Bethel Park School District

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Bethel Park Online Academy

Handbook

Mission Statement

To lead an educational partnership with the community, maintaining an environment that challenges all students to reach their potential as lifelong learners and responsible members of society.

Bethel Park Online Academy

Program Overview:

Bethel Park School District is able to offer Bethel Park students the opportunity to participate in full-time online school. Bethel Park Online Academy is for Bethel Park students primarily in grades K-12. The Bethel Park Online Academy gives students the opportunity to complete school work using online curricula at home, while allowing Online Academy students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities sponsored by the district. In addition, Bethel Park Online Academy students who complete all of the program requirements will be awarded a Bethel Park School District diploma and will be eligible to participate in Bethel Park High School commencement exercises.

Advantages to Bethel Park School District's Online Option:

- Bethel Park High School Diploma
- Participation in School Sponsored and Extra-Curricular Activities
- Access to the School Library and its Resources
- Highly Qualified, PA Certified Teachers
- Elective Course Options
- Flexibility in Program Design
- Progress Monitoring
- Computer Provided by Bethel Park School District*

*NOTE: The computer and related equipment remain the property of Bethel Park School District. All equipment is collected at the end of each school year in order to perform basic maintenance and updates. The equipment will be redistributed at the start of the new year. The student and parent/guardian are responsible for any lost or damaged equipment at the current replacement cost.

Online Academy Program Facilitator:

Brian Lenosky, Online Education Director, Bethel Park School District

Contact Information: Phone: 412-854-8521

Email: lenosky.brian@bphawks.org

Non-discrimination Policy:

The Bethel Park School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification.

Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or need information about accommodations, for persons with disabilities should contact:

Mr. Leonard Corazzi, Title IX Compliance Officer, 301 Church Road, BP, PA 15102
Phone (412) 854-8424 / Fax (412)854-8430 / corazzi.leonard@bphawks.org

Health Screenings:

All students must participate in regular health screenings at Bethel Park High School. Individual screening appointments will be coordinated by the program facilitator in conjunction with the school nurse.

Internet Safety:

Bethel Park School District, along with Waterfront Learning and Educere will make every effort to maintain a safe learning environment for all students. All laptops are provided with basic Internet content filter and are locked to prevent students from downloading other programs. It is an assumed role of the parent/guardian to monitor his/her child as online studies are being completed at home. A record of sites visited and email account data will be archived. Bethel Park School District reserves the right to review live use and archived records. (Refer to Policy No. 815 Internet Acceptable Use).

Eligible Classes:

Students can take a maximum of eight full-year cyber courses per year, (8 credits). For hybrid students, (students enrolled in brick and mortar classes, and cyber classes), there is a maximum of eight full-year brick and mortar and cyber courses per year. Families must pay for all cyber courses beyond the eighth full-year courses (8 credits) Honors classes are not available. Families must pay for all credit recovery courses regardless of the time of year they are taken. Families must pay for all cyber courses that are not part of the Bethel Park School District curriculum. All additional courses must be pre-approved by the building principal in conjunction with the director of the BP Online Academy.

Academic Records:

Bethel Park Online Academy embraces the philosophy that online courses should be as rigorous as those taken in the school buildings. All credits earned in the Bethel Park Online Academy will be recorded as part of each student's official Bethel Park School District transcript. Program enrollment will be coded by homeroom assignment and course section number only in the District's internal database. Courses taken through the Online Academy will not have a unique designation on the transcript.

Minimum Requirements for Bethel Park Online Academy Graduation

Courses	Credits
English	4.0
Social Studies	4.0
Math	4.0
Science	4.0
Fine/Practical Arts	4.0
Health	0.5
Physical Education	1.0
Electives	7.5
Total	27

Enrollment Process:

Students interested in Bethel Park Online Academy are expected to have basic computer skills and be willing to adhere to all guidelines. Time management and independent work ethic are important attributes for students to be successful in the program. As part of the registration process, Bethel Park school counselors will review transcripts and complete a diploma audit. If the audit indicates that enrolling in the online program will not afford the student the opportunity to meet graduation requirements in a timely manner, enrollment may be declined. Additionally, enrollment may be declined if the courses offered in the online environment will not allow the student to continue his/her studies in a particular content area or if course options do not match the student's career focus. Enrollment may also be declined for students who have pending disciplinary matters and/or for students who have entered into legally binding agreements with the district in lieu of expulsion.

Interested students and their parents/guardians must complete all district enrollment forms as a means of confirming residency and program eligibility. Upon receipt of registration forms and academic transcripts, a representative of the Bethel Park School District will review all documents and confirm program eligibility based on progress made toward Bethel Park School District graduation requirements (see Policy No. #217 Graduation Requirements) and current online course options. Once eligibility has been established, the Bethel Park school counselors and/or the online academy facilitator will contact each student to arrange an interview to discuss program expectations, guidelines and to discuss each student's online scheduling options. Each student should investigate the specific subject requirements needed for admission to post-secondary school of his/her choice and/or course requirements specific to his/her area of career interest.

