

Van Buren County Schools Virtual Instruction Program



Student Handbook 2020-2021

**Van Buren County Schools
293 Sparta Street, TN 38585
Central Office: (931)-946-2242**

UPDATED: 8/5/2020

For the 2020-21 school year, Van Buren County Schools (VBCS) Families will have the option to attend their designated school in person for traditional classes or participate in virtual learning through their designated school. **The deadline to apply is Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 3:00pm.** With either option, all students are expected to maintain sufficient academic progress. This handbook is provided to outline the procedures and expectations for families that choose to enroll their student in the Van Buren County Virtual Instruction Program. For the purposes of this document, virtual learning is defined as a form of distance or remote learning that is done using the internet and electronic instruction at home due to health concerns related to COVID-19.

Becoming a Student

VBCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability in provision of educational opportunities or employment opportunities and benefits pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as codified in 42 USC 2000D, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-318, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Title II Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L.101-336, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.

Application and Admissions Process

Applications will be available via online application or at each school in paper form. Once the application has been reviewed, an email from the school will be sent to the applicant containing information regarding registration, any additional documentation if needed, course selections for 9-12 students, and a **required orientation**.

New student orientation will be conducted in person or virtually. The student and at least one parent/guardian will be required to participate in the orientation. Failure to participate in orientation will result in an incomplete application and the student will not be enrolled in the virtual instruction program (VIP) for the upcoming school year. **This required orientation will be August 5, 2020 at 10:00am in the VBHS Auditorium.**

Completion of the VBCS Virtual Instruction Program Application does not guarantee acceptance into the virtual instruction program offered by Van Buren County Schools.

Students must be in good standing in terms of attendance, behavior, and academics prior to acceptance to the VIP program.

Lunch will be provided and can be picked up in front of VBHS for all students enrolled in the Virtual Instruction Program. Meals will not be delivered.

Attendance Requirements and Verification

Van Buren County Schools Board Policy

A copy of the Van Buren County Schools Attendance Policy 6.200 can be found and reviewed at www.vanburenschools.org under the School Board and Policies tab. Board policies are subject to change at any time as the Van Buren County School Board meets monthly.

Attendance Verification

Under both Van Buren County Schools traditional and virtual instruction program (VIP) learning models, students are inspected to engage in both synchronous (live or livestreaming online) and asynchronous instruction (at your own pace learning) at times assigned by the student's teachers. Asynchronous instruction may include independent work, teacher assigned individual or group projects, audio or video recorded lessons, online class modules, or other appropriate methods determined by the school and the teacher.

Daily Attendance Based on Meaningful Student Engagement and Interaction

Tennessee Board of Education Rule 0520-01-17-.01 requires student attendance to be recorded daily when students are participating in remote instruction. Van Buren County Schools will consider students who are interacting and responding to remote instruction as "in attendance."

This may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- Student submission of an assignment;
- Student completion of an online assessment;
- Student participation in synchronous learning (livestreaming) in an online classroom;
- Student submittal of work via hard-copy or virtual formats;
- Student-initiated phone call, email, and/or other digital communication or responses to teacher email; and/or
- Other evidence of participation as determined by the principal or designee.

Attendance is not based solely on assignment completion. Teachers will be responsible for monitoring student participation in remote learning and reporting attendance to principals daily. Students who are not completing assignments and submitting them on due dates can be removed from the remote learning program if it is determined by the teacher and principal that the student is not making adequate academic progress and participation.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Van Buren County Schools Board Policy 6.200 defines excused and unexcused absences. These definitions will also apply during virtual instruction program models. In order for an absence to be excused from remote learning, the parent/guardian or student is responsible for submitting the appropriate documentation for those categories defined in Policy 6.200, which includes:

- Personal illness/injury
- Illness of immediate family member;
- Death in the family;
- Extreme weather conditions;
- Religious observances;
- College visits;
- Pregnancy;
- School-sponsored or school endorsed activities; or
- Summons, subpoena, or court orders.
- Circumstances, in which the judgement of the principal, create emergencies in which the student has no control

A parent/guardian must email, fax, or bring appropriate documentation to the school office. The parent/guardian will have up to 3 days from the day of absence to submit documentation to the school. Absences not properly documented will be considered unexcused.

All other absences will be considered unexcused.

