



Mount Carmel Area

Tornado eLearning Academy (TELA)

Parent/Student Handbook

2020 - 2021

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Mission/Vision/Philosophy

Mission Statement

Mount Carmel Area Tornado eLearning Academy (TELA), through a cooperative effort with the students and family, will provide a quality online learning environment that challenges students to achieve their potential.

Vision

To provide an alternative learning opportunity which strives to develop productive, contributing, responsible citizens capable of meeting the global challenges of the future.

Philosophy

The philosophy of education at Tornado eLearning Academy (TELA) is to foster intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in all students according to their potential. The needs of the individual students are met through a variety of educational experiences, in an online learning environment with emphasis on the students as active learners. As a result of these learning experiences, the students will make vital contributions to the community in which they live. Furthermore, this program provides the students with additional flexibility in their schedules.

Contact Information

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Overview

What is the Tornado eLearning Academy (TELA)?

TELA is a comprehensive K –12 curriculum delivered in an online format. In addition to providing individualized scheduling and pacing for students, the Tornado eLearning Academy is able to offer unique opportunities that are unavailable from other cyber charter schools.

- The Academy offers a fully blended approach to learning. All students have the opportunity to participate in any District run program such as vo-tech education, music, clubs, athletics, etc. Students are a part of the Mount Carmel Area community and have access to the opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary and junior/senior high school.

- Students who graduate from the Tornado eLearning Academy will receive a Mount Carmel Area High School diploma and will be able to participate at commencement ceremonies with other members of the graduating class.
- A unique aspect of the Academy is our commitment to work in a collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District's resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

Policies/Procedures

Admission Policy

The Tornado eLearning Academy has a rolling admissions policy. This means that students can enroll at any time. If you are interested in enrolling, please contact your respective Academy Coordinator (contact info listed above).

Attendance Policy

TELA by nature provides an incredible amount of academic flexibility, and in many cases, students will be working outside the traditional Monday-Friday 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM schedule.

To remain current and in good attendance standing, a student must stay "on pace."

At the beginning of each marking period, students are given a two-week trial period to ensure that they are capable of maintaining an on pace status. Any course changes or placement changes (leaving TELA to come back to MCA) must be made within these two weeks. Students who are not able to maintain an on pace status will be removed from their TELA classes. These students must then contact the Academic Counselor via email to schedule a meeting with MCA Administration. At this meeting it will be decided if the student will be allowed a second chance at TELA (another two weeks) or if they will be required to return to MCA the following day.

The TELA pacing calendar does not take any school vacations or holidays into account. Students wishing to have time off during MCA district "breaks" must plan accordingly. No extra time will be given.

Students who fall behind pace may be marked as illegally unexcused with the truancy officer and citations may be filed (\$750/day). Students above the age of 17 may be dropped from the rolls entirely if assignments are not completed in a timely manner.

Communication Policy

Communication between the student, teacher, parent/guardian, and MCA staff is extremely important. Communication can take place via a number of approved systems: Email, Telephone, and/or Course Messaging System. Students will be required to read and respond to all relevant communication on a daily basis.

This means that students should be checking both their SCHOOL EMAIL and Student Portal messages every day. Students will be held accountable for all information relayed via these communication methods.

Health Screening/ Immunization

All online cyber students are expected to comply with the Mount Carmel Area School District policies on health screening and immunizations as outlined in school board policy. Health records should be provided to the district and will be maintained by the school nurse.

Enrollment Procedures

Interested parents/students should submit a Tornado eLearning Registration Form to the school's main office. Forms are available on the school website (under the "Tornado eLearning Academy" link) or at each school's guidance office.

After being admitted into the eLearning Academy, the Academy Coordinator will set up a meeting with the family to go over all enrollment and scheduling procedures.

Withdrawal Procedures

Should the need for withdrawal arise, the parent/guardian should contact the Academic Counselor to discuss withdrawal procedures.

Expectations

Coordinator Expectations

The Coordinator is expected to:

- Serve as the primary contact person for all eLearning Academy related issues.
- Monitor students' time spent online and their overall progress in all course work.
- Responsible for ensuring that every decision is made in an appropriate time frame, with the student's best interest in mind.
- Be available in person for meetings with parents and students of TELA.

Student Expectations

Students will be expected to:

- Complete all their class work independently, honestly and as accurately as possible.
- Contact their instructors when experiencing difficulties understanding assignments and content materials.

- Notify the Help Desk (by clicking “Contact School”) when they are experiencing technological difficulties which prohibit the student from completing assignments for any extended time period or when any content materials are not accessible.
- Maintain progress in their courses. If progress is not being met, the school can remove the student from their online course and enroll them in a regular course for the remainder of the year.
- Understand that failure to complete the enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full.
- Review, sign, and adhere to the Mount Carmel Area Tornado eLearning Handbook.

Parent Expectations

Parent/Guardian’s are expected to:

- Attend parent/student/teacher meetings as necessary.
- Monitor the student’s time spent online and their academic progress.
- Understand that failure to complete the enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full.

Keys to Success

Students who are able to demonstrate the following may be more successful in their experience in the Tornado eLearning Academy:

- Schedule specific times each day to work on your assignments.
- Read all information, view all resources, and be responsible for making sure they understand the information being transmitted.
- Communicate regularly with the online teachers.
- Work closely with the Academy Coordinator to plan appropriate course selections and to communicate individual needs.
- Take personal responsibility for their learning and contact the Academy Coordinator when necessary.

Honor System

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be honest in their work, including no cheating and no plagiarizing. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing may receive a failing grade for the particular assignments. It is up to the teacher/Academy Coordinator to decide if the assignment may be redone or not.

Plagiarizing: Taking someone else’s words or ideas and submitting them as your own. Things such as copying a friend’s answers and copying and pasting from a website are prohibited.

Students are encouraged to discuss assignments, and to work collaboratively, but all work submitted should be the student's own work or be properly cited.

Cheating: Gaining an unfair advantage by getting help from another source or looking at information that should be off-limits. Procedures for taking tests should be strictly followed. If no notes are allowed to take the test, then no notes or other documents should be open during the test.

Academic Information

Blended Curriculum

Students who enroll in TELA have an option to enroll in any of the Mount Carmel Area School District's traditional courses. This approach allows participants to create a blended mix of online and face-to-face courses in a flexible program that offers the best of both worlds. This unique opportunity gives all students the opportunity to participate in any courses such as art and design, technical education, music, physical education, etc. Students are part of the MCA Community and have access to all opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary and Jr/Sr High schools. Mount Carmel Area School District is proud to offer this collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District's resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

Grading Policy

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

64 - 69 = D

Below 64 = F

It is the student's responsibility to complete their work within the time frame of the course. The end dates for courses are readily available by viewing the student's Academic Snapshot page. ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be completed by this end date. Any unfinished assignments will be graded as 0%, which can drastically affect the student's overall grade.

Graduation Requirements

Students will work with their guidance counselors to ensure proper placement and credit fulfillment in order to meet graduation requirements. Students in grades nine through twelve will be classified by grade based on the number of credits they have earned. A student must successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits to receive a diploma issued by the Mount Carmel Area School District and must have met all Pennsylvania State Department of Education graduation requirements.

Additionally, all students prior to graduation will need to complete a graduation project as well as a job shadowing experience. For more information on this project, please see Miss Parkansky in the HS Main Office or contact Mrs Nestico in the guidance office.

Class Rank & Honor Cords

Students who graduate through the TELA program will **not** be included in the final class rank, which may affect eligibility for certain scholarship opportunities.

Even though they are not ranked, TELA students who have earned a cumulative grade point average of 93% or above, from grades 9 through 12, will still be presented with honor cords for graduation. No classes taken prior to grade 9 will be calculated into the cumulative average.

Special Education

Students with current IEPs will schedule all eLearning courses through the guidance office, with collaboration with the Special Education department.

Even though students will be learning outside the building, they will still have an assigned support teacher that can provide support. Students should contact their support teachers directly (via email) to schedule times that the student can come in for additional help. Students can also schedule times for related services, if applicable (speech therapy, OT, PT, etc.).

The Tornado eLearning Academy also has the ability to enroll students into modified courses based on their IEP needs.

For more information, please see page (4) of this handbook for contact information for the Special Education office.

State Mandated Testing Windows

All eLearning students are **required** to attend state mandated testing. Absences from testing will not be approved during these testing windows. All absences will be considered illegal unexcused absences unless a physician's note is provided for the absence. If students are not present for their exams, all TELA courses will be locked until the student comes in to make up the exam(s). Catching back up with TELA work will be the responsibility of the student. No additional time will be given for time lost due to state testing truancy.

PSSA Testing

7th & 8th Grade

April/May 2021

Keystone Exams Grades 9-12

9th - 11th grade

May 2021

Advanced Placement Exams

Students wishing to take AP exams must work with their school counselor to determine date, time and location. The costs of AP exams are the responsibility of the student.

