibility and when courses are incomplete or a student fails courses, it puts that student behind their anticipated graduation date.

Equipment

Full-time students need a laptop and Internet to be successful. Districts/schools may choose to provide a district laptop or work with the MCIU Technology Office to secure a laptop for students. Part-time students do not qualify to receive a laptop.

REPAIR OF TECHNOLOGY

Any technology issued to a MVP student that requires repair should contact the technology department of the home school.

If the technology needs to be repaired, a loaner unit will be provided to the student upon return of the faulty equipment in order to provide uninterrupted access to the online content.