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Mission/Vision/Philosophy

Mission Statement

Southern York Digital Academy, through a cooperative effort with the students and family, will provide a quality online learning environment that challenges students to achieve their potential.

Vision

To provide an alternative learning opportunity which strives to develop productive, contributing, responsible citizens capable of meeting the global challenges of the future.

Philosophy

The philosophy of education at Southern York Digital Academy is to foster intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in all students according to their potential. The needs of the individual students are met through a variety of educational experiences, in an online learning environment with emphasis on the students as active learners. As a result of these learning experiences, the students will make vital contributions to the community in which they live. Furthermore, this program provides the students with additional flexibility in their schedules.

Contact Information

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Dr. Melissa Bell
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Schools

Friendship Elementary School

3457 Sticks Road
Glen Rock, PA 17327
(717) 235-4811 x1500

Shrewsbury Elementary School

331 South Main Street
Shrewsbury, PA 17361
(717) 235-4811 x5500

Southern Elementary School

3280 Fissels Church Road
Glen Rock, PA 17327
(717) 235-4811 x2500

Southern Middle School

3280 Fissels Church Road
Glen Rock, PA 17327
(717) 235-4811 x3500

Susquehannock High School

3280 Fissels Church Road
Glen Rock, PA 17327
(717) 235-4811 x4500

Technology Services

District Help Desk

(717) 235-4811 x7262
helpdesk@syicsd.org

Overview

What is the Southern York Digital Academy?

Digital Academy has a comprehensive K–12 curriculum delivered in an online format. In addition to providing individualized scheduling and pacing for students, the Southern York Digital Academy is able to offer unique opportunities that are unavailable from other cyber charter schools.

- The teachers for the Digital Academy are from Southern’s staff, which is made up of 100% highly qualified teachers.
- The Academy offers a fully blended approach to learning. All students have the opportunity to participate in any District run program such as art and design, technical education, music, athletics, etc. Students are a part of the Southern Community and have access to the opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Students who graduate from the Southern York Digital Academy will receive a Susquehannock High School diploma and will be able to participate at commencement ceremonies with other members of the graduating class.
- A unique aspect of the Digital Academy is our commitment to work in a collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District’s resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

Policies/Procedures

Admission Policy

The Southern York Digital Academy (SYDA) has a flexible admissions policy. Students may enroll throughout the school year, upon a school-based team meeting. If you are interested in enrolling, please contact the Digital Academy office.

Attendance Policy

Digital Academy maintains attendance records for **all students** in the Academy. Digital Academy attendance is measured by the state law that requires all Pennsylvania Schools to be open 180 days per year and in operation for 990 hours. In compliance with this law the SYDA will follow the Southern York County School District's academic calendar. Attendance will be taken weekly, with a week being considered Monday at 12:01 AM through Sunday at 11:59 PM.

Digital Academy will calculate weekly attendance using the following methodology:

- 1) Students will be required to remain "on pace" to complete their courses per semester.
 - a. Students will be required to complete no less than 30 assignments per week in order to remain on pace.
- 2) On average a typical cyber school student will spend 25 to 30 hours completing their coursework each week to remain on pace.

Attendance Communications

There are several ways that attendance is communicated to parents and students.

- A progress report is sent to all parents regularly.
- A **Digital Academy (Action Needed)** is emailed at the beginning of each week to students who have not met the requirements for attendance or pacing. This email includes course, grade, and assignments behind. An absent note is requested with this email. Absent notes can be submitted through our automated absent note system, by emailing or by faxing medical notes to the school office.
- Once a student accumulates 3 absences our team will communicate in writing to parent and student. This communication could be through an email or a letter via USPS mail service.
- After 5 absences a meeting is scheduled to address goals to improve attendance, which will be reviewed monthly until attendance improves.

When a student has not met the required assignment completion per week, absences will be recorded and reported to the school attendance office on a weekly basis. A student will be considered truant after three (3) unexcused absences. When a student has reached 5 unexcused absences a DAAP document (Digital Academy Attendance Plan) will be created with the school administration, counselor, coordinator and parents and student. While this plan does not necessarily replace the formal policy and procedure for a SAIP (Student Attendance Improvement Plan), it can serve to provide documented evidence of interventions that are implemented by the Digital Academy team to address attendance concerns. This plan will be reviewed monthly.

Excused Absence

Parents are responsible for providing the SYDA with an excuse form to verify the reason for the absence. The student's home school must receive this form within 3 days of the absence period. The following reasons may be considered as a valid excuse for a student absence assuming the parent provides satisfactory evidence:

- Death in the Immediate Family
- Medical or Dental Appointments
- Illness or Injury
- Quarantine
- Court or Administrative Proceedings
- Observance of a Religious Holiday
- Educational Opportunities/Family Educational Trips

**At times, students may need to be absent due to abnormal or unusual circumstances. When this happens, please contact the Digital Academy office immediately.

