



Frequently Asked Questions about the Diocesan Virtual Academy for 2020-2021

As a result of COVID-19, some families expressed a desire for the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System to provide a virtual option for instruction, in addition to our traditional in-person instructional model. To address that request, the Diocesan Virtual Academy (DVA) will be available for the 2020-2021 school year. This option will provide families with the opportunity to begin their instruction completely online, or to transition to a virtual platform, if desired, during the year.

Whether you choose the in-person or virtual option for your family, you will experience the same academically excellent and faith-filled experience you have come to know throughout your child's/children's education. With each option, we are able to partner with you to ensure your child achieves his/her God-given potential because we know your family and each of your children so well. Our smaller environment and assessment tools such as NWEA allow us to deliver a differentiated approach to your child's education. Additionally, our dedicated faculty and administrators know your child personally and will be able to help him/her navigate the challenging nature of this time.

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Q. Will fees be changed this year?



Programming and Academics

Q. What if I do not feel safe sending my child back to school? Will there be a virtual academy?

A. Yes. The Diocese of Scranton will offer a virtual option for learning for the 2020-21 school year. The Diocesan Virtual Academy (DVA) will provide the diocesan curriculum for grades K-12 in a completely online format. Families will need to commit to a particular period of time to engage in this option for planning purposes. To select this option, families must contact their school principal and indicate they are interested in the DVA as their method of instruction by **August 7, 2020**.

Q. Will there be a Pre-K option in the DVA?

A. No. DVA will be offered for students in the Diocese of Scranton for grades K-12.

Q. Will there be a set schedule for the students who are attending the Diocesan Virtual Academy (DVA)?

A. Yes. Students will be engaged in a set schedule that will consist of a combination of live and recorded instruction from teachers. Live class time will include direct instruction, as well as time for activities and student engagement. Recorded sessions will be 40 minutes and will include the recorded instruction and activities. Assignments, “at-the-bell,” and “exit tickets” will be submitted by the end of the recorded class period. To view a sample student schedule at each grade level, please see [Attachment A](#).

Q. What platform will the DVA be using for daily classes?

A. The DVA will be using Google Enterprise (Google Classroom) online platform as the single sign on to access all diocesan approved learning apps and extensions. Students will sign on to Google Classroom with their school assigned account and the teacher will post assignments, provide instruction, and direct students to extensions within this platform. Teachers will host live class instruction within Google Classroom on the provided web-based video conference called Google Meets. Every security measure will be followed to provide the safest learning environment for our students while they are engaged in Google Meet classes.

Additional technology that teachers may use within the Google Enterprise platform include, but are not be limited to: Seesaw for grades K-3, Digital licenses for existing textbooks and workbooks, Discovery Education, NWEA Map Growth Assessment, Newsela (ELA, Science and SS), Khan Academy (Math), and Nearpod.



Q. What if I decide that I want my student to return to in-school instruction? Can I do that?

A. Yes. While we are requiring families to commit to a marking period for the selected method of instruction: DVA or in-person. Families have the option to transition into the selected method of instruction at the beginning of the marking period, space permitting. Families may also transition out at the end of the marking period. In other words, if a parent selects DVA to start the school year and decides his/her student will return to in-person instruction, the parent can select in-person instruction for the second marking period. To make the change for the method of instruction, parents will need to call the principal of the building in which the student is enrolled. The virtual and in-person curricula have been aligned so the transition from the DVA to in-person instruction will be as seamless as possible

Q. Why should I continue to keep my child enrolled at a Catholic schools vs. a Cyber Charter or public school during this time?

A. Whether you choose the in-person or virtual option for your family, you will experience the same academically excellent and faith-filled experience you have come to know throughout your child's/children's education. We will be able to continue to ensure your child/children achieves his/her God-given potential because we have come to know your child/children in greater depth than anyone else could. Our smaller environment and assessment tools such as NWEA allow us to deliver a differentiated approach to your child's education. Additionally, our dedicated faculty and administrators know your child personally and will be able to help him/her navigate the challenging nature of this time

Q. Who will be teaching the DVA?

A. The Diocesan Virtual Academy staff will consist of Diocese of Scranton teachers who have excelled in virtual environment when teaching their content. In some grades within the elementary grades K-8, teachers will be departmentalized according to their content expertise. Teachers for grades 9-12 will be staffed by high school teachers from the content area departments. Specialized subject teachers (Music, Art, Health/Phys. Ed, and Informational Resources (Library/Technology) will provide resources and recorded lessons at elementary level.

Q. Will my student be able to participate in after school activities or sports with the school in which he/she is enrolled if I select DVA as the method of instruction?

