Grades 3-8
Parent Orientation Guide
2016-2017

Visit the TOPS Secrets of Success Website at http://TOPS.k12start.com/

TODAY WE LEARN. TOMORROW WE LEAD!

Texas Online Preparatory School 1955
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2016-2017 Administrative Staff

Dr. Sara Baker..................Head of K12 Texas Schools
Dawn Kaiser...................Deputy Head of School
Leslie Smith..................Principal (Grades 3-12)
Forrest Smith.................Assistant Principal (Grades 3-12)
Katie Skillrud...............Operations Manager
Nolan Martin...............Registrar
Paula Mobley...............School Accountability Manager
Tricia Hamilton..........Testing Coordinator
Teri Heims...............Special Programs Manager
Debby Hester........504 Coordinator
Shannon Peacock..........RTI / Dyslexia Coordinator
Stephanie Makulinski......ELL Coordinator
Tom Troxell...........Special Education Curriculum Coordinator
Alisha Valdez............Lead Teacher, Grades 3-8
Megan Freeman.........Curriculum Coordinator, Grades 3-8
Allyson Arnwine........Lead Teacher, Grades 9-12
Christy Brewer..........Curriculum Coordinator, Grades 9-12
MISSION STATEMENT

TOPS is a partnership of families, teachers, and administrators that empowers students in a flexible learning environment with challenging curriculum, regardless of geographic, financial, or demographic circumstance. Our continuing mission is to provide Texas students with an excellent education that is grounded in high academic standards, in order to help our students achieve their full academic and social potential. The core philosophy of TOPS is that all young people can achieve academic excellence if they are provided rigorous instruction, high standards, informed guidance, and individual attention. Although we use the computer as a learning tool, we believe that education is primarily a human endeavor that relies on caring individuals – specifically, involved parents and committed teachers and administrators.

MOTTO / VISION

Today we learn. Tomorrow we lead!

Mascot: Tigers
Colors: Green and White
INTRODUCTION

This Parent Orientation Guide sets forth general guidance for parents and students enrolled in the Texas Online Preparatory School (TOPS). TOPS operates under the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) and in partnership with Huntsville ISD / Sam Houston State University, and is subject to the rules and regulations of the Texas Education Agency.
### 2016-17 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

#### 2016

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#### 2016

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<tr>
<td>Jul 4</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
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<td>Sep 5</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Columbus Day</td>
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<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Veterans Day</td>
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#### State Testing Dates

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For more information, visit the website: www.calendarpedia.com
**IMPORTANT DATES**

- **August 22:** FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
- **August 15 – 26:** Fall Diagnostic Testing Window (PLA)
- **September 5:** Labor Day
- **October 7:** School Outing Day
- **October 10:** Columbus Day Holiday
- **October 17 – 21:** Interim Assessment Window (Study Island)
- **October 21:** End of Quarter 1
- **October 24:** Beginning of Quarter 2
- **October 28:** Quarter 1 report cards sent out
- **November 4:** School Outing
- **November 11:** Veteran’s Day Holiday
- **November 21 - 25:** Thanksgiving Break
- **December 5 – 9:** EOC Retesting (students taking HS courses only)
- **December 29 – January 2:** Winter Break
- **January 3:** School Resumes
- **January 3 – 6:** Interim Assessment Window (Study Island)
- **January 17 – 20:** Benchmark Assessments (Study Island)
- **January 11:** End of Quarter 2
- **January 12 - 13:** Teacher Work Day/Student Holiday
- **January 16:** MLK, Jr. Holiday
- **January 17:** Beginning of Quarter 3
- **January 24:** Quarter 2 report cards sent out
- **Jan 27:** School Outing Day
- **February 20:** President’s Day Holiday
- **February 24**: School Outing
- **March 13 - 17**: Spring Break
- **March 6 – April 5**: TELPAS Testing
- **March 20 – 24**: Interim Assessment Window (Study Island)
- **March 24**: End of Quarter 3
- **March 27**: Beginning of Quarter 4
- **March 28 – March 31**: STAAR Testing (grades 4, 5, 7, 8)
- **April 1**: Last day to order above grade level courses (Math/ELA only)
- **April 7**: Quarter 3 report cards sent out
- **April 7**: School Outing Day
- **April 14**: Staff/Student Holiday
- **April 24 - May 5**: Remediation CC Sessions for grades 5/8
- **May 1 - 5**: EOC Testing (students taking HS courses only)
- **May 9 - 13**: STAAR Testing (grades 3-8) and STAAR Retesting (grades 5/8)
- **May 19**: School Outing Day
- **May 22 – 26**: Interim Assessment Window (Study Island)
- **May 26- LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**: Last day to enter attendance
- **June 5 - 16**: Remediation CC Sessions for grades 5/8
- **June 2**: Final report cards sent out
- **June 5 - 16**: Round 1 Grade Placement Committee meetings for 5th/8th graders
- **June 19 - 23**: STAAR Retesting (grades 5 & 8)
- **July 19 - 23**: EOC Retesting (students taking HS courses only)
- **July 10 – 21**: Round 2 Grade Placement Committee meetings for 5th/8th graders
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

