

Alachua eSchool



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Alachua eSchool
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Table of Contents

About the Alachua eSchool Program.....	2
ACPS School Calendar 2020-2021.....	3
Rights, Responsibilities and Expectations of Parents and Students.....	4
Alachua eSchool Full-Time Student Enrollment Criteria.....	7
Attendance Policies.....	8
No Contact/Auto Withdraw Policy.....	8
Assessments.....	9
Grades and Grading Scales.....	9
Communication with Teachers.....	9
Grading/Grading Scale.....	10
Academic Integrity.....	11
Academic Expectations.....	11
Alachua eSchool FAQs.....	13
Contract Agreement.....	17

Alachua eSchool



Mission

The mission of the Alachua County Public Schools is to ensure that each student achieves his/her highest personal potential.

Vision

The goal of Alachua eSchool is for K-12 grade students to receive quality, flexible, online learning options and to be successful in realizing their full potential through a virtual education experience.

About the Alachua eSchool Instruction Program

Alachua eSchool Instruction Program offers equitable access to high quality, individualized education, through the Internet and other learning technologies to Kindergarten through 12th grade students in Alachua County. This virtual environment provides flexibility of time and location, and promotes development of the skills, the attitudes, and the self-discipline necessary to achieve success in the 21st century. Alachua eSchool offers students part-time and full-time enrollment with the opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma entirely online.

AES includes a variety of assessment techniques that address the various learning styles and intelligence types. Online learning through the **AES** enables students to assume an increasing responsibility in their own learning.

All courses offered are taught by highly qualified Alachua County teachers that are capable of scheduling face-to-face meetings if needed. Students and parents are encouraged to meet with their teachers periodically or when they encounter a learning challenge that can be solved in a face-to-face instructional environment.

Alachua eSchool is a school choice as defined by Florida Statute 1002.37. If you select AES as your school choice, it is important to note all services previously obtained at a traditional brick and mortar school may not be available in the virtual instructional program, to include certain special needs services.



**School Calendar
2020-21**

Monday, August 3 – Friday, August 7	Pre-Planning (5 weekdays)
Monday, August 10.....	First Day for Students
Monday, September 7	Holiday – Labor Day
Thursday, September 17	Send Interim Reports Home
Friday, October 2.....	Holiday –UF Homecoming
Tuesday, October 13.....	End of First Nine Weeks
Friday, October 16.....	Student Holiday – Teacher Workday
Tuesday, October 27	Send Report Cards Home
Wednesday, November 11	Holiday - Veterans Day
Thursday, November 19	Send Interim Reports Home
Monday, November 23 – Tuesday, November 24.....	Student/Teacher Holidays
Wednesday November 25 – Friday November 27	Holiday - Thanksgiving
Monday, December 21 – Friday, January 1	Winter Holidays
Monday, January 4	Student/Teacher Holiday – Flex Day #3
Tuesday, January 5	Classes Resume
Monday, January 11	End of First Semester
Tuesday, January 12.....	Begin Second Semester
Friday, January 15.....	Student Holiday – Teacher Workday
Monday, January 18	Holiday – ML King Day
Thursday, January 21.....	Send Report Cards Home
Friday, February 12	Student/Teacher Holiday – Flex Day #1
Monday, February 15	Holiday – President’s Day – Flex Day #2
Thursday, February 18	Send Interim Reports Home
Thursday, March 18.....	End of Third Nine Weeks
Friday, March 19	Student Holiday/Teacher Workday
Monday, March 22 – Friday, March 26	Spring Holidays
Tuesday, April 6	Send Report Cards Home
Thursday, April 29	Send Interim Reports Home
Friday, May 28.....	Last Day for Students
Monday, May 31	Holiday – Memorial Day
Tuesday, June 1, – Wednesday, June 2.....	Post-Planning

Rights, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Parents and Students

Virtual instruction and online learning are excellent educational opportunities; however, they are not always suited for *all* students. First, virtual students will need to have Internet, telephone, and email access. Therefore, families enrolling in Alachua eSchool should be comfortable with using the computer and Internet to complete assignments, research, and projects, as well as be comfortable with using email and telephone communication as a primary means for teacher-student and parent-teacher communication. Moreover, because virtual instruction is self-directed, students, parents and learning coaches must be able to understand and follow written lesson assignments independently, in order to meet lesson mastery goals and assignment deadlines. Success will greatly depend on students, parents and learning coaches setting personal goals and working to achieve them in a timely manner. Parent and learning coach involvement in the virtual education program is vital. Therefore, parent(s) and learning coaches must have established routines and on-going engagement in student learning and be committed to the student's success. You are the "glue" that gets the knowledge to stick.

