

**Hardee District Schools
Virtual School Policies and Procedures**



BOARD ACTION

8/13/15

Approved

School Board of Hardee County

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Information, Policies and Expectations For Students in Grades K-12

Hardee District Schools offers eligible students two virtual school options. All programs were created in accordance with Florida Statutes to provide our students with high quality instruction in an online environment.

Hardee County Virtual Instruction offers students both full and part-time options for enrollment. We have solutions available for students enrolled in public school, private school or a home education program. Our office staff is available to meet with families to discuss the programs and what might best fit your needs.

The following information is provided to allow families to make an informed decision about enrollment in a full-time program and to ensure you are informed of the expectations for successful participation in a Hardee County Virtual Instruction Program. Information included below is subject to change, pending School Board action, changes in state statute and contract negotiations.

General Program Overview

In a full-time virtual instruction program, students are in their home each day accessing their curriculum and instruction via the internet. Off line activities and instructional materials may also be provided depending on the grade level of the student and each individual course of enrollment. Students work with the assistance of a responsible adult (learning coach) and their learning is facilitated, monitored and assessed by their teacher(s) who interacts with students via the internet, email, phone, web conference and instant message. Although families will have some flexibility in scheduling within the day, students are expected to work each school day, in each assigned class according to their learning plan. Students must maintain minimum pace and demonstrate mastery on individual assignments to be successful.

Students will be required to participate in both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Synchronous activities are those that are held in real time, online or face-to-face, and are time certain. Select sessions will be mandatory as they will fulfill attendance requirements, provide essential instruction or meet state/district assessment requirements. Students and/or families are expected to attend all mandatory synchronous activities unless excused by the teacher. Families will be provided with these schedules and are expected to make the necessary arrangements for participation. Asynchronous activities are those that students can complete at any time during the day. These activities will be facilitated and scheduled by the learning coach, but are expected to be completed by established deadlines.

Participation in a full-time virtual instruction program is a commitment by the student and entire family. Although students are working from home, the overall time spent engaged in school activities is similar to that in a traditional school environment. Elementary students will spend approximately five hours per day, five days a week. Secondary students will spend between 6-7 hours per day, five days per week on their school work. Virtual learning is a significant departure from traditional schooling and should be considered carefully by all before enrolling in the program.

Our Programs: Hardee District Schools offers students options for their enrollment in a virtual instruction program. Below is an overview; however changes will be made as contracts for the school year are renewed and finalized.

- └ MDVS -- MyDistrict Virtual School is the name of the online learning option for K-12 students provided by the North East Florida Educational Consortium. K-12 students must meet state eligibility requirements. Students in grades K-12 may enroll in virtual education courses either full-time or part-time. NEFEC provides virtual instruction program support as a service to its participating small school districts. Students are taught by state certified instructors.
- └ FLVS (Florida Virtual School) – FLVS is the name of the online learning option for K-12 students. This schooling differs from traditional schools in that classes do not take place in a building. K12.com is a full-time educational program provided to eligible students in grades K-8 and high school. Students are instructed by state certified instructors.

School Name	Grade Levels	Provider	Instruction Provider	Curriculum Utilized
MyDistrict Virtual (NEFEC)	K-12	North East Educational Consortium	MyDistrict Virtual	K12
FLVS	K-8 High School	FLVS	FLVS	K-8 High School

Learning Coach Role: Enrollment in the virtual instruction program is a commitment by the student, family and learning coach. Every student, regardless of age and grade level, must be provided with adequate daily supervision and support by a responsible adult or learning coach. The learning coach's active participation is essential to ensure the success of the virtual school student. The learning coach will establish the structure necessary for daily, focused participation in classes; will provide motivation and time management; and will regularly communicate with school staff to ensure the student has a positive and productive experience. The learning coach and/or parent/guardian will also be responsible for providing transportation to ESE services, to mandatory testing locations and/or other required/optional activities.

At the elementary level, each family's learning coach must be available approximately 5 hours per day to monitor the student's computer access, engage the student in educational activities, facilitate learning activities, provide support with assignments and manage the receipt/use of instructional materials. Students and learning coaches will also be required to participate in activities with the instructor(s) online or via the phone. Depending on the student performance, additional face-to-face activities will be required. At this level, students are unlikely to be successful if they are

monitored by a learning coach from a distance, therefore the learning coach must be someone who is in the home with the student every school day.

