



Benton Harbor Charter School Academy Online Virtual Learning Experience Guide

Your Student's Guide for Virtual Learning Board Policy

All traditional seated courses are eligible to be delivered as virtual courses, or a combination thereof, for the 2020-2021 school year following the guidelines provided within the Michigan Department of Education Pupil Accounting Manual. District and School administration shall coordinate and monitor the implementation for virtual learning and the adherence to state pupil accounting requirements including student accessibility to virtual learning, attendance, and participation in lessons and assessments.

Student Handbook – Course Guide

All traditional seated courses may also be held virtually. For middle school students who do not currently have an EDP must complete an EDP within the first two weeks of the start of the semester. All virtual courses have two-way communication requirements and students must respond to teacher and/or mentor initiated communications

Success

Our online learning platform is a custom built learning platform which allows us to get exactly what we need and have complete control and direction over the online experience.

2020/2021

This guide will be used if the State of Michigan returns to Phase 1-3 of the Michigan Stay Safe Plan and for families who select to learn virtually in Phases 4-5.



Our Mission, Belief, and Promise

Our Mission

Benton Harbor Charter School strives to provide an environment that will foster creativity, promote academic achievement and develop sound character and citizenship while maintaining and improving each child's self-esteem and self-concept. Our mission is to ensure that all students who graduate from the academy are prepared to attend college and are able to compete successfully, academically, and socially with their peers.

Our Belief

Benton Harbor Charter School Academy is an educational community in the City of Benton Harbor that serves grades Pre-K- 8. It is our belief that the most significant learning occurs where there is diversity. We believe that it is our duty to exhaust all possible resources so that no child, limited by poverty, is also deprived of an education.

Our Promise

Benton Harbor Charter School Academy's Mission, Vision, and Values are at the heart of everything we do. They are not empty words—our students can recite them, and our alumni still remember them. We live by them on a daily basis and as we plan our future those words are more important now than they've ever been. For over twenty years now we have promised our families and students that when they leave our campus they will be "Prepared to Compete" with anyone.

Teacher Development

Our Campus is a safe haven. No program of learning, no standard of measurement, no battery of tests can be effective if the students are disadvantaged and disengaged. The true purpose of education in the 21-Century in an urban environment is to nurture and support so that learning can occur. Well-intentioned, compassionate adults must staff the school. The teachers must be nurtured as well in order to work to achieve the established standards in the face of environmental problems and social inequality.

Academic Rigor

High quality teaching is at the core of our work. In order to be considered high quality, we expect our teachers to follow our complex curriculums that have been chosen based on the rigor and standard alignment they embody. We believe that all students, with the necessary support, can access grade level content, no matter the complexity.

Closing the Gap

We understand that success is won in increments; failure must be absorbed and reckoned with, but we fully expect our teachers to close the achievement gap within three years for students who are below grade level, while students at grade level continue to accelerate.

Our Reasons for Choosing Virtual Learning

As we approach the upcoming school year, I want to reassure you that we are actively creating and refining our plans for the fall. Over the past four months, we have been working tirelessly to create a Return to School plan that balances the safety of our students and staff with a return to a learning environment that allows our students to thrive.

The health and safety of our students and staff are the pillars of our plans. As you know, on June 30, the Governor released the [MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap](#) that all schools within the state of Michigan are required to follow in the fall. Our next step as a school community was to create a Preparedness Plan based on each phase of the pandemic, which is always under construction. With that in mind, on Thursday August 6, 2020 at our school board meeting our leadership team and school board reviewed our back to school preparedness plans, and after much consideration, debate, and conversation, the school board and leadership team has decided to **return to school through 100% online learning.**

We know from our experience in the spring, that you do not have to physically be in the building to learn and thrive academically. Yet, we want you to know that this virtual option will be far different this coming school year than the emergency model we employed last March. We have had the whole summer to read and respond to your feedback, and after 77% of you chose the online platform to return this fall, it made our decision easier. We have planned for a strong online learning platform to mirror the in-person experience. Please note as you read this plan, there is the potential for all students to return to in-person instruction after the first 9 weeks of school – and we will be ready.