Technology access, self-direction, self-discipline, good time management skills, and computer skills are the central attributes of students who excel in a virtual learning environment. It is important for parents and students to take these factors into consideration before committing to any full time virtual instruction program.

STUDENT – PARENT – TEACHER Contact and Conferences

The communication between the school, teacher, parent and student is crucial to the success of a virtual school student. Teachers are required to have regular communication with both parents and students. In addition, students and parents are required to confer regularly with the teachers concerning academic progress during the monthly call/email. Conferences may be scheduled by contacting the instructor. AES students and parents must return a phone call/email from AES staff within 2 school days.

Rights of Parents and Students

- Parents have the right to know that Alachua eSchool courses use accredited curriculum taught by certified and highly qualified teachers.
- Students and parents have the right to be treated with courtesy by all members of the staff.
- Students and parents have the right to be treated fairly regardless of race, creed, national origin, economic status, gender, or age. Each child will be treated as an individual.
- Students and parents have the right to know that they can approach a staff member with a concern and that the staff member will listen carefully and do everything possible to address the issue.

Parent Responsibilities and Expectations

Alachua eSchool parents play an important role in helping students be successful in online learning. Therefore, parents should:

- Expect academic honesty.
- Monitor/track your student's performance and pace.
- Be aware of the 45-day grace period.
- Help your student, schedule, study and prepare for assessments, including monthly oral assessments with instructors.
- Ensure that your student has time and an appropriate place to work and study.
- Ensure that AES has updated contact information for you and your student.
- Check email at least once daily.
- Maintain clear, courteous communication with instructors at least monthly and respond to teacher communication within 2 school days of receipt.
- Contact the teacher if your student needs to miss a day due to an emergency or illness. If you are unable to attend a trip or event that you've signed up for, contact the teacher immediately.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

- Have a dedicated work space that is removed from distractions. Make sure that you have all materials and supplies needed, including your computer. Keep your papers and documents related to the course in this location. Make sure that it is a comfortable and well-lit space.
- Create a schedule. A schedule allows dedicated time for each subject. Once your schedule is created, stick to it. Time management is a large factor at succeeding at your online course.
- Keep in contact with your teachers. Schedule all monthly oral assessments (if applicable) in advance. Check email at least daily (intermediate students). Return all calls and emails within 2 school days. Set up tutoring with your instructor as needed. If part of your course, teachers may communicate with students regarding scheduling of virtual classes. While attendance to virtual classes may not be mandatory, if not in attendance, all students must view the recording of the material presented in the session if required.
- Have academic integrity. Be sure that all of your work is your own.
- Complete at least 2-3% of your expected progress each week. Log an average of four hours of schoolwork each day for your core academic subjects. If you have to miss a day due to an emergency or illness, you or your Learning Coach should contact the teacher.
- Participate in all required assessments.

Alachua eSchool Full Time Student Enrollment Criteria

Alachua eSchool is a school of choice and offers a full-time program for students in grades Kindergarten-12th. Full-time **AES** are registered as public school students, take part in FCAT/FSA and other district testing, and have the opportunity to earn an Alachua County diploma. In order to be a successful full-time student with AES students should:

1. Have been successfully promoted to the next grade level at the end of the previous school year.
2. Attain one of the following minimum scores on previous year standardized tests:
 - a. FSA Reading Level 3 or higher
 - b. Stanford Achievement Test Reading Score at 50th percentile or above
 - c. Iowa Test of Basic Skills Reading Score at 50th percentile or above
 - d. Grade level proficiency on an official standardized test administered by another state public system.

Accepted students must meet all of the Alachua County criteria as specified in the Alachua County Pupil Progression Plan. Such criteria include meeting minimum FSA scores, course requirements, immunization, Code of Conduct acknowledgement, etc.

Attendance Policies

Students are expected to log an average of four hours each school day on core academic subjects. If students have to miss a day due to an emergency or illness, the Learning Coach should contact the teacher. School sponsored activities and trips can count toward the required hours each week. PLEASE be respectful of the time and effort of many people to plan and schedule these events. If you are unable to attend a trip or event that you've signed up for, contact the teacher immediately.