Second semester seniors are not eligible for cyber classes if they are attempting to enroll in cyber for the first time. Second semester seniors with an IEP, GIEP, 504 Agreement, or medical documentation must request approval from the building principal/LEA.

Progress Monitoring and Login Time:

Bethel Park Online Academy follows the school district's calendar. Students in grades 3-6 are required to complete 900 hours of instruction and students in grades 7-12 are required to complete 990 hours of instruction per year. Student login time will be reviewed at least weekly by the Bethel Park school Attendance Officers, Counselors, Principals, and/or the Director of Cyber Education.. Students must successfully complete, (ie: passing 62%), 3% of each course per week. If at any time the student rate of completion falls significantly behind or the grade drops below a 62%, the student will be asked to return to school for support. Failure to comply with these minimum requirements will make the student ineligible for athletics as well as other school sponsored events. Students must demonstrate adequate academic progress and participation to validate their attendance. However, students who continue to demonstrate a lack of commitment to their online studies will be referred to the local Magistrate in consideration of truancy charges and/or withdrawn from the Online Academy. Following the third unlawful absence, the building secretary will notify the building principal and a letter will be sent home via certified mail. This letter will notify the parent that they are to attend a meeting (school/family conference) to correct their student's truant behavior. Attending the meeting will be the Parents, Principal, Cyber School Director, School Nurse and Social Worker, as well as any other school/resource personnel who may play a role in the student's education as deemed necessary by the principal. At the end of the conference all parties should sign a Student Attendance Improvement Plan. All cyber school students must adhere to the PA attendance regulations.

Students who fail to complete the course or earn a grade of less than 60%, will receive zero credit for the course. This course will need to be retaken either in a summer school setting or the next school year at the parent/guardian expense. There are no course extensions permitted unless deemed extenuating circumstances by the building principal, (ie: power outages, health issues with medical documentation). The Bethel Park Online Academy follows the original Bethel Park School District calendar set at the start of the school year. The cyber school calendar is not extended due to inclimate weather.

Students may choose to come back to Bethel Park School District at anytime, although it is recommended to do so at the end of the 9 weeks grading period. Cyber school teaching staff and the online academy administrator are there to assist you, answer any questions you may have, or provide any other support you may need.

Reporting Student Progress:

The Bethel Park school counselors and/ or Principals, in conjunction with members of the cyber school teaching staff, will record grades based on content and skill mastery. Report cards will be issued to Online Academy students on a quarterly basis, consistent with Bethel Park School District reporting procedures. Scheduling of parent conferences should occur at times and places that ensure the greatest degree of participation by parents that do not preclude the participation of either parent. (Refer to Policy No. 212 Reporting Student Progress).

School Calendar:

Bethel Park Online Academy students will follow the District's official school calendar. Cyber classes will begin and end at the nine week breaks on the school calendar. For example, 2nd nine weeks material for cyber will not begin until the 2nd nine weeks on the school calendar begins.   Some modification to the schedule can be made if documented in the student's IEP, GIEP, 504 Agreement, or medical excuse. Student/Parent/Guardian must request approval from the Building Principal.

Online Academy studies will NOT be extended with any/all dates added to the District's calendar as a result of cancellations. Online Academy class meeting times will not be adjusted based on delays, snow delays or early dismissals. Online Academy classes will continue when Bethel Park School District classes have been cancelled due to inclement weather or other circumstances that might warrant cancellation at the discretion of the Bethel Park School District Superintendent.

Extra-Curricular Participation:

Students enrolled in the Bethel Park Online Academy are afforded the opportunity to participate in all Bethel Park School-sponsored and extracurricular programs consistent with students who are attending the regular school. Bethel Park Online Academy students who participate in school-sponsored, extracurricular activities are subject to academic and attendance monitoring as per district, WPIAL and PIAA policies and procedures. Bethel Park Online Academy students will be held to the same level of review based on the District's Student Handbooks for the Elementary, Middle School and the High School. Participation and/or attendance at school-sponsored activities may be revoked at the discretion of Bethel Park School District staff.

School Counselors and Social Workers:

The Bethel Park High School District provides school counselors at the High School, Independence Middle School, and Neil Armstrong Middle School for cyber school students consistent with students who are attending these schools. Social Workers are also available at all Bethel Park School District Schools for cyber school students consistent with students who are attending the brick and mortar schools. These services are not an online option but students can make an appointment to come into the buildings to receive services.

Steel Center Area Vocational Technical School and Bethel Park Online Academy:

Bethel Park High School provides the necessary graduation requirements for all of the district's students. Parents of Steel Center AVTS students who desire this online option are welcome to work through the Bethel Park Online Academy Facilitator to make arrangements for such.

Advanced Placement Exams:

Students who take an online Advanced Placement course who wish to take the exam will follow the same procedures as students who take AP courses at Bethel Park High School. Students are required to come into their school building to take the AP Exams.

