



## **VIRTUAL NINNEKAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

### **Description**

Ninnekah Public Schools will provide an online school option (Virtual Ninnekah) for students PK-5th. This interactive learning environment will provide virtual access to lessons, assignments and instruction through a variety of platforms. Our virtual school option meets all Oklahoma public school standards and graduation requirements. Instructors are Oklahoma certified teachers and employees of Ninnekah Public Schools.

### **Eligibility**

Students who meet the following requirements are eligible to participate in the virtual education program:

- Enrolled in Ninnekah Elementary School System PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Complete the Virtual Ninnekah Enrollment Packet, and read this student and parent handbook

### **Requirements**

- Participate in all required state-level academic assessments (OSTP) in the same manner as other regularly enrolled students within the district. Assessments will be taken at the school site at which the student is enrolled as scheduled.
- Students are required to have a device. Families must have access to consistent, daily internet service.
- Students and parents must respond to school system communication in a timely manner.
- Parents must be available for the teacher to contact to stay up to date on student's progress.
- Parents must play an active role in holding their student accountable to keeping their designated pace.
- PK thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be required to use the core curriculum from Exact Path to practice skills for Individualized Education.
- PK thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be supplemented with additional programs as needed as well as with assignments that emphasize penmanship and handwriting. These programs will vary per grade and will be geared to match the standards set forth by the Oklahoma Academic Standards set forth from the State of Oklahoma

### **Attendance Policy**

Students participating in the virtual education program will be considered as being in attendance if the students are meeting the following criteria.

- Students are on pace to finish the assigned courses by the prescribed finish date.
- Students/Parents are attending the meeting times set forth by the Mentoring teacher.

### **Accepted Pace Descriptions and Falling Behind Policy**

- Accepted pace will be communicated for each individual student by the mentor teacher.
- Pace will be based on the learning continuum of the Exact Path program and by the mentor teacher
- Students who fall behind on their weekly percentage, or their grade falls below a 70%, will be REQUIRED to meet with the administration and/or mentor teacher immediately to determine a recovery plan.

### **Failure to Communicate Policy**

- Students/Parents must reply promptly within 24 hours of a mentor teacher's email.
- If failure to communicate continues, or the school is unable to contact the parent to formulate a recovery plan, the student will have to be considered truant, and a letter will be sent to the district attorney for truancy.

### **Extracurricular Eligibility Policy – applies to 5<sup>th</sup> grade only**

- Students must be in attendance at their respective extracurricular each day on campus.
- Students in athletics or extracurricular activities must maintain a 70% average in all classes. If not, the first week student is on probation or any consecutive week after, student is considered ineligible.
- In order to be considered eligible to participate in extracurricular competitions students must be in attendance at their extracurricular class on campus and maintain their required weekly percentage in all assigned coursework.

### **Students on Campus Procedure**

- Students are expected to follow the site student handbook and expectations when on campus.

### **Resources Available to Students**

- Content specific face-to-face mentorship is available through Zoom. Zoom meetings are currently the preferred method for these mentorships. This may change as the Virtual School adjusts to the ever changing situations.

**To join, create a zoom account at [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) and simply Join Meeting at top, enter the meeting ID your Mentor Teacher sends you and you are good to go!**

## **COMMON QUESTIONS:**

### **Which students are eligible for the Virtual Ninnekah program?**

Any PK-5th student enrolled in Ninnekah Public Schools.

### **Is there a cost to participate?**

There is no cost to the parent to participate in the Virtual Ninnekah curriculum.

### **What if I have multiple students but only one device?**

We highly recommend no more than 3 students in your home share a single device.

### **What if my only device is a cell phone?**

Although some programs can be accessed on a cell phone, we highly recommend you use a device that has more capability.

