



# Student Handbook

School Year 2025-2026

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## INTRODUCTION

### FOREWORD

We are so excited to have you join us on this incredible learning adventure! Whether you're a seasoned virtual learner or this is your first year, this handbook is your guide to navigating the virtual school world. Inside these pages, you'll discover helpful tips and important information to make your virtual learning experience the best it can be. Please take time to become familiar with the information within the pages to follow. If you have questions not addressed in the handbook, you are encouraged to reach out to one of our staff members. Remember virtual school is all about flexibility, creativity, and embracing new opportunities.

### MISSION

The mission of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is to reach all students with an individualized, college and career-focused education in a learning environment rooted in rigor, innovation, and peer interaction. We are dedicated to academic excellence that empowers and prepares students for a world of opportunity.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona does not discriminate in enrollment based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, economic status, or sexual orientation. Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona serves students with disabilities and English Learners and provides services to students as required by state and federal law. In most cases, the services required by a student with disabilities can be provided at the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. In some cases, a student's needs require that they be placed at a different program or location as determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 team.



## APPLICATION - REGISTRATION – ADMISSION

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is an online public school recognized by the state of Arizona for grades Kindergarten through Tenth. Admission is open to students statewide. Submission of an application within the online enrollment portal represents the first step in a multi-step process. Submission of an application does not guarantee enrollment. Along with application, the Parent or Guardian will submit copies of the student's:

- Birth Certificate/Proof of Identity
- Proof of Residence

After applying, all required documents must be uploaded via the online enrollment portal (<https://arizona.virtualpreparatoryacademy.com/admissions/>) within 30 days. For assistance with uploading documents, please call 480-716-4837 or email [enrollment@vprepaz.org](mailto:enrollment@vprepaz.org), or fax to 480-716-3177. Once they are received and accepted, you will receive notification of your student's official enrollment.

As part of the enrollment process, additional documentation may be submitted to the Registrar's office. Some of this will be requested from your previous school. This documentation can include but is not limited to:

- Notice of Pupil Withdrawal from the previous school
- Report Card/Transcript
- IEPs, if applicable
- Immunization record (or exemption/waiver)

## ANNUALLY REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

After initial enrollment, each year for continued enrollment there are yearly documents to be completed and submitted by parents or guardians. Among the required documents include:

- Parent/Student Handbook & Agreement
- Household Income Verification Form
- Emergency Medical Authorization
- FTE Form
- Proof of Residency

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, OR CUSTODY

Parents/Guardians/Students are responsible for informing the school of any change of address, phone number, or custody along with the proper documentation. If you have a change of address, proof of residency is required to be submitted to the school office by email. If there is a change of custody for the student, the current custody order is required to be submitted to the school office.

## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Both parent and student are required to sign the Handbook Agreement Form and submit it at the time of admission and then annually while enrolled at the school. The signed Handbook Agreement Form expresses acceptance of policies and is kept in the student's cumulative file.

## AGE REQUIREMENTS

Students must reside in the state of Arizona to be eligible for enrollment. Age eligibility is as follows:  
Must be age 5 by September 1 of the current school year.

## DENIAL OF ADMISSIONS

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona honors all other school's disciplinary procedures as well as the Arizona Revised Statutes option of not enrolling a student who was expelled or who was in the process of being expelled. (ARS 15-841) Students who transfer during the school year will have all prior behavioral records requested to ensure that we honor both the other schools and the current statute.

## STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

### BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona expects positive behavior from all students, teachers, staff, and parents. Effective learning occurs with an approach to student behavior that stresses self-discipline, consistent with the maturity level of the students. Discipline, which reflects the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's policy of non-violence, exists to promote an atmosphere favorable to concentration, attention, and creativity. In addition, discipline is a positive attempt to help all students realize that they are important, worthwhile, and capable of learning. In classroom management, teachers shall be fair, firm, consistent, and impartial, displaying sensitivity to the needs of the individual child.

The following are the main ideas essential to the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's discipline system. Students will be successful by:

- Knowing and obeying the rules,
- Accepting responsibility for their behavior, and
- Engaging in their learning daily.

***The code below applies to student conduct on school property, on live web conferencing, and while in control or custody of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, regardless of whether on or off school premises or at a school-related activity. The types of conduct prohibited by this code are listed below.***

Students and parents shall be provided annually (at the beginning of the school year or upon entering the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona) written information on the rules and regulations to which students are subject while in the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona and participating in any school-related activity or event. The information provided shall include the types of misconduct for which a student is subject to suspension or expulsion from the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona or other forms of disciplinary action. The Board directs the administration to make all students aware of this student Code of Conduct and that any violations of the student code of conduct are punishable.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

To maximize student learning for all students, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will provide a virtual school environment that promotes appropriate behavior and minimizes disruptions. The Board believes that the best discipline is self-imposed and that students should learn to assume responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their actions. All students are expected to have a clear and consistent understanding of the Student Code of Conduct and comply with all School policies and procedures.

The Code of Conduct requires students to:

- conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior;
- respect the person and property of others;
- respect the rights of others;
- preserve the degree of order necessary to the educational program in which they are engaged, and
- comply with the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, Head of Schools, teachers, and staff requests.

The Code of Conduct designates sanctions for student noncompliance with the code, which shall:

- relate in kind and degree to the noncompliance;
- help the student learn to take responsibility for their actions; and
- be directed, where possible, to reduce the effects of any harm which the student's misconduct may have caused.