No Contact/Auto Withdraw Policy

Only through continuous communication can students be successful in an online course. It is essential that the student and instructor maintain regular contact.

To ensure that our students are aware of this commitment, the three-part process will be followed for students grades K-5:

1. If the student does not submit the expected number of assignment(s) within a period of seven to fourteen (7-14) consecutive days, the student and parent(s) will receive communication notifying them of the student's unacceptable pace for completing assignments.
2. If the student does not respond by completing all required assignments within seven (7) days of the initial communication, the principal or guidance counselor will be notified.
3. If the student does not respond by completing all required assignments within twenty-one (21) days of the initial communication, AES will assume that the student does not intend to remain in the course, and the student may be administratively dropped from the course. The instructor will communicate this information to the student and parent, via phone first, followed by an email.

By enrolling in AES, you acknowledge that during the first 45 consecutive days of being activated into an AES course, you may drop the course without penalty. You understand that for each online course there are assignments that must be completed each week. Failure to complete the assignments on a weekly basis may result in your removal from the course and may result in a failing grade being assigned to your academic transcript. You must return all course materials and/or borrowed property to AES.

Assessments

All AES students are required to participate in district and state assessments. These may include a Kindergarten Screening (FLKRS) in September, the state-wide assessment test, and other district assessments. Participation is mandatory for these assessments. The tests are not administered online remotely, so students must provide their own transportation to the school office or other testing locations and have picture identification to be tested.

Required Semester Sessions

Students are required to attend the mandatory sessions that will occur in person once per semester. These sessions will cover essential information with students and are extremely important. Please make sure you plan well in advance to make these sessions! Failure to attend could result in being dropped from the program.

Communication with Teachers

Our eSchool teachers do not have regular office hours. We realize that many of you choose eSchool because traditional school hours don't work with your family's schedule. Because of this, we strive to be accessible beyond the "regular" school day. Our communication policy is that we will respond within 24 hours to any contact from a family. Email is the easiest and fastest way to get a response. If you need to discuss something in person or over the phone, we ask that you first email the teacher to set up a time. This ensures that we have sufficient time to address your concerns.

Email is our program's primary form of communication. Every Learning Coach should check their email on a daily basis! Teachers will send out important information by email and it's important that everyone knows what's going on. Please get in the habit of checking email regularly. Emails will come from the teachers' school board email addresses, as well as our general eSchool account. (The general account is not monitored, so always make sure you contact your teacher directly if you have questions or need something.)

Students are welcome to email their teachers, but we ask that students consider emails as a more formal form of communication. This means following some basic guidelines:

1. Specify the class and assignment in the subject line.
2. Address your teacher formally.
3. Keep your email brief and to the point.
4. Use formal language and proper grammar.
5. Send the email and be patient when waiting for a reply.

Grading

All AES students will receive grades based on their performance, progress, and work samples. The teacher will submit grades to the school district once every nine weeks. Report cards will be sent through the mail to each student.

All submitted assignments will be graded within 48 hours of submission. For some assignments, a minimum score is required before the student can move forward in Canvas. If you are waiting on a teacher to grade an assignment in Canvas before you can move on, you can be working in your textbook or workbook in the meantime. If your assignments are not graded in 48 hours, please contact your teacher by email to see what is going on.

Grading Scale

GRADE (K-2)	GRADE (3-5)	PERCENT
E	A	90-100
S +	B	80-89
S	C	70-79
N	D	60-69
U	F	0-59

Academic Integrity

AES expects a full commitment to academic integrity from each student. It is extremely important in an online environment. Students should be submitting their own work at all times. If a student violates the academic integrity policy by copying from another source or submitting unoriginal material, they will receive a zero on the assignment. If it happens more than once, students may be removed from our eSchool program.

Academic Integrity means:

- Your work on each assignment will be completely your own.
- Your collaboration with another classmate on any assignment will be pre-approved by your instructor.
- You will not practice plagiarism in any form.
- You will not misuse content from the Internet.
- You will not provide assistance to anyone scheduled to take the same course semester/final exams in the future.
- Your parent/guardian will attest to the fact that your work is completely your own.

