Virtual High School Calendar

Virtual
HIGH SCHOOL

Last revised in 2026

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1. Virtual High School

Virtual High School has been an inspected private school in the Province of Ontario, Canada since 2001. The Ontario Ministry of Education has issued the BSID# 665681 to Virtual High School. Virtual High School issues Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credits to students from all over the world.

2. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

2.1 Mission

To deliver an online secondary education experience with outstanding teaching, high-quality courses, and exceptional administrative support in an atmosphere that enables every student to achieve their academic goals.

2.2 Vision

At Virtual High School, we focus on delivering the highest quality education to our students and preparing them for post-secondary success. With rigorous academic standards, exceptional teaching, and outstanding administrative support, we deliver flexible online courses that accommodate and respond to the needs of individual learners. Our innovative approach to education fosters the skills, qualities, and knowledge students need to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. We are committed to upholding a culture that champions diverse, healthy, and inclusive communities while encouraging responsibility, respect, integrity, perseverance, and innovation.

2.3 Core Values

The five chambers found near an apple's core grow seeds that hold incredible potential. At Virtual High School, we aim to have our school community demonstrate five specific core values: responsibility, respect, integrity, perseverance, and innovation. Whether you are a student, teacher, or administrator, these five life skills will benefit you, our community, and the world beyond.

Responsibility

The value of responsibility calls people to complete their duties to the best of their ability.

Students of VHS act responsibly when they do the following:

- Put a strong effort into their work
- Ask questions and use feedback to improve their understanding

Staff and teachers of VHS act responsibly when they do the following:

- Create content that is interesting and prepares students for the future
- Help students improve their knowledge and skills by providing valuable feedback

Respect

The value of respect calls everyone to treat others positively and appreciate the abilities, qualities, and achievements of others.

Students of VHS act respectfully when they do the following:

- Communicate with others in a positive, kind manner
- Recognize others' successes and support others in times of need

Staff and teachers of VHS act respectfully when they do the following:

- Provide inclusive learning opportunities that allow all students to learn and grow
- Model kind, caring interactions to students

Integrity

The value of integrity calls people to act in honest, trustworthy, and respectful ways.

Students of VHS act with integrity when they do the following:

- Complete their work using their own ideas and knowledge
- Take pride in the work they complete

Staff and teachers of VHS act with integrity when they do the following:

- Provide resources on how to show academic honesty
- Encourage students to use critical and creative thinking strategies
- Provide accurate, supportive, and honest feedback to nurture positive development

Perseverance

The value of perseverance calls people to put in the effort necessary to reach their goals, even if there are challenges on their way to success.

Students of VHS demonstrate perseverance when they do the following:

- Set challenging goals and work to reach them
- Believe in their ability to reach their goals and continue improving

Staff and teachers of VHS demonstrate perseverance when they do the following:

- Demonstrate that challenges are another opportunity to continue to learn
- Hold students to high standards to help them reach their fullest potential

Innovation

The value of innovation calls people to be creative in how they solve problems and discover new knowledge.

Students of VHS demonstrate innovation when they do the following:

- Learn about and use new technologies
- Use new strategies to solve problems and maximize their learning and success

Staff and teachers of VHS demonstrate innovation when they do the following:

- Provide chances for students to develop and apply 21st century skills
- Engage students through innovative approaches to learning
- Remove barriers for students to support their learning

3. Goals

A positive, responsive, and respectful online school culture does not happen in isolation but arises as all teachers and administrative staff focus on achieving the three goals set by Virtual High School in a thoughtful and meaningful manner.

3.1 Reaching out to National and International Students

Many international students come to Ontario to pursue secondary school because Ontario is recognized across Canada and around the globe as a leader in educational excellence. The Ontario government is committed to keeping Ontario as an educational destination for international students. Virtual High School attempts to follow in these footsteps by providing a positive educational experience for our national and international students seeking online Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credit courses. Students completing their OSSD with Virtual High School may then consider Ontario as a potential destination for their post-secondary education. Actions to be taken by Virtual High School are:

- ensure Virtual High School courses provide a high-quality learning experience for national and international students.
- focus on the specific educational needs of international students and provide direct intervention to meet these needs in meaningful ways; and
- consider every student equally and thus provide opportunities for the student to achieve success according to their own interests, abilities, and goals.

3.2 To Be Responsive to the *Educational Needs* of Our Students

The educational philosophy of Virtual High School has always been to provide a student-centered education in the online environment. The growth in the number of students taking our courses, the high level of completion rates within Virtual High School courses, and the strong academic performance of our students as they progress into post-secondary institutions, all affirm that we are focused on the essential educational outcomes. Actions to be taken by Virtual High School are:

- allow the student to start their Virtual High School course on any day, move through the course at any pace, and write the final exam on any day,
- contact the student upon registration to provide the necessary information, enabling them to begin the online course quickly,
- post the contact information of Virtual High School administrative teams at our main website to help students quickly receive answers to their questions,
- promote communications between the student and their teacher upon enrolment to open this extremely important connection,
- adhere to the principles and policies outlined in "*Growing Success: Assessment and Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools*" to improve student learning,
- constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the initial student communication, student handbook, course introduction units, News items, and school website,
- share best practices of teacher-student interactions among all Virtual High School teachers,
- enable all Virtual High School staff to receive student feedback to determine the extent to which student educational needs are being met, and
- create an environment where **student and parent feedback** is encouraged and welcomed so that this constructive feedback is acted upon in a prompt and welcomed manner.

3.3 To Be Responsive to the *Administrative Needs* of Our Students

Virtual High School makes every attempt to provide a full range of academic services to its students. Our goal is to make sure that this full range of services is provided in a professional and timely manner to all students. Actions to be taken by Virtual High School are:

- establish and maintain Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC) accounts for our OSR students planning to enter university upon graduation from Virtual High School;
- maintain Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) accounts for our OSR students planning to enter college upon graduation from Virtual High School;
- produce and forward copies of the Ontario Student Transcript (OST) to post-secondary institutions in a timely manner;

- make arrangements for students to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), a requirement for graduation;
- establish and implement accommodations for exceptional students, based on their existing Individual Education Plan (IEP) in order to identify the student's specific learning expectations;
- establish and maintain an Ontario Student Record (OSR) for those students who are the sole responsibility of Virtual High School, following the Ontario Ministry of Education's guidelines; and
- determine the equivalent credits earned by students entering the Ontario school system in their previous educational setting and to advise the student on the remaining requirements to be completed in order to earn the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

4. The School

Every student in Ontario is required to remain in secondary school until they reach the age of eighteen or obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Virtual High School aims to provide each student with the opportunity to achieve success according to the student's own interests, abilities, and goals. By providing a quality online education within the student's greater educational community, Virtual High School can offer the student more choice in their educational endeavours. While Virtual High School may have changed the form of the school in which this mission is carried out, we have not changed the provision of providing quality education to the student.

4.1 Program Structure/Delivery Model

Virtual High School operates on a continuous intake, asynchronous delivery model. As such, the school does not follow traditional terms, reporting periods, or timetables. Students progress at an individualized pace, with ongoing assessment and feedback provided throughout the course. All courses are designed to meet Ministry requirements, including the equivalent of 110 hours of instructional time per credit.

4.2 Student - Teacher Interaction

The student from anywhere in the world can interact in meaningful ways with their Virtual High School teacher as long as they have an internet connection. A host of communication tools and procedures have been developed by D2L within the Brightspace Integrated Learning Platform to facilitate this essential communication component of a quality education. These include email, threaded discussions, assignment feedback through the dropbox, and testing feedback. A Virtual High School student has many ways of communicating with their teacher and the teacher has many options to communicate information and ideas back to the student.

4.3 Student - Student Interaction

A host of communication tools and procedures have been developed by D2L within the

Brightspace Integrated Learning Platform to facilitate student – student interaction, an essential component of a quality education. A student has many ways of communicating with other students in their course. These include email and threaded discussions. Students may also respond to discussion threads from students who may have completed a course before them.

4.4 Student - Administration Interaction

With multiple tools at their disposal, the Virtual High School principal and administration may intervene early in addressing conduct concerns and other problems within proper conduct, and other problems within the various courses. The goal is to ensure that the technology does not become a deterrent to effective learning. Prompt and early intervention solves small problems before they become impediments to the learning process. The student has quick and easy access to the principal and other staff via their Classlist and the Contact Us page.

