



Parent Student Handbook
2025-2026

Website: www.valcharter.info



Parent/Student Handbook

VIRTUAL ACADEMY OF LAFOURCHE

Main Office
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VIRTUAL ACADEMY OF LAFOURCHE CHARTER BOARD MEMBERS

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President

Shontell Terrebonne
Vice President

Bernita Deville
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Travis Toups
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Monique Pitre
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Donald Andras
Member

Michael Rieth
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Edmond Adams
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Holly Naquin
Office Manager

Holly Knight
IT Manager

E. Denise Gibson
Professional School Counselor

Misty Walker
Enrollment Coordinator

Elizabeth Verret
504/SBLC Coordinator

Buffy Kennedy
Special Education Coordinator

VIRTUAL ACADEMY OF LAFOURCHE SITE INFORMATION

St Mary Elementary Site (K-6)

509 E St Mary Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
Phone (985) 387-1792
Fax (985) 387-1786

Natalie Johnson, Site Manager

St Mary High Site (7-12)

509 B St Mary Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
Phone (985) 448-0620
Fax (985) 448-0623

Paul Nelson, Site Manager

Central Site

3737 Hwy 308 (Bldg 7)
Raceland, LA 70394
Phone (985) 538-0504

Monica Tausin, Site Manager

South Site

14669 East Main Street
Cut Off, LA 70345
Phone (985) 632-3169
Fax (985) 632-4384

Annette Fornies, Site Manager



MISSION

The mission of Virtual Academy of Lafourche is to provide a flexible and engaging educational environment that meets the needs of diverse learners with an emphasis on research based curriculum and data-driven instruction.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

Any student qualified to attend school in Lafourche Parish in the appropriate grade will be eligible to attend Virtual Academy of Lafourche. As a school of choice, Virtual Academy of Lafourche enrolls students from across the parish in grades K-12. Virtual Academy of Lafourche's admission policies preclude exclusion of pupils based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, and national origin, intelligence level as ascertained by an intelligence quotient examination or identification as a child with an exceptionality.

Virtual Academy of Lafourche will accept enrollment applications from eligible students who submit an application throughout the year, space permitting. Open enrollment begins during the month of March 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year. If the number of applicants does not exceed the space available, families will be notified by Virtual Academy of Lafourche to confirm their intent to enroll and complete the enrollment process in time to start school in the fall. Prior to the opening of school, families and enrolled students will be involved in a variety of introductions to the school and staff members.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

The school shall enroll all students eligible for admission to Virtual Academy of Lafourche under the provisions of the charter school proposal submitted to the School Board with Addenda. Enrollment shall be of students who reside in the jurisdiction of the School District, and who submit a timely application unless the total number of eligible applicants exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school. The total number of students in the school's approved charter is *five hundred (500) for the school year 2025 - 2026.

An application shall be timely if it is submitted within the period designated by School (March 1st to March 31st) which period shall not be less than one month or more than three months. Virtual Academy of Lafourche shall establish an application period for each successive school year. During the application period, Virtual Academy of Lafourche shall not admit any student but shall wait until the application period has ended.

If the total number of eligible applicants exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school, admission to the program, class, grade level, or school shall be based on an admissions lottery conducted from among the total number of eligible applicants done in such a fashion as to assure compliance with the provisions of LSA-R.S. 17:3991(B)(1). Should enrollment applications exceed the *five hundred (500) mark established in the charter application and students are selected by lottery, the following will apply; if one child in a family is selected in the lottery, all eligible siblings will also be enrolled in Virtual Academy of Lafourche. **Please note: These enrollment numbers are currently under review and may be adjusted.*

Virtual Academy of Lafourche may not enroll more than one hundred twenty percent of the total number of students which are approved in the charter without formally amending the Virtual Academy of Lafourche charter.

For the purpose of calculating the percentage of at-risk students, the at-risk percentage for the School System will reflect the current school year's at-risk population. R.S. 17:3991(B)(1)(a).

The percentage of the total number of students enrolled in Virtual Academy of Lafourche is based on the October first student membership who are at-risk shall be not less than eighty-five percent of the average percentage of students enrolled in the Lafourche Parish School System who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program.



The remaining number of students enrolled in Virtual Academy of Lafourche may be composed of students who are at-risk as otherwise provided in LSA-R.S. 17:3973(1).

Admission requirements that are consistent with the provisions of Virtual Academy of Lafourche approved charter and with the provisions of the Louisiana Charter Schools Demonstration Law and that are related directly to a charter school's role, scope, and mission shall be established by Virtual Academy of Lafourche. Such admission requirements and procedures shall be in the charter application and shall include a system for admission decisions that precludes exclusion of students based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, intelligence level as ascertained by an intelligence quotient examination, or identification as an exceptional student as defined in LSA-R.S. 17:1943(4). Such admission requirements may include specific requirements related to the Virtual Academy of Lafourche mission as a virtual school. Virtual Academy of Lafourche shall comply with all statutory mandates and other statutory requirements applicable to public schools with the same grades, public school officers and employees regarding the admission of home study students, LSA-R.S. 17:236.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Virtual Academy of Lafourche uses multiple online curricula approved by the charter board and by Virtual Academy of Lafourche that are aligned to Common Core Curriculum across all grade levels and subject areas. Online curriculum will be the cornerstone of instruction and be supplemented by materials chosen from various sources (websites, workbooks, state-approved textbooks, hands on activities, video clips, etc.) based on student need. Each student is assigned an educational consultant who will monitor student progress and chooses supplementary materials appropriate to the specific student need and will maintain communication with site managers, parents, and students relative to student academic progress. Each student will receive a custom designed learning plan based on the student's individual academic strengths and weaknesses, thus addressing at-risk students as well as gifted and talented students.

