# MNOHS Handbook 2019-2020

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Welcome (back) to MNOHS!

Whatever your reason for choosing MNOHS, our teachers and staff are excited about getting to know you! We each bring different expertise and skills, but we all have this in common: We’re committed to helping you to create an academically and socially rich online high school experience.

Connect with us here: [Facebook] [Twitter]

MNOHS Mission and Vision

The mission of Minnesota Online High School is to engage, inspire, and educate the whole student for an options-rich future through a challenging, flexible, teacher-developed curriculum; with the encouragement of responsive faculty and staff; within a creative and supportive learning community.

Vision: At Minnesota Online High School (MNOHS), all students define their unique identities and entry points into adult life; their reasons to persist and to stretch toward excellence; and their individual and collective purposes that make school, work and life meaningful. MNOHS supports students to engage with learning not only online but everywhere adults will support their achievements.

Are we living up to our mission and vision? Please share your ideas about how we could do better with MNOHS Executive Director Elissa Raffa: e.raffa@mail.mnohs.org

Parents/guardians, join with other MNOHS families, alumni and friends in building our school’s supportive statewide (and worldwide) community! Share your talents with MNOHS to help us sustain creative, connected online learning. Use this survey to volunteer your time (online or in person) or to donate goods or services to our school auction. MNOHS is a 501 c(3) tax-exempt organization: surveymonkey.com/s/share_your_talents_with_MNOHS
About this Handbook

This handbook is your guide to MNOHS. Inside you’ll find important information about what you can expect from MNOHS, and what MNOHS will expect from you. The handbook also contains general instructions for finding your online courses, turning in assignments, and communicating with your teachers and other students—and it contains special sections for parents/guardians or other adults who support your success.

For a productive and successful online learning experience, please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Returning students, read for parts you may have missed, or look for the sections marked New!

Sections of this handbook may apply to some students more than others, based on type of enrollment. Before reading more, please which type of enrollment you have chosen:

- **Comprehensive students** are sometimes called “MNOHS-only.” You have chosen MNOHS as your “enrolling school” (district) and will earn your Minnesota high school diploma from MNOHS. You may be taking PSEO full-time, or you may even take a course or two at your local high school—but MNOHS is your high school and your district.

- You are a **supplemental student** if you are enrolled at another high school while taking some (usually up to half) of your courses at MNOHS. The credits you earn at MNOHS apply toward the graduation requirements at your enrolling school. **Important!** Minnesota does not fund most students to be more than full-time. For each supplemental online course you take, your district may require you to drop a course. A district can waive this limitation and allow you to take a supplemental course in addition to a full-time load. You need a signature from your counselor or principal for this.

- **Tuition students** pay for MNOHS courses and services because you attend a private school, are home schooled, live outside Minnesota, or want to take more than a full-time course load without district support during the regular school year.

Parent/guardian role

This handbook identifies different areas where parents/guardians play a vital role in student success. You can easily identify these sections by the gray box like this one. Within these areas we offer some practical suggestions for partnering with the MNOHS faculty/staff and with your student to help foster academic, personal, and social success.

Students are encouraged to read these sections too! If you are a student over 18, you may act as your own guardian at MNOHS.
Your school counselor coordinates support for all MNOHS students. If you have any questions about the contents of this Handbook, or about how MNOHS works, please contact your counselor. Don’t be shy – they’re here to help you get the most out of MNOHS!

- **Comprehensive** (MNOHS-only) students with last names A-L
  Sarah Benson
  s.benson@mail.mnohs.org • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x105

- **Comprehensive** (MNOHS-only) students with last names M-Z
  All supplemental students (also enrolled at another school)
  Jen Millard
  j.millard@mail.mnohs.org • 1-800-764-8166 x110

To make sure you are ready to succeed at MNOHS, take note of these eight “big ideas.” At the end of your reading, summarize each big idea with a friend or family member:

_____ 1. What you as a student are expected to do each school day
_____ 2. The MNOHS “course weeks” calendar and pace chart
_____ 3. What self-advocacy is and why it is important
_____ 4. Important habits to save time and effort
_____ 5. The MNOHS Add/Change and Drop dates
_____ 6. The MNOHS Attendance Policy and what “continuous progress” means
_____ 7. The MNOHS Academic Honesty Policy
_____ 8. Requirements for comprehensive (MNOHS only) students

**Handbook updates**

From time to time we will make corrections or updates to this handbook. When important changes are made, you will receive an email notification to check the Policies and Handbook section of the MNOHS web site – [https://mnohs.org/policies-and-handbooks](https://mnohs.org/policies-and-handbooks).

For comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PEO) students, changes to this handbook and any MNOHS policies will also be reviewed in your Ramp-Up advisory meeting.
Self-advocacy and communication at MNOHS

At MNOHS, students, parents/guardians, teachers and staff are a team, all focused on student success. At MNOHS, we encourage you, the student, to practice self-advocacy—that is, to ask directly for what you need when you need it. You can expect timely responses (within 24 hours, excluding weekends) from all teachers and staff.

Please don’t hesitate to call, text, message or e-mail teachers and counselors to share your questions, concerns, accomplishments, or ideas about improving MNOHS.

- Your teacher can most quickly resolve your concern about a specific course—for example a broken link or assignment instructions that need clarification.

- Your counselor is the best person to contact for issues such as class schedules, progress toward graduation, and post-secondary planning.

- For more options please see the Who to Contact page below.

Email and phone are our primary means of communication at MNOHS. Every student is given and expected to use a MNOHS Office 365 email account.

Also, many teachers use text messages to connect with individual students and to send class announcements.

To get the most out of MNOHS:

- Share your mobile number, if you have one, with your counselor and teachers
- Check your MNOHS email daily

New! In Spring 2019 we added Skype for Business (SfB), an internal instant messaging system, which is accessible through Office 365. When you are logged into SfB you can see who else from MNOHS is logged in and available and start a private chat. Follow this link for instructions: https://mnohs.org/images/students/MNOHS_Skype_for_Business_Guidelines_for_Students.pdf

Email and phone contact information for teachers can be found under the Contact Your Teacher link in each individual course, and at http://mnohs.org/school-information/faculty-and-staff
Parent/guardian communication at MNOHS

To best support your student’s success as an online learner:

• Make sure you have an email account separate from your student. Many free options exist, including outlook and gmail. Contact MNOHS tech support if you need help.

• Check your own email daily for all-school announcements and updates on individual student progress or attendance concerns.

• Log in regularly to your Blackboard observer account to check your students’ progress in courses and let us know if you have questions. Look in the Student Activities course for a special link to Parent/Guardian Resources.

We welcome your contact with faculty and staff, and we encourage you to support your student in practicing self-advocacy. Often the easiest way to resolve a question or concern about a specific class is for the student to communicate directly with their teacher. As mentioned above, you can expect timely responses (within 24 hours, except weekends) from all faculty and staff. Please follow up with your counselor, a success manager or the executive director if you need more help.

Also, look for emails from MNOHS Family Coordinator Matt Hawk. Please don’t hesitate to contact Matt with concerns or suggestions about improving the parent/guardian experience at MNOHS: 1-800-764-8166 x122 or m.hawk@mail.mnohs.org

Who to Contact starts on the next page.
Who to Contact

I have a question about my **schedule** or **graduation plan**—or I need general support:

- Comprehensive (MNOHS-only) students with last names A-L:
  - Sarah Benson, School Counselor  
    s.benson@mail.mnohs.org • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x105  
  - Kim Breeden, Success Manager  
    k.breeden@mail.mnohs.org • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x119

- Comprehensive (MNOHS-only) students with last names M-Z, and all supplemental students:
  - Jen Millard, School Counselor  
    j.millard@mail.mnohs.org • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x110  
  - Vanessa Petek, Success Manager  
    v.petek@mail.mnohs.org • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x136

I need **social/emotional support** and/or help connecting with **resources in my community**:

- Contact Amanda Seelen, School Social Worker • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x136  
- Email: a.seelen@mail.mnohs.org  

I have a question about an **assignment**, a **broken link**, my **online textbook** or **class progress**:

- Contact your teacher immediately. Phone numbers, email and Collaborate office hours are found under the “Contact your teacher” main link in each course and at [http://mnohs.org/school-information/faculty-and-staff](http://mnohs.org/school-information/faculty-and-staff)

I can’t remember my **password**, or **access** my textbooks, Blackboard or other systems:

- Send an email to password@mnohs.org. Please include a phone number and the hours that we can contact you.  
- Call Sarah Bayrd, Enrollment Manager • phone: 1-800-764-8166 x137

I need **technical help**:

- Submit a tech ticket at [www.mnohs.org/tech-support](http://www.mnohs.org/tech-support)  
- Mike Tempel or someone else from MNOHS Tech Support will contact you.