4.5 Student - Resources Interaction

The student has access to quality online courses and can easily view resources to enhance their learning experience. The student will also have access to both career information, which is being built into every course to meet with Ministry Program Consideration expectations, as well as more general career information provided on an 'as-needed' basis. In addition, Virtual High School offers access to myBlueprint for all students whose Ontario Student Record (OSR) is held at Virtual High School. This program allows students to plan their education, review their options for post-secondary programs, and assists in the course selection process.

4.6 Parent - School Interaction

The parents or guardians of students under 18 and the parents or guardians, with the permission of adult students, may have access to the student's online course including assessment and evaluation items. If the student does not share the access directly with the parent, the parent can contact the Virtual High School office for information. This allows the parents to become more involved with the education of their child. An online, transparent electronic grade book, electronic report cards, online conferencing, and direct phone contact with the Virtual High School principal and office staff, also promotes parental involvement.

Periodic news items are posted online at the Virtual High School website by the school to an area viewable by parents and the broader community. (*https://www.virtualhighschool.com/blog/*).

With Virtual High School, parents have the responsibility and opportunity to work with their child in the planning of their secondary school education. The final decision of the course selection of students under the age of 18 rests with the parents. All students and their parents should consider seriously the advice and recommendation of the school. The consequences of course selection can be extremely important whether students plan to work or attend college or university. Detailed courses of study are available at the school website. (*https://www.virtualhighschool.com/courses/*)

4.7 Hardware and Software Requirements

Brightspace is an online Integrated Learning Platform and requires an internet connection to be

accessed. In order to login and use the service your browser is required to have JavaScript and Cookies enabled, and it should be set to allow pop-ups and redirects from virtualhighschool.com.

Brightspace Learning Environment continuously updates and is supported on the following platforms with the latest browser versions.

Desktop Browser Support:

Platform	Apple® Safari®	Google® Chrome™	Microsoft® Edge	Mozilla® Firefox®
Apple® Mac OS®	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Microsoft® Windows®	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Tablet/Mobile Browser/Operating System Support:

Platform	Apple® Safari®	Google® Chrome™	Microsoft® Edge	Mozilla® Firefox®
Apple® iOS® for iPhone® and iPad®	Yes	No	No	No
Android™ OS for Android phones and tablets	No	Yes	No	No

Some courses also require the use of additional software that is provided in the course. Some courses may require additional hardware such as a camera, a microphone, or speakers. Please refer to the specific course outline to determine if any additional software or hardware is required or provided in the course.

5. Code of Behaviour

It is the duty and responsibility of the principal of **Virtual High School** to enforce the consequences when people do not obey the code of behaviour expected of all people within our online school community.

5.1 Attendance

Regular engagement in the learning process is essential for student achievement and success. In an online asynchronous environment, attendance is demonstrated through active participation in course content, learning activities, and assessments. Consistent engagement supports progress, skill development, and the achievement of curriculum expectations. Students who do not regularly engage with their course may experience gaps in learning and reduced achievement.

The following processes are in place to monitor, support, and promote regular student engagement and attendance:

1. The principal maintains attendance records for all students. In an asynchronous environment, attendance is monitored through evidence of active engagement in the course.
2. Due to the continuous intake model, Virtual High School does not follow a traditional daily attendance structure. Instead, attendance is demonstrated through regular participation in learning activities. Indicators of attendance include:
    - Access to and progression through course content
    - Time spent engaging with course materials
    - Completion and submission of assignments and assessments
    - Communication and interaction with the teacher
3. Student participation and engagement are continuously monitored by teachers. Participation is assessed through ongoing communication, responsiveness to feedback, and involvement in course activities and assessments, in alignment with Growing Success principles.
4. Although pacing is flexible, students are expected to demonstrate consistent progress. A typical course may take approximately 110 hours to complete; however, timelines are individualized and may vary based on the student's schedule and learning needs.
5. Students who become inactive for an extended period may be contacted by the school to re-engage in their course. Continued inactivity may impact the student's ability to successfully complete the course within the maximum 18-month timeframe.
6. Students who wish to withdraw from a course must communicate their intent in writing or by contacting the school directly to ensure accurate record keeping.
7. Students must complete their course within 18 months of enrolment. Students who exceed this timeline may be removed from the course unless an extension has been approved by the school.

Regular engagement is essential to student success, and the school supports students through ongoing feedback, communication, and monitoring to ensure they remain actively involved in their learning.

As of December 20, 2006, all students under 18 years of age are required to be in attendance at school unless they have already graduated or are otherwise excused from attendance at school.

5.2 Safe School Environment

Virtual High School makes considerable effort to provide and maintain a safe environment in which learning can occur. Protection of a person's dignity and self-esteem is critical. The following processes have been put into place to create a safe school environment for the student:

1. All students are expected to treat other students, teachers and admin staff with respect, courtesy, and consideration. Profanity will not be acceptable in any of the communication tools provided within the online courses.
2. All students will accept the authority of the teachers and all teachers will demonstrate respect for all students.
3. Threats, distasteful remarks, abuse of any kind, or harassment by any individual which impairs the health and welfare of any student or staff member is not permitted and is to be reported to the Virtual High School principal immediately. The principal will determine the consequence according to the situation.

5.3 Code of Conduct for Computer Use

The school reserves the right to monitor all material in user accounts on the file server in order to determine the appropriateness of computer use when a challenge has arisen. The following processes have been put into place:

1. The Brightspace Integrated Learning Platform at Virtual High School is a Learning Management System (LMS) and is intended for educational purposes only. Any use of any LMS tool within course for any other purpose other than the intended educational purpose is prohibited. The inappropriate uses include, but are not limited to, criminal, obscene, commercial, or illegal purposes.
2. Student access into the LMS is provided as long as the student follows the guidelines set by the school principal, provincial, and federal laws.
3. If the LMS is used inappropriately or in a prohibited manner, the principal reserves the right to terminate the registration or suspend the user. There is the possibility of further disciplinary action including legal prosecution, if the appropriate laws, regulations, or contracts deem it necessary.
4. Malicious LMS network damage, interference or mischief will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
5. It is important to be aware that activities in an online environment are not private. The school reserves the right to monitor all material that is placed in a user's account and to remove it if deemed necessary.
6. The security of the online environment is only as effective as the practices of its users. Therefore, it is important that the student user:

- Never reveal your Virtual High School password to any individual, except your parent or guardian.
- Always report to your principal any email or chat message which causes you concern

or any message which requests inappropriate personal information from you.

- Never attempt to access unauthorized material or to impersonate another user. Any attempt to vandalize, harm or destroy data of another user is prohibited. Any attempt to vandalize the data of the course or school is also prohibited.

5.4 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents another person's work as the student's own. This is not acceptable at Virtual High School. The Virtual High School Plagiarism Policy is designed to teach the student to identify plagiarism, to distinguish between the two types of plagiarism, to identify strategies to avoid plagiarism, to practice proper paraphrasing and to explain the consequences of plagiarism by the student. Commercial search engines are often very good at detecting work copied from material available online. Experienced teachers can often spot when writing does not come from the student.

Negligent Plagiarism means presenting someone's work as your own in an accidental, naïve, careless, or reckless way. This often happens when a student paraphrases incorrectly or when a student borrows words or phrases from another source and forgets to cite the source.

Dishonest Plagiarism means that the student has knowingly presented a person's work as their own. All instances of plagiarism that are not considered to be negligent plagiarism will be assumed to be dishonest plagiarism. Examples of dishonest plagiarism are:

- borrowing facts or information that are not common knowledge and not citing the source. Common knowledge includes things that are commonly known, such as: Toronto is the capital of Ontario, Charles Darwin proposed a theory of evolution, The Amazon is the world’s largest tropical rainforest , etc. Common knowledge facts do not have to be cited;
- cutting and pasting text from websites with no intention to cite the source;
- handing in an online essay or portions of one as though it were your own work;
- copying another person's work and presenting it as your own;
- using another person's 'lab' findings from an activity or experiment;
- having another person write a portion or all of your final exam;

This means the student must not cheat or try to cheat in any way. It hopefully means that students will come to value their achievement when it is honestly, fairly, and respectfully won through hard work.