K-12 students will receive online instruction in required core and elective subjects as mandated by the Louisiana Department of Education. VAL will provide expanded course offerings to students that will relate to the students' personal needs and interests.

The VAL Leadership Team is responsible for organizing and implementing expanded academic programs. Students have access to all levels of coursework ranging from developmental through Advanced Placement.

VAL provides an Internet-based curriculum for grades K-12. These curricula are aligned to state and national standards, students will learn all the necessary skills to advance to the next grade. Quizzes and tests are graded automatically. Real time reports are available to parents, educational consultants, site managers, and administrators at any time.

Curriculum offerings include options to suit virtually any learning style, lifestyle, and any grade level from kindergarten through high school. Lesson levels may be adjusted based on the student's needs regardless of age or grade level.

Elementary Curriculum for grades K-8: Includes personalized, web-based lessons in language arts, math, science, social studies, and the arts, as well as hands-on projects and offline learning. Also included is access to custom courses in language arts, math, and Louisiana History. Students also have access to online typing lessons, reading comprehension lessons, and spelling lessons and games customized by their education consultant. Middle school students may schedule appropriate high school electives.

High School Curriculum for grades 9-12: Includes personalized, web-based lessons in the following areas: English 1, English 2, English 3, English 4, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, Physics, Pre-Calculus, Personal Finance, Trigonometry, Biology, Chemistry, Earth/Space Science, Health, Physical Science, Economics, US Government, US History 1, US History 2,



World Geography, World History, Advanced Placement courses, and career/technical courses. High school level online typing lessons and foreign language courses in five languages (Chinese, French, German, Latin, and Spanish) for grades K-12 are also available. High school students in their junior and/or senior years may participate in dual enrollment courses available at the Lafourche Parish Career Magnet Center or any local career and technical college, community college, or four year university.

Optional Programs: Includes Reading Enhancement for students needing extra help or remediation in reading, as well as additional high school electives and programs. The additional electives available are: Chorus, Instrumental Music, Drama, Computer Applications, Introduction to Art, Strategies for Academic Success, Health, Psychology, Sociology, Consumer Skills, Career Skills, Healthy Living, Foundations of Personal Wellness, Lifetime Fitness, Art History I, Computer Applications-Office 2007, Career Planning and Development. ACT and SAT prep courses are also available.

GRADING SCALE

Virtual Academy of Lafourche will use the statewide uniform 10 Point Grading Scale for all coursework.

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0
Uniform Grading Scale	

PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Virtual Academy of Lafourche students may choose to participate in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in their geographically designated Lafourche Parish Public School, including but not limited to clubs, organizations, middle school athletics (grades 7 and 8), etc., as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding developed with the Lafourche Parish School Board. Virtual Academy of Lafourche students will wear the designated school uniform in line with Lafourche Parish School System Student Code of Conduct when present on a school campus and Virtual Academy of Lafourche issued student identification tag. Students violating any rule or procedure enumerated in the Lafourche Parish School System Student Code of Conduct while participating in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activity will no longer be permitted to participate in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activity in any Lafourche Parish Public School.

Parents are required to provide transportation for their child to and from activities and must be prompt.



STUDENT ASSESSMENT

State mandated tests will be administered during scheduled testing windows. These include 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade LEAP Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies, Louisiana Alternate Assessment (LAA1), English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), Algebra I, Geometry, English, English II, English III, Biology, Civics, and American History, LEAP 2025 Exams, WorkKeys, CLEP, ACT and any additional tests mandated by the state.

ALL VAL students are required to take these LDOE mandated tests aligned with specific grade levels or associated coursework. **Students who are not compliant are subject to dismissal from Virtual Academy of Lafourche.** All promotional requirements set by state law will apply to all Virtual Academy of Lafourche students.

VALEDICTORIAN

A student must be enrolled at Virtual Academy of Lafourche as a student for the entire junior and senior years to be considered for Valedictorian. Class rankings are determined by quality points divided by credits attempted.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with state law, it is the responsibility of every parent, or legal guardian of a child attending school under the age of 18 to enforce the attendance of his or her child at the school to which the student is enrolled. Compulsory (mandatory) attendance laws and the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) regulations require students to be in attendance a minimum of 60,120 minutes per school year.

A student attending Virtual Academy of Lafourche would need to be in a school seat at minimum four (4) days a week at six (6) hours a day (total of 1,440 minutes) plus at minimum an additional 240 minutes (four (4) hours) of virtual work per week; or a total of 1,680 minutes of instruction per week in a manner approved by the site manager **and** school director.

