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## *“Power Up with Virtual Arkansas”*

### ■ **Welcome**

Welcome to the exciting world of digital education! Your school district has chosen to provide these 21st Century technology classes on your campus to offer curricular opportunities that may not otherwise be available to you. To make the most of this privilege, you need to be aware of the structure of the classes, policies, and tools utilized by teachers. All Virtual Arkansas digital learning courses follow a blended-learning model of instruction that includes digital face-to-face time and online time. This handbook is designed to help you become a successful digital learning student and make the most of your technology-based learning experience.

Read this handbook completely. Your parent or guardian will need to read and sign the AV Release. You, the student, will need to read and sign the MOU.

### ■ **Structure of Digital Learning Courses**

**Overview of Technology:** Blackboard, Power Up, and e-Learning are the LMS (Learning Management System) used by Virtual Arkansas and these are where students access course material and assessments. The primary interactive technology students will use to participate in the blended, interactive periods is Zoom. Zoom allows students and the teacher to see and hear each other in real time. Interaction is much the same as in the traditional classroom.

**Your Classes:** As a student enrolled in Virtual Arkansas, a student may have a course or courses in the three campuses - Core, CTE (Career and Technical Education), and Concurrent Credit. When students participate in the Virtual Arkansas blended, interactive classes, students will interact with students from other schools during these blended, interactive periods. Each course will begin with a Gateway short course. These modules are designed to help a student make a successful transition to the online classroom. Please pay special attention to the strategies and tools provided during these sessions.

**Your Teacher:** Virtual Arkansas employs teachers who are certified/licensed in their subject areas and have the responsibility of teaching and grading students in Virtual Arkansas courses. Teachers have an area within the Learning Management System (LMS), Moodle or Blackboard, with contact information, content resources, and tutoring information to help you succeed in the course(s).

**Your Facilitator:** The facilitator supervises students at individual schools, in collaboration with, and under the guidance of, your teacher. The trained site facilitator is responsible for printing handouts/lesson plans, maintaining a positive learning environment, collecting student work, managing ethical testing, keeping students on task and communicating with the teacher. The facilitator has the authority to enforce school, Virtual Arkansas, and teacher policies. Students are expected to behave respectfully towards the adult facilitators.

**Your Grades:** Grades are accessed through the Power Panel. Students may check their grades at any time and should communicate any concerns to the Virtual Arkansas teacher immediately. We encouraged students to provide their parents or guardian access to their grades.

## ■ Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty in regard to student work is an ever-increasing problem in the age of technology. Institutions all over the globe, are implementing policies and strategies to ensure that students do their own work and give credit to the originator of the ideas, when using the thoughts or work of others. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, stealing academic property, and cheating. Students identified as being in violation of an Academic Dishonesty Policy may not receive credit for that work and may suffer additional penalties based on local school policy. Depending on the severity of the Academic Dishonesty, as determined by the campus director and teacher, a student may receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

The Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus may impose the following actions in situations involving cheating or plagiarism.

1. The student may receive a lower grade, with the possibility of revision,
2. The student may receive a grade of zero for the test or assignment,
3. The student may be awarded a failing grade for the course, or
4. The student may be withdrawn from the course.

In the online environment, students assume more responsibility for keeping up with the course requirements. It is critical that students access and interact with the online content on a daily basis and participate in the scheduled blended, interactive periods. If a student is absent from a digital learning class, the student is responsible for making up the missed assignments.

## ■ Attendance

Attendance for the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus is specialized due to preparation for post-secondary involvement. Students should communicate in advance with the teacher regarding absences and making up assignments/tests, except in emergency situations. Students must adhere to the specific guidelines given in each teacher's course syllabus.

Advanced Placement classes do not end until the Advanced Placement exam is given. In the event of absences due to extenuating circumstances (illness, medical emergency, etc.), the supervisors of each Virtual Arkansas campus will work on a case-by-case basis with the local administration to devise a plan for the student.

## ■ Classroom Discipline

Classroom discipline will be in accordance with the policies of the local school district. Each teacher may establish his/her own class rules and procedures as long as they do not conflict with local school policy. In the event of serious student discipline issues, the name of the student and the specifics of the problem could be reported to the local principal. If action is merited, the procedure below may be followed.