Truancy

Attendance is extremely important for success in the Digital Academy. It is the student's responsibility to be in attendance and complete their assignments.

Upon the third illegal/unlawful absence the parent/guardian will receive an official letter from Ms. Jill Platts the District's attendance officer. The letter will outline the legal penalties established by law for violation of the attendance requirements.

Communication Policy

Communication between the student, teacher, parent/guardian, school counselor, administration and Academy Coordinators is extremely important. Communication can take place via a number of approved systems: Email, Telephone, Course Message System, and by video-conference. Students will be required to read and respond to all relevant communication on a daily basis. Parents will be contacted regularly by the Digital Academy office.

Health Policy

All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code (28 PA Code Ch. 23). The only exemptions for immunizations are for religious beliefs or medical reasons.

Health Screenings

In compliance with School Code, all students are required to follow the health and dental exam policies.

Other Health Requirements

- All students must have yearly height/weight and far and near point vision screenings.
- All students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11 must have documented hearing screening results on file with the school nurse.
- All students in grades 6 and 7 must have a scoliosis screening with the results submitted in writing to the school nurse.

Enrollment Procedures

After being admitted into the Digital Academy, the Digital Academy office will coordinate with the family and the appropriate school counselor to review the enrollment procedures.

Withdrawal Procedures

Should the need for withdrawal arise, the parent/guardian should contact the Digital Academy office to discuss withdrawal procedures.

Expectations

Coordinators Expectations

The Coordinators are expected to:

- Serve as the primary contact person for all Digital Academy coordination of services.
- Monitor students' time spent online and their overall progress in all course work.
- Contact the parent/guardian regularly to review progress and discuss issues/concerns.
- Facilitate the creation of an **Individualized Instruction Program (IIP)** for every student who enrolls in the Academy.
- Be available for virtual and in person meetings with parents and students of the Academy.

Student Expectations

Students will be expected to:

- Participate in all required orientation training sessions.
- Complete all their class work independently, honestly and as accurately as possible.
- Contact their instructors when experiencing difficulties understanding assignments and content materials.
- Notify the Helpdesk when they are experiencing technological difficulties, which prohibit the student from completing assignments for any extended time period or when any content materials are not available.
- Participate in synchronous video lessons and/or meetings when applicable.
- Participate and attend real time student/instructor meetings through chat, phone, video or face-to-face opportunities as required.
- Maintain progress in their courses. If progress is not being met, the district may remove the student from their online courses and enroll them in regular courses for the remainder of the year.
- Return textbooks or computer equipment to the Southern York County School District immediately upon completion or withdrawal from the program.
- Understand that failure to complete the enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full.
- Review, sign, and adhere to the Southern York County Student Behavioral Handbook.

Teacher Expectations

The Digital Academy Coordinator Teachers are expected to:

- Maintain, monitor and adjust Digital Academy courses throughout the school year.
- Provide virtual office hours to answer questions and/or provide further feedback.
- When applicable, provide synchronous learning opportunities for students.
- Teachers prove and incorporate support resources to help students further their understanding or to assist with students having difficulty.
- Update grades and feedback in the Student Information System.
- Communicate regularly with SYDA students and parents/guardians.
- Conduct student/instructor/parent meetings as necessary.

Parent Expectations

Parent/Guardian's are expected to:

- Assist students and school counselors in the course selection process.
- Attend parent/student/teacher meetings as necessary.
- Monitor the student's time spent online and their academic progress.
- Understand that failure to complete the enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full.

Keys to Success

Students who are able to demonstrate the following may be more successful in their experience in the Digital Academy:

- Schedule specific times each day to work on assignments.
- Read all information, view all resources, and be responsible for making sure they understand the information being transmitted.
- Communicate regularly with their teachers.
- Work closely with a school counselor to plan appropriate course selections and to communicate individual needs.
- Take personal responsibility for their learning and contact the Digital Academy office when issues arise.

Honor System

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be honest in their work, including no cheating and no plagiarizing. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing may receive a failing grade for the particular assignments. It is up to the teacher, school administration and Digital Academy Coordinator to decide if the assignment may be redone or not. For more information on this topic please refer to the Southern York County School District Student Behavioral Handbook.

Plagiarizing: Taking someone else's words or ideas and submitting them as your own. Things such as copying a friend's answers and copying and pasting from a website are prohibited. Students are encouraged to discuss assignments, and to work collaboratively, but all work submitted should be the students own work or be properly cited.