Unexcused Absences and Truancy

Van Buren County Schools will utilize a Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan. An additional step to identify students who are accumulating unexcused absences are those who are not making adequate academic progress while participating in the online program. Parents will be contacted via email, phone, or in person after *three* unexcused absences. The goal of this meeting/contact shall be to identify and eliminate problems keeping the student from meeting the attendance requirements for the virtual program. After the initial contact, Van Buren County Schools will implement a Three Tier System to improve student/school attendance for subsequent unexcused absences:

Van Buren County Schools Truancy Procedures

A student who is absent three (3) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of Schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absence. If a parent/guardian does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall

implement the progressive truancy intervention plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Tier I

Tier I of the progressive truancy intervention plan shall include the following:

1. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and an Attendance Supervisor/designee. The contract shall include:
 - a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
 - b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
 - c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.

Tier II

If a student accumulates additional unexcused absences in violation of the attendance contract in Tier I, the student will be subject to Tier II. Under this tier, a school employee shall conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier III

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful. These interventions shall be determined by a team formed at each school. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

Any additional unexcused absence will result in a referral to the Van Buren County Juvenile Court for truancy following the implementation of all three tiers listed above.

Consequences for Truancy

Considerable absences can directly influence student achievement and the student's ability to understand and comprehend content. Because of the interactive nature of courses within VBCS Virtual Instruction Program, instruction will often be dependent upon collaboration with peers and instructors as coursework is completed. As attendance directly relates to academic success, VBCS Board Policy related to absences resulting in truancy will be followed.

Make-Up Work Following Student Absences

Students are responsible for all work missed during an absence from school. The student has three (3) days to make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to collect and complete these assignments. To avoid missing current class assignments upon his/her return to school to make up work, students should take advantage of the after school program to get help with makeup assignments and/or makeup tests when offered. Parents and students will be responsible for working with the teacher(s) to making these arrangements. Students who are absent from the VIP school program for any day will be permitted to make up any missed work.

Grades and Exams

Grade Classification

A student will be classified to the grade level he or she would have normally been assigned.

Grading Scale

The grading scale below will be used at most grade levels, however elementary grade levels may not be on a traditional A-F scale but instead reflect a level of mastery for each skill. Grading for kindergarten will be assessed and monitored using a standards-based skills checklist. During the school year, students may be required to attend school on scheduled days for assessment. Final grades for each marking period will indicate progress towards mastery of the skill or standard.

Letter (Elementary)	Numerical Grade
A	93-100
B	85-92
C	75-84
D	70-74
F	69 and below

Exams

TCAP and End of Course Exams will be taken on campus for any course that requires it. Students will report to their designated school when they are scheduled to take the exams. Parents will be notified within one week of the first scheduled date. Failure to take the exams at the scheduled times so will result in an incomplete (I) grade for the course. No credit will be earned for the course until the student takes the exam on a makeup day (only permitted with an excused absence) or takes it the following school year.

Students may be required to take diagnostic assessments or other exams in person and on campus at scheduled times if the teacher and/or principal requires it.

All 11th graders are required to take the ACT Exam. The exam will be scheduled on campus and more information will be communicated as it becomes available.

Academics and Academic Integrity

Academics

Grades K-8 VBCS Virtual Instruction Program- Daily instruction and assignments will be provided by teachers utilizing Google Classroom. Google student email and Google Classroom will be used to communicate with students. In order to fully cover the required curriculum, students should expect to spend up to 7 hours per day engaged in online learning, and be able to document 35 hours of learning activities as required by the State of Tennessee. Pre-K students should expect to spend up to 4.5 hours per day engaged in online learning.

Grades 9-12 VBCS Virtual Instruction Program- Google Classroom will be utilized to provide virtual learning opportunities for all students. Depending on courses, students may use Edgenuity, Dual Enrollment course learning platforms, or other online programs. Google student email account will be used to communicate with students as well. In order to fully cover the required curriculum, students should expect to spend 7 hours per day engaged in online learning for their full class load. This is equivalent to 35 hours of learning activities per week. When possible students should complete work during regular schools hours of 8:00am-3:00pm in order to allow for communication with teachers.

Please understand that homeschooling and the Virtual Instruction Program are not the same. To be clear, home school is an instructional program organized and/or delivered by the parent of a student. Homeschool students must completely withdraw from Van Buren County Schools and report *Intent to Homeschool* to the Van Buren County Board of Education.

