



# Parent/Student Handbook 2025-2026

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to inform students and parents of important information regarding students' educational experiences at Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga. The enclosed guidelines are intended to assist students and parents in understanding the different facets of life at Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga. While no handbook can cover all questions concerning school rules and regulations, it is this handbook's intent to answer as many questions as possible. Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga follows Sylacauga City Schools' policies as well as state and federal laws.

Our administrators and staff at Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga are committed to providing a quality education for our students in a supportive, safe, and positive learning environment. It is our goal to partner with the families of our students to enhance the learning experiences for all students.

Parents/guardians and students should take the time to review and discuss the information in this handbook. If you have any questions regarding the items at any time during the year, please contact the school office at 256-513-7070.

## ADMISSIONS

Students who apply for enrollment in a Sylacauga City School must attend school in the attendance zone where they reside with a parent or legal guardian, as granted by the Talladega County District Court or other appropriate court. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide school officials with verifiable student information and to notify the school immediately in writing of any changes in student information. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in an investigation and appropriate action, i.e. withdrawal of students from school, tuition fee, report to court officials and/or the Department of Human Resources, etc.

All transfer students must be in good disciplinary standing from their previous school(s) with no outstanding suspension or expulsion offenses pending. Sylacauga City Board of Education honors suspensions and expulsion from other official Boards of Education.

The parents/legal guardians of children enrolling in grades K-8 shall provide the following:

- Parent/Guardian Picture Identification
- Birth Certificate
- Copy of Social Security Card (Optional)
- Proof of Custody when warranted
- Documented Proof of Immunization as required by state law
- Withdrawal form and transcript from previous school
- Proof of Residency

Additional admissions details can be found in the Sylacauga City Schools Code of Conduct. That document can be viewed on our district website at [www.scsboe.org](http://www.scsboe.org).

## PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Sylacauga City Board of Education believes that the education of children is a collaborative effort between parents and schools. Furthermore, it is our belief that the involvement of parents increases the effectiveness of the school and contributes significantly to the success of the children.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents/guardians are urged to confer with teachers often. All conferences with teachers at school must be arranged in advance. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a conference with a particular teacher or group of teachers. Teachers will not be available during instructional time for conferences.

## ATTENDANCE

School enrollment and attendance are mandated by state law for all children, and regular school attendance enhances learning. Students are expected to report to school on time and attend school the full day. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child attends school. All students are subject to the same attendance policies. Parents should make every effort to schedule doctors' and dentists' appointments after school hours.

All students are expected to attend School and regularly engage in instructional programming to receive maximum benefit from the program. The instructional experience takes place outside a regular school building; therefore, accountability of student activities and participation is measured by the students' reporting of the educational learning hours. The daily amount of expected instructional time is 6 hours. Daily attendance is tracked via a combination of the following: offline time submissions submitted by Parents/Guardians, online activity reports automatically generated by the school's Learning Management System when students work in courses or attend live sessions, participation in state and local assessments, contact with school staff, and other methods as dictated by the school. Any student who has not logged into the system and completed coursework or assessments on a given day will be marked absent.

- It is expected that students will be engaged and actively participating in schoolwork each day. Students should be online, completing asynchronous lessons through the course dashboard, and attending live sessions as instructed by teachers. If students do not maintain the expected level of engagement or maintain expected course progress, students will be referred to the engagement intervention program.
- Live session attendance is critical to student success in the online classroom. It is highly recommended that all students attend all live class offerings daily to interact with teachers and receive instruction and practice, especially when students are not receiving passing grades. These live sessions are recorded and available for students to view at any time.
- Students must attend virtual state testing on assigned days.
- Failure to log into the system and complete coursework each day and/or to show up for assigned testing constitutes an unexcused absence for the student.
- Students must attend school on all official school days, complete all assignments promptly following stated class schedules, attend live class sessions or view archived materials as directed.
- Parents/Guardians may be directed to log offline hours and/or properly document the student's offline work.
- Students who miss school are encouraged to review recordings of any live instructional sessions missed and to make up any daily asynchronous course assignments that were not completed during the absence.
- Parents/Guardians must provide the school with written notes documenting why absences should be excused within one day of the absence date. *All communications regarding student attendance should be emailed to [attendance@classicalal.org](mailto:attendance@classicalal.org).*

## SCHOOL EXCUSES

Parents/guardians must email an excuse to the school on the day the child returns to school. Failure of the parent/guardian to send an excuse **within three school days** of the child's initial return will result

in the absence being marked unexcused.

