

OKALOOSA ONLINE

PROCEDURES

The following procedures govern distance learning in Okaloosa County Schools, whether online via the Internet, videoconferencing, or facilitated by other means.

Distance or online learning is an instructional delivery option that does not constrain the student to be physically present in the same location as the instructor; it may occur when the instructor and student are separated by distance or time, or both. Learning opportunities can be extended to locations away from a classroom, building or site by using video, audio, computer, multimedia communications, or some combination of these with other traditional delivery methods. Resource sharing, access to experts in a variety of fields, and course content that is standards-driven makes Okaloosa Online a viable and creative option for a variety of student audiences.

The 2000 Florida Statute 228.082 established the Florida Online High School (officially renamed Florida Virtual School in 2001) for the development and delivery of online education. Ownership of all Florida Virtual School (FVS) patents, copyrights, trademarks, licenses, and rights or interests vest in the state. The Okaloosa County School Board has expanded distance learning within the district by the franchise of FVS courses for delivery by Okaloosa county teachers to our students through Okaloosa Online. The district's online entity is a franchise of and is modeled upon the state's Florida Virtual School.

1. Eligibility, Registration and Enrollment:

A. Any student, regardless of grade level, who is academically qualified to take a course for high school credit may use distance learning to take the same course, receive a grade to be averaged into the student's GPA, and be granted high school credit through the district or a district approved virtual provider upon successful completion of the course. No minimum GPA is required to take a course through distance learning. All prerequisites must be successfully completed prior to enrollment. Charter School students will be served at cost recovery.

B. An electronic registration is required. It is strongly recommended that the student register himself/herself on the computer that will be used during the course of study. A student is not considered actually enrolled in a class until an official of Okaloosa Online receives the fully completed and signed Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and the student receives a welcome acknowledgement from the teacher. The AUP is available for download on the Okaloosa Schools website.

C. Distance learning courses may be selected by students who:

- may need or want a learning environment different from that of a traditional classroom setting;
- want to accelerate their academic program by taking additional courses;
- want to take a course(s) not offered at their school;
- have scheduling conflicts;
- need to make up credits in order to graduate on schedule;
- are seeking grade forgiveness;
- are hospitalized or homebound for an extended period of time;
- are excused from being physically present on the campus of their school of record for an extended period of time.

D. Online learning is an alternative to learning in a traditional classroom. It is not for every student. Characteristics that aid in the success of an online student are:

- reading competency
- time management skills
- intrinsic motivation
- self-discipline
- computer literacy

E. The academic counselor at the student's school of record or from Okaloosa Online shall conference with the student and parent(s) or designee to determine if the distance learning course(s) selected by the student is (are) developmentally and academically appropriate for the student before the student is authorized to participate in this alternative learning mode. For online courses, signatures of parent, academic counselor and student are required on the AUP form after the parent and student have read the complete form and agree to its contents. The form must be received by the online entity and acknowledged before the student is considered officially enrolled in the course(s).

F. Attributes and practices of students who are successful distance learners can be found on the Okaloosa Online website.

G. Students may register in online distance learning courses on a continuous basis as long as there is space available in the selected course. When the class is full, the student may elect to be placed on a waiting list.

H. All students enrolled in approved online courses must have email accounts and Internet access. Email account names must be appropriate for school purposes.

I. The school of record must cooperate with the provider of Advanced Placement courses through distance learning with respect to the provision of Advanced Placement Examinations and their administration. The school of record must:

- register students in Advanced Placement classes in the district registration system;
- order, receive, administer and pay for Advanced Placement examinations to district students registered in a distance learning course;
- report the Advanced Placement Examination results of students taking the courses through distance learning to the course provider;
- identify the distance learning teacher as the teacher of record when considering scores on the Advanced Placement Examinations.

2. Removing Students from Courses:

Only through continuous communication can students be successful in an online course. Within each course, the instructor outlines the weekly minimum work requirements. It is essential that the student and instructor maintain regular contact.

Teachers may initiate removal, but may not totally withdraw students from a course. If a teacher has a concern about a student's progress, the following steps should first be taken:

- Contact the student by phone to alert him that he is not making appropriate progress and explain the consequences if such behavior were to continue after the grace period expires.
- Contact the parent about the concern(s).
- Contact the school counselor and/or Okaloosa Online Director regarding the concerns.
- Note each of the above contacts in the student's contact log in SIMS.