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense – Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal.  
The local school principal should contact the parent and inform the parent of the issue.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Student will be disciplined according to local school policy.

4<sup>th</sup> offense – Student may be officially dropped from the class. If this occurs, the student may not receive credit for the digital learning course.

*\*Please be aware that some actions may result in immediate removal from class, regardless of whether it is the first, second or third offense. If a student is removed from class, he/she may receive a W, F, or not receive a grade.*

## ■ Computer Usage

Your school district's computer usage policy will be enforced in the Virtual Arkansas digital learning classroom. In regard to digital learning applications (i.e., Zoom), unacceptable usage includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, cyber bullying, and trespassing in the files of others. These actions may result in the loss of access to these applications and websites. Any communication or content within the digital learning application is subject to access and review by local school and Virtual Arkansas personnel at any time.

## ■ Concurrent Credit Students

College grades earned through the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus are part of a student's permanent college transcript. The grade can affect grade point averages. The effect of pre-freshman status grades varies from one post-secondary institution to another. If a student is concerned about the grade that is assigned, the student is encouraged to check with the post-secondary institution he/she plans to attend after high school graduation for advice.

## ■ Course Access

Students will access their courses by first logging in through the Power Panel. Once inside the Power Panel, students will click on Go to LMS in the upper left block and select the appropriate LMS for the class they are accessing. Your teachers will guide you to the correct LMS for each class you are enrolled in during the semester.

1. Blackboard
2. Power Up
3. e-Learning – this LMS is for Content-Only courses only.

## ■ Drop/Add Procedures - Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE Students

All drops/adds in Virtual Arkansas classes are done using the registration system and will be submitted by the school Registrar or Super User.

**General Drop Policy** - Virtual Arkansas teachers will do everything possible to help students succeed in coursework, but there may be situations when students are dropped from enrollment in Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes. These situations are usually failure to complete work, discipline, or an academic dishonesty violation. To be successful, students should not procrastinate in completing coursework, but do it on a timely basis.

- Schools may drop students who have not logged in to begin working within the first 10 school days after enrollment, or the instructional start date.

## ■ Drop/Add Procedure - Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit Students

Please have the facilitator or a school administrator contact the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit office for information on the university deadlines to add/drop students in the concurrent credit classes. Participating school principals and counselors will be contacted by a Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit administrator when a student is at risk of failing a class prior to the drop deadline established by the partnering universities and will post the dates on the Virtual Arkansas website.

You should be prepared for the academic rigor of concurrent credit courses. Local school personnel should counsel any student with a C, D or F, prior to the official “drop date” of the participating post-secondary partner.

- The partnering universities have different deadlines to drop a course.
- Before withdrawing/dropping a course, a student should consider the impact on future financial aid.
- College hours attempted in high school under pre-freshman status count toward the maximum number of hours a student is allowed to attempt under federal and state grant programs.
- Students should use good judgment and consult the post-secondary institution they currently attend, as well as the post-secondary institution they plan to attend after high school graduation, for advice before withdrawing.
- If it is determined that withdrawal is the best option, the student must be dropped from the course in the Virtual Arkansas registration system. The school administrator must also follow the university’s procedure for withdrawing. Students are responsible for the partnering university course drop fees and withdrawal from the institution, if applicable. Failure to pay these fees may prevent a student from receiving an official college transcript.

## ■ Due Process

Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at the school. Students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

## ■ Expectations for Student Success

**Attend Class:** Attendance is extremely important. If you are absent, you are responsible for homework, notes, and all class-related assignments and materials according to your school’s policy. Check with your facilitator and, if necessary, with the teacher for the materials you need for class.

**Avoid Plagiarism:** Plagiarism continues to be an ever-growing problem in our current world of sharing resources online. Each teacher will provide a review of plagiarism and share resources to assist you in following policies of academic honesty. Consequences for engaging in plagiarism include, but are not limited to re-submitting the assignment for reduced credit or receiving no credit on the assignment.

**Be Considerate:** You may be in class with students of varying backgrounds from different schools. Treat everyone in your class with respect at all times. This includes teachers, facilitators and students from all

sites. Disrespectful or derogatory comments toward the digital learning community members are not acceptable.

**Be Prepared:** Come to class prepared and on time. You should bring all required materials to class every day and begin work immediately when class begins.

