



# Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Press Release

Office of Communications

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## **Diocese of Richmond Office of Catholic Schools Launches** **Saint Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy**

(RICHMOND) – Today, the Diocese of Richmond announced open enrollment for the newly formed Saint Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy (SVVA), a full-time, online learning school for families seeking a quality Catholic school curriculum for their children at home. Classes for grades 8-12 will begin this fall.

Named for the patron saint of the diocese, Saint Vincent de Paul Academy will operate under the guidance of administration and staff from Peninsula Catholic High School (PCHS) in Newport News, but it will be managed by the Office of Catholic Schools.

“The existence of a full-time virtual school has always been a goal for us. We’ve wanted to provide another option for families in our diocese who, because of where they live, aren’t close to a traditional brick and mortar Catholic school but desire the rigorous, faith-based curriculum that incorporates Catholic principles,” said Kelly Lazzara, superintendent for the Office of Catholic Schools. “The pandemic provided an opportunity to really test the digital systems already in practice, with the current faculty at Peninsula Catholic allowing us the advantage to streamline and see what was possible and manageable.”

Since 2016, PCHS has offered digital learning days several times a year. For this school year and due to COVID-19, PCHS students had the option of learning face-to-face or virtually. In-person students are now accustomed to some of their classmates participating with them in a virtual setting. In February 2021, PCHS announced it would permanently add its own online program for high school students wishing to graduate from Peninsula Catholic. SVVA is a distinct and separate virtual school running in sync with the PCHS virtual education program.

“This is a vision for the future and an exciting time for Catholic education in the Diocese of Richmond,” observed Jenny Franklin, principal of Peninsula Catholic. “We know an all-virtual option is an interest parents are pursuing because of the flexibility it offers and the learning style that fits a student’s needs. We know there are families in our diocese who want access to the spiritual growth a Catholic education offers for their teen, and SVVA provides such an opportunity – online from anywhere. We know students of active-duty military families can now have the option to always call a school home no matter where their parent is assigned in the world, offering a consistent school environment for them.”

Since PCHS is already operating its own virtual school, there is minimal additional expense associated with opening SVVA.



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## Saint Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy (SVVA) includes:

- Choice between full-time and part-time students. Full-time students are seeking a diploma from SVVA. Part-time students are not, paying per course and complementing a homeschool learning structure as a component of a blended learning environment.
- SVVA is strictly academics. The program does not include athletics, extracurricular or social activities.
- Students attending full-time receive a diploma from SVVA.
- Individuals would still have to apply and meet eligibility requirements. Applications would be approved by the SVVA Enrollment Committee.

“While in-person teaching is at the core of our Catholic faith and Catholic education, which engages the body, mind and spirit of each student, we must adapt to the times in which we live,” explained Bishop Knestout. “We are grateful for the technology and the teachers who have adapted to it for allowing those who cannot be physically present in our classrooms to benefit as much as possible from the formation we provide.”

For additional information and to learn about the enrollment process for Saint Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy (SVVA), visit [www.PeninsulaCatholic.org](http://www.PeninsulaCatholic.org).

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**Media Note: If you would like to interview Superintendent Kelly Lazzara or Principal Jenny Franklin regarding SVVA, both are available for interviews March 11 after 2 p.m. Their contact information is:**

**Kelly Lazzara can be reached at (724) 516-7656 or email [klazzara@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:klazzara@richmonddiocese.org).**

**Jenny Franklin can be reached at (757) 596-7247 or email [jfranklin@peninsulacatholic.org](mailto:jfranklin@peninsulacatholic.org).**



## The Diocese of Richmond

*The Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond is under the leadership and pastoral care of Bishop Barry C. Knestout. With 220,000 Catholics, 149 parishes and 29 schools, the diocese is a diverse faith community that comprises the entire Commonwealth of Virginia with the exception of 21 counties to the north. The Diocese of Richmond encourages Catholics across our diocese to live an active life of faith through the many opportunities offered within our diocesan boundaries. Our local Church works to support our diverse parishes and schools and welcomes all to live and practice the Gospel with faith and charity. Want to know more about us? Visit: [www.richmonddiocese.org](http://www.richmonddiocese.org).*