



**Upper Merion Area School District**

# **Virtual Academy**

**2021  
Student and Family  
Guide**



# Welcome, Families!

December 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians/Caregivers,

Our district staff cannot thank you enough for your support, patience, and flexibility these past several months. Although the decision to enroll your child virtually was determined to be the best choice for your family, we recognize this may not be the preferred format for your child's elementary education. Despite our current circumstances, we assure you that your child will continue to receive well-rounded and high-quality instruction from our dedicated Upper Merion staff. Our resourceful teachers have been working tirelessly to create a virtual experience that promotes academic growth and positive social-emotional well-being. Upper Merion prides itself on having the best teachers who make it their mission to inspire excellence in every student, every day.

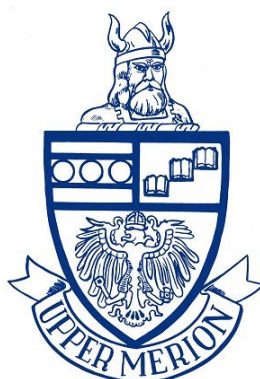
By now, our students have likely established home routines and familiarity with the current virtual learning schedule. As we transition to the Virtual Academy, the daily schedule will largely remain the same. Although your child will not be returning in-person at this time, they are still considered students of their home school and can always participate in extra-curricular activities or events. In the Virtual Academy, students are Virtual Vikings, but of course, they will always be Bridgeport Bears, Caley Cougars, Candlebrook Cubs, Gulph Gators, or Roberts Raccoons!

While you are welcome to reach out to your child's principal anytime, I encourage you to direct any questions, concerns, or feedback about your child's virtual experience to me. I will be working in partnership with your child's principal as they manage day-to-day operations at our brick-and-mortar schools.

Please review the following pages for additional information regarding schedules, tech support, and online learning resources. Additionally, families can stay connected and informed by following our [district website](#) for important updates and information. Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to working with you and your child!

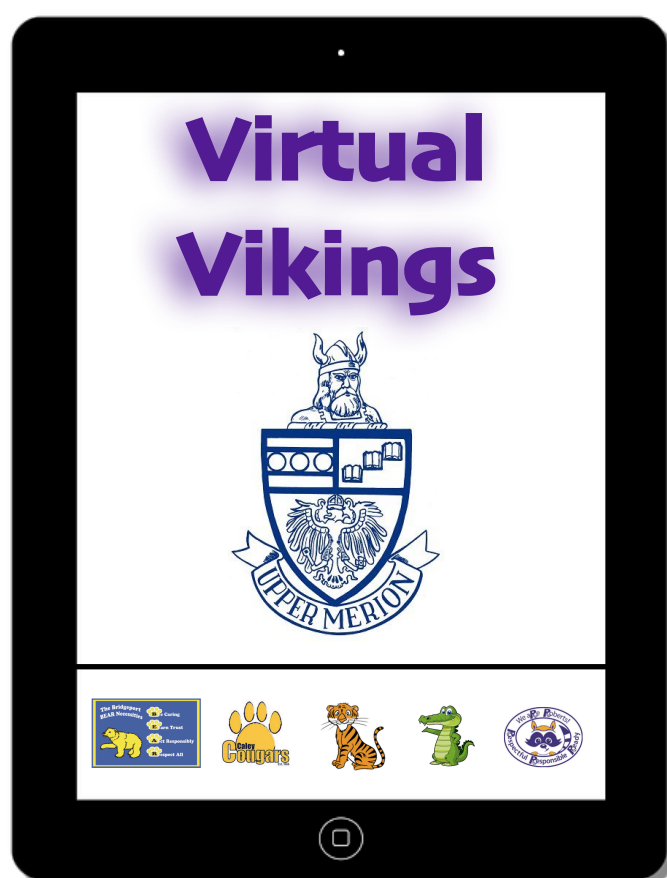
Best Regards,

Chris Dickerson  
Virtual Academy Coordinator  
[cdickerson@umasd.org](mailto:cdickerson@umasd.org)  
267-645-9610



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# Virtual Academy Schedule

While your student will be “on” (e.g., connected to Zoom) during the entire class, each class period will be a combination of whole group, small group, and independent time. There will also be various screen breaks and snack time integrated within the schedule, but these are unique to each homeroom. Your child’s teacher will communicate the specifics of how this will work.