**Be Responsible:** Take responsibility for your learning. You are expected to be mature learners by paying attention, asking questions, completing homework, studying for quizzes/tests, and checking your email, messages, and announcements from teachers daily.

**Engage in Developing 21st Century Technical Skills:** By nature, digital learning courses will provide each student with the opportunity to master keyboarding skills, creating, saving, uploading files, email communication, and basic software utilization.

**Know Your Policies:** Become familiar with your local school student policies, the Virtual Arkansas operating policies, and teacher procedures. In order for a student to be fully enrolled in the course, the signed audio visual release and M.O.U. should be returned, as soon as possible, to your facilitator. Failure to return these forms, signed, within the time frame required, may result in a student being dropped from the class.

**Participate:** Participation involves paying attention during instruction, answering when called upon, and asking questions related to the topic being covered. To ask a question, wait to be recognized and speak politely. Students should expect to attend all Zoom sessions possible. Students are also expected to know their teacher's Zoom schedules, enter the Zoom room on time, and follow their teacher's Zoom room procedures and expectations. Student data indicates that there is a direct positive correlation between Zoom attendance and grades.

**Practice Ethical Testing Procedures:** Follow the teacher's procedures for ethical testing, which may include utilizing a cover sheet, forbidden usage of electronic devices, such as cell phones and smartwatches, and clearing your desk. The best practice is to not engage in academic dishonesty of any kind.

## ■ Extensions

Extensions of any type will follow the following procedures:

1. Local students must first receive permission from their local administrator prior to receiving approval from Virtual Arkansas.
2. VA instructor must receive, via email, approval for any extension requests from a local administrator (the email shall include the student's name, a statement of approval, and the approved extension final date or window.)
3. Upon receipt of the approval, instructor will email student and facilitator confirming the approval and the approved extension deadline. The Director of Academics or designee will be copied on this email.

## ■ Grade Reporting

Virtual Arkansas teachers will provide numerical grades based on a range from zero to one hundred in four nine week periods based on the Virtual Arkansas academic calendar. Semester averages for Teacher

Led courses will be calculated using the 40 – 40 – 20 formula. Teacher Facilitated and Flexed Paced course final grades utilize a combination of the running total of all tests and assignments for the semester and the semester exam: 80% of the semester grade will come from the assignments and tests throughout the semester. 20% of the semester grade will come from the semester final exam.

If you have a question about your grade, contact your teacher. The teacher can provide you with the information you will need to understand what assignments may have been submitted but have not been graded, or if access to past assignments will be granted.

## ■ **Grade Reporting - Concurrent Credit Students**

The Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus operates on semester calendars. College grades earned through the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus are part of a student's permanent college transcript. The grade can affect grade point averages. The effect of pre-freshman status grades varies from one post-secondary institution to another. Each student is encouraged to check with the post-secondary institution he/she plans to attend after high school graduation for advice, if the student is concerned about his/her grade assignment.

## ■ **Make-up Policy**

For Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes, if you have an excused absence, you should complete all graded assignments as allowed by your school's make-up policy. In cases of an extended excused absence, the Virtual Arkansas campus director will consult with the local principal to develop a plan for you to complete the coursework.

If you are enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit course, you must follow the guidelines set by the partnering institutions of higher education in regards to make-up policies. These guidelines are listed in each course syllabus.

## ■ **Parental Involvement**

Teachers have frequent contact with parents regarding student performance and achievement. Please have your parents contact the teacher at any time to request a conference to discuss your progress and achievement information.

Virtual Arkansas concurrent credit teachers must abide by federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The regulations are current as of April 28, 2016, and may be found at [Ed.gov](http://Ed.gov).

## ■ **Reporting Concerns**

Most issues or questions can and should be resolved at the lowest level. Your first point of contact for classroom issues or concerns is the teacher.