SAT/ACT

Students wishing to take the SAT or ACT exams should contact their school counselor to determine date, time and location. This should be done early in the school year to ensure successful preparation.

Student Activities

Athletics

Students wishing to participate in the Mount Carmel Area School District athletic program or clubs will need to express interest to the MCA Athletic Director, who will give the student the appropriate details of the club or program including academic restrictions. Students must be on track with assignments and passing at least 4 full-credit courses, or the equivalent, as of each Friday during a grading period. If the student fails to meet this requirement, he/she will lose their eligibility from the immediately following Sunday through the Saturday immediately following the next Friday as of which you meet this requirement. The Mount Carmel Area School District has the authority to enforce academic probation on any student that is participating in a club or activity.

Extra-curricular

The Mount Carmel Area School District has a wide variety of extracurricular activities (band, chorus, school musical, class office, etc) that are open to all students enrolled in the TELA, subject to maintaining academic eligibility as outlined in the MCASD handbook. If you would like more information please contact the Academy Coordinator.

Clubs

There are many clubs that meet at various times during the school day and after school hours. If you would like more information please contact the Academy Coordinator or Club advisor directly.

Events

Throughout the year, there are many events that take place within the Mount Carmel Area School District. Events such as pep rallies, special assemblies, college fairs, school dances, and other school sponsored events. Full time TELA students are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities. Students must comply with all Mount Carmel Area School District policies and not be on disciplinary action to be eligible. Full time TELA students should remember they are still members of the Mount Carmel Area School District and therefore should dress and act in accordance with the high school and elementary school codes of conduct. Any student found in violation of the code of conduct, which includes student dress, will not be allowed to participate in the field trip or social activity. Students also should be aware that when they attend a Mount Carmel Area School District

related function they are representing their local school and community. They should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times as their conduct is a direct reflection on themselves, their families and their school. Numerous social activities and community service projects will be made available for students and will be posted on the district website and various school-related social media sites. Transportation to and from the social and community service events will be the responsibility of the parent.

Technology

Full time cyber students (taking 4 or more credits) may apply for a reimbursement of up to \$200.00 for local Internet Service Provider fees for the school year. Reimbursement request will be accepted in January for Semester 1 (marking periods 1 & 2) for an amount up to \$100.00 and in June for Semester 2 (marking periods 3 & 4) for an amount up to \$100.00.

Required documentation must include:

- Letter requesting reimbursement with the name, grade and start date of the eLearning courses. Reimbursement is only available for full time students enrolled in a minimum of 4 courses.
- Paid receipt of the internet bill noting costs incurred with the home address that is listed in the student information system as the student's home residence
- The Mount Carmel Area School District may terminate Internet reimbursement at its sole discretion. **Reimbursements should be submitted within one week of the marking period 2 and marking period 4 END DATES (January/June) upon successful course completion. Reimbursements after this period will not be accepted.**

All submissions shall be mailed directly to:

Attn: Mrs. Erica Nestico, e-Learning Academy Coordinator, 600 West 5th St, Mount Carmel, PA 17851

- The school reserves the right to deny a student's access to Internet reimbursement if unauthorized usage occurs.

Completing a Help Ticket

TELA students should report all issues that they are having with the courseware through the ***contact school*** area in the courseware. An email to the guidance counselor is also recommended so any additional follow up can be completed. All reported issues must include the student's name, courses that are affected and specific details that will assist the help desk in resolving the problem.

Technology Requirements

All students must have access to the internet/wifi in order to complete their coursework. DSL or Cable Internet connection is the recommended Internet connection speed, while a 56Kbps

modem connection is the minimum recommended. Slower dial-up connections are not recommended. Public Wi-Fi locations such as the library provide a great resource to students who are seeking online workstations.

Chromebooks will be provided to all students to borrow. Parents/guardians must sign for the device. Proper use of and care for the device is the responsibility of the student. Fines will be assessed for damaged/lost equipment.

Acceptable Use Policy

The school's information technology resources, including email and Internet access, are provided for educational purposes. Adherence to the Mount Carmel Area School District's policy on acceptable use is necessary for continued access to the school's technological resources. **Failure to abide by the district's Acceptable Use Policy may result in removal from the cyber program.**



Parent/Student Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received the Mount Carmel Area 2019-2020 Tornado eLearning Academy Handbook. I have read, understand, and will comply with all of the policies and procedures described in this handbook.

Parent Name (print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please sign and return this page to the Ms. Niglio