A. Yes. When possible, DVA students may participate in school events and activities at their respective schools outside of the school day. If a student participates in a school related activity, the parent will need to complete the health screening tool prior to attending the activity in-



person. ([Attachment B](#)) DVA students will be eligible for all special recognition, awards, honor, and ceremonies at the school where he/she is enrolled.

If the student is graduating in 2021 and is a DVA student, his/her diploma will come from his/her school. Graduating students will be eligible to attend and participate in graduation activities upon successful completion of coursework in the DVA. If a DVA student participates in a school-related graduation events, the parent will need to complete the health screening tool prior to the student attending the activity in-person. ([Attachment B](#))

Q. What school supplies will students need for the DVA?

A. Students will be accessing the DVA online; therefore, students must have access to a computer equipped with a camera and microphone. Students will also need a headset with a microphone for some assessments. Please see the list of school necessary supplies for the DVA at each grade level. ([Attachment C](#)) If there is a need to loan a device from the local school, please reach out to the local building principal.

Q. What will happen if the school closes due to a local or state-wide closure? Will my student remain in DVA?

A. If schools close due to county or state-wide directives, the DVA students will remain with the DVA teacher and class. If this scenario were to occur and then the school returns to in-person sessions, the DVA student will continue instruction in the Virtual Academy without interruption.

Q. Will my student be able to attend Mass at the school virtually?

A. Yes. In order to maintain the student's connection with his/her school community, there will be opportunities to engage virtually with his/her school's class, and to participate virtually in school Masses.

Q. Will I still be informed about activities at the school in which my child is enrolled?

A. Yes. The principal of your school will remain your student's principal while he/she is learning virtually, with an additional layer of support provided by the DVA Lead Teacher and the Diocesan Technology Administrator. The principal from the student's school will communicate updates and calendar events to DVA students.

Q. Will there be technology support available?

A. Yes. There will be an additional layer of support provided by the DVA Lead Teacher and the Diocesan Technology Administrator.



Q. Is it possible to loan technology from the school if I do not have a computer for my child?

A. Yes. In order to loan technology from the school for your child, you will need to make this request to your school principal. All parents and students will be required to sign the technology user agreement. Students are to use this loaned technology for school related assignments and activities. School-owned devices are monitored and are not to be used for anything but school work. All activity on school-owned devices is documented for the safety and security of all students enrolled in diocesan schools.

Q. Will my student receive grades for the work he/she completed?

A. Yes. Teachers will provide daily assignments and due dates for each assignment. Students are expected to submit all assignments when due. Class assessments will be provided by the DVA teacher and will include, but not be limited to: tests, quizzes, projects, essays, reports, classwork, participation and homework. The DVA teacher will provide the due date and weight of each assessment.

Q. Will there be live sessions of teaching?

A. Yes. Live class sessions, also known as Google Meets, will be active for 40 minute session with 30 minutes of direct instruction from the teacher. During this time, students can ask questions and teachers can address students who need assistance. Students are “dismissed” when teacher ends the Google Meet. All live sessions will be recorded for student review of material and absent students. Teacher will post the recording in Google Classroom with all resources/materials/homework by end of day.

Tuition and Fees

Q. The pandemic has affected my family’s income. Is there financial assistance available?

A. The Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation awards financial assistance based on need using objective criteria. If your income has been affected by the pandemic, please be in touch with our tuition office to discuss the possibility of financial assistance or an alternate payment plan. Additionally, schools may have financial assistance, and we encourage you to reach out to your principal. All of our schools also offer additional tuition reduction opportunities. More information can be found at <https://www.dioceseofscranton.org/catholic-schools/apply-for-tuition-assistance/>.



Q. Will there be any changes to tuition this year due to adaptations to the learning environment?

A. Tuition will remain as posted for the full year. During a normal year, tuition alone does not cover all of the expenses to run our schools. On average, the cost to educate each student is approximately \$2,000 more than his/her current tuition cost. Additional revenue sources, such as the roughly 20% directly from our parishes, allows us to keep tuition lower than the actual cost. For the upcoming year, we are facing additional expenses related to costs for increased technology, training, and cleaning protocols. However, we remain committed to providing an excellent Catholic education even though it may look a little different.

Q. Will fees be changed this year?

A. Fees are set by the individual school and may be adjusted if a program or activity is cancelled.



K-5th Grade Sample Student Schedule		
Time	Day 1	Day 2
8:30-9:10 am	Office hours	
9:15-9:55 am	Google Meet - Class 1	Google Meet - Class 2
10:00-10:40 am	Recorded lesson - Class 2	Recorded lesson - Class 1
10:45-11:25 am	Google Meet - Class 3	Google Meet - Class 4
11:30-12:10 pm	LUNCH	
12:15-12:55 pm	Recorded lesson -Class 4	Recorded lesson - Class 3
1:00-1:40 pm	Google Meet - Class 5	Google Meet - Class 6
1:45-2:25 pm	Recorded lesson - Class 6	Recorded lesson - Class 5
2:30-3:10 pm	Office hours	

6th-8th Grade Sample Student Schedule		
Time	Day 1	Day 2
8:30-9:10 am	Google Meet - Class 1	Google Meet - Class 2
9:15-9:55 am	Recorded lesson - Class 2	Recorded lesson - Class 1
10:00-10:40 am	Google Meet - Class 3	Google Meet - Class 4
10:45-11:25 am	Recorded lesson -Class 4	Recorded lesson - Class 3
11:30-12:10 pm	LUNCH	
12:15-12:55 pm	Google Meet - Class 5	Google Meet - Class 6
1:00-1:40 pm	Recorded lesson - Class 6	Recorded lesson - Class 5
1:45-2:25 pm	Office hours	

9th-12th Grade Sample Student Schedule		
Time	Day 1	Day 2
8:00-8:40 am	Google Meet - Class 1	Google Meet - Class 2
8:45-9:25 am	Recorded lesson - Class 2	Recorded lesson - Class 1
9:30-10:10 am	Google Meet - Class 3	Google Meet - Class 4
10:15-10:55 am	Recorded lesson - Class 4	Google Meet - Class 5
11:00-11:40 am	LUNCH	
11:45-12:25 pm	Recorded lesson - Class 5	Recorded lesson - Class 3
12:30-1:10 pm	Google Meet - Class 6	Google Meet - Class 7
1:15-1:55 pm	Recorded lesson - Class 7	Recorded lesson - Class 6
2:00-2:40 pm	Office hours	



Diocesan Virtual Academy

Sample Schedules

- **GOOGLE MEET live lessons**
 - Meet is active for 40 minute session with 30 minutes of direct instruction from the teacher
 - Students can ask questions
 - Teachers can see who needs assistance
 - Students are “dismissed” when teacher ends the Meet
 - Sessions will be recorded for student review of material and absent students
 - Teacher will post the recording in Google Classroom with all resources/materials/homework by end of day
- **RECORDED lessons**
 - Recorded class period will be 40 minutes and will include the recorded instruction and activities
 - Assignments, “at-the-bell,” and “exit tickets” will be submitted by the end of the class period
- **OFFICE HOURS**
 - Each teacher will have scheduled office hours each school day



Attachment B

Part of our Partnership in *Sharing Good Health* will require teachers, staff and students/parents to review a Screening Tool at home each day prior to coming to school. We will use this screening tool for DVA students who are interested in participating in school activities during which the student will be in attendance with other students, such as afterschool activities. While it will not be collected, it is imperative that the screening be completed at home to ensure everyone’s safety.

Diocese of Scranton School Symptom Screening Tool

Part I: If you answer “yes” to questions 1, 2, or 3, please contact your school prior to sending your child to participate in a school event.

1. Are you/is the student taking any medication to treat or reduce a fever such as Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol)?
2. Have you traveled to an area (state or region) with required quarantine according to either Pennsylvania or United States guidelines?
3. Have you/your child been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days or told by the Department of Health that you/your child should quarantine?

Part II

1. Are you/is the student experiencing any of the following?

Group A 1 or more symptoms	Group B 2 or more symptoms
Cough Shortness of breath Fever (100.4 or higher) Difficulty breathing	Sore throat Runny nose/congestion Chills New lack of smell or taste Muscle pain Nausea or Vomiting Headache Diarrhea

Stay home if, you or the student:

- Have one or more symptoms in Group A OR
- Have two or more symptoms in Group B OR
- Are taking fever reducing medication OR
- Are within a window for recommended quarantine



Attachment C

DVA School Supply List

Technology- Please reach out to your child's home school if you need to ask about a technology loan for a device.

- Device (Chromebook, iPad, laptop, etc.)
- Headphones w/microphone
 - Please take note of the headphones port on your device before purchasing:
 - USB headset
 - 3.5mm jack headset
 - [Cyber Acoustics Stereo Headset, Headphone with Microphone, Great for K12 School Classroom and Education \(AC-204\), Gold](#)

Other supplies – Additional supplies may be requested by students' individual teachers

Notebook for each class

Pens, pencils, crayons and/or colored pencils

Loose-leaf paper

Construction paper

Ruler

Calculator

Box of recycling materials - bathroom tissue/paper towel rolls, yogurt cups, cardboard, etc.

Scanning

Students can use the Notes app on an iPhone or iPad as a scanner if one is not available. This converts the image differently than taking a picture and makes it much easier to turn in through Google Classroom (or via email when necessary). This app comes with the device and does not require a cost or a download.