Each excuse must contain the following information:

- Child's full name
- Date to be excused
- Reason for absence
- Phone number to contact parent/guardian
- Signature of parent or doctor

A phone call to the school about an absence is not sufficient documentation. The State of Alabama requires a written note on file within 3 days upon a student's initial return to school. *Please email the note to [attendance@classicalal.org](mailto:attendance@classicalal.org).*

All excuses will be kept on file for the remainder of the school year. When school officials do not know the reason for an absence, they must assume that it is unexcused.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Excused Absences are defined as the following:

- Student Illness – Students who are sick and whose illness would endanger their health and the health of others. A doctor's excuse may be required.
- Serious Family Illness – Students in whose immediate family there is a serious illness that would reasonably necessitate the absence of a student.
- Death in the Immediate Family – Students in whose immediate family there has occurred a recent death may be temporarily excused from school for a reasonable length of time.
- Professional Appointments – Appointments will be excused with a note from the doctor.
- School Sponsored Activities – Students shall be marked present when participating in a school sponsored activity away from the school building.
- Family Emergency/Crisis – Students will be excused when their absence is beyond their control and due to a family emergency/crisis as determined by a school administrator.
- Legal – Students will be excused with documents from court officials.
- Permission from the principal (educational, religious, etc.)

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND TRUANCY**

An absence or tardy for a reason not covered in the provision described under "Excused Absences" will be unexcused.

#### **Absences that are not excused can result in the parent/guardian receiving a truancy letter.**

In accordance with the State Department of Education, the timeline for reporting truancy is as follows:

Parents will be notified of unexcused absences by letter, per the following:

1. First (1<sup>st</sup>) unexcused absence – Warning

The parent/guardian will be notified by letter that the student's absence was unexcused.

2. Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) unexcused absence – Parent contact and/or conference

The parent/guardian will be notified by the school administration. This is the last contact from the local school for unexcused absences.

3. Fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence – Court Complaint

School officials will file a truancy complaint with juvenile court officials. Court officials will notify parents of the date and time of the School/Court Early Warning Meeting.

4. Seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence – Formal Court Proceeding

School officials will sign a warrant on parents of students in elementary school.

Important: School officials will follow procedures for School/Court Early Warning meeting before filing a complaint or a warrant. Parents/guardians should make sure to always have current contact information on file in the school office.

### **EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

Each student is allotted 10 parent notes per year, while medical and legal excuses are unlimited. **Any parent note submitted to the school after the 10th parent note will be coded as unexcused.**

Any student enrolled in grades K-8, who accumulates more than 10 unexcused absences during the year, may be subject to being retained. The principal shall evaluate the attendance record and may recommend retention. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that a written note is delivered to the appropriate school personnel.

### **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS**

The Sylacauga City Board of Education and each of the schools within the system realize that certain circumstances may arise during the academic year that cause parents to request permission from the school for their child to be absent due to an educational trip. If such is the case, parents should contact the school administration well in advance of the trip, complete the required forms, and follow the correct procedures. Should the request be approved, the absences will be coded as excused absences. If the request is not approved, the trip may still be taken. However, the absences will then be recorded as unexcused. Shopping trips, extended weekends at the beach/lake or other similar trips shall not be classified as having legitimate educational value. Requests should not exceed five (5) days per year. Should prior permission not be sought and obtained, the absences will be coded as unexcused.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

In order for students in an online school to be successful, it is necessary for them to be continuously engaged in the education process. Regular completion of diagnostic assessments is essential for the promotion of student development and instrumental to the development and implementation of targeted instructional techniques. Moreover, regular live class participation and the submission of classroom assessments allows instructional staff additional insight into student development and affords students another opportunity to ask questions and demonstrate academic growth.

Periodically, throughout the school year, the school implements iReady, or other diagnostic assessments to ascertain student ability and development and to target instruction. Students shall be given the opportunity to complete such assessments within a reasonable amount of time, which is consistent with the purpose of administering the assessment. Students are required to complete all diagnostic assessments.

Alabama Virtual Classical Academy of Sylacauga assesses Student Engagement levels via a combination of the following:

- Completion of diagnostic assessments\*
- Course assignments and assessments
- Local assessments
- Attendance in live instructional sessions
- Participation in state-mandated testing\*

\*Participation in diagnostic assessments and state-mandated tests is non-negotiable and is weighted most heavily in the determination of student engagement level.

## **DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS**

Diagnostic Assessments are aligned with the Alabama academic content standards and model curriculum, designed to measure student comprehension of academic content and mastery of related skills in relevant subject areas.

- a. Any Student who transfers to the school if his/her former school did not administer each applicable diagnostic assessment to the student in the current school year (the applicable assessment must be administered within thirty (30) days from the date of transfer); and
- b. Previously home-schooled students enrolled at the school to determine their appropriate grade level placement.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Completing course assignments and assessments regularly is critical for student success. This allows teachers to monitor progress and ensure growth and mastery of state standards. Within each course, students should complete all items on the plan for the day and stay on track with assignment due dates as set by the teacher. Students who do not follow the minimum expectations of course completion will be referred to the engagement intervention protocol.

