



Virtual Academy Student-Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

We are #RockSolid

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A Message from our Director

Director, Rock Hill Virtual Academy, K-12

Heather Andrus

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! As an educator of 27 years, I believe whole child education is vital to academic success. That means we will support your child socially, and emotionally so they can reach their full potential as a learner. We are looking forward to meeting your students where they are and watching them grow throughout the 23-24 school year. A few ways we plan to accomplish this is through our new proficiency-based model as well as beginning the *Leader in Me* journey. The proficiency-based model will allow us to personalize the learning to meet better meet students' needs. Leader in Me is "an evidence-based, comprehensive model that builds leadership and life skills in students, creates a high-trust school culture, and lays the foundation for sustained academic achievement. There are over 5,000 Leader in Me schools in all 50 states and in over 50 countries" (<https://www.leaderinme.org/>).

As a product of Rock Hill Schools, I am thrilled to begin my 28th year as the Director of RHVA. This is my 25th year in the District and am proud to call Rock Hill home. I began my career with Rock Hill School District at Northwestern High School as a Social Studies teacher. After serving as a Program Coordinator and Assistant Principal at NHS, I became Principal at Rawlinson Road Middle School. I have learned so much throughout these experiences and I look forward to continuing my professional growth working with the RHVA.

Warm Regards,

Heather Andrus
handrus@rhmail.org
803-324-7478

MISSION: To provide Rock Hill Virtual Academy students with flexible and rigorous online learning opportunities that will assist them in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and characteristics necessary for college, career, and military readiness.

CORE VALUES:

- ★ Student success is the center of each decision.
- ★ Integrity, honesty, and respect are important characteristics of the Rock Hill Virtual Academy.
- ★ As active partners in the educational process, students, parents/guardians, educators and stakeholders are responsible for their role in student success.
- ★ Commit to an environment of professional learning that emphasizes communication and collaboration to best meet the needs of our students.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- ★ Focus on the individual success of each student and tailor instruction to students' educational needs.
- ★ Prepare students for work and life by providing a 21st-century education that encourages lifelong learning in our increasingly knowledge-driven world.
- ★ Provide a safe and nurturing virtual environment that promotes integrity, honesty and respect while building on students' academic and social needs.
- ★ Facilitate communication between educators, students and parents/guardians in order to support students and ensure their success.

Elementary Virtual Academy Bell Schedule:

7:45-11:40	Synchronous instruction with the teacher covering ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies
11:40-12:40	Student/Teacher Lunch/Recess
12:40-1:25	Related Arts (Art, Music, PE, STEM, Spanish)
1:25-2:10	*Asynchronous work time *Targeted support w/ classroom teacher *Clubs one day per week (9-week rotations)

Middle School Virtual Academy Bell Schedule:

Middle School Virtual Schedule:	
8:30-9:15	Block 1: Daily synchronous instruction
9:20-10:05	Block 2: Daily synchronous instruction
10:10-10:55	Block 3: Daily synchronous instruction
11:00-11:45	Block 4: Daily synchronous instruction
11:50-12:35	Block 5: Daily synchronous instruction
12:35-1:35	*Student and Teacher Lunch/Break/Independent Work Time
1:35-3:30	*Asynchronous work time *Targeted support w/ classroom teacher / Academic Seminar

High School Virtual Academy Bell Schedule:

High School Virtual Schedule:	
8:30-9:25	Block 1: Daily synchronous instruction
9:30-10:25	Block 2: Daily synchronous instruction
10:30-11:25	Block 3: Daily synchronous instruction
11:30-12:25	Block 4: Daily synchronous instruction
12:30-3:30	(12:30-1:30 teacher lunch/planning) Block 5:*Asynchronous work time for targeted support w/ classroom teacher



Synchronous Learning

RHVA will be using a combination of **synchronous and asynchronous learning**. Synchronous learning refers to a method of learning in which a group of participants is engaged in learning at the same time. There is real-time interaction with other people, therefore, the Zoom conference platform makes this possible because students can interact with the instructor and other participants. Our students will begin each day with synchronous learning. Asynchronous learning is where students will work on their own to ensure mastery is taking place. This learning will take place after the lunch break. Students may also have the opportunity to extend their learning or be provided extra teacher support during the afternoon work time.

