



**STARRS  
ONLINE ACADEMY**

**Student Handbook  
2024-25**

**STARRS Online Academy  
Supplemental and  
Credit Recovery Courses**

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## **Administration and Staff**

Executive Director: Cliff Carmody

Online Principal: Stephanie Streng

Online Learning Manager (OLM): Dawn Christensen

Teachers: Jennifer Besser, Marissa Erdman, Sarah Neu, Matt Fjerkenstad, Isabelle Morris, Eric Nelson

Administrative Assistant: Lisa Paplow

## **Mission**

To offer our member districts a range of online options that provide additional educational opportunities for students to meet individual needs.

## **Vision**

Provide educational opportunities for students that will give them the skills they will need to fulfill graduation requirements and become successful, lifelong learners and productive members of society.

## **Description**

STARRS Online Academy is a public, online school enrolling students in grades K-12 offering supplemental and credit recovery courses during the traditional school year. Students are allowed to take up to 50% of their school day in online courses, per Minnesota Statute. This allows students to continue attending classes in their home school and choose from a variety of online courses to fill a schedule and is available to all Minnesota residents. There is another provision on the Enrollment Form that allows a student to take more than half of their courses online if the enrolling district agrees. STARRS Online Academy serves students who need a flexible schedule and students looking for a virtual school option. Our Online Learning Manager (OLM) will collaborate with your school guidance office on enrollment. You will continue to be enrolled in your resident district and receive your diploma from that school. Our credit recovery courses are designed especially for students who did not pass a course initially but learned enough to make a complete repetition of the course unnecessary. With the diagnostic driven model, students can test out of the material they previously mastered in a course so they can focus on the more difficult concepts they missed. Courses will be taught using an online curriculum. Laptops will be provided by your home district.

An online school program may be appropriate for the following types of students:

- Students who are looking for courses and advanced courses that our small schools are not able to offer
- Students who are struggling to learn in a large school setting
- Students who are credit deficient and willing to put the work in to graduate
- Homebound students
- Advanced students
- Students seeking flexibility in a school schedule to pursue career readiness

## **Enrollment Information**

1. Complete and submit the Online Learning Supplemental Notice of Student Registration form or contact your resident school guidance office and inform them you are interested in enrolling in STARRS Online Academy.
2. You will continue to be enrolled in your resident district.
3. Following approval from your resident district all required paperwork will be sent to STARRS Online Academy.
4. Upon successful completion of enrollment forms and receipt of required documents you will receive notice of enrollment (an email from Edgenuity) and instructions on how to get started including the required orientation process.

Students will be required to participate in an online and/or in-person orientation prior to beginning classes. All students will receive and review the online learning handbook. Their signature on the Enrollment Form will serve as an assurance indicating they have read, understand and agree to follow the policies.

### **Online Supplemental Classes**

Students can enroll in supplemental classes up to the midpoint of the resident district semester or later with district approval.

### **Credit Recovery**

Students can enroll in credit recovery courses at any time during the school year calendar with district approval.

## **Program Eligibility**

STARRS Online Academy is an option available to eligible learners to assist them in succeeding in school or to learners who wish to complete school in a nontraditional setting designed to meet the individual needs of learners.

To become an eligible student of the STARRS Online Academy, the following requirements must be met:

- Students must be 5-21 years of age or in grades K-12.
- Students must be Minnesota residents or have a Tuition Agreement through their home district.
- Students must have access to high-speed internet in their home, school or community. (OLM will assist in finding opportunities for internet in your community)

### **Daily Schedule (Term Based)**

Students who enroll in the STARRS Online Academy full-time are encouraged to set up a daily schedule that closely “mimics” their home district. Students should plan to have a common start and end time. For optimal success, students are encouraged to login to each course for 45 minutes and then take a 10-15 minute break before moving to the next course. A 30-minute lunch break is encouraged. Students always have the option to spend more time logged into a course as needed.

The minimum expectations for attendance requirements will be determined by the home district. Truancy will also be the responsibility of the home district.

### **Grading**

All STARRS Online Academy courses are graded at the end of each semester according to the school calendar. Depending on the course, students may need one semester or an entire year of a course to earn the required credit. The grade is given at the end of the semester or school year and is a final grade that will be recorded on the student transcript in the home district. STARRS Online Academy is designed on a semester schedule.

### **Drop/Add Policy**

A student has ten instructional days from when they start the class in which to officially withdraw from a course. If a student stops participating in a course without withdrawing, they are in danger of failing.

The district needs to contact the OLM to officially withdraw a student from a course. The district needs to contact the OLM if they want to add any classes for a student.

### **Calendar and Pacing Charts**

At STARRS Online Academy, each semester course contains two, approximately nine-week quarters. Students working at a standard pace complete eight weeks of work in each quarter, plus any projects or final assessment required. We will upload our school calendar and Edgenuity will automatically create a pacing guide for each course.

Course assignments are available continuously, meaning that once an assignment is completed, the next one will be released for the student to complete. To be successful, it is imperative that the student pace themselves and stay on top of the coursework. We recommend students look ahead in their courses each week to determine how many assignments, projects, or quizzes need to be completed before testing. Students are encouraged to talk to the OLM or teacher for assistance with pacing.

If a student enrolls in a new course mid-semester, they may be given the opportunity to complete the entire semester course at an accelerated pace.

### **Special Education Services**

STARRS Online Academy will work with your district to understand your IEP and make sure we include any accommodations or modifications necessary.

### **Course and Graduation Requirements**

STARRS Online Academy will work with the resident district. The student will follow the graduation requirements of the district of residence. The OLM will work with the student's local guidance office to determine what is needed for graduation. Courses are worth 0.5 credits per semester and 1.0 per year.

## **Diploma**

Students attending STARRS Online Academy will receive a diploma from the district of residence. STARRS Online Academy does not issue diplomas. We work closely with the student's guidance office to ensure graduation requirements are met.

## **Technology Needs**

Enrolling in STARRS Online Academy requires internet access in the student's home or local community. The STARRS Online Academy team will assist students in options for internet in their local community if needed. We have internet access available to enrolled students at our Educational Learning Centers located in Cosmos, Marshall, Montevideo, New London, Pipestone and Windom. Laptops will be provided by your home district.

The technology requirements needed to complete courses:

- Laptop or home computer
- Built-in wireless capability
- Dial-up and high-speed connections installed
- Virus protection software and filters to protect students
- 24/7 technology support through online curriculum provider

## **Online Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

Access to STARRS Online Academy data and information, and access to IT accounts, systems, and applications, is based on the student's need for access and consent to use that access appropriately. These services are integral to the operation of the school, and security and privacy laws and other school policies protect much of the information. Therefore, before being granted access, students must read and agree to follow these acceptable usage standards and must accept responsibility to preserve the security and confidentiality of information that is accessed, in any form, including oral, print, or electronic formats. Students should read the information carefully as it sets out user responsibilities.

### **Passwords**

Students and parents will be issued usernames and passwords to be used in accessing courses and school-provided email accounts. Students and parents are required to keep the login information private. Passwords should never be shared with other STARRS Online Academy students or with any individuals outside STARRS Online Academy. This information is used to identify a student or parent online and help in the tracking of student progress. Students or parents who suspect that their login information has been accidentally compromised should contact the STARRS Online Academy office immediately to request a change of password. Parents, guardians and the OLM will have "observer" access to all student accounts.

### **Email Accounts**

STARRS Online Academy email accounts are to be used for school-related communication only. Students and parents are also required to use their STARRS Online Academy email account for all school-related email communication. Students and parents are required to check

their school-assigned email account on a daily basis for important communications from the school or from their teachers. Teachers will be identifying student emails by their assigned email accounts, so students should never use another student's webmail account for any purpose. Students or parents should report any problems with their school-assigned email account to the school office or the SWWC Technology Helpdesk by phone for prompt assistance.

### **Internet Safety**

STARRS Online Academy provides a secure, password-protected OLL environment for students. All course materials are located within this system. At times, teachers will provide students links to appropriate internet sites for students to do additional research or exploration. At no time will a STARRS Online Academy teacher or staff member direct students to an internet site with sexually explicit or other inappropriate internet content. Students should only access internet sites that are approved by STARRS Online Academy.

Parents need to be vigilant in monitoring their child's internet use. Laptop computers that are loaned to students have internet filtering software loaded on them that will block inappropriate internet content. STARRS Online Academy recommends that parents providing a home computer for their student purchase internet filtering software for their home computer to provide internet protection for times when parents may not be working directly with their student. Some practices that can help keep students stay safe when working online include: keep student work areas in a public area of the home where internet use can be more easily monitored, talk with your child about the importance of keeping their personal information private and only visit internet sites approved by STARRS Online Academy, make use of internet filtering and other programs that track student access to the internet so that parents can periodically review their child's web surfing habits. Students or parents who have concerns about internet sites that are required for school should feel free to contact the STARRS Online Academy office or the student technical support team to report the issue for prompt response.

### **Submission or Posting of Inappropriate Content**

Students are not allowed to submit, post, write about, or otherwise promote any inappropriate content in any of their courses. This includes drug-related content, sexually explicit content or anything that violates laws or the generally accepted standards of school appropriateness.

### **Virtual Classroom Conduct**

In order for a virtual classroom session to be educationally effective for students, all students should abide by a standard set of rules. The following rules govern student conduct in the virtual classroom:

- Students' written and oral communications must be free of vulgar, belittling, or offensive language.
- Students must abide by rules established by the course instructor.
- Students must comply with usage instructions communicated orally or in writing by the instructor.
- Students must dress appropriately for any online class meetings.

Students who violate the virtual classroom rules of conduct will be warned by the instructor to correct their behavior. If the student does not comply with the instructor's instructions, they will be removed from the virtual classroom for the rest of the session.

### **Use of Language and Images**

Students must not use vulgar, obscene, abusive or demeaning language, writing, pictures, signs or acts in written or oral communications, including email, discussion board, virtual classroom, student websites, or in photographs. Students are prohibited from posting content from or links to suggestive, lewd or otherwise inappropriate websites.

### **Personal Respect**

Administrators, instructors and students know that personal respect is the foundation of learning. Language, comments, or images that show a lack of respect for individuals or groups will lead directly to disciplinary action.

### **Defiance**

Students should follow the requests of STARRS Online Academy staff. Failure to do so is defiance toward school personnel or rules. Defiance is defined as defying instructions of school personnel, the bold resistance of school authority, and/or contemptuous behavior or attitude that is manifested by breaking school rules. Acts of defiance may result in disciplinary action.

### **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

No one should be subjected to harassment at school for any reason. Therefore, it is school policy that all students will deal with all persons in ways which convey respect and dignity. Harassment in the form of name-calling, taunting, gestures, intimidation, conduct, jokes, pictures, slurs or ridicules are prohibited. Such conduct referencing or directed at an individual or group that demeans that person/group on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age, disability or other extraneous factors is prohibited and shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

STARRS Online Academy has a zero tolerance policy towards intimidation, harassment, bullying and/or fighting. Intimidation, harassment, bullying, fighting and racial and/or sexual harassment are violent acts against others. These behaviors will not be tolerated, and the natural consequence is to be barred from interactions with others. The school will promptly and thoroughly investigate reports of harassment and bullying, whether of a physical or of a nonphysical form. If it is determined that either has occurred, the school will act appropriately within the discipline codes of the school and will take reasonable action to end bullying.

### **Computer and Internet Access**

All students must have access to a high-speed internet connection. Computers will be supplied through the home district and a 24/7 tech support line is available. If your computer is in for repairs, speak with the OLM for options. Progress is expected to continue. Options may include using your public library's computer or traveling to one of our educational learning centers to use a computer.

## **CIPA, FERPA, and COPPA**

Our online partner, Edgenuity, ensures the privacy and safety of all students. Edgenuity seeks to maximize every child's potential by transforming the educational experience, and making it accessible, engaging and individualized.

This Privacy Policy lets you know how we collect, use, share and protect information that we may gather from Edgenuity and Edgenuity's other web sites, the Edgenuity Online School ("OLS"), and the websites we manage for schools (collectively, "Sites"). This policy also applies to information that we may collect from you outside of our Sites, such as over the phone, by fax, through conventional mail, or by other means. By using any of the Sites, you agree to accept the terms of this Privacy Policy that are in effect at the time of use, including any provisions pertaining to changes to the Privacy Policy. You can click the link below to visit the SWWC website to [view more information on CIPA and Internet Safety](#). A signature page is included in the enrollment packet to indicate that you agree with the privacy policies.

## **Student Requirement**

Upon review of the student handbook, students will be asked to explain the following to the OLM:

- The STARRS Online Academy Attendance Policy
- The Online Code of Conduct and what it means
- The STARRS Online Academy Drop/Add Policy
- The STARRS Online Academy calendar and pacing structure
- Student expectations
- Important habits to assist in continuous progress in each course
- Who to contact for technology support
- Who to contact for support with courses

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Minnesota Online Learning**

### **Is Online Learning (OLL) open to all Minnesota K-12 students?**

The statute allows a public school student residing in Minnesota to apply to a certified OLL provider to enroll in full-time or part-time OLL at no cost to the student.

Minnesota Statutes section 124D.095 Subd 3a, articulates the following OLL enrollment parameters:

- A student aged 17 or younger must have the written consent of a parent or guardian to apply.
- No school district or charter school may prohibit a student from applying to enroll in OLL.
- An OLL student may enroll during a single school year in a maximum of 12 semester-long courses or their equivalent delivered by an OLL provider in a comprehensive program or through supplemental OLL up to 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term at their enrolling district.
- A student may exceed the supplemental OLL registration limit if the enrolling district grants permission for additional supplemental OLL enrollment or if there is an agreement between the enrolling district and the OLL provider for these instructional services.

Students who are ineligible for public funding for OLL include nonpublic school students, students taking summer classes, students enrolling in classes above full-time status (e.g., credit recovery) and students who are not physically located in Minnesota. Students may enroll on a tuition basis with an OLL provider if they are ineligible for state public school funding or do not qualify for another public school program.

### **How many courses can a student take through a certified OLL program?**

Supplemental OLL, defined as an online course taken in place of a course period during the regular school day at a local district school, may not exceed 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term at their enrolling district. A student may exceed the supplemental OLL registration limit if the enrolling district grants permission for supplemental OLL enrollment above the limit, or if an agreement is made between the enrolling district and the OLL provider for instructional services.

Students that enroll in a full-time program (open enroll or transfer to a charter school) will take all their classes and receive all student services through the online school in which they've enrolled. They will receive a high school diploma from this OLL public school.

### **Where can I find a list of OLL programs in Minnesota for K-12 students?**

The Minnesota Department of Education Website has a list of providers and other information about OLL: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/oll/>

### **Can a student participate in OLL courses beyond being a full-time student?**

Yes. Students can participate at their own expense or at the district's expense, but they will not generate additional funding for the school district.

The enrolling (resident) district may reduce the instructional contact time of an OLL student in proportion to the number of OLL courses the student takes from an OLL provider that is not the enrolling district (M.S. § 124D.095 subd 3d). The statute states that enrollment in additional courses, beyond full-time status, with the OLL provider is permitted under a separate agreement that includes terms for payment of any tuition or course fees. (M.S. § 124D.095 subd 4b3). A public school student must first be offered a reduction of instructional contact time in the enrolling district so that full-time status is not exceeded. If a student/family elects not to reduce instructional contact time to within full-time enrollment, then payment of tuition is allowable.

**What school is responsible for comprehensive student enrollment when a student registers for OLL classes outside of their enrolling (local) school?**

There are comprehensive OLL programs that provide grade level advancement and grant high school diplomas and others that provide supplemental OLL instruction (grade level progression and comprehensive student enrollment is maintained at the local school). Certain certified OLL programs offer both comprehensive and supplemental enrollment options.

The student and family determine which school (local or online) the student will be enrolled in as a full-time, comprehensive student. Continued enrollment in the local (enrolling) school requires that all grade level and graduation requirements are met at that district, OLL courses are transferred in, and the enrolling school continues to provide non-academic services. A student may access supplemental instruction through OLL up to 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term at their enrolling district and remain enrolled in their local school.

**Are there deadlines for student application to OLL and notifications to students and resident districts?**

Part-time, Supplemental OLL: In order that a student may enroll in OLL, the student and student's parents must submit an application to the OLL provider and identify the reason for enrolling in OLL. The OLL provider that accepts a student under this section must, within ten days, notify the student and the enrolling district in writing if the enrolling district is not the OLL provider. The student and family must notify the OLL provider of their intent to enroll in OLL within ten days of acceptance, at which time the student and parent must sign a statement of assurance that they have reviewed the online course or program and understand the expectations of OLL enrollment. The OLL provider must notify the enrolling district of the student's enrollment in OLL in writing on a form provided by MDE (OLL Supplemental Notice of Student Enrollment Form).

Supplemental OLL notification to the enrolling district must include the courses or program, credits to be awarded, the start date of online enrollment, and confirmation that the courses will meet the student's graduation plan. A student may enroll in supplemental OLL courses up to the midpoint of the enrolling district's term. The enrolling district may waive this requirement for special circumstances and upon acceptance by the online provider. (M.S. § 124D.095 Subd 3 a and b).

Full-time or Comprehensive OLL: Students may apply for full-time enrollment in an approved OLL program through open enrollment, agreement between school boards or to an online charter school following enrollment procedures and timelines in Minnesota Statutes § 124D.03 (Enrollment Options), Minnesota Statutes § 124D.08 (School Boards' Approval To Enroll In Nonresident District.) or Minnesota Statute § 124D.10 (Charter School).

**How does the student get access to necessary technology for OLL?**

An OLL student has the same access to the computer hardware and education software available in a school as all other students in the enrolling district.

An OLL provider must assist an OLL student whose family qualifies for the education tax credit under section 290.0674 to acquire computer hardware and educational software for OLL purposes (M.S. 124D.095 Subd 4c).

OLL programs may provide computer hardware, educational software and stipends for Internet services to enrolled students.

**Can home school or nonpublic school students participate in OLL from a certified provider and generate state funding for OLL?**

The Omnibus Education Bill (2005) changed funding for OLL such that Minnesota nonpublic school students must become full-time public school students to be eligible to generate funding for OLL courses. If you have specific questions relating to funding, please contact Sharon Peck at 651-582-8811 or e-mail [sharon.peck@state.mn.us](mailto:sharon.peck@state.mn.us).

Nonpublic school students (home and private school students) can generate funding through the shared-time aid law (M.S. § 126 subd. c19), but the students must participate in core curriculum from a public school building. Therefore, nonpublic school students can generate shared-time aid for OLL only for the number of hours they access the course from a computer in a public school building.

**Do teachers of online courses need to be licensed in Minnesota?**

Yes. A teacher who is properly licensed in Minnesota and highly qualified must assemble and deliver instruction to OLL students enrolled in certified programs. The delivery of instruction occurs when the student interacts with the computer or the teacher and receives ongoing assistance and assessment of learning. The instruction may include curriculum developed by persons other than a teacher with a Minnesota license.

**Is there a limit on the number of students enrolling in a single course or program?**

Unless the commissioner grants a waiver, a teacher providing OLL instruction must not instruct more than 40 students in any one OLL course or program.

**Can an OLL provider limit enrollment?**

An OLL provider may limit enrollment if the provider's school board or board of directors adopts by resolution specific standards for accepting or rejecting students' applications.

The Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) Model Policy 624 provides a summary of the statute as it relates to OLL enrollment for review or approval by school districts. MSBA members can access policies by visiting <https://mnmsba.org/resource-library/#district-policies>.

The law specifically states that no school district or charter school may prohibit a student from applying to enroll in OLL (M.S. § 124D.095 subd 3a).

**Can a student participate in extracurricular activities as an OLL student?**

Yes, a student can participate at their local district of enrollment when they enroll in supplemental OLL classes.

When a student enrolls in a full-time OLL program, they should contact that school's coordinator to see what arrangements can be made for extracurricular activities based on rules established by the Minnesota State High School League.