At the secondary level, the role of the parent/guardian and learning coach is no less important. Every student must be monitored closely to ensure adequate course pace, appropriate participation, and timely submission of assignments. Students need significant support throughout the school day from the learning coach. The program requires regular communication between the teacher(s) and parent/guardian or learning coach regarding course progress and content mastery. Regardless of age, students who are not supervised each school day are traditionally less successful than those who have daily structure and support provided by a learning coach.

Communication: Communication with students and parents/guardians or learning coach in all programs will be handled electronically via email, phone calls and or face-to-face. Additional communication by phone will also be required, especially between students and teachers. It is necessary that current telephone numbers and email addresses are provided for school records. Families are required to monitor the communication on a regular basis in order to stay informed about opportunities, deadlines and requirements.

It is also important to notify the Hardee County Administrative offices immediately of changes to student contact information.

Technology: To be successful in the program, students must have daily, dedicated access to a computer, monitor and the internet. Families of full-time students who do not have this technology in the home may be eligible to receive assistance. Proof of need will be established through the Free and Reduced lunch reporting system. Potentially eligible families need to contact the Hardee District Schools Food Services Department for the appropriate application.

School Day / School Calendar: Although students are working from home, the overall time spent engaged in school activities is similar to that in the traditional school environment. Elementary students will spend approximately five hours per day, five days a week. Secondary students will spend between 6-7 hours per day, five days per week on their school work. The learning coach will establish the actual hours each day. Although students have access to curriculum 24 hours per day, seven days a week, students are expected to work in courses each school day, at minimum. The established schedule must provide adequate time to complete all coursework to remain on pace, accommodate synchronous activities and provide adequate time to work with teachers during their posted office hours.

Integrity of Online Courses: It is essential for the success of the student, that all coursework be completed by the registered student and that it is an original creation. All work submitted by the student must have been created/completed by the student. In addition, section 1002.321 (5), Florida Statutes, states, "It is unlawful for any person to knowingly and willfully take an online course or examination on behalf of another person for compensation. Any person who violates this subsection commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s.775.083."

Tuition: All of Hardee District virtual instruction programs are public schools, therefore all instruction and curriculum are provided to eligible students tuition-free.

The Academic Program

Instructional Staff: The teachers who serve students in the Hardee County Virtual Instruction Programs are all highly qualified in the subject areas and grade levels they teach. All teachers hold valid Florida certification and have completed all necessary fingerprinting and background checks.

Curriculum:

FLVS (Florida Virtual School) and Connections Academy, both longtime leaders in online learning, have combined the best of their programs as Florida Virtual School Full Time, a state-approved, tuition-free online school. Backed by proven expertise, this school-at-home program has earned many awards, an excellent reputation, and accreditation from AdvancED.

MDVS is a franchise of the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) offering full and part-time enrollment for eligible students in grades 6-12 and is a franchise of k12.com offering full-time enrollment for students in K-5. MDVS utilizes FLVS curriculum and K12.com curriculum, which is completely internet based. Each student completes their work, submits it via the online system to the teacher, it is graded by the teacher, and returned via the internet. Full-time students will supplement MDVS courses with those taught by the Florida Virtual School. Courses taken from FLVS are taught by FLVS employed teachers

Pace: One benefit of a virtual instruction program is a family's ability to influence their student's schedule. Many aspects of the student day are determined by the learning coach; however students are expected to be working each school day. MDVS and FLVS must operate on the traditional school calendar and students are required to have all coursework completed on or before the last day of school. In order to complete all coursework on time, students must maintain adequate, minimum pace. Teachers, the Academic Advisors, guidance and administration will be monitoring student's pace regularly. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in removal from the program at the semester.

Mandatory Testing and Progress Monitoring: Students enrolled full-time in the Hardee District Schools Virtual Instruction Programs are considered public school students and are therefore required to participate in all district and state mandated testing and progress monitoring. Transportation to and from the testing site is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Certain tests, including but not limited to FSA, End of Course Exams, ACT and PLAN, can only be administered on school campuses. In these instances the tests will be administered in the zoned school for each student, which is based on your place of residence determined by the proof of residency provided during registration. Any change in address should be sent to the Hardee County Schools Administration Office immediately and supported by a new proof of residency documentation.

