

# **Department of Children and Families Virtual Academy Procedures Manual**

"Healthy, Safe, Smart and Strong"



Unified School District #2 - Virtual Academy Matt Folan, Superintendent of Schools 505 Hudson Street - Hartford, CT 06106 Phone 860-550-6436

Email: <u>USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@CT.GOV</u>

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#### School Mission

The mission of the Unified School District (USD) #2 Virtual Academy is to provide greater educational opportunities with respect to remediation, credit recovery and credit accumulation, as well as standardized test preparation to youth who are currently or have previously been involved with The Department of Children and Families (DCF).

#### School Goals

The Virtual Academy's overarching goals are:

- To provide students access to both math and reading remediation classes.
- To provide students access to online core content area classes in English, math, science and social studies.
- To provide students access to elective, standardized test preparation, and career preparation courses.
- To encourage students who are on a diploma-track to work towards fulfilling their Local Education Agency (LEA) requirements for graduation.
- To ensure that students will demonstrate proficiency in the understanding and application of the skills and concepts presented.
- To allow students the ability and opportunity to self-advocate for their educational goals and future career interests.

# DCF Regions and Office Locations

DCF Regions	Office Locations
1	Bridgeport / Norwalk
2	Milford / New Haven
3	Middletown / Norwich / Willimantic
4	Hartford / Manchester
5	Danbury / Torrington / Waterbury
6	New Britain / Meriden

# Staff Contact Information

		Virtual Academy		
Region	Office Location	Contact Name	Phone Numbers	E-Mail Address
			(203)899-1448(O)	
1	Norwalk	Michael MacDonald	(860)299-5086 (C)	michael.macdonald@ct.gov
			(860)638-2116(O)	
2	Middletown	Lisa Adams	(860)280-4736 (C)	lisa.adams@ct.gov
			(860)638-2116(O)	
3	Middletown	Lisa Adams	(860)280-4736 (C)	lisa.adams@ct.gov
			(860)418-8180(O)	
4	Hartford	Greg Corbett	(860)258-9210(C)	gregory.corbett@ct.gov
			(203)465-7375(O)	
5	Waterbury	Michael Angelone	(860)249-3441 (C)	michael.angelone@ct.gov
			(860)418-8180(O)	
6	Hartford	Greg Corbett	(860)258-9210(C)	gregory.corbett@ct.gov
		Matt Folan,		-
	Central Office -	Superintendent of		
All	Hartford	Schools	(860)550-6375(O)	matt.folan@ct.gov

## Part-Time Student Designation

The status of a student's admittance into the Virtual Academy is handled by Central Office and the school administrator or an administrative designee. All Virtual Academy students are enrolled as part-time students and **must** be registered and enrolled in a full-time school program through their Local Education Agency (LEA).

Part Time-High School Students	Part Time- Middle School Students
Home District is Student's LEA	Home District is Student's LEA
Credit Recovery	Remediation
Remediation	No credits issued
Electives	
Test Preparation	

### Characteristics of a Successful Student

Students are expected to be self-motivated and possess an understanding that they will only be successful in the Virtual Academy if they invest time and effort into the program. The ideal Virtual Academy student varies according to personal academic goals and individual student needs. He or she may be:

- A student who has not found success in a traditional school setting due to
  excessive absences or issues outside of education that hinder his or her
  ability to attend a traditional school setting.
- A student who has missed an excessive number of school days and, despite the fact that his or her grades may be passing, cannot be awarded credit based on district attendance policies.
- A student who is struggling in his or her grade level courses and would benefit from academic remediation to earn elective credit in order to improve achievement in core classes.
- A student who wants to improve his or her credit status in working towards graduation.

## **Program Expectations**

There is no "one size fits all" method for determining a student who is in good standing with the Virtual Academy. Individual needs dictate a unique plan of study for each student. Progress is determined by how closely each student follows his or her given plan.

Students are admitted on a part-time basis to the Virtual Academy and are required to be enrolled and attend their Local Education Agency (LEA) school programs on a daily basis, as well as to continue to comply with and meet all Local Education Agency (LEA) school rules and expectations.

All students are expected to adhere to the following:

- 1. Students are expected to work on a weekly basis.
- 2. Students are expected to maintain positive communication with their assigned Virtual Academy teacher.
- 3. Students are expected to share any concerns or difficulties with their assigned Virtual Academy teacher.
- 4. Students are expected to display the ability and motivation to complete their own coursework independently with teacher support as needed.