5.5 Academic Integrity

Virtual High School is committed to ensuring the integrity and validity of student achievement within its courses by promoting academic honesty among its students. Students are responsible for upholding integrity and will be held accountable for the quality of their work and actions. Virtual High School takes preventative measures to reduce the incidence of academic dishonesty among its students. Virtual High School may review any work or correspondence submitted by a student to determine its authenticity and legitimacy. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students who violate the academic integrity of Virtual High School will be subject to discipline in accordance with this policy. Academic dishonesty consists of any deliberate

attempt to falsify, fabricate, or otherwise tamper with data information, records, or any other material that is relevant to the student's participation within any course. Academic offenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty intended to gain unfair academic advantage;
2. Distributing or receiving answers or other information by means other than those expressly permitted by the teacher as part of any assignment, test or the final examination;
3. Copying answers, or other information (or allowing others to do so) during any assignment, quiz or the final examination in which a student is not permitted to work jointly with others;
4. Submitting academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source;
5. Assuming another individual's identity or allowing another person to do so on the student's behalf for the purpose of fulfilling any academic requirement or in any way enhancing the student's grade or academic standing;
6. Using any device, implement, or other form of study aid during the final examination without permission, or as explicitly stated within a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP);
7. Using Artificial Intelligence tools to generate the student's work;
8. Allowing another individual to access course content, a quiz, unit test or final exam at any time while the student is completing an assessment;
9. Accessing course content or external content during the final exam.

6. General Educational Philosophy

6.1 Teachers

The teachers at Virtual High School will emphasize that students actively inquire into and make connections between ideas and subject areas. A variety of teaching methods will be used including:

- direct instruction via structured lessons and activities,
- differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students,
- scaffolded instruction to promote greater independence in the learning process,
- opportunities to collaboratively construct knowledge through discussions and reflection, and
- personalized and comprehensive assessments.

6.2 Curriculum

Virtual High School courses are constructed using a backward design approach with the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations as the starting point for all instruction and assessment. The curriculum at Virtual High School will deal with real-life applications of student learning as much as possible. The curriculum expectations are stated as clear objectives that have been broken down into achievable targets and are transparent to students in each lesson and assessment. At Virtual High School, we focus on educating the whole student and cultivating digital citizens by giving students opportunities to think critically and creatively, solve complex problems, and communicate well.

6.3 Students

Each student at Virtual High School will be treated as an individual and encouraged to express their own opinions and ideas.

- The teachers at Virtual High School will be aware of the learning styles of their students as much as possible, in order to use strategies most effectively in the learning process.
- Opportunities will exist for all students to be successful by providing them with the opportunities to seek additional help, to have large complex tasks broken into manageable chunks, to have scheduled student conferencing with a member of the Virtual High School Academic Team and to have clear standards for evaluations.
- Students must respect the intellectual property rights of others.

6.4 Assessment and Evaluation

A wide variety of assessment and evaluation tools will be used at Virtual High School including quizzes, tests, projects, essays, journals, and final assessments.

- A variety of assessment and evaluation devices will be used by the teacher and the student.
- The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.
- At the beginning of each course, the student will be made aware of the assessment and evaluation process and subsequent criteria.
- Regular communication with parents and guardians is available upon request and will provide them with pertinent information on student progress for students under 18 and for students over 18 who have given permission to Virtual High School to discuss their education with their parents or guardians.
- Careful tracking of the student's progress with respect to the expectations is the shared responsibility of both the student and the teacher.
- Identified Special Education students must have their learning differentiated according to the student's Individual Education Plan.
- Rubrics will be used by teachers regularly and consistently.

6.5 Exceptional Students

Recognizing the needs of exceptional students and designing an online program to respond effectively to these needs is a priority at Virtual High School. Documentation outlining a student's specific areas of strength and need, such as an Individual Education Plan (IEP), can be provided to Virtual High School to have accommodations implemented into the student's course. An IEP identifies a student's specific learning needs and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate accommodations within their courses. Virtual High School will apply the accommodations outlined in the student's IEP in their online course. Students are provided with the accommodations identified in their IEP when completing course assignments, activities, and assessments.

7. Program Planning

Any person interested in learning more about secondary education at Virtual High School will find the relevant policies set out in *Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016 (OS)* by the Ministry of Education of Ontario to be particularly informative.

Links to all appropriate Ontario curriculum documents are made available to parents, guardians, and students within each course. They are also available to the general public on the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Curriculum and Resources* website. This website provides a modern and interactive way to access Ontario's curriculum and learning resources.

7.1 Types of Secondary School Courses

The Ontario secondary school program is based on a credit system. Full credit courses are 110 hours in length. A credit is granted by the principal on behalf of the Ministry of Education in recognition of the successful completion of the expectations of a 110-hour course that has been developed or approved by the Ministry of Education.

The curriculum is organized into several types of courses intended to enable students to choose courses suited to their strengths, interests, and goals.

7.1.1 Grades 9 and 10 Courses

De-streamed Courses

Beginning in 2021, the Ministry of Education introduced de-streamed learning in Grade 9 to provide students with equitable access to learning opportunities and to keep future pathway options open. Students take common Grade 9 courses in English, mathematics, science, and geography.

In Grade 10 and beyond, course pathways vary by subject and school board. Students should consult their school's course calendar and guidance department when selecting courses and planning for post-secondary pathways.

Academic Courses

Academic courses develop a student's knowledge base and skills through the study of theory and abstract problems. These courses focus on the essential concepts of a

subject and explore related concepts. They incorporate practical applications as appropriate. The code of an academic course ends with the letter "D" (i.e., ENG2D).

Applied Courses

Applied courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject and develop a student's knowledge base and skills through practical applications and concrete examples. Familiar situations are used to illustrate ideas, and students are given more opportunities to experience hands-on applications of the concepts and theories they study. The code of an applied course ends with the letter "P" (i.e., ENG2P).

Open Courses

Open courses are designed to prepare students for further study in a subject and enrich their education generally. Open courses comprise a set of expectations that are appropriate for all students. The code of an open course ends with the letter "O" (i.e., BEM1O).

Students in Grade 10, together with their parents or guardians, select courses based on their strengths, interests, goals and learning needs. The Virtual High School principal and Guidance Team are available to support students in making informed course selections and planning for future pathways.

Virtual high school offers a range of grade 10 course types, including academic, applied, and open courses. Students should carefully consider course prerequisites and future pathway options when making their selections. Generally, Grade 10 academic courses provide preparation for Grade 11 university and college preparation courses, while Grade 10 applied courses provide preparation for Grade 11 college and workplace preparation courses.

7.1.2 Changing Course Types

A student may change their educational goals in secondary school. If the student decides to embark on a new pathway, they may find that a prerequisite course that has not been completed is now required. Virtual High School makes provisions to allow its students to make such changes of direction and clearly describes these provisions in the Virtual High School course calendar. In Grades 10 to 12, a student may change to a different type of course in a given subject provided that the student has taken any course specified as a prerequisite for that course. If the student has not done so, they may take one of the specified prerequisite courses through Virtual High School. If the Virtual High School principal or the principal at the student’s main school believes that a student can be successful in a particular course without having taken the specified prerequisite course, then either principal may waive the prerequisite.

7.1.3 Grades 11 and 12 Courses

At Virtual High School, Grades 11 and 12 students will choose between destination-related course types: university preparation, university/college preparation, college preparation, and open courses. Students will make their choices based on their interests, achievements, and career goals. Prerequisites are specified for many of the courses offered in Grades 11 and 12. These prerequisites are identified in the Course of Study document for each course. The following four types of courses are offered by

Virtual High School in Grades 11 and 12:

- **College preparation courses** are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for most college programs or for admission to specific apprenticeship or training programs. The code of a college preparation course ends with the letter "C" (i.e., MBF3C).
- **University preparation courses** are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for university programs. The code of a university preparation course ends with the letter "U" (i.e., SCH3U).
- **University/college preparation courses** are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for specific programs offered at universities and colleges. The code of a university/college preparation course ends with the letter "M" (i.e., MCF3M).
- **Open courses** comprise a set of expectations that are appropriate for all students, designed to broaden students' knowledge and skills in subjects that reflect their interests, and prepare them for active and rewarding participation in society. They are not designed with the specific requirements of university, college, or the workplace in mind. The code of an open course ends with the letter "O" (i.e., EMS3O).

7.1.4 Course Coding System

The common course code of all courses at Virtual High School consists of a five-code character and a course title component as designated by the Ontario Ministry of Education:

For example: **MPM2D a1, Principles of Mathematics**

MPM	**2**	**D**	**a1**
Course Descriptor	**Grade of Course**	**Course Type**	**School Code**
The first letter of each course code indicates the department. In this case, M=Mathematics.	"1" = Grade 9 "2" = Grade 10 "3" = Grade 11 "4" = Grade 12	D = Academic P = Applied W = De-streamed O = Open U = University C = College M = University/College	This is an indicator of the course version for Virtual High School administration reference.*

*This part of the code will not appear on an Ontario Student Transcript (OST)

7.1.5 Prerequisite Courses

Many courses require a student to have completed a prerequisite course. All prerequisite

courses are identified in curriculum policy documents published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and no course apart from these may be identified as prerequisites. Any school operating in Ontario must provide parents and students with clear and accurate information about prerequisites. If a parent or an adult student (a student who is 18 years of age or older) requests that a prerequisite be waived, the Virtual High School principal will determine whether the prerequisite should be waived. The principal will make their decision in consultation with the student, the appropriate Virtual High School staff members, and the parent or guardian.

