



7777 Davie Road Extension | Suite 302B | Hollywood, Florida 33024
1-877-327-5707

American High School

a Virtual High School Online

2009-2010

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Table of Contents	Page Number
Letter to Parents	3
Mission Statement	4
Philosophy	4
Tips for Students	5
Tips for Parents and/or Guardians	5
High School Diploma Options	6
Individual Courses	7
Graduation Requirements	7
Graduation Ceremonies	7
Fifth Year Students	8
Grade Placement of Students	8
Transfer of Students from Non-Accredited Schools	8
Repetition of Courses	8
Promotion and Retention	8
Grading Scale	8
Attendance	8
Incomplete Grade	9
Progress Reports and Report Cards	9
Summer School	9
Honors	9
Honor Roll	9
Florida Bright Futures Scholarship	9
Student Advisory System	10
Schedule Changes	10
Textbooks	10
Class Supplies	10
Testing	10
High School Equivalency Exam	10
Independent Students	11
Good Student Verification for Insurance	11
School Announcements	11
Withdrawals	11
Transcripts	11
Discipline	11
Accessory to Serious Violation	12
Policy on Non-Discrimination	12
Internet Safety	12
Technology Requirements	13
Student Code of Conduct	13
Accountability	14
Inappropriate Behavior	14
Use of Copyrighted Materials	14
Integrity	15
Plagiarism	15
Netiquette	15
Publication of Student Information	15
Access to and Release of Records	16
Tuition Agreement	16



7777 Davie Road Extension | Suite 302B | Hollywood, Florida 33024
1-877-327-5707

Dear Parents/Guardians or Independent Students:

Thank you in advance for reading the Parent/Student Handbook. Our policies and procedures are detailed in the Handbook, and we are sure many of your questions and/or concerns are addressed here.

We want all of our students to have a successful experience at American High School. Please make sure that both you and the student have reviewed our rules of conduct and Internet safety in addition to all other information.

If you have any questions not addressed here, please feel free to contact us. Please print, sign and upload this document. Also, attach a photo ID for both the parent and the student (unless student is over the age of 18). We appreciate your understanding that the file has to be complete in order for the student to continue in our program.

If you have any questions please contact the school office, Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our office number is 877-327-5707.

Sincerely,

Admissions Office



7777 Davie Road Extension | Suite 302B | Hollywood, Florida 33024
1-877-327-5707

Mission Statement

American High School (AHS) provides a rich and varied curriculum developed for academic excellence in a framework that fosters maximum academic success. We are dedicated to providing alternative educational opportunities to help meet the needs of students with unique educational challenges and goals. We offer a traditional Middle & High School curriculum on line and through Correspondence.

Philosophy

We are a unique educational setting that provides options for individuals wanting to earn a high school diploma. Academic and vocationally oriented education programs will be provided through an individualized, student-centered approach. Programs will be sensitive to the variety of learning styles among students.

Students will learn online. The environment created for each student will be positive, caring, and adapted to individual needs. Content areas will stress academic education, career development, and personal growth.

A fundamental belief of the school is that all students are of value, and they need guidance to find and develop the positive qualities they possess. We understand that many will have histories of failure in the 'traditional' educational system. Thus, our goal is to strive to find creative approaches to their learning which will enable them to experience success and create satisfying futures.

We understand that many students may come to AHS with life circumstances, which present barriers to their success. We will strive to be non judgmental, to provide a structured environment that is not rigid, and a supportive environment that fosters success.

AHS will work with each student to assess academic, career and personal needs in order to develop a learning path that fits his or her needs.

AHS also welcomes the opportunity to work with parents or guardians. Please feel free to call or email.

Tips for Students

Welcome to a different type of high school. You will have much more freedom than you had in a traditional high school. BUT, with that freedom, comes responsibility and self-discipline. Responsibility and self-discipline are indicators of maturity, of being an adult. In order for you to be successful at AHS you will need to take responsibility for yourself, to be mature enough to study, and self-disciplined enough to “log on” everyday.

