

# SMCPS Foundations of Technology (171343 ) Online

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### ***Enrollment and Registration***

#### **What is an online course?**

Online courses are self-paced and can be accessed anytime, anyplace. An online course is designed as an environment for learning. Lessons are delivered in a sequential order. Comprised of educational information in a variety of media (videos, images, web links, and articles), Online courses are enhanced with communication (discussion boards, face-to-face sessions, email, phone) and also include student assessments (projects, quizzes, tests). To ensure its success, students have to be self-motivated and invested in the endeavor.

#### **When am I eligible to take online courses?**

For Foundations of Technology, students are eligible to take the course after completing Grade 8.

#### **Eligibility**

The online Foundations of Technology course is for St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) students actively enrolled in grades 9-12. Students who reside in St. Mary's County, but attend non-public schools must formally enroll in SMCPS to be eligible for the program. Non-residents of St. Mary's County will not be admitted.

#### **How do I enroll in an online course?**

Students can register with a School Counselor at their home school. Questions regarding eligibility should be directed to the school counseling office. Additionally, parents and students will need to complete the SMCPS Signature Page MVLO (Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities) Online Courses form (submitted to the Director of Instructional Technology).

Full payment must be made at the time of registration. Registration will not be accepted without payment. We will accept cash or checks. A money order or certified check should be made payable to St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS). Please include the student's name and student ID on the check or money order.

#### **How to access the course**

The course platform for FOT online is Moodle. Moodle is an open-source, learning management system. Students will have access via the internet. A password will be distributed to students by the teacher at the first orientation session to access the online class. Students will also use email correspondence for the duration of the course.

### ***Tuition***

#### **What is the cost for an online course?**

Like summer courses that are offered for credit, Online FOT is offered outside of the school day and the normal school schedule; therefore, there is a cost to take the course. The tuition for the Online Foundations of Technology course is \$250 for the full credit (1.0 credit). Exceptions are made for students who meet the criteria for financial need through the State of Maryland and SMCPS.

## **What is the course refund policy?**

**Refunds must be requested in writing by the parent or guardian.** Refunds will be issued accordingly:

- A full refund with drop date prior to the first session,
- A 50% refund with drop date prior to the third week of a full semester offering, or the second week of a summer offering.

No other refunds will be considered. Refunds will be processed through SMCPS Fiscal services.

## ***General Course Info***

### **When does my class meet and when do I work in an online course?**

Class times are flexible, but students need to complete assignments approximately every day. Each course has face-to-face class meetings, which have mandatory attendance policies. All other work may be done at times convenient to the student. Students who do not attend the required face-to-face meetings will not receive credit for the course.

### **How is an online class different from one in a traditional classroom setting?**

Online courses use the same curriculum and learning outcomes as the courses taught in school buildings. They are designed to take advantage of the online format. Most classwork may be done from home. Students who are most successful with online courses have good time management skills and are self-motivated.

### **Will I get a grade and course credit?**

The same grading and credit policies apply to online courses as to traditional courses offered in classrooms. The grade will appear on the students' transcript after the course has been completed.

### **Who will be teaching the class?**

All classes are taught by highly qualified teachers who have been trained to teach in an online environment and are certified Technology Education teachers.

### **Are the scheduled face-to-face meetings mandatory?**

**Students cannot receive credit if they are unable to attend all of the face-to-face meetings.** Attendance is mandatory. If a student's schedule will not allow him/her to attend all of the face-to-face meetings, the student should not enroll in the course. The face-to-face meetings take place on the first day, at the midpoint, and on the last day of class.

### **Transportation**

Parents /Students are responsible for providing transportation to face-to-face meetings. Time and location are to be announced for each semester.

### **What happens during a face-to-face meeting?**

The exact agenda depends on the course and the meeting date, but important content is covered in each meeting.

Examples of activities in face-to-face meetings include:

- Discussing course requirements and processes
- Introducing the online environment
- Exams
- Organizing group projects
- Covering key curriculum concepts
- Creating hands-on projects

### **How much time will I need to spend on an online course?**

**Summer Courses:** As the curriculum is compacted from a year-long course to 6 weeks, students should plan to spend four to five hours per day to complete assignments. Students can access the course and work from home. Students are also welcome to use computer labs at the designated school site during available times.

**Semester Courses:** The course offered during the school year is offered on a semester basis (i.e., either August-January or January-June). The course content is equivalent to that offered during the day for the entire year. As work is independently completed, the time is fully dependent on the student to complete work assigned for the course.

### **Do I need to be online at prescribed times during a course?**

Students are not required to be online at specific times, but all deadlines are expected to be met. Students need to complete assignments approximately every day. The online work may be done at times convenient to the student.

### **Can I work ahead in a course?**

Typically, there are opportunities for a student to work ahead. If you want to complete work in advance of the class schedule, communicate with your teacher to develop a plan.

### **What if I need help with course content?**

Instructors will have "office hours" when they can be reached by phone or online. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the teacher in order to progress through a course. Procedures for communicating with the teacher will be discussed at orientation.

### **Student Conduct and Dress Code**

Students are expected to follow all SMCPs rules when attending face-to-face sessions. Please refer to the SMCPs Student Handbook online at [http://www.smcps.org/files/SS/Secondary\\_School\\_Handbook\\_Presentation\\_copy.pdf](http://www.smcps.org/files/SS/Secondary_School_Handbook_Presentation_copy.pdf)

### **Will there be a report card grade?**

Grades will be posted to student transcripts once the course is completed. Course grades during the semester will be posted online in the course module.

## ***General Hardware and Software Requirements***

### **What computer skills are required to take an online course?**

The student will need computer skills which include: navigating websites, uploading and downloading files, using word processing software, using PowerPoint software, using spreadsheet software, saving and updating files, locating files in a computer, and downloading and installing software. These skills will be reviewed with students at the initial Orientation meeting.

### **What computer hardware and software do I need to be able to take an online course?**

**Hardware:** Any MAC or PC computer running Windows XP (or higher) or MAC OS 10 (or higher) can access our online course content. Students need a reliable Internet connection, but high speed is not required. iPads and iPods are still not capable of playing Flash content so neither of these technologies can be used for the online course at this time.

**Software:** The latest version of Firefox (preferred browser) or Microsoft Internet Explorer with Flash player installed will be needed to access course content. Students need a word processing program that can open and save Microsoft Word format or Rich Text Format (RTF) files in order to open and submit assignments.