As a district we recognize that families need some down time. All of our Elementary students in the Virtual Academy will have lunch and recess from 11:30am - 12:30pm.

## KINDERGARTEN

9:00 - 9:30	Morning Meeting - whole group
9:30 - 11:30	ELA/Fundations
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Recess
12:30 - 1:10	Math
1:10 - 1:40	Creative Play
1:40 - 2:25	SPECIALS
2:25 - 3:15	Integrated Content/Writing Time
3:15 - 3:30	Rest and Relax - Charge iPad

Class Time

Off-Screen



# Virtual Academy Schedule

## FIRST GRADE

9:00 - 9:30	Morning Meeting - whole group
9:30 - 10:15	ELA/Fundations
10:15 - 11:30	ELA & Science & Social Studies
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Recess
12:30 - 1:05	ELA
1:05 - 2:05	Math
2:05 - 2:30	Small group Intervention/ Enrichment
2:30 - 3:15	Specials
3:15 - 3:30	Rest and Relax- Charge iPad

## SECOND GRADE

9:00 - 9:30	Morning Meeting - whole group
9:30 - 10:40	ELA
10:45 - 11:30	Science and Social Studies
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Recess
12:30 - 1:15	Specials
1:15 - 1:45	ELA
1:55 - 2:55	Math
2:55 - 3:15	Small Group Intervention/ Enrichment
3:15 - 3:30	Rest and Relax- Charge iPad

Class Time

Off-Screen

# Virtual Academy Schedule

## THIRD GRADE

9:00 - 9:30	Morning Meeting - whole group
9:30 - 10:40	ELA
10:45 - 11:30	Specials
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Recess
12:30 - 1:00	Science and Social Studies
1:00 - 2:20	Math
2:25 - 2:55	ELA
2:55 - 3:15	Small Group Intervention/ Enrichment
3:15 - 3:30	Rest and Relax - Charge iPad

## FOURTH GRADE

9:00 - 9:30	Morning Meeting - whole group
9:30 - 10:15	Specials
10:20 - 11:30	ELA
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Recess
12:30 - 1:40	Math
1:50 - 2:20	ELA
2:25 - 2:55	Science/Social Studies/ Writing
2:55 - 3:15	Small Group Intervention/ Enrichment
3:15 - 3:30	Rest and Relax - Charge iPad

Class Time

Off-Screen



# Elementary School Letter Days

Students will have art, physical education/health, enrichment, and music once every four days.

Day	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
1	-	B	C	-	-	A
2	-	C	D	-	-	B
3	-	D	A	-	B	C
4	-	A	B	-	C	Noon Dismiss - D
5	-	Noon Dismiss - B	Noon Dismiss - C	-	D	-
6	-	-	-	C	A	-
7	-	-	-	D	Noon Dismiss - B	A
8	-	C	D	A	-	B
9	-	D	A	Noon Dismiss - B	-	C
10	-	A	B	-	C	D
11	-	-	Conf - C Noon	-	D	Noon Dismiss - A
12	-	-	Conf - D Noon	C	A	-
13	-	-	-	D	B	-
14	-	-	-	A	C	Noon Dismiss - B
15	-	-	A	B	-	Noon Dismiss - C
16	-	B	B	C	-	Make-Up TBD #1
17	-	C	C	-	D	Make-Up TBD #2
18	-	D	D	-	-	Make-Up TBD #3
19	-	A	A	D	A	-
20	-	-	-	A	B	-
21	-	-	-	B	C	-
22	-	B	B	C	-	-
23	-	C	C	D	-	-
24	-	D	D	-	D	-
25	A	A	A	-	A	-
26	B	B	B	A	B	-
27	C	-	-	B	C	-
28	D	-	-	C	D	-
29	A	-	Make-Up TBD #4	D	-	-
30	-	-	Make-Up TBD #5	A	-	-
31	-	-	-	-	-	-

Noon Dismissal = One Friday each month, Conference Days, and the last three days of school in June.