#### Required Materials

All students will need access to a computer, tablet, or gaming device, along with an internet connection. The online education platform can be accessed from *any* computer or device with an internet connection. The Virtual Academy does not provide students with computers/devices. Students are encouraged to utilize the program at home, a public library, school, or other community setting.

At the initial meeting, the Virtual Academy teacher will assess any potential needs a student may have and problem-solve with that student.

## Student Attendance and Communication Expectations

Students are expected to demonstrate consistent engagement in the program. A typical student should expect to commit to a minimum of five hours per week of active online engagement. This will allow high school students the ability to complete credit in a reasonable amount of time. If a student cannot reach this goal, it is the responsibility of that student to effectively communicate with his or her Virtual Academy teacher to discuss the reasons why he or she is unable to meet these expectations.

Students and teachers must work together to establish a preferred method of communication, and all students are expected to respond to teacher texts, e-mails, phone calls, and efforts to schedule face-to-face meetings at DCF-approved locations in their regions. Students are expected to provide personal e-mail addresses and/or cell phone numbers to their Virtual Academy teacher to serve as additional means of communication. If a student needs greater assistance with his or her Virtual Academy courses, it is expected that the student will reach out to his or her Virtual Academy teacher to receive additional support.

### Referral Process

- 1. Any caring and involved adult<sup>1</sup> can make a referral to the Virtual Academy. The student needs to have current or previous DCF involvement, but not necessarily an open and active DCF case.
- 2. The application is completed online and submitted to the DCF Virtual Academy e-mail address (<u>USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov</u>). A copy of this application can be provided by any Unified School District #2 staff member in a region or on the Virtual Academy website.
- 3. An administrative designee reviews all applications to verify DCF lineage (LINK number) and that the student is currently enrolled in a full-time school program through their LEA as verified through the state's Public School Information System (PSIS).
- 4. An administrative designee will assign each student to a region and a Virtual Academy teacher. Students will be assigned a Virtual Academy teacher based on the DCF region in which they currently reside. In some cases, this may differ from their LEA or town in which their DCF Social Worker is based.
- 5. Applications are reviewed as they are received, and admission is granted within two to ten days of the initial receipt of the application.

## Acceptance Process

- 1. A student is accepted into the Virtual Academy program as indicated by an approved application from the school administrator or an administrative designee.
- 2. The administrative designee will send an acceptance e-mail to all involved parties, which will include a copy of the student's application, the student's assigned region, and the name of the student's assigned Virtual Academy teacher.
- 3. The assigned Virtual Academy teacher may issue a letter to the Local Education Agency (LEA) to notify them of the student's part-time participation in the Virtual Academy program and to request a copy of the student's educational records (IEP, 504, transcripts, attendance records, disciplinary records, standardized testing data, and currently enrolled classes).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A caring or involved adult is defined as a parent/guardian, DCF caseworker, school guidance counselor, school social worker, surrogate parent, education consultant or specialist, school administrator, pupil services specialist, teacher, or community provider.

#### **Upon Enrollment**

- 1. The Local Education Agency (LEA) is requested to provide the Virtual Academy with a student's course selection. The Virtual Academy teacher will forward a course selection form to the LEA requesting that the LEA completes the form to help determine the assignment of online courses. If necessary, the assigned Virtual Academy teacher will conduct a credit analysis and/or record review to determine which course(s) that student would benefit from completing.
- 2. The Virtual Academy teacher assigned to the student will follow up on the acceptance e-mail and contact all involved parties to schedule an initial meeting with the student to provide him or her with an overview of the program and its expectations.
- 3. If applicable, the assigned Virtual Academy teacher will then review the results of the student's Virtual Academy placement exam to determine what course of action should be taken based on the student's academic ability level.

### Course Offerings

The Virtual Academy offers a wide selection of online courses in the major content areas (social studies, science, math, and language arts) which align with the CT Common Core and CT Frameworks. There are also a large selection of electives, GED prep, and remediation courses available. The Virtual Academy teachers can provide a course selection form which lists the available online courses. The course selection list may routinely change as new courses are released or courses are phased out.

#### Transcripts and Course Completion Process

- 1. A transcript is generated either when a student:
  - a. completes an assigned Virtual Academy course,
  - b. completes a partial course earning a minimum of 0.125 credits,
  - c. or withdraws from the Virtual Academy having completed at least a minimum of 0.125 credits.