I am having trouble **getting online**: Contact your internet service provider. Also call your counselor to let them know your issues and to brainstorm about solutions.

I have a **friend or family member** who is interested in attending MNOHS:

- Call Ashley Voss, Office Manager • phone: 1-800-764-8166 X101  
- Email info@mnohs.org
Getting started: Your first quarter and the start of every quarter at MNOHS

This handbook section describes what you need to do to get started at MNOHS—when you first enroll, and every quarter. In some cases, it may depend on the type of enrollment you have chosen—comprehensive, supplemental or tuition. You can review these on page 3.

In some cases, what you need to do to start the school year or the quarter will depend on whether you are a new or returning student. Here’s a quick summary, followed by detailed descriptions of how and why to do these things:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All new students</td>
<td>MNOHS Technology Orientation</td>
<td>One time: Before your first quarter at MNOHS</td>
<td>This will appear as one of your courses in Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>Workshop and Orientation Days</td>
<td>Quarterly: These are the first two days of each quarter.</td>
<td>In the Student Activities course in Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students—optional but highly recommended!</td>
<td>Quarterly Kick-Off</td>
<td>Quarterly: On the second day of each quarter, at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>In the Academic Success Center (ASC) Collaborate room—look for the link in Blackboard &gt; Student Activities course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PSEO) students</td>
<td>Performance Series reading and math tests</td>
<td>Twice per year: In the fall (or when you first enroll) and in the spring</td>
<td>You can take these at home and will receive email instructions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Blackboard learning management system, also called Blackboard or Bb, is where you’ll come to school each day. It’s where you access all course activities.

- **Technology Orientation**: All new MNOHS students are expected to complete the MNOHS Technology Orientation before the start of your first quarter at MNOHS. Technology Orientation is listed as a separate course in Blackboard.

  It’s possible to complete the Technology Orientation in two hours, although it may take longer if you need to troubleshoot any technical issues. In Tech Orientation, you will:
  - get set up in the student virtual desktop,
  - practice using features of the Blackboard learning management system, and
  - become familiar with other Internet communication tools and software crucial to your success at MNOHS.

  When you complete Technology Orientation, it will be removed from your Blackboard Course list. If you have completed it but need instructions for (re)connecting to the student desktop or Skype for Business, see Blackboard > Student Activities > Tech Support.
• **Workshop and Orientation Days:** *All MNOHS students—new and returning*—are expected to participate in Workshop and Orientation Days, which are the first two days of each quarter. Workshop and Orientation Days are found in the Student Activities course in Blackboard. Each quarter we introduce new topics, tools, techniques, and discussions to help you have fun and stay on track as online learners.

When you successfully complete an Academic Enrichment Workshop, you will earn a digital badge. Comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PSEO) students can collect four workshop badges plus one for Tech Orientation to earn 0.125 elective credit. Also, some courses require you to complete a workshop, so it always pays to work ahead.

• **Quarterly Kick-Off:** *All MNOHS students—new and returning*—are invited to the real-time quarterly kick-off webinar, held in the Academic Success Center (ASC) Collaborate room, at 11:00 a.m. on the second day of every quarter. This is a great way to connect with our MNOHS community! The ASC Collaborate room link can be found in Blackboard > Student Activities. (Note: We do not have a Kick-Off in Summer Session.)

• **Performance Series Assessments (PS):** *Comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PSEO) students* are required to take these standardized, web-based tests of reading and math. Students will take the test in the fall (or at time of enrollment) and again in the spring. The test is taken from your home computer, but we ask that a parent/guardian be present during the test.

**Why should you take these tests?** Here are two good reasons:

1. Counselors and teachers use the test results to make sure MNOHS is meeting your needs. The test results give you and us information on your skills, progress, and what you need to learn next.

2. MNOHS uses the data to know how well we are serving students – which we are required to report to the State of Minnesota and to our charter school authorizer. **If you like having a choice about where to come to school, take the tests and do your best!**

**Test taking tips**

- Complete the tests on a day and time that is free of other stresses and commitments.
- Get a good night’s rest and eat healthy, beginning the day before the test.
- The test is not timed; read the question carefully and take time to think it through before selecting an answer.
- Revisit the score from the last time you took the test. Do your best on the test to beat that score.
13 Tips for succeeding at MNOHS

MNOHS faculty and students report that a consistent effort is the most important factor in a student's achievement. Putting forth this effort is your best guarantee that you will enjoy your classes, stay on track for graduation, and be ready for your post-secondary plan! Here are some important tips that will help you to succeed at MNOHS:

1. **Make sure you have the technology you need**, including a laptop or desktop computer with Firefox installed and a highspeed Internet connection. Please note that Chromebooks, iPads or other tablets are not enough—and you definitely can’t do MNOHS on a phone!

2. **Complete the MNOHS Technology Orientation** as soon as you are given access.

3. **Make a schedule and stick to it.** Be sure to look in each of your courses in Blackboard for the weekly overview, a checklist of learning activities and assignments. Plan on at least one hour per course per day or 5-8 hours per course per week. Do the important things first, including the things that are harder for you.

4. **Submit assignments and look for feedback!** Progress in your courses depends on you submitting work, and in some cases responding to your teachers’ feedback. As explained in the video linked to below, this is how MNOHS counts attendance. Make sure to learn your way around the My Progress / My Grades page in Blackboard, so you can easily find your teachers’ responses to your work. [https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5b842d77f3afdf](https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5b842d77f3afdf)

5. **Remind yourself that effort counts.** Make a consistent effort and watch yourself grow! Notice the difference that hard work (practice) makes in the lives of people you admire—family, friends, artists, and athletes.

6. **Ask family, friends and MNOHS adults for support.** Sometimes, when we struggle to remember that effort counts, we need other people to cheer us on. Consider telling someone you trust “I need help feeling better about the work I’m doing,” or “I need help remembering that I really am making progress.” Your MNOHS counselor, and teachers are happy to support you in this as well.

7. **Reward yourself with small breaks throughout the day.** Online learning allows us to take breaks when we need them. However, it’s important to put serious distractions on the shelf and well out of reach until the end of the day. Family and friends can help you with this too.

8. **Pay attention to wellness.** Take care of yourself when working many hours on a computer. The best rewards you can give yourself are short breaks for exercise or connecting with someone you love, healthy snacks, and plenty of water!
9. Ask for help or clarification when you need it. You don’t have to do this alone. Email, text or call your teachers. You can also write notes to them on your assignments, such as: "I’m not sure I get #4", or "Am I supposed to ______ here?"

10. Report problems and move on while you are waiting for a resolution. Links can and do break. If something isn’t working as we have described it please check with your teacher or submit a tech ticket and then keep moving.

11. Print out instructions and weekly overviews / checklists. It’s nice to be paper-free, but a little bit of paper can help you to keep organized and make better use of your time online.

12. Make connections at and through MNOHS. MNOHS offers many casual and formal opportunities to connect with other students and to get involved in making MNOHS a great school. Some of these include the Student Leadership Council, the New! Peer Leaders Program, Mouse Squad, TAG Team, All Booked Up Book Club, the Student Leadership course and the Academic Support Center. You can find out more about these below. Also talk to your counselor and teachers about Guided Study opportunities in the subjects that you love best.

13. Celebrate your accomplishments. The self-management skills you are developing as an online learner will serve you in college and in your future careers.

Quick tips and resources for parents/guardians to support success

- Make sure your student has the technology, space and time they need to focus on MNOHS. Click for the MNOHS technology requirements: https://mnohs.org/computer-requirements
- Make sure you understand the MNOHS attendance requirements.
- Log in to your Blackboard observer account to check your student’s progress in their courses. Help them to interpret their My Progress page and to find teachers’ feedback. Look in the Student Activities course for a special link to Parent/Guardian Resources. Click for a helpful video, https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5d662e2c91797, and see the MNOHS Technology section below.
- Ask your student to give you a tour of their courses and learning activities in Blackboard.
- Ask them regularly to discuss what they are learning at MNOHS.
- Encourage them to develop time management and self-management skills.
- Encourage them to write, text, message or call teachers, counselors and advisors to get the information they need.
- Access MNOHS Tech Support when dealing with tech issues. Parents/guardians and students can consult the FAQs or tech Knowledge Base and submit tech tickets.
- Attend MNOHS parent/guardian events to learn more about your school.
What to do every day at MNOHS

Flexibility is one of the greatest benefits of attending MNOHS; you can create your own daily or weekly schedule based on your other commitments. However, flexibility can also present one of the biggest challenges for MNOHS students. You’ll want to do these things each day to be successful.

1. **Organize your time:** You are expected to spend 60-90 minutes per day (M-F) or 5-8 hours per week per course on your assignments. Yes, you can work on the weekend, or early in the morning or late at night—but is it a realistic plan? **What time have you set aside for MNOHS today?** Use a daily planner or scheduling tool, make a plan and stick to it!