The 100% virtual option complements the school's classroom instruction, and is a combination of self-paced and live opportunities for instruction, participation and feedback. The new virtual learning option includes:

- The grading of student work will resume, and accountability for learning as reported through assignment completion and progress on grade level achievement also resumes.
- BHCSA curriculum and assessments will be used consistently.
- {Google classroom, Seesaw and Edmodo} will be used more consistently across classes and grade levels.
- Teachers will offer more live learning and engagement opportunities.
- Attendance is mandatory and will be determined by a variety of measures including log-in data, assignment completion, and grades.

Please continue reading the handbook for additional information on expectations, attendance, grade-level support and much more.

We look forward to welcoming YOU back to school ON August 31, 2020



Orientation Letter

On Monday, **AUGUST 24, 2020**, you and your child are invited to attend our Back to School **Orientation Meeting** under the **Big Tent**. Due to COVID-19 Restrictions, the hours are as follows:

9:00am – 11:00am	11:30am – 1:30pm	2:00pm – 4:00pm
Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade	3 rd grade – 5 th grade	6 th grade – 8 th grade

What can you expect from Student Orientation?

- Sign-out laptop
- Enroll your student **OR** Check student enrollment status
- Pick-up reading material
- Receive username, password, email, and login information for online learning sites
- Learn how to access virtual learning programs
- Meet classroom teacher (virtual)
- Pick up school calendar
- Pick-up breakfast and lunch schedule
- Pick-up virtual learning guidelines
- Create Educational Development Plan (6-8 grade)
- Speak with administration about concerns you may have

The 2020/2021 school year will be a new adventure for your son or daughter. There will be many new expectations and experiences. Our goal at BHCSEA is to ensure success for every student. We can only accomplish this with your help. Below are a few items that we would like you to be aware of as we begin our school year together.

- BHCSEA virtual learning requires my child to meet all conditions that foster a successful online education aligned with Michigan Department of Education Requirements.
- Your child will receive grades based on daily participation, assignment completion, and demonstrated mastery of skills.
- Attendance will be taken daily from 10:00am – 11:00am and adherence to Berrien RESA truancy and attendance requirement.
- Your child should be made available for virtual learning and engagement between the hours of 9:00am – 3:30pm Monday – Thursday every school day and complete an independent project on Fridays
- Your child will need access to the internet during school hours and a quiet place to complete assignments. Your child will have access to all assignments from 9:00am – 9:00pm daily. At which time laptop will shutoff off
- Breakfast and Lunch can be picked-up on Mondays from 9:30am – 11:30am for the week.

We welcome you and your child back to school. This year will present significant changes for your child. It can be terrifying, wonderful, exciting, scary, challenging and rewarding, ALL AT THE SAME TIME! Please encourage your child to keep up with the academics and to take care of the school provided laptop. We look forward to meeting you at Orientation.

Refreshments will be served! Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

PRESCHOOL – GSRP – KINDERGARTEN – ROUNDUP FROM 9AM – 4PM

Ownership of Learning (Students)

As a participant in our virtual learning program, we have created a robust program for you to thrive! Parents and students you are the owner of your success in the program. Of course, the teachers and staff will support you, but you must:

- Commit to taking virtual learning online courses and will make a concerted effort to keep up with the pace of the course, to participate in classes, and to complete all course requirements.
- Understand and agree to invest the time necessary for successful completion of your classes. You are aware that the number of hours required to complete online classes is similar to the number of hours required to complete traditional courses (to include both time online and the time offline on assignments, projects, and testing requirements).
- Participate online at certain times on a daily basis for live instruction or appropriate intervention services.
- Understand the importance of prompt communication with teachers and the school staff on a regular basis particularly when you are having difficulties with technology and/or class work.
- Have reliable access to a device and Wi-Fi/Internet connection. If you don't have internet the school has installed a Park & Learn Wi-Fi port so you can use Wifi anywhere on our campus. Inside or outside of the building.

Students who do not abide by the policies, guidelines, and rules regulating the virtual learning option will be required to meet with a school leader with a parent present to discuss successful strategies.