Take stock of yourself! *WHY* are you at AHS? *WHAT* do you expect to get from this school? *WHERE* do you expect to go from here? *HOW* do you expect to make the most of your opportunities here? These are your goals. Write them down, so you can check back periodically. You can monitor your path to achieving your goals.

Here are a few suggestions for helping you with the day to day routine of an online high school.

1. Keep in good physical condition, get plenty of sleep and rest and eat wholesome food, get proper amounts of exercise, and form habits of cleanliness.
2. Be sure you understand your assignments. If not, ask via email, online chat, or call the school.
3. Make a “study place” for yourself.
4. Always review the previous lesson before going on to new material.
5. Develop good attitudes toward study, an interest in your lessons and in your progress in learning, a desire to succeed, and a willingness to persevere and to assume responsibility for good work.
6. Always read explanations and directions carefully.
7. Study the whole lesson; then study the more difficult parts again, and finally, review the whole lesson.
8. Train yourself to remember or memorize. Learn to make use of notes and outlines, and how to organize facts.

Tips for Parents or Guardians

Almost every parent or guardian we know wants to cooperate with the school. Here are some ways parents can help.

1. Support the school. Maintain a positive attitude about education, the school and the teachers. If a problem occurs at school, get the FACTS. Then cooperate with the school to affect a workable solution to the problem.
2. Insist that the student do all of his/her work and that you check it daily. At minimum students should be logged into the school everyday for a period of 2-3 hours if they are going to accomplish the goals they have set to complete all coursework within a predetermined time.
3. Become acquainted with the student’s teachers and cooperate closely with them. Make a point of reviewing the student's progress report and attendance online with your parent access.

4. If all possible, provide the student with a private study, a place where he or she may study without interruption. Check on homework preparation.
5. Read the Student Handbook completely. It answers many questions and provides information that will help you understand the operation of American High School.

High School Diploma Options

AHS offers three different paths to graduation: 1) Academic/College Prep Diploma, 21-24 credits, Offered as On Line Courses Only; 2) General/Vocational High School Program, 21 credits, Offered as At Home, Self-Study Modules; and 3) A High School Equivalency Diploma, 12th Grade Competency Exam Given by CPHS and Transcript Evaluation.

1) Academic/College Prep Diploma: On line Courses

Students must meet Florida statewide standards in order to graduate with an academic diploma. At a minimum, students must complete 21-24 academic credits in grades 9-12 and maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA). If a student is planning to go to college, then the Academic Diploma/College Prep Diploma is the route the student must take.

These minimum state standards also require that the 21-24 course credits be distributed as follows:

- Four credits in English, with major concentration in composition and literature
- Three credits in mathematics, at least one of which must be in Algebra I, its equivalent, or a higher level course
- Three credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component
- One credit in American history
- One credit in world history, including a comparative study of all major political systems
- One half credit in economics
- One half credit in American government, including study of the U.S. Constitution and the structure of the state and local government
- One credit in practical arts career education or exploratory career education, or one credit in performing arts, or one half credit in practical arts / exploratory career education and one half credit in performing arts
- One half credit in life management skills
- One half credit in physical education, and
- Three - nine elective credits

Please Note: The half credit of Life Management includes a Health Education section. The State of Florida mandates that Health include material on sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and birth control. Videos are part of this course, and some of the material is graphic. If you do not want your child to have this course, it is your responsibility to let AHS know. In the absence of your contacting AHS, we will assume we have your permission to offer this course to your child. Life Management is part of the graduation requirements, and without this course, you child will not have all the required course work.

2) General/Vocational Diploma: At Home, Self-Study Modules

Our Independent Study program provides all of the coursework necessary to complete the High School Diploma program at home. The complete program is comprised of 21 credits. The program is broken down into 21 modules - 18 core credits and 3 elective credits.