TOPS staff recognizes that life at school does not always run smoothly. As problems arise, school personnel and parents must collaborate to solve them. TOPS staff also realizes that parents and students do not always know what to do or where to seek out answers and often give up and become frustrated when problems remain unsolved. Please follow these procedures for general information or for assistance in resolving a problem:

**Step 1.** All concerns and issues should first be directed to the student’s teacher via phone or email. If a TOPS teacher cannot resolve the issue, he/she directs the parent to the appropriate contact for assistance.

**Step 2.** If the concern is not resolved at this level, parents are advised to contact the Lead Teacher.

**Step 3.** If you still have questions or concerns, you may discuss them with school administration. Please send your request for a meeting via email to Forrest Smith, Assistant Principal, at chsmith@k12.com or Leslie Smith, Principal, at lasmith@k12.com.
ADMISSION & ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Student must reside in the state of Texas
- Student must have been enrolled a Texas public school in the preceding school year*
- Students who have been expelled are not eligible for enrollment
- **State Tests**
  - Student must have met Level 2 on the previous school year’s STAAR scores.
  - 3rd Grade applicants must take and pass a Reading Assessment proctored in person with a TOPS staff member.
- **Attendance Record**
  - Students must have been in attendance at least 90% of the enrolled time in the previous school and provide official attendance records.
- **Transcript/Final Report Card**
  - High school students must be on track to graduate with their cohort year as verified by the student’s transcript.
  - Grades 3-8: Final report card stating student promoted to the next grade level

*Texas Education Code Sec. 30A.002. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY*
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Families new to TOPS are required to participate in a K\textsuperscript{12} course entitled \textit{Welcome to Online Learning}. This course will appear in the student’s daily plan in the Online School and needs to be the \textbf{VERY FIRST} course that the learning coach and the student complete together. The course is required and is intended to be completed during each day of the first five days of school. The TOPS teachers will actually offer daily Class Connect sessions or a recorded session to guide the learning coaches and students through this course. During this time the learning coach and student will:

- Receive instructions about how to best use the Online School (OLS)
- Review daily attendance and login requirements
- Learn how to use the synchronous tool \textit{Blackboard Collaborate}
- Complete the Reading & Math \textit{PLA} diagnostic assessments
- Log on to \textit{Study Island}, K\textsuperscript{12} ’s test preparation program
- Receive an introduction to all courses
- Get directions on communicating with the teacher via our internal mail system called K-mail

We believe learning coaches and students will benefit greatly from participation in this K\textsuperscript{12} course. We know that the lessons will help jump start the school year so learning coaches and students will soon be swiftly soaring to success!

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

TOPS students are subject to the rules and restrictions implemented by Texas Online Preparatory School and the Student Code of Conduct: Acceptable Use Guidelines for the Internet. Students enrolled in TOPS should be aware of the following guidelines and expectations. Any activity that is not listed here, which violates local, state, or federal laws, is considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Guidelines.

\textbf{Acceptable Use Guidelines for the Internet:}

- Posting anonymous messages online is not permitted unless authorized by the course's online teacher. Impersonating another person is also strictly prohibited.
- Students must use only their own user names and passwords, and must not share these with anyone.
- Students may not interfere with other users’ ability to access TOPS or disclose anyone’s password to others or allow them to use another user’s account. Students are responsible for all activity that is associated with their usernames and passwords.
- Students should change their password(s) frequently, at least once per semester is encouraged.
- Students must not publicly post their personal contact information (address and phone number) or anyone else’s.
- Students must not publicly post any messages that were sent to them privately.
- Students are not allowed to download, transmit or post material that is intended for personal gain or profit, non-TOPS commercial activities, non-TOPS product advertising, or political lobbying on a TOPS owned instructional computing resource.
Students may not use TOPS instructional computing resources to sell or purchase any illegal items or substances.

It is not allowed to upload or post any software on TOPS instructional computing resources that are not specifically required and approved for student assignments.

**Inappropriate Behavior:**

- Insults or attacks of any kind against another person.
- Use of obscene, degrading, or profane language.
- Harassment (continually posting unwelcome messages to another person) or use of threats.
- Posting material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person. This includes distributing “spam” mail, chain e-mail, viruses, or other intentionally destructive content.

