VIRTUAL CODE OF CONDUCT

All students receiving digital curriculum and direct instruction online are subject to any applicable District policies and this Student Code of Conduct.

As an online student, there are additional rules and expectations regarding proper internet etiquette in place in order to protect all students. Internet access is required for all students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses, we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. We especially appreciate partnering with parents to teach responsible Internet use. Please review the following rules and expectations carefully:

- **Students are responsible for good behavior** on the network. Always use a computer in a way that shows consideration and respect. It is not acceptable to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- **We take integrity and authenticity of student work** very seriously. Do not cut, copy, or plagiarize Internet content or the work of your online classmates. Teachers do utilize technologies to check for authenticity. Copying, knowingly allowing others to copy from you, and/or misusing Internet content could result in removal from our courses and other disciplinary action.
- **Security is a high priority**, especially when the system involves many users. If you identify a security problem in the school's computers, network, or Internet connection, notify a system administrator.
- **Email is not private**. Never say anything via email that you wouldn't mind seeing on the school bulletin board or in the local newspaper.
- **Beware of emails from anyone, particularly adults you don't know**, asking for personal information, attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact. Alert your teacher of any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- **Email with your online classmates should be course-related.** It is prohibited to send unwelcome email or messages to your online classmates.
- **Email addresses that use profanity or may be construed as offensive, shall not be permitted for correspondence.** Administration reserves the right to determine if student email addresses are
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inappropriate. When necessary, students will be asked to use an alternative email address or be refused participation in courses.

- **Protect your password.** Keep it secret from anyone except your parents.
- **Administrators will cooperate fully** in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet access. In the event there is a claim that you have violated this policy, you will be provided with notice of the suspected violation and have an opportunity to present an explanation. Any violations may result in removal from course(s), as well as other disciplinary or legal action.
- **Student or parent/guardian may NOT record or take photos of any part of the online classroom. This includes any attempts to screen record or take video/photos on any other devices.**

**INTERNET USAGE POLICY**

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via our computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of AVE and, as such, is subject to disclosure to the parent, administration or other third parties. Consequently, AVE expects both students and staff to abide by the school’s Internet usage policy:

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Abuse of internet platforms and tools provided by the school in violation of school policies will result in disciplinary action. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else’s code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Sending or posting confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the organization
- Violating copyright law
- Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the organization or initiate unwanted Internet services and transmissions
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person
- Refusing to cooperate with a security investigation
- Using the Education Portal for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling
- Jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems
- Sending or posting messages that disparage another organization's products or services
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization
- Sending anonymous e-mail messages
- Engaging in any other illegal activities

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is an ethical code, whereby the student guarantees that all work submitted is the student’s own work. When students submit an assignment that is not their own original work, there are two issues involved:

- Students are earning credit for learning material for which they have not demonstrated mastery.
- They may be violating the policies of the school.

There are two kinds of academic integrity violations. One is “plagiarism” and the other is “cheating.”

Plagiarism - To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own: use (another’s production) without crediting the source. Some examples are, but not limited to the following:

- Copying and pasting a report from the Internet and representing it as your own work
- Copying any other work and not properly citing authorship

Cheating

- To influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice
- To practice fraud or trickery to violate rules dishonestly
- Providing questions/answers/work to another student
- Receiving questions/answers/work from another student
Ensuring Academic Integrity

AVE uses a variety of tools to ensure the integrity of student work.

- **Plagscan.com** - This Internet tool compares student work against a variety of databases. The Learning Management System is now integrated with Plagscan.com, and most work is automatically uploaded to the system. This database compares students’ work against other students’ work, as well as work found on the Internet.
- **Academic Integrity Database** - Database of student integrity incidences or violations. This database is used to monitor the number of student integrity issues.
- **Teacher Expertise** - Instructors have extensive classroom experience. Their expertise is often a guide in identifying the level of originality in student work.
- **Discussion Based Assessments** - Each teacher regularly conducts discussion-based assessments with his or her students. These conversations occur at specific intervals as well as randomly in a course and are included in the assessment component of each course. The teacher discusses individual student work and extends the conversation to allow the student to demonstrate mastery of the content and to verify the authenticity of the student’s work.
- **Academic Integrity Reporting Policy** - Community members, guidance counselors, parents, and students can call or email any academic integrity-related issue anonymously.

Consequences of Violation of this Policy

A variety of consequences will be administered when students are caught cheating or plagiarizing. These consequences range from resubmission of an assignment up to expulsion from coursework. Additionally, final grades may be rescinded if a student is found to have cheated or plagiarized after the grade has been posted to a transcript.