Note: Credits are issued in 0.125 increments.

- 2. The assigned Virtual Academy teacher is responsible for verifying credit and completing a "Credit Completion Form" and submits it via e-mail to <a href="https://www.uso.com/uso.co
- 3. The administrative designee generates the transcript and has the transcript signed by the school administrator or an administrative designee and forwards the official signed transcript to the assigned Virtual Academy regional teacher and to the Virtual Academy email box.
- 4. The Virtual Academy teacher distributes copies of the transcript to the student, parent/guardian, Local Education Agency (LEA), and caseworker, if applicable.

## Procedure for Students Moving between Regions

The regions in which students reside dictate Virtual Academy teaching assignments. When a student moves between regions or changes schools, the following procedure will take place:

- 1. The Virtual Academy teacher in the student's current region will send an e-mail to an administrative designee, the <u>USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov</u> e-mail box, and the Virtual Academy teacher assigned to the region in which the student is moving.
- 2. This e-mail will include the reason(s) the student is changing regions, new mailing address/contact information, and provide an update on the student's current level of academic engagement and progress.
- 3. The teacher in the student's original region will also provide all contacts and documentation on the student to the new regional teacher.
- 4. The new regional teacher will then reach out to the student's team to provide an introduction, review the student's Virtual Academy learning plan, share contact information, and answer any questions the student or other involved parties may have.

### Statement of Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is never acceptable. For the purpose of the Virtual Academy, cheating is defined as the following:

- Attempts to access websites that have no redeeming academic value for the sole purpose of obtaining answers to the questions asked in Virtual Academy courses.
- Attempts to compromise the account of a Virtual Academy teacher in an effort to gain access to answers to the questions asked in the Virtual Academy courses or for the purpose of altering or changing grades earned in Virtual Academy courses.

Any student suspected of or found engaging in this academic dishonesty will face a consequence determined by the school administrator or an administrative designee, which may include removal from the Virtual Academy program.

## Failure to Meet Program Expectations

- 1. The Virtual Academy teacher identifies the student who is not meeting program expectations.
- 2. The teacher reaches out to that student and all involved parties to problem-solve and re-engage the student with the Virtual Academy.
- 3. Students who do not respond to their Virtual Academy teacher in a timely and courteous manner risk being removed from the program.
- 4. The student is given ample time to re-engage or communicate reasons for lack of engagement.
- 5. If the student continues to not meet the program expectations (see program expectations section), withdrawal paperwork will be issued, and the student will be removed from the Virtual Academy.

#### Withdrawal Process

- 1. The Virtual Academy teacher will determine if a student needs to be withdrawn from the program.
- 2. The Virtual Academy teacher will complete a withdrawal form indicating the date, the reason for the student's removal.
- 3. The Virtual Academy teacher will send the withdrawal form to all involved adult parties to notify them of the student's removal from the program.
- 4. All involved parties are expected to acknowledge the withdrawal form within two weeks of notification.
- 5. The form should be signed by both the Virtual Academy teacher and a school administrator. If the withdrawal form is not returned within two weeks of the initial notification, the withdrawal will be processed in lieu of continued attempts to communicate with all involved parties.
- 6. If the student completed at least 0.125 credit, the credit completion form should be submitted, and a transcript should be issued by the assigned Virtual Academy teacher.
- 7. After all paperwork is completed, the administrative designee will provide the Virtual Academy teacher and the <u>USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov</u> email box with a signed final copy of the withdrawal form.
- 8. The administrative designee will remove the student from PowerSchool and the Virtual Academy teacher will archive/disable the student's online account.
- 9. The Virtual Academy teacher will issue a letter to the student's LEA informing them of the student's withdrawal from the program.

#### Re-Enrollment

As circumstances change, students who were previously withdrawn from the Virtual Academy may be readmitted into the program up to three times. If a student wishes to re-enroll, they are expected to contact their Virtual Academy teacher, caseworker and/or school guidance counselor and request re-admittance to the program. After a six-month time-lapse, a previously withdrawn student will need to provide the Virtual Academy with a new application to be considered for acceptance. Additionally, any changes in demographic information are expected to be updated at the time of re-enrollment.

