PAULDING VIRTUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Parent & Student Handbook

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The Paulding County School District is excited to announce a new online learning opportunity for our middle school students. Beginning in August of 2020, we will offer a 100% virtual online school option for our middle school students that will be based out of the New Hope Education Center. This program is designed for students who would prefer an experience that is similar to Paulding Virtual Academy (PVA), which until now was only available to our high school students.

Over the past four years, the PVA program has compiled a successful track record of working with students in grades 9 – 12 and supporting some 6 – 8 students. The addition of the Paulding Virtual Middle School program (PVMS) will enable students in grades 6 - 8 to work completely online from home. Middle School students who wish to continue their online learning into high school may be offered a seat in PVA.

The Paulding Virtual Middle School program will provide the following to students:

- An opportunity to participate in home school (your normal districted middle school) activities which could include feeder sports programs, dances, additional before/after school clubs
- A completely online program
- Pacing Guides to help guide students on weekly work/task completion
- Online classes completed at home under the supervision of an academic content area teacher
- Ability to connect with an academic content area teacher(s) during their office hours
- Opportunities for participation in instructional video conferencing with teachers while working from home
- Tutoring
- Flexible course load and scheduling to meet individual student needs
- Encouragement and monitoring to complete assignments as scheduled
- Student grading that is consistent with the Paulding County School District grading policy. Students/Parents will be able to utilize the normal parent portal to view and monitor student academic progress.

Paulding Virtual Middle School requirements:

- Enrollment in the program for a minimum of one semester
- Internet access and appropriate technology device

Paulding Virtual Middle School student responsibilities:

- Work daily in assigned courses
- Meet daily/weekly pacing guide expectations
- Communicate with program supervisor and teachers through email and video conferences
- Complete weekly online academic performance reflection form
- Participate in activities as required by the districted school and PCSD
- There are courses (specifically any that earn high school credit) that will require students to be on a PCSD campus for proctored assessments.
- Students will be required to be on a PCSD campus to take required state assessments which may include Georgia Milestone Assessments, and End of Course Assessments.

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		27-31 Pre-planning

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 – First Day of School
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						21 Days

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	2 – Two Hour Early Release
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	7 – Labor Day
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21-25 Fall Break
27	28	29	30				16 Days

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	12-16 Parent Conferences (2 hr)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
							22 Days

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	3 – District Professional Learning
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23-27 Thanksgiving Break
29	30						15 Days

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	18 – Two Hour Early Release
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21-31 Holiday Break
27	28	29	30	31			14 Days (88 days)

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
					1	2	1 Holiday Break
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 – Teacher Workday
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	5 First Day Second Semester
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	18 – MLK Holiday
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							18 Days

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	3 – Two Hour Early Release
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15*	16*	17*	18*	19*	20	15-19 - Winter Break/Pres Holiday
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28							15 Days

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	12 – Teacher Workday
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15-19 Parent Conferences (2 hr)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				22 Days

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5-9 Spring Break
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		17 Days

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	28- Last Day of School
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	28 – Two Hour Early Release
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	28-29 Graduation Ceremonies
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	31- Memorial Day
30	31						20 Days (92 Days)

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	1-2 Post Planning
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				

Approved 7/24/18

■ Holiday/Schools Closed   ■ Conferences (ALL Levels) Students Dismissed 2 Hour Early
■ Teacher Workday/Student Holiday   ■ Early Release/All Students Dismissed 2 Hours Early
*Days marked with an asterisk may be used as inclement weather make-up days

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students should work on all classes daily, in order to maintain an acceptable pace as required by each course pacing guide.

Students may accelerate progress in their coursework based upon their academic ability to do so.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADING SCALE INFORMATION

Numerical Grading Scale

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70- 79

F = below 70

Honors Weighting on Numerical Grade Point Average

Additional numeric points are added to 8th student's grades who take honors (High School Level) courses and earn a 70 or higher. The additional 5 points is recorded as part of the weighted numerical average on the student's high school transcript for each course successfully completed. Students may take Ninth Lit, Physical Science, Algebra I and Spanish I if they meet the requirements associated with taking those courses.

GRADES – COURSE – PLACEMENT

Student grades and course placements are based upon the time of enrollment into PVMS. The academic expectation is for students to complete all course work within the allotted semester.

PVMS will offer a full suite of online classes. The school counselor will discuss with students and families the best course load based upon each student's individual needs.