## **LOCAL ASSESSMENTS**

Throughout the school year, the school implements diagnostic/interim assessments, short-cycle assessments, and common mock assessments to determine students' current levels of mastery and development and to target instruction. Students shall be given the opportunity to complete such assessments within a reasonable amount of time, which is consistent with the purpose of administering the assessment. These timelines for completion will be communicated as each assessment is announced. Students are expected to complete all the assessments given. Students who do not follow minimum expectations will be referred to the engagement intervention protocol.

## **LIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SESSIONS**

The curriculum at Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga is designed to provide flexibility to its students and allow them the opportunity to earn credit and complete assignments in their own time. However, students who attend and participate in live class sessions on a regular basis are typically more successful than students who do not. Students are provided a clear schedule for live opportunities in the core subjects of Math, English, Science, and Social Studies. Although live instructional sessions are recorded and made available to students for review on their own time, students are encouraged to attend live sessions as they are provided in real-time to benefit from live discourse and collaborative work with students and teachers.

The school requires that students attend 50% of live instructional opportunities per calendar month as outlined in the student's schedule. Students who do not meet minimum live instructional attendance expectations at the end of each month will be referred to our engagement intervention protocol.

## **STATE-MANDATED TESTING**

Any student who fails, without a legitimate excuse, to participate in state-mandated testing may be expelled for Parents and students are notified in advance of the schedule and location of required testing. Although the School undertakes to make testing facilities easily accessible to parents/students, it is the parent/student's obligation to provide transportation to testing facilities, and a failure to attend required testing will not be excused for transportation reasons except in extreme circumstances.

## **ENGAGEMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

The Student Success team coordinates support services in a timely manner to address the specific engagement needs of the student and family and promote positive academic outcomes. Team members

continuously monitor student progress to evaluate and adapt the support plan as needed. Participation is required to ensure student success.

## **SUPPORT TIERS**

### **Tier 1:** General school-wide prevention and programming

At Tier 1, the focus is on universal engagement through school-wide preventative measures and teacher support. Students and families are expected to adhere to school policies regarding attendance, engagement, assignment completion, and communication. Teachers implement interventions as needed, documenting any emerging student needs.

### **Tier 2:** Student Support Needs Identified: Student Engagement Plan Implemented

Engagement or course progress concerns require students and family to receive additional interventions, support and progress monitoring through individual check-ins and/or small group sessions. The assigned Success Coach collaborates with the student and family to address the identified issue, and a Student Engagement Plan is developed and implemented.

- Intervention methods are identified with the student and Learning Coach.
- The Success Coach will facilitate the process, monitor progress, and provide regular, formal follow-up.

### **Tier 3:** Continued Student Support Protocol: Action Plan & Accountability

After several weeks of engagement at Tier 2, if the family fails to comply with the Student Engagement Plan, Tier 3 intervention is initiated. This involves reinforcing the engagement protocol and holding the family accountable for meeting the student's personal and educational needs. An intensive Student Engagement Plan will be implemented based on two or more of the following factors: academic performance, engagement, teacher referral, behavioral concerns, and/or credit deficiency.

- During this period, focus will remain on enhancing academic growth through identifying any barriers interfering with a student's education, setting specific goals, and creating an action plan to provide additional accountability. Students on this plan can expect to be in close and frequent contact with their Success Coach to form a partnership that serves to balance the weight of sustaining educational growth by working communally.

### **Tier 4:** Administrative Action

If all available resources and interventions are exhausted without success, and the student and family remain disengaged and not compliant, Tier 4 administrative review and action is warranted. Students at Tier 4 are referred to administration and are at risk of being disenrolled from the program.

## **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE/EXPECTATIONS**

Expectations for student behavior have been established to ensure student and staff safety as well as an effective learning environment for every student. **Students are expected to follow rules and expectations for behavior.** When students violate the code of conduct and/or school rules, certain disciplinary actions will be taken. These actions include but are not limited to parent/teacher or student/teacher conferences, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and alternative placement. Students may be disciplined for infractions occurring during the school day on campus but also occurring off campus during school-sponsored activities and while riding the bus.

The school has five basic school rules that govern student behavior:

1. I will listen and follow directions.
2. I will be respectful to my teachers and peers.
3. I will keep hands, feet and objects to myself.
4. I will respect school property and the property of others.
5. I will be truthful.

Each student will obey each rule and is responsible to self, other students, and all staff members. Each staff member will enforce each rule and is responsible for all students.

### **IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

In-school suspension is a structured disciplinary action in which a student is removed from the regular classroom and placed in a more restrictive setting. The principal or her designee has the authority to assign students to in-school suspension for a reasonable and specified period.

### **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

Suspension is defined as the temporary removal of a student from school for a violation of school policies, rules, regulations, or for interfering with the orderly operation of the school. Without an appropriate disciplinary hearing, cumulative suspensions shall not exceed 10 school days per semester for non-special education students and 10 days per year for special education students. In the event a proposed suspension results in cumulative suspensions exceeding ten (10) school days per semester for non-special education students or ten (10) full days per year for special education students, an appropriate disciplinary hearing will be held. Only the Superintendent or his/her designee, principal, or assistant administrator shall have the authority to suspend students.