All students attending Virtual Academy of Lafourche who have accumulated at a minimum of eight (8) unexcused absences shall be contacted by their educational consultant/school personnel/site manager by mail, email, or phone call and will be requested to attend a truancy meeting conducted by the site manager to discuss the aforementioned attendance requirements.

If a student exceeds fifteen (15) unexcused absences, the parent or legal guardian shall be contacted by their educational consultant/school personnel/site manager by mail, email, or phone call and will be requested to attend a truancy meeting conducted by the site manager to discuss the aforementioned attendance requirements. The parent/legal guardian, and the student will be informed of the possible consequences of accumulating more unexcused absences.

If a student exceeds twenty (20) unexcused absences, the parent or legal guardian and student will be requested to attend a truancy meeting conducted by the site manager and school director to discuss the aforementioned attendance requirements. Should the student not comply with the goals set in the truancy meeting, the parent/legal guardian and student may be referred to Truancy Court for further intervention or dismissed from Virtual Academy of Lafourche per charter attendance mandates.

***Note:** Parent excuses are used for a student to be eligible to receive credit and make up work following an absence within five (5) days of the student's return to school. Otherwise, parent excuses are considered unexcused relative to truancy requirements.

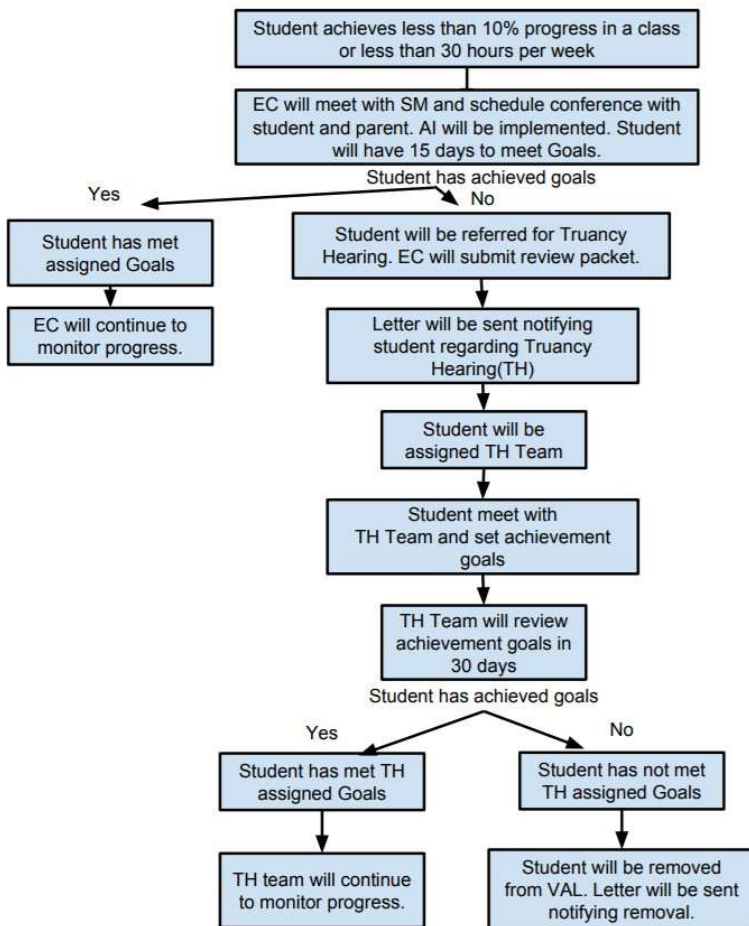


CONTACT INFORMATION

All parents are to keep their contact information updated. If there is a change in EMAIL, Home Phone Number, Cell Phone Number and or Address the parent is to immediately notify the school via email or through the update contact information link on the VAL website. At least one parent or guardian must have an up-to-date EMAIL address that will be checked weekly by a parent or guardian.

It is suggested that to limit the possibility of an EMAIL address change with internet services that they would utilize one of the EMAIL providers: yahoo.com or gmail.com. Instructions on how to get an EMAIL from these providers can be found on the VAL charter website.

INTERVENTION TIMELINE



- Intervention Timeline**
1. EC should be in weekly contact with student and Bi-weekly contact with parent. Using EMAIL, Program Messaging or SKYPE
 2. If during the first month it appears that the student is achieving less than 10% progress or less than 30 hours per week in any class will activate Academic Intervention (AI). This should occur no later than the end of the first month.
 3. The EC will meet with the Site Manager and begin process.
 4. The EC will meet with the student and parent within one week of AI activation and set academic goals.
 5. The EC will monitor progress and if it appears goals are not being met within 15 days the student will be referred to the Truancy Hearing Committee (TH)..
 6. The EC will prepare TH packet and submit it to the Truancy Hearing Committee.
 7. The parent and student will be notified of Truancy hearing within 15 days.
 8. The parent and student will meet with TH team and set achievable goals.
 9. If the student meets the goals the TH team will refer the student back to the EC to monitor progress.
 10. If the student doesn't meet the goals the student will be sent a letter of removal.

- TH Review Packet**
1. Progress Report Grades
 2. iREADY Evaluation and activities.
 3. Notes regarding student and parent contact.
 4. Previous RTI activity.
 5. Student Status (Reg, 504, 1508).