There may be a time when you or someone from your school will need assistance beyond the teacher. Below you will find the steps to take when you need further assistance beyond the teacher:

1. If you need further assistance, contact the applicable Virtual Arkansas campus director to seek a resolution



- a. CTE Campus: Contact James Malcom, CTE Campus Director
    - i. Phone: 870-260-6046
    - ii. Email: [james.malcom@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:james.malcom@virtualarkansas.org)
  - b. Core Campus: Contact John Ashworth
    - i. Phone: 501-477-2781
    - ii. Email: [john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org)
  - c. Concurrent Credit Campus: Contact Ellora Hicks, Concurrent Credit Campus Director
    - i. Phone: 870-224-3299
    - ii. Email: [ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org)
2. Contact the Virtual Arkansas Director of Academics for a resolution
    - a. Virtual Arkansas Director of Academics: John Ashworth
      - i. Phone: 501-477-2781
      - ii. Email: [john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org)

## ■ Student Safety Tips

As a student in a digital online class, always remember that whatever you type or post is never erased. Even if you delete a message, there is an electronic version available. These electronic tracks are never totally erased.

**Maintain Privacy** – It is fun to meet new people in Zoom, but you should not share your age, telephone number, email address or home address anywhere within the online digital learning sites. Do not share your passwords with anyone. Keeping your password private will prevent other people from having access to the accounts that you are responsible for.

**Don't Respond** – If you receive an inappropriate message that makes you feel uncomfortable or is hurtful, do not respond. Take a screenshot of the offensive message if possible and notify the facilitator or teacher right away.

**Don't Participate in Cyber Bullying** – Inappropriate pictures or writing are not allowed within the digital learning coursework. Screenshots may be kept of all student work and will be utilized in discipline referrals, if necessary.

**Stay on Task** - When students have an individual computer to access coursework, there is sometimes the temptation to “surf the web” or visit non-instructional websites. In order to be safe and engaged in the instruction, refrain from visiting non-instructional websites.

## ■ Testing Policy

All students enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE courses are required to take all nine-weeks and cumulative/semester exams as detailed by the teacher.

**There are no exemptions for Virtual Arkansas Core or CTE cumulative/semester exams.** If a student misses a major exam and does not make it up during the time frame allowed by district policy, the student will receive a zero for the exam. Extensions to semester exams must first be approved by the local administrator. The extension policy found in this handbook applies to semester exams.

Students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses must take the AP exam for each AP course the student is enrolled in to receive weighted credit at the district level.

Semester final dates for Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit classes are established by the partnering universities and are listed in the course syllabus.

### ■ **Transcript Requests**

To request a transcript, go to the post-secondary institution website, then to the registrar page. Each institution has specific instructions for requesting a transcript with your college grades.

## Virtual Arkansas Audio Visual Release and MOU

By checking the box to the left, **I am** authorizing Virtual Arkansas to use audio and/or visual representations of my child/legal dependent in class recordings, publications, websites, video presentations or any other electronic or published media, to promote or communicate the advancement of Virtual Arkansas digital courses. I understand, when Virtual Arkansas uses an audio or visual recording of my child/legal dependent, the image or recording will not contain personally identifying information, but may include the name of the school that he/she attends.

**OR**

By checking the box to the left, **I am not** authorizing Virtual Arkansas to use audio and/or visual representations of my child/legal dependent in any way, as described above. However, **I DO** give permission for my child to participate in Virtual Arkansas courses.

**Parents:** Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understand the Virtual Arkansas Student Handbook.

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(Parent/Guardian Signature)

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(Date)

### Student Memorandum of Understanding

1. It is my responsibility to familiarize myself and abide by all Virtual Arkansas policies as outlined in the handbook. The electronic version may be found at [http://virtualarkansas.org/school\\_information.php](http://virtualarkansas.org/school_information.php).
2. I will maintain appropriate classroom behavior as outlined by my high school handbook, the Virtual Arkansas Student Handbook, and my digital learning teacher classroom procedures.
3. I will be accountable for all class activities, including online and offline instruction.
4. I will be respectful to all digital learning teachers, facilitators, and other students participating in class.
5. I will actively participate in my digital learning experience.
6. I will not willingly participate in activities that are dishonest, including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.
7. I will follow the computer usage guidelines of my local school district, my digital learning teacher, and attend the scheduled Zoom sessions.
8. I will make my digital learning class a priority and make every effort to access the course content daily.
9. I will take the responsibility to obtain and complete missed assignments when I am absent.
10. I understand that I may be removed from a Virtual Arkansas class and receive a W or F or no grade, if I am involved in a severe discipline or academic dishonesty incident.

**Please sign in pen.**

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(PRINTED LEGAL Student Name)

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(Student Signature)

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(Date)

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(School/District)