Before being enrolled and as a condition of enrollment, parents and students must:

- Acknowledge receipt of the Code of Conduct; and
- Agree to comply with all expectations and procedures contained therein.

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona does not discriminate based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, economic status, or sexual orientation in its discipline policy and practices.

The Code of Conduct applies to any conduct that occurs on or off the school property and at any Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona activity, function, or event or during travel to or from said activity, function, or event.

The Code of Conduct also applies to conduct that occurs via the Internet if it is directed at School students, officials, or personnel or to the extent it affects the learning environment. The following infractions are examples of prohibited behavior and will be subject to consequences, including but not limited to potential suspension or expulsion. The list of infractions is not intended to be exhaustive, and every incident will be evaluated individually. If a student leaves Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona for any reason, whether through voluntary withdrawal, engagement/attendance based withdraw, or expulsion, he/she must return all school property including, but not limited to, the computer, hardware, software, textbooks, workbooks, and other materials and supplies loaned by the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona or its Management Company. In addition to the consequences enforced by the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, law enforcement will be contacted in instances where criminal acts are committed:

- Cheating –to act dishonestly; copying or using someone else's work.
- Plagiarism –to use another's work without proper citation; to pass off another's work as your own.
- Insubordination –not accepting directions; refusing to cooperate with school employees, agents, and/or other representatives.
- Theft –to take the property of another without right or permission.
- Fighting –to participate in physical contact with one or more students, faculty, or staff of Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona or any other person with the intent to injure.
- Possession or intake of a controlled substance or alcohol.
- Vandalism –purposeful destruction, misuse, or defacing of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's property or other's personal property (including the computer) and/or hardware on loan to the student.

- Profane/obscene language or gestures toward students/staff/teacher/others –inappropriate, disrespectful words, terms, or gestures intended to embarrass or insult.
- Inappropriate use of internet access, as detailed later in this Handbook.
- Wrongful conduct –any action or inaction not explicitly referenced in the listing above that, in the opinion of the Superintendent, impedes, obstructs, interferes, or violates the mission; philosophy, policies, procedures, rules, and/or regulations of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona and/or is disrespectful, harmful, or offensive to others or property.
- Intimidation/interference/hazing of student or staff –threatening to physically or verbally harm, interfere, or degrade another student or staff.
- False alarms/bomb threat –purposefully engaging in a false alarm.
- Use/possession/sale/transmission/concealment of any drug, look-alike drug, or other illegal or controlled substance (other than tobacco or alcohol).
- Use/possession/sale/transmission of tobacco of any kind, as well as vaporizers and e-cigarettes.
- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of a firearm (or look like firearm) –a firearm is any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; or possession of a 'weapon' may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.
- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of a dangerous weapon (or look-alike) other than a firearm of explosive, incendiary, or poison gas –a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.
- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas and any destructive device (or look-alike), which includes a bomb, a grenade, or a rocket.
- Unwelcome sexual conduct –unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct, or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment, i.e., pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, gestures, jokes, or pressure to engage in sexual activity.
- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior (including by an electronic act) as defined herein and in the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona’s Policy on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying.
- Gang involvement –participation in gang-related actions, dress, and/or activities; and
- Abuse or misuse of any school property or materials.

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS

Students are supported by Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), an approach to discipline that targets desired outcomes with teachable moments and prevention of poor choices rather than focusing on punitive measures and reactive punishment. The research-based PBIS model teaches positive behavior choices alongside and embedded within Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons to ensure that students understand behavioral expectations. Once this is taught, student behavior is also seen as a form of communication, and teachers strive to see through the behavior to see what the student might need and offer proactive support and guidance. Student Success Plans are created with the goal of both behavioral and academic success, and intervention strategies are tiered based on a multi-tiered level of support system.

## STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS

The Student Success Plan is an essential part of the Student Services model. The success plan outlines the individual student's needs and specific actions for a student to become successful with the goal of academic achievement. Student Services, teachers, students, and learning coaches develop the Student

Success Plan together. The assigned Student Services team member facilitates the process, monitors the plan, and provides ongoing follow-up.

## ACADEMICS

### GRADES

**Grades Kindergarten through Five use the following grading system:** Virtual Prep Academy of Arizona utilizes an internal standards-based grading approach to assess student learning and progress. This grading system focuses on the mastery of specific learning standards or objectives, providing a more comprehensive understanding of each student's academic proficiency.

In standards-based grading, students are assessed based on their demonstration of learning against predetermined performance descriptors. These descriptors represent various levels of proficiency and are used to communicate a student's progress in mastering the learning standards. To ensure VPA-AZ students are still completing their online assignments, teachers will also use a traditional external grading scale to help parents track student progress within the Canvas Learning Dashboard.

#### Performance Descriptors:

Internal Standards Based Grading Scale	Traditional External Grading Scale
A= Advanced: Student exceeds grade-level expectations and demonstrates a deep understanding and application of the learning standards.	<b>A = 90% - 100%</b> <b>B = 80% - 89%</b> <b>C = 70% - 79%</b> <b>D = 65% - 69%</b> <b>F = 64% and below</b> Pass= Satisfactory progress Fail= Unsatisfactory progress
P= Proficient: Student demonstrates mastery of the learning standards and meets grade-level expectations.	
B= Basic: Student is progressing towards proficiency but may still require additional support or practice to fully master the standards.	
BB= Below Basic: Student is beginning to understand and apply the learning standards but has not yet reached proficiency.	