Throughout the duration of the online course, students and instructors will maintain constant communication via e-mail, phone, and fax to assure student success. Minimum communication must occur no less than once every seven days. Students will have

agreed to these minimum requirements prior to the enrollment process.

In the event that a student initiates withdrawal during the grace period (14 days), the teacher should be sure to note that request in their contact log. The teacher should also make contact with the parent and counselor (by phone or e-mail) to inform them of the student's request.

No teacher at any time is to remove or drop a student from Okaloosa Online without having gone through the above steps and consulting with the Director or a designee.

Every effort will be made to give students opportunity to succeed in the online environment, though it does not fit everyone's needs. If a student is removed from a class within the first 14 days, the grade report should reflect "Withdrawn-No Grade." Should a student be dropped from the course after the grace period has expired (either by their own choosing or due to lack of participation), and has not completed more than 50% of the course assignments, the students will be issued a grade of "F". Students who complete more than 50% of the assignments but fail to take the final exam may be issued a final grade of "F," or perhaps be awarded ½ credit in the course if applicable. Contact the Okaloosa Online Director prior to taking action on any student that may meet this condition. A final grade report will be sent to both the student and the school of record.

3. Reporting Students' Progress and Grades:

Note: Okaloosa Online reserves the right to monitor a student during an online test or to print out an online exam and administer the exam to a student in the presence of the online teacher at any time.

A. The distance learning teacher shall be the teacher of record and, using the district's system for assigning grades for work submitted, will report the student's progress to the student, parent, and guidance counselor at the student's school of record at a minimum of the appropriate number of times determined by Board Policy.

B. The student's progress and grades are the responsibility of the distance learning instructional teacher and will be available for review by authorized school personnel only at the student's school of record.

C. The distance learning instructional teacher will post all final grades to the student's academic record in the same manner as grades received for courses taken in a traditional classroom.

D. Grades assigned by the distance learning teacher are the student's final grades and may not be enhanced or otherwise altered prior to being posted to the student's permanent record.

4. Pace:

After a conference with parent(s)/guardian and academic counselor, a student who takes an online course may select an extended, regular, or accelerated pace. In most cases, no course should take more than one additional semester to complete. A student may accelerate an online course and complete the course prior to the school of record's completion date, at which time the grade will be posted on the student's academic record and the credit granted.

5. Communication Policy:

Prior to being granted access to their online course, students must have a Welcome Phone Call conversation with the instructor. Unless otherwise directed by administration, teachers should begin the process of contacting students in their enrolled view once the student's name appears in the enrolled view for the course.

Unless approved by administration, students should not be activated into a course unless the teacher has made verbal contact with the student and/or parent.

It is recognized that sometimes it can be difficult to reach students for the Welcome Phone Call. Below are some strategies which may be used in the effort to reach the student for this call:

- 1) call the student's home number
- 2) call the parent's work number (if approved)
- 3) contact the school counselor at the student's base school
- 4) e-mail the student and request that they contact you to set up an appointment
- 5) e-mail the parent and request that they contact you to set up an appointment .

Teachers should be certain to note all attempts to reach the student for a Welcome Call in the student contact log in SIMS. This practice will provide a record of efforts to that end.

Teachers are not to begin the process of removing an enrolled student until all strategies listed are attempted to reach the student.

Expectations for Communication:

Communications and interaction is at the heart of online success. Research shows that customer interaction is the key to student success in the online environment. Responding within 24 hours is the standard set by our franchise. Voice to voice communication and e-mail are considered essential and are expected on a regular basis. Teachers are expected to talk personally with each student once a month and the student's parent/guardian once a month. The telephone should be used to communicate problems rather than e-mail. Voicemail messages are not adequate for the once-per-month contact. Students and parents are to be contacted by phone a

minimum of once per month. Teachers are required to create a system of logging all phone calls to students and parents. These logs will be collected twice per year for review.

If a situation is important enough to tell a student and phone contact cannot be made, teachers should follow up with a letter via regular mail. If there is a problem with a student at a physical school, the school guidance counselor should be contacted. IF a student is not performing, the teacher is expected to follow the communication procedures listed herein.

6. Online Calendar:

A. Online courses will have continuous registrations and will proceed throughout the calendar year. The completion date for each enrolled student will be determined based on the date the student was officially enrolled in the class. Online courses are designed to meet all of the benchmarks in the Sunshine State Standards. They cannot be condensed for a shorter summer session. However, acceleration of pace may result in early completion. At the regular pace, the expected completion time for a .5 credit course is 18 weeks and for a 1.0 credit course, it is 36 weeks. However, an extended or accelerated pace may be requested.

B. The online teacher calendar will be 241 days. Accrual and use of these days will be the same as for all 241-day district employees.

C. Online teachers must provide notice to their students about teacher vacation periods or other extended periods of absence and provide for coverage of their classes by other online teachers in the case of an emergency.

D. Teacher Day

1. Due to the nature of online instruction, the teacher must be available during non-traditional instructional time periods and/or traditional instructional time periods.

2. District paid teachers are required to work the number of hours per day that are required by the district to be considered full-time.

3. Teachers with Okaloosa Online may work in a part-time capacity and may be paid on a per class or per hour or percentage/completion basis. They are required to be available for student/parent contact outside of the traditional instructional school day.

4. All online teachers must report their hours on a regular basis to their administrator when requested to do so.

E. Student Day

1. The distance learning classes may be taken during the student's school day, as a part of the student's regularly scheduled courses on or off the school campus as one of the regularly scheduled courses or an additional course to accelerate student progression, meet specific individual needs, make up credits or apply for forgiveness as described in current district policy.

2. Students must provide their own transportation if they elect to leave the campus of their school of record to take a class through distance learning.

7. Drop and Withdrawal / Grace Period for Students Enrolled in Courses for High School Credit:

Only through continuous communication can students in a virtual learning environment be successful. Each instructor outlines the expectations for work submission each week. Therefore, it is essential that the student and instructor maintain regular contact. To ensure that students are aware of this commitment, the four-part process below will be followed:

- A. During the first 14 consecutive days of being activated into a distance learning course, the student may drop the course without grade penalty. Requests to drop the course after the 14-day grace period will not be honored and the student will receive the grade earned by the end of the duration of the course. It will be stressed to students that this first 14 days should be a period to demonstrate that they are willing exert the effort to be successful online students.
- B. If the student does not submit the expected number of assignment(s) within a period of seven (7) consecutive days, the student, parent(s) and guidance counselor at the student's school of record will receive a letter notifying them of the student's unacceptable pace for submitting assignments.
- C. If the student does not respond to the letter by submitting assignments within seven (7) consecutive days of the initial letter, the instructor(s) will make a telephone call to the parent of the student.
- D. If the student does not respond by submitting assignments within fourteen (14) consecutive days of the initial letter, it will be assumed the

student does not intend to remain in the course and the student will receive a failing grade of “F”. In individual cases, the teacher, academic advisor, and parent may agree that the student be granted a specified extension period due to extraordinary circumstances.

- E. Distance learning teachers will maintain a Student Contact Log, which will indicate each time a student or parent has been contacted for lack of participation and other noteworthy occasions.
- F. The school of record shall notify the distance learning teacher when a student is withdrawn, suspended or expelled from the school of record.
 - 1. The withdrawn student will receive a transfer grade if that student leaves Okaloosa County Public Schools. The grade will be based on the quality of the work submitted and the quantity of work that should have been submitted by the withdrawal date
 - 2. The suspended student will have education privileges in accordance with the policy of the district and the school of record.
 - 3. The expelled student may be provided continued education:
 - in a virtual environment that prevents the expelled student’s interaction with other district students;
 - in accordance with district policy for the education of expelled students.
- G. To maintain continuity and sound academic practice, online students who are enrolled in the district Homebound Program or for other reasons are absent from the school of record for an extended period of time, will continue with the online format until the courses are completed after returning to the traditional school environment, provided that they actively participated online for more than 14 consecutive days.

8. Provision of Services and Materials:

- A. Online instruction is limited to the course that is offered and auxiliary support services for students are not part of the course.
- B. Online instruction, either part or full time, is a choice for students and their families. The course(s) itself constitutes the entire educational service that is provided to the student. Adaptations, modifications, auxiliary support or course adjustments are not part of the online instructional delivery system.

- C. The school of record will be responsible to update and/or revise Individual Educational Plans (IEP) when required.
- D. In order to support virtual education and identify quality instructional resource materials for learning through technological access, the necessary instructional materials required for a student to participate in class through distance learning may be provided by the online entity.
- E. Part time distance learning students may have access to contests, fairs and field trips through their school of record in accordance within current district policy.
- F. The student's school of record will provide the technology necessary or Internet access for students to participate in approved distance learning courses offered when:
 - the course(s) is(are) part of the student's normal class load and are scheduled within the regular school day;
 - the student is required to be physically present on the school campus during that time.
- G. The school district is not *required* to provide the technology necessary or Internet access for students to participate in approved distance learning courses offered when:
 - the course is taken outside the regular school day, in addition to the student's normal class schedule;
 - the student is not required to be physically on the school of record's campus during that time;
 - the student is suspended or expelled from the school of record;
 - the student withdraws from Okaloosa County Public Schools.

9. Technical Specifications for Participation in online courses:

Because they are subject to change with new and improved technology, the required hardware and software specifications for distance learning through the Internet will be made available online and in the district's current guidelines for distance learning.

10. Responsibilities of the Distance Learning Provider:

The approved distance learning provider shall:

- A. provide curriculum and instruction to students registered in distance learning courses;
- B. provide the full facilitation of student progress by a teacher certified in field by the State of Florida;
- C. make available appropriate data about instructional teachers and course assignments;
- D. provide the school's academic advisor or designee with a password that will allow entry to the website where student progress reports and grades are posted or with hardcopy of these records (these are updated on a monthly basis and will be accessible only to guidance personnel at the student's school of record and may be downloaded and printed if a hard copy is needed);
- E. provide appropriate professional development to in-school facilitators in the district when students are taking classes during the school day or from school based facilities;
- F. provide awareness programs about distance learning to meet the needs of the district schools, administration, students, parents and local communities;
- G. assess and evaluate student progress in accordance with the course for which the student has registered;
- H. provide timely progress reports for online courses to parents, to students and to guidance counselors at the student's school of record;
- I. assign a grade that accurately describes the level of success the student achieved in a distance learning course;
- J. limit the number of enrollments from a single school within the district for each course based on space available in the course(s) as determined by the school and Okaloosa Online.
- K. provide the district with information regarding FTE implications, NCAA eligibility and the accreditation status of the instructional entity;

- L. respect the district drop policy for students enrolled in distance learning courses provided by entities outside the district.

11. Responsibilities of the Student's School of Record:

The student's school of record shall:

- A. include available distance learning classes in school course selection guides to assure that all students are aware of the academic opportunities provided through distance learning;
- B. assist in the registration of students in distance learning courses that are appropriate for their academic and developmental levels;
- C. verify essential demographic data entered in the student's AUP that must be signed by the school guidance counselor, the student, and the student's parent or designee;
- D. provide appropriate email addresses to facilitators as points of contact for students registered in distance learning courses;
- E. accept the grade for the student's successful completion of distance learning courses and enters the grade on the student's cumulative records and grant earned credit.

12. Responsibilities of Okaloosa County Schools

- A. Okaloosa County Schools will identify the Okaloosa Online Director as the individual who:
 - is responsible for correspondence and articulation among the district staff and the schools, and with distance learning course providers affiliated with the district and those initiated by the district.
 - directs all activities related to distance learning for K-12 public school students in Okaloosa County.
 - facilitates the completion of any required affiliation agreement, contract, partnership, franchise or other documents required to engage services;
 - disseminates information regarding available distance learning courses and registration guidelines throughout the district;

- serves as a local point of contact for schools, students and parents involved in or interested in becoming involved in any approved distance learning initiative;
- assists administrators and guidance personnel in district schools with distance learning course registration when requested.

13. Responsibilities of the Parent(s)/Guardian:

- A. The parent(s)/guardian must confer with the student's guidance counselor to discuss the enrollment of the student in a distance learning course.
- B. The parent(s)/guardian will ensure that the student has an email account or address that is appropriate for school.
- C. The parent(s)/guardian must sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), thus agreeing to the rules, and requirements therein.
- D. The parent(s)/guardian will cooperate with the distance learning course provider and instructor(s) in all areas pertaining to the student's progress in the distance learning course(s).