Cheating: Gaining an unfair advantage by getting help from another source or looking at information that should be off-limits. Procedures for taking tests should be strictly followed. If no notes are allowed to take the test, then no notes or other documents should be open during the test.

Rules of Conduct

Southern York Digital Academy students should show respect to one another and to those employed to help them. The Southern York County School District will not tolerate harassment of its students or employees by other students, employees, or associates. Harassment is defined as threats or actual violence, hostility, intimidation, and/or hateful and insulting language. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances and other inappropriate conduct of sexual nature.

If a student feels they are being harassed by anyone associated with the Southern York Digital Academy, please contact the Digital Academy office immediately.

Please refer to Board Policy No. 248.

Student Behavior Handbook

All Digital Academy students and parents/guardians are required to review and sign and adhere to the respective school's behavioral handbook. Students in the Digital Academy are subject to all the provisions that regular education students adhere to.

Academic Information

Individualized Instruction Program (IIP)

Southern York County School District believes that it is our responsibility to provide an individualized personal learning experience for all students in our District. The SYDA is able to extend this experience to students in a virtual setting.

SYDA is fully committed to design an education plan that is tailored to the needs of each individual student. We do this by creating an **Individualized Instruction Program (IIP)** for every student that enrolls in the Academy. Each year, the student, parents/guardians, school counselor, school administration and all necessary SYDA staff will meet to develop an updated IIP. Throughout the year the IIP team will monitor the student's progress according to what was outlined in the IIP. If changes need to be made, a meeting will be scheduled to adapt the IIP.

Online Curriculum

In collaboration with our Southern York County School District highly qualified teachers, the Digital Academy has partnered with several vendors to provide a quality online curriculum. We are excited to share that our teachers have worked to align the online curriculum with our own rigorous in-school Southern York County School District curriculum. The curriculum creates differentiated and customized assignments to personalize instruction for each student. The project-based thematic units of instruction incorporate higher levels of thinking with an integration of science, social studies, and writing within reading and mathematics activities.

Blended Curriculum

Students who enroll in the SYDA have an option to enroll in any of the Southern York County School District's traditional courses. This approach allows participants to create a blended mix of online and face-to-face courses in a flexible program that offers the best of both worlds. This unique opportunity gives all students the opportunity to participate in any courses such as art and design, technical education, music, physical education, etc. Students are part of the Southern Community and have access to all opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary, middle and high schools. Southern York County School District is proud to offer this collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District's resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

Grading Policy

Letter	% Earned	GP A	Letter	% Earned	GP A
A+	99-100	4.25	C+	81-82	2.25
A	94-98	4.0	C	76-80	2.00
A-	92-93	3.75	C-	74-75	1.75
B+	90-91	3.25	D+	72-73	1.25
B	85-89	3.00	D	67-71	1.00
B-	83-84	2.75	D-	65-66	.75

Additionally, all high school core online courses (math, science, social studies, language arts) will use the same weighted system as Susquehannock High School.

Academic Calendar

The Digital Academy will follow the Southern York County School Districts published academic calendar. When the District is closed, students and staff are not required to work. Courses will be modified and adapted so that students will be able to finish the required elements each marking period.

Students of the Digital Academy are also required to participate in certain state tests. The testing dates can be found on the academic calendar.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements for the Digital Academy will follow the requirements on page 5 and 6 of the Susquehannock High School Course Curriculum Guide for 2020-2021. Students are required to attain 25 credits for graduation.

Additionally, all students prior to graduation will need to complete a graduation project. For more information on this project, please see the Susquehannock High School Course Curriculum Guide or contact the High School Counseling or Digital Academy office.

Special Education Overview

Upon admission and prior to enrollment, the parent/guardian must submit the students IEP to the Academy Coordinator to be reviewed by the Special Education Department.

Technology Information

Equipment/Internet Access

Each student is provided with a SYCSD issued student chromebook. *The District's Acceptable Use Policy governs the use of this computer.* CIPA compliant Internet filtering is applied for student use of all District-owned laptops and chromebooks.

Helpdesk Support

Technology Support Personnel will provide initial setup and provide any follow-up assistance with the use of District owned equipment. Help desk services are available Monday through Friday, between 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM (on school days) by phone at 717-235-4811 extension 7262 or via email at helpdesk@sycsd.org.

Student Activities

Extra-curricular

The Southern York County School District has a wide variety of extra-curricular activities that are open to all students enrolled in the SYDA subject to maintaining academic eligibility as outlined in the behavioral handbook. If you would like more information please contact the Digital Academy office.

Clubs

There are many clubs that meet at various times during the school day and after school hours. If you would like more information please contact the Digital Academy office.

Events

Throughout the year, there are many events that take place within the Southern York County School District. Events such as special assemblies, field trips, and school sponsored community events are all listed on the district calendar.