# Contact Information

## VIRTUAL ACADEMY

Name	Contact	Role
Chris Dickerson	<a href="mailto:cdickerson@umasd.org">cdickerson@umasd.org</a>	Coordinator
UMASD Tech Department	<a href="http://www.umasd.org/dlsupport">www.umasd.org/dlsupport</a>	Technology Support

## SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Home School	Principal Name	Email Address
Bridgeport	Timothy Bickhart	<a href="mailto:tbickhart@umasd.org">tbickhart@umasd.org</a>
Caley	Steven Van Mater	<a href="mailto:svmater@umasd.org">svmater@umasd.org</a>
Candlebrook	Frank McCartney	<a href="mailto:fmccartney@umasd.org">fmccartney@umasd.org</a>
Gulph	Carole Hoy	<a href="mailto:choy@umasd.org">choy@umasd.org</a>
Roberts	Anthony Grazel	<a href="mailto:agrazel@umasd.org">agrazel@umasd.org</a>

## SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Home School	Counselor Name	Email Address
Bridgeport	Jessica Vicente	<a href="mailto:jvicente@umasd.org">jvicente@umasd.org</a>
Caley	Barbara Micucci	<a href="mailto:bmicucci@umasd.org">bmicucci@umasd.org</a>
Candlebrook	Steffany Yacovetti	<a href="mailto:syacovetti@umasd.org">syacovetti@umasd.org</a>
Gulph	Melissa Besz	<a href="mailto:mbesz@umasd.org">mbesz@umasd.org</a>
Roberts	Kelly Gallagher	<a href="mailto:kegallagher@umasd.org">kegallagher@umasd.org</a>



# District Calendar

FIRST/LAST STUDENT DAY  
TEACHER INSERVICE DAY  
ACADEMIC YEAR HOLIDAY  
MAKE-UP DAY IF NECESSARY

## UPPER MERION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020-2021 Student/Teacher Calendar

Attachment #12.A  
02032020

July 2020							T-4		August 2020					S-1		T-19		September 2020					S-19		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
1 2 3 4							2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <sup>1</sup>	1 2 3 4 5											
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26					
26	27	28	29	30	31		30	31						27	28	29	30								
T-22		October 2020				S-22		T-19		November 2020					S-18		T-17		December 2020					S-16	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
1 2 3							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1 2 3 4 5											
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26					
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31							
T-19		January 2021				S-19		T-19		February 2021					S-17		T-20		March 2021					S-20	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
1 2							1	2	3	4	5	6	1 2 3 4 5 6												
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	12	13					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25	26	27					
24 <sup>24</sup> 31	25	26	27	28	29	30	28							28	29	30	31								
T-20		April 2021				S-19		T-20		May 2021					S-19		T-11		June 2021					S-11	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
1 2 3							2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <sup>1</sup>	1 2 3 4 5											
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26					
25	26	27	28	29	30		30	31						27	28	29	30								

August 24,25,26  
September 4  
August 31  
September 7  
September 28  
November 3  
November 26,27  
December 23  
Dec 24-Jan 1  
January 1  
January 18  
February 11  
February 12  
February 15  
March 29-April 2  
April 5  
May 18  
May 31  
June 15

