



Student and Family Handbook

Fall 2021

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BELLINGHAM VIRTUAL LEARNING



Introduction to Bellingham Virtual Learning

Welcome to our community of online learners! Our goal is to help you be successful in your online courses, so we developed this guide to help you get started as a Bellingham Virtual Learning (BVL) student. Below are some common questions that will help you and your family determine if taking online courses, whether part- or full-time, is right for you.

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What is BVL?

Bellingham Virtual Learning (BVL) is a web-based educational program of the Bellingham Public Schools. It provides instructor-led online courses to high school students who want to learn remotely. BVL utilizes the learning platform called *Edgenuity*, and BVL courses are *asynchronous*. Asynchronous means that students move through courses at their own pace and are not bound by scheduled class periods. However, students are expected to log in every day and complete course work.

BVL is an ideal environment for a motivated learner who seeks the independence of completing coursework that runs “parallel” with the Bellingham Public Schools high school curriculum, wants to learn asynchronously and be remote.

What is the pace of BVL like?

The Edgenuity software platform provides flexibility in accessing

coursework in researched-based content with certificated teachers instructing through videos and 100% online courses. Students and families who choose BVL must note that these courses follow a quick pace, require regular daily participation, and are at least as rigorous if not more so than a traditional classroom course. It is imperative that students remain self-motivated, disciplined, and consistent within each course to ensure that all assignments and requirements are completed on time in order to earn credit. Students work at their own pace from home with a supervising district teacher as the main contact/point person facilitating instruction, utilizing reporting tools to monitor student progress, and ensuring continued movement through the course. Students are expected to complete 100% of each course in order to earn credit.

What are the rules for online learning programs in Washington

state?

In our state, taking courses through programs like BVL are considered Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE).

Most significantly, Washington state ALE laws require students to make adequate progress in their online courses in a timely manner (WAC 392-121-182).

Students enrolled in online courses are required to have weekly contact with their instructors. Contact is for instruction, review of assignments, testing, reporting of student progress or other learning activities.

Here are some examples of what weekly contacts can look like:

- An assignment/test/activity posted to Blackboard that an instructor grades and/or provides feedback on
- Email exchange with instructor
- Phone call with instructor
- Electronic exchange with instructor, discussion board, blog, Blackboard Instant Message

What does adequate progress mean?

Adequate progress in an online course

consists of two important components for students:

1. students taking online courses are required to have weekly contact with their online instructor.
2. students must maintain adequate progress that will be evaluated against progress benchmarks which are clearly defined in the course for each month.

At a minimum, students must turn in at least one assignment per week to maintain a status of “making monthly progress,” but will need to complete **ALL** the assignments the instructor requires for each week in order to complete the course on time.

Completing only one assignment per week will not be enough to finish the course in a semester. Please note: Bellingham Public Schools recommends students complete three to five assignments per week to maintain adequate progress.

What if I am not making adequate progress in my online courses?

If your progress is evaluated as non-satisfactory (for the previous month), your BVL instructor will create and

implement a student success plan (or intervention plan) that you must acknowledge in order to remain enrolled in your BVL class. Students will have approximately until the next month's grading period to show adequate progress.

Students who receive two Student Success Plans and do not show adequate progress may be dropped from their course by their home high school. Barring a special circumstance, such as a medical emergency, any student placed a third student success plan will be removed from the course and will not be able to enroll in a future BVL course.

How do we monitor student progress?

Progress in online courses is monitored weekly and monthly.

Weekly: You and your parent/guardians will receive a progress report electronically from the online instructor every Friday, based on benchmarks specific to the course.

Monthly: Students' progress is also evaluated at the end of each month to determine satisfactory vs. non-satisfactory for the month as a whole, based on benchmarks specific to the course. Students, parent/guardians

and counselors will receive this monthly progress report at the end of every month. If you are behind in your course, increasing the amount of time/effort put into coursework and communicating your plans with your instructor is recommended.

What courses are offered through BVL?

Please see the last two pages of this handbook for list of high school courses available through BVL.

How is an online class/course similar and different from an in-person class?

Unlike an in-person class, online courses rarely ever meet in person with an instructor. Students in online courses move through the curriculum asynchronously without following a defined bell or period schedule. All communication and learning is done electronically through email, electronic assignments, text messages, zooms, blogs, etc. Similar to an in-person class, there is a state-approved curriculum that the instructor guides students through during the course of a semester.

What helps students succeed in online classes?