**Computer Requirements
For All
Virtual Academy of Lafourche Sites**

1. It is mandatory that students have their **own laptops and headphones** prior to attending VAL.
2. **Fully charged laptops**, chargers and headphones must be brought to school daily.
3. It is strongly recommended that the laptop is used exclusively for academic purposes.
4. When laptops are used for other purposes, like gaming or video storage, the memory is used up at a rapid rate and may hinder the progress of students.
5. A slow internet connection will affect the performance of multimedia elements found in all of our software courses.

Chromebooks, HP Streams and Tablets (iPad, Kindle) are not allowed.

When purchasing a laptop or using one you already have, please follow the requirements below:

Operating System - Either one of the following:
<input type="checkbox"/> Windows 11 (Not in S mode)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mac OS® v14 or higher
Processor - Any one of the following:
<input type="checkbox"/> AMD Ryzen 3 or higher
<input type="checkbox"/> Intel Core i3, i5, i7, i9 or i11
Memory
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 8 GB RAM
Hard Disk Space
<input type="checkbox"/> 250 GB or larger (Solid State is recommended)
Display
<input type="checkbox"/> Both touch screens and non-touch screens are allowed.
Touchpad
<input type="checkbox"/> If your child is not comfortable using the touchpad/mousepad, please provide an external mouse (wireless or USB).
Note:
Chromebooks, HP Streams and Tablets (iPad, Kindle) are not allowed. Chromebooks are not compatible with some of our online programs. The hard drive space is very small on a HP Stream. Some of our curriculum do not have apps available for tablets.

Rev. 2/10/2025



SPECIAL EDUCATION AND 504

Services are provided for individual accommodations per Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individual Accommodation Plans (504). Parents seeking initial evaluations must contact the Virtual Academy of Lafourche School Building Level Chairperson, Elizabeth Verret, at 985-446-2877 for information to begin the referral process.

PLAGIARISM FAQs

What is a definition of Plagiarism?

- To steal and pass off the ideas or words from another person's work as your own without crediting the source.
- To commit intellectual theft, which is presenting work as a new and original idea or product that comes from an existing source.

What does Plagiarism look like?

- Cheating, copying the work of another person or turning in someone else's paper, project, assignment, etc. as your own.
- Using another's words or ideas without proper citation.
- Rearranging or changing a few of the author or website's words and presenting it as your own work and NOT giving credit to the source.
- Having someone else write your paper, program, or project. This includes taking information word for word from the internet without proper citation.

Is it dishonest to utilize the internet to answer test questions without permission?

- Yes, it violates the concept of academic integrity to use any unauthorized source for answers on a quiz, exam, or test.

How do I avoid Plagiarism?

- If you are unsure, ask your teacher for help.
- Develop your own thoughts, ideas, and conclusions.
- Anytime you use someone else's language or ideas you should CITE it and give credit to the original author.
- Do not use a website or other source for answers without permission.

***Taken from the West Seattle High School website.

What are the consequences for committing Plagiarism?

- Parent/guardian will be contacted to discuss the violation.
- The student will receive a "0" for the original assignment.
- The student will complete an alternative assignment at the discretion of the teacher and/or site manager.
- Repeated violations will result in additional penalties including possible removal from VAL.



GUIDANCE; RE: LA. REV. STAT. 17:416.3

Virtual Academy of Lafourche is the lessee of any buildings, and property within the site building and any other area of any site or grounds set aside specifically for the personal use of students, therefore any expectation of privacy is not warranted. Students shall have no expectation of privacy in use of the sites which have been assigned to them. Any site manager or his/her designee may search any site building/property, desk, schoolbag, handbag, or site grounds for any evidence that state law, or school regulations have been violated; or when there is a reasonable belief that a violation has occurred.

Virtual Academy of Lafourche authorizes any site manager or his/her designee to search a student's person or his/her personal effects when, based on the attendant circumstances at the time of the search, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated the law or a school rule.

Items which are specifically prohibited by law or school regulations shall be immediately seized, and the site manager/designee shall within a reasonable amount of time contact the student's parent/guardian, appropriate law enforcement agency, and the director.

Any vehicle parked on Virtual Academy of Lafourche leased property by a student may be searched at any time by a site manager/designee when he/she has articulated facts which lead to a reasonable belief that weapons, dangerous substances or elements, illegal drugs, alcohol, stolen goods, or other materials or objects the possession of which is a violation of law or school regulations will be found.

Virtual Academy of Lafourche authorizes the use of metal detectors to minimize the presence of implements that may be used as weapons on sites or at school sponsored events. Searches with metal detectors may be performed by school personnel provided they are conducted without deliberate touching of the student. If a school administrator suspects the presence of firearms, weapons (defined as dangerous instrumentalities which in the manner used causes or may cause great bodily harm), controlled dangerous substances (drugs), stolen goods, or other materials or objects the possession of which is a violation of school regulations, specific searches with a metal detector of students or their personal effects within the perimeter of the suspicion may be conducted at any time.