### **Is this program the same as distance learning during the Spring 2020 semester?**

No. In March of 2020, the state Board of Education closed schools in Oklahoma due to the coronavirus pandemic and recommended a distance learning plan that allowed students to complete the school year at home. At that time, NPS provided families with distance learning options that allowed for review and completion of courses. Virtual Ninnekah will be a graded platform with online instruction, progress and attendance requirements.

### **What curriculum will be used for the Virtual Ninnekah program at the Elementary School level and what will my child study?**

- **Curriculum for PK-5th** – Exact Path, supplemental websites, apps, links, printables, and activity pages.

The subjects in Virtual Ninnekah are the same grade-appropriate core subjects they would take in person at Ninnekah Public Schools. These include but are not limited to: Literacy, Math, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Social/Emotional. All curriculums are aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards. These standards may be found at : <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-academic-standards> . Therefore, students who stay on track with virtual learning should not encounter any instructional loss and should be as ready to progress to the next grade as their in-class peers.

### **How much time do students have to complete courses?**

Students have the same time to complete the course as students in traditional school. The program will show if the student is on track to finish on time. It is important to not get behind in the program.

### **Will students be required to take state mandated achievement tests or other required tests?**

Yes, students must take the tests mandated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. (Unless SDE waives the testing mandate as they did this past spring) Parents will be notified of the times and locations of those tests. There are also required Reading Sufficiency Act screeners that will be required throughout the year for students in grades K-5.

## **What are the responsibilities of parents?**

A virtual instructional option is home-based. This gives parents additional responsibilities for providing instructional support, monitoring student engagement and progress, and communicating with teachers via e-mail and telephone.

- Parents must help maintain a computer and internet access for their student's work.
- Parents must establish an environment that is conducive to a student's learning.
- Parents must ensure that students log in to courses, so attendance can be taken daily.
- Parents must be aware that students are expected to follow the district's virtual attendance policy and attend (complete) their virtual courses regularly. A student's failure to sign in to his or her digital platform account regularly and/or demonstrate academic progress will have a negative impact on a student's ability to stay enrolled as a virtual student.

## **Will my 5<sup>th</sup> grade student eligible to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities?**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade students in the Virtual Ninnekah program are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities offered by Ninnekah Public Schools if they meet the academic eligibility requirements. Students and parents must work directly with their school to make arrangements for participation in extracurricular activities.

## **Will my child be in front of a screen all day?**

No. We estimate that the Virtual Ninnekah program will require students to spend 2-4 hours a day maximum on the computer. Their screen time could be lessened depending on their grade level and course work. The involvement of the parent or guardian will be crucial to ensure that the student is not spending too much time in front of a screen.

## **How is my student counted for attendance in the Virtual Ninnekah Program ?**

Students are required to log into the virtual platform on a regular basis. Ninnekah Public Schools verifies attendance by students signing in to their virtual courses and making successful academic progress. While students have flexibility, if a student does not log on for an extended period of time it will affect their attendance negatively.

Attendance is determined by the student's level of progress towards completion of the coursework. A minimum of 10-20 hours per week are recommended for satisfactory progress depending on the age of the student. Parents are subject to the Oklahoma compulsory student attendance law and are accountable for compliance in virtual school just as they are in the traditional school setting. Students with attendance/progress deficiencies may be returned to the regular school setting.

## **What if a virtual student tests positive for COVID-19?**

Students/Parents should notify the building principal of a positive test as soon as possible. In the event of a mild case, the flexible nature of online learning would allow the student to take a few days to recover and then resume lessons. Be mindful that the student may need to double up on lessons to remain on pace to finish the course work by the end of the semester. This would not be different than a student having make-up work in the traditional classroom. In the event of a severe case with extensive recovery, the students' situation would be reviewed by the instructor and administration to determine how to proceed. Communication is key.