#### Teacher Expectations

The following is a list of expectations for all Virtual Academy teachers:

- 1. Conduct an initial meeting with each student to discuss the Virtual Academy and review expectations for remaining in good standing within the program.
- 2. Review the online dashboard daily to assess and monitor student engagement time and progress.
- 3. Schedule meetings with students as needed.
- 4. Submit progress reports and updates to adults actively and legally involved in each student's educational plan.
- 5. As needed, maintain communication logs (texts, emails, notes, etc.) of student contact.
- 6. Complete monthly progress monitoring reports and routinely save them to the Virtual Academy drive. Submit these reports to the Virtual Academy Superintendent via email. Due dates are as follows: Week 1 Region 1, Week 2 Regions 2 & 3, Week 3 Region 4, Week 4 Regions 5 & 6.
- 7. Regularly attend education meetings scheduled for assigned students to present information on progress and participation to their educational teams.
- 8. Attend scheduled meetings to collaborate with the Virtual Academy team to improve programming and professional growth.
- 9. Attend all-office and/or workgroup meetings within the Regional DCF area offices to present information and answer social worker questions about the Virtual Academy program.
- 10. Consistently reach out within the department, as well as to community agencies, resources, and supports, to provide information and updates on opportunities within the program and to further the mission of the Virtual Academy.

# Getting To Know You: An Informal Assessment

Name	e: Date:
	ome to the Virtual Academy! Please answer the following questions to the best of ability using complete sentences.
1.	Give three examples of how you have succeeded and/or struggled in school.
2.	Who is your case worker and/or school guidance counselor?
3.	List three things you would like to gain from the Virtual Academy.
4.	What is the best way to contact you? Please provide a phone number and/or e-mail address.



Student Name:

Regional Teacher of Record:

Unified School District #2 - Virtual Academy Michael MacDonald, Region 1 Phone: 860-299-5086

Email: michael.macdonald@ct.gov

Date Submitted:				
Edgenuity Course Name	Numerical Grade	Earned Credit	Credit Type	Course Start Date

## Region [X] Progress Monitoring:

#### [Virtual Academy Teacher Name]

C. I III	
Student Name	Progress

# **Communication Log**

#### Student Name:

Method of	What was discussed
Communication	
	Method of Communication



#### DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Vannessa L. Dorantes Commissioner Ned Lamont Governor

**DATE, 2019** 

#### SCHOOL DISTRICT Records Department:

Please be advised that (STUDENT NAME), DOB (DATE OF BIRTH), has been enrolled as a part-time student in the Virtual Academy of Unified School District #2. The Virtual Academy provides online remediation, credit recovery, core content and elective credit accumulation, SAT and GED test preparation, and standards-aligned instruction for youth currently or previously involved with the Department of Children and Families. Participants with the Virtual Academy are considered part-time students and remain registered and enrolled in their LEA. In the event that this student is not registered in your district, please notify us so that we can update our records accordingly.

Please send a copy of this student's education record, as this term is defined under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4).

#### Please ensure the following information is included:

Transcript of credits earned (high school students)
Attendance & disciplinary records (only historical records from grade 7 and above)
Most recent IEP or 504 (if applicable)
Current course schedule
Completed Virtual Academy course selection form (included with this letter)

We ask that you forward the requested information as soon as possible, but no later than **ten (10) calendar days** after receipt of this letter, so that an appropriate education can be provided to this student. Please forward the requested educational records to <a href="https://www.uscalent.gov.uscalents.gov">USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov</a>.

Thank you for your prompt attention in response to this request. Please contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,
VA TEACHER NAME
Virtual Academy Teacher, Region X
E-MAIL
PHONE NUMBER

#### STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Department of Children & Families- Education Division
Unified School District #2 - Virtual Academy
Matt Folan, Superintendent of Schools
505 Hudson Street - Hartford, CT 06106
Phone 860-550-6375 - Fax 860-560-7079
USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov

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Vannessa Dorantes

Commissioner

#### DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Ned Lamont

Governor

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#### Virtual Academy Withdrawal Form

(Student will be automatically withdrawn within 2 weeks if form is not acknowledged.)