Upon any such violation, the student shall be recommended for expulsion by the site manager, and investigative facts and or seized items immediately turned over to the proper law enforcement officials.

FERPA, FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

An Open letter to Parent/Guardian(s) or Eligible Student for pupils enrolled in the Virtual Academy of Lafourche.

Dear Parent/Guardian(s) or Eligible Student,

Notification of Rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for Elementary and Secondary Schools. FERPA affords parents/guardian(s) and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Educational records are those records, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution.



You should submit to the director or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The director will make arrangements for access and notify you 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 is inaccurate or misleading.

You may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by you the school will notify you of the decision and advise you of the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to you when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in 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 by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel), a person serving on the School Board, a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist), or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to have any or all student Directory Information withheld. To request Directory Information be withheld by you shall have thirty days in which to notify the school as to which specific types of information about the student shall not be included as directory information.

Directory Information has been designated by the Lafourche Parish School Board to include the student's name, address, date of birth, grade level, official activities, height and weight for sports, schools presently enrolled, honors received and student photograph.

Information classified as directory information may be disclosed to media sources, school web sites, nonprofit organizations, or private companies, etc.

Please note that the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002 requires the Lafourche Parish School Board System to: a) give military recruiters the same access to secondary students as provided to post-secondary institutions or to prospective employers and b) provides students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested unless you have opted out of providing such information.

5. The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) 20 U.S.C. 1232h requires the Lafourche Parish School Board to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas ("protected information survey"): a) Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; b)



Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; c) Sex behavior or attitudes; d) Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; e) Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships; f) Legally recognized privilege or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers; g.) Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or parents; or h.) Income (other than as required by law to determine program eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program). This requirement also applies to the collection disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and certain physical exams and screenings.

6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Lafourche Parish School System to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy
Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

MEDICATION POLICY

1. A **Parent/Guardian** is required by the State of Louisiana to fill out the Health Information Sheet provided by the school nurse. The form requires a list of medications taken at home or school and the medical condition requiring the current medication. The **school nurse** must be contacted if any medical condition and/or medications are changed within the current school year.
2. The following are **required** if a student has been prescribed medication to be taken at school:

Parent/Guardian must:

- **Meet** with the Registered Nurse (**RN**) if a **NEW** or **INITIAL** medication is to be given at school
- Complete all required paperwork
- Complete prescription order from the practitioner that includes:
 - Student's Name
 - Student's Date of Birth
 - Signed and Dated by Doctor or Prescribing Personnel
- Paperwork needed includes:
 - Consent
 - Medicine Administration Record (MAR)
 - Nursing Goals and Intervention
 - Side Effects
- Provide prescriptions in a pharmacy labeled container.
- Have the pharmacy provide a prescription label for over-the-counter medications.
 - The label **must** contain the following:
 - Student's Name
 - Student's Date of Birth
 - Medication Name
 - Strength
 - Dosage
 - Route
 - Time to be Given



3. After the parent/guardian meets with the RN and the appropriate paperwork from the practitioner has been completed, the Licensed Practical Nurse (**LPN**) and the medically trained school employees (**MTSE**) can administer the prescribed medication accepted by the RN. The RN will review the medication, paperwork and how and when to administer the medication with the LPN and MTSE.
Once the instructions are completed by the RN:
The **LPN** and **MTSE** will administer the medication:
 - 30 minutes before or
 - 30 minutes after the ordered timeThe **LPN** and **MTSE** will be allowed to accept prescription refills from the Parent/Guardian as long as there is no change to the initial order accepted by the RN. This includes changes to the medication name, dose or time to be given.
4. The **RN, LPN** and **MTSE** will maintain accurate documentation.
5. **Remember:** Parents/guardians are not allowed to drop off any medications before the initial meeting with the **RN**.
6. **Remember:** The **Only** school employee that can **accept** initial medication is the **RN**. **The only employees that can give** medications are the **RN, LPN** and the **medically trained school employees (MTSE)**.
7. Non-emergency medication must be stored in a **double locked** safe area.
8. Emergency medication will be stored in a safe area that is accessible for the **RN, LPN** and **MTSE** in an **emergency situation**.
9. The **RN, LPN** or **MTSE** are responsible for transporting the **emergency medication** in a school evacuation event.
10. Under **NO** circumstances are any school employee allowed to give a student medication that is **NOT** prescribed to the student. This includes over the counter medications
11. Under **NO** circumstances are **NON-medically trained** school employees allowed to accept or give a student medication **even** if it is prescribed.
12. Students are not allowed to have medication on their person, **UNLESS** it is an emergency medicine **AND** the proper paperwork is completed, including the permission from the doctor/prescribing personnel, parent/guardian, **and RN**.
13. On the student's last day at school, the **RN, LPN** or **MTSE** must meet with the parent/guardian to count and return any leftover medication and to close out the paperwork.

