

Mahanoy Area Virtual Academy



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The Mahanoy Area School District (MASD) believes that student learning is not always confined to the classroom or the school day. Opportunities for learning today's technologically connected world should be available at all times in many ways. The District also understands the desire of some students and parents to pursue an educational route that could be considered non-traditional but is becoming more prevalent as technology provides more learning opportunities. In an effort to create a culture of educational opportunity within the legal entitlement of a public school education, the MASD has created a variety of learning opportunities for students. Many of these courses take place in an on-line forum and can be accessed from any internet connection. It is the intention of the District to offer these on-line options for students while ensuring the quality and integrity of curriculum that has exemplified the tradition of excellence our students have enjoyed. Ideally, every student living in the MASD will find an opportunity to complete a rigorous and relevant education within the relationship that community school provides.

To that end, the District has developed the following guidelines to assure that both the individual education of each student and the academic and financial integrity of the District are maintained in this exciting time of change in education. Since the never ending march of technology makes it nearly impossible to anticipate every situation, the District maintains the latitude to make decisions on an individual student basis within the philosophy and guidelines of the District and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The MASD is a member of Blendedschool.net. This is a consortium of over 200 Pennsylvania schools. They have a network of available coursework that is designed by accredited teachers and follows the guidelines of the Pennsylvania academic standards.

Goals of Cyber Learning

- Expand the educational opportunities for the MASD students and residents in a financially responsible manner through Cyber Learning
- Enhance MASD's curriculum by providing courses which are part of the regular course schedule. These courses may be used for course conflict and credit recovery
- Provide prerequisite courses for programs for populations too small to justify regular course offerings
- Provide access to college courses through alternative delivery methods in order to offer educational opportunities to students unable to meet a regular class schedule
- Provide educational opportunities to extended homebound, expelled, health impaired or incarcerated students
- Provide professional development opportunities to faculty and staff.

Attendance

Regular attendance in any learning environment is vital to school success. Students who do not participate in their on-line course regularly will diminish their learning experience. The insistence on good attendance serves a clear and constant reminder of the importance of good instruction, enabling the student to:

1. Learn subject matter and earn good grades
2. Develop responsible work and study habits

Students are subject to the same attendance rules and laws as students attending regular public school

- a) Sign-on daily attendance will be based on successful completion of the following two requirements:
 - i. Students must log in each course daily and actively work a minimum of 30 minutes per day, per course.
 - ii. Complete daily assignments per instructor's direction.
Note: Students who do not satisfy the above requirements will be marked absent for that course for that day.
- b) For attendance purposes, unlawful absence for more than one (1) course each day will equate to one (1) full day absence.
- c) If a teacher assigns course work over an extended period of time and the student does not complete the assignment by the due date, the student will be marked absent for those consecutive days at the teacher's discretion.
- d) Attendance will be tracked on a course by course basis. If absences occur for ten (10) or more consecutive days in any course, the student forfeits enrollment in that course effective on the 11th day. If ten (10) or more consecutive absences occur in two (2) or more courses, the student will be dropped from the MAVA. If the student is dropped from the MAVA, it is understood the student will begin attending the MASD.
- e) Should the student be dropped from MAVA for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to schedule a meeting with the building principal and the OPC in order for the student to begin attending the MASD. Compulsory school attendance procedures will be initiated if the student is not immediately attending MASD and truancy hearings before the local magistrate will be scheduled.

- f) Students must contact the OPC to report progress or problems, extenuating circumstances such as illness or connecting issues.
- g) Students are not required to attend classes on those days that the MASD's students are not required to attend. These would include snow days, Act 80 days, in-service days, holidays or any other days approved by the MASD.
- h) If a student is 17 years of age or older and is absent for ten (10) or more consecutive days and the absence occurs in two (2) or more courses, that student will be dropped from the roles of the MAVA and the MASD effective on the 11th day, as per school policy.
- i) Absence notes are required to be submitted within three (3) days of any absence for the absence to be considered excused. Those notes must be sent to the OPC of the MAVA.
- j) Students must obtain approval from the teacher and OPC to turn in late assignments.
- k) MAVA cyber education will not be considered a break in the MASD's education.
- l) Students must complete the Educational Trip/Activities form before taking a trip. The form must be submitted to the OPC five days prior to taking the trip for approval.