2. **Submit assignments in Blackboard!** You are only counted as attending MNOHS if you submit work regularly to demonstrate that you are learning.

3. **Check your e-mail** at Office 365, [http://mnohs.org/mail](http://mnohs.org/mail)

4. **Log in to Blackboard,** [https://mnohs.blackboard.com/webapps/login/](https://mnohs.blackboard.com/webapps/login/)
   - Go to My Courses > Student Activities to:
     - Check for general school announcements
     - Follow up on discussions or projects you may be working on with classmates
   - Log into each of your academic courses. In each separate course, be sure to check:
     - Course announcements (the first page)
     - The weekly folder (click on Part 1: Weeks 1-8 or Part 2: Weeks 9-16 > the folder for the week you are working on)
     - My Progress link on the left side—where you can find feedback on assignments already submitted and graded, and your current course grade (percent)
     - Discussions, Journals, Blogs, or Wikis—depending on the course, there may be ongoing discussions

5. **Stay on Pace** – The MNOHS Pace Chart can help you stay on pace. It indicates when MNOHS course week begins and ends.
   - Each MNOHS course week includes 5 weekdays plus a weekend.
   - Each weekly folder has assignments for one week’s worth of school work.
   - To stay on pace, complete and submit the assignments in each weekly folder during that week, and look for feedback from your teacher.
   - Pace charts are in the “Getting Started” folder of each course. They are also here: [http://www.mnohs.org/images/files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf](http://www.mnohs.org/images/files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf)
A note about academic support

Online learning is not independent study. We are here to help you learn!

If you are confused or struggling for any reason in any course, here’s what to do:

• **Consider that it may not be you!** Online teaching and learning involve a lot of writing, and we all make mistakes. Maybe your teacher can correct or clarify something that will save you time and trouble.

• Contact your teacher by email, phone, text or Skype for Business. Click on the Contact Your Teacher link in the course for contact information.

• Meet with your teacher in their online Collaborate (webinar) room. Drop in during the posted office hours or schedule an alternate appointment time.

• Drop in to the Academic Success Center (ASC Collaborate room) at scheduled times when a MNOHS teacher is there to help you. The ASC schedule and Collaborate room link are in Blackboard > Student Activities.

If you are struggling in more than one course, or with organizing your time, ask your MNOHS counselor or success manager to help you make a plan.

Parents/Guardians Supporting Students

When teachers and parents/guardians work together to help students take responsibility for learning, students reap the rewards in learning growth, enjoyment, and progress toward graduation. Students also develop self-confidence and self-discipline that will help them long beyond high school. On page 8 of this handbook, we briefly suggested some ways to support your student’s success at MNOHS. Here are some more detailed suggestions:

• Attend start-of-quarter **online parent/guardian meetings**. These are held in an online webinar room and are led by the MNOHS Family Coordinator. Watch your email for an invitation.

• Regularly check your own email. Weekly emails from our Success and Intervention Team will alert you to academic or attendance concerns. Individual teachers and counselors also use email as their primary communication tool.

• Watch for the MNOHS parent/guardian email **newsletter**. It is sent monthly and contains important resources and announcements.
• Log in to your Blackboard **observer account**, using the credentials we have sent you, to:
  • Observe your student’s progress in each course. This video will show you how: [https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5d662e2c91797](https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5d662e2c91797)
  • Visit the Parent/Guardian Resources folder in the Student Activities course. This folder includes ideas about how to help your student develop time management skills.

• Periodically review the **MNOHS calendar** and pace charts (links below) with your student and note days and times when other life-commitments might disrupt a regular schedule. Devise work-around plans that allow your student to still devote **at least five hours per week** to each MNOHS course they are enrolled in. Also note **non-instructional days** (teacher grading days and school breaks), which are great for taking care of personal business including medical appointments. 
  [www.mnohs.org/calendar](http://www.mnohs.org/calendar)
  [www.mnohs.org/images/Files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf](http://www.mnohs.org/images/Files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf)

• Set aside time, at first every day and then weekly, to:
  • Review computer organization skills. At a minimum, students should create one Desktop or Documents folder for each course they are taking. They should also keep backup copies of work submitted.
  • Review and discuss your student’s attendance (work submitted), progress, and grades in each course
  • Review what they are learning, what’s going well, and what could go better.

• Encourage students to challenge themselves—for example, by choosing the honors option embedded in most MNOHS course. This will enrich their learning experience and enhance their post-secondary applications. Honors work at MNOHS is not always harder; it is sometimes deeper than the standard course can allow in eight or sixteen weeks. For more information see the Academics section of this handbook.
Blackboard course features

Each of your courses in Blackboard will contain these common features:

- **Announcements**: Course announcements are posted on the front page of each course. Be sure to keep an eye on them for important updates and class notices.

- **Assignments**: The assignment feature is most often used for longer writing assignments—or for attaching files made in applications such as Excel or The Geometer’s Sketchpad. Students can respond in the text box provided on the assignment form or by attaching completed essays, lab reports, etc. for submission.

- **Journals** are for private student-to-teacher communication. Anything that you want to keep confidential should be posted in a Journal (if your teacher uses them) or emailed.

- **Discussions, Blogs, and Wikis**: Discussions, Blogs and Wikis are for group interactions. Most will be assigned as part of your course work, but some are for informal conversation.

  In some MNOHS courses, student community is an important part of the learning process. Here are a few general tips for dealing with blog, discussion or wiki assignments:

  - Make sure to follow your teacher’s instructions on each assignment—especially on how to respond to other students. Usually, your teacher will be looking for, and your classmates will appreciate, *substantive comments*—that is, comments that go beyond “Good job!” or “I agree” and add something new (and something you) to the conversation.

  - Use the Quote button when replying to someone else’s Discussion posting. This allows you to see the message you are responding to as you compose your reply. You can delete the quoted text before submitting, so that your message is uncluttered.

  - Use the Comment button when replying to someone else’s Blog posting.

  - In Wikis, anyone can comment, and anyone can edit. This takes some practice, so ask your teacher if you have questions.

- **My Progress**: The My Progress link is in the left menu of each course. Click on this link to open a chronological list of all graded learning activities in the course. Check this often to see your grades on completed course work and to read comments and suggestions from your teacher.
Staying connected and getting the attention you deserve

At MNOHS, we don’t run into each other in the halls, so we must all make an extra effort to stay connected. Here’s how:

- **Phone, text or IM:** Each teacher’s telephone number is listed on the course syllabus and under the Contact your Teacher link in each course. Leave a voice message or send a text as needed. No question about a particular course is too large or too small for the course teacher—so please don’t be shy about calling! Also remember that you can instant message any teacher who appears as green in Skype for Business.

  About once each month, in each course, your teacher will contact you by telephone to talk about assignments and questions you might have, and to review your progress. These conversations are expected to be supportive, to help you build connections with your teachers.

- **Feedback from teachers:** MNOHS teachers are expected to grade and give feedback on your daily work within 1-2 days on regular school days (Monday – Friday). They may need more time to write a thoughtful response to longer or more complicated assignments—in some cases you may need to wait a few days for feedback.

  Feedback is a conversation between you and your teacher. Even if you receive the full points on an assignment, it is important to read your teacher’s feedback. It may help to clarify your ideas, provide detailed praise, or point to what’s next. If you don’t receive full points, your teacher’s feedback is an opportunity to understand why before moving on. In some cases, you will be invited to revise and resubmit your work.

  Feedback can be found in each Blackboard course under the My Progress main link. Some teachers also use the course Journals to give feedback because it’s a convenient way to keep track of an ongoing conversation.

- **Office hours:** All MNOHS teachers are expected to post weekly online office hours when they can be found in Collaborate, in Skype for Business, and/or by phone—or to make an appointment if you need an alternate time. This is a valuable resource, even for very strong students! You don’t need to learn a complex skill like balancing chemical equations by reading or watching videos on your own—*sometimes five minutes of back-and-forth real-time conversation with your teacher will save you an hour or more of work.*

- **Weekly class meetings:** Building on the success of online office hours, some MNOHS teachers hold weekly class meetings—a time to gather in Collaborate to discuss the important ideas from the week that will help you to complete your assignments. Some
class meetings are optional, and some are required (with a make-up option if your schedule doesn’t allow you to attend).

- **Email:** As mentioned above, email is the main form of communication at MNOHS and should be done through your Office 365 @mail.mnohs.org account. All email from your teachers, MNOHS staff, and other students will go to this account. Remember to login to your MNOHS email every day to make sure you know what’s happening. **Be sure to check your Junk and Clutter folders** for important messages and announcements that you may have overlooked!

  Also, be sure to send an email if it’s too late to contact your teacher by phone or SfB, if you can’t find them, or if your question is somewhat complicated.

- **Academic Success Center (ASC):** The Academic Success Center is a Collaborate room where students can drop in during specific daytime hours, Monday through Friday, to get help from a MNOHS teacher. Students can also use the ASC to meet up with other MNOHS students—to work on school projects or just hang out.

  A core group of teachers takes turns staffing the ASC. Teachers can give help with specific subjects, or can help students to solve problems with course navigation, assignment instructions, understanding feedback from teachers, tech issues, interpreting course grades, and more. ASC teachers can also help students connect with additional resources such as school counselors, success managers, the school social worker, or tech support.

  Go to Student Activities> ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER – “ASC your questions here!” (left menu) for the ASC weekly schedule and the online Collaborate room link.

- **Ramp-Up to Readiness Advisory Courses** (for MNOHS-only and PSEO students): Comprehensive students are required to take the Ramp-Up to Readiness Advisory course each quarter, or an approved replacement. You’ll progress through advisory with other students in the same grade.

  The course has a weekly online meeting which takes place in the advisor’s Collaborate webinar room. Most of the work from the course can be completed in these meetings, plus it’s a great way to build strong relationships at MNOHS. You can read about the Ramp-Up curriculum under “Graduation Requirements” below.
MNOHS calendar and pace charts

THE MNOHS School Calendar lists quarter beginning and ending dates, drop/add dates and school breaks and holidays. You can find the school calendar on our web page: mnohs.org/calendar

At MNOHS, semester courses are broken into two eight-week quarters. A few courses are only one quarter in length. Students working at a standard pace complete 8 weeks’ worth of learning activities in each quarter, plus any projects or final assessments.

Courses are designed on a weekly folder schedule. Except for weeks with holidays or breaks, MNOHS course weeks usually begin midweek and end sometime the following week, with a weekend in the middle. This gives you the opportunity to use the weekend to complete and submit coursework. (Your teachers may be online over the weekend, but they are not required to be.)

In every course, the teacher “unlocks” folders one week at a time, according to the Pace Chart. Inside that folder are all the assignments for that week. Follow the pace chart to be sure that you are completing your learning activities on time. Pace charts are in the “Getting Started” folder of each course or at the link below: https://mnohs.org/images/Files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf

If you enroll in a new course at the quarter break you may be given the opportunity to complete the entire semester course at an accelerated pace (block schedule). This means that you will need to complete two folders per week.

When you start a new weekly folder, be sure to review the week’s work in case you have any questions. Some assignments require teacher feedback and revision, so it’s best to do some work on each MNOHS course each day. Each week you should also check your course syllabus to make sure you’re on track in the course and can prepare for longer assignments. The syllabus will tell you about any assignments that are essential to passing the course.

Work on course activities in the order they are presented and do your best to keep a good pace. If you have questions on an assignment, contact your teacher by phone, email, text or IM—and then do your best to move on. You can also attend a teacher’s office hours or come to the Academic Success Center Collaborate room with questions or to ask for help on assignments.

Teachers generally grade work within 24 hours once it has been submitted. However, they are not required, nor should you expect your teachers to read and grade work that is submitted late, “all-at-once” or seriously out of order.
Resources provided by MNOHS, and supplies you must provide

When you sign in to each MNOHS course in Blackboard, you'll learn about the resources that your teacher has chosen for that course. Some of MNOHS’s more commonly used resources are described in this section of this Student Handbook. Most are provided by MNOHS. In some cases, you may need to use your own equipment or materials to successfully complete the learning activities (please see below). In general, you should notify your teacher immediately if you are missing materials that are required for participation in one of your courses.

What MNOHS Provides:

- **MNOHS Student Desktop**
- **MNOHS Media Center**
  The MNOHS Media Center can be found in Blackboard > Student Activities course. Here you’ll find access to many valuable information resources including:
  - Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM)
  - Hoonuit (formerly Atomic Learning), a library of technology training videos
  - the Opposing Viewpoints in Context database

- **Microsoft Office Suite**
  When you log into Office365, your MNOHS email, you will also gain access to the Microsoft Office Suite of productivity tools including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, etc.

- **Online textbooks**
  Some of your MNOHS courses will require an online textbook. The textbooks come from different publishing companies, including Holt McDougal, Pearson, and Kendall Hunt. If a course that you are enrolled in has a text, you will receive a web address for your student account with that publisher. You’ll find this information in your course on the first day of classes. In many cases, your user ID and password will be the same as the one you use for Blackboard; exceptions will be explained in the particular course. You'll be able to access your online text 24/7 on the Internet—except on rare occasions when the publishers are having server problems or scheduled maintenance.

In a course that uses an online text, some class assignments will be based on the text and some will not. Read information carefully in Blackboard to find out what parts of the online textbook the teacher is requiring you to use and how. Your teacher may give you some specific tips for getting the most out of your online text—what parts to focus on, what parts to skip, etc. Each book, course and teacher is different.
• **The Geometer's Sketchpad**

Many MNOHS math courses use The Geometer's Sketchpad software (usually called Sketchpad for short). Don’t be fooled by the name! This dynamic tool is great for drawing and manipulating geometric figures, but it will also be used by students in Algebra 1.5, Algebra 2, Precalculus, Calculus, and Discrete Math.

Sketchpad gives you access to computer-based graph paper, straight edge, compass, pencil, and other drawing tools common in the math classroom—and to an equation editor for typing mathematical symbols. Sketchpad can be accessed through the MNOHS student desktop. Students enrolled in some MNOHS math courses will use Excel or other data-handling programs. You will find out how to use these programs in the “Getting Started” folder of your math courses.

• **Voice Thread**

VoiceThread is a web-based visual and oral communication tool. Students and teachers can make “threads”—similar to online narrated picture books or media albums—to explain their ideas and opinions. The MNOHS Technology Orientation for students provides an introduction to this tool and details about logging in.

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**Supplies you must provide**

In some cases, you’ll need special equipment and/or materials in order to successfully complete your MNOHS learning activities. Please read on for information about how to find out what you need for each course and where to purchase it. If you can't provide the equipment/materials required for a course, please contact MNOHS Office Manager Ashley Voss at a.voss@mail.mnohs.org.

• **Computer & Internet Access**

All students must have access to a computer and high-speed Internet access. Specifications for your system can be found here: [http://www.mnohs.org/computer-requirements](http://www.mnohs.org/computer-requirements).

If your computer needs repairs, contact your counselor and teachers immediately so that they will know that your access has become limited. Please note that technical difficulties are not an excusable absence. You are responsible for continuing to make progress in your courses while your computer is being repaired. Options may include using your public library’s computer, a friend or family member’s computer, or contacting MNOHS Tech Support to see if there is a loaner computer available. A
limited number of loaner computers are available if your computer repairs will take longer than a few days.

- **Headset**
  All students must have a **headset with microphone** to participate in activities using Collaborate and VoiceThread. This is particularly important for students enrolling in MNOHS Spanish or Chinese courses where audio activities begin the first week of the course. You can find a headset at large electronic stores or department stores, or you can shop online. A headset with a USB connection is best. They cost about $20.

- **Library Card**
  In several MNOHS courses you will do independent research. Of course, much of your research can be conducted online, but there is still no substitute for the vast resources that a library, and a knowledgeable and helpful librarian, can provide. All MNOHS students are strongly encouraged to obtain a current library card at their city and/or county libraries. With most current Minnesota library cards, you can also conduct online searches for library resources through the ELM (Electronic Library for Minnesota) system, at [http://www.elm4you.org/](http://www.elm4you.org/). More information about using ELM can be found in the Student Activities course in Blackboard under the Media Center main link.

- **Art Students - Access to A Digital Camera**
  - A digital camera is required for the **Media Arts** course. The camera should have at least 5 megapixels and a 3X physical (not digital) zoom. If you are unable to afford a camera, please contact Office Manager Ashley Voss at a.voss@mail.mnohs.org. MNOHS has a limited supply of loaner cameras we can send to students who qualify.
  - For the **Video Production** course, you need either a DSLR Camera, a cell phone, a tablet, or an iPod with a 5mp or higher camera with video capabilities. You also need access to the IOS or Google apps store on that device.
  - If you are enrolled in the **Visual Arts course**, you will find it helpful, though not required, to have access to a digital camera and/or scanner in order to submit art work you create or that you are analyzing for course assignments. If you do not personally own this kind of electronic equipment, you can sometimes use it at libraries or copy centers for a minimal fee. Alternatively, you can always send work to your teacher the old-fashioned way, through the US Mail service. MNOHS will supply envelopes and postage as needed.
• **Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies**

  o Depending on the course, science students may need to gather equipment and supplies for safe, simple at-home labs. Please check the course description for your particular science course at the MNOHS web site: www.mnohs.org – go to School Information > Course Descriptions. The lists posted on this page will be updated one week before the start of each semester. As part of the MNOHS registration process, parents/guardians or students over 18 sign a permission and release form. Please be sure that we have this document on file before participating in any science lab activities.

  o In some language arts and social studies courses, you might be asked to read a novel or book, or to view a film or video that is not available online due to copyright and/or technology considerations. Your teacher will list these required course materials in the course syllabus, and make periodic course announcements so you will have ample time to borrow the materials from your local library, or view them through an online video streaming source (such as Netflix), or purchase them. If you are unable to obtain the materials through any of these means, please let your teacher know immediately so other arrangements can be made to get the required course materials to you.

• **Physical Education**

  Students enrolling in an online physical education course will need to submit baseline information about their heart rate and blood pressure. As part of the MNOHS registration process, parents, guardians or students over 18 sign a permission and release form. Please be sure that we have this document on file before participating in a MNOHS Physical Education course.
Co-curricular activities

Students make MNOHS a great school! This section describes several opportunities for students to get involved at MNOHS and in their home communities, and in some cases to earn credit at the same time. Colleges and employers look positively upon community service and leadership experience, and your participation will help you to connect your learning process to the world around you. Be sure to take advantage of these student activities:

- **MNOHS Student Leadership Council:** Unlike many other schools, all students who desire to participate in Student Leadership Council are welcome. Students can earn elective credit through steady participation in MNOHS SLC. MNOHS SLC sponsors or co-sponsors a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities to promote civic responsibility and community-building within the school and in the local communities where our students live. SLC members will have opportunities to share their ideas, insights, and concerns with MNOHS staff and administration. Past activities have included annual volunteer and food drives, an online talent show, and more. Please contact Amanda Seelen (a.seelen@mail.mnohs.org or 320-406-8155) if you are interested in getting involved!

- **New! MNOHS Peer Leaders Program:** MNOHS Peer Leaders work with students new to MNOHS to help them make a successful transition to online learning.

- **Student Leadership Course:** This semester-length course provides students with opportunities to develop leadership skills useful in all areas of school and life. Students explore the qualities of a leader and examine their own potential for leadership. The first half of the course looks at leadership within education, a place where all students are experts. In the second half of the course, students examine more closely leadership skills and style while preparing an action plan for change in their community or school. Contact your MNOHS counselor if you are interested in the Student Leadership course.

- **Mouse Squad:** Intro to Mouse Squad is a quarter-length course which allows students to develop the computer and work skills to participate on the MNOHS technology support team. Once students complete the course and earn the credential, they can enroll for credit in the Mouse Squad elective where they log hours helping peers, faculty and staff to make MNOHS easy to navigate. Contact your MNOHS counselor if you are interested in joining the Mouse Squad.

- **TAG Team (Talented and Gifted):** The TAG Team was created to support students who have shown high achievement or high potential in intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership activities. Students may also show high potential in specific academic fields. TAG meets monthly to discuss ideas and plan activities. The group also focuses on enrichment activities such as learning strategies for dealing with stress, putting together
an e-portfolio, planning post-secondary education, and furthering research skills. Any student at MNOHS may participate in the TAG team (there are not any GPA or testing requirements to join). Contact Mrs. Breidenbach at l.breidenbach@mail.mnohs.org if you are interested in joining this group.

- **All Booked Up! Book Club**: Join other students and staff in discussion of short stories and books. Meetings occur monthly in an online Collaborate webinar room and asynchronously through VoiceThread. Contact Mrs. Breidenbach at l.breidenbach@mail.mnohs.org if you are interested in joining this group.

## The role of parents/guardians

A parent/guardian or other significant person in your life can help you to stay motivated by taking an active interest in your education. Depending on your age, we will ask for your parent/guardian’s signature as well as your own for you to enroll.

If **you are under 18**, your parents or guardians will be able to monitor your progress in each of your courses within Blackboard. They cannot log in to your courses but they can see a record of your attendance, participation, and grades. In addition, your teachers will phone and email them to talk about your progress.

If **you are over 18**, or if you turn 18 during the academic year, we will assume that MNOHS has permission to contact your parent/guardian and give them access unless you state otherwise on the enrollment application form. If you are over 18 and receiving special education services, we will need written permission from you to provide your parent/guardian with access to your school records—and we encourage you to give it!

### Parent Teacher Conferences at MNOHS

The fourth week in each quarter is identified for parent/teacher conferences. During this time, parents/guardians are encouraged to set up a conference with their students’ teachers via phone, email or an online meeting.
Quarterly grading

**Important!** All MNOHS courses, for all students, are graded at the end of each eight-week quarter according to the [school calendar](#).

Most courses are semester-length but divided into two quarters: Part 1 (Weeks 1-8) and Part 2 (Weeks 9-16). Each eight-week part is worth 0.25 credit, and students have eight weeks (one quarter on the calendar) to complete it.

Some courses are just one quarter on length.

The grade given at the end of each quarter is a final grade which is recorded on your transcript.

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A-F grading

Most MNOHS Students in most courses are graded on a scale from A+ to F. The letter grade corresponds to the percentage of all possible points that you have earned by the end of the quarter as shown here:

- 100 and above = A+
- 94 – 99 = A (4.0)
- 90 – 93 = A-
- 87 – 89 = B+
- 84 – 86 = B (3.0)
- 80 – 83 = B-
- 77 – 79 = C+
- 74 – 76 = C (2.0)
- 70 – 73 = C-
- 67 – 69 = D+
- 64 – 66 = D (1.0)
- 60 – 63 = D-
- < 60 = F

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P/NC and A/B/P/NC grading

The Ramp-Up to Readiness advisory course is graded on a P/NC basis. P and NC are not calculated in a student’s grade point average or class rank.

Students with IEPs, 504 Plans, or extenuating circumstances verified by their counselor may be eligible for A/B/P/NC grading. Please click to read about [this grading option](#).
Student recognition: Kudos, Student of the Quarter, and Honors Options

MNOHS recognizes students for their effort, attitude and progress through weekly kudos emails and Student of the Quarter announcements.

MNOHS also recognizes academic excellence through our honors options: honors courses and honors diplomas.

- **Weekly Kudos:** When completing weekly progress reports, teachers note students with high quality academic work or notable improvement in their courses. In turn, MNOHS sends these students and their families kudos emails.

- **Student of the Quarter:** At the end of each quarter, teachers and staff nominate students of the quarter for any number of reasons such as, their creativity, excellent effort, determination, or simply their overall attitude toward school. Teachers provide rational for each student they nominate. The list of students with anonymous staff comments is posted in the school announcements. These students receive a certificate and are asked to complete a survey which reveals their strategies for learning, advice for their classmates, their interests and plans for the future. The responses are written up as individual student profiles and are shared, with the student’s permission, in student announcements, family and alumni newsletters and on Facebook.

- Click to read about [MNOHS honors courses and honors diploma options](#) (PDF).

Graduation requirements—for comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PSEO) students

Minnesota Online High School requires 21.5 credits for graduation, in the same subject areas required by the State of Minnesota. MNOHS diploma students planning to apply to a four-year college will need to plan carefully to complete a somewhat more rigorous program (with the same number of credits but fewer electives). Work closely with your counselor to transfer credits from past schools. Work closely with your Ramp-Up advisor and your counselor to plan for post-secondary college and work opportunities. Please check the MNOHS web site for complete details: [http://www.mnohs.org/graduation-requirements](http://www.mnohs.org/graduation-requirements)

Currently, no state or national tests are required for graduation. The Minnesota Department of Education does require schools to administer MCA tests and to provide the opportunity for all 11th and 12th graders to take a college entrance examination such as ACT. MNOHS will pay for
any student to take the ACT on the national testing day in April. Information about this will be sent by e-mail and in the parent/guardian newsletter.

To see what a “typical” class schedule looks like, visit http://www.mnohs.org/images/Files/mnohs_four_year_program.pdf

Making school meaningful

Please tell your counselor, Ramp-Up advisor, and course teachers about your interests, hobbies, and outside-of-school commitments. They can help you select courses or to design guided study opportunities (supervised by a licensed MNOHS teacher) that allow you to earn credit doing things you enjoy while meeting the graduation requirements.

Ramp-Up to Readiness Advisory Courses: As explained above, each comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PSEO) student is required to take the Ramp-Up to Readiness (Ramp-Up) advisory course each quarter. Advisory courses are graded on a P/NC basis and earn .125 elective credit.

Ramp-Up is a curriculum designed by the University of Minnesota’s College Readiness Consortium to help you reach the following goals by the end of high school:

- **Academic Readiness**: The ability to succeed in first-year, credit-bearing courses at a technical college, a community college or a four-year college or university.
- **Admissions Readiness**: The ability to meet admissions requirements at a range of postsecondary institutions.
- **Career Readiness**: The ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers.
- **Financial Readiness**: The ability to cover the cost of the first term of study at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, and financial aid.
- **Personal and Social Readiness**: The ability to set educational goals, make and monitor progress toward them, and create relationships with peers and adults that support academic success.

MNOHS students are required to earn at least .125 credits in advisory or in the Student Leadership course to graduate. Students who have already met graduation requirements for elective credits or who have a scheduling conflict which prevents attending synchronous advisory meetings may contact their counselor regarding another option.
Parents/guardians and course scheduling

If your student is choosing MNOHS as their district (comprehensive enrollment), please help to get them started on time by providing unofficial transcripts while we are waiting for their official records to arrive.

Also, ask your school counselor to consult with you and your student about selecting courses that support their current interests and possible post-secondary plans.

Other services: Special education, EL, 504 Plans, and other supports

Special Education

Special education teachers at MNOHS have developed several ways to effectively deliver support services in person, online and over the phone. Since they do not have daily face-to-face interaction with students, our special education team also values and relies on clear communication from parent/guardians. IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings are conducted in person or by phone. After the initial IEP meeting for new students, these meetings are scheduled annually.

MNOHS Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

In order to increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in district policy making and decision making, Minnesota Online High School has a special education advisory council (SEAC) which meets quarterly. If you are interested in the SEAC, please contact MNOHS Special Education Teacher Christie Allison at c.allison@mail.mnohs.org or 800-764-8166 x115.

English Language (EL) Services

MNOHS offers EL courses developed and taught by our EL teacher in addition to modified general education courses. The WIDA W-APT assessment, other standardized test scores and
teacher insight are used to place EL students in appropriate courses and to support their success.

504 Plans

To qualify for a 504 plan, a student must have: (1) a physical or mental impairment (2) that substantially limits (3) a major life activity. All three criteria must be met.

If you think you meet these criteria, or if you had a 504 Plan at a previous school, please tell your MNOHS counselor right away. We will honor any existing plan and modify it as needed to align with online teaching and learning.

Please see this 504 FAQs document which was written for MNOHS parents/guardians—but is a good summary for all: https://mnohs.org/images/students/504_FAQs.pdf

Academic support and wellness support

New! This year, MNOHS has added two full-time staff positions—one to provide academic support to comprehensive (MNOHS-only) students who are active in their courses but struggling and one to provide counseling support to comprehensive students who are dealing with anxiety and/or depression. Please contact your counselor if you are interested in either of these programs.

Student Support Groups

As we all know, life can be stressful and students experiencing stress can struggle physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. The MNOHS school counselors and social worker offer support groups depending on student interest. The goals of the groups are:

- to provide MNOHS students with a supportive and confidential environment where they can talk about topics affecting their daily lives,
- to help students connect with other students who are dealing with similar issues, and
- to explore healthy ways to deal with stressful situations.

If you are interested in participating in a support group, please contact the school social worker.
Student Support Groups Opt-Out Form

The MNOHS student enrollment process includes an opt-out form for student support group participation. We will assume any student without a returned form is given permission to participate in a MNOHS support group. If you do not wish your student to participate in any groups, please contact the Enrollment Manager about signing an opt-out form:
s.bayrd@mail.mnohs.org

Important MNOHS policies

The MNOHS school board, faculty, and staff and work together to support students in a safe, rewarding online school environment. MNOHS policies passed by school board the outline the rights of students or of parents/guardians and our expectations of students, their families and MNOHS staff. Policies that apply to students can be found on this MNOHS web page:
http://www.mnohs.org/policies-and-handbooks

Following are brief summaries of a few important MNOHS policies. Links to these policies are also available in every MNOHS course.

Continuous Progress and the MNOHS Attendance Policy

This video summarizes how we count attendance at MNOHS, and how to make it work for you:
https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5b842d77f3afdf

At MNOHS, attendance is defined as continuous active engagement with the learning process and making continuous progress in each course in which you are enrolled. These are the expectations:

- Login to Blackboard five days per week—or more!
- Make regular and continuous progress in each course. Continuous progress means that you are progressing in a course at a rate that keeps you on track for passing. You can show this by:
  - Spending an average of 60-90 well-focused minutes per day in each course.
  - Consistently submitting course work that shows effort, is of your own creation and earns points.
  - Engaging in other required learning activities that earn points (e.g. participation in class meetings)
  - Revising work as recommended or required by the teacher.
Maintain regular and responsive communication with teachers and counselors. This includes:

- Responding to e-mail and text messages and/or returning calls from MNOHS faculty and staff.
- Updating MNOHS office staff when addresses and phone numbers change.
- Having your parent/guardian report absences through the MNOHS Attendance Line (or you, if you are over 18) if you are unable to log in due to an illness or personal emergency.
- In addition to contacting the Attendance Line, always check with your teachers. They can offer suggestions to help you keep up or catch up.

### Contacting the Attendance Line

If your student is unable to login to <MPJS due to an illness or a personal emergency, please report this using the MNOHS Attendance Line: attendance@mail.mnohs.org OR 1-800-764-8166 x201.

For students under 18, their parent or guardian must email or call the attendance line. Students age 18 and over may email or call the attendance line themselves. (In both cases, a signed explanation from a practitioner, such as a doctor, may be required to verify an absence.)

In addition to contacting the attendance line, encourage your student to check in with their teachers about how to keep up or catch up.

### Attendance, kudos, and concerns

All MNOHS teachers report on the progress of each student in their courses each week.

When completing weekly progress reports, teachers indicate students with high quality academic work or notable improvement in their courses. MNOHS will send you and your parents/guardians **kudos emails** to congratulate you on a successful week in one or more courses.

If a teacher indicates that you are inactive or expresses academic concerns, MNOHS will email you and your parent/guardian. In addition, you may be contacted by a success manager who will work with you to create a plan to get you back on track.

If attendance continues to be a problem, our school is required by law to file truancy. When students are offline or unexcused for 15 consecutive instructional days or more, the law also
requires MNOHS to end your enrollment. You are welcome to reenroll at the start of the next quarter if you think that MNOHS is the right place for you.

As an online community school, MNOHS strives to offer a high-quality education in a flexible environment. If you experience a challenge or life emergency that makes it difficult for you to meet our attendance requirements, please contact your counselor or success manager so you can work together to create an academic plan that will help you succeed. Any issues you share can be kept confidential.

Academic Honesty Policy

In an online program, as in a traditional classroom, each student is responsible for doing his or her own work. The MNOHS Academic Honesty Policy provides guidelines for being a responsible student while creating and completing course work. It also includes the consequences for those who do not comply with this policy.

Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy

To ensure a safe, welcoming online school environment, MNOHS outlines our expectations for respectful communication and appropriate use of technology in our Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy. The primary purpose of the MNOHS online environment, including the Blackboard learning management system, is educational. Our systems may be used only for educational purposes.

Drop/Add Policy

A student has until the seventh instructional of each quarter to add a course to their schedule or to change a course in their schedule. This is the add/change deadline.

A student has until the seventeenth instructional day to drop a course and receive a ‘W’ on your transcript. This is the drop deadline. Dropping courses after a quarter's drop/add date will likely result in a low grade on your transcript.

The MNOHS Calendar lists the add/change and drop dates for each quarter. To add, change or drop a course, you must contact your MNOHS counselor by email.
MNOHS systems overview

What does it mean to go to school online? Like all schools, MNOHS is made up of many parts—however, almost all of them accessible through the Internet. MNOHS students use the Internet to show up for classes, share ideas and information with teachers and other students, access course materials, read, write, draw, research, ask and answer questions, make proposals, work on projects, complete quizzes and tests, tell jokes, take home report cards, discuss career and college options, and do many other activities that are part of the high school learning experience.

MNOHS uses several systems for students to go to school online. To access the systems you’ll use every day, go to www.mnohs.org and click on the Login tab, shown here:

![Login tab screenshot]

Your username and password will be the same for many but not all systems. This information was sent to your MNOHS e-mail account when you confirmed your application. If you need help retrieving it, email password@mnohs.org or call the Enrollment Manager (see “Who to Contact” above).

- **Office 365 is our e-mail system.** All e-mail from your teachers, counselor and other students will go to this account. Be sure to log in Monday through Friday, or any time you are working on MNOHS. Your MNOHS address begins with your username and ends with “@mail.mnohs.org”. Example: the username “mnohs18flastname” would have the Office 365 account of mnohs18flastname@mail.mnohs.org. Link: [http://mnohs.org/mail](http://mnohs.org/mail)

  Your MNOHS email account is a web-based, hosted service provided by Microsoft Office 365 for Education. MNOHS email uses a similar login page as MSN, Hotmail, Messenger, Xbox LIVE, and Live. If you have a personal account with any of those services, you will need to sign out of that account to be able to sign in to your MNOHS email account. To help you know you’re in the right place, your MNOHS email inbox and account screens will have the MNOHS logo displayed at the top.