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Service Animals In Schools

June 6, 2023 (Adopted from District Policies-Lafourche Parish Public Schools)

Legal

42 USC 1201 et seq. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)

28 CFR, Part 35 (Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services)

Virtual Academy of Lafourche Charter School acknowledges its responsibilities to permit students and/or adults with disabilities to be accompanied by a "service animal" in its school buildings, in classrooms, and at school functions, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Part 35, subject to the following:

1. All requests for an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be addressed in writing to the Director of Schools, and must contain required documentation of vaccinations. This written request must be delivered to the Director of Schools' office at least ten (10) business days prior to bringing the service animal to a school or school function.
2. The animal must be a dog or, in specific circumstances, a miniature horse. No other species of animal, whether wild or domestic, will be permitted to function as a "service animal" in schools or at school functions.
3. Owners of a service dog must provide annual proof of the following vaccinations: DHLPPC (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus), Bordetella, and Rabies.



4. Owners of a service miniature horse must provide annual proof of the following vaccinations: Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Test), Rabies, Tetanus, Encephalomyelitis, Rhinoneumonitis, Influenza, and Strangles.
5. All service dogs must be spayed or neutered.
6. All service animals must be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks.
7. All service animals must be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander.
8. Owners of service animals shall be liable for any harm, damages, or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property.
9. The animal must be "required" for the individual with a disability.
10. The animal must be "individually trained" to do work or a task for the benefit of the Individual with a disability.
11. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.
12. Special Provisions/Miniature Horses: Requests to permit a miniature horse to accompany a student or adult with a disability in school buildings, in classrooms, or at school functions, shall be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering:
 - a. The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features.
 - b. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse¹.
 - c. Whether the miniature horse is housebroken.
 - d. Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation of that facility.
13. Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may ask an individual with a disability or his/her parents to remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, or from a school function, if any one of the following circumstances occurs:
 - a. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.
 - b. The animal is not housebroken.
 - c. The animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the service, program, or activity.
14. A service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control.
15. The Virtual Academy of Lafourche School Board shall not be responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal, including walking the animal or responding to the animal's need to relieve itself.
 - a. The School Board shall not be responsible for providing a staff member to walk the service animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal.
 - b. Students with service animals shall be expected to care for and supervise their animal. In the case of a young child or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise his/her service animal, the parent shall be responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the building administrator.

¹Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

***Individuals with a disability wanting to bring a service animal to an LPSD school or school function on a property not-leased by Virtual Academy of Lafourche Charter School must receive permission from the Superintendent of the Lafourche parish School System per their policy. Prior approval from VAL does not guarantee approval from the LPSD regarding said request.*



AMENDMENTS

Prohibition against Bullying (Rev. 6/28/2017)

Virtual Academy of Lafourche believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the school have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully or intimidate any student through words or actions. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to direct physical contact, verbal assaults, the use of electronic methods, and social isolation and/or manipulation. The school policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- School staff and/or administrators will promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school, or a school-sponsored activity, and during a school-sponsored activity.

Bullying and intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken following each confirmed incident of bullying. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
- Reassignment of classes
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion
- Assignment to an alternative school

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying. Students, parents/guardians and other school personnel may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member orally or in writing by using the appropriate form.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- All staff, students, and their parents will receive a copy of the policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school will keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- Anyone who witnesses or experiences bullying is encouraged to report the incident to a school official.



The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. Investigation

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation of the incident. The investigation will begin no later the next business day in which the school is in session after the report is received by the school official. The investigation will be completed no later than ten school days after the date the written report of the incident is submitted to the school official. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s), and staff members separately. Physical evidence of the bullying incident will be reviewed, if available.

2. Notification

Parents or legal guardians of the victim and accused student will be notified of the investigative procedure. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student will be charged with bullying and will receive age-appropriate consequences which shall include, at minimum, disciplinary action or counseling.

4. Follow Up

Complainants will be promptly notified of the findings of the investigation and the remedial action taken.

5. Documentation

Written documentation containing the findings of the investigation, including input from the students' parents or legal guardian, and the decision by the school official, will be prepared and placed in the school records of the victim and perpetrator.

Expectant and Parenting Students

The Virtual Academy of Lafourche Charter Board is cognizant of the problems of marriage, pregnancy and parenthood among students prior to their graduation from high school. The Board authorizes the Director to assure that such students have the opportunity to earn the education which they deserve.

It is recommended that a pupil who becomes pregnant shall notify the site manager or guidance counselor in writing immediately upon knowledge of the condition. Pregnant pupils will be permitted to continue in school in all instances when continued attendance has the sanction of the expectant mother's physician. A physician's statement shall be submitted stating the pupil's medical condition, approval for continued attendance, and activities in which the pupil may not participate. The student shall keep the school administration continually apprised of her progress. The school shall not be held responsible for any medical problems that may arise with a pregnant pupil while she is in school.

Should the student need to be absent from school for a prolonged period of time, the student may continue in virtual status with supervision by their EC program until released by her physician to return to regular classes. Any student who is not able to return to regular classes shall contact the site manager who will make necessary arrangements to successfully complete their education.

Marital, maternal, or paternal status shall not affect the rights and privileges of pupils to receive a public education nor to take part in any extracurricular activity offered by the schools.



After delivery, the student shall be permitted to return to school as soon as she is physically able, upon certification by her physician.