Additionally, synchronous learning requires:

- ❖ Students log in each school day to meet with a virtual teacher.
- ❖ Flexible class structures, including but not limited to, small group instruction, individual conferencing, and interventions.
- ❖ Teachers collaborate with parents/guardians primarily through emails, messages within the learning platform (Canvas or Seesaw), virtual conferencing tools, or by phone call if necessary. When needed, teachers are available for virtual support and interaction.

How to Create Observer Account in Canvas for Parents

[Canvas Observer Tutorial \(English\)](#)

[Canvas Observer Tutorial \(Spanish\)](#)

Student Expectations

RHVA students are expected to:

- ❖ Work from a suitable space free from distractions, preferably with a solid wall directly behind the student (Bed is not a suitable space). This includes but is not limited to a school appropriate virtual background free of profanity and/or references to drugs, alcohol, political affiliations or any content/material that is a distraction to the learning environment.
- ❖ Log in 3 minutes before the virtual classroom session begins.
- ❖ Sign into all classes on time each day and remain for the duration of class until dismissed.
- ❖ Cameras must be on upon entering the virtual classroom and remain on at all times.
- ❖ Show your entire face (chin and up).
- ❖ Dress appropriately.
- ❖ Use a school appropriate background.
- ❖ Actively participate in the virtual community.
- ❖ Complete and submit assignments on time.
- ❖ Work independently and in groups (when assigned).
- ❖ Show respect for everyone.

Virtual Parent/Guardian Expectations

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- ❖ Provide a positive learning space where students can work uninterrupted in a suitable space free from distractions, preferably with a solid wall directly behind the student (Bed is not a suitable space). This includes but is not limited to a school appropriate virtual background free of profanity and/or references to drugs, alcohol, political affiliations or any content/material that is a distraction to the learning environment.
- ❖ Ensure students are signing into all classes on time each day and remaining until dismissed.
- ❖ Ensure background noises are minimized. Examples of noises that can disrupt your student's learning are music, television, video games, pets, conversations, other children, etc.
- ❖ Remind your student not to share his/her login information for any virtual class.
- ❖ Remind your student to adhere to the honor code regarding plagiarism.
- ❖ Ensure that your student is dressed properly for participating in virtual classrooms.
- ❖ Ensure students complete assignments and turn in the work on time.
- ❖ Monitor their child's grades and assigned work using Canvas/Seesaw.
- ❖ Review and remind your students to adhere to all expectations identified in the district mobile computing guide which can be found on the district's website.
- ❖ Remind your students of the following unacceptable behaviors:
 - Vulgarity (avoid cursing, vulgar language, inappropriate gestures, memes, etc.)
 - Posting negativity or cyberbullying others within class discussions or chats.
 - Smoking, vaping, drinking alcoholic beverages, or using drugs as well as pretending to participate in these activities.

- Brandishing weapons or look-a-like weapons.
- Trespassing into and/or disrupting another virtual class session where the student is not a member.

*****All inappropriate behaviors will receive appropriate consequences in accordance with the RHVA Handbook and may result in permanent removal from the RHVA.*****

Plagiarism and Cheating

Students who participate in RHVA are held to the same academic standards as students who choose face-to-face instruction in any of our schools. Academic integrity must be maintained at all costs. Virtual students who choose to resort to plagiarism, cheating, or using social media to transmit any work will be subject to disciplinary action and parents will be contacted should a violation occur.

If violations are repeated, the student could lose the opportunity to continue his/her education through the virtual program. For consistency across the district, the following definitions will be used to define plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as **"presenting someone else's ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased."** It includes, but is not limited to, the following types:

1. Copying verbatim all or part of another's written work;
2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.

Cheating is defined as representing any other person's work or work from any source as your own.

Consequences of Plagiarism/Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are two (2) types of academic fraud. Teachers will follow the following protocol for those students who are found guilty of plagiarism and cheating:

First Offense: *Warning, documentation, and parent contact.* Assignment will be reassigned with the highest grade possible of 80% (or 20 point reduction of grade). *Note: If a student has not completed the reassignment, the original score will be replaced with a '0'.*

Second Offense: *Documentation and parent conference.* Assignment can be redone only after parent, teacher, administrator and student have met to discuss assignment expectations. The student must be present in the conference to review the guidelines. The highest grade possible will be 50%. *Note: If a student has not completed the reassignment, the original score will be replaced with a '0'. The offense will also be documented in PowerSchool.*

Third Offense: *Parent and administrator conference.* Parents will be notified of probable removal from RHVA. The student will receive a '0' on the assignment.

