

Panther Online Academy Handbook

2025-2026 School Year

K-8 Virtual Learning through Edmentum EdOptions Academy

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Mission and Vision
 3. Admission, Enrollment, and Eligibility
 4. Program Overview
 5. Academic Expectations and Policies
 6. Attendance Policy
 7. Grading and Assessment
 8. Technology and Equipment Requirements
 9. Student and Parent Responsibilities
 10. Communication and Support
 11. Code of Conduct and Discipline
 12. Special Education and Support Services
 13. Withdrawal Procedures
 14. Contact Information
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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Jennings County Schools Online/Virtual School. This fully online learning program is designed for K-8 students who seek a flexible and comprehensive education through Edmentum's EdOptions Academy. Students in grades K-5 will use the Calvert Learning curriculum and 6-8 will use Courseware curriculum.

This handbook provides guidelines for students and families to ensure a successful and structured online learning experience. All Jennings County Schools Corporation policies and rules apply.

2. Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a rigorous, flexible, and engaging virtual learning experience that meets the needs of all students while maintaining the high academic standards of Jennings County Schools.

Vision Statement

To empower students through high-quality virtual education, fostering independence, responsibility, and academic excellence.

3. Admission, Enrollment and Eligibility

- Jennings County Schools Online/Virtual School is open to all K-8 students who reside in Jennings County, Indiana or Indiana residency. Proof of residency (IC 20-19-9-6) is required and, if appropriate, out-of-district transfer approval.
- After receiving an application for Panthers Online Academy, an orientation session to complete enrollment will be arranged. Final enrollment occurs after the registration process, review of student records, and completion of orientation. Students will only be admitted to Panthers Online Academy at the start of a new semester.
- Students must have reliable internet access and a suitable device for online learning.
- Commitment to attend at least one semester in the virtual learning environment and abide by the engagement and attendance expectations.
- Parents/guardians must commit to supporting their child's education by ensuring daily participation and engagement.
- Parents/guardians will attend a required orientation.

4. Program Overview

Jennings County Schools Online/Virtual School partners with **Edmentum's EdOptions Academy** to provide a high-quality, fully accredited, teacher-supported virtual learning experience for students in grades K-8. The program is designed to offer flexibility while maintaining academic rigor, ensuring students receive the same level of education as their peers in traditional classrooms.

- **K-5 Curriculum - Calvert Learning:**
 - **Engaging and Interactive Lessons** – The curriculum includes videos, interactive exercises, and multimedia resources to keep young learners engaged.
 - **Comprehensive Core Subjects** – Students study **English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies**, along with integrated lessons in the arts and physical education.
 - **Structured Pacing** – Lessons follow a set schedule to help students build foundational skills progressively.
 - **Hands-on Activities** – In addition to digital coursework, students engage in offline activities, such as science experiments, creative projects, and workbook exercises.
 - **Teacher-Led Instruction** – Each student is assigned an **EdOptions Academy-certified teacher**, who provides support, feedback, and live instruction when needed.
 - **Parental Involvement** – Parents serve as **Learning Coaches**, guiding students through their daily lessons, reinforcing concepts, and ensuring consistent engagement.
- **6-8 Curriculum:**
 - **Indiana-Certified Teachers** – Students are taught by highly qualified instructors who provide virtual instruction, grade assignments, and offer feedback.
 - **Core and Elective Courses** – Middle school students take courses in **ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies**, with the option to explore electives such as Computer Science, Health, and World Languages.
 - **Personalized Learning Paths** – The curriculum adapts to individual student needs, offering **additional support or advanced coursework** based on performance.
 - **Interactive and Self-Paced Learning** – Lessons include digital content, real-world applications, and self-paced learning to accommodate different student

schedules.

- **Teacher Check-Ins** – Students participate in scheduled virtual meetings for academic support, project-based learning, and one-on-one guidance.
- **Academic Integrity and Mastery-Based Progression** – Students must demonstrate mastery of content through quizzes, tests, and projects before progressing to the next unit.

5. Academic Expectations and Policies

- Students must log in daily and actively participate in their coursework.
- Assignments must be completed by designated deadlines.
- Virtual class meetings are required and one-on-one teacher check-ins may be needed.
- Parents should monitor progress and communicate with teachers if concerns arise.

6. Attendance Policy

Indiana law requires regular attendance in virtual learning.

- Students must log in daily and complete assignments to be marked present.
 - A student is considered absent if they fail to participate in learning activities for a full school day.
 - Parents must report absences by calling the attendance hotline or filling out the attendance form.
 - Excessive absences may result in withdrawal from the virtual program.
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7. Grading and Assessment

- Assignments, quizzes, and tests will be graded according to Jennings County Schools' grading scale.
 - Progress reports and report cards will be issued quarterly.
 - State-mandated standardized testing is required, and students must attend in-person test sessions when necessary.
 - Academic integrity is essential; plagiarism or cheating may result in disciplinary action.
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8. Technology and Equipment Requirements

To participate in virtual learning, students need:

- A reliable internet connection
- A laptop, desktop, or tablet with a webcam and microphone. JCSC will provide one if needed.
- Headphones (recommended)
- A quiet and structured workspace

Technical support is available through the Jennings County Schools IT department.

9. Student and Parent Responsibilities

Student Responsibilities:

- Log in daily and complete assignments on time.
- Attend scheduled virtual meetings with teachers.
- Will keep in close communication with teachers.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Will have their camera on for all live teaching sessions.
- Attend all required in-person testing.
- Follow the Jennings County Schools Code of Conduct.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Ensure their child has access to reliable Wi-Fi required technology capabilities every school day.
 - Provide a safe and secure study environment.
 - Make sure the student is complying with attendance expectations.
 - Monitor progress and encourage daily participation.
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- Maintain communication with teachers and school administrators.
 - Will commit to transporting students in person for local and state assessments.
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10. Communication and Support

- Teachers will communicate with students and parents via email, phone, and virtual meetings.
 - Parents should regularly check the online learning platform for updates.
 - Technical issues should be reported to the school's IT helpdesk.
 - A virtual learning coordinator is available for additional support.
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11. Code of Conduct and Discipline

Students are expected to:

- Engage respectfully in online discussions and interactions.
- Follow academic integrity guidelines (no plagiarism or cheating).
- Use appropriate language in all communications.
- Comply with all Jennings County Schools discipline policies.

Disciplinary actions for violations may include warnings, parent meetings, or removal from the virtual program.

12. Special Education and Support Services

Students with IEPs, 504 Plans, or other learning needs will receive appropriate accommodations. Services may include:

- Virtual support sessions with special education teachers.
- Adjusted pacing or modified assignments.
- In-person meetings if required.

Parents should contact the special education coordinator for specific support options.

13. Withdrawal Procedures

- Parents wishing to withdraw their child must notify the school in writing.
 - Students must complete all pending coursework before withdrawal.
 - Records will be transferred to the student's next educational institution.
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14. Contact Information

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Jennings County Schools Corporation Panther Online Academy
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This handbook serves as a guide for parents and students to ensure a smooth and successful virtual learning experience. Please review all policies carefully and reach out with any questions.