

# ONLINE COURSE POLICY

## OCCASIONS WHEN STUDENTS MAY APPLY FOR AN ONLINE COURSE

While classroom instruction and learning are the primary modes of education at Providence, students may apply to take an online course in lieu of a course at Providence when:

1. A course is a required or recommended course for a post-secondary program for which the student plans to apply.
2. A student needs an additional university credit and there are no workable options (e.g., schedule conflicts) offered at Providence.
3. A course is required for the OSSD or Providence diploma, but due to exceptional circumstances in the student's schedule, the student is unable to take the course when it is offered at Providence.
4. A course is regularly offered by Providence, but for some reason is not able to be offered during a certain school year.

Online courses with close equivalents at Providence will normally not be considered.

When a student asks for a course that does not fit in the above criteria, it will only be considered when a student has a grade average of 85% or higher in the courses taken in the previous two semesters as a demonstration of self-discipline, motivation, and commitment to persevering through challenges. Only one course would be allowed, and the student would be permitted to take it in Grade 11 or 12.

Please remember that students are always able to take any online course at home under the supervision of their parents. Unless the course is approved by this policy, any online course the student takes would be considered above and beyond the regularly scheduled courses at Providence.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPROVING ONLINE COURSE APPLICATIONS:

Online courses are difficult. Students that have taken online courses in the past generally have struggled with the format of online courses, pacing through content, and getting support that they are looking for from the teacher of the online course. Also, since online courses are offered by secular institutions, the courses lack the Christian worldview and perspective that locally-offered courses have. Therefore, when students apply for online courses, the principal will only grant approval if the student has demonstrated:

1. A discerning heart and mind,
2. The academic capacity to succeed in an online course,
3. Self-discipline and motivation to work independently,
4. Commitment to persevering through challenges.

## ONLINE COURSE FEES

If there is a fee associated with the course, the school will pay if it is a course:

- Required for the O.S.S.D. (e.g. OLC40, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course),
- Required for the post-secondary program, or
- We typically offer but cannot, due to logistics (e.g. staffing, cancelled course due to low interest).

Students are responsible for fees if it falls outside of the above guidelines (e.g., it is a general interest course, a course that is recommended for a post secondary program, etc.).

If a student begins a course with a fee and chooses to withdraw, the student will usually be required to reimburse the school for the entire fee of the course.

At present, online courses may be taken with Virtual High School (\$550-\$580), AMDEC (free, with limited availability), or the Blyth Academy (\$495-\$1295).

## PROCEDURE

In order to participate in an online course, the following steps must be observed:

1. The student must speak with the Guidance Counsellor regarding course options, in a timely fashion, prior to the semester in which the course will be taken. Due to space restrictions within the school building, there may be a cap on the number of students permitted to take online courses during a given period.
2. With the Guidance Counsellor's consent, the student and his/her parents will fill out the application form requesting the Principal's permission to participate in an online course.
3. After Principal consent, parents and student will be informed of the decision in writing/email.

If a student's application for participation in an online course is denied, the parents of the student may appeal the decision to the Education Committee in writing.

Once the application has been approved:

1. The student should speak with the Administrative Assistant to receive the proper paperwork.
2. During the semester in which the course is taking place, the student will be assigned a supervisor (normally the Learning Assistance Co-ordinator (LAC)) with whom he/she will maintain contact regarding progress and challenges of the course.
3. The student will abide by the timeline for the course as provided by the online teacher or the LAC.
4. During the appointed time slotted for the student to take the course, the student will be required to remain in the assigned room and be actively engaged in his/her studies.

## PROGRESS THROUGH THE ONLINE COURSE

Students in online courses are responsible for providing evidence of their achievement within the time frame specified by their online teacher and/or the Learning Assistance Coordinator, and in a form approved by the teacher. Students must understand that there will be consequences for:

- Not progressing through the course at the required pace
- Not completing assignments for evaluation
- Submitting assignments late.

In these instances, the student may incur penalties from the online teacher, including removal from the online course.

Where in the Learning Assistant Coordinator's professional judgement it is appropriate to do so, several strategies may be used to help prevent and/or address late and missed assignments. They include:

- asking the student to clarify the reason for not completing the assignment;
- helping students develop better time-management skills;
- planning for major assignments to be completed in stages, so that students are less likely to be faced with an all-or-nothing situation at the last minute;
- maintaining ongoing communication with students and/or parents about due dates and late assignments, and scheduling conferences with parents if the problem persists;
- Required time at lunch spent on the course;
- Removal from school sports teams;
- The loss of the privilege to take an online course in the future.

Students may only withdraw from a course after consultation with the Guidance Counsellor and Principal and after having received parental permission.