*****If the student plagiarizes or cheats on a cumulative assessment such as final course exams, project, and End of Course exam, a score of '0' will be recorded and is ineligible for make up.**

Assessment and Missing Assignments

Retesting/Reassessing

Students will be provided an opportunity for reassessments after reteaching. Reteaching occurs when the teacher or student determines that the student is not meeting learning goals. Reteaching can occur with a teacher's computer-based instruction or additional practice opportunities at home. Reassessment opportunities will be offered to students that score below a standard as follows:

- ❖ Below a 80 in elementary/middle summative assessments in the areas of reading, writing, and math (elementary), and core classes (middle).
- ❖ Below an 80 in CP/Honors Courses on major assessments

Only one (1) reassessment opportunity is offered per task/assessment. When tasks/assignments are re-assessed, they may be reassessed partially, entirely, or in a different format, as determined by the teacher. However, all reassessments will have the same level of difficulty.

The following assessments/tasks indicate a final measure of learning and may not be reassessed:

- ❖ End-of-course or semester exams
- ❖ An assessment that ends an instructional period such as
 - Benchmark/Midterm exams
 - Final research papers, reports, or essays
 - Culminating projects or performances

When re-assessment is offered, students scoring below the standard will have one opportunity to retest within five (5) school days for a maximum grade of 80 for elementary students, 80 in Middle and High School courses. This will not apply to Dual Credit courses because they are administered by outside institutions of higher learning.

Making up missed work

Students will be permitted to make up all work missed within the allotted timeframe. It is the responsibility of students to contact their teachers within three (3) days of returning to school concerning all make-up assignments. Students will be afforded a period of time equal to the number of days absent to make up missed assignments if other arrangements are not made with the teacher. Parents and students may also access Canvas from the school's home page. Canvas provides access to class work and assignments, as well as due dates via the calendar. Students may ask teachers questions through Canvas Inbox.

Content and Instruction

RHVA is committed to adhering to the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate as seen below:



Promotion and Retention for High School Students

Note: In order to comply with state law and ensure continuous and appropriate progress from grade 9 through 12, the high schools have established regulatory guidelines to follow the Rock Hill Schools Board of Trustees Policy IKE (Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students, revised 11/23/2015). The following language is included in the RHS High School Course Catalog.

In [Grades 9](#) through [12](#), in order to be eligible for promotion to the next grade classification, students must have earned a minimum number of units, as specified below. Note: Students must be enrolled in at least one English and one Math course each of the four years of high school.

To be promoted to [Grade 10](#), a student must pass a minimum of 4 units of credit to include:

- ❖ One English credit
- ❖ One math credit
- ❖ Two additional credits

To be promoted to [Grade 11](#), a student must pass a minimum of 10 units of credit to include:

- ❖ Two English credits
- ❖ Two math credits
- ❖ One science credit
- ❖ One social studies credit
- ❖ Four additional credits

To be promoted to [Grade 12](#), a student must pass a minimum of 16 units of credit to include:

- ❖ Three English credits
- ❖ Three math credits
- ❖ Two science credits
- ❖ Two social studies credits
- ❖ Six additional credits

Student Support Services (Special Education, 504)

The RHVA is committed to providing free and appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities. We will follow the District Policy with regard to scheduling meetings and delivery of related services.

South Carolina State Testing

Virtual Academy students will be expected to take all state assessments associated with their grade level or chosen coursework. All state assessments will be taken on campus at times scheduled by the school within the required testing windows.

Grading Policy

Assessments and Grading

Teachers will provide a variety of assessments to determine student mastery of the course content. Assessments may include multiple choice, discussion-based, essays, project-based, major unit tests, etc. The gradebook in Canvas shows the most up-to-date grades for your child. Parent Portal is also another tool for parents to check grades. You may also check your Parent Portal account for grades.

Grading Scale

RHVA will follow the statewide uniform grading scale as approved by the State Board of Education. This uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle/junior high school level.

The uniform grading scale is as follows:

- A** 90-100
- B** 80-89
- C** 70-79
- D** 60-69
- F** 59 and below

Second grade students are assessed using a mastery-based report card.