TOPS reserves the right to review any material transmitted using TOPS instructional computing resources or posted to a TOPS instructional computing resource to determine the appropriateness of such material. TOPS may review this material at any time, with or without notice. E-mail transmitted via TOPS instructional computing resources is not private and may be monitored.

TOPS assumes no responsibility for information obtained via the Internet, which may be illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or offensive. TOPS assumes no responsibility for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from the use of instructional computing resources. TOPS also denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through user access. Any statement, accessible on the computer network or the Internet, is understood to be the author’s individual point of view and not that of TOPS, its affiliates, or its employees. TOPS assumes no responsibility for damages to the user's computer system.

Nothing in this policy negates any obligation the student and Learning Coach have to use the instructional computing resources as required in the Use of Instructional Property Agreement ("Agreement") the Learning Coach or guardian signed as part of the student's enrollment packet. In the event that this Code conflicts with the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall prevail.

**Violation Consequences:**

- Removal of student access to TOPS instructional computing resources, which could result in his/her inability to complete learning activities.
- Suspension or expulsion from TOPS.
- Involvement with law enforcement agencies and possible legal action.

TOPS administration reserves the right to update or alter this agreement at any time. Such revisions may substantially alter access to TOPS instructional computing resources. TOPS instructional computing resources include any computer, software, or transmission system that is owned, operated, or leased by TOPS.
**EXPECTATIONS**

**Serving as the learning coach is a full-time job.** TOPS' program is challenging. Parents of students in grade 3 through 8 can expect to work with their student six to seven hours per day in addition to lesson planning to maintain a typical school year's pace for accomplishing lessons associated with assigned grade levels. The Online School® and its curriculum both have the flexibility that allows for students to be challenged according to their mastery of skills. Most students spend between 25 and 50 percent of their day actually online and the remainder of their time working offline completing assignment in workbooks, printed lessons, or other related activities.

TOPS has chosen the K12® curriculum because it is designed to help children exceed state, national and international standards.

Lesson planning, materials preparation, progress planning, teaching and the administration of a student's day-to-day education are both exciting and challenging. All of these things require parental commitment to the discipline and organization implicit in the skills needed to manage a first-class education.

Please read the “I Understand and Agree” statements below very carefully as these expectations should be a part of each parent’s calculation of commitment as a TOPS parent. While these expectations were included in the application packet, now is a good opportunity to revisit that commitment.

---

**I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE**

The purpose of this “I Understand” section is to set expectations for TOPS parents. Student success is a primary goal of TOPS and that can only be achieved if you, the parent, are successful. To be successful it is important that parents of TOPS students understand and are in agreement with the following curricular and attendance requirements:

- I understand that my student is enrolled in a public school with attendance requirements that I am expected to meet. The state requirement is an average of 7 hours per day. Please see the Instructional Time section of the Parent/Student Handbook for more information. Students who have poor attendance (insufficient hours recorded over time in the system) may be referred to the juvenile courts system as a truant student in need of supervision.

- I accept the responsibility to supervise my student in using the K12® curriculum, and I understand that I am expected to become knowledgeable about it. Any other work accomplished by the student is supplemental to, and not in place of, the K12® curriculum lessons. TOPS does not consider it acceptable to leave a student home alone or unsupervised to complete coursework.

- I understand and agree that student progress is an expected part of the TOPS program in addition to the hours logged, and that my student is expected to complete the work of one grade level in one academic year. I understand that my student should be completing all of the listed assignments in the course calendars and/or OLS schedule each week in each subject. I am committed to ensuring that my student meets this expectation.

- I understand and agree that I am expected to follow the guidance and support of a certified teacher in implementing the TOPS program with my student.
- I understand and agree that I am expected to participate in regular conferences and meetings with my student’s teacher, and that my student must submit work samples as required.

- I understand and agree that, as students in a public school, TOPS students are required to participate in state testing, PLA diagnostic testing, and Benchmark testing. I understand my child is expected to fully participate in the testing at his/her enrolled grade level and that I am required to provide transportation to all testing sites regardless of distance.

- I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to secure an Internet service provider and that I am reimbursed according to the school policy and compliancy with the program, as described in this handbook. My student is also required to have a working microphone.

- I understand and agree that TOPS is a full-time public school program and that my student may not be enrolled in any other full-time or part-time school.

- I understand that if my child receives special services, they may not be provided in the home and I must provide transportation to those services.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

All work submitted and/or marked complete in the OLS is assumed to have been completed only by students from their own student account. Students should not have access to the learning coach login credentials. Students are also 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 Principal and will result in a conference with the student’s parent and/or Learning Coach. Students who violate this policy are subject to the following consequences.

Consequences

First Offense- The parent is informed and the student will have the opportunity to redo the assignment with a 25-point deduction.