### **CLASS II AND III VIOLATIONS**

See Sylacauga City Schools Code of Conduct for a complete list of Class II and III violations and appropriate disciplinary sanctions.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **GRADES**

Alabama Virtual Classical Academy has a standard grading procedure, as well as additional notations that may indicate work in progress or incomplete work. The purpose of a grade is to indicate the extent to which the student has acquired the necessary learning. In general, students are assigned grades based upon results, homework, projects, and classroom participation. Each teacher may place a different emphasis on these areas in determining a grade and will so inform the students at the beginning of the course work. If a student is not sure how his/her grade will be determined, s/he should ask the teacher.

### **GRADING SCALE**

90-100 A  
80-89 B  
70 -79 C  
60-69 D  
Below 60 F

### **GRADING PERIODS**

Grades will be reported quarterly. Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be report cards. Final semester grades are calculated based on cumulative performance over the entire semester. Semester grades will be posted

to the student's permanent transcript and used to calculate the overall GPA.

### **PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION**

Promotion to the next grade level is based on a comprehensive review of the student's academic progress, assessment performance, and overall readiness. The following criteria are considered when determining promotion:

1. Students must demonstrate mastery of grade-level academic standards, as shown through course grades, teacher-developed assessments, and assignments aligned to Alabama's Learning Standards.
2. Results from diagnostic, benchmark, and/or state assessments (such as i-Ready or NWEA MAP support promotion decisions and ensure readiness for the next grade.)
3. Students are expected to complete all required core subjects with a passing grade in accordance with the school's grading policy.
4. The student's emotional, physical, and social development is considered, particularly for students in early elementary grades.
5. When appropriate, promotion decisions may involve a review by the instructional team or a school-based support team to ensure decisions reflect the best interest of the student's academic and personal development.

Parents/guardians will be informed if a student is not on track for promotion and will be involved in intervention planning and decision-making processes.

### **ACADEMIC PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES**

The school shall provide intervention services commensurate with the student's performance in pertinent subject areas to students who score below the proficient level on a reading, writing, mathematics, or science proficiency or achievement test or to those who do not demonstrate academic performance at their grade level based on the results of a diagnostic assessment.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **DUE PROCESS**

The policy of the Sylacauga City Board of Education is to adhere to due process when carrying out the procedures contained in this handbook. Principals are responsible for familiarizing their staff with due process procedures and providing each staff member with a copy of this handbook. The handbook has been published with the following concepts in mind:

1. School rules must be clearly stated and related to the educational purposes of the school.
2. School rules must be fair and specific enough for students to understand.
3. Students, parents, and guardians must be informed of the school rules.
4. When disciplinary action is involved, school personnel and students must comply with required procedures set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

Parents must provide telephone numbers where they or adult relatives may be reached. Because emergencies may arise, please keep addresses and telephone numbers current in the office.

### **HARASSMENT/BULLYING (SCS BOE Policy 6.25)**

Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Student Code of Conduct. No student shall engage in or be subject to harassment, violence, threats of

violence, or intimidation by any other student. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

The district encourages the reporting of discrimination, harassment, or bullying to school administration. Complaints of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may be reported by students, staff, and parents. Verbal and written complaints of bullying/harassment and discriminatory behavior will be documented and investigated by the principal or her designee, and in some cases school security, which will include private questioning of all parties allegedly involved as well as any witness.

The Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form is located online at [www.scsboe.org](http://www.scsboe.org) under the Family Resources tab.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT (SCS BOE Policy 6.11)**

A student who believes that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall immediately report the matter to a teacher, the school counselor, assistant principal, principal, or the Head of School. Any student who suspects that another student is being sexually harassed shall immediately report the information to a teacher, school counselor, assistant principal, principal, or the Head of School. A student's request to make his or her report to someone of the same sex will be granted.

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

Information Regarding How to Allow, Limit, or Prevent Your Child's Participation in Mental Health Services Under Alabama law, no student under the age of fourteen may participate in ongoing school counseling services including, but not limited to, mental health services, unless (1) the student's parent or legal guardian has submitted a written opt-in granting permission for the student to participate or (2) there is an imminent threat to the health of the student or others.

Therefore, if your child is under fourteen, they will only be allowed to participate in mental health services if you opt-in. If you would like the school system to be able to offer and/or provide mental health services to your child, you must opt-in for each service listed for them to participate in that service.

Even if you do not opt-in to mental health services, your child may be provided mental health services if there is an imminent threat to their health or others. School employees may determine in their discretion whether such an imminent threat exists and provide any mental health services they deem necessary under the circumstances.

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities: Please note that the opt-in process is not applicable to any school counseling services or "mental health services" contained in a student's IEP or 504 plan. Consent for those services will be obtained and information regarding your child's mental health services will be provided through the usual special education process.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Sylacauga City School System is responsible for identifying all children and youth with disabilities who need special education or related services, age birth to 21 years, who live in the school district attendance zone. Referrals may be made by anyone with knowledge of such children or youth. Referrals may be made to the school counselor or to the coordinator of special education.