Middle School Grading/Information

6th & 7th Grades: No final exams are required.

8th Grade: Cumulative year-end exams (End of Course - E.O.C.) are required in all courses in which the student receives high school credit.

Each semester, the two nine-week grades are averaged to determine the semester grade. The two-semester grades are averaged for the yearly final grade. If the student is enrolled in a high school credit course with an EOC (end-of-course) exam, the two-semester grades count 40% and the EOC counts 20% of the final year grade.

Attendance Policy

RHVA will adhere to the South Carolina Attendance laws. Please refer to the links below for specifics on Elementary, Middle, and High School attendance <http://bit.ly/Attend23-24> . Email excuse notes to interim attendance clerk Ms. Debra Harrison at DHarrison@rhmail.org or call her office at (803) 981-1398.

****If an absence is due to technology issues, a tech support ticket must be entered immediately on the day the issue takes place.***

****Students who accumulate 5 absences will be required to bring their parents and meet with school personnel to develop an attendance intervention plan. Violations of the plan will result in a court referral for truancy. If a student misses 10 consecutive days, he/she/they will be dropped from enrollment. Please see your administrator if an appeal needs to be made.***

****Per district policy, parents/guardians must submit absence notes, medical notes, etc. directly to the RHVA attendance clerk within 3 school days or their return or the absence will be considered unlawful.***

Elementary School Attendance

- ❖ Attendance will be taken and recorded at the beginning of class each day.
- ❖ Students are considered tardy if they are more than 5 minutes late to class.
- ❖ Students are considered absent if they do not attend at least 50% of the school day.
- ❖ Students are expected to stay in class until the teacher dismisses them.
- ❖ Students are expected to have cameras on and their face (chin and up) visible at all times, during class.
- ❖ Teachers will report absences, tardies, and early dismissals from class to the RHVA attendance clerk.

Middle School Attendance

- ❖ Attendance will be taken and recorded at the beginning of each class.
- ❖ Students are considered tardy if they are 5 minutes late to class.
- ❖ Students are considered absent if they miss 20 minutes or more of class.

- ❖ Students are expected to stay in class until the teacher dismisses them.
- ❖ Students are expected to have cameras on and their face (chin and up) visible at all times, during each class.
- ❖ Teachers will report absences and early dismissals from class to the RHVA attendance clerk.

High School Attendance

- ❖ Attendance will be taken and recorded at the beginning of each class.
- ❖ Students are considered tardy if they are 10 minutes late to class.
- ❖ Students are considered absent if they miss 25 minutes of class.
- ❖ Students are expected to stay in class until the teacher dismisses them.
- ❖ Students are expected to have cameras on and their face (chin and up) visible at all times
- ❖ Teachers will report absences and early dismissal from class to the RHVA attendance clerk.

Policies

Dress Code

RHVA is concerned with the health, safety, and well being of students and the avoidance of distractions to learning and must adhere to the following dress protocol:

- ❖ Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that includes profanity or promotes sexual activity, violence or the use of alcohol or drugs is inappropriate.
- ❖ Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that degrades or intimidates another because of race, gender, sexuality, religious persuasions, national origin or disability is inappropriate.
- ❖ Pajamas, plunging necklines, see-through apparel, and other revealing clothing is inappropriate.
- ❖ Students are expected to dress in accordance with the home school dress code policy when attending face-to-face campus activities, including district and state testing.

*****If a change is not made immediately, the violation of dress code will lead to removal from class, which will result in an unexcused absence in PowerSchool. If dress code violations continue, administrative disciplinary action will take place consistent with board policy.*****

Classroom Camera Policy

- ❖ RHVA students must enter class with their cameras turned on. Cameras must remain turned on until directed otherwise.

- ❖ Student background images must be school appropriate. This includes but is not limited to a school appropriate virtual background free of profanity and/or references to drugs, alcohol, political affiliations or any content/material that is a distraction to the learning environment.

Seesaw/Canvas, Technology, and Device Usage

All users are expected to use the computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner. RHSD reserves the right to monitor all technology resource activity.

All RHVA students will access Seesaw, Canvas, and Zoom via the LaunchPad app on the laptop.

❖ *Technology Support and Assistance*

- If you need support with your laptop, please have your child's teacher put in a HELP ticket with technology. If you need a laptop repair, you can bring the laptop to Belleview School, 501 Belleview Rd, for repair or replacement between 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Students in RHVA will have the availability to pick up a device from Belleview School. It is the responsibility of the family to pick up the device.