Academic Expectations

We have high academic standards for our eSchool students. Our program is flexible, but student must still master the academic standards. In order to do this, students should be working diligently every day. Pacing guides are provided for each subject (under the Announcements menu in each course). Students should stay within these pacing windows in order to stay on track. If students fall more than two weeks behind the pacing guide, they will be placed on academic probation. (The specifics of the probation will vary depending on the student's grade level, so your teacher will give more details should this happen.) Failure to comply with the conditions of the probation will result in the removal from the program.

There are some assignments in Canvas that have a minimum required score in order for the student to continue in the curriculum. This is because we want to make sure the standards are mastered before moving on. If a student doesn't meet the minimum score on one of these assignments, the LC or the student must **email the teacher** (at the gm.sbac.edu email address, NOT in the Canvas messaging system) in order to get a second attempt. Please do not wait and think that this will happen automatically! The teacher does not get an alert when a student doesn't pass an assignment, so you will have to contact the teacher.

Some notes about our retake policy:

- We do not do retakes for any assignments with a score over 70%. We consider a 70% a passing grade.
- When requesting a retake, make sure you have a plan for how to review the material BEFORE doing the retake. In math, this might be the reteach page, or rereading the assignment in reading for instance. We don't want to give retake attempts for students to just keep clicking answers until they get it right. Learning mastery is our goal.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between Alachua eSchool and FLVS?

Alachua eSchool employs all local, highly qualified, Florida-certified teachers. Additionally, AES follows the Alachua County school calendar ensuring that students complete their courses on time and stay on track for graduation. Because of these factors, we are able to provide a personal touch and special opportunities, such as field trips, tutoring, in-person connections, and special events. We also offer a variety of courses from multiple sources, creating unique opportunities for students.

Why choose Alachua eSchool over Florida Virtual School or another online option?

Flexibility, your tax dollars remain in Alachua County, full time and local teachers, optional face-to-face sessions, no waiting lists!

Does my child have to log in at a specific time?

No. For each online class there is a schedule or plan that shows what work should be done each week. As long as your child sticks to this pace and completes work each week, there is not a specific time or day that they must be online.

Can my child work on the weekends?

Yes. One of the benefits of taking online classes is that students can work during non-traditional school hours such as evenings and weekends.

Can my child finish the class early?

Yes. Another benefit of taking online classes is that students can work ahead of schedule and finish classes early.

Can my child still participate in sports, school activities, etc.?

Yes, full-time Alachua eSchool students can participate in all sports and school activities at their zoned school.

How often do I need to make contact with my child's online teacher(s)?

You will have contact with your child's online teacher(s) at least twice a month to discuss their progress. It will be very important that you supply your child's online teacher(s) with a phone number and email address where you can be reached. You can contact the online teacher(s) at any time as well with questions.

Our family will be out of town for a period of time. Can students work on their online classes out of state or the country?

Yes. As long as a student has a computer and Internet access they can continue to work in their online classes wherever they are.

What are some challenges I might expect with my child taking online classes?

With online classes, students (with the help of their parents/guardians), must make a greater effort to stay organized, create a schedule and manage their time, and work toward staying on pace with work. As a parent/guardian you will need to make sure you are helping to keep your student on track and organized.

What are some positive changes that I might see in my child as a result of them taking online classes?

Students have to opportunity to develop skills related to organization and time management, develop a sense of responsibility, as well as take charge of their own learning.

What do we do if we have technical issues?

If technical issues arise your child's online teacher(s) will be there for initial support. You will also have access to a technical support team if the issue extends beyond the teacher's ability.

What if my child starts an online class and discovers that this style of learning is not right for them?

This is okay. Online learning may not be for everyone. A student can drop an online class within the first 45 days without any negative consequences. The student, parents/guardians, and teacher work together to make this decision. Ultimately, we want to make sure that students are place in a learning environment that is right for them.

What if I can't afford a computer or Internet service?

The school district will make arrangements to provide access. Full time Alachua eSchool students may qualify for technology assistance if the family's income meets the Free/Reduced Lunch program guidelines and if the family satisfies the technology hardship provisions outlined by Florida State Statute 1002.45 and HB 7197.

How do I enroll in the Alachua eSchool program?

Enrollment for the Alachua eSchool Elementary Program for the 2020-2021 school year is now open. If you have any questions or need to set up an appointment to complete enrollment, please call our office at 352-955-7589.

Is AES accredited?