- **Virtual Desktop:** MNOHS students will use a virtual desktop to log into all MNOHS systems. In the MNOHS Technology Orientation, you will set up the desktop and practice
using it. You can also access instructions on how to install the student virtual desktop at http://mnohs.org/installvdi.

- **Blackboard.** Blackboard is our Learning Management System (LMS) where you access your classes and attend school. In Blackboard, you'll also find the Technology Orientation (if you haven’t already completed it) and the Student Activities course, which is our school “commons.” Use your MNOHS username and password to login to Blackboard. You can find detailed instructions in Appendix 1 of this handbook. Our Blackboard link: http://mnohs.blackboard.com/

- **Collaborate** (also called Blackboard Collaborate) is our webinar system. You’ll use this to meet online with your teachers, counselor and other students in real time (“live”) or to watch recordings of meetings. Collaborate combines chat, voice, video (optional) and an interactive whiteboard so that users can all look at the same image, document, or website at the same time. MNOHS teachers use Collaborate for online office hours, tutoring sessions, class meetings and occasional required oral assignments. In each course, contact information includes a link to the teacher’s online Collaborate webinar room. If you can’t meet with your teacher during their office hours, please check with them about a different time to meet.

The Academic Success Center (ASC) Collaborate room is used schoolwide. It is our meeting room, auditorium, and study hall—and a place to hang out with other students. The ASC link is in Student Activities in Blackboard. See Technology Orientation for more information on Collaborate and to practice using it.

- **Infinite Campus** is our student information system, or “school office,” where you can access official documents including your class schedule, final grades, and your transcript. Link: https://mncloud2.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/mnohs.jsp

**Parents/Guardians** receive an email with a user name and password for observer accounts in Blackboard and Infinite Campus.

In Blackboard, this allows you to view your student’s progress in their courses, to find teacher contact information, and to access to a special collection of Parent/Guardian Resources within our Student Activities course. In Infinite Campus, it allows you to see your student’s schedule and quarter grades.

If you are a parent/guardian who has not received login information, please email password@mnohs.org or contact Family Coordinator Matt Hawk at m.hawk@mail.mnohs.org
For more information, including steps for logging into and navigating within these accounts, please watch this video, [https://safe.share.tv/x/ss5b842eab583c6#](https://safe.share.tv/x/ss5b842eab583c6#), or see Appendix 2 in this handbook.

**Please remember that only students should log into student accounts!**

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**Tech issues?**

Technology glitches are bound to occur, but you cannot afford to allow them to interfere with learning for long. Technology problems are generally **not accepted** as excuses for turning in late or incomplete work, so have a backup plan and reach out for help right away!

**Backup plan**

- Develop safe habits for online learning. See Appendix 3 of this handbook.
- If you have trouble connecting to the Internet, first contact your local internet service provider for help.
- If your computer fails, be sure that you know where you can go to login until you can get your own computer fixed. Often a public library will allow you to work for 2 hours at a time.
- If your computer needs serious repairs, contact your counselor. MNOHS has a limited supply of loaner computers that may be available to use for a month or two.
- Frequently make backup copies of your essays and other major assignments you complete. **Save them to the virtual desktop** so you can replace them if they are accidentally deleted and so you can work on them using another computer if necessary.
- Most importantly, let your teachers know that you are having problems. They may be able to suggest ways for you to keep up with the coursework.

**If you can't connect,** either for personal or technical reasons:

- Your parent/guardian (or you, if you are 18 or older) should contact the attendance line immediately.
- You should contact your teachers, counselor, and success manager so we know where you are.

**If something is not working in one of your courses,** please begin by contacting your teacher. It may be as simple as broken link, and your teacher will thank you for pointing it out.
MNOHS Tech Support

If you run into a technical problem that your teacher can’t solve or if you know that some required software on your computer is not working, please visit the Tech Support area of the MNOHS web site: [http://www.mnohs.org/techsupport](http://www.mnohs.org/techsupport).

- **Knowledge Base and FAQs** – First, check the Knowledge Base and FAQs see if your problem is described and solutions given.

- **Tech Support Ticket** - You can also submit a Tech Support Ticket by logging in to the website with your MNOHS username and password. Please be sure to give as many details as possible. Explain what you did and what happened. If you can, attach a screen shot of any error message you may have gotten. This way, Tech Support can help you more quickly.

- **MNOHS Student Desktop** – In addition to giving students access to important learning software, the MNOHS virtual desktop is often our first step in providing tech support. If you are having problems, MNOHS Tech Support will ask you to install the virtual desktop in order to troubleshoot more efficiently.
Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

About daily life at MNOHS

How do I get new assignments in my class?
On the first day of each MNOHS course week, your teacher will open a new folder in the course. In that folder, you will find the activities and assignments for that week. If you know you will be offline later in the quarter, contact your teacher to see if they can open up new assignments early for you.

How do I know when a MNOHS week begins and ends?
You will find the weekly folder dates on the MNOHS Pace Chart. Go to mnohs.org > Calendar > and click to download the school year pace chart. Or, click on this link: https://mnohs.org/images/Files/mnohs_semester_and_quarter_pace_charts.pdf

How many weeks are in one MNOHS quarter?
There are 8 weeks in a quarter. Each week is 5 school days, plus a weekend. Sometimes weeks are longer due to breaks or holidays, but each folder will contain 5 days’ worth of work.

How do I check my grade?
Go to your course in Blackboard > My Progress (in left column menu). The top two rows show your current percentage which is your running quarter grade. Your current percentage is based on all work that should be completed by that point in the quarter. Typically, this means all work up to the current week (for example, if it is MNOHS week 4 your current grade is based on weeks 1-3). All your assignments for the quarter are listed below this in the order assigned. Each assignment title includes the week number; use this and the MNOHS pace chart to determine if the assignment should have already been completed.

What is a passing grade at MNOHS?
A passing grade is 60% or higher. You can check your current grade on your My Progress page in each course. Each week more points are added to your course (in the online grade book). As a result, your current grade changes from week to week.

What if I fall behind?
Check your course for your teacher’s policy about late work; some teachers may deduct points for late assignments or not accept particular assignments after a given point in the quarter. If you are behind, contact your teacher for help in catching up. For example, your teacher may meet with you to talk through some assignments (oral submission) to save you time. It is important to complete your assignments in the order listed because they often build upon each other.

How do teachers take attendance?
Attendance is taken each week. To be counted as attending, you must make regular progress towards passing. This means you submit assignments, respond to teacher communication and meet other course requirements. Like other schools, consistent attendance is required to pass your classes, stay enrolled at MNOHS, and avoid truancy.

**Is Ramp-Up Advisory a class?**
Yes, Ramp-Up Advisory is a credit earning course. Advisory credit is required for Comprehensive (MNOHS-only and PEO) students to graduate from MNOHS. Ramp-Up Advisory has weekly meetings where you interact with classmates and earn points for the assignments.

**Is “Student Activities” a class?**
No, Student Activities is not a grade earning class. It is like the commons in a brick and mortar school. It contains announcements, orientation and workshop activities, the Media Center, the Academic Support Center (ASC) and other resources.

**About Support at MNOHS**

**Where can I find teacher contact information?**
Go to your course in Blackboard > Contact Your Teacher (in left column menu). Teachers can be contacted by email, phone, or text.

**What should I do if I need help?**
For questions about a class, contact your teacher by email, phone or text. If you have a personal concern or general questions about MNOHS, contact your counselor.

**How do I get technology support?**
For questions about online textbooks or broken class links, contact your teacher. For other questions, submit a tech ticket using the Tech Support link in the left column of each course. You can also submit a tech ticket from the MNOHS website: mnohs.org > Tech Support

**What is the Academic Support Center (ASC)?**
The ASC is an online meeting room where you can drop in for help from MNOHS teachers (even if you are not in their class). The schedule and link can be found in the student activities course. Students also use the ASC as a place to connect with other students—to work on projects or just to hang out.

**Is counseling support available?**
It is! As we all know, life can be stressful. Students experiencing stress can struggle physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. Minnesota Online High School (MNOHS) has offered weekly support groups facilitated by licensed professionals in the areas of parent support (for students who are also parents), dealing with anxiety and depression, and grief and loss. These groups are available depending on student interest.
Your MNOHS counselor and the MNOHS social worker are also available to meet one-on-one with you to discuss personal issues. If you are interested in getting support, please contact the school social worker or use these self-referral forms:

Appendix 2: Logging into Blackboard

All MNOHS courses are created using a similar format to make navigation easy.

Students attend classes by logging into Blackboard at [http://mnohs.blackboard.com/](http://mnohs.blackboard.com/)

Your username and password were sent to you by email. If you've lost these, please contact password@mnohs.org

When you log into Blackboard, you will see links to each of your classes. This includes Student Activities, which contains school wide announcements and should be checked daily. It also includes Technology Orientation if you have not yet completed it.