7.1.6 Taking Courses Through Other Ministry-Inspected Providers

Students may choose to earn Ontario secondary school credits through other Ministry-inspected schools and educational providers, including TVO's Independent Learning Centre (ILC), where permitted by the receiving institution. Students who are considering taking courses through another provider are encouraged to consult with the Guidance Team to ensure that course selections align with their educational goals, graduation requirements, and post-secondary plans. Students are responsible for arranging for official transcripts or report cards from the external provider to be sent to Virtual High School for inclusion in their Ontario Student Record, where applicable.

7.2 Programs for Exceptional Students

Recognizing the needs of exceptional students and designing courses to meet those needs are important and challenging aspects of program planning. Students who have an existing Individual Education Plan (IEP) will have that IEP honored at Virtual High School through the implementation of appropriate accommodations.

7.2.1 Reaching Ahead

Elementary school students may reach ahead to take high school credits. This may occur only after the Virtual High School principal consults with the student, the parent or guardian, and the principal of the student's elementary school. The Virtual High School principal must ensure that the learning expectations of the Grade 8 course have been met. The Virtual High School principal is also responsible for evaluating the student's achievement of the expectations of the Virtual High School course. Virtual High School will issue the OSSD credit.

7.3 Online Courses Available

Students may register for any course at any time during the calendar year, progress through at their own rate, and finish the course at any time up to 18 months from the time of enrolment.

7.3.1 Course List

To view a list of Virtual High School's current course offerings, please refer to the *course index* on the Virtual High School website. (*https://www.virtualhighschool.com/courses/*)

7.3.2 Fast Track Courses

In addition to our standard courses, Virtual High School is pleased to offer

Fast Track courses.

Fast Track courses guarantee 24-hour teacher email response times, 2-day assessment grading, and prioritized administrative services. They are otherwise identical to the standard version of the courses. Students who need to meet an approaching deadline or simply prefer the accelerated workflow of quicker teacher response and assessment turnaround times may benefit from registering for a Fast Track course with Virtual High School.

8. Student Achievement

Every student attending Virtual High School is unique. Each student must have opportunities to achieve success according to their own interests, abilities, and goals. The Virtual High School assessment and evaluation policy is based on seven fundamental principles, the first of which tells us that assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices and procedures must be fair, transparent, and equitable for all students. Students and parents/guardians need to know that evaluations are evidence of student learning and that there is consistency in the way grades are assigned across all Ontario schools.

When these 7 principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will guide the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning:

1. Fair for all students,
2. Support all students,
3. Related to curriculum expectations as well as interest of all students,
4. Clearly communicated to students and parents,
5. Ongoing, varied in nature,
6. Provide descriptive feedback that is meaningful and timely to support learning, and
7. Develop student self-assessment.

8.1 Assessment and Evaluation Strategies

In order to ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that:

- address both what students learn and how well they learn;
- are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level descriptions given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for each discipline;
- are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the

needs and experiences of the students;

- are fair to all students;
- accommodate the needs of exceptional students, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- accommodate the needs of students who are learning the language of instruction;
- ensure that each student is given clear directions for improvement;
- promote students' ability to assess their own learning and to set specific goals;
- include the use of samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement, and
- are communicated clearly to students and parents/guardians at the beginning of the course and at other appropriate points throughout the course.

8.2 The Achievement Chart

The achievement chart for each subject matter is included in the curriculum policy document specific to that discipline. The chart provides a reference point for all assessment practice and a framework within which to assess and evaluate student achievement.

- The chart is organized into four broad categories: Knowledge / Understanding, Thinking / Inquiry, Communication, and Application / Making Connections. The names of the categories differ slightly from one discipline to another, reflecting differences in the disciplines.
- The achievement chart describes the levels of achievement of the curriculum expectations within each category. The descriptions associated with each level serve as a guide for gathering assessment information, to enable teachers to make consistent judgements about the quality of student work, and to provide clear feedback to students.
- The achievement chart provides Virtual High School teachers with a provincial standard to use in assessing and evaluating their students' achievement. A variety of materials are to be made available to assist teachers in improving their assessment methods and strategies and, hence, their assessment of student achievement.
- The following table provides a summary description of achievement in each percentage grade range and corresponding level of achievement:

Achievement Chart*

Percentage Grade Range	Achievement Level	Summary Description
80–100%	Level 4	A very high to outstanding level of achievement. Achievement is *above* the provincial standard.

70–79%	Level 3	A high level of achievement. Achievement is *at* the provincial standard.
60–69%	Level 2	A moderate level of achievement. Achievement is *below, but approaching*, the provincial standard.
50–59%	Level 1	A passable level of achievement. Achievement is *below* the provincial standard.
below 50%	Level R	Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations. A credit will not be granted.

NOTE: Level 3 (70–79%) is the provincial standard. Teachers and parents can be confident that students who are achieving at level 3 are well prepared for work in the next grade or a subsequent course. A student whose achievement is below 50% at the end of the course will not obtain a credit for the course.

*The achievement chart for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) differs from all other courses.

8.3 Reporting Student Achievement

Student achievement is communicated formally to students and parents by means of the Virtual High School "Secondary School Report Card, Grades 9–12".

8.3.1 Reporting on Achievement of Curriculum Expectations

The report card, which follows the Provincial Report Card very closely, provides a record of the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations in the form of a percentage grade. This reflects the corresponding level of achievement as described in the achievement chart for the discipline.

- A final grade is recorded for every course, and a credit is granted and recorded for every course in which the student's grade is 50% or higher.
- The final grade for each course in Grades 9–12 will be determined in accordance with Ministry of Education assessment and evaluation requirements. In grades 9 an 10, the final grade consists of 65% coursework completed throughout the course, 20% mandatory final evaluations, and 15% attendance and participation. In Grades 11 and 12, the final grade consists of 65% coursework completed throughout the course, 25% mandatory final evaluations, including written examinations and/or culminating tasks, varies by subject area as prescribed by Ministry policy.

Evaluation refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards and to assign a value to represent that quality. Evaluation is based on "assessment of learning".

While all curriculum expectations must be accounted for in instruction and assessment, the evaluation focuses on students' achievement of the overall expectations. A student's achievement of the overall expectation is evaluated on the basis of their achievement of related specific expectations. Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine which specific expectations should be used to evaluate achievement of the overall expectations. Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three difference sources: observations, conversations, and student products. Evaluation is the responsibility of the teacher and does not include the judgement of the student's peers.

8.3.2 Reporting on Demonstrated Learning Skills and Work Habits

The report card provides a record of the learning skills demonstrated by the student in every course. The 6 identified learning skills and work habits are:

1. Responsibility,
2. Organization,
3. Independent Work,
4. Collaboration,
5. Initiative, and
6. Self-regulation.

The learning skills and work habits are evaluated using a four-point scale:
(E = Excellent, G = Good, S = Satisfactory, N = Needs Improvement).

8.3.3 Teacher Comments

The report card will include the teachers' comments on the student's strengths, areas in which improvement is needed, and next steps.

8.3.4 Principal Comments

The report card may include the principal's comments on the performance of the student.

8.4 Methods of Evaluation

Teachers will take various considerations into account before determining the grade to be entered on the report card. Teachers will consider all evidence collected from all products submitted or not submitted. Some evidence may carry more weight than others. Teachers will consider all evidence and use their professional judgement to determine the student's report card grade. Determining a report card grade will involve the teacher's professional judgement and interpretation of evidence and should reflect the students most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to the more recent evidence. The principal will work with teachers to ensure common and equitable grading practices that follow Ministry policy. For Grades 7 to 12, a student's achievement of the overall curriculum expectations will be evaluated in accordance with the achievement chart and will be reported as percentage grades. It is expected that both mathematical calculations and professional judgement will inform the determination of the percentage mark.

8.4.1 Final Examination

- Each course has a final assessment that will be given as a final examination, a final project, or a combination of both an exam and a project.
- Students in the same course should be similarly evaluated, which means that final exams and assessments will use the same format, although questions may be different among the students.
- A course with a final examination must be written in a supervised environment with a proctor. A proctored exam is one that is overseen by an impartial individual, the proctor, who monitors and supervises a student while they are taking the final exam.