WITHDRAWAL CRITERIA

1. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:
   a. Accumulates 10 unexcused absences per semester.
   b. Fails to maintain appropriate pace and academic progress:
      i. Pace: Each student receives a pacing guide for every course that they take at PVMS. Each pacing guide lists the assignments students are required to complete each week.
      ii. Academic Progress: This refers to the student's current class average at any given time. Any assignment listed on the pacing guide that is not completed for the appropriate week will be entered into Infinite Campus as a 0%. However, students can still complete these 0% assignments through the end of each semester.

2. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student if the superintendent or superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS RULES

1. Excessive absences have a significant impact on students' academic performance. Students not in attendance during a scheduled video meeting will be considered absent.

2. Students that visit the physical school building for completion of specific tasks must be checked out through the school office by a parent or other authorized adult before leaving school.

3. A student is considered absent if not in the virtual conference room at the appointed start time and/or if he does not have the necessary materials to begin class. Students who sign in late to the virtual conference room will be considered tardy. Teachers will manage the first three absent or tardy events to class. On the fourth absent or tardy event the student is to be referred to an administrator.

INTERNET/EQUIPMENT AND ELECTRONIC NETWORK USAGE

PVMS students have 24/7 access to the curriculum. Please note:

1. Students are offered the opportunity to enhance their education through the use of the internet and other electronic networks. There is no right to privacy as it relates to information accessed, developed, or used on Paulding County School District computers, networks and the internet. Paulding County School District employees may monitor or access information from computer workstations at any time. Paulding County School District does not provide electronic mail, off campus internet access, or equipment to students.

2. Paulding County School District takes precautions to prevent access to materials that may be defamatory, inaccurate, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate in the education center setting. On an unregulated network however, it is impossible to control all material, and a user may discover inappropriate material. Ultimately, the parent/guardian is responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their son/daughter or ward should follow, as the parent/guardian is legally responsible for his/her student's actions. Paulding County School District supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to authorize unsupervised access to the Paulding County School District education center's electronic networks. Any violation of the terms and conditions, outlined on the internet and electronic network usage form, will result in immediate revoking of internet and electronic network privileges and may result in termination from the program.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Materials, equipment, internet access, or any support that students receive from the school system, are issued to students as borrowed property; consequently, students will be held responsible for damage and/or loss of items issued to them. Any financial obligations must be settled before a student can withdraw, graduate, receive grade reports (including final transcripts), student records, or diplomas. Please note, all prospective PVMS students must confirm access to their own computer and internet connection during school hours before enrollment in the program.

PAULDING VIRTUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Students participating in the PVMS are subject to the rules, regulations, and behavioral expectations of the Paulding County School District as defined by Paulding County School District's Board Policy. All students are expected to adhere to both Board Policy and local program rules. These policies and rules will serve as guidelines and are subject to administrative discretion when appropriate.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Parents/guardians and students are asked to sign a form acknowledging their receipt of the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Discipline Codes of Conduct for Elementary, Middle, and High School Students are contained in Regulation JD-R (2) and JD-R (3). The information regarding rules and regulations of this policy are contained in Regulations JD-R (0), JD-R (1), JD-R (2) and JD-R (3).

It is the intention of the Paulding County School District to establish standards for behavior that expect students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.
The center's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the code of conduct, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in the Paulding County School District Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

1. At school, on school property, or at school sponsored events at any time
2. Off school grounds at any school activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events
3. On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system; and at school bus stops

Students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which is felonious, or which may pose a threat to the school's learning environment or the safety of students and employees.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

As required by the Georgia General Assembly, parents and guardians are encouraged to inform their children on the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

STANDARDS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Standards for student behavior are designed to create the expectation that students will behave themselves in such a way so as to facilitate a positive learning environment. The standards are designed to encourage students to respect each other and school district employees, to motivate students to follow student behavior policies adopted by the BOE, and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within this school district.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Demonstrate courtesy with all individuals regardless of circumstances.
2. Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
3. Prepare for each class by bringing appropriate materials.
4. Meet the Paulding County School District and school standard of grooming and dress when on video conferencing or when physically on campus.
5. Respect the rights and privileges of all students, teachers, and employees of PCSD.
6. Respect the property of others, including Paulding County School District property and facilities.
7. Refrain from committing violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESSES

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by corrective consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

Due to the nature of the PVMS's format, disciplinary options are limited to denial (continuation) of access to school district properties including software.