Student Participation

Student participation in on-line cyber instruction will be based on the individual student's needs and is subject to the approval of the school principal and OPC. Typical examples of the students who may qualify for on-line instruction would include the following:

- medical or medical related problems
- alternative education
- transferring from an existing on-line program
- home-school students
- credit recovery
- course conflicts
- other (at the discretion of the OPC)

Students will be required to participate in all state mandated testing and will meet all graduation requirements including a senior project for receipt of a MASD diploma.

Students who wish to participate in sports or activities are subject to the MASD's qualifying rules including volunteer entrance into the drug testing program.

MAVA will follow the MASD calendar and schedule of marking periods for completion of coursework.

Student participation in MAVA is a privilege that may be withdrawn if circumstances warrant at any time.

MAVA students will have access to school resources such as the library and guidance counseling per appointment only. Students who are expelled are not permitted on school property. The public library is available for use.

Transcripts will be reviewed for all MAVA students by the OPC and school administrator.

The MAVA curriculum is standards-based. The average course takes approximately 90 days to complete and is ½ credit. Credit for MAVA courses will be granted to students by MASD in accordance with the established district policies.

MAVA courses are approved for credit by the Board of Education consistent with any other instructional delivery. All district policies related to academic honesty, participation and attendance will apply to MAVA courses.

Any confirmed cases of cyber bullying, cyber stalking or cyber harassment will result in immediate dismissal from the MAVA and discipline actions may result based on the MASD policy.

Parent/Guardian Role in Your Child's Education

MAVA is pleased to partner with you to provide your child with a quality education. While we supply the curriculum and professional support, you provide the supervision, management and encouragement. Your child's success truly depends upon your consistent involvement. MAVA Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- supervise their child's work
- provide support and encouragement
- maintain communication with instructors
- monitor progress through the online eSchoolbook
- hold their child responsible for completing coursework
- oversee the care of school materials

Acceptable Use Policy

Access to the technology utilized by MAVA courses imposes responsibilities and obligations upon users. The MASD's acceptable use policy must be signed and adhered to at all times. Appropriate use is:

- Characterized by ethical and honest behavior
- Demonstrated by respect for physical and intellectual property
- Responsive to system security protocols
- Respectful of individual rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment and unwarranted annoyance

The MASD's acceptable use policy must be signed and adhered to at all times

MAVA has established the following expectations for student behaviors:

1. Exercise responsible, ethical behavior.

The Internet is a global network of information. The information available ranges from being useful and scholarly to being incorrect, possibly plagiarized and offensive. There are no gatekeepers or systems of censorship in place on the Internet. The student bears responsibility for the conduct while engaged in MAVA courses, both in terms of how they interact with others and in how they demonstrate mastery of course objectives.

2. Respect individuals' freedom from harassment.

Students will protect the privacy of classmates. Students will not publish any names, passwords, e-mail addresses, or other information pertaining to other students. Students understand that the MAVA courses require use of discussion boards as a means of communication and learning; therefore, respect these technologies as a means of instruction. Students will not use these or other forms of communication as a means to harass people via the Internet, including administrators, teachers, and other students.

3. Utilize the technology and the MAVA Blendedschools.net in a respectful manner.

Students will not use the MAVA on-line course system for any commercial or illegal activity. Students will follow rules, written and unwritten, pertaining to Internet etiquette, and communicate respectfully to all people. Students will not attempt to bypass security protocols on servers or workstations.

4. Violations

Violation of any part of this agreement or engaging in any other activity that school authorities consider inappropriate will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with MASD policies and procedures. Discipline could include, but would not be limited to: immediate suspension or termination of Internet access to the MAVA courses. Any attempt to break into or tamper with the system operations, including any student records or grades, will result in cancellation of MAVA privileges and disciplinary action.