Scheduling of district and state mandated testing and progress monitoring is defined by the district, the state of Florida, or testing entity and cannot be modified. Within the established testing window, the test site will establish specific dates and times when the tests can be administered to virtual school students. Families will be required to participate according to the schedule provided. It is the responsibility of the family to make the arrangements to be in Hardee County during these scheduled events. Advance notice will be provided to families so arrangements can be

made, however when the testing schedules are not established by the Virtual Instruction Office, changes may be made and families must adjust accordingly. Failure to participate in all mandatory testing sessions during the school year will be grounds for removal from the program for the following school year. Examples of required testing include, but are not limited to: PLAN (10th grade), ACT (11th grade), FSA, End of Course Exams (EOC), Advanced Placement (AP) Exams, Elementary District Assessments, other assessments that may be required by the district or state.

Promotion/Graduation: Hardee virtual instruction programs are public schools and therefore full-time students will be held to the promotion and graduation requirements of Hardee District Schools and the state of Florida. Part-time students will be held to the promotion and graduation requirements of the school of membership (public school, home school or private school).

High School Diploma: In order to receive a high school diploma a student must be enrolled full-time Hardee District's MyDistrict Virtual Instruction Program for at least one semester and fulfill the graduation requirements of Hardee District Schools and the state of Florida in accordance with the Student Progression Plan, available for review at www.hardee.k12.fl.us

- **Attendance:** Full-time students enrolled in Hardee's MyDistrict Virtual Instruction Programs are enrolled in a public school and therefore must meet the attendance requirements. Attendance in the program is expected to be for the entire school year (or semester if granted mid-year enrollment).
- **FLVS** – Attendance in the synchronous instructional activities each week is mandatory. Daily attendance is also taken based on completion and submission of coursework each day. To be marked present, a student must attend any mandatory online synchronous session for the day and complete the required coursework (check points).

□ **MDVS** – Attendance in the MyDistrict virtual instructional program is based on a combination of student/teacher contact, student work submission, and appropriate pacing. Students falling behind pace are immediately placed in CI (contact instructor) status and a more rigid daily contact, work submission plan is implemented.

Advanced Placement Classes: Advanced Placement (AP) courses are high school classes taught at a college level. Students participate in a national exam upon completion. Depending on the score achieved, a student may be eligible to receive college credit upon enrollment at a college or university. AP courses will only receive the 5.0 weighting if the student sits for the AP exam.

AP courses are available to students enrolled in the high school programs. Students enrolling in an AP class will be required to take the AP exam. Most tests will be administered at the student's zoned school, however if the zoned school will not be administering a certain subject area exam, then an alternate testing location will be determined. In some instances a test may be offered at only one school in the district. Transportation to the testing site, regardless of distance from the student's home, is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Additional Information

Gifted Student Program: (GSP Full-time students in grades K-12 may participate in the GSP program at the zoned school, if it is offered as a pull-out program or an elective at the secondary school. Students who elect to participate in the program must attend on a regular basis and abide by the school dress code and rules while on campus.

Exceptional Student Education/Section 504/ADA: Prior to enrollment as a full-time student, an IEP/504 accommodation plan review will be scheduled to determine if the virtual environment is appropriate for the individual student. Hardee Virtual Program is a school choice option for parents but as in traditional public schools, not all ESE services are available at every school and may not be available through the virtual program. Therefore, the IEP/504 team will determine the location of services should they be needed for the student while attending the virtual program with the parent providing transportation. An annual review and 3 year reevaluation must occur for all students with individual education plans and will be arranged at the student's zoned school. Annual reviews will also be scheduled for students with disabilities receiving accommodations through 504 plans. Should the parent or virtual education teacher have concerns regarding a student's need for specially designed instruction, a referral should be made to the Director of ESE for an evaluation.

McKay Scholarship: Students on a McKay Scholarship will forfeit their scholarship eligibility if they participate full-time in a virtual instruction program. A student may not establish eligibility for the McKay Scholarship based solely upon attendance in MDVS or FLVS.