1. First infraction
   - Parent and student notification, parent meeting prior to continuation, denial of access (3 days)
2. Second infraction
   - Parent and student notification, parent meeting prior to continuation, denial of access (5 days)
3. Third infraction
   - Parent and student notification, parent meeting prior to continuation, denial of access (5 days)
4. Fourth infraction
   - Removal from PVMS and return to the districted public school

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's progress regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior.
Parents must be available for conferences with PVMS.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The director/principal may undertake the corrective measure or measures that are determined to be in the best interest of the student and the center, including student withdrawal, denial of access, adjustments to a student's schedule, adjustments to the building schedule, and course offerings provided any such action does not violate school board policy.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- All Paulding County School District students in grades 6 - 8 who elect not to attend their zoned school due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are eligible to apply for admission into the PVMS program.

- Students not currently enrolled in the PCSD, but living in Paulding County, will be allowed to apply for admission through Central Registration and will be enrolled by their districted home school counselor.

- PVMS teachers will be available 20 minutes per day, per course for student support. In addition, your student may request additional online tutoring support from his course facilitator.

- Students will have 24/7 access to the Learning Management Systems and course content.

- Each student will have an individualized plan to complete middle school requirements.

- Students will be encouraged to progress through the coursework at their own pace but must meet minimum pacing standards as listed in the pacing guides. Students may have the opportunity to accelerate their academic progress through demonstrated performance and approval.

- All students taking classes through PVMS will be required to take any state or district mandated assessments.

SPORTS - CLUBS – EXTRACURRICULAR

Students may not change eligibility once enrolled into PVMS.

Students who wish to take band or chorus classes must opt for the in-person instruction option as these classes will not be available under the virtual option. (updated 07/10/20)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students interested in attending PVMS must complete an online application which will be electronically signed by their parent/guardian. This application will be reviewed by their middle school counselor who will complete the school section of the application and then submit for enrollment consideration. After the application review is complete, the student will be contacted regarding the outcome.

Please note, the application packet must be completed in full before a student will be considered for admission to PVMS. Applications will be accepted two different times. For the Fall semester, applications will be accepted from July 6th – July 13th. For the Spring semester the application window will be broadcasted early November. After the application is reviewed, students and parents will be notified about admission status.

PROGRAM MODEL

The PVMS is designed to utilize current technology to individualize each student's academic program.

Students are expected to maintain 100% attendance while in PVMS as measured by participation in video-based meetings. Students are granted off site access to the curriculum. Pace and academic progress are monitored by the middle school. Students who do not progress adequately in both their pace and their academic progress may be removed from PVMS and returned to the face-to-face learning experience to improve academic outcomes.

The following supports will be offered:

    a. Direct daily video-based support
    b. Access to web conferencing
    c. Flexible time scheduling
    d. Daily meeting with core academic teachers
    e. Full access to PVMS technology
    f. Full access to internet-based services

Students should:

    a. Be able to remain on pace and pass all classes
    b. Have access to adequate technology and internet access from home
    c. Have the ability to communicate via e-mail

Pacing and academic progress will be evaluated weekly by the PVMS instructors.

Please note that online learning requires a highly motivated student with good home support.

Virtual students will only need to attend the PVMS physical site when they need to take a test on campus. The number and frequency of tests depends on the course.

PVMS PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

Paulding County resident: Students must reside within the borders of the Paulding Count School District.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will be responsible for completing an PVMS application and having their school counselor complete and submit the application for review.

Securing off site access to the internet and computer will be the responsibility of the student. Students will not be allowed to enroll in PVMS without confirmation of internet and computer access.

Students will be encouraged to complete career pathways course before entering PVMS. Students who have not completed a pathway will have limited access to Career Technical Agricultural Education (CTAE) courses.

Students will be expected to maintain on-line etiquette consistent with requirements of the PCSD student code of conduct while participating in PVMS either on site or virtually.

STATEMENT OF PLAGIARISM

Definition of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism in an academic setting occurs when a student uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common knowledge) material without crediting the original author. There are two types of plagiarism:

- Deliberate Plagiarism: The most serious offense, involves a deliberate attempt on the part of a student to pass off as his own the writing or ideas of another person (student, parent, published or unpublished author, et al). Straight copying or slight paraphrasing of a source that the student attempts to conceal.
- Unintentional Plagiarism: Carelessly or inadequately citing ideas and words borrowed from another source.

Both types of plagiarism are serious violations of the principles of academic integrity.