8.4.2 Coursework

- Students must complete all assigned coursework.
- Coursework may include assignments, tests, projects, labs, discussions, etc.
- Students assume the responsibility to ensure that they have completed all assigned requirements of the course before completing the final exam and/or assessment task.
- The final exam and/or assessment task will be released to the student after they have submitted all the course work.
- Once the final exam is written or the final assessment is submitted, no further assignments may be submitted, unless prior arrangements have been made between the student and the teacher. Students will receive zeros for any incomplete assignments.

8.4.3 Attendance and Participation

- A student's attendance and participation is used as part of the final grade calculation. Participation in an online environment includes the active participation in class discussions, communicating regularly with the teacher, asking relevant questions, and contributing positively and respectfully to the online class environment.

9. Ontario Student Record (OSR)

The Ontario Student Record (OSR) is the official school record for a student registered in a school in Ontario. Every Ontario school keeps an OSR for each student enrolled at that school. The OSR contains achievement results, credits earned, diploma requirements completed, and other information important to the education of the student. These records are protected by the *Education Act* and *Freedom of Information* legislation in the Province of Ontario. If a student is enrolled in Virtual High School as well as another Ontario secondary school, the OSR is held by the school where the student is attending full time (typically the school where the student is taking the most courses). Virtual High School will not hold the OSR for students who have already graduated at another school. If the student is currently attending another school — public or private — and is simply taking a single course with Virtual High School, then that

student's OSR will reside at the school that the student is attending full time. Virtual High School establishes or obtains the student OSR only if the student becomes the sole responsibility of Virtual High School.

9.1 Contents

An OSR will include the following components:

- Form 1A
- Report Cards: Virtual High School will file both the midterm and final report cards in the student's OSR or Virtual High School will send these report cards to the student's school where this OSR is held
- Ontario School Transcript (OST)
- Documentation Files for such things as IEP, psychological assessments, Violent Incident Form, etc.
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record
- Cumulative Community Involvement Report
- Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test results
- Office index card
- Additional information identified as being conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the student.

Personal information in the OSR is maintained for at least one year after use. Report cards and documentation files are maintained for five years after use. The OSR folder containing the OST and the Office Index Card will be maintained for fifty-five years after a student retires.

9.2 Access

Students and their parents or guardians (if the student is under age 18) may examine the contents of the OSR. Access to the OSR is also granted to the educational personnel from the Ministry of Education.

9.3 Transfer

The OSR is an ongoing record and may be transferred from Virtual High School if the student transfers to another Ontario school. Transfer of all original material in the OSR occurs by Priority Post when Virtual High School receives written request from the receiving school and written consent to the transfer from the student (or parent or guardian if the student is under age 18). If a student transfers outside Ontario, then only a copy of the OSR is transferred. When a student retires, Virtual High School may give the parents a copy of the OSR, if requested.

10. Ontario Student Transcript (OST)

The Ontario Student Transcript (OST) is an official document maintained by the Ontario school for each student. The OST is stored in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and retained for 55 years after a student retires from school. It is a record of all secondary school credit information and diploma requirements. The OST will be issued to students whose OSR is held by Virtual High School as required and upon graduation. In September 1999, the Ontario Ministry of Education instructed that schools in Ontario implement a policy of full disclosure. This policy states that all grades 11 and 12 courses attempted by students must be recorded on the OST. Students who require a certified copy of their OST from Virtual High School may contact the Virtual High School administrative staff. If the student is currently attending another school — public or private — and is simply taking a single course with Virtual High School, then that student's OSR will reside at the school that the student is attending full time. Virtual High School will forward an official copy of the student's final report card for the course taken at Virtual High School to the student's home school (the school which holds the OSR), so that the credit can be added to the OST. Virtual High School establishes or obtains a student's OSR containing the OST, only if the student becomes the sole responsibility of Virtual High School.

10.1 Withdrawal from a Course

- If a student withdraws from a Grade 11 or 12 course before completing 60% of the course content, the course attempt will **not** be recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST).
- If a student withdraws from a Grade 11 or 12 course after completing more than 60% of the course content, a "W" will be recorded in the "Credit" column of the OST along with the percentage grade at the time of the withdrawal.
- Withdrawals from Grade 9 or 10 courses are not recorded on the OST, regardless of when the withdrawal occurs.
- In cases where extraordinary circumstances apply, an "S" may be recorded in the "Note" column of the OST to indicate a special situation.

10.2 Repetition of a Course

- Only one credit is earned if a course is repeated.
- In grades 11 and 12, an "R" will be recorded in the "Credit" column of the student's OST for the course attempt with the lower mark. The credit will be granted for the course attempt which received the higher mark.

10.3 Equivalent Credits

Out of province students or transfers from non-inspected private schools may be granted equivalent credits upon the principal's evaluation of the student's previous learning.

- "Equivalent Credits" are entered in the "Course Title" column,
- "PLE" entered in the "Course Code" column,

- "EQV" in the "Percentage Grade" column,
- the total number of credits entered into the "Credit" column,
- and the number of compulsory credits entered into the "Compulsory" column.

11. Diplomas and Certificates

11.1 Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)

The Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requires that a student must earn 30 credits: 17 compulsory and 13 optional. A credit is defined as a 110-hour course in which the expectations are laid down by the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum guideline. Students must also complete 40 hours of Community Involvement Activities, meet a Financial Literacy requirement (as part of their Grade 10 Career Studies course), and meet the provincial literacy requirement.

If the student is currently registered in and attending an Ontario public school or private school and is simply taking one or two courses from Virtual High School, then the student will in all cases, complete the provincial literacy requirement and Community Involvement Activities at their home school where their OSR resides. Only students who are the sole responsibility of Virtual High School will complete the Community Involvement Activities and the provincial literacy requirement at Virtual High School.

Students who are not the sole responsibility of Virtual High School may complete the provincial literacy requirement by completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OLC4O) with Virtual High School. The school which holds the OSR will be responsible for updating the Ontario Student Transcript and OSR accordingly.

11.1.1 *What is needed to graduate?*

The following requirements apply for students starting in grade 9 in the 2024–2025 school year or later. *For students who started Grade 9 prior to September 2024, the former OSSD requirements will apply (see below).*

1. Seventeen (17) Compulsory Credits (courses you must take)
    - 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)*
    - 3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
    - 2 credits in science
    - 1 credit in technological education (Grade 9 or 10)
    - 1 credit in the arts**
    - 1 credit in Canadian geography Grade 9
    - 1 credit in Canadian history Grade 10
    - 1 credit in French as a second language***

- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 0.5 credit in career studies
- 0.5 credit in civics and citizenship
- 1 credit from the STEM-related course group
    - STEM-related course group:
        - business studies
        - computer studies
        - cooperative education
        - mathematics (in addition to the 3 compulsory credits currently required)
        - science (in addition to the 2 compulsory credits currently required)
        - technological education (in addition to the 1 compulsory credit required)

2. Thirteen (13) Optional Credits (courses you get to choose)

    In addition to the 17 compulsory credits described above, students must complete 13 optional credits by successfully completing courses offered in their school's program and course calendar.

    Optional credits may include up to 4 credits earned through approved dual credit programs.

    Note: Virtual High School does not offer dual credit programs currently.

The following requirements apply to students who started Grade 9 in the 2023–2024 school year or earlier.

1. Eighteen (18) Compulsory Credits (courses you must take)
    - 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)*
    - 3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
    - 2 credits in science
    - 1 credit in the arts**
    - 1 credit in Canadian geography (Grade 9)
    - 1 credit in Canadian history (Grade 10)
    - 1 credit in French as a second language***
    - 1 credit in health and physical education
    - 0.5 credit in career studies

- 0.5 credit in civics and citizenship
- 3 credits for group 1, 2 and 3 courses (1 credit in each group):
    - Group 1:
        - English (including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course) or French as a second language.
        - Native languages
        - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit studies
        - classical and international languages
        - social sciences and the humanities
        - Canadian and world studies
        - guidance and career education
        - cooperative education
        - American Sign Language as a second language
        - Langue des signes québécoise langue seconde
    - Group 2:
        - health and physical education
        - the arts
        - business studies
        - French as a second language
        - cooperative education
        - American Sign Language as a second language
        - Langue des signes québécoise langue seconde
    - Group 3:
        - science (Grade 11 or 12)
        - technological education
        - French as a second language
        - computer studies
        - cooperative education
        - American Sign Language as a second language
        - Langue des signes québécoise langue seconde

Note: The following conditions apply to selections from the above three groups:

- In groups 1, 2 and 3, a maximum of 2 credits in French as a second language can count as compulsory credits, one from group 1 and one from either group 2 or group 3.
- A maximum of 2 credits in cooperative education may count as additional credits, selected from any of Groups 1, 2, or 3.