Students who do well taking online

courses typically have strengths that include:

- Strong study habits
- Independent learning skills
- Enjoyment of reading and writing
- Ability to problem-solve and work through frustrations
- Strong organizational skills
- Intrinsic motivation
- Willing to take notes during lessons -- these notes can be used on tests and quizzes and other activities
- Strong tech skills
- Comfort with technology

It is important to note that online courses are not for everyone. Students have to schedule time to work on their courses in order to be successful.

Students should expect to put in an average of five hours weekly to maintain adequate progress in each online course. Taking an online course is not necessarily easier than taking an in-person class, but it can provide more flexibility for a learner given its asynchronous format.

Students who struggle with time management, course completion and self-motivation may not be good candidates for BVL. Additionally, Edgenuity coursework requires

copious amounts of reading so students who are significantly behind grade level reading may struggle to complete the academic content on their own.

Is BVL a good fit for students who have an IEP or are in ELL support classes?

The best way to answer this is to carefully read through the profile above of what makes a student successful with online classes. As with any student considering an online course, it is also best to talk to trusted adults and have conversations with your school support team, such as school counselors, IEP teacher, ELL teacher, and so forth. These decisions are best made as a team and on a case-by-case basis.

What is the role of my high school counselor?

High school counselors are responsible for ensuring students' online courses meet requirements for their high school diploma. The school counselor will work with the student to sign up for BVL courses.

Additionally, there is a core team of high school teachers that support BVL students and will help orient them to Edgenuity and assist with classes, etc.

Can students take any classes they want?

Bellingham Public Schools reserves the right to limit courses to students. Generally, students can take courses online that are not available at their high school as a part of their regular schedule. See your high school counselor for more information about these limitations. Since high schools base staffing on enrollment, we ask families to make a one semester commitment to BVL courses. Students are allowed to take blended schedules with administrator approval.

What if students want to take a world language or an Advanced Placement (AP) course remotely?

We contract with Spokane Virtual Learning for World Language and AP courses. Your counselor can provide you with more information on how to register for these classes.

Do I need my own personal computer to take an online course?

Students are not required to have their own personal device to take an online course. The Bellingham School District provides each student enrolled in BVL with a laptop.

How do I earn credit?

Students earn credit via BVL and Edgenuity is by completing an *entire* contracted course. Students have the opportunity to earn credit at their own pace and can rapidly advance if determined to put in the time to do so. A typical pace would be to earn 0.25 - 0.5 credit every 9 weeks (if student worked approximately one hour daily in class). Students may work ahead and earn credit faster however it does require self-motivation and time management. It is recommended that students focus on no more than two or three courses at a time and then begin the next class as soon as they finish one. If a student is struggling, do not wait to get help! Students should contact their supervising teacher or BVL contact right away for ideas, support, or assistance.

How is BVL graded?

Students earn standard A, B, C, D, INC (Incomplete) and NC (No Credit) grades in BVL courses. It is not graded on a *growth model*. Students need to pass their BVL courses by completing 100% of the course and pass with a 60% or higher. If students do not complete the course at the end of a semester and earn an INC, they may continue working on the course the next grading period. Students who

do zero work in their BVL course will receive NC on their transcript.

BVL Percentages and Letter Grades revised
12/4/2020

A	100	92.00
A-	91.99	90.00
B+	89.99	87.00
B	86.99	82.00
B-	81.99	80.00
C+	79.99	77.00
C	76.99	72.00
C-	71.99	70.00
D	69.99	60.00
INC	59.99	.01
NC	0.0	0.0

Note: All assignments, projects, quizzes, tests, etc. must be attempted prior to awarding credit using this scale

How do I sign up for BVL?

Students and families who are interested in taking a BVL course should contact their high school counselor. Information about BVL can be found on the Bellingham School District website.

What support do students need in BVL classes?

- Make sure your student has internet access. They can use their district-provided device or a personal computer/device to engage with classes. Please note that Bellingham Public Schools can only provide support
- Set up a Family Portal and learn how to monitor your student's online progress, check grades and connect with instructors.
- Find out when teachers are available for student support and what options exist for extra help.
- Support your student in making adequate progress each week.
- Know how often your student should log in during the day.
- Make sure you and your student know what the requirements are for the course.
- Assist in creating a daily routine and organization system for your student.
- Recognize students may need to set aside extra time to complete assignments.

- Designate a comfortable place free from distractions as a work area for your student.