Teacher Inservice Days  
No School  
First Student Day  
Holiday (Labor Day)  
Holiday (Yom Kippur)  
Teacher Inservice Day  
Holidays (Thanksgiving)  
Inservice/Flex Opportunity  
Winter Break  
Holiday (New Year's Day)  
Holiday (MLK, Jr. Day, Observed)  
Teacher Inservice Day  
Inservice/Flex Opportunity  
Holiday (President's Day)  
Spring Break  
Inservice/Flex Opportunity  
Teacher Inservice Day  
Holiday (Memorial Day)  
Last Student Day

First Student Day  
Last Student Day  
**Total Student Days**

August 31  
June 15  
**181**

First Teacher Day  
Last Teacher Day  
**Total Teacher Days**

August 24  
June 15  
**190**

Emergency Closure Make-Up Days: Beginning on the first day classes are cancelled: Wednesday, June 16; Thursday, June 17; Friday, June 18; Monday, March 29; Tuesday, March 30

Teacher Required In-Service: August 24-26, November 3, February 11, May 18  
Teacher Flex Opportunities: December 23, February 12, April 5

# iPad Apps and Tech Support

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For students and families needing a refresher on how to use and navigate the various iPad apps and curriculum programs, please check out our Technology Academy. Here you can watch easy-to-follow tutorial videos created by our incomparable Instructional Coaches!

Click [HERE](#) to access the **TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY**

If your child is experiencing technical issues with their iPad or apps, please contact our Technology Department.

Click [HERE](#) to access **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**





# Virtual Assessment Guide

Teachers measure a student's academic growth and development in a number of ways. One of the biggest indicators comes from data received on written or online assessments (i.e., MAP, Wonders, and EDM tests). Virtual learning can present some challenges with assessment delivery, but with the help and support of parents/guardians and learning coaches, student data can continue to be accurately collected while reducing test anxiety.



Throughout the year, teachers will measure student growth through various assessments as they would traditionally. To prevent frustration and long periods of sitting and staring at the screen, many of these assessments will be broken into smaller segments conducted over several weeks.

As always, the purpose is to gather relevant information about students' abilities, progress, and needs.

Assessment data assists the teacher in supporting your student as effectively as possible.

☒ **To have data that accurately reflects your child's true placement (progress, growth, abilities), it is imperative that you do the following during testing:**

☐ **Eliminate distractions.**

Students should take assessments in a quiet environment. Phones, gaming devices or other distractions should be put away. It is recommended that students wear headphones while testing.

☐ **Refrain from helping your child during the assessment.**

It is completely natural to want to help your child when they are struggling. However, please allow them to complete the test without prompting or influence. Assessment results provide teachers with a reliable indication of the student's ability.

☐ **Place emphasis on their best effort, not high marks.**

Remind your student that they are more than a test score! Let them know that it is okay to not know an answer, but to always try their best. Help your child reduce assessment anxiety by helping them focus on what they do know.

# PBIS in the Virtual Academy

## Virtual Vikings Values

The PBIS values of being respectful, safe, responsible, and kind will continue to be promoted for students in the Virtual Academy through positive incentives, interactive lessons and (virtual) school-wide events.

## Supporting Your Student Socially and Emotionally

Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), Growth Mindset, and Social Emotional Learning are embedded in all aspects of school. Identifying and reinforcing expected behavior, maintaining a positive outlook, and taking time for wellness is a value we hold in school. In a virtual school experience it is equally important to be mindful about nurturing yourself and your child as a component of each day's experience. Growth mindset, nurturing relationships, and healthy expression of emotions that you model and reinforce sets the foundation for learning and growth.



## The Positive Behavior Intervention Support Framework (PBIS)

PBIS is an evidence-based approach to the development of a positive school culture that is built on the premise that behavioral expectations must be positively stated, clearly defined, taught directly, and systematically reinforced. The PBIS framework supports students by explicitly teaching them expected behaviors and then provides reinforcement for these behaviors when they occur. Our schools have been implementing the PBIS framework for some time now and have been awarded state-wide recognition for our success. We have adapted the PBIS framework for use in our virtual learning environment. Each school's core values will be defined into specific behavioral expectations for virtual learning and explicitly taught to students. Teachers will reinforce these behaviors and families are encouraged to acknowledge these behaviors as well.