Keystone Exams:

Students enrolled in the Bethel Park Online Academy will participate in the Keystone Assessments. The Keystone Exams are required end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of: Algebra I, 10th grade Literature and English Composition, and Biology. Cyber students are required to come into their respective school building to take the Keystone Exams. Keystone Exams occur during in May when the student completes the respective course. Students that do not pass the Keystone Exam are required to take a remediation course as per the District Policy # 215 Promotion and Retention. Retake Keystone exams occur during the winter and the spring for students who did not pass the exam.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment:

All students, grades 3-8, including Bethel Park Online Academy students, are required to take the ELA (English Language Arts), and Mathematics exams as part of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Additionally, all students in 4th and 8th grade will take the PSSA Science exam. Bethel Park Online Academy students enrolled in grades 3-8 will be required to report to their respective school building to take the PSSA.

Remediation Requirements

Per Bethel Park Policy 217, "A requirement for graduation shall be the completion of work and studies representing the instructional program assigned to grades 9 through 12, which are aligned to established academic standards, and fulfillment of state mandated requirements, and evidence of obtainment of proficiency on the state test (ex. Keystones). If the above criteria are not met, a student must show evidence of competency through a remediation course, a Project Based Assessment or a portfolio review. Please reference the High School Course Selection Guide and BP web page for specific details.

Lost or Damaged Equipment:

Students are loaned computer equipment to access the online courses. This equipment will include but is not limited to: a laptop. The computer and other equipment issued remain the property of Bethel Park School District. Computers and equipment are collected at the end of each school year in order to perform basic maintenance and updates. Redistribution of equipment will be at the start of each school year. The student and parent/guardian are responsible for any lost or damaged equipment at the current replacement cost.

Pupil Services:

The Bethel Park School District seeks to meet the needs of pupils by employing specialists in many areas. Some of the services provided include the following:

ESL	Hearing Support
Speech Therapy	Adaptive Physical Education
Remedial Reading	Emotional Support
Autistic Support	Learning Support
Gifted Support	Life Skills
Academic/Instructional Support	Psychological Evaluation
Occupational Therapy	Home-School Visitation
Vision Support	Social Work Services
Physical Therapy	After School Tutoring K-4

Requesting a Special Education Student Evaluation:

Parents or guardians, who are interested in having their child evaluated by the Bethel Park School District through a school based multi-disciplinary evaluation (initial evaluation) or re-evaluation (already identified as needing special education supports), should provide a written request to the Building Principal located in their child's neighborhood school or to the Director of Special Education at the district administration building.

The written request should include the reason(s) for the request and specifically, the educational concern(s) that you have for your child (i.e. academic, behavioral, social). In-turn, the District will either agree to the evaluation by issuing a Permission to Evaluate/Re-Evaluate Consent form or reject the evaluation by issuing a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), which would indicate the reason(s) why the evaluation is being rejected.

If an evaluation/re-evaluation is agreed to by the District and written parent or guardian consent is granted, the student evaluation will be completed and disseminated to the parent or guardian within 60 calendar days. At that time, the parent or guardian will be invited to attend a multi-disciplinary or IEP team meeting to review the results of the report, ask questions to school personnel and to develop or revise an Individualized Education Program (IEP), if the child is found to be or continues to be eligible for special education services.

For additional information or if you have any questions, please contact:

> Lori Sutton, Director of Special Education
> Special Services Department
> Bethel Park School District
> 301 Church Road
> Bethel Park, PA 15102
> 412-854-8410
> sutton.lori@bphawks.org

Gifted Education Screening & Evaluation Procedures

- The Bethel Park School District aims to identify any student who performs or shows potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of his/her age.
- The first step to identifying students who are suspected of mental giftedness is through the BPSD referral process.
- At any time during the year, a parent or school designee (teacher, guidance counselor, principal) may refer a student who they determine exhibits traits/characteristics of a gifted learner.
- The district ensures equal access to screening and further assessment to all district children.
- Building level administrators review student screening data throughout the school year on an ongoing basis.
- If a school designee should decide to refer a student, a Gifted Screening Form (GSF) is completed which outlines the following.
  - The district utilizes a matrix rating system which assigns a set number of points to each of 6 areas.
    - The teacher or school designee rates the student using the most recent group assessments (achievement and cognitive ability), current grade point average, and estimates of acquisition and retention. Information is collected using the student's educational records as well as teacher input.
  - Based on the score profile, the student may be referred for further assessment, referred for further discussion or consideration by the school based team, or not referred. For referrals whose scores are lower than a pre-determined threshold, the school principal must sign off to assure that the appropriate information was reviewed.
- While a referral can be made at any time of year, teachers typically complete the GFS, following receipt of the results of the InView group ability assessment, PSSA, Keystone, or other achievement measure. This is to allow for a more detailed analysis of the student's individual strengths and to make a reasonable determination whether to refer the student for further evaluation.
- Parents are also able to initiate screening or referral for consideration of a gifted evaluation.
- Parents can recommend to their child's respective school that a screening be completed to determine if their son/daughter is an appropriate candidate for a gifted evaluation.
- In addition, parents who wish to refer their child for a multi-disciplinary gifted evaluation, must put this request in writing and forward the letter to their child's teacher or principal. Upon review, the principal will forward the letter to the special services department and within 10 calendar days, a permission to evaluate must be supplied to the student's parent(s).