- the Langue des signes québécoise langue seconde course is only available in French-language schools.

2. Twelve (12) Optional Credits (courses you get to choose)

   In addition to the 18 compulsory credits described above, students must complete 12 optional credits by successfully completing courses offered in their school's program and course calendar.

   Optional credits may include up to 4 credits earned through approved dual credit programs.

   Note: Virtual High School does not offer dual credit programs currently.

* The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) may be used to meet either the Grade 11 or the Grade 12 English compulsory credit requirement. The Grade 11 Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices course may be used to meet the Grade 11 English compulsory credit requirement. For English language learners the requirement may be met through earning a maximum of 3 credits in English as a second language (ESL) or English literacy development (ELD); the fourth credit must be a Grade 12 compulsory English course.

** The Grade 9 course "Expressions of First Nations Métis, and Inuit Cultures" may be used to meet the compulsory credit requirement in the arts.

*** Students who have taken Native languages in place of French as a second language in elementary school may use a Level 1 or 2 Native language course to meet the compulsory credit requirement for French as a second language.

Literacy graduation requirement

Students who entered Grade 9 in the 1999–2000 school year or in subsequent years must successfully complete the literacy graduation requirement. For most students, this means passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). This test, administered by EQAO, determines whether the student has acquired the reading and writing skills considered essential for literacy. It is based on the Ontario curriculum expectations for language and communication, particularly reading and writing, up to and including Grade 9.

Note: See subsection 11.1.4 below for more information.

Forty (40) hours of Community Involvement Activities

Students who began secondary school during or after the 1999–2000 school year must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the diploma requirements. The purpose of this requirement is to encourage students to develop an awareness and understanding of civic responsibility, the role they can play, and the contribution they can make in supporting and strengthening communities. The Virtual High School principal will determine the number of hours of community service the mature student is required to complete, based on the grade level in which the student enrolls.

Note: See subsection 11.1.5 below for more information.

Online Learning Graduation Requirement

Students who entered Grade 9 in the 2020–21 school year or in subsequent years must earn at least two online learning credits.

Note: See subsection 11.1.6 below for more information.

Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement

Students who began Grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year or later must successfully complete Ontario's Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement (FLR) to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The FLR is completed as part of the compulsory Grade 10 Career Studies (GLC2O) course and consists of TVO-developed financial literacy learning modules and assessment activities. Students must achieve a minimum score of 70% to meet the requirement. Successful completion is recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript.

11.1.2 Substitution of Compulsory Credit Requirements

In order to provide flexibility in designing a student's program and to support individual learning needs, the principal may substitute up to 3 compulsory credits with courses from other subject areas that meet the requirements for compulsory credits. Substitutions are made on an individual basis when the principal determines that a student's educational interests are best served by the substitution. In all cases, the total number of credits required for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) remains 30.

The following limitations apply to substitutions for compulsory credits:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) courses may not be used as substitute credits. However, ESL and ELD courses may be used to meet up to three of the four compulsory English credit requirements, in accordance with Ministry policy.
- No more than one Learning Strategies course, from the Guidance and Career Education curriculum may be used through substitution to meet a compulsory credit requirement.
- Credits earned through Cooperative Education courses may not be used through substitution to meet compulsory credit requirements.
- A Locally Developed Compulsory Credit (LDCC) course may not be used as a substitute for a compulsory credit. Such courses may only be used to meet the compulsory credit requirement for which they were designed.

Each approved substitution will be recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST) with an "X" in the "Note" column.

11.1.3 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside Ontario secondary school classrooms. Through a

formal evaluation and accreditation process known as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), students enrolled in Ontario secondary schools, including the Independent Learning Centre and inspected private schools that choose to implement PLAR, may have their skills and knowledge evaluated against the overall expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma. PLAR procedures are carried out under the direction of the school principal, who grants the credits.

The PLAR process developed by a school board in compliance with Ministry policy involves two components: challenge and equivalency. The challenge process is the process whereby students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document. The equivalency process involves the assessment of credentials from other jurisdictions.

PLAR for Regular Day School Students

Because young people benefit in many ways from the learning experiences offered in secondary school, PLAR has a specific, limited function in the Ontario secondary school program. For regular day school students, a maximum of 4 credits may be granted through the challenge process for Grades 10, 11, and 12 courses; or for Levels 1, 2, and 3 in classical languages courses; for Levels 2, 3, and 4 in international languages courses; and for Levels 3, 4, and 5 in Native languages courses. No more than 2 of these credits may be granted in one discipline.

For students who are transferring from home schooling, a non-inspected private school, or a school outside Ontario, principals will grant equivalency credits for placement purposes based on their evaluation of the student's previous learning (see OS section 4.3.2 and Appendix 2).

PLAR procedures must also be available to exceptional students. Assessment strategies must be adapted for this group in keeping with their special needs; for example, extra time might be allowed for the completion of work, or a quiet environment might be provided for activities. While PLAR may be of benefit to some gifted students, it is not intended to be used as a replacement for or alternative to enriched or other special programs for gifted students.

PPM No. 129 outlines in detail the PLAR policy and requirements that apply to regular day school students.

PLAR for Mature Students

A mature student is a student who is at least eighteen years of age on or after January 1 of the current school year and who is enrolled in a secondary school program for the purpose of obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Because of the broader life experience of mature students, the requirements concerning the application of PLAR procedures are different for them than for regular day school students. Principals will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a mature student needs in order to meet the credit requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). At the discretion of the principal, up to 16 grade 9 and 10 equivalency credits may be granted to a mature student following an individual assessment.

Mature students may earn 10 of the 14-remaining grade 11 and 12 credits needed to meet diploma requirements in three ways:

- they may demonstrate achievement of the required secondary school curriculum expectations and receive credit through the challenge process;
- they may present education and/or training credentials for assessment through the equivalency process; or
- they may take the course.

It should be noted that Levels 2 and 3 in classical languages are equivalent to Grades 11 and 12, respectively; that Levels 3 and 4 in international languages are equivalent to Grades 11 and 12, respectively; and that Levels 4 and 5 in Native languages are equivalent to Grades 11 and 12, respectively.

Mature students must earn a minimum of 4 grade 11 and 12 credits by taking the course at a secondary school (or through any of the options outlined in OS section 10), with the following exception: at the discretion of the principal, mature students who present evidence of a completed postsecondary diploma and/or degree from an accredited Canadian postsecondary institution may qualify for the OSSD under Ontario Schools by completing a minimum of one Grade 11 or Grade 12 credit (PPM 132). Mature students who have previously accumulated 26 or more credits towards the diploma must successfully complete the required number of courses to bring their total number of credits up to 30 before they will be eligible to receive the OSSD. Mature students working towards the OSSD under OS must also satisfy the diploma requirements with regard to the provincial literacy requirement. Principals will determine the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student will have to complete.

PPM No. 132 outlines in detail the PLAR policy and requirements that apply to mature students.

Regular day school students who transfer to an Ontario secondary school from a school outside Ontario or from a non-inspected private school may be granted equivalent credits through the PLAR equivalency process for regular day school students based on the principal's evaluation of their previous learning. The total number of equivalent credits and the corresponding number of compulsory credits are recorded on the OST. The equivalent credits should be entered as a total, and the required items of information should appear as follows: "Equivalent Credits" should be entered in the "Course Title" column; "PLE" in the "Course Code" column; "EQV" in the "Percentage Grade" column; the total number of credits in the "Credit" column; and the total number of compulsory credits in the "Compulsory" column.

The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 2013

11.1.4 Provincial Literacy Requirement

If you entered Grade 9 in September 1999 or later and are working toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), you must meet the provincial literacy requirement in order to earn your high school diploma. For most students, this means writing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Virtual High School students seeking an Ontario Secondary School Diploma will take the Secondary School Literacy Test in

Grade 10. When a student has met the provincial literacy requirement by achieving a passing score, this will be recorded on their Ontario Student Transcript.

OSSLT

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is the usual method for assessing the literacy skills of students in Ontario for the purpose of determining whether they meet the provincial literacy requirement for graduation. The test thus identifies students who have demonstrated the required skills in literacy as well as those who have not demonstrated the required skills and will need to do further work. The test identifies the specific areas in which these latter students need remediation. The test is administered through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Schools may choose to schedule the test to take place during one of the two administration windows (one in the fall, and one in the spring). Students will usually take the OSSLT in the school year following the school year in which they enter Grade 9. Students who do not successfully complete the OSSLT will have opportunities to retake the test in subsequent years.

Virtual High School may organize the OSSLT administration for students whose Ontario Student Record (OSR) is held at Virtual High School. The test can be written at the Virtual High School office in Bayfield, Ontario, or we may assist the student in arranging to write the test as a guest student at another Ontario school that is local to them. The test must be supervised by a suitable official who satisfies the requirements outlined by EQAO.

OSSLC

Students who have had the opportunity to write the OSSLT twice and were unsuccessful at least once may be eligible to meet the provincial literacy requirement by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).

Students who reside outside of Ontario may meet the literacy requirement by completing the OSSLC.

Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals, and Exemptions

In accordance with OS section 6.1.3 and Appendix 3, students may be eligible for accommodations, special provisions, deferrals, or exemptions from the provincial literacy requirement.

- **Accommodations:** Students with special education needs and those who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be eligible to have accommodations implemented to ensure that they will have a fair and equal opportunity to successfully complete the OSSLT or the OSSLC.
- **Special Provisions:** Special provisions (adjustments to the setting and/or timing for writing the test) may be made for English language learners if the principal of Virtual High School deems such provisions to be in the best educational interest of the student.
- **Deferrals:** Deferrals are intended for students who are working toward the OSSD and who have not yet acquired a level of proficiency in English that would allow them to successfully complete the test. A request for a deferral may be made by either a parent (or the student, if the student is over eighteen) or the school, as long as both parties have been consulted. Such requests should be made in

writing to the Virtual High School principal. The principal may grant the deferral.

- **Exemptions:** To be eligible for an exemption, a student must have an IEP. The IEP must include documentation to support an exemption from the literacy graduation requirement and a clear indication that the student is not working towards an OSSD. Both parental consent and the approval of the Virtual High School principal are required for an exemption.

11.1.5 Community Involvement Activities

All students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of unpaid community involvement activities before graduating from high school. This requirement is in addition to the 30 credits and literacy requirement needed for a high school diploma. Students who are the sole responsibility of Virtual High School will be able to choose their own community involvement activities, within guidelines that will be provided by Virtual High School. Students will be responsible for fulfilling this requirement on their own time, and for keeping a record of their activities on a tracking booklet supplied by the school. The student is required to submit the tracking booklet each time they have completed community involvement activities, the data from which will be kept in the student's OSR. When the student has successfully completed 40 hours of community involvement activities, the OST will be updated to reflect this. This information is also recorded on the final secondary report card. Students will provide documentation of completion
of volunteer hours to the principal of the school where the student's
OSR is held.

Students can start accumulating their community involvement hours in the summer before entering grade 9.

To strengthen communities and encourage civic responsibility, students must complete the 40 hours of community activities outside of scheduled class time. Students are to select community activities appropriate to their age, maturity, and ability. The student is not to partake in any activity in which the student's safety will be compromised. Any activity NOT on the approved list must receive written approval of the principal of Virtual High School before beginning the activity.

Community Involvement Activities not approved:

- Any paid activity (i.e. babysitting);
- Cooperative education;
- Any activities or programs organized by the school (i.e. cadets);
- Playing on sport teams;
- Any involving the operation of a motor vehicle or power tools or scaffolding;
- Any involving in the administration of medications or medical procedures to another person;
- Any occurring in an unsafe or unsupervised environment;
- Any displacing a paid worker;

- Any in a logging or mining environment if the student is under 16 years old;
- Any in a factory, if the student is under 15 years of age;
- Any taking place in a workplace other than a factory, if the student is under fourteen years of age and is not accompanied by an adult;
- Any involving handling of substances classed as "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- Any requiring the knowledge of a tradesperson whose trade is regulated by the provincial government;
- Any involving banking or the handling of securities, or the handling of jewellery, works of art, antiques, or other valuables;
- Any consisting of duties normally performed in the home (i.e. daily chores) or personal recreational activities;
- Any involving activities for a court-ordered program (i.e. community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

Community Involvement Activities approved:

- Fundraising for non-profit organizations
- Coaching or assisting sports at the community level
- Church activities such as helping teach Sunday school, bazaars, etc.
- Assisting seniors with chores (e.g. delivering groceries, yard maintenance, etc.)
- Involvement in community committees, food banks, fairs, etc.
- Participation in environment projects such as recycling projects, etc.
- A letter-writing campaign to seniors living in a nursing or retirement home
- Virtual tutoring to help students practice reading, communication, and/or other skills
- Volunteering related to animal care (e.g. an animal shelter or on a farm)
- involvement in health organizations (e.g. volunteering for Canadian Blood Services (assist at blood donor clinic or time required to donate blood), volunteering in hospices);
- participation in environmental projects (e.g. Picking up litter, garden planting, recycling projects).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Stakeholders

The **principal** is required to provide information about the community involvement requirement to parents, students, and community sponsors. The principal is also required to provide students with the information and forms they will need to complete the community involvement requirement, including the school's list of approved activities from which to choose. After a student completes the 40 hours of community involvement

and submits all documentation of their completion to the school, the principal will decide whether the student has met the community involvement requirement and, if so, will record it as completed on the student's official transcript.

In consultation with their **parents, students** will select an activity or activities from the list of approved activities or choose an activity that is not on the list, provided that it is not an activity specified on the Ministry of Education's and the school's lists of ineligible activities. If the activity is not on the list of approved activities, the student must obtain written approval from the principal before beginning the activity.

Before beginning any activity, students will provide the principal or other school contact with a completed "*Notification of Planned Community Involvement Activities*" form indicating the activity or activities that they plan to do. This form must be signed by the student, and by their parent if the student is under eighteen years of age. More than one such form may be submitted when additional activities are planned that were not included on a previously submitted form.

A "*Completion of Community Involvement Activities*" form must be completed by the student, the student's parent (if the student is under eighteen years of age), and the community sponsor (that is, the person or organization that provided the community involvement opportunity for the student). The student must submit the form to the principal or other school contact upon completion of the 40 hours or at appropriate intervals determined by the principal.

Parents (or guardians) should assist their child in the selection of their community involvement activities. Parents are also encouraged to communicate with the community sponsor and the school principal if they have any questions or concerns. A parent must sign the "*Notification of Planned Community Involvement Activities*" form and the "*Completion of Community Involvement Activities*" form if the student is under the age of eighteen years. Parents are also responsible for obtaining the appropriate insurance covering the student for any unseen circumstances while involved in these community activities.

One of the purposes of the community involvement requirement is to develop strong ties between the students and their community, fostering valuable and long-term relationships. **Persons and organizations within the community** may be asked by the student to sponsor a community involvement activity. Any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity should be provided by the person or organization. It is crucial that students are able to fulfill their community involvement requirement in a safe environment. The person overseeing the student's activity must verify the date(s) and the number of hours completed on the "*Completion of Community Involvement Activities*" form. Community sponsors will be responsible for ensuring that their liability insurance will protect them for their involvement in the program. The community sponsor should be aware that the students do not have either accident insurance or Workplace Safety Insurance through Virtual High School. The community sponsors should ensure that the students are provided with adequate safety instructions, are trained properly for their work, and supervised to ensure a safe volunteer experience.

11.1.6 Online Learning Graduation Requirement

Students who began secondary school during or after the 2020–2021 school year must earn at least two online learning credits as part of the diploma requirements unless they have been opted out or exempted in accordance with the processes outlined in Ministry PPM 167.

The online learning graduation requirement also applies to adult learners that will be entering the Ontario secondary school system starting in the 2023–2024 school year.

Eligible credits

Online learning courses or credits, also known as e-learning courses or credits, are grades 9 to 12 courses which are delivered entirely online and do not require students to be physically present with their educator or with one another. An exception to this is when students may be required to physically attend examinations and other final evaluations or access internet connectivity, learning devices, or other school-based supports (guidance, mental health and well-being supports, etc.)

Online learning credits may be earned at any time during the student's secondary school program.

Ineligible Credits

Credits earned through the following methods may not count towards the online learning graduation requirement:

- in-person learning (students physically present with other students and their educator in the school environment).
- blended learning (digital learning resources are used in an in-person learning environment or part of the lessons are taught in a physical school environment and part of the lessons are taught in an online environment).
- flipped classrooms (a blended environment in which students are introduced to online content while working through the material in a physical school environment while physically present with their educator)
- remote learning (minimum synchronous learning requirements are covered, among other requirements as defined in PPM 164)

Exception: Up to one secondary school credit completed by grade 9 students in the 2020–2021 school year during the province-wide school closures (April 2021–June 2021) may be counted towards the graduation requirement.

Opt-out process

Students may be opted out of the online learning graduation requirement:

- at the request of their parent(s)/guardian(s)
- at the students request, if they are 18 years of age or older (or if they are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control)

A Virtual High School student or parent/guardian of a student who wishes to opt out of the online learning graduation requirement must contact the Virtual High School

Guidance team to request an “opt-out form”. The Virtual High School staff will discuss the student's individual needs with the parent/guardian and/or student and determine the appropriateness of online learning for the student.

Reporting

The school holding the student's Ontario Student Record will track each student's progress toward achieving the online learning graduation requirement. When the requirement has been met, this will be recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript and report card.

11.2 Ontario Secondary School Certificate

The Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) will be granted, on request, to students who are leaving secondary school upon reaching the age of eighteen without having met the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). To be granted an OSSC, a student must have earned a minimum of 14 credits, distributed as follows.

11.2.1 Compulsory Credits (total of 7)

- 2 credits in English
- 1 credit in Canadian geography OR Canadian history
- 1 credit in mathematics
- 1 credit in science
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1 credit in the arts, computer studies or technological education

11.2.2 Optional Credits (total of 7)

- 7 credits selected by the student from available courses

Note: *The principal, to better serve a student's educational interest, and in consultation with the parent, may replace up to three courses with courses meeting the requirement for compulsory credits. Either the principal or the parent may initiate the process. The total of compulsory and optional credits will still not be less than 14 for granting an OSSC. The substitution will be noted on the OST.*

11.3 Certificate of Accomplishment

Students who are leaving secondary school upon reaching the age of eighteen without having met the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment. The Certificate of Accomplishment may be a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain kinds of further training, or who plan to find employment directly after leaving school. The Certificate of Accomplishment is to be accompanied by the student's Ontario Student Transcript. For students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a copy of the IEP may be included.

Students who return to school to complete additional credit and non-credit courses (including

courses with modified or alternative expectations in special education programs) will have their transcript updated accordingly but will not be issued a new Certificate of Accomplishment. The OSSD or OSSC will be granted when the returning student has fulfilled the appropriate requirements.

12. Cooperative Education

Cooperative education programs allow students to earn secondary school credits while completing a work placement in the community. These programs complement students' academic programs and are valuable for all students, regardless of their post-secondary destination. A cooperative education program comprises, at a minimum, one cooperative education course and its related course, on which the cooperative education course is based. Any course from an Ontario curriculum policy document or any ministry-approved locally developed course may serve as the related course for a cooperative education program.

In their cooperative education program, students may earn one or two cooperative education credits for each related course, whether the related course is a full-credit or half-credit course. If the related course is a multiple-credit course, a student may earn a maximum of two co-op credits for each credit earned in the related course.

The cooperative education course consists of a classroom component and a placement component. The classroom component includes pre-placement sessions and classroom integration sessions. The pre-placement sessions prepare students for the workplace and include instruction in areas of key importance, such as health and safety. The classroom integration sessions provide opportunities for students to reflect on and reinforce their learning in the workplace as the program progresses. A personalized placement learning plan (PPLP) must be developed for all students in a cooperative education program. A student's progress in achieving the curriculum expectations and in meeting the requirements identified in the PPLP must be assessed and evaluated by a teacher through regular workplace monitoring meetings with the student and the student's workplace supervisor.

Virtual High School does not currently offer a cooperative education program. Students wishing to pursue a cooperative education should consult their local school board or another Ministry-inspected provider that offers cooperative education courses.

13. English as a Second Language (ESL)

The linguistic diversity of Ontario's student population continues to increase. Some students at Virtual High School are developing English language proficiency and literacy skills that will enable them to achieve the curriculum expectations in all subjects and at all grade levels.

The programs of study offered by Virtual High School must be flexible in order to accommodate the needs of students who require instruction in English as a second language or English literacy development, and teachers of all subjects are responsible for helping students develop their ability to use English.

Students who enrol in Virtual High School provide information during registration about their English language learning backgrounds. This information is provided to teachers so they can

target instruction and provide appropriate accommodations throughout the course. Appropriate accommodations to teaching, learning, and evaluation strategies help students gain proficiency in English, since students learning English as a second language at the secondary level have limited time in which to develop this proficiency. English Language Learners (ELLs) are encouraged to draw upon their home language, use bilingual dictionaries, maintain vocabulary logs, and use graphic organizers to support learning. ELLs may be provided with extra time on quizzes, tests, and examinations, where appropriate to ensure they have time to process the demands of the task as well as to process the language. Consistent with Growing Success, greater consideration may be given to the student's more recent and more consistent demonstration of learning when determining final achievement.

Virtual High School recognizes that it may take up to seven years for some students to develop the level of proficiency in reading, writing, and abstract thinking required for full academic fluency in English. Teachers have the support of Department Heads and the Guidance Department to ensure they appropriately accommodate ELLs at Virtual High School.

14. Guidance and Career Programs

Virtual High School provides individual student counseling with respect to course selection and post-secondary planning. By doing so, individual student needs and concerns are met, and appropriate plans can be put into place. In addition, the skills and competencies that students acquire through the guidance and career education program outlined in Ontario's *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools, 2013* will not only help students succeed in school, but will also contribute to their success in the workplace.

Throughout their secondary school education, students in Virtual High School courses will learn about the educational and career opportunities that are available to them; explore and evaluate a variety of those opportunities; relate what they learn in their courses to potential careers in a variety of fields; and learn to make appropriate educational and career choices.

To this end, Virtual High School:

- supports English Language Learners by providing appropriate accommodations in instruction, assessment, and evaluation, as required;
- provides opportunities within the Four Areas of Learning in Education and Career/Life Planning (Knowing Yourself, Exploring Opportunities, Making Decisions and Setting Goals, Achieving Goals and Making Transitions) in all newly revised courses;
- provides individual assistance and short-term counselling to students, when requested;
- provides current information on post-secondary education, training, apprenticeship, and admission requirements to students pursuing a variety of post-secondary pathways;
- provides the opportunity for Grade 8 students to "Reach Ahead" to Grade 9 courses with the approval of their elementary school principal. This opportunity allows eligible Grade 8 students to explore secondary school courses and academic interests before entering high school;

- offers access to myBlueprint for all students whose Ontario Student Record is held at Virtual High School. This program allows students to plan their education, review their options for post-secondary programs and assists in the course selection process;
- communicates directly with the Ontario Universities Application Centre and the Ontario College Application Service regarding student achievement;
- communicates with post-secondary institutions, where appropriate and with student consent, regarding academic records and achievement;
- communicates with students who may be at risk of not meeting graduation requirements to provide guidance and support the development of a graduation plan.

15. The Role of Technology in the Curriculum

In preparation for further education, employment, citizenship, and lifelong learning, students and teachers must be capable of deriving meaning from information by using a wide variety of information literacy skills. By virtue of the fact that Virtual High School courses are entirely online, students will experience firsthand the benefits of a technologically enriched education and thereby acquire skills in an increasingly digital world. Increasing reliance on digital technologies, networks, and online information makes it essential for students to develop strong digital and information literacy skills. Information literacy includes the ability to access, evaluate, create, and communicate information effectively and responsibly. Virtual High School emphasizes the effective use of information to solve problems, make decisions, and support lifelong learning.

15.1 Software Programs for Students

As part of their training in computer and information literacy, students should become familiar with a wide range of available software programs. Among the applications that can aid student learning are simulations, multimedia resources, educational applications, online research tools, databases, and interactive learning platforms, many of which have been developed for use in particular disciplines. Students will also be expected to use software applications that help them develop general skills in such areas as writing, problem solving, research, and communication. It is important that students learn to critically evaluate the accuracy, validity, currency, comprehensiveness, and depth of the information they access using information technology, particularly the Internet. Students are expected to use digital technologies, including emerging technologies and artificial intelligence tools, responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with school policies. In general, students must acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to allow them to use computer and information technology safely, effectively, confidently, and ethically.

15.2 Collaboration Tools for Teachers

The curriculum writers for Virtual High School work collaboratively within and across disciplines to effectively plan for the integration of computers and information technologies into the teaching/learning process. As new technologies that enhance teaching and learning become available, teachers are encouraged to evaluate and incorporate these tools where appropriate

and educationally beneficial. Effective communication programs can also help to promote the development of information literacy skills among all students by supporting and coordinating the collaborative planning and implementation of reading programs, inquiry and research tasks, and independent study.