The VBCS Virtual Instruction Program option is a continuation of the Van Buren County Schools curriculum of study for enrolled Van Buren County students. When virtual learners return to the classroom, VBCS expects a seamless transition into the regular classroom.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the foundations of VBCS Virtual Learning. Because of its importance in each area of our instruction, there are a variety of tools that will be utilized in ensuring the integrity of student work. It is the *student's responsibility* to understand and acknowledge the policy statements and cheating definitions of each of his or her teachers.

Plagiarism -The Harbrace Handbook, 18th edition defines plagiarism as “the presentation of someone else’s ideas as your own” (510). Students should strive to avoid this by ensuring that any material which is not common knowledge is adequately cited.

Some examples of plagiarism are, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying and pasting any selection from an online or print source and representing it as your own work.
- Utilizing selections of online or print sources and failing to properly cite authorship.
- Presenting the work of another individual as one’s own.

Cheating-The Oxford Dictionary defines the act of cheating as a student’s decision to “act dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage.” For the purposes of VBCS VIP, three definitions are particularly relevant:

- To influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice.
- To practice fraud or trickery.
- To violate rules dishonestly, ex. To cheat on a quiz or assignment

Some examples are, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing questions/answers/work to another student.
- Receiving questions/answers/work from another student.
- Utilizing online or print sources on an assignment, quiz, or test.

The tools used by VBCS VIP to ensure sustained academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

- *Academic Integrity Database* - Each VBCS school will maintains its own database of student integrity incidents or violations. This database will be used to monitor the number of student integrity issues.

- *Teacher Expertise* - VBCS instructors have extensive classroom experience. Their expertise is often a guide in identifying the level of originality in student work.
- *Proctored Exams* - Any teacher can require a scheduled proctored exam at any time for a student to be given at the designated school.

Discipline for Academic Integrity Violations:

- 1st offense-Zero on the assignment. The student is notified. (An alternate assignment for partial credit may be completed only with teacher discretion.)
- 2nd Offense-Zero on the assignment. Parents and student(s) must have a conference with the VBCS administration. (Assignment may be completed for feedback from the teacher; zero will not be replaced with an alternate assignment grade.)
- 3rd Offense-Zero on the assignment. The student may be removed from VBCS VIP option. (Assignment may be completed for feedback from the teacher; zero will not be replaced by an alternate assignment grade.)

***Students who need additional support in regards to academic progress, academic integrity, or other disciplinary infractions may be required to attend at the designated site in order to ensure academic success.**

Campus Events and Attendance

Attendance on Campus

All campus visits during school hours will be by appointment only or as scheduled by the teacher/administration for in person exams or other scheduled reason. Students may participate in sports and any after-school extracurricular activities after school hours as long as all school guidelines are met. Students should be current with all school work and in good standing in all subjects. Parents will notify school administrators if their child will participate in after school extra-curricular activities. The student will sign-in each day and follow any screening protocol required from any other student upon entering the campus. During all meetings or events that students attend on campus, all Van Buren County School Board Policies will be in effect and students are expected to follow the policies.

Course Progress and Academic Support

It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete the work for his or her courses. VBCS instructors will make themselves available to help students as needed over the course of the academic term during regular school hours when teachers are available according to their

schedule. It is the student's responsibility to reach out and request support or inform the course instructor that he or she will be needing extra support.

Students must have a designated **Education Coach**. The Education Coach will be a parent, guardian, or adult designated by the parent/guardian who will be responsible for ensuring the student is making satisfactory progress in the VBCS Virtual Instruction Program. Additionally, the student's Educational Coach will be the contact person for the school staff for daily phone calls and/or emails.

VBCS Course instructors will make daily contact with students and the student's designated Educational Coach during the academic term, but ultimately the student must take the initiative to complete the course and stay on track for completion. Students who fall significantly behind or who struggle with completion will have consultation with administration to determine if the virtual learning program is their best option. The student's education coach designee must also attend this consultation.

In the event that a student is not making sufficient academic progress or is not on track to complete the course, or his or her attendance or behavior is not in line with the expectations of VBCS VIP, he or she will be placed on academic probation at which point in time the student must fulfill the expectations or be dismissed from VBCS Virtual Learning.

Students who are enrolled in the Virtual Learning Program will be required to take the school and district benchmark tests. These tests must be taken on the school's campus. Progress monitoring and benchmark testing will take place at least twice per marking period. On campus testing will occur during regular school hours.

Grade Monitoring and Report Cards

Student progress is updated weekly in the Skyward student database and reflects student progress and achievement as grades are updated. This report contains academic progress and attendance information in each class, and parents are encouraged to closely monitor their student's work in each course. Additionally, students have daily access to grades and assignments through Google Classroom.

