The Virtual Academy

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

The AACPS Virtual Academy

The AACPS Virtual Academy (VA) is a virtual-only learning solution for a limited number of students entering grades 3–12. Virtual Academy students receive real-time, synchronous, instruction 4.5–6.0 hours per day from AACPS educators and participate in AACPS curriculum and assessments as well as all in-person mandatory Maryland State assessments. In addition, students have time during the school day for academic coaching and co-curricular clubs.

Interested students who reside in Anne Arundel County must complete an annual application to be considered for registration based upon seat availability; and if accepted, they must commit to a full-year of enrollment in the Virtual Academy.

Is the Virtual Academy Right For You?

We understand that the Virtual Academy may not be the best fit for every student. Before you make your fully informed decision about applying to the Virtual Academy, you (the student) should be willing to:

- Transfer to the Virtual Academy for a fully virtual school day without in-person activities (aside from mandatory in-person State testing/ MCAP). The Virtual Academy is different from brick-and-mortar schools because—with the exception of State mandated testing—all activities are virtual, including classes, clubs, and meetings.

- Keep cameras on at all times and remain visible to the instructors.

- There is no opportunity for in-person athletics or clubs through the VA. Only the graduation ceremony and State-mandated testing (MCAP) takes place in person at a designated location; VA families commit to that testing upon accepting a seat.

- Understand that applicants must have a strong academic record with a history of regular school attendance and passing grades in all core courses and most electives.

- Must accept that for high school students, the one pathway to graduation in the Virtual Academy is the College Completer Pathway. High school students must earn at least 2 credits of the same World Language (Spanish) and must take 4 credits of math, including Algebra 2. All other AACPS graduation requirements apply to the Virtual Academy. Students must pass and earn credit for all core courses each year.

- High school students may not participate in coursework at the Centers for Applied Technology, Signature, or Magnet Programs.

- Arrange personal transportation to the designated locations for State mandated testing and to pick up required materials for student use (text books, supplies, and electronic devices) as needed throughout the school year.

- Allocate time outside of school for homework, group projects, study groups and independent studying.

- Register for and successfully complete all Virtual Academy courses.

- Commit to one year of active participation upon accepting a seat for the following school year while residing in Anne Arundel County for the full year.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

Is the AACPS Virtual Academy a new school?

No, the VA first opened for students in grades 3–12 in the 2021/22 school year.

Are all AACPS students eligible to enroll in the VA for virtual learning?

Academically successful and fully engaged students entering grades 3–12 (in 23/24) who due to personal medical conditions, the medical condition of a member of the household, or those with social emotional barriers preventing them from attending brick-and-mortar schools, may apply for the VA. Additionally, all applicants must maintain full residency in Anne Arundel County.

- High school applicants must be pursuing a College Completer Pathway toward graduation with 2 credits of world language and 4 credits in math, including Algebra 2.
- All accepted students agree to a one-year commitment and to residing in Anne Arundel County throughout the year. (There is no option to participate at another school in any Magnet, Signature Program, or Center of Applied Technology program).

Is a hybrid option available for 2023/24?

No, students either attend their designated brick-and-mortar school or - if granted a seat following an application acceptance- attend the Virtual Academy with classes taught by AACPS teachers and engage in AACPS curriculum through virtual or online teaching. Additionally, some high school students will engage in rigorous courses like Advanced Placement, through an MSDE approved vendor. All instruction, services, and school communication occur through the VA.

Assessments

Will students in the AACPS Virtual Academy participate in district and state-wide mandated assessments?

Yes, students in the VA follow the same assessment schedule and requirements as all AACPS students. All mandatory State test/assessments (MCAP) are administered in-person at designated testing locations. Virtual Academy students are required, without exception, to attend State Assessment sessions in-person. Students and parents/guardians commit to this requirement upon accepting a seat in the VA.

Expectations

How many days per week will students engage in online learning?

Students in the VA engage in a regular school day schedule with instruction and collaboration every day that AACPS schools are in session.

Are there expectations for maintaining enrollment in the AACPS Virtual Academy?

Yes, students are expected to maintain successful academics, attend regularly, and engage in all classes and meetings consistently with cameras-on. Support plans or probationary periods may be initiated to assist students struggling to maintain those expectations. If it is determined that virtual learning is not optimal for student success, students may be required to return to in-person instruction at the designated school during the school year.