Second Offense- Conference with teacher and lead teacher. The student will receive a zero on the assignment with no opportunity to resubmit.

Third Offense- The student will receive a zero on the assignment and will be required to do a presentation over plagiarism at a mandatory meeting with the teachers, parents, and Assistant Principal.

Fourth Offense- Possible expulsion hearing with the Principal.

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 is not tolerated are:

- Copying or rephrasing another student's work.
- Taking material from Internet sources and using it as your own, even if some words are changed.
- Having someone else write an assignment or rephrase any part of an assignment (not just proofread it).
- Directly copying student aids (for example, CliffsNotes), critical sources, or reference materials in part or in whole without acknowledgment.
- Indirect reproduction of students aids, such as CliffsNotes, Coles Notes, critical sources, or reference materials by rephrasing ideas borrowed from them without acknowledgment.

Source Citation
Many courses require written work in which students need to cite sources. Any direct quotations from a textbook can simply be cited as (Author, Page Number). Any quotations from outside sources require full citations, including author, title, publisher, date of publication, and page number. If a student cites information found on a Web site, he/she provide the complete Web page or site title, URL, author if known, page number if applicable, and publication date of the site, if available, and date of access.
SCHOLAR CODE & PLEDGE

As a student at TOPS, I take personal ownership of my education and behavior. I understand and embrace the scholarly traits which will lead me to success.

Scholarly traits:

- **Goal Oriented** – I have goals and I strive every day to reach them.
- **Perseverance** – I don’t give up. If I have struggles, I seek to resolve them.
- **Pride** – I always take pride my school and my work.
- **Curiosity** – I have questions and I look for answers.
- **Resourcefulness** – I use resources and references to the best of my ability.
- **Organization** – I have a personal system for organizing and collecting ideas.
- **Academic Integrity** – I practice honesty in all aspects of my learning.

_____In addition, I know the unethical behaviors of cheating and plagiarism are NOT tolerated. I understand that these behaviors will damage my chances for success and also impact the success of others.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

Failing to provide proper credit and citations when:

- Copying another person’s actual spoken or written words
- Using another person’s idea, opinion, or theory
- Using facts, statistics, graphs, drawings, and pieces of information that are not common knowledge
- Paraphrasing another person’s spoken or written words
- Downloading papers or excerpts from a website and turning them in as your own

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying, stealing, borrowing, or turning in as one’s own, the work of another student
- Loaning your work to another student to help him/her complete an assignment
- Collaborating on assignments without instructor’s permission and submitting as your own work
- Getting or giving questions to other students in another section to help with a test
- Purchasing, downloading or copying software programs, documents, graphic designs, papers, assignments, tests or answer keys from the Internet to complete any part of an assignment
- Copying or taking pictures of tests, test questions or answers and posting on internet websites like Facebook or sharing test information in any public forum
- Multiple submission or using work previously submitted for course credit at TOPS or any other school, even if it is revised or altered
I understand the consequences for plagiarism and cheating listed below.

Consequences

First Offense- The parent is informed and the student will have the opportunity to redo the assignment with a 25-point deduction.

Second Offense- Conference with teacher and lead teacher. The student will receive a zero on the assignment with no opportunity to resubmit.

Third Offense- The student will receive a zero on the assignment and will be required to do a presentation over plagiarism at a mandatory meeting with the teachers, parents, and Assistant Principal.

Fourth Offense- Possible expulsion hearing with the Principal.

Finally, I realize my scholarship, academic honor, and integrity is an important part of all future endeavors and the consequences of my actions may also result in the loss of scholarships, recommendations, and college admissions as well as internships and job opportunities.

_________________________  _________________________  __________
Student Name                  Student Signature                  Date

_________________________  _________________________  __________
Parent Name                   Parent Signature                   Date

** This form must be signed and returned to your homeroom teacher by the end of the first nine weeks of school. **
COMPLIANCY & BACK ON TRACK PLANS (BOT)

Families who enroll their children in the Texas Online Preparatory School agree to the “I Understand” statements listed in this Parent Orientation Guide. These expectations represent the basic minimums to which parents and students must comply in order to experience success in the Texas Online Preparatory School. The POG is sent to parents in email and parents should complete the survey to note they have read the POG.

The vast majority of families who enroll with the Texas Online Preparatory School consistently and conscientiously comply with these expectations. However, as the school year progresses, some families may demonstrate the inability or unwillingness to fulfill one or more of the “I Understand” statements.

In the event that a student is non-compliant with school expectations, his/her continued enrollment is in danger and the teacher will implement a Back on Track Plan (BOT) as a last attempt to get the student on track and avoid failure or possible withdrawal from the program. Students may also be referred to the school administration for further action.