### **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 includes Section 504 to prevent discrimination based upon disability. The Section 504 civil rights statute requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled. The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga will provide a

"free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability under Section 504. An individual with a disability means any person who: "(i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment" [34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)].

### **CHILD FIND**

The school is participating in an effort to assist in identifying, locating, and evaluating all children who may have disabilities that may be hindering their ability to receive FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education). We are committed to affording all children their right to a free and appropriate education, regardless of any disability a child may have. Parents, guardians, relatives, public and private agency employees, and concerned citizens are used to helping schools find any child, birth through age 21, who may have a disability and need special education and related services. If you are aware of a child who may have special needs, please notify the School's Administrator.

### **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

It is the official policy of the Sylacauga Board of Education that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age or economic disadvantage be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity or employment.

It is the policy of the Sylacauga Board of Education not to discriminate based on sex, disability, religion, creed, national origin, race, color or age. Any complaints regarding compliance with Federal Regulations may be directed to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Jennifer Rosato or Executive Director of Learning Support Services, Mr. Bobby Hall at 43 North Broadway Avenue, Sylacauga, Alabama 35150, telephone number (256) 245-5256.

### **HOMELESS STUDENT POLICY**

Children who meet the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free and appropriate public education in the same manner as all other students at the school. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless and will be assigned to the school serving those non-homeless students residing in the area in which the homeless child is actually living. No homeless student will be denied enrollment based on a lack of proof of residency. No Board policy, administrative guidelines, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit enrollment attendance or school success of homeless children.

Homeless students will be provided with services comparable to other students in the School including:

- Transportation
- Educational services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or similar State and local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
- Programs in vocational and technical education;
- Programs for gifts and talented students; and
- School nutrition programs.

### **MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Superintendent of the School shall serve as the school's local liaison for homeless children and youth. To the extent that the school receives assistance from the Federal Program for Education for Homeless Children and Youth, it shall comply with requirements to coordinate services for homeless students with local social service agencies and programs, including those funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

## **SCHOOL RECORDS (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within forty-five (45) days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school administrator a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school administrator will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school administrator, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A "school official" is a person employed, contracted, or volunteering at the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic or support staff position, including but not limited to, school employees (whether employed directly by the Board or by a third party on behalf of the Board); a member of the school law enforcement unit, which consists of the School Leader; a person with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (i.e. Attorney, auditor, outside consultant); a person serving on the Board. A School official has a "legitimate educational interest" in an education record when the official needs to review the record in order to fulfill his or her responsibility on behalf of the School, such as when the official is performing a task that is specified in his or her job description or by a contract agreement or other official appointment; performing a task related to a student's education; performing a task related to the discipline of a student; or providing a service or benefit relating to the student or student's family, such as health care, counseling, assisting with the college application procedure; any other purpose that the Board deems necessary as related to a student's education. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

### **STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

It is the policy of the school not to release any personal information such as names, home address and phone numbers to outside agencies or requesting parties without the direct written consent of the Parent

or guardian or as otherwise required by law, such as military recruiters, etc. Unless a Parent/Guardian - or adult student (18 years of age or older) - notifies the school in writing that the Parent/Guardian or adult student permits the distribution of any personal information, the school will not release the information. Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. The school has designated student names and grade levels as directory information and will use such information in school publications, social media publications, recognition lists, programs and/or student directories. If you do not want the school to disclose any or all the information designated above as directory information you must notify the school in writing.

### **ACCESS BY MILITARY RECRUITERS/INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Two federal laws require the school to provide military recruiters, upon request, with student names, addresses and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the school that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. Similarly, state law requires the school to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names and addresses of students in grades ten through twelve, unless parents have advised the school that they do not want such information disclosed.

### **AUDIO-VISUAL INFORMATION**

The school recognizes the value of audio-visual and other types of electronic communication in providing our students with an effective education. In communicating with our school-related activities, opportunities exist to photograph and/or videotape students and their work in a variety of activities. However, individual student records (academic, behavioral) will not be disclosed. Communications may include school newsletters, local newspapers, community access cable channel, school-sponsored web pages, marketing materials and other publications. Highlighting the achievements and celebrating student successes in our school is an integral part of the reporting responsibility to the community.

However, we will respect your wish for privacy in this area. Please call the school should you have any questions or concerns. You may also notify the school in writing if you prefer that we do not use your student's name, picture, and/or work product for presentations or other uses.

### **PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Parents have the right to request the following regarding their child's teacher(s):

- Licensure and certification information;
- Emergency or provisional status;
- Educational background and
- Qualifications of instructional aides.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND TITLE IX/SECTION 504 NOTICE**

The school provides an equal opportunity for all students to learn regardless of race, color, creed, disability, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, social or economic background, or other legally protected category. It is the intention of the school to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. All employees shall report to the Title IX coordinator at any time the employee has notice of sexual harassment, including allegations of sexual harassment.