The typical program is as follows

- Upon enrollment the student will be mailed the 1st three modules.
- The student will work at own pace and complete all coursework.
- Upon completion of that module the student will return it to the school for grading.
- Upon receipt of the module by AHS, the next module is mailed to the student within 24 hours
- Each module is worth 1 credit towards graduation.
- The student must complete all modules with an average of "C" or better in order to receive credit.
- The student can work as quickly or as slowly as s/he wants.
- The student will have two years to complete the equivalent of one grade level.

Upon completing all modules the student will be issued a High School Diploma.

3) High School Equivalency Diploma

Students must present previous transcripts for evaluation before they are eligible for the Equivalency Exam. The Exam is given through the AHS web site. Upon passing the exam, a student is issued the Equivalency Diploma.

Individual Courses

Please visit our web site for listings of individual course offerings and other academic programs that we offer. Our website is www.americanhighschool.net.

Graduation Requirements

It is the responsibility of all students to make sure they have completed all the requirements for graduation. The On Line Director and Advisors are available to discuss graduation requirements.

Graduation Ceremonies

Since AHS is a virtual high school, we do not offer a formal graduation ceremony. Students will be conferred a high school diploma upon successful completion of all necessary coursework. In the event we do have enough students in one geographic location, we may consider a formal graduation ceremony in the future.

Fifth Year Students

A student should complete graduation requirements in four years of high school attendance. In the event that additional time is required, the student must present a plan to the Directors that establish a completion schedule.

Grade Level Placement of Students

AHS uses the Florida educational model. Each class provides one regular academic credit. A student normally earns 6-8 credits in an academic year (excluding summer school). The total number of credits earned by a student at the beginning of the academic year determines grade level placement/classification for that year.

Transfer Students from Non-Accredited Schools

A student transferring to AHS from a non-accredited school will be enrolled provisionally and must pass all course work the first academic year at AHS to receive credit for previous work. If all grades are not satisfactory or passing, the student will have to repeat the courses for an additional fee.

Repetition of Courses

Courses that students have taken and passed cannot be taken again for credit. Students and parents who question whether credit can be received for a course should check with the advisors before taking the course in question.

Promotion and Retention

AHS assumes its responsibility to assure appropriate achievement as students progress through their school experience by establishing promotion and retention criteria based on attendance, grades, and state regulations.

Grading Scale

A - 90-100
B - 80-89
C - 70-79
D - 60-69
F - 59 & below

Attendance

We at AHS believe that it is vital that students log-in every day in order to be a productive student. Individual courses have their own attendance policies. Additionally habits developed during school years have a direct correlation to work attendance, which can affect employment in the future.

Incomplete Grades

Students have one year, 365 days to complete their course work. If the student is unable to complete requirements for a course due to hardship circumstances in that timeframe, the student will receive an incomplete grade. Courses with Incomplete Grades must be re-taken for an additional fee.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Student progress is viewable on-line in the student dashboard module. The report will have numerical grades for all courses taken. At the end of the course, the student will receive a report bearing the final grade in each course taken. The grade report will be a computer-generated sheet that will be sent to the students via email. These grade reports do not require a signature nor do they need to be returned to school.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school when questions arise about their child's progress. The final grade is the only grade that appears on the student's high school transcript and is the grade that determines whether or not the student passes the course. The transcript is the student's official record, not the grade report. There is a \$5.00 charge for a duplicate report.

Summer School

AHS offers summer classes on a tuition basis for those students who are in need of academic course work, skill training, or remedial instruction. Students are encouraged to make up graduation requirements or to keep up with their program of study by attending summer school. All tuition fees are to be paid before summer school begins.

Honors

All students are encouraged to strive for recognition of honors.

Honor Roll

A student is eligible for the honor roll with an average of 90, computed by averaging all grades received for one semester. A 90 to 100 equals 4.0.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship

In 1997, the Florida Legislature created the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. This Florida Lottery-Funded scholarship rewards students for their academic achievements during high school by providing funding for them to pursue post secondary educational and career goals in Florida.