Extracurricular Activities: With the expansion of the full-time virtual instruction programs, extra-curricular activities are being added each year. If an extra-curricular opportunity, including interscholastic sports, is not provided by Hardee Virtual then full-time students may be eligible to participate at the zoned school. Extracurricular activities are those that take place outside the school day and do not require participation in a course during the day. Students must meet all eligibility requirements to participate, which may include applications and/or tryouts. It is the responsibility of the family to seek out these opportunities at the zoned school.

On Campus Activities: Full-time students will return to school campuses for select assessments and may participate in Exceptional Student Education services and extracurricular activities. Anytime a MDVS or FLVS student is on a campus, he/she must abide by the district dress code, per School Board Policy, follow all school rules and represent the virtual programs well. Failure to abide by these rules and expectations may result in disciplinary action on the school campus and/or in the virtual instruction program. Severe violations may result in suspension, expulsion, legal action and/or removal from the virtual instruction program.

Registration / Enrollment

Eligibility: Eligibility for our programs is established by sections 1002.45 and 1002.37, Florida Statutes. The specific eligibility requirements vary by program. Regardless of program, all students must reside in Hardee County and maintain residence within the county for the entire enrollment period. If a family moves out of the county, the student will be required to withdraw. In addition, students in an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program with an active IEP or students with a 504/ADA plan, must also have their plan reviewed by the IEP or 504 team to determine if the virtual school is an appropriate learning environment prior to acceptance being granted.

Below is a summary of the eligibility requirements for each program. The information below is in accordance to s.

1002.45 or s.1002.37, Florida Statutes.

- **FLVS and MDVS** – The student must reside in Hardee County, have a positive history of attendance the semester prior to enrollment, be on track for graduation/promotion and be eligible to enter grades K-12 in a traditional public school in Hardee County.
The following additional requirements may be a determining factor in enrollment (s1002.455, F.S.):
 - a) The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school in this State and was enrolled and reported by a public school district for funding during the preceding October and February for the purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) surveys **OR**
 - b) The student is a dependent child of a member of the United States Armed Forces who was transferred within the last twelve (12) months to Florida from another state or foreign country pursuant to the parent's permanent change of station orders **OR**
 - c) The student was enrolled during the prior school year in a School District virtual instruction program under F.S. 1002.45, a K-8 virtual school program under F.S. 1002.415, or a full-time Florida Virtual School program under F.S. 1002.37(8)(a) **OR**
 - d) The student has a sibling who is currently enrolled in the School District virtual instruction program and that sibling was enrolled in such a program at the end of the prior school year **OR**
 - e) The student is eligible to enter kindergarten or first grade **OR**
 - f) . The student is eligible to enter grades 2 through 5 and is enrolled full-time in a District virtual instruction program, virtual charter school, or the Florida Virtual School.

The above eligibility requirements are established by state law, therefore the district is not at liberty to allow exceptions.

Process: Parents interested in enrolling full-time in MDVS must first complete contact the district office or the guidance counselor at their zoned school to help determine if virtual school is a good option for their child. After a review of attendance, grades, and other factors if it is determined virtual school is a good option, a link is emailed to the parent to complete registration. The parent signs a commitment form and is given a copy of the policy and procedures. Upon acceptance, all materials and instructions will be provided electronically to the parent/guardian. In courses requiring physical materials, the materials will be shipped directly to the address supplied by the Learning Coach.

Full-Time Application Windows: The virtual instruction office offers full-time students two start dates. Two application windows for each start date have been provided. Application during the Open Enrollment Window is preferred to allow adequate time for registration, course selection, material distribution and orientation. Application during the Late Enrollment Window may result in a slight delay in finalizing registration, course selection, material distribution and orientation.

Program Reenrollment: Students who are successful in the virtual instruction program and meet all program requirements and expectations will be able to reapply for continued enrollment in the program. Students who are not academically successful, who express issues with attendance or who fail to abide by program policies and expectations may be denied enrollment in subsequent years.

Withdrawal: Full-time enrollment in a virtual instruction program is expected to be a commitment for one school year (or semester if granted mid-year enrollment). Withdrawals will be permitted at any time; however students are encouraged to do so at the semester, as transition to a new school is typically easier at that time. Students withdrawing from any virtual instruction program will be required to return to their zoned school or enroll in another school or program.