It is the goal of the Texas Online Preparatory School to partner with parents in order to ensure that all students are successful and the school remains compliant with state and local requirements. If there is no response to this attempt to resolve the student’s non-compliance within the provided timeline on the BOT, the student’s continued enrollment may be jeopardized.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Texas statute requires all public schools offer a minimum of one-hundred-eighty (180) days of instruction. Additionally, TOPS requires an average of 7 hours of instructional time per day. For a student to receive credit, TEC §25.092 requires that a student be in attendance 90% of the scheduled school days. This attendance requirement is prorated for students enrolling after August 22, 2016. Your teacher will help you develop a weekly schedule to ensure that your student meets this requirement.

TOPS students may log instructional time anytime during the day and on any day of the week between the first day of school, August 22, 2016 and the last day of school on May 26, 2017. Students are required to school through May 26, 2017. Any requests for a student to finish the school year early must be approved by the Principal. Attendance cannot be logged after May 26, 2017. Instructional time must directly relate to lesson objectives which are aligned to the standards set forth in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
Texas statute requires all public schools offer a minimum of one-hundred-eighty (180) days of instruction. Additionally, TOPS requires an average of 7 hours of instructional time per day as stated in the TEC §25.082 (SCHOOL DAY; PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE; MINUTE OF SILENCE. (a) A school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.).

For a student to receive credit, TEC §25.092 requires that a student be in attendance 90% of the scheduled school days. Following the schedule set forth in each week’s course plan will ensure that your student meets this requirement. TOPS students may log instructional time anytime during the day and on any day of the week between the first day of school, August 22, 2016, and the last day of school on May 26, 2017. Students are required to go to school through the very last day. Attendance cannot be logged after May 26, 2017. Instructional time must directly relate to lesson objectives which are aligned to the standards set forth in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Live attendance and participation in remediation is required and counts towards attendance.

Attendance for TOPS students is accounted for in the following ways:
1. Student working in coursework whether on or offline in the Online School (OLS) or Learning Management System (LMS);
2. Student participation in assigned virtual online sessions with state-certified teachers.

Attendance credit will be submitted for each approved student to the Texas Education Agency two ways: full day present or full day absent. Full day present and full day absent are determined based on the total minutes below, which are logged by the Learning Coach:

Attendance Credit Chart
Grades 3-8:
420 minutes or greater daily = Full day present

Grade 9-12:
420 minutes or greater daily = Full day present

Excused Absences
When a parent/legal guardian knows that their student will be absent, it is requested that the parent/legal guardian give the school prior written notice of the upcoming absence.

Texas Online Preparatory School considers the following factors, as defined by Texas Education Agency (TEA), to be a “reasonable” excuses and will result in an “excused absence” for time missed from school:

- Personal illness (a written physician’s statement verifying the illness may be required);
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Death in the immediate family; shall mean: parents, legal guardians, spouse, brothers, sisters, children, grandparents, parents-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts and uncles;
- Family emergency; circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent or legal guardian for the safety or health of the student (the reasonableness of the parent’s or legal guardian’s concern is subject to evaluation by the Head of School, Head of School’s
designee, on a case-by-case basis);

- Other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Head of School, Head of School’s designee, on a case-by-case basis, including, but not limited to, homelessness and its attendant difficulties.

When it is necessary for a student to be absent, it is the parent’s responsibility to call or email the student’s Homeroom Teacher/Advisor. The will send the information to the attendance clerk.

**Required sessions**

Failure to attend required Class Connects, Intervention, Target Teach, Remediation or Tutoring sessions is considered absence from school and may result in truancy being filed. *Each student’s grades and standing in the course will determine their individual expectations for attending sessions.* Teachers will notify students if they are required to attend a session.

**Accumulated Unexcused Absences and Truancy Process**

Students who do not attend required online sessions or fail to log attendance within the Online School when required, will be considered absent for the required amount of time unless a valid written excuse is provided to the Attendance Clerk. Absences not identified as “reasonable” above will be considered “unexcused.” Families who fail to log a full day in the Online School are subject to unexcused absences (see Attendance Credit Chart above).

A student is deemed truant when he/she is absent from school without an acceptable excuse when three (3) unexcused absences are accumulated. The parent/legal guardian must submit a Dr.’s note or a written excuse for absences that are deemed as excused. (See 1-7 under excused absences).

**(5) Unexcused Absences:** Students who accumulate a total of five (5) absences will be sent a warning letter via personal email/email by their Attendance Clerk.

**(10) Unexcused Absences:** Students who accumulate a total of ten (10) absences will be sent an invitation to attend a Truancy Mediation Hearing via personal email/email. Parents and students (if necessary) will be required to attend a meeting with school personnel in Blackboard Collaborate, which is subject to include; teachers, Administrators, Truancy Officer, and anyone else designated by the Head of School, to discuss the absences and a truancy plan for improvement. Failure to attend the meeting can result in truancy charges will be filed at the student or parent’s local court.

In the event that a TOPS student’s chronic truancy results from homelessness, the student’s enrollment rights at TOPS shall be based on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq., and the Texas Education For Homeless Children Act Sec 721

**(15) Unexcused Absences:** After a total of fifteen (15) or more total absences are accumulated for any student, the student will be withdrawn and ineligible for return for the current school year.
Student Engagement and Non-Compliance Policy

The Texas Online Preparatory School is a full-time, tuition-free public, online, college preparatory school.

TOPS is designed to be a personalized and more flexible schooling option for families who prefer to educate students in the home. The curriculum is approved by the Texas Education Agency and teachers are certified by the Texas Education Agency in the subject areas in which they teach.

Requirements for schooling with TOPS are:

1. Actively participating in courses by completing course assignments in all courses.
2. Actively engaging in instruction.
3. Attending required in-person state assessments, such as STAAR, TELPAS and STAAR/EOC testing.

Enrollment and active engagement:

Based upon the Texas Administrative Code 70.1015(a)(1) *, students are not considered to be enrolled until they begin receiving instruction and actively engage in instructional activities.

*Failure to log in to courses and actively engage in instructional activities (coursework and class sessions) for a period not to exceed ten days will be considered rejection of enrollment into the program and the seat may be revoked and given to the next eligible student.*

Continued enrollment with Texas Online Preparatory School requires that students actively participate in courses and engage in instructional activities. Students who are not completing coursework and who are not engaging in instructional activities will be considered to no longer be enrolled and will be reported to the Texas Education Agency as withdrawn from TOPS as required by the Texas Administrative code TAC 70.1015(a)(3) *. The student’s district of residence will be notified that the student is no longer enrolled with TOPS.

*TAC 70.1015 TXVSN Enrollment, Advancement and Withdrawal

(a) A student taking a course through...a TxVSN Online School (OLS) program is considered to:

(1) be enrolled...when he or she begins receiving instruction and actively engages in instructional activities in a …course;

(2) have successfully completed a course if the student demonstrates academic proficiency and earns credit for the course, as determined by the TxVSN teacher; and

(3) be, and must be reported as, withdrawn from the TxVSN when the student is no longer actively participating in the TxVSN course or program.

This will apply for all students, including those served by special programs. School officials may make exceptions for students in extraordinary circumstances.

When students are withdrawn from TOPS for the reasons notated above, TOPS will notify the school district in which the student resides within three business days of withdrawing a student from TOPS, per Texas Administrative Code §100.1211.
Students who are not actively participating will be referred to the Homeroom Teacher for the development of a Back On Track Plan (BOT). The BOT Plan will be individualized for the student and will set goals to foster re-engagement, active participation, and progression in coursework. Students successfully meeting Back on Track goals will be considered to be making progress and actively participating.

Campus administration will hold a final meeting with families prior to considering withdrawal. Families/students who have not progressed on Back On Track goals (actively engaged and making progress) and do not attend the required meeting with campus administration, may have their seat revoked and be reported to the state as withdrawn from TOPS.

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**ATTENDANCE FAQs**

1. **When can I log attendance?**
   You are able to log attendance from your first day of school, your assigned School Start Date, until the last day of school, May 26, 2017.

   For Grades 3-8, attendance must be logged in the LC’s account daily in the Online School (OLS); HS attendance must be marked daily by the LC in the Online School and in the **Learn Management System** (LMS) by the student. Please see below important attendance (truancy) information:

   - On the student’s 3rd absence, you will receive an email/email and a personal call from your Attendance Specialist.
   - On the student’s 5th absence, you will receive an email/email advising you of the absence. As a truancy prevention measure, you will receive a notice for a mandatory online mediation hearing with your Attendance Specialist (via Blackboard Collaborate) to address the reasons for the excessive absences (TEC 25.095(2)). At that time, you will be required to sign a mediation agreement (plan) to avoid any additional absences.
   - On the student’s 8th absence, you will receive a phone call from the Truancy Officer as a reminder not to accumulate any additional absences.
   - On the student’s 10th absence, the law requires that court action be taken (TEC 25.0951). At that time truancy proceedings will begin. Filing will take place in your local court and you will be required to appear before the judge and may be subject to a fine.

2. **What attendance requirements do I need to fulfill by May 26, 2017**
   Your child needs to have 180 days AND 1080 hours of attendance logged by the last day of school (hours are prorated based on enrollment date).

3. **What if my child exceeds the required attendance hours?**
   Your child is encouraged to attend school above the required attendance hours, but not required to do so. A minimum of seven hours must be logged daily in order for a student to be counted present for the school day. Less than seven hours logged will result in accrual of unexcused absences.

4. **Where do I need to log my child’s attendance and how often?**
   Student attendance hours are logged on the attendance screen in the parent’s OLS and must be entered daily. At no time should a student be entering his/her own attendance.

5. **Why should I log attendance?**
   In addition to meeting the legal attendance requirements for TOPS, logging attendance provides you and your child with a log of the work accomplished and is a required as TOPS is a Texas public school.

6. **What are supplemental hours?** Provided you complete your K12 coursework first, attendance time may be logged for activities in which your student engages that relate to the course objectives. Please contact your teacher before entering supplemental attendance time to
ensure the additional activity you wish to include satisfies course objectives.

7. What should I do if I forgot to log my child’s supplemental hours?
Contact your teacher and he/she will assist you in logging supplemental hours.

8. How many hours should my child log if they enrolled after the start of school?
Hours are prorated based on a student’s start date. Students who start after the first day of school should follow the daily or weekly attendance guidelines outlined in the Instructional Time section of this Parent/Student Handbook

9. Do I log attendance for the actual time the lesson took or just the default time that comes up on the OLS?
You must log the actual amount of time it took for the student(s) to complete the lesson(s) each day. If you consistently observe your student(s) complete lessons before he/she accumulates the required amount of time, you may benefit from setting a time limit to each subject rather than just expecting one lesson per day. From the landing page you will click the word “Attendance”

When you click “Attendance”, an additional screen will appear. In the top right corner of the screen you will see how many missing days you have:

When you click “View” next to missing days, all of the dates will appear that attendance has not been logged for. You will need to select the date and log hours for that particular date. You should never see any days of missing attendance.
The system will now display alerts on your account for missing days and hours:

10. If I am absent, who do I send my absence notification to? 
   You would send your absence notification to your Homeroom Teacher.

11. Where do I send doctor’s notes or excused absence notes to? 
   Doctor’s note should be emailed to your Homeroom Teacher.
**STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records are maintained at the TOPS office. Parents/legal guardians may contact the TOPS office to obtain a copy of student records. A copying fee may be assessed. If parents change their address, telephone, e-mail address, or place of employment, they are asked to follow the procedure below. Parents are responsible for keeping contact information current within the account setup section of the OLS®.

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**CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Mailing Address**

In the event your address is different and needs to be changed, TWO new proofs of residence are required in order to update your address in the K12 and state systems. TOPS will need two of the documents listed below. Once these documents have been submitted, our administrative office will be happy to update your new address.

**To confirm your address please follow the steps below:**

1) Log into the OLS with your username and password;  
2) Click “My Account” at the top right of your screen;  
3) Select “My Account” from the drop down menu;  
4) Your address will appear.

Please submit two of the following documents as new proofs of residence:

- Mortgage Statement;
- Lease;
- Utility Bill (gas, water, or electric) – must show service address;
- Property Tax Statement;
- Texas Driver's License or Texas ID with new address on it;
- Internet/Phone/Cable Bill – must show service address. If you have a bundle service, please submit your entire bill to ensure the proper information is received.

Please ensure the proofs of residence are in the name of the parent/guardian, otherwise the documents will not be accepted.

If the proofs of residence you are submitting are not in your name, you will need to fill out a form and have it notarized (contact school office for the form). You will send this notarized form in with your two new proofs of residence.

Please fax these two new proofs of residence to 1.888.506.6777. Attn: Address Change

If you have any questions regarding your address change, please send a k-mail to your
appropriate grade level registrar. Your homeroom teacher will be able to tell you the name of your appropriate grade level registrar. You may also contact the TOPS Administrative Office at 972-420-1404, Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm if you have additional questions.

**Email Address and Phone Number**

This can be done by parents in the “My Account” area under “My Info” in the Online School.
WITHDRAWALS

If a parent wants to withdraw their student from TOPS, they should contact their homeroom teacher to begin the withdrawal process. The teacher will work with the family and possibly refer them to other administrators to speak with before withdrawing. Once the withdrawal has been confirmed with the parent, the TOPS office will email a form to the parent’s personal email address to be completed and returned. Once the forms are received, the Registrar will request final grades from the homeroom teacher who will then submit those to the Registrar and the withdrawal will then be completed.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Due to the design of the linear calendar, students in a traditional school are expected to progress at the same rate during the one-hundred-eighty day (180) day school year. High-performing students may be held back and low-performing students may be left behind. All students are presented the same lesson at the same time. Students are often not required to master the lesson objectives before advancing to the next grade level. Advancement of students before they are ready may result in gaps or deficiencies of knowledge that is essential for success in the next subject level.