Attendance is required daily, if you are unable to attend, please call the office to report your excused absence, just like in-person learning. Similar to a traditional day, if you are not present in class, you will be marked absent and the office will notify the parent/guardian. See below for attendance guidelines:

- Attendance will be taken daily from 10am – 11am
- After 1 missed day of online learning, The Office Support Team will reach out to you to- get a return date.
- After missing 2 more days of online learning, your teacher or teacher assistant will call you.
- After 3 days of no contact, school support staff our Student Advocates will be calling you to set up a home visit (or school visit outside of daily school hours).
 - If no response within 24 hours, the school will call your emergency contacts.
- The home visit will be during school hours to ensure you have all the necessary support you need for learning at home.
 - If needed, the school will work with local support networks to ensure services are available to those that need it.
- If attendance continues to be an issue, a meeting is set up with the school leader.



Ownership of Learning (Parent Agreement)

As the parent(s)/guardian(s) of: _____
(Print Student's Name)

_____ I understand that BHCSA virtual learning requires my child to meet all conditions that foster a successful online education aligned with Michigan Department of Education Requirements. Conditions defining a successful online student:
(Initial each line)

_____ I understand that my child will receive grades based on daily participation, assignment completion, and demonstrated mastery of skills.

_____ I understand that attendance will be taken and adherence to Berrien RESA truancy and attendance requirements

_____ I will make sure my child will be available for virtual learning and engagement between the hours of 9:00am – 3:30pm Monday – Thursday every school day and complete an independent project based/problem based project on Friday

_____ I will make sure my child will have access to the internet during school hours.

_____ I will make sure my child will have an appropriate adult or secondary student available to assist them during school hours every school day.

_____ I will make sure my child will engage in coursework on a DAILY basis with supervision when necessary

_____ I will make sure my child will establish regular communication with all teachers through the platform being used by the teacher

_____ I will make sure my child will attend all mandatory testing and evaluations sessions at the school when necessary

_____ I will ensure that child will maintain academic integrity through the submission of authentic, original work.

_____ I will make sure my child will honor all rules and procedures established by BHCSA as stated in the Student & Family Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Home Environment for Learning

For early childhood students, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to support independence, engage in meaningful tasks, and supplement learning through various activities and lessons offered by teachers via Google Classroom, Edmodo, SEASAW, remote learning kits (packets), general emails to families, specific emails to families, and consultation over phone/ZOOM.

For elementary to middle school students, this will mean all of the above, plus establishing a quiet work space, expectations, and routines for daily live meetings and classes via ZOOM or Google Hangouts, and assignments outlined on Google Classroom.

Five Things to Consider Before the 31st

- **Have a designated area for school work:** For students, having a designated area means fewer distractions and getting into a “school mindset” when in that area. This can be a spare room or even a corner in a room and make sure this area is quiet or has a door that can be closed.
- **Stock this area with school supplies:** Include pens, pencils, markers, paper, notebooks, and any other tools your student may need besides the computer.
- **Ensure you have the appropriate equipment:** BHCSA believe the best way to experience virtual school is on a desktop or laptop where you can view lessons full-screen. Please contact the school if you need a laptop.
- **Create a set schedule with breaks built in:** Parents think of your student’s schedule just like the bell schedule at school. When the bell rings in a school, students automatically get up, pick up their books, and head on to their next class, right? You should plan your virtual school day the same way. Respect the schedule!
- **Create a calendar:** It really helps to have a weekly calendar posted on a dry-erase board conveniently placed near your child’s work area. Where you can posts assignments due weekly and ensures they fit within their schedule which focuses on 1-2 subject areas each day.



Ownership of Teachers

All teachers will be expected to prepare daily lessons and have two-way communication. This may be done through the use of technology (i.e. virtual meeting, email, Google Hangout)

Teachers will monitor student access and assignment completion on a regular basis within the instructional platform. Teachers will provide feedback to students on assignments through the instructional platform as they are completed. Teachers will differentiate instruction within the platform to meet each student's needs.

Teachers will use the instructional platform to monitor student wellness, engagement, and completion of assignments. Teachers will also keep a log of all communication with students and families. Inconsistent completion and/or communication with a parent or student will be raised to the student advocate of that community to develop a plan to connect with the student and family. Additional support agencies may be sought to make these connections.