What are the technology requirements for participating in the Virtual Academy?

A Chromebook will be issued to each student enrolled in the VA. Connection via broadband internet will support full access.

- The parent/guardian must pick up their student(s) device, textbooks and materials from the designated location for student use with the onset of the school year.

Other Services & Activities

I qualify for Special Education services. Can I still participate in the Virtual Academy?

AACPS strongly believes in equitable access and inclusive opportunities. Thus, a continuum of services are available, primarily in the general education setting. For applicants who require specialized instruction, IEP reviews will occur to ensure a "free, appropriate, public, education" can be provided in the virtual setting. As a high school completer program, all high school students must engage as college completers with credits earned in World Language and Algebra 2.

Does the Virtual Academy offer co-curricular activities or clubs?

Yes, all students have access to virtual co-curricular experiences and clubs. All activities take place virtually with no in-person gatherings.

Are students able to participate in interscholastic sports or athletics if enrolled in the Virtual Academy?

No, the AACPS VA programs are solely virtual. No in-person sports or athletics will be offered; nor are VA students permitted to participate in athletics or activities at geographic/designated schools.

Families interested in in-person athletic programs may seek opportunities through community organizations.

Will virtual students have access to school meals?

Students in the VA, like other AACPS students, may purchase meals. Meal distribution for VA families will be at designated schools in the county. Registration is required. Families who qualify for free or reduced meals should contact the VA directly.

Can I take classes at the Center for Applied Technology (CAT) while in the Virtual Academy?

No, Virtual Academy students do not participate in any in-person offerings at other schools, including the Centers for Applied Technology (CAT). The only in-person activity is the mandatory State testing (MCAP) which occurs in the spring. For in-person testing, families are required to transport their student(s) to the designated location on the days that mandatory State testing occurs.

Applying for the Virtual Academy

All applicants to the Virtual Academy must reside/live in Anne Arundel County, complete an application, and be determined eligible for the Virtual Academy. If there are more eligible applicants than seats available per grade level, an unweighted lottery is run to determine which eligible applicants will be offered a seat.

Students remain home and *attend* live, on-line classes with AACPS instructors engaging in AACPS curricula. For enrolled students, the Virtual Academy becomes their school instead of their home geographic school.

Students must maintain residency in Anne Arundel County, MD throughout the school year.

High school students must pursue a College Completer Pathway earning 2 credits of the same world language (Spanish) and 4 credits (4 years) of math, including Algebra 2.

Important Application Dates

Application Window
October 10 @Noon–November 21

Lottery Results
February 2023

Seat Offerings
Late February 2023

Where is the application for the Virtual Academy?

The online application, a centrally managed application system for Programs of Choice, is available at www.aacps.org/magnet. Only online applications will be accepted.

Note: The Virtual Academy (VA) is a Program of Choice, not a Magnet. However, the application system is the same one used for any student applying to the VA, any of the magnets, or to the Centers for Applied Technology. You will see multiple options. Be certain to select the Virtual Academy on that page to complete your application for the VA.

Who may apply?

Students who due to personal medical conditions, or the medical condition of a member of the household, or those with social emotional barriers preventing them from attending their designated schools in-person may apply to the VA. These students would be in Grades 3-12 the following school year and live/reside in Anne Arundel County.

When should I apply to a Magnet Program?

You should apply during the fall, the year before you would enter the Virtual Academy. For example, if you hope to attend the Virtual Academy in 9th grade you will apply in the fall of grade 8. The application window is generally open for several weeks from mid-October through mid-November. Announcements with details will be made in September and early October.

For the 23/24 school year the window is from noon on October 10, 2022 to noon on November 21, 2022.

Can I apply to more than one program of choice, for example the Virtual Academy and also a Magnet program?

Yes, students may apply to the Virtual Academy and to a Magnet Program. However, once students accept a seat in either, they no longer have the opportunity to participate with the other. Students may only accept a seat in one at which point they relinquish the other opportunity.

Is a current Virtual Academy student automatically enrolled in the Virtual Academy for the following year?

No, current students of the Virtual Academy must complete an application every fall if they wish to continue enrollment in the VA the following year. If academically successful and fully engaged, however, they may be offered a seat without having to be entered into the lottery process.