Students' performance is assessed using a variety of methods, including tests, projects, homework assignments, and classroom participation. Each teacher may emphasize different aspects of these assessments based on the specific learning objectives and instructional strategies used in the classroom.

**Pass/Fail Grades:** For elective courses grades Kindergarten through Eight, students will receive Satisfactory progress/Unsatisfactory progress grades to indicate their achievement in the course.

**Grades Six through Twelve use the following grading system:** The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 on assessment results, homework, projects, and classroom participation. Each teacher may place a different emphasis on these areas in determining a grade and will 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.

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona uses the following grading system for grades 6-12:

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
59% and below	F

**Credit Recovery:** Students that need to retake a class will be given the opportunity to earn the credit through a credit recovery asynchronous course that will be available at different times of the school year. These classes will be in addition to the courses they are regularly taking.

## GRADING PERIODS

Progress reports will be provided at the end of each quarter. Progress report grades are not final but are a snapshot in time. A report card will be issued at the end of each semester.

## PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION

Promotion to the next grade (or level) is based on the following criteria for grades K-8:

1. current level of achievement
2. potential for success at the next level
3. emotional, physical, and/or social maturity
4. passing grades for each semester in ELA and Math as a minimum

High school students are automatically promoted to the next grade regardless of credits earned, however, to be on track for graduation students must earn at least 6 credits each year.

## THIRD GRADE RETENTION: ARIZONA'S MOVE ON WHEN READING

Arizona's Move on When Reading policy is designed to provide students with evidence-based, effective reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade to position them for success as they progress through school, college, and career. The legislation in A.R.S §15-701, A.R.S §15-704, and A.R.S §15-211 explains the requirements for pupil promotion, early literacy instruction, and accountability for student achievement in reading.

A.R.S. 15-701 requires that an Arizona student not be promoted from the third grade if the student scores far below the third-grade level on the AASA statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

1. Is an English Language Learner (ELL) who has received less than two years of English instruction.
2. Has a disability, and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate, or the student is in the process of being evaluated for an IEP.
3. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment (including dyslexia).
4. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of assessments approved by the State Board of Education.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Arizona State Board of Education establishes the requirements for graduation from high school. The minimum course of study and competency requirements are outlined in Title 7 Chapter 2 of The Administrative Code. The minimum course study State Board Rule is R7-2-302.

The table below summarizes the **minimum** credit requirements for high school graduation in Arizona, starting with the graduation class of 2017. Please note that school districts and charter schools may, at their discretion, establish additional graduation credit requirements for their students. Students will meet with their counselor several times a year to discuss their individual graduation plan.

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
English or English as a Second Language	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits
Science	3 credits
History & Social Science	3 credits
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1 credit
Locally Prescribed Courses	7 credits

### **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY**

As a statewide virtual school, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is required to monitor student progress and attendance. Attendance is the responsibility of the students and Parents/Guardians. Students may fail classes, or promotions may be withheld if this requirement is not met.

Daily attendance is tracked via a combination of the following: offline time submissions submitted by Parents/Guardians, online activity reports automatically generated by the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona’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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. Any student who has not logged into the system and completed coursework or assessments on a given day will be marked absent.

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona reports daily attendance to the Arizona Department of Education beginning the first day of school for each student. This means your child must "attend" school a specific number of hours per week. Students in Grades K - 3 are required to attend 20 hours (roughly 4 hours per day) and lesson completion per week, while students in Grades 4 - 12 are required to attend 25 hours (roughly 5 hours per day) and lesson completion per week. Ten hours per day is the maximum number of hours allowed to be recorded. The school week runs from Sunday to Saturday. Lack of attendance and/or lesson completion can demonstrate truancy. A student may be withdrawn if they lack attendance for 10 percent of the annual instructional time. It is recommended that parents log other educational times in their offline time tracker each day to allow for other time beyond the normal school activities.

<b>Cumulative Full Day Absences</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Procedure</b>
<b>3 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email from office</li> </ul>
<b>5 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email from office</li> <li>• Phone call from office</li> </ul>
<b>7 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truancy warning email from office with cc to success coach</li> <li>• Success coach schedules truancy meeting* to implement success plan and schedules 1 week follow up call</li> </ul>

<b>9 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from success coach coordinator explaining escalation options if 10<sup>th</sup> day is reached</li> </ul>
<b>10 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from principal defining escalation consequence</li> </ul>
<b>Options for escalation</b> Tier 2 mandatory attendance, Truancy, DFS, Welfare Child Check, Withdrawal from VPA-AZ, Notify the District Attorney, Possible Retention (Notification by 3rd quarter)	

\*Failure to attend the scheduled conference may result in a withdrawal from Virtual Prep Academy due to habitual truancy.