Penalties for Plagiarism:

- A student who has unintentionally plagiarized will not receive a grade until citation errors are corrected, at which time he will receive a grade reduction just as he would for any other formatting error. Should a student fail to resubmit the paper with corrections within five school days, he will receive a grade of zero. A pattern of documentation error will be considered as intentional.
- A student who intentionally plagiarizes will receive zero credit for the assignment and will be subject to a disciplinary referral. Recovery will not be given.
- A student who allows another student to copy his or her paper or assists in the act of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action.

1. What is the program called?
   - Paulding Virtual Middle School (PVMS)

2. Why did the district decide to develop PVMS?
   - PVMS was developed to meet the education needs of PCSD students who elect not to return to their home school due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Will there be teachers in the program?
   - All classes are taught online utilizing the best software based upon the student's performance level. PVMS is not designed for students to work 100% independently. Core academic instructors will support students by providing supported instruction, office hours for tutoring, web conferencing, video support materials, and e-mail contact. Teachers are available during school hours and students will have an attendance schedule.

4. Can homeschool students participate in the program?
   - Yes, the students will then be considered students of their districted school for all extra-curricular activities.

5. Can students participate in all activities at their home school?
   - Yes, in fact it is encouraged. Students who participate in PVMS are considered full members of their districted school and may participate in all clubs, sports, proms, and special events at the districted school.

6. How do students enroll?
   - Completion of the online request form located on the district website during the enrollment window.

7. Can students withdraw from PVMS and return to their districted school?
   - Yes, student may withdraw and return to their districted school up to the first 10 days of school. Typically transfers from PVMS to the districted school will occur at the end of each semester. Students may transfer at the beginning or at the end of any semester.

8. At what point are students committed to attending PVMS and cannot return to their districted school?
   - Students are permitted to return to their districted school within the first 10 days in the PVMS program.

9. What are the deadlines and timetables for applying to the PVMS?
   - For the Fall semester, applications will be accepted from July 6th – July 13th. For the Spring semester the application window will be broadcasted early November.

10. Will there be full time highly qualified staff to assist the students?
    - Yes, we anticipate great growth and will provide state certified and highly qualified core content teachers.

11. How often must the students physically attend PVMS?
    - Students are required to attend for proctored assessments and counselor tasks.

12. I have a child with an IEP that receives special education services, can my child attend the Paulding Virtual Middle School program?
    - Yes, as a program of our public-school system, Paulding Virtual Middle School accepts students with disabilities. Enrollment in Paulding Virtual Middle School is considered a school choice option. Special education services will be provided differently in an online environment. Once a student with a disability has been registered with Paulding Virtual Middle School, the Exceptional Students Education Program (ESEP) coordinator will facilitate an IEP to discuss possible amendments to the student's IEP to reflect acceptance into Paulding Virtual Middle School. We encourage parents to contact the PCSD Student Services Department at 770-443-8030 prior to registering; Student Services can also be reached at: studentservices@paulding.k12.ga.us

13. What would be an appropriate device to access the computer software and participate in video conferences?
    - Equipment: laptops, chrome books, desktops, tablets, cell phones. Tablets and cellphones work but can be challenging to navigate compared to laptops, chrome books, or desktops.
    - Video Conferencing: video conferencing works on any internet connected device. If two-way video is desired the internet connected device must have a camera.

14. As a student, is there a minimum amount of time each day that I should expect to spend completing assignments and participating in video conferences?
    - Students should expect to spend an average of one hour per class per day

15. What courses are offered?
    - 6,7,8 grade Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Family and Consumer Science, PE, Elective Spanish, Transition to High School, Health, Career Explorations. Students who meet district established guidelines will be able to take HS Spanish (7/8 grade), 8th grade students who meet district establish guidelines will be able to take HS Physical Science, Algebra I, and 9th grade literature.

16. Can my child participate in Band or Chorus at their home school while enrolled in Paulding Virtual Middle School?
    - Neither band nor chorus classes will be available to students enrolled in the virtual academy. Those who would like to participate in Band or Chorus must attend the traditional school setting.

20. What courses are offered

	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Language Arts	23.01100	23.01200	23.01300
Mathematics	27.02100	27.02200	27.02300
Science	40.06100	26.01100	40.01700
Social Studies	45.00700	45.00800	45.00900
Elective Spanish	60.06700	60.06800	60.06900
Spanish for HS Credit	N/A	60.07100	60.07100
Middle School Health	17.00700	17.00800	17.00900
Family & Consumer Science	20.01100	20.01200	20.01300
Middle School Career Explorations	N/A	32.02200	32.02300
Physical Education	36.00700	36.00800	36.00900
Transition to High School I, II, III	35.03000 (I)	35.03100 (II)	35.03200 (III)