Is it important for me to submit my application as soon as the applications open?

No, Virtual Academy seats are NOT offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Rather, eligible applicants who submit an application before the deadline will be included in the lottery.

What if there are more applicants than there are seats for the grade level in the VA?

Should more students qualify than there are available seats in a specific grade level of the VA, a random, unweighted lottery process will select students from the list.

What if I miss the application deadline and submit my application late?

While families may complete a late application and be placed on a secondary/late waitlist, those applications will not be considered for the lottery or until the original waitlist for all on-time applicants has been depleted. After the late application process, we may generate a "late waitlist," in order of date of submission. All late applicants will need to meet the requirements of the Virtual Academy. Be sure to regularly check the magnet application website for updates: www.aacps.org/magnet (That page contains applications for multiple options including the Virtual Academy; click on the logo/ link for VA applications below the yellow box where you type your user name and password.)

What is my username and password?

Students who are currently enrolled in AACPS should use the username and password they use when logging in to the computers at their schools. Non-AACPS students will be given a prompt to set up a username and password.

What do I do if I forget my password?

If a password is forgotten, contact the person at your school who resets passwords (Computer Tech or secretary). You may also contact the AACPS Help Desk at 410-222-5135 or Help-Desk@aacps.org.

Why do you need my email address?

Email is the primary form of communication used to send you notifications and updates about the status of your application. Parents/Guardians must have a valid email address to receive these notifications. Do not use your student's email address, because all communication regarding your application and possible offers would then be sent to your student, not to you, the parent/guardian. Please be sure to check your Spam/Junk folders regularly for messages as well.

Why can't I change the Student, Parent, or School information in the Application?

The Application uses your UserName to automatically pull this information from the AACPS Student Database. If any of this information needs to be changed, contact the person at your school who updates the Student Database.

I am a School Counselor/Interpreter helping a student complete an application. What do I have to do?

If you are supporting an application, complete all areas of the application. On the Application Terms of Agreement page, answer "Yes" to "Were these terms signed by a School Counselor/other third party?" Fill out the requested information. Counselors may apply with students, with parental consent.

How will my application be evaluated?

The Virtual Academy Office will review grades and attendance of applicants. Applicants must have a record that reflects academic success and appropriate attendance. High school students must take the required courses to graduate as a College Completer with at least 2 credits of the same world language (Spanish) and four years of Math including credit for Algebra 2.

Additionally, the VA will review the specific services and accommodations for students with disabilities requiring an IEP to verify that those can be met in the VA.

I've submitted my application. What do I do now?

Upon application submission, please take note of your Magnet ID number(s), and if possible, print out your application for your records (or take a photo with your phone). Your application will be reviewed over the next few weeks and you will be contacted with further information via email.

Apply at:
http://magnet.aacps.org/

After You've Applied

The Lottery

What is the Lottery?

If there are more eligible applicants than seats available at a grade level for the Virtual Academy (VA), a randomized, computerized lottery will be conducted to assign on-time eligible applicants who reside in Anne Arundel County either a seat in the grade level or a position on the waitlist for that grade. The VA office will not know if it will be necessary to conduct a lottery until all on-time applications have been evaluated.

How can I find my lottery position?

Lottery results are posted on the Magnet Application website (www.aacps.org/magnet) by your application ID which appeared in the email offering either a seat or a waitlist position. Students' ID numbers are initially listed in the order assigned by the lottery. As other students decline seats, that list may change and your waitlist placement may move up.

Am I placed differently in the lottery based on my grades or other factors?

No, in the lottery all eligible applications are treated the same and have the same chance of being offered a seat in the VA. The VA does not use a weighting system for any students in the lottery regardless of academic achievement, siblings in the program, or other circumstances. There are no exceptions.

Note, returning VA students who have evidence of thriving will not be required to engage in the lottery.

The Waiting List

Is there a waiting list?

Yes, there may be a waitlist. If there are more eligible applicants than seats at any grade level in the VA, those applicants who are not offered a seat as a result of the unweighted lottery will be placed on a waitlist. These students must "accept" the waitlist placement to maintain that position in hopes of being offered a seat. Their placement/position on the waitlist determined by the lottery may change as other students decline seats they had been offered. The waitlist is updated weekly, and families on the waitlist should continue to review their status regularly.

I can't find my Virtual Academy/Magnet Application ID number on the website. What should I do?