Teachers will consistently deliver online lessons in an area away from school that mimics a classroom **OR** use their assigned classroom at the school.

Teachers will deliver daily ELA and math lessons to students via recorded Zoom meetings. These lessons will be posted and shared with students who cannot attend. Students will complete daily assignments that correlate to the daily lessons. For students who need extra help, teacher will be available for virtual office hours.

Assessments will be completed on Fridays and teachers will use that data for planning their next week's whole group and small group lessons.

Ownership of Instructional Team

Principal

Ensure that educators and support staff have the necessary resources, support and material to deliver a 21st century online program that is in conjunction with our mission, belief and promise while following protocols and requirements of MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap.

Instructional Leader

The Instructional Leader will oversee all components of the instructional program. She will ensure that coaches are available and assisting in planning lessons that are aligned to our curriculum and our student needs. She will observe virtual lessons and monitor gradebooks and google classroom to ensure engagement from staff and students. The instructional leader will also plan and coordinate all team meetings and professional development throughout the year.

Instructional Coaches

Instructional Coaches will support teachers in their specific content areas. Each coach will lead PD sessions relevant to their content, will observe teachers weekly and will provide instructional feedback based on observations and student data.

Community Coaches

Community Coaches will serve as the point person within their community and will meet with leadership to share up dates, concerns, or questions the team may have. This person will also lead team meetings biweekly with the community to find out what supports are needed and what is going well. Often times, this person will assist in data meetings and other collaborative sessions if the coaches are working with other groups.

Specials Teachers

Specials Teachers will continue to teach through our virtual platform. They will be required to post weekly assignments for students to complete that allow students an opportunity for enrichment.

Special Education Department

This department will ensure that IEP's and 504's are reviewed and implemented either completely or through a contingency plan. Students who need additional supports such as OT, PT, Speech Path, etc., will continue to receive these services through their provider remotely, individually or in small groups on campus following all CDC requirements and protocols

Teacher Assistants

Teacher assistants will host small group sessions as requested by teachers. They will also assist in reaching out to families when assignments are not turned in or students are failing to participate in the virtual classroom.



Safety Measure While On Campus

PPE and Hygiene	Any person that may enter the building, mask wearing will be required 100% of the time.
Spacing and Movement	Any adults in the building will follow spacing requirements, maintaining no less than 6-feet of distance between themselves and others.
Screening Students	Any staff who may report to the building will have their temperature taken and answer questions in accordance with health department guidelines for COVID-19 before gaining entrance
Cleaning	Individuals who report to the building will clean any surfaces or spaces they have worked - including classrooms, meeting spaces, common spaces and restrooms.

Michigan's 50-D Virtual Learning Policy

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Teacher interaction is flexible. • Teachers are available to students during scheduled school days/hours, but students can access work outside of the scheduled hours • Students may be in the building or off site. • School must provide for the technology needs
Documents Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Consent of Virtual Enrollment • Virtual Learning Agreement • Educational Development Plan (6-8) • Interest Survey (K-5)
Parental Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil has parent or legal guardian consent for enrollment in the virtual course(s).
Virtual Learning Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to a Title I Compact, this will outline the expectations of Virtual Learning and how it differs from what we saw in the spring.
Educational Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An EDP is a living document that each student develops with the school district. • K-5 will follow a format of "interest survey". • 6-12 will be a more formal approach with an EDP • EDPs will be kept in student's CA60.
Student Information System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses within your SIS may be coded as Virtual and In Person to help you differentiate. • Does not have to indicate Virtual on Report Cards or Transcripts. • Students within your SIS should be coded as Virtual to identify them for your auditor. • Schedules must reflect all courses for each student (whether virtual or in person). • Elementary students who are virtual will need a schedule reflecting all courses they are taking (core subjects, PE, Art, Music...).
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil who enrolls in a virtual course under this section is not required to maintain regular daily physical attendance. • Attendance is taken through assignment completion or weekly 2 Way Communication.
Count Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment Completion on Count Day = an assignment is completed and turned in for each class on the student's schedule. • 2 Way Communication = back and forth with the teacher of record at least once per week beginning on count day and continuing for 4 weeks. Weeks are Wednesday - Tuesday.
2 Way Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way interaction is the communication that occurs between the teacher of record or mentor and pupil, where one party initiates communication and a response from the other party follows that communication. • This interaction may occur through, but is not limited to, means such as email, telephone, instant messaging, or face-to-face conversation. Parent or guardian facilitated two-way interaction may be required if the pupil is in grades K-5 and does not yet possess the skills necessary to participate in two-way interaction unassisted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What will a typical virtual learning day look like for my student?