<b>Consecutive Full Day Absences</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Procedure</b>
<b>3 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from Ops Manager</li> </ul>
<b>5 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from Success Coach with Success Plan implementation</li> </ul>
<b>7 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from Success Coach coordinator explaining escalation options if 10<sup>th</sup> day is reached</li> <li>• Truancy email</li> </ul>
<b>9 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call from principal defining escalation consequence</li> </ul>
<b>11 Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawal from VPA-AZ per state requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Options for escalation</b> Tier 2 mandatory attendance, Truancy, DFS, Welfare Child Check, Withdrawal from VPA-AZ, Notify the District Attorney, Possible Retention (Notification by 3rd quarter)	

## ABSENCE CLASSIFICATIONS AND ACTIONS

In a virtual model, attendance tracking must acknowledge the correlation and interplay between attendance and engagement. All student absences from Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will be classified as follows:

### Excused Absences

VPA-AZ follows the definition of excused absences outlined by the Arizona Department of Education. To report an absence, parents should email [attendance@vprepaz.org](mailto:attendance@vprepaz.org) within 24 hours with the date of absence and the reason for absence.

### Unexcused Absences

Any absence for reasons other than those listed under the excused absence.

### Excused from school attendance for religious purposes A.R.S. 15-806

A student may be excused from school attendance for religious purposes, including participation in religious exercises or religious instruction. These conditions shall include at least the following:

1. The person who has custody of the pupil has given written consent.
2. Any religious instruction or exercise takes place at a suitable place away from school property designated by the church or religious denomination, or group.

Note: Lack of internet access will be considered an unexcused absence, as guardians must ensure consistent internet access to students enrolled in the virtual program.

## TRUANCY

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona intends to work with families to ensure that they are supported and successful in our model. Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will make all possible attempts to contact students and families of students who are not regularly attending required live class sessions. Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will work with these students and their parents and/or guardians to provide the needed support to increase the opportunity for these students to be successful in our online model and to avoid disciplinary action. Families will be contacted for school interventions when a student does not actively participate in instructional activities on a consistent basis.

"Instructional activities" shall include instructional meetings with a teacher, completed assignments that are used to record a grade for a student that is factored into the student's grade for the semester during which the assignment is completed, testing and school-sanctioned field trips, and orientation.

It is unlawful for any child who is between six and sixteen years of age to fail to attend school during the hours Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is in session, unless either: A.R.S 15-803

1. The child is excused pursuant to section 15-802, subsection D or section 15-901, subsection A, paragraph 5, subdivision (c).
2. The child is accompanied by a parent, or a person authorized by a parent.
3. The child is provided with instruction in a homeschool.

Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the number of required attendance days prescribed in section 15-802, subsection B, paragraph 1.

"Habitually truant" means a truant child who is truant for at least five school days within a school year.

"Truant child" means a child who is between six and sixteen years of age and who is not in attendance at a public or private school during the hours that school is in session unless excused as provided by this section.

## ENGAGEMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The Student Success team provides timely coordination of support services to address the specific needs of each Student and foster positive academic outcomes. The assigned Student Success team members will continuously monitor student progress to evaluate and adapt a support plan as needed. Participation is required to ensure student success.

## SUPPORT LEVELS

Student Success staff, teachers, and administration will monitor attendance, course completion, assignment submission, and compliance with Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona and state assessment requirements to determine a student's engagement level. A four-tiered intervention system with increasing support will be utilized.

Level 1: General school-wide prevention and programming, including onboarding, homeroom support, live instructional sessions, and student group activities.

Level 2: Engagement or course progress concerns requires Student to receive additional support and progress monitoring through an intervention plan. During this period, the focus will remain on enhancing academic growth through increased contact with teachers and support staff, modification of learning

goals, and/or modification of the student learning plan. Student Success staff will work with a teacher to identify barriers interfering with Student's education, set specific goals, and create an action plan to provide additional support or accountability as needed. Individual check-ins and/or additional small group sessions may be required.

Level 3: All available resources and interventions have been exhausted for a student. Students are escalated to administration for the next steps, including possible transfer to another school program to address their individual needs more appropriately.

Level 4: Escalation to Administration. All available resources and interventions have been exhausted. The family is not compliant or is unengaged in the process.

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona leaders determine the course of action, which may include withdrawal from Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. Per A.R.S. §15-808 (G), if the academic achievement of a student declines while the student is participating in Arizona online instruction, the students' parents, teachers, and the principal or head of the school shall confer to evaluate whether the student should be allowed to continue to participate in Arizona online instruction.

Communication with parents or learning coach is an essential part of the online program. It is the policy of VPA-AZ that for a student to stay continuously enrolled, the parent or learning coach must respond to communications from the school. If they do not respond to staff members, there will be an escalation to administration to determine the next steps which may include withdrawal.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

All students are expected to continuously engage in instructional programming to be successful at Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. Daily course completion and live instructional session participation allow instructional staff insight into student development and academic support needs. Live sessions also allow students to participate in cooperative learning, ask questions and demonstrate academic growth. Regular completion of diagnostic, summative, and formative assessments is essential for promoting student development and instrumental for implementing targeted instructional techniques.

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona assesses student engagement levels via a combination of the following:

- Completion of course assignments
- Completion of local assessments
- Attendance in live instructional sessions
- Participation in state-mandated testing

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS**

It is critical for student success to complete course assignments and assessments regularly so teachers can 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 minimum expectations of course completion will be referred to the engagement intervention protocol.

## LOCAL ASSESSMENTS

All new students will be assessed for learning readiness using a computer-adaptive, nationally normed test. The results from this initial assessment will assist teachers in developing a personalized plan for each student using Arizona State Standards.