Double check the website and keep in mind that your original position may have changed if other students have declined their seats. If you still cannot locate your ID, contact the Virtual Academy office. (410-544-1082).

What are the odds of moving off the waitlist and being offered a seat in the VA?

Waitlist movement is affected by the number of students on the waitlist for each grade of the VA. It is impossible to predict the likelihood of moving off the waitlist. The waitlist will continue to be updated until school opens for AACPS staff the week prior to all AACPS students beginning school. Most movement takes place during the first month following the lottery: although some waitlist movement may also occur during the spring and summer.

Can I move off the waitlist to the VA after school starts?

No, the VA will not accept new students once teachers return to school. Staffing and schedules have been arranged based upon current enrollment. The waitlist will be disbanded once the school doors open for staffing prior to the arrival of students.

What happens if military orders require me to move to Anne Arundel County after the application window has closed?

If a student of a military family who moves to Anne Arundel County after the application window has closed and applies late, the student - if eligible - will be placed at the top of the late waitlist. Proof of Anne Arundel County residency or military orders must be verified before a seat offer can be made.

Accepting or Declining a Seat

What is the difference between a Virtual Academy (VA) seat offer and a Waitlist offer?

Some students will be offered seats in the VA as a result of the lottery. If they accept the seat, they will be registered with the VA. Additional eligible students who are not offered a seat following the lottery will be placed on waitlist for a specific grade and will receive a waitlist offer and must accept the waitlist offer. Those students may later be offered seats as some seats open if and when other students decline them.

Accepting or Declining a Seat

What does it mean to "accept" a seat in the VA?

Accepting a seat in the VA means that you are committing to remain academically successful and fully engaged as a VA student for one full school year. Students who accept a seat will attend and fully engage in each class or activity, remaining visible to the teacher and other students using the camera on their computers. Families and students also commit to residing in Anne Arundel County for the school year and attending two days of state mandated testing in person as the designated location.

What does it mean to "accept" a waitlist offer?

Accepting a waitlist offer means that you wish to remain on the waitlist in hopes of later being offered a seat in the VA. If students have decided they do not want to attend the VA, they should not accept the offer and allow that seat to be offered to someone on the waitlist. Students who have accepted the waitlist seat will be notified by email if a seat at the desired grade level becomes available to them.

What does it mean to decline a seat in the VA or on the waitlist?

Declining a seat in the VA or on the waitlist means the student will not be registered to attend the VA. The student (VA Application ID) will be removed from all VA lists and the seat will be offered to the next student on the list. The decision to decline is binding.

How do I accept or decline my seat?

Log into your Magnet/Virtual Academy Application account (http://magnet.aacps.org)with the student ID and password used to submit your application. You will see your application(s) and can select your desired action from a drop down menu under "Actions" and "Go."

Once you SAVE your decision to accept or to decline your seat, you will receive a confirmation email. You have 10 days to accept or decline your seat offer. (Your official specific deadline date can be found in the original email seat offer.) If you do not take action within 10 days, the Virtual Academy office will take the lead in declining the offered seat and it will no longer be available to you.

I have accepted a seat in the Virtual Academy. What happens next?

You will receive email messages regarding opportunities to participate in Welcome meetings with the principal. Additionally, scheduling information messages will occur for secondary students. Check the Virtual Academy website regularly for further information. https://www.aacps.org/virtualacademy

Are there requirements for remaining in the Virtual Academy once accepting a seat and the beginning of the school year?

Yes, students who begin the school year after accepting a seat in the Virtual Academy commit to full participation for a complete school year. The school year begins when teachers return following the summer break and school and student schedules have been created.

I am a Home Instruction or private school student who accepted a seat in The Virtual Academy. What do I need to do?

Private school students must submit proof of residency for Anne Arundel County, transcripts, and standardized test scores. If the school is not approved or accredited, high school students must pass assessments for core subjects in order to receive high school credit for those courses.

If offered a seat, Home Instruction students should contact the Home Instruction office regarding transferring from Home Instruction to the Virtual Academy.

For further information, contact the Virtual Academy.
virtualacademy@aacps.org or 410-544-1082

ANNE ARUNDEL
COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ELEVATING ALL STUDENTS...ELIMINATING ALL GAPS

www.aacps.org/magnet