For SKYWARD Family Access login information, please contact the main office at each school. Access the VBCS Skyward website at:

<https://sis-vanburen.tnk12.gov/scripts/wsisa.dll/WService=wsVANStu/seplog01.w>

Technology Device and Internet Agreement

Technology Device

Technology devices will be available for all students participating in VBCS Virtual Learning and will be issued by the district. These devices can be used with or without internet access at home with some limitations. Our teachers have been trained in using these devices and are looking forward to the opportunity to integrate technology into their curriculum through digital resources, collaboration and G-Suite including Google Classroom. A schedule for digital device pick up will be communicated by each individual school at a later date. Parents will sign an acceptable use contract before devices are distributed. Parents will be held responsible for any repairs for damages or replacement of a school device. Devices must be turned in immediately upon request or on the designated due dates. For more information regarding technology or any other questions, please contact the district's technology support staff.

Responsible Internet Use

The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the school system. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network.

Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material that is protected by a trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

- **Privileges:** The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The school system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may suspend privileges at any time.
- **Net Etiquette:** Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Avoid offensive or inflammatory speech.
 - Be courteous and polite.
 - Use appropriate language.
 - Profanity or obscenities are not permitted at any time.
 - Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the work of others.
 - All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

- Do not post, share, or send someone else's information, photo, video, or audio without their knowledge and consent
- Users may not quote personal communications without the author's consent.
- **Vandalism:** Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet, or other networks that are connected to the Internet system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- **Exception to terms and conditions:** These terms and conditions reflect the entire agreement of the parties and supersedes all prior oral and written agreements and understandings of the parties.

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. Students who are in violation of responsible Internet Use Policy may be suspended from use of school devices or network, or dismissed from VBCS VIP.

Accommodations

Students who have an active IEP or 504 will receive accommodations as stated in their most recent IEP/504 plan. Parents with questions or concerns should contact their child's school.

Removal or Dismissal from Program

Removal from VBCS Virtual Instruction Program

A student may be referred for removal from the VBCS VIP option for any number of reasons (plagiarism, attendance, behavior, failing more than one course per grading period, etc.). Parents will be notified in writing via school email and/or phone call or home visitation with a request for a meeting to discuss the conditions the student will need to meet in order to be successful in the program.

Transferring from VBCS VIP to VBCS Traditional Learning

All requests for moving from VBCS Virtual Learning to a VBCS Traditional classroom will need to be made in writing to the principal before September 3, 2020. Each request made after



September 3, 2020 may be given consideration at the end of the first nine week marking period on a case by case basis.

Withdrawal from VBCS Virtual Learning

A parent of a student participating in the VIP option who plans to withdraw their child from Van Buren County Schools for any reason should contact their designated school's main office. The staff will assist parents with the proper procedure. All obligations such as turning in books, technology devices, paying fees and/or fines, etc., must be cleared before withdrawing to another school. Records will not be forwarded until all obligations are met.

Please submit questions or concerns by calling your child's school, the Central Office at (931)946-2242, or by emailing your child's principal.

Spencer Elementary School

Principal: grissomd@vanburenschools.org

Van Buren County Middle/High School

Principal: simmonsj1@vanburenschools.org

Van Buren County Schools



Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) Application

***Please read ENTIRE VBCS VIP handbook prior to completing the application.**

***Completion of the VBCS Virtual Instruction Program Application does not guarantee acceptance into the virtual instruction program offered by Van Buren County Schools.**

***Students must be in good standing in terms of attendance, behavior, and academics prior to acceptance to the VIP program.**

Student Full Name: _____

School Name: _____

Grade Level: _____ Student Birthdate: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name(s) _____

Primary Address _____

Address Where Student will receive online instruction (if not primary address):

Parent Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Parent Email(s): _____

Designated Educational Coach Name: _____

Educational Coach Phone: _____

What is the best time to contact you (the Educational Coach) each day? _____

Educational Coach Email(s): _____

Student Phone (Optional): _____ Other: _____

Primary reason for choosing the virtual instruction option:

___ Health Concerns due to COVID-19 ___ Other-Explain: _____

Signing this form indicates that you understand that choosing the virtual instruction program option requires a 9 week (grading period) commitment and you have read and understand the requirements outlined in the VBCS Virtual Instruction Program Student Handbook.

Signature

Date

*Parents/Guardians are expected to provide updated and current phone number/emails in order for school staff to communicate with students.