Once a student is enrolled and has finalized his/her personalized plan, the student will participate in a variety of performance assessments over time to monitor their progress and modify their academic program keeping them on track for academic success. These assessments include:

- Short Cycle Assessments
- Course-level Assessments
- Computer-adaptive Nationally Normed Assessments: The assessments are taken three times per school year by all students. Baselines (incoming assessment) are established in the first month of the school year. Once a baseline has been established, performance is also measured in the winter and spring.

Students shall be allowed to complete assessments within a reasonable time, consistent with 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 INSTRUCTION SESSIONS

The curriculum at Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is designed to provide flexibility to its students and allow them the opportunity to earn credit and complete assignments independently. However, students who attend and regularly participate in live class sessions are typically more successful than those 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 so that they can benefit from live discussion and collaborative work with students and teachers.

## STATE MANDATED TESTING

Arizona students are tested regularly by the state to assess their progress as they move through school. Students are required to attend all state testing. If a pupil fails to comply with the testing requirements and the school administers the tests pursuant to A.R.S. 15-808 to less than 95% of the pupils in the program, the pupil shall not be allowed to participate in the program.

Arizona Academic Standards Assessment (AASA) measures student achievement and growth according to Arizona Academic Standards. The summative assessments for Arizona students and assesses:

- Mathematics: Grades 3-8
- English Language Arts: Grades 3-8
- Science: Grades 5, 8, and 11

The high school achievement tests are from the ACT products.

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade- ACT Aspire
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade – ACT + Writing

Some students may additionally be required to participate in the following assessments:

#### English Language Proficiency

Grades K-12 are required for all non-English speaking students eligible to receive English Language Development (ELD) services.

#### Move on When Reading (MOWR)

As required by statute, every K-3 student must complete both screening, ongoing assessments, and progress monitoring for reading throughout the year. All K-3 students must participate in these during the testing windows. ARS § 15-704.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

### **SECTION 504**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 includes Section 504 to prevent discrimination based on a 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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)]. The Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act specify that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary, or postsecondary schooling. 'Disability' in this context refers to a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies, and diabetes; and learning problems. Once the need is determined, a 504 plan is constructed that details the modifications and accommodations that will be needed for the students to have an opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers within a general education environment. This plan is developed in conjunction with the parent or adult student and is reviewed annually by the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona leader or designee.

### **CHILD FIND POLICY**

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will follow the Child Find requirements of the state, as well as the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to provide any previous special education documentation during the enrollment process. VPA-AZ follows the required 45-day screening process to determine if a student may have special needs or additional resources.

Students may be referred for special education evaluation by their parent/guardians, teacher, or the Student Support Team (SST). The team, consisting of general education teachers, special education staff, and school leaders, will regularly review data on students that are not progressing as expected. The SST will consult with the parent/guardians and address struggling students' needs through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) process. The teacher will implement and document interventions and the student's responses to interventions. If a student is referred for an evaluation, the student's response to MTSS/RtII efforts is used as one data metric in the determination of special education eligibility. These interventions will not be used to delay or deny a

parent / guardian-requested special education evaluation. The team will verify that the struggling student has received appropriate instruction and that the student's difficulties are not related to Limited English Proficiency. Data related to academic achievement, behavior concerns, intervention results, and academic progress will also be reviewed by the team.

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will provide Child Find information to school staff, parents/guardians, and state and local organizations and agencies. These efforts will include compliance with the special education referral process, providing professional development to the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona staff and Student Support Team, participating in the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) process, including universal screening procedures, creating and maintaining written policies, and procedures related to Child Find, and involvement in public awareness activities related to Child Find of implementation of students enrolled in Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona.

Parents, guardians, relatives, and public and private agency employees 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona Superintendent.

## HOMELESS STUDENT POLICY

Children who meet the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided with free and appropriate public education in the same manner as all other students at the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. 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. Pursuant to the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona Enrollment Policy, any homeless child in the State of Arizona is eligible to attend the Virtual Preparatory Academy. No homeless student will be denied enrollment based on a lack of proof of residency. No governing board policy, administrative guidelines, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment attendance or school success of homeless children.

Homeless students will be provided services comparable to other students in the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, including transportation as needed, 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, or programs for gifts and talented students.

### McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program Overview

The Special Programs Manager shall serve as the local liaison for homeless children and youth. To the extent that the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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.

McKinney-Vento Coordinator  
Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona  
Nicole Gena  
ngena@accelschools.com

## 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school leader a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona leader 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona to amend a record should write to the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona Head of School, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed and specify why it should be changed. If Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona in an administrative, supervisory, academic, or support staff position, including but not limited to school employees (whether employed directly by the governing board or by a third party on behalf of the governing board); a member of the school law enforcement unit, which consists of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona Leader; a person with whom the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona has contracted to perform a special task (i.e. Attorney, auditor, outside consultant); a person serving on the governing board. A school leader 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's policy not to release personal information such as names, home addresses, 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona in writing that the Parent/Guardian or adult student permits the distribution of any personal information, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will not release the information. Directory information, 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).] A sample notice has been included at the end of this handbook that you may use for that purpose.

## AUDIO-VISUAL INFORMATION

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona recognizes the value of audio-visual and other electronic communication in providing our students with an effective education. In communicating school-related activities, opportunities exist to photograph and/or videotape students and their work in various activities. However, individual student records (academic or behavioral) will not be disclosed. Communications may include school newsletters, local newspapers, community access cable channels, school-sponsored web pages, marketing materials, and other publications. Highlighting the achievements and celebrating student successes 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona should you have any questions or concerns. You may also notify the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona in writing, preferably via email, if you prefer that we do not use your student's name, picture, and/or work product for presentations or other uses.