**Students** are responsible for submitting their own, original work and are expected to:

- Read and sign the Student/Parent Acknowledgement Form as part of the enrollment process
- Participate in a welcome call during which components of our academic integrity program will be discussed
- Ask any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating if they are not sure

**Parents**, as partners in supporting student learning, are expected to:

- Read and sign the Student/Parent Acknowledgement Form as part of the enrollment process
Somerset Academy St. Lucie

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- Participate in a welcome call during which components of our academic integrity program will be discussed
- Ensure that their student’s work is authentic and original
- Monitor, via their guardian account, various academic integrity tips from the IM
- Ask any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating if they are not sure

Teachers, as stakeholders in ensuring the highest standards of academic integrity, are expected to:

- Act as a resource for student questions
- Submit various assignments in the Plagscan.com database
- Coordinate any academic integrity issues with the Instructional Leader
- Verify student mastery of content through discussion based and authentic assessments
- Participate in any mandated trainings or staff development

Instructional Leaders are expected to:

- Support academic integrity in each course they oversee
- Ensure that all teachers participate in academic integrity initiatives
- Support the administration of consequences
- Provide support to the instructional staff in the implementation of these policies

STUDENT CODE OF HONOR

A student should NEVER:

- Share their Username and Password with anyone other than their Parents
- Use anyone else’s Username and Password
- Obtain or assist anyone to obtain unauthorized access to the network
- Post their or anyone else’s personal information (i.e. address, email, telephone, etc.)
- Post private messages sent to them
- Students may NOT record or take photos of any part of the online classroom. This includes any attempts to screen record or take video/photos on any other devices.
Students attending the virtual charter schools are public school students, and accordingly will follow their District’s Code of Student Conduct. Students will be expected to abide by the Sponsor’s Code of Student Conduct incorporating all applicable district policies, procedures, and student expectations for behavior. The school will follow guidelines and procedures related to discipline, suspension, and dismissal, as the school district is the only entity with the authority to dismiss a student.

In the virtual environment, however, there is a set of non-traditional types of misconduct that must be regularly monitored and, if not hopefully eliminated altogether, then disciplined in a swift and rigid manner. Accordingly, in addition to district applicable policies, the Code of Conduct incorporates expectations of conduct specific to participation in a virtual instructional program. For example, Internet access is required for all students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses, we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives.

**Cyber-bullying** - is an issue of conduct taken quite seriously by the school. Cyber-bullying, which is the use of the Internet and similar technologies to hurt and/or harm other people, has been a pervasive problem, especially among contemporary children and adolescents and can have extraordinarily deleterious effects on students, ranging from low self-esteem to poor academic achievement to severe mental and emotional problems even leading to suicide. In order to combat this serious problem, the school’s administrations, faculty, and staff prepare an introductory lesson educating students about the nature and consequences of cyber-bullying and how they can avoid and stop it. Beyond this proactive intervention, the school also closely monitors all discussion boards, student-to-student emails, and peer interaction that takes place through the Internet or other related technologies. Teachers are also trained (during professional development sessions) on how to identify potential cyber-bullying and are required to report to school administration any potential examples of such abuse.

**Violations** - As is the case with the gradation of cyber-bullying, the severity of the offense is the prime determinant in deciding the appropriate consequence. Again, depending on the violation, the school will follow the Schools discipline matrix from the student handbook for possible consequences adapting these to a virtual setting as necessary. For example, possible actions may include but are not limited to:

- **Written and verbal warning** and notification to the parent.
- A student’s online academic network activities will be monitored for the duration of the student’s current course(s) and the course(s) the student takes in the subsequent term.
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- **Suspension** from the program for a specified period of time. When a student is suspended, he or she is temporarily removed from class (the Learning Management System) or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is determined by the school Principal (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student’s permanent record. During a period of suspension as defined by the school Principal, a student’s permission to log on to and/or use parts of the LMS is restricted. Student access to Webmail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or the entire LMS may be revoked. In such cases where the student’s access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to the LMS and obtaining the student’s assignments, responding to Webmail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

When a violation has occurred, a report, including the date, time and circumstances of the alleged act, will be submitted. This report includes a description of the actions of all parties involved, names of witnesses available and documentary evidence that supports the charge. Students wishing to report a violation should file the report through the teacher. Upon receipt of the report, the school will determine if a policy may have been violated by the student. If there is sufficient information, the student and parent will be contacted in writing informing the student of the charges in sufficient detail, including the time and place the alleged violation occurred and the penalty that would be appropriate if the student did in fact violate the policy. A parent conference will be scheduled at that point to discuss the matter with the school principal.