The Title IX Grievance Procedure below is meant to provide for timely and equitable resolution of complaints. The school shall respond promptly to Title IX sexual harassment in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. This means that the school's response will not be considered unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

Any individual may report allegations of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (victim or third-

party), by any means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time by using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

A School employee or School official receives notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment, they shall immediately report it to the Title IX Coordinator.

The following have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and can advise parents on the specific civil rights grievance procedure.

Title IX Coordinator  
Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga  
April Siddique  
43 North Broadway Avenue  
Sylacauga, AL 35150  
256-513-7070

Section 504 Coordinator  
Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga  
April Siddique  
43 North Broadway Avenue  
Sylacauga, AL 35150  
256-513-7070

## **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA) NOTIFICATION**

### **DESCRIPTION OF INTENT**

The school follows a philosophy of continuous improvement and honest, objective data analysis. This philosophy requires well-planned and sometimes independent research efforts to determine the effectiveness of the school's programs and strategies. From time to time, the school will collect and analyze student performance data and various measures of effectiveness. Families may also be asked to participate in surveys or focus groups. Such research shall always be undertaken ensuring student privacy is protected and in compliance with the PPRA. For example, the names of the student, parent, and family members will not be revealed, and results will only be reported in the aggregate or by sub-groupings of sufficient size so that anonymity of the participants is safeguarded.

### **RIGHTS AFFORDED BY THE PPRA**

The PPRA affords parents of minors' certain rights regarding the school's conduct of surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and conduct of certain physical exams. These rights include the following:

The right to provide consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more protected areas ("Protected Information Survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education. Protected areas include the following:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or clergy
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent

8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

The right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt out of the following:

1. Any other Protected Information Survey, regardless of funding
2. Any nonemergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law
3. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others

The right to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, of the following:

1. Protected Information Surveys of students
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

### **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

The school will work to develop and adopt policies regarding these rights in consultation with parents. The school will also work to protect student privacy in the administration of Protected Information Surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

The school will directly notify the parents of these policies annually in this PPRA Notice or after any substantive changes. The school will also directly notify by U.S. mail, e-mail, or other reasonably available method, the parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys described in this PPRA Notice and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt students out of participation in the specific activity or survey. The school will notify parents near the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, the parents will be provided with reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys covered by the PPRA and will be provided with an opportunity to opt for their students out of such activities and surveys. The parents will also be provided with an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution
- administration of any Protected Information Survey funded in whole or in part by U.S. Department of Education
- any nonemergency, invasive physical examination, or screening as described above in the Rights Afforded by the PPRA where a student is scheduled to participate in these activities, the student will be notified as described above.

### **REPORTING A VIOLATION**

The parent/or student who believes his/her rights have been violated may file a complaint with the following:

Student Privacy Policy Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Inquiries concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and ADA may be referred to:

State Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights Coordinator  
Contact Information TBD

OR

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1100

## **TECHNOLOGY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of the overall curriculum of the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga. Each family will be required to have a computer system that meets the minimum specifications necessary to access the online platforms. Many mobile devices such as tablets and phones are not fully compatible because they do not support all the necessary software products. In certain cases, based on their financial situation, a family may be eligible for a computer loaner. Families who would like to apply for a loaner computer should first submit the household income form via the Parent Dashboard/Portal, then the guardian should submit the computer application. The administration will review applications and consider the financial situation. Lack of computer access will not be a viable excuse for absence.

This policy applies to both school issued devices as well as privately-owned devices accessing the school domain/network. Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga will not be liable for the communication sent via personal devices. The school will, from time to time, make determinations on whether specific uses of technology are consistent with program policies for students and employees. The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga always reserves the right to monitor and log technology use, monitor cloud storage utilization by users, and examine specific network usage (as may be deemed necessary) for maintenance, safety, or security of the technology resources or the safety of the user. It is the policy of the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga to:

- Prevent users from accessing or transmitting access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via the Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications,
- Prevent unauthorized access, other unlawful online activity, and damage to program resources.
- Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and
- Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Publ. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].
- Provide students with resources to help them make sound decisions regarding appropriate behavior and conduct online. We encourage you to study the International Society for Technology in Education Standards at <https://www.iste.org/standards/for-students>

### **ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

To the extent practicable, technology protection measures are used to block or filter internet access to or other forms of electronic communications containing inappropriate information. Filtering and maintenance, or blocking, is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene, child pornography,

or any material deemed harmful to minors, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The filter serves to block minors from accessing inappropriate matters on the Internet and the world wide web.

The installation of technology protection measures at the time of computer provisioning is mandatory, and the internet filter will be set at a level determined by the school. Thereafter, the Guardian will be responsible for monitoring computer usage to comply with school policies and the Children's Internet Protection Act. The technology protection measures may be disabled only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes as approved by the administration. Additionally, it shall be the responsibility of all members of the school staff to supervise and monitor the usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet and ensure that the same is in accordance with this policy, including any e-mails, chat room discussions, electronic communications, and webcam usage.