A: It will vary by grade and by teacher. Students will be required to follow a schedule similar to an in-person student day. The majority of teachers will hold live instruction during the period/time in which they would normally be teaching. Others will pre-record lessons and/or give assignments for students to complete on their own, and this could vary by day, i.e. a teacher might hold a live lesson one day and then give students an assignment the next.

Q: Where will my student access online lessons?

A: Depending on the grade level, teachers will have a {Canvas, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and SeeSaw} including subject area teachers and special education teachers. All lessons and assignments will originate in Google Classroom.

Q: How does my student access {Canvas, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and SeeSaw}?

A: Students will log into {Canvas, Google Classroom, SeeSaw} using their account.

Q: When does my student need to log on to {Canvas, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, and Edmodo} each day?

A: It will vary by grade and by teacher. Teachers will communicate with students how they're planning to teach on virtual instruction days, i.e. if there will be a live lesson or an assignment that can be completed at any time during the day. Look for communication from the student's teacher(s) via {Canvas, Google Classroom, Edmodo, SeeSaw} and email.

Q: How much time will my students need to complete a lesson?

A: The time will vary by student, but in general the time spent on the lessons and assignments on school days will be comparable to the time spent in school for an in-person student. Virtual instruction will include live lessons or meet ups, which could extend the time. Again, students will be expected to be online at specific times each day.

Q: How will we provide services to students with IEPs, EPs, and 504 plans? How will we be able to accommodate their needs?

A: Students with IEPs, EPs, and 504 plans will participate in online learning along with our other students. Accommodations and modifications will be implemented as they would if the student were receiving face-to-face instruction. Students who receive services from an ESE teacher or specialized therapist will receive those services on a reliable schedule virtually (if possible) or at a scheduled time in-person, if desired.

Q: When and how can I reach my child's teacher?

A: Email remains the best way to contact a teacher. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please use email to set up a time to connect. Each teacher has also designated "Office Hours" during which they are consistently committed to be readily available.

Q: When can I expect a response from teachers?

A: You can expect a response to emails within 24 hours, within working hours. (We encourage students, parents, and staff to take the evenings and weekends off. With no physical boundary between school/work and home, we need to provide time to reflect and refresh.)

Q: How much communication can I expect from the school?

A: You can continue to expect weekly newsletters, which are a great source of information for school- and community-wide updates and information, in addition to summaries and sharing from each classroom teacher. Administrative staff is available and will respond to emails within their working hours.

Q: Will attendance be taken?

A: Yes. Students will be required to sign in for attendance every day. If not present or active, students will be marked absent. Students who are sick or cannot participate for another reason should contact the office to report an absence. Students in virtual instruction are still subject to the attendance requirements of the state of Michigan.

Q: Will virtual instruction assignments be graded?

A: Yes. The grades earned during virtual instruction will be the grades used to determine report card grades. Classwork, homework, and assessment grades will be taken into account. We understand that some students, particularly at the elementary level, may not be able to complete tasks independently. We are also aware that many parents are now trying to balance their new normal of working from home and caring for their children. Please let us know how to support you and your student best.

Q: How will I know if my child is in danger of failing?

A: Promotion for virtual school remains the same as that for in-person learning. Weekly assessments and independent work will keep teachers apprised of student progress. If students begin to struggle, parents, school leaders, and teachers will schedule a meeting.

Q: Will students take standardized tests this year?

A: As of August 4, 2020, yes standardized tests are required for all public school students in the state of Michigan.