Alachua eSchool is fully accredited by the (SACS) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the (CITA) Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation. AES is also registered with the Florida State Department of Education and a part of the Alachua County Public School system.

Is AES available to everyone?

AES is a public school serving grades K-12. If you meet AES admission requirements and have determined that online learning is suitable for your needs, you are encouraged to apply for enrollment. AES thrives on diversity and feels our diverse student body is what sets us apart from other traditional schools. We truly offer a well-rounded and diversified learning experience. Alachua eSchool will use the district-adopted curriculum and the Canvas management system for the 2020-2021 school year. It's important to know if your child is eligible to participate in an online program. Please select the "Eligibility Link" to see if requirements are met.

[Eligibility Requirement Link](#)

Is the school's online environment safe for students?

AES is proud of its safe online environment. We have a comprehensive Acceptable Use Policy, to which all students and parents must agree. Parents/Students and teachers can communicate within the curriculum program or through the student and teacher @gm.sbac.edu email addresses.

How do we know students are learning?

All courses include meaningful assessments of student learning. Teachers are in regular contact with all parents/students. In addition, students are required to take standardized tests to meet promotion standards and so that their learning can be compared to students statewide.

Is there a face-to-face requirement? What sort of attendance is required?

AES offers a true distance learning experience that does not require seat time in a traditional classroom. However, we are proud to offer face-to-face contact with teachers as an option for students. Students are encouraged to meet with teachers as needed individually or in groups to receive additional instruction as needed. Periodically, standardized testing and academic interventions require students to attend face-to-face activities. Teachers may exercise the option to have students take face-to-face proctored assignments and exams to ensure fidelity. Students are expected to actively participate in all courses on a weekly basis in order to maintain educational integrity. Students are considered truant if there is no participation in the online courses for more than one week without prior approval and will be reported as truant to the proper authorities.

How do I know if online learning is right for my family?

A successful online learner is a motivated self-starter and is committed to the success of his or her education. While AES offers world-class educational opportunities, there is a high degree of accountability placed upon the student and family that can only be achieved by putting forth much effort. Like anything, the more effort you put into your education, the greater the benefit.

Can I attend AES on a full or part-time basis?

It is our goal to provide students with whatever level of service they require. We can offer a full curriculum for grades K-12; or just one or two courses to satisfy your current private or public school requirements; or supplement your home school curriculum.

What is the cost of AES?

Free to Alachua County Residents.

Who teaches the online courses at AES?

All online high school courses and programs are taught by highly qualified Alachua County Public School instructors that meet Florida Department of Education certification requirements. You can be sure that quality in education is our #1 goal!

What if the student has questions or problems while taking a course?

Students are assigned an instructor who is available daily via web conference, email, or telephone. Support services are available to all AES students through our guidance department.

What is the difference between AES and traditional brick and mortar schools?

There is no difference in the level of curriculum between AES and traditional schools. There is a significant difference in the flexibility offered to all AES students in the way they can complete their courses online.

Is AES less challenging than other traditional accredited schools?

No. As an accredited school, AES offers a flexible alternative for students. It is not an easier option than traditional accredited schools. Our courses engage students in a challenging curriculum, requiring the use of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply the knowledge they have acquired.

As a parent, will I be kept informed of my student's progress?

Absolutely! As a parent, you will likely receive more updates and information about your student's progress than ever before. We strongly feel that a parent's involvement in a child's education is critical. Our teachers provide frequent online reports to parents. You can always see how your child is performing by logging in to the parent/guardian accounts.

Who are AES students?

Any student seeking a quality education through a flexible format is a potential AES student. AES students are students who benefit from individualized instruction, athletes, performers, highly motivated students who prefer to accelerate, part-time students, students who travel, students with medical issues, or home school students.

What if I want to withdraw from AES?

- Contact the eSchool office
- Inform online teachers
- Contact Student Assignment office (or other school) for enrollment information

FURTHER QUESTIONS? Please contact us at 352-955-7589 or alachuaeschool@gm.sbac.edu.

Contract Agreement

I understand and acknowledge the expectations and requirements of the Alachua eSchool program and agree to follow these requirements throughout the academic year. I also agree that failure to meet any of the requirements and/or failure in a course may disqualify me from participation in the program in the future. I have read and understand all terms of this agreement.

Student Name

Student Signature (if able)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date