## Growth Mindset

In a growth mindset, success depends on time and effort. Persons with a growth mindset feel their skills and intelligence can be improved with effort and persistence. They embrace challenges, persist through obstacles, learn from criticism and seek out inspiration in others' success. In Upper Merion we have adopted a Growth Mindset and further acknowledge that Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers are the best models for maintaining a child's healthy outlook and positive growth mindset. We invite you to stay positive and continue good habits, such as connecting with others, taking time to have fun, and getting enough sleep.



# Learning Coach Support

Learning Coaches serve as a guide, supporter, and motivator to further stimulate learning and establish a suitable structure for the school day at home. The role of a learning coach evolves over time as the student gains confidence and develops more academic skills.

Learning Coaches can help with small concerns and questions such as, “Am I on the right track?” or “Am I being clear in this essay?” The more students reach out to their teachers, the more they will grow to be independent learners.

Learning Coaches breathe easy. You do not need to plan lessons. You are a partner in your student's education and this partnership can strengthen the connection between students and teachers. It is vital to the success of any student in a virtual school experience.

Here are a few examples of tasks that Learning Coaches complete to effectively assist students:

## **Learning Coaches Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Encourages breaks throughout the day when appropriate
- Motivates the student to complete lessons
- Makes sure the student has enough rest and nutrients for a productive school day
- Asks the student what he or she learned at the end of each day to maintain open dialogue
- Prompts the student to communicate with the teacher when needed
- Answers minor questions and assists with assignments but does not resolve the problem or do the work on the student's behalf
- Reassures the student when he or she is having trouble understanding a concept
- Implements some learning activities that might help with areas of weakness
- Assists with organization and time management skills
- Stays in contact with teacher for regular updates and suggestions
- Ensures that the student is working at an appropriate learning pace

## **Additional Resources**

Video on Promoting Student Engagement in the Home:  
by Jacque Montemuro M.Ed., BCBA  
Behavior Analyst, UMASD  
[Click Here](#)



# The Importance of Routines

Routines have long been a staple of effective classroom learning throughout the Upper Merion Area School District and can serve as effective frameworks for helping students learn at home. By establishing and maintaining routines, you can help your student(s) remain engaged and learning throughout the process.

## Your Child's Workspace

- ★ Have an outlet nearby to keep iPad or laptop plugged in while working.
- ★ Best if in a quiet area away from distractions
- ★ Provide a distraction-free background for students when the camera is on.
- ★ Establish a central location to keep all books, writing supplies, and iPad readily accessible.



## Daily Routines

Help your student get ready in the morning just like they would on a normal school day!

- ★ Wake up
- ★ Eat breakfast
- ★ Get dressed for school (appropriate school attire)
- ★ Check your email for any updates from your student's teacher(s).
- ★ Check Schoology with your student for daily schedule and assignments.
- ★ Students should arrive for each class on Zoom 1-2 minutes prior to the class starting.
- ★ If your child is going to be absent, please contact their homeroom teacher.

# Community Resources

If you are experiencing challenges with learning, behavior, and or wellness, please contact your child's school counselor. For more information, resources, and support, please refer to the links below.

<a href="#">Crisis Hotline Number 1-855-634-HOPE (4673)</a>
<a href="#">Upper Merion Community Cupboard</a>
<a href="#">Social Services and Community Resources</a>
<a href="#">Montgomery County Children and Youth Services</a>
<a href="#">PA Training and Technical Assistance Network</a>
<a href="#">Unicef: Tips for Talking to Your Kids About COVID-19</a>
<a href="#">Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</a>
<a href="#">Parents Lead: COVID-19</a>