## **ANTI-HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING, and CYBERBULLYING POLICY**

It is the policy of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona that any form of Bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property, including, without limitation, at school-sponsored Events, or via electronic act (defined as an act committed using a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication devices) is expressly forbidden. Periodically, Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona shall review the policy and consult with parents, school employees, school volunteers, students, and community members regarding necessary revisions. A.R.S. 15-341

Students determined to have engaged in prohibited behaviors are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school. The school's commitment to addressing such prohibited behaviors, however, involves a multifaceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which students, faculty, or school personnel will not tolerate bullying.

It is imperative that bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met because the designation of such prohibited incidents carries special statutory obligations. However, misconduct by one student against another student, whether appropriately defined or not, will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

## DEFINITIONS

**Bullying:** Bullying may occur when a student or group of students engages in any form of behavior that includes such acts as intimidation and/or harassment that

- has the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm or damage to property,
- is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action, behavior, or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment in the form of physical or emotional harm,
- occurs when there is a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength, or
- may constitute a violation of the law.

Bullying of a student or group of students can be manifested through written, verbal, physical, or emotional means and may occur in a variety of ways including, but not limited to

- verbal, written/printed, or graphic exposure to derogatory comments, extortion, exploitation, name-calling, or rumor spreading either directly through another person or group or through cyberbullying,
- exposure to social exclusion or ostracism,
- physical contact including but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, or spitting, and
- damage to or theft of personal property.

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is, but is not limited to, any act of bullying committed by use of electronic technology or electronic communication devices, including telephonic devices, social networking, and other Internet communications, on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or other Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona -owned property, and by means of an individual's personal electronic media and equipment.

**Harassment:** Harassment is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that is disturbing or threatening to another student or group of students. Intentional behaviors that characterize harassment include, but are not limited to, stalking, hazing, social exclusion, name-calling, unwanted physical contact, and unwelcome verbal or written comments, photographs, and graphics. Harassment may be related to, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, national origin, language, socio-economic status, cognitive and physical abilities, cultural background, size, or personal appearance. Harassing behaviors can be direct or indirect by the use of social media.

**Intimidation:** Intimidation is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that places another student or group of students in fear of harm to a person or property. Intimidation can be manifested emotionally or physically, either directly or indirectly, and by the use of social media.

"Electronic communication" means the communication of any written, verbal, pictorial information, or video content by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a mobile or cellular telephone or other wireless telecommunication devices, or a computer; and

"Threatening behavior" means any pattern of behavior or isolated action, whether or not it is directed at another person, that a reasonable person would believe indicates potential for future harm to students, school personnel, or school property.

In evaluating whether conduct constitutes Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim and whether the victim's reaction was reasonable or foreseeable under the circumstances, and the perpetrator's motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred.

## TYPES OF CONDUCT

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying can include many different behaviors, including overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student or school personnel. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence and/or attacks.
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures.
- Extortion, damage, or stealing of money and/or possessions.
- Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
- Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others using information and communication technologies and other Web-based/online sites (also known as "cyberbullying"), such as the following:
  - Posting slurs on Web sites where students congregate or on Web logs (personal online journals or diaries).
  - Sending abusive or threatening instant messages or emails.
  - Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and post them online or sending them to third parties; and,
  - Using Web sites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students; and
  - Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.

## HAZING

Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will not tolerate hazing, the solicitation to engage in hazing, or aiding and abetting another person who is engaged in hazing. A.R.S. 15-2301

"Hazing" means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with other people, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

- The act was committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with an educational institution.
- The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm, or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm, or personal degradation.

"Organization" means an athletic team, association, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or similar group that is affiliated with an educational institution and whose membership consists primarily of students enrolled at that educational institution.

It is no defense to a violation of this policy if the victim consented or acquiesced to hazing. In accordance with the statute, violations of this policy do not include either of the following:

- Customary athletic events, contests, or competitions that are sponsored by an educational institution.
- Any activity or conduct that furthers the goals of a legitimate educational curriculum, a legitimate extracurricular program, or a legitimate military training program.

All students, teachers, and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy.

Students and others may report hazing to any professional staff member. Professional staff members must report the incident to the school principal in writing, with such details as may have been provided. A failure by a staff member to timely inform the principal of a hazing allegation or their observation of an incident of hazing may subject the staff member to disciplinary action. The staff members shall preserve the confidentiality of those involved, disclosing the incident only to the appropriate school leader or as otherwise required by law. Any instance of reported or observed hazing which includes possible child abuse or violations of statutes known to the staff member, shall be treated in accordance with statutory requirements and be reported to a law enforcement agency. Forms for submitting complaints are to be available to students and staff in the school offices.

Disposition of all reports/complaints shall be reported to the Head of School. The Head of School will determine if the policies of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona have been appropriately implemented and will make such reports and/or referrals to the Board as may be necessary.

All violations of this policy shall be treated according to the appropriate procedures and penalties provided for in Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona policies related to the conduct and discipline of students, staff, and others.

## REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING

Students are prohibited from bullying, harassment, or intimidation on school grounds, school property, at school-sponsored events and activities, and through the use of electronic technology or electronic communication equipment on school computers, networks, forums, or mailing lists.