The course announcements page displays important current information, as well how to contact your teacher. Your teacher’s email address, phone number, and Collaborate room link can also be found under the “Contact Your Teacher” link.

On the left bar of the screen, you can access the course syllabus and course assignments. Many courses begin with a set of “Getting Started” assignments. These cover key topics like accessing textbook, course software, and class expectations. These should be done before any other assignments, regardless of when you enroll.
The semester is divided up into 2 quarters, labeled weeks 1-8 and weeks 9-16. Clicking on these links opens up the folders containing the actual learning activities, assignments and tests.

The menu on the left contains 2 other important links: “My Progress,” and “Tech Support”. Students (and parents/guardians) can check for grades and feedback from teachers using the “My Progress” link. Students can submit questions regarding technology issues using the “tech support” link; this can also be accessed from www.mnohs.org/tech-support

You can navigate in Blackboard using the “cookie trail” near the top right of the page below the dark gray bar (see screenshot on next page). It identifies the particular page you are viewing as well as exactly where it is located. For example, in the screen shot below we are viewing “Week 1 Scavenger Hunt” which is in the Week 1 folder which is in the Weeks 1-8 folder. You can click on any part of this cookie trail to jump back to that location. This is the preferred method of navigation; do not use your browser’s back button.
Teacher contact information can be found under Contact your teacher, and in the course announcements.

Parents/guardians are assigned an observer’s role in their student’s classes and therefore have fewer links available.
Appendix 3: Habits to save your time and your work

Things happen in the digital world. A little time and effort invested NOW can save hardship, stress, and pain LATER.

People who make their living on the Web—for example, professional web designers, bloggers and others—have developed habits to protect themselves in case:

- Software and websites don’t work correctly.
- A hard drive crashes and you lose EVERYTHING.
- The power goes out or your Internet connection drops at just the worst time.
- You click the wrong button by mistake.

Here are three habits that as an online student you should start to practice **today**.

- Habit 1: Work OFFLINE and SAVE
- Habit 2: Close out of Blackboard and log back in
- Habit 3: Trust but verify: Did it go through?

**Habit 1: Work OFFLINE and SAVE**

**Problem:** Even though Blackboard has that handy text box you can type right into, your work isn’t saved unless you click submit. But what if you close the browser window before all the data has transferred—or your Internet connection drops at that very moment?

**Result:** You’ve lost all that work and you have to start over!!

**Solution & habit:** Work OFFLINE and SAVE.

1. Type your response using your computer’s plain text editor (text-only word processor). Use Notepad for Windows or TextEdit for Macs.

   - For **Windows**, Go to the Start menu and search for Notepad. Pin it to your Start Menu or Taskbar so you have it available all the time.
   
   - For the **Mac**, TextEdit is in the Applications folder. Drag it to your Dock so it’s always there.
2. Type up your response in the text editor.

Type your response in notepad first
3. **Save** your file...often! Develop a pattern for naming so you can find it quickly like “US History B – week 1 – assignment 1”.

4. After you’re done typing your response and you’ve saved your file, **copy all your text.**
5. Once you’ve made sure you’re on the right assignment, locate the “Write Submission” button.

6. Paste the text into Blackboard’s text box.

7. Use the text box’s controls to add formatting if needed.
8. Don’t forget to click “Submit”!

Happy result: All your work is now saved, backed-up, and submitted! You can sleep easy!

Habit 2: Close out of Blackboard and log back in

Problem: If you walk away from Blackboard without logging out, the system will eventually log you out automatically. Unfortunately, there is no message telling you that you’ve been logged out, so you may follow all the steps in Habit 1, submit your work, and get an “access denied” message.

Result: If you’ve followed Habit 1, you have saved your work--but even so you’ve just wasted a few minutes that you can’t afford to waste.

Solution & habit: Don’t walk away from Blackboard--log out or at least close your browser window so the next time you sit down to work you will know if you need to log in.

Happy result: All of your time will be spent productively and small frustrations will be avoided.
Habit 3: Trust But verify: Did it go through?

Problem: You click the “Submit” button and then you go off and work on something else.

Result: A week later you go back and check your grade. Wait! My assignment isn’t there! Now what do I do?

Solution & habit: Trust but verify: take five more seconds and check “My Progress.”

1. After you click “Submit” on an assignment, wait for the Blackboard to display a confirmation message in a little green bar...

2. Click on the “My Progress” main link and scroll down and find the assignment you just submitted.
   - Look for the yellow or green exclamation mark (see screenshot below). If it’s there – everything is fine. Your assignment is waiting to be graded.
   - If you don’t see the exclamation mark for an assignment or test, you should re-submit.

3. If you’ve resubmitted the assignment or test and you still don’t get that exclamation point:
   - Email your teacher with the assignment text you saved to your hard drive.
   - Submit a tech ticket so we can investigate the problem.
Happy result: This simple check will save you potential headaches later! You wouldn’t send money to an online bank without checking! Do the same with your school – trust but verify.

Look for the yellow exclamation mark for the assignment you just did.

If it's there, your assignment went through and is waiting to be graded.
Appendix 4: Reading the "My Progress" page

Log into Blackboard and select your course as usual.

Click on “My Progress” at the left.

**Important!** At the top right of the My Progress page, choose “Due Date (Latest First)” in the drop down menu. MNOHS doesn’t use due dates on assignments (we use a Pace Chart instead), but choosing this will bring two calculations—Current W 1-8 and Current W 9-16 (see screen shot below)—to the top of the page. These calculations show total points earned divided by all the possible points that can be earned through the current week as a percentage. They are the basis of your quarter grades.

If you are on pace in the course, you should see this percentage for the current quarter hovering in the passing range of 60-100%. New assignments are included in the total points possible at the end of each MNOHS week.

Assignments are listed below the Current calculations in chronological order. Typically, they will have the weekly folder number as part of the name. If this is missing and you need help understanding where an assignment is from, please ask your teacher. Even though “My
Progress” lists all assignments from the semester, only the assignments through the current week are calculated in your current percentage.

The grade column on the right shows your score out of the points possible for each assignment. Click on the Comments icon (speech bubble) to look for feedback from teachers. This is where you will find suggestions to revise your work to increase your understanding and your grade.
Appendix 5: Parent/guardian observer accounts

MNOHS Systems

Links for all MNOHS systems can be found at http://mnohs.org/login

Blackboard

Blackboard is the MNOHS learning management system (LMS). It is where students attend classes, find their learning activities, interact with teachers and other students, and receive grades and feedback on their course work. It’s also where you can check your student's course-by-course progress on a daily or weekly basis.

You will be sent your observer user name and password in a separate mailing. If you need your username or password, please email password@mnohs.org or contact Blackboard is accessed at http://mnohs.blackboard.com. It's a good idea to bookmark this page as we encourage you to check your student’s progress regularly.

When you sign in, you'll find yourself on the tab called My MNOHS. On this tab, you'll see links to announcements in each of your student’s courses. You’ll also see the Parent Dashboard link at the top left of the My MNOHS tab (under Tools)

If you are observing more than one MNOHS student, use the Parent Dashboard to select which student’s progress you want to monitor (click to open the dropdown menu circled in red on the screenshot below).

Even if you are only monitoring one student, the Parent Dashboard will tell you at a glance the last date and time they logged into the MNOHS Blackboard system.
Next click on the My Courses tab. From this tab, you can enter each course in which your student is currently enrolled.

In each course, you can view the:

- Announcements page, with current information about what’s going on in each course and teacher contact information;
- Course Syllabus;
- "Getting Started" folder, which is an orientation for each course;
• My Progress page (opens as My Grades) which lists each graded learning activity and your student’s status regarding it; and
• Information about accessing MNOHS Tech Support.

Please check My Progress regularly. You can see at a glance where your student stands on each assignment—including which assignments/assessments your student has submitted to the teacher for grading, and how many points were earned. The assignments/assessments for the entire semester are listed in order and labeled by week (Week 1, Week 2, etc.) so that you can more easily tell how your student is progressing. Use the MNOHS pace chart to see which link your student should be working on.

Semester courses at MNOHS are broken into two quarters, which are labeled Part 1: Weeks 1-8 and Part 2: Weeks 9-16. **Grades given at the quarter break are final grades** that will appear on your student’s transcript. The school calendar and pace chart show quarter end dates.
At the top of the My Progress page (opens as My Grades), you will find two calculations—one called Current W 1-8 the other called Current W 9-16. These calculations show total points earned divided by all the possible points that can be earned through the current week as a percentage. These figures are the basis of the student’s quarter grades.

If your student is on pace in the course, you should see this percentage for the current quarter hovering in the passing range of 60-100%. New assignments are included in the total points possible at the end of each MNOHS week.

A video tutorial on checking your student’s progress can be found in the Parent Resources folder in Blackboard > Student Activities or accessed at http://youtu.be/qus3yKYW6r4