In regard to each expectant and parenting student, each site and Virtual Academy of Lafourche shall:

1. Maintain confidentiality in regard to the student.
2. Ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for the student.
3. Promote academic success for the student.
4. Utilize sensible attendance policies, taking into account all necessary factors; and,
5. Provide a supportive school environment that promotes high school graduation.

Student Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances

Virtual Academy of Lafourche, recognizing that problems may arise at our sites, shall require student concerns, complaints or grievances to be registered with the site manager or designee.

Any student (parent or guardian) shall have the right to present a grievance when it is believed that a misapplication or misinterpretation of policy or violation of rights has resulted in harm to the student. The student (parent or guardian) shall be assured freedom from interference, discrimination, or reprisal when presenting a grievance in accordance with this policy.

All grievances shall be handled expeditiously and according to the following procedures:

A. Definitions

1. **Grievance**: A claim by a student or parent that he/she has suffered harm or injury by the interpretation, application, or violation of a school policy, a Charter School Board policy, a law, or constitutionally guaranteed rights. The term "grievance" does not include matters for which a method of review is prescribed by law or Charter School Board policy.
Any claim by an individual that there has been a violation of rights shall be a grievance and shall be resolved through the procedures set forth in this policy. With consent of the aggrieved students/parents involved, several individual grievances may be consolidated for consideration.
2. **Aggrieved Student**: The student who is making the claim. A parent or guardian may act on the behalf of the aggrieved student and may initiate the grievance.
3. **Respondent**: Person or persons responsible at each level of the procedure for responding to the claim of the aggrieved student.
4. **Days**: School or working day.
5. **Board**: Virtual Academy of Lafourche Charter School Board.
6. **Responsible Person**: Person who allegedly caused harm or injury to the aggrieved student by misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation of a policy or guaranteed right.

B. Procedures

Grievances shall be processed as rapidly as possible. The number of days indicated at each level is a maximum, and every effort shall be made to expedite processing the grievance. As indicated below, grievances carried above the level of the school at which the student attends must be in writing. The response will also be in writing.

INFORMAL LEVEL: Any student, or parent, with a complaint or grievance must first request redress orally with his/her site manager. Within ten (10) days, the site manager shall render an oral decision. At that time, the student and/or parent will be informed about the requirements outlined in this policy.



****NOTE**** If the site manager is the responsible person against whom the grievance is made, the process begins at Level One.

LEVEL ONE: In the event the aggrieved student/parent is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at the informal level, or if no decision is rendered within ten (10) days after presentation of the grievance, the aggrieved student/parent may elevate the grievance to the main support site supervisor exercising academic control over the school. The grievance must be in writing and specify:

1. the nature of the grievance
2. the nature or extent of the injury, loss, or inconvenience
3. the results of previous discussions and/or decisions
4. the dissatisfaction with decisions previously rendered

LEVEL TWO: Should the aggrieved student/parent be dissatisfied with the disposition of the grievance at level one, or if no decision has been rendered by the main support site administrator within ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievance, the student/parent may elevate the grievance to the Director. The same type of information required at level one shall be submitted in writing. The Director may meet with the parties in interest and/or appoint a disinterested party to conduct a formal investigation. In any event, the Director must render a decision on the grievance within fifteen (15) days from date of receipt.

LEVEL THREE: If the aggrieved student/parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, or if no decision is rendered within fifteen (15) days from receipt of the grievance by the Director, the aggrieved student/parent may request, in writing, that the Director places the grievance on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Charter Board. Such written requests must include the same information called for at previous levels, and copies of all decisions previously rendered in connection with the grievance. The request for a hearing before the Board must be made no later than ten (10) days after receipt by the aggrieved student/parent of the Director's decision or if no decision was rendered, no more than ten (10) days following the last date on which the Director could have rendered such decision.

The hearing by the Board may be conducted as informal as possible, and all parties in interest shall be given the opportunity to present evidence in support of their positions. After hearing from all parties that desire to be heard, the Board shall render its decision on the merits of the grievance at the Board meeting or a subsequent Board meeting.

c. General

1. The deadline for submission of a grievance is not later than thirty (30) days after the last day of the school year during which the alleged grievance occurred.
2. A grievance may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice or record. Additionally, there shall be no recrimination against a student because a grievance has been submitted.
3. The grievance will be adjudged at each level on the specific issues raised in the original grievance. The parties in interest will not be allowed to expand or add issues during the grievance procedure, except to the extent necessary to respond to administrative decisions made along the way.
4. Failure by the aggrieved student/parent to meet the timelines and requirements of this policy may result in dismissal of the grievance. Failure by the respondents to meet timelines and requirements of this policy shall allow the aggrieved student/parent, at his/her option, to proceed to the next level.
5. Any aggrieved student/parent shall have the right to present his/her own grievance or may designate a representative to appear with him/her at any level of the procedure.



Physical seclusion and restraint policy

During the 2016 Louisiana legislative session, Act 522 (originally Senate Bill 317) dealing with the use of physical restraint and seclusion was enacted. In order to be compliant with this law, the following procedures are to be strictly followed in the event that any student with a disability (any special education student excluding students who are identified as gifted and/or talented only).