By using the filter program, as well as monitoring student use, the school is attempting to provide a safe and secure medium by which students can use the Internet, the world wide web, electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. To the extent practicable, steps are taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga. Other inappropriate network usages the school intends to eliminate include:

- Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking' and other unlawful activities; and
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

By signing the Parent/Student Handbook agreement, the Parent and Student agree:

- To abide by all The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga policies relating to the use of technology.
- To release all The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga employees from all claims of any nature arising from the use or inability to use the technology.
- That the use of technology is a privilege and
- That use of technology will be monitored, and there is no expectation of privacy whatsoever in any use of the technology.

The Parent/student further agrees and understands that the user may have his/her privileges revoked or other disciplinary actions taken against them for actions and/or misuse such as, but not limited to, the following.

- Altering system technology, including but not limited to software or hardware.
- Placing unauthorized information, computer viruses, or harmful programs on or through the computer system in either public or private files or messages.
- Obtaining, viewing, downloading, transmitting, disseminating, or otherwise gaining access to or disclosing materials the school believes may be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, abusive, or otherwise objectionable.
- Using technology resources for commercial, political, or other unauthorized purposes since the school technology resources are intended only for educational use.
- Intentionally seeking information on, obtaining copies of, or modifying files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.
- Disrupting technology through abuse of technology, including, but not limited to, hardware or software.
- Malicious uses of technology through hate mail, harassment, profanity, vulgar statements, or discriminating remarks; Interfering with others' use of technology.
- Installation of software without the consent of Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga.
- Allowing anyone else to use an account other than the account holder.
- Sending unsolicited mail messages, including the sending of "junk mail" or other advertising

material to individuals who did not specifically request such material ("e-mail spam").

- Creating or forwarding "chain letters" or other "pyramid schemes" of any type, whether or not the recipient wishes to receive such mailings.
- Malicious e-mail including, but is not limited to, "mail bombing" (flooding a user or site with very large or numerous pieces of e-mail).
- Unauthorized use, or forging, of mail header information.
- Using The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga or a client account to collect replies to messages sent from another school account and
- Use of program-owned hardware for commercial or for-profit purposes.
- Use of program-owned hardware for product advertisement or political lobbying
- Other unlawful or inappropriate behavior.

The user also acknowledges and agrees that he/she is solely responsible for the use of his/her accounts, passwords, and/or access privileges and that misuse of such may result in appropriate disciplinary actions (including but not limited to suspension or expulsion), loss of access privileges, and/or appropriate legal action. The user must also know and further agree with that:

- Should the user transfer a file, shareware, or software that infects the technology resources with a virus and causes damage, the user will be liable for any and all repair costs.
- The user will be liable to pay the cost or fee of any file, shareware, or software transferred or downloaded, whether intentionally or accidentally.
- Should the user intentionally destroy information or equipment that causes damage to technology resources, the user(s) will be liable for all costs and
- Violation of this internet safety policy is also a violation of The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga Code of Conduct and may result in any other scholastic disciplinary action other than those specifically set forth above, including but not limited to suspension or expulsion.

## **SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USING PROGRAM-PROVIDED COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga offers access to live web conferencing sessions, webcams, discussion boards, collaborative documents, IT Support live chat, and e-mail to provide parents and students access to instruction and a forum to communicate. All live web conference sessions and network e-mails are monitored and recorded to protect all participants. The Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga does not discourage criticism or healthy disagreements; however, the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga does expect each web conference session and e-mail participant to act civilly throughout such conversations and will not tolerate vulgarity, name-calling, or attacks upon other participants in any way. These expectations also apply to interactions with IT Support team members.

Suppose for any reason, the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga does not believe that a Student/Parent or Guardian is acting in a manner that will enhance or support the mission of the school. In that case, it reserves the right to remove that person from the network (except for access to his/her teacher and course materials) in accordance with the penalty provisions provided below. Specifically, the School's in-home computers and internet connection should not be used for any of the following purposes, and acting appropriately does not include:

- Making statements that are sexually explicit or grossly offensive, including blatant expression of bigotry, racism, hatred, or profanity.
- Indulging in abusive, defamatory, or harassing behavior; insults or personal attacks; threats of harm to anyone; promoting physical harm or injury to any group or individual.
- Promoting or providing information about illegal activities.
- Indulging in activities that infringe upon anyone else's copyright(s). Specifically, he/she cannot advocate illegal conduct or participate in illegal or fraudulent schemes.