Harassment, Bullying, and Intimidation

(Refer to District Policy AR JIAA-R for more information on sexual harassment)

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is prohibited against members of the same sex as well as against members of the opposite sex.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, verbal harassment, including sexually offensive comments or slurs; physical harassment; physical interference with movement or work; or visual harassment such as sexually offensive cartoons, drawings, posters, images, or video. Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes sexual harassment under federal law.

In order to qualify as a complaint under Title IX, sexual harassment must be sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it does one of the following:

- ❖ Adversely affects a student's education
- ❖ Creates a hostile or abusive educational environment

Behavior Prohibited of All Employees and All Students

- ❖ No employee or student of this district will create a sexually hostile or offensive school environment for any other student by engaging in any sexual harassment.
- ❖ No employee or student of this district will assist any individual in doing any act which constitutes sexual harassment against any other student.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

- ❖ Any student who feels that he/she has been the object of sexual harassment is encouraged to file a complaint with the student's principal unless the principal is the person the student is accusing of the harassment. In such cases, the student or the student's parent/legal guardian will contact the director of personnel. Sexual harassment complaints may be filed by the student's parent/legal guardian.

Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination in the case of an employee, or expulsion in the case of a student. The district will take appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student who has filed a complaint of sexual harassment.

The identity of the complainant and the facts stated in any complaint will remain confidential.

*****To file a complaint, please contact your RHVA administrator.**

Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying occurs when people use laptops, cell phones or social media to send harassing, threatening, or intimidating messages to others.

- Students should recognize the responsibility, legal consequences, and emotional effects of cyberbullying.
- Students will recognize that bullying online is the same as real life bullying and can carry significant legal consequences depending on student age and the offense.
- Students will refrain from repetitive, unwanted digital communication which can carry legal consequences.
- Students should understand that digital content can affect college admissions and employment.
- Students should understand that Internet content can be archived and can exist forever.

- Students should understand that digital content sent via phone, cameras, and other digital devices can be archived and can exist forever.
- Students should understand that online communication, including email and text messaging, is never private and may be shared with others without your knowledge.
- Students should understand that legal consequences are more serious once the age of majority is attained (Prosecution and inclusion on the sexual predator list are possible consequences of taking or sharing inappropriate pictures and videos).

Devices are used for school purposes and can be inspected. Activities completed online are public and permanent. Devices are expected to be taken care of properly and used to increase educational knowledge.

Cyber Safety Quick Tips:

- ❖ Once you hit send, you can't take it back.
- ❖ Once you hit send, you lose control of the information. Even if you send it to a best friend or family member, you no longer have control of the information, it can be altered, shared, and posted with a different intent.
- ❖ Once you hit send, the information (picture, video, etc.) can become known to an entire school, entire community, country, world. Nothing is private.
- ❖ Snapchat photos do not disappear, they can be recovered
- ❖ Students and adults need to think about what is in a text, email, or post before sending. Always think, "What would this email, text, picture, or post look like on the front page of YAHOO, Facebook, or a newspaper?"

Consequences for Violating Expectations

- ❖ In-Zoom conversation
- ❖ Personal reflection time in waiting room
- ❖ Virtual Student-Teacher Conference
- ❖ Communication with parent/guardian
- ❖ Virtual Parent-Student-Teacher Conference
- ❖ Administrative Conference I
- ❖ Administrative Conference II (Potential removal from RHVA)

Students are expected to attend conferences.

*****Note: Consequences will depend on the severity of the infraction.**

Miscellaneous

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

RHVA students are entitled to participate in school activities through their zoned school. For additional information, contact the student's zoned school.

Important Dates for RHVA Students

August 21	1st day of school
October 20	Early Release Day
December 22	End of Semester
January 9	1st day of 2nd Semester
March 28	Early Release Day
April 1-5	Spring Break
May 2	Early Release Day
June 6	End of semester (half day)

For additional dates important to Rock Hill students, please view the District's 2023-2024 School Calendar at: <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/Page/2#calendar1/20210728/month>

Important District policies concerning students are below:

Student Records:

https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=york3_rock_hill&s=275796

Expulsion of Students:

https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=york3_rock_hill&s=275767