Student Last Name	Student First Name		Student DOB
Withdrawals require notification using e by a parent, guardian, educational repre reason, and school that the student will b	sentative, or social worker va	ilidating the withd	rawal date,
Withdrawal Date: Click here to select date			
Reason/Comments for Withdrawal:			
Location/School student will be attending			
Select a box to the <u>RIGHT</u> indicating if the s has been notified of being WITHDRAWN from the DCF Virtual Academy.		Unavailable	
Individual acknowledging withdrawal / title		if the DCF CASE IS	CLOSED
VA Teacher Name	VA Teacher Signat	ture	
Matt Folan	Wilh	_	
VA Administrative Designee Name	VA Administrative	Designee Signature	
VA TEACHER - Mark as applicable:			REGION
Not Meeting Program Requirements No Discontinued: LEA/PPT Decision Di Facility Transfer U	o Full-time LEA in PSIS iscontinued Schooling nresponsive to Communication WOL	Moved Out of St Lack of Technol Graduated Other:	

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Unified School District II - Virtual Academy, Education Division
505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone 860-550-6436 Fax 860-560-7079

Connecticut Department of Children and Families
Unified School District 2
VIRTUAL ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE SELECTION FORM

Student LAST Name:	Student FIRST Name:		SASID:	DOB:	
District and School Name:				Special Education:	504 Plan:
				Yes No	Yes No
District/School Contact Name and Title:		Contact Pho	one:	Contact E-mail:	
Submitted by:					
Select the requested courses and					

Select the requested courses and								
enter the credit recovery/remediation credit amount required for course completion after the course name.								
Lanquage Arts	Math	Technology						
Common Core - ELA 9	☐ Pre-Algebra	Computer Applications Office 2019						
Common Core - ELA 10	Common Core - Algebra I	Online Learning & Digital Citizenship						
Common Core - ELA 11	Common Core - Geometry	Microsoft Office 2016						
Common Core - ELA 12	Common Core - Algebra II	☐ Introduction to Coding						
Language Arts 11	Common Core - Math I							
Literacy and Comprehension I	Common Core - Math II							
Literacy and Comprehension II	Common Core - Math III							
Expository Reading and Writing	Common Core - Pre-Calculus							
☐ Intro. to Communications & Speech	☐ Trigonometry							
	Concepts in Probability and Statistics							
	Financial Math							
	Mathematical Models with Applications							
Social Studies	Science	Health and Physical Education						
Survey of World History	☐ Environmental Science	Healthy Living						
Human Geography	■ NG55 - Life Science	Foundations of Personal Wellness						
☐ Economics	NG55 - Physical Science	Lifetime Fitness						
CT - Civics and Government	CT - Earth and Space Science	Contemporary Health						
CT - Modern World History	CT - Biology							
CT - US History	CT - Chemistry							
<b>-</b>	CT - Physics							
Career	Art	Electives						
Career Explorations	☐ Introduction to Art	Personal Finance						
Career Explorations I	Art History I	☐ Psychology						
Career Explorations II		☐ Sociology						
Career Explorations III		Strategies for Academic Success						
Career Planning & Development		☐ SAT Prep						
Career Management		GED Prep						
Reading Remediation	Math Remediation	Other Requested Courses						
Foundational Reading	Foundational Math (speci							
Basic Reading	Basic Math Speci							
☐ Intermediate Reading	☐ Intermediate Math ☐ (speci							
Advanced Reading	Advanced Math (speci	fy):						

Submit completed form to: USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov

Connecticut Department of Children and Families
Unified School District 2
VIRTUAL ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE SELECTION FORM

<del>-</del>				
Student LAST Name: Student FIRST Name:		SASID:	DOB:	
District and School Name:	<u>'</u>		Special Education:	504 Plan:
			Yes No	Yes No
District/School Contact Name and Title: Submitted by:		Contact Phone:	Contact E-mail:	
	PLEASE SELECT THE	E REQUESTED COURSES	:	
Language Arts	Math	Science	S	ocial Studies
Common Core - ELA 6 Common Core - ELA 7 Common Core - ELA 8 Literacy & Comprehension I	Common Core - Math 6 Common Core - Math 7 Common Core - Math 8 Common Core - Grade 8 Algebra  Math Remediation	CT - Science 6 CT - Science 7 CT - Science 8	M5 Moder	l Studies 7 I Studies 8
Foundational Reading Basic Reading Intermediate Reading Advanced Reading	Foundational Math Sasic Math Intermediate Math Advanced Math	Career Explorations Strategies for Academic Success Online Learning and Digital Citizenship Keyboarding and Applications Middle School Computer Science Middle School Health Quest		
	PLEASE SPECIFY ANY O'	THER REQUESTED COUR	SES:	
(specify):				
(specify):				
(specify):				

Submit completed form to: USD2.DCF.VIRTUALACADEMY@ct.gov