**Teacher availability and Responsiveness**

Frequent student-teacher communication in the virtual learning environment requires commitment above and beyond the traditional workday by staff in a brick and mortar environment, as communication is the critical element to the success of the program. Instant Message (IM) communication and email are considered essential and are expected on a regular basis. Voice to voice communication is expected, at a minimum, during the initial start as well as at the end of the term. We make the following commitments to its students, parents and schools:

- All email, voicemail and instant message communication will be responded to within 48 hours during the workweek.
- Teachers will establish office hours and post them within the virtual classroom. During those hours, teachers will be available to answer phone calls, emails, and instant messages. Each request for correspondence will be answered in as timely of a fashion as possible with a minimum turnaround target of 48 hours. No response to a student/parent contact shall exceed 48 hours from the time of initiation.
- Teachers will update course announcement pages frequently.
Teachers will provide targeted and timely feedback to students on submitted assignments and completed assessments.

PARENT/GUARDIAN’S RESPONSIBILITIES

As a parent/guardian of a virtual school student, it is very important to understand the responsibilities associated with that role. With the many distractions students have today, it can be difficult for some students to set aside time to work on courses when not in school. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to encourage the student to manage their time in an effective way. Teachers will keep the parent/guardian apprised of the student’s progress and will initiate contact if they fall behind in their coursework.

Parents are expected to supervise and monitor their student’s progress throughout the duration of the course. This can be accomplished by accessing the parental account periodically to monitor student progress.

Parents should support Academic Integrity. Academic Integrity is one of our core values and one of the most important areas of focus as a learning organization. Students with Academic Integrity make decisions based on ethics and values that will prepare them to be productive and ethical citizens.

You may contact your child’s teacher directly via email and/or instant messaging to answer questions about the course that you may have. When a parent/guardian has a concern about the child’s performance or behavior, the parent/guardian should set up a conference with the child's teacher.

Parents/guardians should also be aware of the course progression plan that their student is following and use that to help plan for the child’s academic and educational future.

PRIVACY POLICY

We will abide by student privacy guidelines inspired by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of the federal government of the United States. The following persons have access to student records:

- Principal
- Administrative Team
- Professional Staff (Teachers, Guidance Counselor, the General Counsel)
Students may be provided with a unique password to access online content/resources. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her password in confidence.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

We do not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, physical, mental, emotional, learning disability or handicap in its education programs.

Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or marital status against a student or an employee is prohibited.

BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

Harassment is prohibited between members of the school community, including communication of any form between students, faculty and/or staff, and any third parties directly or indirectly related to the Academic Network.

We are committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which students, faculty, and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally and socially. Such an atmosphere must be free of intimidation, fear, coercion and reprisal.

It is an expectation that all students and employees shall use all equipment and programs for the intended educational purpose. We are committed to protecting its students and employees from bullying, harassment or inappropriate uses of computers or programs to participate in bullying behavior. Bullying and Harassment will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action.

Conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

Bullying, harassment, and cyber stalking are defined as inflicting physical or psychological distress, and/or communicating words, images or language using electronic mail that causes emotional distress and for which there is no legitimate purpose.

Any action by a student or parent deemed inappropriate will be fully investigated by the appropriate school administrator.
Consequences for students for actions that violate the policy on bullying and harassment shall be determined by the administrative staff and may include:

- Student/teacher/parent conference
- Suspension of email privileges
- Removal from access to courses

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

We will determine the appropriate disciplinary actions for student violations of the code of conduct as they arise. The severity of the offense is the prime determiner in deciding the appropriate consequence. Possible actions may include but are not limited to:

- Written and verbal warning and notification to the parent.
- A student’s online academic network activities will be monitored for the duration of the student’s current course(s) and the course(s) the student takes in the subsequent term.
- Suspension from the AVE program for a specified period of time.

When a violation has occurred, a report, including the date, time and circumstances of the alleged act, will be submitted. This report includes a description of the actions of all parties involved, names of witness’s available and documentary evidence that supports the charge.

Students wishing to report a violation should file the report through the teacher. Upon receipt of the report, it will be determined if the student may have violated a policy. If there is sufficient information, the student and parent will be contacted in writing informing the student of the charges in sufficient detail, including the time and place the alleged violation occurred and the penalty that would be appropriate if the student did in fact violate the policy.

**GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Each school will follow their existing grievance policy.