### **Must I enroll my student in the Virtual Ninnekah program for one year, or may I enroll my student at the change of semesters?**

A student must be enrolled in the Virtual Ninnekah program for one semester. However, the parent may choose to continue for the full school year. Students will be allowed to change enrollment from the traditional classroom to the virtual program and vice versa at Christmas break (semester). We highly encourage parents to evaluate student progress (at the end of each semester) with their teachers to ensure digital learning is the right fit for you. At the end of the semester if you would like to return to the traditional classroom, reach out to your building principal.

### **What if we discover the Virtual Ninnekah program does not meet my student's needs, what are my options?**

We want to ensure students are placed in a successful learning environment and understand that online learning may not be for every student. Parents should make the decision to enroll their student in virtual school in a very thoughtful manner. Virtual education is a flexible option for students and/or parents who have anxiety about returning to the traditional classroom, but some find the demands too strenuous.

A family has ten school days after the first day of school to move their student back into the traditional setting. The student, parent/guardian, teacher, and site administrator will work together to make this decision. After the first ten school days of the school year, students and parents are committed to at least one semester of digital learning.

If you choose to return to classroom instruction at the end of the semester, your student will be enrolled as normal, through the building principal.

### **Can I move my child into the virtual program during the school year?**

No. It is very difficult to ensure that the curriculum for the virtual school and the traditional classroom will match in the middle of a semester. If a student becomes ill, or cannot be in school, the parent will need to reach out to the school principal to work on a solution. These cases will be handled as we have in the past, by sending work home and allowing the number of days missed plus 1 to make up work.

### **Is this program a good fit for students who are homeschooled?**

Yes! Families who choose to homeschool may enroll in the Virtual Ninnekah program while maintaining control of their child's at-home learning environment. The Virtual Ninnekah program offers board-approved elementary, middle, and high school curriculum that is comprehensive and aligned to Oklahoma's state standards. This affords homeschooling families the opportunities to engage in a curriculum that is comprehensive, engage in extracurricular activities if available, while also offering the support of a teacher mentor. Grades and transcripts will be issued by Ninnekah Public Schools.

### **What if my child has special needs?**

Parents of children with disabilities on a Section 504 Accommodation Plan or on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will want to meet with their student's team to determine if the Virtual Ninnekah program is the best placement for their child. Our Special Education director, Terry Jones, Jr. can be contacted at (405) 222-0420 or by email at [t.jones@ninnekah.k12.ok.us](mailto:t.jones@ninnekah.k12.ok.us).

### **Is my student eligible for breakfast and lunch while they are learning at home?**

Yes, meals will be available to be picked up at a set time each day. Families will be responsible for ordering the meals ahead of time. The meal will be a "grab 'n go" only option. This may be done through the superintendent's office (405) 224-4092.

### **What school supplies will be needed for virtual learning?**

The supplies necessary will vary depending upon the grade level of your student. The mentor teacher will provide each family with a list of any necessary supplies. This list may be fluid as the student progresses.

### **Who do I contact for questions and additional information?**

Please email the Elementary Principal, Vickie Loughridge at [vloughridge@ninnekah.k12.ok.us](mailto:vloughridge@ninnekah.k12.ok.us), or call the elementary school office at (405) 224-0420.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES**

### **What are the opportunities of taking an VIRTUAL NINNEKAH?**

- Flexible schedule
- Flexibility of time to work through coursework
- Individualized pacing
- Convenience to access courses at any time and from any place
- The comfort of working at home with parental assistance and support
- Parental involvement in education
- Individualization of student needs

### **What are the obstacles of taking online courses?**

- Lack of face-to-face and personal contact with instructor on a day to day basis
- Required access to computer and internet
- Technical problems (including computer, server, network, power)
- Needed self-discipline, self-motivation, time-management and strong organization skills
- Required technical/computer literacy and keyboarding /typing skills
- Lack of immediate help or feedback from online teacher
- Distractions when working from home
- Limits certain kinds of class instruction (modeling, demonstrations, hands-on activities, spontaneous interactions).
- Less socialization with peers (no library time, class crafts/parties etc.)
- Time required for parental involvement in student learning