1. When an incident of seclusion and/or physical restraint takes place, the person who has made that determination must report the details of the incident to the site manager/administrative designee, the PAC Manager and the parent.
2. The site manager/administrative designee must provide all of the required paperwork to the person who secluded or restrained the student with a disability.
3. The paperwork must be completed in its entirety before the end of business on the day that the restraint and/or seclusion took place.
 - a. This paperwork shall be submitted to the site manager no later than the day following the incident.
 - b. A copy of this paperwork will be included as part of the written notification of the incident to the parent/guardian within 24 hours of the incident.
 - c. A copy of this paperwork shall be submitted to the Pupil Appraisal Center Manager no later than the day following the incident.
4. The parent of the child who was restrained/secluded must be notified in writing within 24 hours of the incident. The notice will come from the principal/administrative designee and must include:
 - a. Reason for restraint/seclusion
 - b. Procedures used
 - c. Length of time of the restraint/seclusion
 - d. Names and titles of any school employee involved
5. The Special Education Director or his/her designee (Pupil Appraisal Center Manager) shall be notified in writing after each such event.
6. In the event a student is subject to the use of restraint and/or seclusion a total of five times within the same school year, the student's IEP team shall convene to review and revise, if appropriate, the student's Behavior Intervention Plan to include any appropriate and necessary behavioral supports.
7. After the fifth such event, at a minimum of every three weeks the teacher of IEP authority and the campus principal/administrative designee shall review documentation compiled for a student who has been placed in seclusion or physically restrained when it is determined through data that the student's challenging behaviors continue or escalate. If necessary, the student's IEP team shall convene to review and revise, if appropriate the student's Behavior Intervention Plan to include any appropriate and necessary behavioral supports.

What IS Physical Restraint?

Physical restraint means bodily force used to limit a person's movement. Some examples of physical restraint might include (but are not limited to):

1. Blocking a student's exit from a classroom "for more than a moment"
2. Carrying a student out of a classroom when he/she does not want to leave
3. Using any sort of CPI-approved restraint, i.e. basket hold, two-person transport, etc.
4. Grabbing a student's arm, leg, shoulder, etc. to stop him/her from going where he/she wants to go.



Physical restraint does not include: (1) Consensual, solicited, or unintentional contact; (2) “Momentary” blocking of a student’s action if the student’s action is likely to result in harm to the student or any other person; (3) Holding of a student, by one school employee, for the purpose of calming or comforting the student, provided the student’s freedom of movement or normal access to his or her body is not restricted; (4) Minimal physical contact for the purpose of safely escorting a student from one area to another; (5) Minimal physical contact for the purpose of assisting the student in completing a task or response.

An example that will help you to understand the judgment that is required to make a determination on whether or not a physical restraint is being used may be:

A Kindergarten student is in line to go from the cafeteria where he has just had breakfast into his classroom when the school day is about to begin. As 6-year-old boys are apt to do, he takes off and runs toward the street. The teacher or administrator runs after him, grabs his arm and stops him before he can get into the street where he could be injured. The student stops immediately and willingly goes with you to his classroom (or office, depending on the circumstances). Because the restraint was only momentary and it was to prevent the student from getting hurt, this is NOT a restraint and does not have to be reported.

BUT...

In the same scenario, when the teacher/administrator grabs the student to stop him, the child resists and continues to try to pull away from the adult. If the hold is more than “momentary”, this would be a physical restraint and would need to be documented per the administrative procedures attached.

What is Mechanical Restraint?

Mechanical restraint means the application of any device or object used to limit a person’s movement.

Mechanical restraint does not include: (1) A protective or stabilizing device used in strict accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions for proper use and which is used in compliance with orders issued by an appropriately licensed health care provider; and (2) Any device used by a duly licensed law enforcement officer in the execution of his/her official duties.

So, the use of a harness on the bus for purposes of addressing behavioral concerns IS a mechanical restraint. We do NOT use harnesses on the bus or in the classroom for this purpose but if someone does choose to use it for this purpose, a report would have to be made each time the harness was used and administrative action would be required for the inappropriate use of a harness.

If, however, there is a clinical reason (for proper positioning) for the use of a harness, then this would NOT be a mechanical restraint, and such a use would not have to be documented. Additionally, the use of a harness for purposes of positioning would be an IEP decision which would include an OT or PT and the parent would have already been involved in the decision to use it, making this a consensual restraint (If the parent agreed to it during the IEP meeting).

What is Seclusion?

Seclusion shall mean a procedure that isolates and confines a student in a separate room or area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to self or others. This would include “time out” unless this has been determined to be an appropriate behavioral intervention for the child and that has been documented in his/her IEP. If any special education student is put in timeout and it is NOT the result of an

IEP team decision, then this incident would have to be documented and reported as indicated on the attached administrative procedure.

DISCLAIMER: While there may be some instances in which Act 522 doesn’t require reporting to a parent that their child has been “restrained” or “secluded”, best practices would dictate that you use your professional judgment as to when you would notify the parent of these incidents.

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER: Virtual Academy of Lafourche (VAL) retains the right to alter or vary the application of these rules. This handbook is intended to help parents, students, and VAL personnel work together. As new policies or regulations are developed by the VAL board or State or Federal Statutes, additions and/or deletions will be made to this handbook.