Disciplinary action may result for bullying, harassment, or intimidation which occurs outside of the school and the school day when such acts result in a substantial physical, mental, or emotional negative effect on the victim while on school grounds, school property, or at school-sponsored events and activities, or when such act(s) interfere with the authority of the school system to maintain order. All suspected violations of the law will be reported to local law enforcement.

Students who believe they are experiencing being bullied, harassed, or intimidated or suspect another student is bullied, harassed, or intimidated should report their concern to any staff member of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. School personnel are to maintain appropriate confidentiality of the reported information. Reprisal by any student directed toward a student or employee related to the reporting of a case or a suspected case of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall not be tolerated, and the individual(s) will be subject to the disciplines set out in applicable Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona policies and administrative regulations.

Students found to be bullying, harassing, or intimidating others will be disciplined up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.

Knowingly submitting a false report shall subject the student to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion. Where disciplinary action is necessary relevant Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona policies shall be followed. Law enforcement authorities shall be notified any time Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona leaders have a reasonable belief that an incidence of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is a violation of the law.

## COMPLAINTS

### Written Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file reports regarding suspected Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific, including the person(s) involved, the number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or leader, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the principal for review and action in accordance with this policy.

### Verbal Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may make verbal complaints of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying by verbal report to a teacher, school leader, or other school personnel. Such verbal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying, including the person(s) involved, the number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or leader who receives a verbal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the above information. This report written by the school staff member and/or leader shall be promptly forwarded to the principal for review and action following this policy.

### Protection of Person Filing Complaint

Individuals who make complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and leader(s) who receive the complaint. The complaints shall be reviewed, and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student (s) alleged to have committed acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying. Reports of bullying should be kept confidential to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Family Education and Privacy Rights Act (FERPA) and to protect students who report incidents of bullying from retaliation.

### False Complaint

It is a violation of this policy and procedure to knowingly report false allegations of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying. People found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.

## SCHOOL PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Teachers and Other School Staff**

Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the principal and/or his/her designee of the event observed and shall promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying shall promptly notify the principal and/or his/her designee of such report(s). If the report is a written complaint, such a complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the principal or his/her designee. If the report is a verbal complaint by a student that a teacher or other professional employee receives, he or she shall prepare a written report of the verbal complaint, which shall be promptly forwarded (no later than the next school day) to the principal or his/her designee.

In addition to addressing written and verbal complaints, school personnel are encouraged to address the issue of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying in other interactions with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating, or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying."

### **Leader Responsibilities**

#### Investigation

The principal and or his/her designee shall be promptly notified of any written or verbal complaint of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying. Under the direction of the principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action, shall be included in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making a verbal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such a complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitations of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

#### Remedial Actions

Verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying shall result in an intervention by the principal or his/her designee that is intended to ensure the prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there

is no one prescribed response to verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying. While conduct that rises to the level of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying, as defined above, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such prohibited behaviors, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in and out-of-school suspension; or expulsion), is a matter for the professional discretion of the principal.

## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

### Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

If, after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying by a specific student are verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such a Student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.

### Reports on the victim and his/her parent or guardian

If, after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying against a specific student are verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying.

### Reporting of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyberbullying

The principal shall annually provide the president of the governing board a written summary of all reported incidents and report to the Arizona State Department of Education as required.

## TECHNOLOGY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's overall curriculum. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will offer each student a school-provided computer. If the school-provided computer is declined, this policy also applies to privately-owned devices accessing the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona domain/network. Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will not be liable for communication sent via personal devices. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will provide a computer that meets the requirements of the educational program and does not warrant that technology resources will meet any specific requirements that the student, or other users, may have or that it will be error-free or uninterrupted. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will, from time to time, make determinations on whether specific uses of technology are consistent with program policies for students and employees. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona to:

- Prevent users from accessing or transmitting access over their 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy. Thereafter, the guardian will be responsible for monitoring computer usage to comply with The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 staff monitoring student use, The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. Other inappropriate network usages Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 form, the Parent and Student agree:

- To abide by all The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona policies relating to the use of technology.
- To release all The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona believes may be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, abusive, or otherwise objectionable.
- Using technology resources for commercial, political, or other unauthorized purposes since The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona technology resources is 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 the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona.
- 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 materials to individuals who did not specifically request such material ("email spam").
- Creating or forwarding "chain letters" or other "pyramid schemes" of any type, whether the recipient wishes to receive such mailings.
- Malicious e-mail including, but not limited to, "mail bombing" (flooding a user or site with very large or numerous pieces of email).
- Unauthorized use, or forging, of mail header information.
- Using The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona or a client account to collect replies to messages sent from another The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 agrees 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona offers access to live web conferencing sessions, webcams, discussion boards, collaborative documents, IT Support live chat, and email 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of

Arizona does not discourage criticism or healthy disagreements; however, The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona does not believe that a Student/Parent, or Guardian is acting in a manner that will enhance or support the mission of the Virtual Preparatory Academy. 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona'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 which, at the principal's sole discretion, does not support the Virtual Preparatory Academy'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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona'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/email, depending on the severity of the infraction. The length of any temporary ban shall be at the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona leader's sole discretion. Student access to content and instruction will not be impacted. Students who continue to violate the school's acceptable use policy may face disciplinary actions of suspension or expulsion.

## SOCIAL MEDIA/COLLABORATIVE CONTENT TOOLS

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona’s live web conference sessions, email, 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/email, depending on the severity of the infraction. The length of any temporary ban shall be at the principal’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, webcam, discussion boards, collaborative documents, and email 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

Each Student enrolled in the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona may receive one computer. If you choose to waive your right to a school-provided computer, you will be asked to sign a Computer Waiver form at the time of enrollment. By signing this form, you indicate that you understand that the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is not in any way responsible for installing or maintaining any hardware, software, external connections, or peripheral equipment associated with this computer. Furthermore, you indicate that you understand that if your equipment becomes inoperable, there is a possibility that the school may not have a computer immediately available, in which case you accept the responsibility for finding a suitable or temporary solution until the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona can furnish a computer.

## RETRIEVAL OF SCHOOL-ISSUED COMPUTERS

Consistent with established educational policies enacted by School Boards throughout the United States, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 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 occurs:

- A Parent's written notice of the intent to withdraw has been received.
- The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona withdraws students for lack of engagement or non-attendance.

- A replacement is required due to a technical issue.
- A student graduates from the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona; or
- A student is expelled.

When any of the above incidents occur, the Parent/Student will be contacted by the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona’s fulfillment vendor, who will provide details on how to return the loaned equipment. Parents/Students who are contacted by the vendor multiple times within a 30–45-day reclamation period and fail 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 textbooks, computers, software, hardware, and other materials loaned to the parent and/or Student are the property of the Virtual Preparatory Academy. No student and/or Parent have any right to the same except for usage in accordance with the Virtual Preparatory Academy’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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona. 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona, 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona.

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

If a parent wishes to know the qualifications of their teachers, please request via email to Taylor Sorenson, operations manager, for a copy of their resume at [tsorensen@accelschools.com](mailto:tsorensen@accelschools.com).

## COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is committed to fostering and achieving student/ family satisfaction. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona does not discriminate against students in enrollment based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, economic status, or sexual orientation. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona strictly adheres to all non-discrimination and anti-harassment laws and does not tolerate acts of harassment.

The following procedure ensures that student/family grievances are addressed fairly by the appropriate people in a timely manner. Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona has designated several staff members as coordinators of non-discrimination and anti-harassment. The coordinators are responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with all non-discrimination and anti-harassing laws. The coordinators shall document all reports of discrimination or harassment and establish a protocol for recordkeeping.

Step 1: The student and parent(s), custodian(s), or legal guardian(s) should address in writing any concern or grievance to the Head of School. The Head of School will respond within ten (10) working days. If the concern or grievance is not resolved by the Head of School, the parent(s), custodian(s), or legal guardian(s) may request a meeting (via phone or in person) with the Head of School to discuss the concern or grievance. The meeting request must be in writing. The Head of School shall investigate and respond

within ten (10) working days. The Head of School contact information is in the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona handbook and is listed in the Help section of the Virtual Preparatory Academy's learning system.

Step 2: If the family's concern is not resolved at the meeting with the Head of School, the family may file a complaint with the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona Head of School.

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

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona does not discriminate in enrollment based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, economic status, or sexual orientation. 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona is committed to a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It is a violation of policy for any member of the school staff to harass students or for students to harass other students through conduct or communications (verbal, written, social media, or other electronic means) of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

## REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND SANCTIONS

Students should report all incidents of sexual harassment to a teacher, counselor, or principal and file a complaint through the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's complaint process addressing sex-based discrimination. All reports and indications from students, employees, and third parties must be forwarded to the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's Title IX Coordinator.

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will initiate and conduct an investigation in accordance with the appropriate procedures addressing sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment.

All matters involving sexual harassment reports must remain confidential to the extent possible. Doing so follows applicable law and policy and does not preclude the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona from responding effectively to harassment or preventing future harassment. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect the individual's academic or employment status, affect grades, or impact team or activity participation.

The school will take appropriate corrective action to make the harassed student whole by restoring lost educational opportunities, preventing harassment from recurring, or preventing retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

All students and employees will receive periodic training related to recognizing and preventing sexual harassment. Employees must receive additional periodic training related to handling reports of sexual harassment. Training materials are available to the public on the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's website.

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  
Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona  
Dr. Kayleen Marble  
kmarble@accelschools.com

## PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA) NOTIFICATION

### Description of Intent

The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona's programs and strategies. From time to time, the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona 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 the anonymity of the participants is safeguarded.

### Rights Afforded by the PPRA

The PPRA affords parents of minor's certain rights regarding the Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona'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 a student 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will work to develop and adopt policies regarding these rights in consultation with parents. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will also work to plan 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will directly notify the parents of these policies annually in this PPRA Notice or after any substantive changes. The Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona will also directly notify by U.S. mail, e-mail, or other reasonably available methods, 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 Virtual Preparatory Academy will make this notification to 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 parent will be provided with reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys covered by the PPRA and will be provided an opportunity to opt 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 the 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 to 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:

Arizona Attorney General's Office  
Civil Rights Division  
602-542-5263  
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

**Virtual Preparatory Academy of Arizona**  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

SIGNATURE PAGE 2025-2026

By signing this handbook, I am stating that I agree to abide by all VPA-AZ rules, policies, and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print) Student Name (Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) Parent/Guardian Name (Signed)