- Using chat rooms to distribute unauthorized copies of copyrighted materials, including photographs, work, text, recordings, designs, or computer programs.
- Impersonating someone else or falsely representing oneself.
- Attempting to post or use computer programs that contain destructive features including, but not limited to, viruses, worms, trojan horses, bot scripts, etc.
- Posting or transmitting unauthorized or unsolicited advertising, promotional materials, or any other forms of solicitation of other users; and
- Any other chat room behavior that, at the Administrator's sole discretion, does not support the school's mission.

While this is not a complete listing of every behavior that may be inappropriate, it gives some guidance regarding the types of actions and communications that are prohibited.

### **INAPPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY USE PENALTY SYSTEM**

Violation of the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga's Acceptable Use Policy may result in a warning, temporary, or permanent ban from the live web conferencing sessions, webcam, discussion boards, collaborative documents, and or/e-mail, depending on the severity of the infraction. The length of any temporary ban shall be at the Administrator's sole discretion. Student access to content and instruction will not be impacted.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA/COLLABORATIVE CONTENT TOOLS**

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga may provide users with access to websites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing, and messaging among users. Users are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, using appropriate, safe, and mindful language. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging may be monitored by staff. Users should be careful not to share personal information in an online forum.

Violation of the Alabama Virtual Classical Academy at Sylacauga's live web conference sessions, e-mail, or webcam policy may result in a warning, temporary, or permanent ban from the live web conferencing sessions, webcam, discussion boards, collaborative documents, and or/e-mail, depending on the severity of the infraction. The length of any temporary ban shall be at the Administrator's sole discretion. Student access to content and instruction will not be impacted.

### **STUDENT MISUSE**

In addition to the penalties above, students who violate any policy may be suspended or expelled in accordance with live web conferencing sessions, webcams, discussion boards, collaborative documents, and e-mail Code of Conduct.

### **LOST, STOLEN, OR DAMAGED DEVICES**

Students are responsible for the device at all times. Any device that is misplaced or lost will attempt to be recovered. Students are ultimately responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Guardians may be invoiced for any lost, stolen, or damaged device or associated components unless theft has been determined.

### **REPAIRING DEVICES**

All repairs, inspections, and equipment replacements MUST be made through IT Support. Do not attempt to remove or change the physical structure of the device, including the keys, screen, casing, etc. Doing so may result in guardians being responsible for the cost of repair or replacement.

### **SCHOOL-LOANED PROPERTY**

- Computer and Charging Cord
- Special Education Assistive Technology

### **RETRIEVAL OF SCHOOL-ISSUED COMPUTERS**

Consistent with established educational policies enacted by School Boards throughout the United States, the School seeks to protect its property and usage interests through the following policies. Please note that as part of the handbook acknowledgment, the parent and/or student also consent to the fact that student computers may be activated with geolocation features to assist in the retrieval/recovery of school-issued computers.

Tech Support representatives will contact a parent to commence computer recovery when any of the following occur:

- A Parent's written notice of the intent to withdraw has been received.
- The school withdraws students for lack of engagement or non-attendance.
- A replacement is required due to a technical issue.
- A student graduate from the school; or
- A student is expelled.

When any of the above incidents occur, the Parent/Student will be contacted by the school's fulfillment vendor, who will provide details on how to return the loaned equipment. Parents/Students contacted by the vendor multiple times within a 30-45 day reclamation period and failing to return the equipment will be escalated into Tier II and Tier III reclamation efforts, which may include charges, credit complaints, or criminal filings.

### **VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL**

The school's property is the textbooks, computers, software, hardware, and other materials loaned to the parent and/or Student. No student and/or Parent has any right to the same except for usage in accordance with the school's educational model, Code of Conduct, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. Students and Parents are responsible for the textbooks, computers, software, hardware, and other materials loaned to the parent and/or Student within their possession from the moment of receipt until all items have been officially returned to the school. Parents must return the materials and property if their child or children withdraw from the program or are expelled.

All students will be loaned various equipment, supplies, and services from the school, which has been determined to be necessary to ensure the functionality and connectivity of the educational program. Materials and property must be used solely in connection with the education services provided by the school.

### **ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIGITAL DEVICE POLICY FOR ACAP TESTING**

Students shall not possess any digital device within the testing space when participating in ACAP testing. The possession of a digital device by students participating in ACAP testing is strictly prohibited during the administration of a test. The ONLY exception to this policy is for students who have been pre-approved by the Building Test Coordinator or the Principal to have a digital device that is necessary for the health and/or well-being of the student.

For this policy, digital devices are defined to include anything that can capture, store, relay, or receive electronic information. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: laptops, smart phones, smart watches, fitness trackers, MP3 players, and tablets.

If students are in **possession** of a digital device, whether powered on or off, during the administration

of an ACAP test, the device will be confiscated, and the student's test will be invalidated. If the appropriate administrator determines there is reasonable suspicion that the device was used to capture, record, share test information or to facilitate cheating on the assessment, the device will be subject to search pursuant to LEA policy for any information directly related to the assessment being administered. Violation(s) may result in disciplinary action by the LEA in accordance with the LEA's disciplinary policy.