Behavior Expectations in BVL

All students enrolled in BVL courses are Bellingham Public Schools students and are accountable to the policies of our school district. A full list of policies pertaining to students is available at bellingshamschools.org/policies-and-procedures.

Academic Honesty:

Academic integrity and honesty are paramount to online courses just as they are to in-person classes. Students enrolled in a BVL online course are expected to conduct themselves honorably with regards to academics. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from all forms of cheating, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Violations may result in loss of credit on assignment or for the entire course. Violations will also result in parent/guardian contact and documentation in the student's discipline file. Chronic violations of academic dishonesty or extreme cases may result in further discipline such as removal from the BVL program.

For more information regarding cheating and plagiarism, see our

district policy 3240. Excerpts are below:

Cheating, plagiarizing, or turning in another person's papers, projects, electronic-generated products as one's own work or enabling misrepresentation to occur is a violation of Bellingham Public Schools rules.

The inappropriate use of electronic devices to give/obtain answers or to promote or aid in cheating and/or plagiarism or other forms of dishonesty is prohibited.

Digital Citizenship

Use of electronic resources is guided by our policy and procedure 2022. We expect our students to be good digital citizens when interacting with each other and with our staff. We have more information about digital citizenship and our 1:1 technology resources [here](#).

Below are a few highlights that are important to remember when engaging in online classes.

BVL "Netiquette" expectations
Online and network etiquette (called

netiquette, or digital citizenship.in cyberspace) exists in the wide world of computers. Perhaps just as important as "real world manners," netiquette rules are necessary because readers draw inferences from your words rather than nonverbal body language. Be aware that teachers and administrators have complete access to your communications. All postings within the email system or the class discussion area are public. Any inappropriate use of email or communication within the course will result in administrative action. Email messages should be written in a more formal manner than instant messaging but not as rigid as a business letter.

Online and digital communication

- Show respect for your fellow students and instructors.
- Work to communicate using more formal spelling, grammar and capitalization, as compared to less formal communication used in other settings, like social media.
- Avoid writing in all caps, which can be perceived as SHOUTING by your reader.
- When using abbreviations like BRB (for "be right back") make

sure your reader knows what you mean.

- Avoid using emoji to express feelings. There is no substitute for a clearly written email.
- Always sign your first and last name to your communications.
- Please do not send chain letters or spam material of any nature to your teachers or fellow students.
- Only send appropriate electronic communication.

I still have questions about high school BVL and need more information. Who can I contact?

You can contact your high school counselor, or you can contact:

Nancy Barga, BVL Coordinator
Options High School Assistant
Principal

nancy.barga@bellingshamschools.org

High School BVL Courses offered through Edgenuity< Fall 2021

ENGLISH
Common Core ELA
English Language Arts 9A
English Language Arts 9B
English Language Arts 10A
English Language Arts 10B
English Language Arts 11A
English Language Arts 11B
English Language Arts 12A
English Language Arts 12B
SOCIAL STUDIES
WA - Modern World History A
WA – Modern World History B
WA - US History A
WA – US History B
WA – Civics- semester only
Social Studies Electives:
WA – Contemporary World Probs A
WA – Contemporary World Probs B
WA – Economics (semester course)

MATH
Common Core Math
Algebra 1A
Algebra 1B
Geometry A
Geometry B
Algebra 2A
Algebra 2B
MATH Electives:
Pre-Calculus A Sem 1
Pre-Calculus B Sem 1
Financial Math A Sem 1
Financial Math B Sem 2
Concepts in Probability & Stats A
Concepts in Probability & Stats B
Trigonometry (full year course)
PE & HEALTH
Lifetime Fitness (semester course)
Contemporary Health-semester course
Found. of Pers. Wellness A

WA – Psychology A
WA – Psychology B
Sociology (semester course)
SCIENCE
WA - Biology A
WA – Biology B
Environmental Sci A
Environmental Sci B
WA – Chemistry A
WA – Chemistry B
WA – Physics A
WA – Physics B
FINE ARTS
Intro to Art A
Intro to Art B

Found. of Pers. Wellness B
TECH CONNECTIONS (0.5)
Computer Applications-Office 2016
ELECTIVES: (each course is 0.5 credit)
Business Law
Intro into Coding
Keyboarding & Applications
Healthy Living
Medical Terminology
Career Management
Intro to Careers in Education & training
Strategies for Academic Success
Food Safety & Sanitation
Other:

