

Polk Innovative Learning Academy

2019-2020

Student/Parent Handbook

Dr. Tamra Lanning, Principal
tlanning@polkcountyschools.com

Jawana Goodman, Lead Teacher
jgoodman@polkcountyschools.com

Welcome to Polk Innovative Learning Academy (PILA)

PILA is a nontraditional K-10 school within Polk County School District. Classes are taught asynchronously and virtually by highly qualified, certified Polk County teachers. All courses are aligned with the district's instructional goals and Tennessee's academic standards, curriculum frameworks, and assessments. Courses are accredited and approved by the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee State Board of Education.

PILA courses are free for Polk County students meeting the eligibility requirements with students able to enroll on a full time basis. Enrollment for out-of-county students is also offered based upon availability for those students meeting the eligibility requirements and consistent with the procedures contained herewith.

PILA is governed by the policies and procedures adopted by the School Board of the Polk County School district and the Tennessee State Board of Education, as well as all applicable laws adopted by the Tennessee General Assembly. Except those policies and procedures presented herewith, all other policies and procedures adopted by the school board apply to PILA. The policies and procedures below are designed to ensure the efficient and effective operations of PILA and to ensure the ultimate academic success of enrolled students.

Mission

To provide students in Polk County with a high quality education in a flexible, online learning environment that will impart the knowledge, skills, and characteristics necessary for college and career readiness.

Vision

We believe:

- Building solid relationships will enhance the learning experience.
- Students can develop a love of learning by taking ownership for the learning experience.
- Students, parents, and teachers should be active partners in the educational process.
- The student experience in online and blended learning will prepare them for post secondary education and future employment.

Application for Enrollment

PILA is a virtual public school within Polk County School district in which students may take courses online in a home setting instead of at their school. Parents who are interested in enrolling in PILA should contact Dr. Tamra Lanning, Principal, for an application. Because the online learning environment is not appropriate for every student, a student applying for full time enrollment will attend a meeting to establish whether virtual school will best serve the student's individual learning needs. If the student meets eligibility requirements and virtual learning will best serve the learner's needs, the student then completes a registration form for PILA. Upon reviewing the student's application, the PILA Administrator will notify the school of primary enrollment, student, and parent/guardian whether the enrollment request has been approved.

If a parent wished to transfer a student from PILA to any brick and mortar schools in the Polk County School District, the parent should contact the PILA Administrator. Students will not be transferred mid-semester. Students may only transfer *out of* PILA back to a brick and mortar school at the end of each semester (December and May). If the parent chooses to withdraw from PILA and Polk County Schools in order to homeschool, a homeschool affidavit must be filed with Polk County Schools' Central Office.

Students must commit to working 5 hours per week per course, on average, to stay on pace in all subjects. Students who do not meet these expectations will not be eligible for continued enrollment in the program. Students are evaluated for enrollment each year and may not be allowed to re-enroll if expectations have not been met. Other than in pre-approved extenuating circumstances, the enrollment requirements for high school are as follows.

Enrollment requirements for High School students

Enrolling Fall Freshmen: Same as above

Enrolling Spring Freshmen: Minimum of 3 credits earned

Enrolling Fall Sophomores: Minimum of 6 credits earned

Enrolling Spring Sophomores: Minimum of 10 credits earned

Characteristics of a Successful Virtual Student

We believe that by becoming a virtual leader in learning, all students will be confident in their ability to learn, work, and be successful in an asynchronous and synchronous virtual environment as well as in face-to-face settings. Virtual courses offer students opportunities to learn in new, engaging ways, and **students must be active learners**. In general, to be successful at PILA, virtual students must continuously demonstrate the following competencies:

- The virtual student strives to achieve his or her full potential.
- The virtual student takes ownership of his or her learning.
- The virtual student is an excellent communicator both orally and in writing.
- The virtual student constantly displays academic professionalism.
- The virtual student is self-motivated and self-disciplined.
- The virtual student exhibits attention to detail, reading and following all instructions.
- The virtual student is adaptable and able to manage competing demands in various virtual courses.
- The virtual student takes responsibility for actions and in keeping commitments.
- The virtual student has excellent time management skills completing virtual assignments on time and remaining on–pace.
- The virtual student seeks help when support is needed, or speaks up if a problem arises.
- The virtual student has a “no excuses” attitude.
- The virtual student maintains a positive attitude toward learning

Asynchronous Instruction

Instruction at PILA is primarily delivered asynchronously. This means that virtual students and virtual teachers can access the virtual courses and participate at various times and need not be online simultaneously. We are not a synchronous virtual school with virtual students and virtual teachers logging into the virtual course and interacting at the same time. Even though our school is mostly asynchronous in nature, we offer a few synchronistic and tutoring opportunities. Teachers make every attempt to respond as needed by students, but return communication may, in some cases, be the following school day.

Virtual School Attendance

PILA is required to monitor student attendance in accordance with all applicable statutes set forth by the state of Tennessee, as well as to report all truant learners to the appropriate legal authorities. Parents/Guardians with legal responsibility for a student between the age of six (6) and seventeen (17) are accountable for the student’s attendance in a public school unless otherwise exempt by law. Virtual school attendance is based upon the completion of lessons consistent with a pacing guide developed for each course. In the event that a student is truant, PILA will intervene with the parent/guardian and student, with all parties subject to penalties provided for under Tennessee’s Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Our guidelines for a successful virtual student include attending to daily work in systematic manner. The virtual student dedicates the time needed to successfully master the content in the course.

PILA students are expected to attend and participate in their online education courses as fully as they would attend and participate in a traditional classroom course. Students will be given weekly due dates and are responsible for completing those assignments in a timely manner. Both PILA personnel and parents/guardians are expected to monitor student attendance and class progress. If a student falls behind the prescribed weekly requirements, we reserve the right to mandate that the student do any or all of the following:

- Keep a daily log of time spent on each activity
- Weekly virtual check ins with teachers or administrators
- Be required to attend additional face to face sessions

All absences are unexcused unless a doctor note is provided. Excuses must be turned in to the administrator within 3 school days. These may be submitted via email.

Each work week begins on Monday at 12:00am and ends at 11:59 on Friday.

Attendance Policy Grades Kindergarten – Fifth Grade

Students in grades K-5 are required to complete the assignments before intended due dates each week **and** complete 45 minutes of iReady in Reading and Math. Work weeks begin on Monday at 12:00am and end at 11:59 on Friday. Students have the weekend to makeup any missed work. Attendance will be checked every Monday morning to ensure that pacing is being maintained in Village Virtual **and** iReady. Full attendance credit will be given if both of these factors are in place.

Absenteeism Schedule:

If a student fails to complete lessons for the week, absences will be accrued based on the following scale:

- 2-3 assignments not submitted: 1 day absent
- 4-5 assignments not submitted: 2 days absent
- 6-7 assignments not submitted: 3 days absent
- 8-9 assignments not submitted: 4 days absent
- 10+ assignments not submitted: 5 days absent

****iReady math and iReady reading count as one assignment each for the week****

Attendance Policy Grades 6-8

Students in grades 6-8 are required to complete the weekly assignments in each subject in Canvas before due dates each week **and** complete one graded lesson in iReady Reading (or other assigned program) and Math.

Attendance will be checked every Monday morning to ensure that pacing is being maintained in Canvas **and** iReady. Full attendance credit will be given if both of these factors are in place.

Absenteeism Schedule:

If a student fails to complete lessons for the week, absences will be accrued based on the following scale:

- 2-3 assignments not submitted: 1 day absent
- 4-5 assignments not submitted: 2 days absent
- 6-7 assignments not submitted: 3 days absent
- 8-9 assignments not submitted: 4 days absent
- 10+ assignments not submitted: 5 days absent

High School Attendance Policy

Students in grade 9/10 are required to complete the weekly assignments in each subject in Canvas before the due dates.

Attendance will be checked every Monday morning to ensure that pacing is being maintained in Canvas.

Absenteeism Schedule:

If a student fails to complete lessons for the week, absences will be accrued based on the following scale:

- 3-5 assignments not submitted: 1 day absent
- 6-8 assignments not submitted: 2 days absent
- 9-11 assignments not submitted: 3 days absent
- 12-14 assignments not submitted: 4 days absent
- 15+ assignments not submitted: 5 days absent

Board Policy on Attendance:

A student who is absent for three (3) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of Schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absence. If a parent does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy intervention plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Tier I

Tier I of the progressive truancy intervention plan shall include the following:

1. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and an attendance supervisor or designee. The contract shall include:
 - a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
 - b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
 - c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.

Tier II

If a student accumulates additional unexcused absences in violation of the attendance contract in Tier I, the student will be subject to Tier II.

Under this tier, a school employee shall conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier III

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful. These interventions shall be determined by a team formed at each school. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

Expectations

Students are required to be an effective communicator while enrolled at PILA. This is vital to the success of our virtual students. It is expected that the virtual student maintain consistent and regular communication with their teachers. The following expectations are required for all virtual students enrolled in PILA:

- Maintain internet access at all times.
- Have a working telephone and provide the number to PILA for distribution to our teachers and staff.
- Must read PILA's weekly newsletter.
- Must respond to all teacher and administrative questions within 24 hours on regular school days (Monday-Friday).
- Are required to participate in all district mandated testing in a face to face environment. Tests include STAR diagnostic testing, content area benchmark tests, and TCAP tests. This may require students to be present at one of the PILA learning centers for multiple days.**

General Expectations

Students

- complete 5 hours of work per course, per week, or more if required
- attend parent/student orientation session
- make adequate progress in each class, stay on pace, and have passing grades
- ask questions when you don't know!
- attend tutoring sessions as needed, or when required by teachers
- maintain weekly contact with teacher
- read messages/emails daily
- take all required face to face assessments, including state tests

Parents

- facilitate student learning by checking grades in Canvas
- assure student is following a structured schedule
- provide consistent and high speed internet access
- provide all necessary enrollment paperwork
- attend parent/student orientation session
- check email daily

Behavior

Code of Conduct

All virtual students enrolled are subject to the Polk County Schools Student Code of Conduct and all rules contained therein. Internet access is required for all virtual students and must use this access in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Use of the Internet must be in accordance with the Polk County Student Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Virtual students agree to Polk County Schools Student Technology Acceptable Use policy when enrolling in PILA.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to a successful virtual learning experience and ultimate student mastery. For learners, this means that the student, without unauthorized help of any kind, completes all academic work consistent with the following:

- The student completes each assignment independently and without help.
- The student does not practice plagiarism in any form.
- The student does not cheat in any form.
- The student does not allow other individuals to copy work.
- The student does not misuse content from the Internet.

Plagiarism is defined as copying or using ideas or words from another individual and presenting those ideas or words as the student's *without properly citing the source*. Cheating is defined as submitting work that is not completed by the student. Note that collaboration with another individual on any assignment must be pre-approved by the teacher.

Specific examples of plagiarism that will not be tolerated are:

- Copying, paraphrasing or summarizing another person's work without citing that source.
- Using material, including photographs, from the internet or any other source and representing as your own, even if you have changed some of the words.
- Having someone else write the assignment or rephrase any portion of that assignment.
- Directly copying or rephrasing student aids (Cliff Notes, for example), critical sources, or reference materials in part or whole without acknowledging those sources.

Teachers suspecting that a virtual student has violated this policy, the teacher will intervene in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The **minimum** consequence for plagiarism is

clearing all answers in the lesson and starting over. The **maximum** consequence is dismissal from the program.

Academic Integrity Intervention Schedule

Violation Number:	Intervention:
Violation #1	The teacher notifies the student and the parent that it is suspected that the student has violated the Academic Integrity policy. Consequently, all answers will be cleared and the student must redo the assignment for credit. The teacher will also inform the virtual student and parent that a second violation will be reported directly to the principal which may result in failure of the course.
Violation #2	The teacher will notify the principal of the second violation. The student will receive a zero on all assignments submitted in violation of the policy. The principal will contact the virtual student and parent notifying them of a mandatory face-to-face conference in the administrative office.
Violation #3	The teacher will notify the principal of the third violation. The principal will send an official notification to the student and the parent noting that the student will receive no credit for any remaining assignments and class credit will be nullified. The student may be subject to removal from the program.

Cyberbullying/Bullying Policy

Every PILA student has the right to an educational environment that is reasonably free from intimidation, harassment, harm or threat by another student.

Bullying and/or cyber-bullying is prohibited during school, via school equipment, at school-sponsored events, or by any electronic act that results in the disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment, whether or not the electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment.

“Bullying” is considered to be the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student or school employee by a written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of:

- a) Physical harm to a school employee or student or damage to the school employee’s or student’s property
- b) Substantial interference with a student’s education or with a school employee’s role in education

- c) A hostile educational environment for one (1) or more students or school employees due to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the act
- d) Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment.

“Electronic act” means, without limitation, a communication or image transmitted by means of an electronic device, including without limitation, a telephone, wireless phone or other wireless communications device, or computer.

“Harassment” means a pattern of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct relating to another person’s constitutionally or statutorily substantial interference with the other’s performance in the school environment.

“Substantial Disruption” means, without limitations, that any one or more of the following occur as a result of bullying:

- a) Necessary cessation of instruction or educational activities
- b) Inability of students or educational staff to focus on learning or function as an educational unit because of a hostile environment
- c) Severe or repetitive disciplinary measures are needed in the classroom or during educational activities
- d) Exhibition of other behaviors by students or educational staff that substantially interfere with the learning environment.

School employees who witness bullying, or have reliable information that a pupil has been the victim of bullying, as defined in this policy, shall report the incident to any member of PILA Administration immediately. Students who engage in bullying during school, on school property, during and/or while in route to or from any school function in connection to or with any school sponsored activity or event, or by an electronic act that results in the disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The person or persons who file a complaint will not be subject to retaliation or reprisal in any form.

Virtual Student Etiquette

Most of our communication between our teachers, virtual students and parents is written. It is important to note that the words that we use are choices. Respect the power of those decisions and choose words with care. Email and other communications should always be professional. The following are etiquette expectations for virtual students:

- Always use correct spelling and grammar. Do not use any acronyms associated with social media.
- Provide a brief and concise summary in the subject line of the electronic communication.

- Keep communications brief and to the point.
- Do not discuss multiple subjects. Be sure to focus on one subject per communication.
- Always include a professional greeting and closing.
- Address the contact with the appropriate level of formality.
- Read communications for tone and avoid sarcasm.
- Do not write messages in all capital letters.
- Remember that your electronic communication is not private and you are representing yourself and PILA.

Withdrawal

PILA strives to ensure that online learning is the best educational placement for each student enrolled. When in the best interest of the learner, the student may be withdrawn from the virtual school, enrolled in a more appropriate educational placement, and prevented from re-enrolling until the student demonstrates virtual learning readiness. Reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:

- During the first two (2) weeks of the semester, the learner has *not* demonstrated progress in the virtual courses as demonstrated by the following: (1) not attending orientation, (2) not logging into the virtual course, and/or (3) not completing the assigned lessons and progressing forward in the course.
- The student has extensive, documented, virtual truancy issues and is better served by the accountability associated with physical attending, daily, a brick-and-mortar school.
- The student is no longer attending PILA.

Students not actively participating in the virtual courses during the first two (2) weeks of the semester will be transitioned to the zoned school or another choice school. Full-time students with extensive virtual truancy will be transitioned back to the zoned school or another choice school at the end of the quarter (i.e., nine-week grading period).

If a student chooses to voluntarily withdraw from PILA, he or she may only transition into to another Polk County School at the end of each semester.

Onsite Intervention for Full-Time Students

The Principal of PILA may require that a truant student attend, daily, virtual school's student learning center for the purposes of intervening and helping the student get back on-pace. This authority only extends to truant learners. Further, the Principal, when mandating attendance for truant learners, may submit student absences consistent with Tennessee's

Compulsory School Attendance Law when the learner fails to report to the learning center (without an excusable absence).

Physical Education

Physical education may be defined as “the development and maintenance of skills related to strength, agility, flexibility, movement, and stamina, including dance; the development of knowledge and skills regarding teamwork and fair play; the development of knowledge and skills regarding nutrition and physical fitness as part of a healthy lifestyle; and the development of positive attitudes regarding sound nutrition and physical activity as a component of personal well-being.”

PILA does not offer an online version of physical education and fitness program for grades K-8. However, we encourage all PILA students to engage in cardiovascular exercise daily that promotes healthy living. Student attendance in Physical Education is required at 90 minutes per week.

Student Extracurricular Activities

PILA students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities available through the brick and mortar school for which the student is zoned to attend with the following expectations:

1. Students are responsible for contacting the coach or club sponsor of any extra-curricular activity in which they wish to participate.
2. Students will comply with all of the policies and procedures of the zoned school while on campus, including dress code for that school.
3. Students who participate in athletics will be subject to all TSSAA rules and regulations.
4. Students will be subject to the same disciplinary actions as all other students.
5. Students will meet the same attendance and grade expectations for participation as all other students.
6. It is understood that academics take precedence over any extra-curricular activities. This includes required testing sessions, required tutoring, and class meetings/field trips.

Classes on Campus (PCHS/CBHS)

Students enrolled in the PILA may participate in a class at Polk County High School or Copper Basin High School if the class is not available virtually. Enrollment will follow school procedures and availability of a desired class is not guaranteed. Students must meet prerequisites and any admission policies in order to be eligible for a class. Parents must provide transportation to a campus-based class. Students must be on time and must sign in and out at the office. Students will be expected to follow all class rules and policies. Parents must pick students up promptly at the end of class.

Grading/Graduation

Course Grading Policies & Procedures

We believe that by inspiring academic virtual excellence in learning, all students will be college and career ready and expect all of our learners to master and apply the content provided. Grades are based on learning. Our school believes that our students should be afforded every opportunity to succeed.

For virtual students this means the following:

- When the virtual student scores less than 70% on an assignment the learner is allowed to retake the assignment during the current quarter.
- Missed assignments are considered incomplete.
- Additional attempts to quizzes may require submission of notes by the student and/or tutoring before attempts are granted.

Grading: Grades will be issued to students based on the State grading scale:

A 93-100
B 85-92
C 75-84
D 70-74
F below 70

Students enrolled through our virtual homeschool program may use Canvas to access grades at anytime, and may request a physical grade card be printed if desired.

Graduation: Graduation requirements are set by the Polk County Board of Education and must be met for a student to earn a regular high school diploma. In grades 9-12, students must obtain credit in 28 courses/credits:

- 4 English
- 4 Math (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, & an upper Math)
- 3 Social Studies (US History, World History or Geography, & Gov't/Economics)
- 3 Science (Biology I, Physics or Chemistry & 1 other lab Science)
- 1 Wellness
- .5 PE
- .5 Personal Finance
- 2 Foreign Language (same language)*
- 1 Fine Arts*
- 3 Program of Study Focused Electives** (CTE)

*may be replaced by other electives if the student is not planning to attend a 4-year university. Parent and student must sign the opt-out form.

**Students may pursue three full credits through the Credit Advancement option as an elective focus.

Credit Advancement

Full time students at Polk County High School or Copper Basin High School who wish to earn additional credits virtually may be interested in Credit Advancement through PILA. Credit Advancement courses carry both half and whole credits depending on the class. All CA courses are approved by the Tennessee Department of Education, taught by certified instructors, and are aligned to Tennessee content standards.

Credit Advancement is only available if students meet the criteria established by the school board and are approved by the PILA Administrator. Students must also have a minimum GPA of 2.8 to enroll in (CA) courses. These courses are provided through the district's Canvas Learning Management System using Florida Virtual School Curriculum. Students interested in this option should see their school counselor for a complete list of these courses, or view them [here](#).

Sometimes students may desire to take a course that is not offered at Polk County High School. A complete list of classes offered to brick and mortar students through PILA is available at the counselor's office. Students interested in this option should contact their school counselor who will work with PILA personnel to get the student enrolled.

Students should realize that taking a course online requires personal discipline and effective time management skills. Students should not expect that there will be less to do than in the regular classroom since each course must adhere to the Tennessee standards and benchmarks for the area of instruction. Students spend more time taking an online course than they typically devote to a traditional high school class. Students should consult their school counselor and Onsite Facilitator to make sure that they are ready for online learning. Computer

expertise is not required; however, students should be aware that a certain level of computer skill and comfort is necessary to do work online.

Field Trips

PILA will sponsor optional outings for students and families on a regular basis that enhance the curriculum/learning activities. While attendance is not mandatory, it is an opportunity to socialize with other school participants, have conversations, share practices that work and academic enrichment.

Parents are responsible for the cost of transportation and any entrance fees associated with optional outings.

PILA parents and students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all optional student outings. Parents /guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times and must attend outings with their students.

Dress Code

PILA expects students will dress neatly and appropriately at all times on school grounds and at sponsored field trips. The two criteria for determining appropriateness are safety and decency.

Examples of inappropriate dress include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures, or any other combinations thereof, advocates or promotes sexual activity, violence, death, suicide, or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans, degrades, or intimidates another because of race, sex, religious persuasions, national origin, disability, or gang membership.
- Apparel that reveals or exposes the midriff/lower back or sides of the upper body or torso and/or undergarments.
- Any clothing that is excessively tight, is excessively short, is of transparent material or see-through material, or that is ripped or torn, or has suggestive signs or symbols.
- Any clothing through which underwear or any type of undergarment may be seen.
- Clothing which does not cover backs or clothing which permits viewing of cleavage, tank tops with open sides and muscle/tank shirts.
- Spikes, dog chains/chokers, ball bearing chains, wallet chains or other jewelry that increases the risk for accidents.

2019-2020 Polk County School Calendar

August

1,2,5 Inservice Days
6 First Day of Classes/Full Day

September

2 Labor Day- No Classes

October

14-18 Fall Break- No Classes

November

1 Inservice Day- No Classes
25-29 Thanksgiving Holiday- No Classes

December

20 Early Dismissal/Semester 1 Ends
21-Jan.3 Christmas Holiday- No Classes

January

6 Classes Resume
20 MLK Holiday- No Classes

February

17 Presidents' Day- No Classes

March

3 Staff Development Day- No Classes/ Election Day
23-27 Spring Break- No Classes

April

10 Good Friday- No Classes

May

25 Memorial Day- No Classes
27 Last Day of Classes/ Full Day

Connect with PILA

Follow us on Twitter: [@Polk_ILA](#)

Connect with our Facebook page: [Polk Innovative Learning Academy](#)