During the 2009-10 award year, over 120,000 Florida students received funding for a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

Questions relating to student eligibility should be directed to the Bright Futures Hotline toll-free at **1-888-827-2004** or the website at www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/home/uamain.htm.

Student Advisory System

The Student Advisory System is designed to assist students and parents, in planning each student's program of study. Students are assigned to the same advisor for their entire high school program of study.

- During advisory sessions, students will discuss transcripts, course of study, and graduation requirements.
- Students and parents must assume responsibility for knowing graduation requirements and for keeping track of progress toward meeting those requirements. Even though there is an advisory process, **the final responsibility for taking the correct courses and completing graduation requirements rests with the student and the parents.**

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes are discouraged beyond the first week of a course. All cases for schedule changes will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Textbooks

In most cases, the textbooks required for the online course are online. For the General/Vocational program (self-study modules), the textbooks are consumable and disposable. Students will write directly in the textbooks and submit assignments for grading upon completion of the course.

Class Supplies

Students are required to have the necessary materials as prescribed by an individual teacher. Students may be required to purchase additional supplies/materials, and in that case, the student will incur those charges as an additional expense.

Testing

College Bound Students (Academic Diploma) in Junior and/or Senior year

ACT

PSAT

SAT

Registration for these tests is available through the AHS website. More details are available through advisors.

High School Equivalency Exam

Registration is available through AHS website. This test can be taken any time.

Independent Students

Students under 18 must have a parent or guardian be responsible for them; or else, students of legal age, 18 or older, are responsible for themselves.

Good Student Verification for Insurance

A \$5.00 administrative fee will be charged for researching and completing good student verification forms for submission to insurance companies. Requests should be faxed to the receptionist. Forms will be mailed to the student's address of record within 72 hours of the request

School Announcements

Announcements are important. School news will always be available upon logging-in to the student section of the AHS Website. It is the students' responsibility to stay current and review all announcements. Check the announcement section each time you log in.

Withdrawals/ Drop outs

A student who withdraws from school for any cause must contact the registrar's office to obtain a withdrawal form which must be properly filled out and returned. In addition, students who are withdrawing or dropping out must fill out an exit survey, which is required of all students.

Students who withdraw or drop out of school must pay all school debts. Students who do not clear all debts will not be allowed to reenter school until this is corrected. Please see entire refund/withdrawal policy below.

Transcripts

A student may obtain a transcript of his/her work from the Office of the Registrar by requesting a photocopy of his/her record. Students who owe money and/or materials will be denied a copy of their transcript until payment is made/materials are returned. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for each transcript if the transcript is to be sent to an entity other than a public high school.

Discipline

Teaching and learning occur most efficiently in a climate of order. Courteous, considerate behavior is required of all students at all times for all students attending AHS. The administration and teaching staff at American High School will use the necessary means to insure that an environment conducive to learning and safety is maintained. Disciplinary action will be taken against those who disrupt this environment or break school rules. Possible action includes restrictions to access of the online school, long-term suspension, and/or expulsion from AHS.

Accessory to Serious Violations

A student who is an accessory to a serious offense is guilty of misconduct and can be punished just as if he had committed the offense. This means that a student is not to do anything that might cause, encourage, or assist a serious violation to take place.

Policy on Non-discrimination

AHS does not discriminate on the basis of color, marital status, sex, age, race, creed, handicap, religion, native language, or national origin in its educational programs and activities and the employment and admission practices under which it operates and will honor all appropriate laws relating to discrimination.

Directory Information

AHS designates certain information from student education records as "directory information," as is specified in this paragraph. A parent/guardian or eligible student may request that such information not be designated as directory information in nature. In the absence of this request, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request.

Directory information is as follows: 1) Each student's name, address, and telephone number; 2) the date and place of birth for each student; and 3) awards received during the time enrolled in AHS.

AHS Internet Safety/Computer Acceptable Use Rules

1. The computer network in AHS is provided to students and staff for educational and research purposes only.
2. AHS is NOT responsible for any delays, non- or mis-delivery of e-mail, or any loss of data as a result of using the Internet.
3. The use of the Internet is a privilege. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with the use of computer systems will have his/her computer access severely limited.
4. The Internet is unregulated and all of the information found on the Internet has not been verified for accuracy. Each user must exercise critical thinking skills when using Internet resources as source material for schoolwork. AHS will NOT be held responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained from the Internet.
5. Each user is expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include being polite, using appropriate language (no profanity, threatening, or abusive language) and not disrupting network use by other users.
6. Students should not reveal any personal information (description, telephone numbers, address, etc.) about themselves or other students over the Internet. They should not contact anyone they have met using Internet resources without the knowledge and permission of their parents.
7. Students should not access sites or send material over the network that contains obscene, abusive, threatening, or illegal material. Users should not deliberately use the computer to annoy or harass others with language, images or threats.

8. AHS will authorize all web pages that represent the school. Students may design and publish web pages through the school network as part of classroom instructional activities. These pages may be published through the school Intranet or on password-protected pages on the Internet.
9. If the student identifies or perceives a security problem (for example, accessing files that should not be available), the student should immediately notify AHS. The student must NOT demonstrate the problem to other students.
10. All computer users in the AHS System must adhere to the copyright law regarding copying and installing computer programs. The law states that it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted software without authorization.

Technology Requirements

Is technical support available?

If an online student encounters any technical problems with the course, tech support is available Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST.

Can a student work on a course from home?

Yes, if the student has access to the appropriate computer and Internet services (see technology requirements), the student can work at any computer, anywhere, any time.

Technical Requirements	
Macintosh	Windows
System 8.5 or higher	Pentium or other recent processor
64 Mb RAM	
Color Monitor (16 bit, 800x600 resolution)	
8x or faster CD-ROM	
Keyboard and Mouse	
Internet Access 56k modem minimum cable modem or DSL suggested	
Hard drive with at least 40 Mb available	
Microsoft Internet Explorer 5 with plug-ins	
Sound card and speakers	

Student Code of Conduct

Access to the technology utilized by the AHS online courses imposes certain responsibilities and obligations. Appropriate use is ethical and honest, and demonstrates respect for physical and intellectual property, system security protocols, and individuals' rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.

The following procedure will be followed for students who do not or cannot abide by the guidelines listed in this document.

First Offense: The student will be given an email warning and told that his/her parents and supervisor will be notified of the infraction.

Second Offense: The student will be removed from the course with no credit awarded! Also, access to all on-line courses offered through AHS will be revoked.

Severe Misconduct: Regardless of whether the offense is a first or second offense, the student will be removed from the course with no credit awarded! Also, access to all on-line courses offered through AHS will be revoked.

As a student enrolled in AHS, you should be aware of the following guidelines and expectations:

Accountability

Posting anonymous messages is not permitted unless authorized by the course's online teacher. Impersonating another person is also strictly prohibited.

- Use only your own user name and password, and do not divulge these to anyone.
- Do not aid anyone in gaining unauthorized access to password-protected courses.
- Do not publicly post your personal contact information (address or phone number) or anyone else's.
- Do not publicly post any messages that were sent to you privately.

Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior includes:

- Insults or attacks of any kind against another person.
- Use of obscene, degrading, or profane language.
- Harassment (continuously posting unwelcome messages to another person) or use of threats.

Use of Copyrighted Material

All materials in the courses are copyrighted and provided for use exclusively by enrolled students. Enrolled students may print or photocopy material from the website for their own use while studying. However, copying or reprinting these materials for use by or distribution to others is prohibited unless expressly noted. Unauthorized copying or distribution may result in revoked access to course(s).

Integrity

All work submitted is assumed to have been completed without direct help. Students are responsible for observing the standards on plagiarism and properly crediting all sources relied on in the composition of their work. Failure to abide by these standards will be reported to the appropriate administrative authorities and may result in loss of credit and revoked access to course(s).

Plagiarism

The definition of plagiarism is: Copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another writer and passing them off as your own original work. Specific examples of plagiarism that will not be tolerated are:

- Copying or rephrasing another student's work.
- Having someone else write an assignment or rephrase any part of an assignment (not just proofread it).
- Directly copying student aids (for example, Cliff Notes), critical sources, or reference materials in part or in whole without acknowledgment.
- Indirect reproduction of students aids, such as Cliff Notes, Cole Notes, critical sources, or reference materials by rephrasing ideas borrowed from them without acknowledgment.

Netiquette

The word "netiquette" refers to common-sense guidelines for conversing with others online. Please abide by these standards:

- Avoid sarcasm, jargon, and slang. Swear words are unacceptable.
- Never use derogatory comments, including those regarding race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, political persuasion, body type, physical or mental health, or access issues.
- Focus your responses on the questions or issues being discussed, not on the individuals involved.
- Be constructive with your criticism, not hurtful.
- Review your messages before sending them. Remove easily misinterpreted language and proofread for typos.
- Respect other people's privacy. Don't broadcast online discussions, and never reveal other people's email addresses.

Publication of Student Information

AHS will publish on its website a student's first name and a picture, so classmates and teacher(s) can get to know each other. In addition, teachers can at their discretion publish outstanding student work on AHS website.

If a parent/guardian or independent student does not want his/her child's picture or outstanding work published, AHS must be notified. In the absence of notification, AHS will assume publication on the website is acceptable.

Tuition Agreement (Cancellation and Refund Policy)

The following is our cancellation and refund policy. You may request cancellation in writing at any time. Your signature on the 3rd page of this handbook indicates you have read and understood the terms of this Agreement, and your obligations to satisfy the terms of this Agreement.

1. If you cancel within 3 business days of the day you signed the Agreement, you will receive a refund of all money you have paid to the school, less the non-refundable \$150.00 registration fee. There are no refunds on promotional or discounted full year tuition enrollments.
2. If you cancel up to 5 business days after enrollment and before any online exam or coursework has been taken or reviewed, you will owe an administrative fee of 33.3% of the tuition, excluding any non-refundable registration fees. You will receive all money you have paid in excess of the administrative fee and the non-refundable registration fee within 45 days.
3. There are absolutely no refunds after 5 business days.
4. Payment plans: If you have signed up for a payment plan and you fail to make any payment within 5 business days of due date, or request frequent due date payment changes, the school may cancel this Agreement. Your entire tuition obligation may become due and payable immediately.
5. You will be charged a late fee of \$25.00 for each monthly payment which is not paid within 5 days of its due date. The credit card on file will be debited \$25.00 late charge fee plus the monthly agreed upon amount. Any payments submitted, due or debited under this Agreement e.g. credit card, check, draft, or money order which is dishonored, you will be charged a fee of \$45.00 plus the agreed upon monthly amount. Access to coursework will be denied until account is in good standing.

Access to and Release of Records

Except for directory information, AHS shall not permit access to or release of educational records or personally identifiable information to parties without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student except under the following circumstances:

Disclosures will be made to school administrators, teachers, or other professionals employed or associated with AHS who have some role in evaluating or educating the student;



7777 Davie Road Extension | Suite 302B | Hollywood, Florida 33024
1-877-327-5707

Records will be released to the school where the student has enrolled upon request from that school; disclosures will be made to federal or state officials in connection with the audit of educational programs. A student account must be in good-standing before any records will be released to schools, parents, or students. If the student account has an outstanding balance, then no records will be released until the account is restored to good-standing. An account is restored to good-standing when all outstanding balances are paid in full.