Decisions to advance in a course level are made jointly by the parent and teacher at any time of the year. Advancement of a student from one course level to the next requires the approval of the Principal. Students are required to master at least 90% of the course objectives before advancing to the next course level. This approach results in a solid foundation of core knowledge essential for success in the next subject level.

Pursuant to the Student Success Initiative, TOPS must notify students and parents of mandatory state testing requirements. As part of the Student Success Initiative, fifth grade and eighth grade students must meet the expected standard on the STAAR Reading and the STAAR Math assessments to be promoted to the next grade level.

Your teacher will review the STAAR testing dates with you. The very firm expectation for TOPS is that your student will attend the STAAR testing on the given date.

MANDATORY TESTING INFORMATION

Attendance is mandatory at all TOPS testing events. Parents must ensure that students participate in all required state and local testing. This testing includes but is not limited to PLA and Study Island benchmarks (either online or in person) and all STAAR testing. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from all testing, regardless of distance.
Lack of participation in required testing may result in failing grades and may place the student’s continued enrollment at risk. If a student misses any testing (PLA, Study Island benchmarks, STAAR, and TELPAS if applicable), the student will receive a zero for participation. A doctor’s note is required for missed STAAR testing. Students who choose not to attend testing will be referred to the Principal. Vacations, holidays, and/or doctor’s appointments cannot be scheduled during any testing dates.

It is very important that your child participate in the State of Texas STAAR assessments given to every student in grades 3–8. Not participating in the assessments has negative consequences for the student, the school, and the district.

As is the case for all Texas public schools, Texas Online Prep is required to administer state issued standardized testing to all students in the district. There is no "option" to permit your child to opt-out of STAAR testing. State statute, Tex. Educ. Code Sec. 26.010, in its entirety states as follows:

26.010. EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION.

(a) A parent is entitled to remove the parent's child temporarily from a class or other school activity that conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs if the parent presents or delivers to the teacher of the parent's child a written statement authorizing the removal of the child from the class or other school activity. A parent is not entitled to remove the parent's child from a class or other school activity to avoid a test or to prevent the child from taking a subject for an entire semester.

(b) This section does not exempt a child from satisfying grade level or graduation requirements in a manner acceptable to the school district and the agency.

While you may hear numerous justifications to opt-out of testing, parents should understand that in accordance with longstanding statutory interpretation and at least one prior ruling by the Texas Attorney General, the terms "test" and "assessment" are interchangeable, and there is no distinction. Accordingly, the Texas Education Agency and Texas Virtual Academy will interpret Tex. Educ. Code Sec. 26.010 as intended, which does not permit parents to opt-out of testing.

Results from STAAR reading/English language arts and mathematics are used to satisfy the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements in determining the school and district accountability ratings. Schools and districts that do not have a testing participation rate at or above the 95th percentile will be deemed ineligible to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

STAAR results from grades 3–8 are also used for promotion to the next grade level and are intended to provide schools with an assessment of student understanding in order to guide future instructional decisions for students during the following school year. Students who do not participate in one or more STAAR assessments are subject to the following:

- Students who do not participate in STAAR will be deemed non-proficient at their grade level because they will receive a zero score on the subject area assessment.
Students who were absent from testing will take a make-up test later that same week. (The exception to this is math and reading for grades 5 and 8 only.) If the parent requests in writing to opt their child out of STAAR tests, including the make-up tests, or if the student does not attend but completes any lessons that day, the student’s blank answer document(s) will be submitted to TEA as “scored.” Again, the score will be recorded as a zero, thus indicating the student is non-proficient at his/her grade level.

Students in grades 5 and 8 who do not meet the standards on the math and/or reading STAAR test will be required to attend the AIP (Accelerated Instruction Plan) Class Connect sessions during the summer.

Please read over the K^12 Testing Family Guide to State Testing which will be emailed to families in February.

### STAAR Tests by Grade Level

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Science</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### STAAR Testing Weeks

*Do not schedule any vacations or appointments during these weeks!*

- **March 28 & 29:** Grades 4 & 7 (Writing) and Grades 5 & 8 (Math and Reading)
- **May 8 - 12:** Grades 3-8
  - **May 8:** Grades 3, 4, 6, 7 (Math) and Grades 5 & 8 (Math Retest)
  - **May 9:** Grades 3, 4, 6, 7 (Reading) and Grades 5 & 8 (Reading Retest)
  - **May 10:** Grades 5 & 8 (Science)
  - **May 11:** Grade 8 (Social Studies)
  - **June 20 & 21:** Grades 5 & 8 (Retesting for Math and Reading)
*Note* These dates are selected by the state and any updates/changes will be communicated at that time.

**PLA (Personal Learning Assessments)**

Students will take two sets of PLA Diagnostic Assessments during the school year. Students will test in Math and Reading at the beginning and at the end of the school year. PLA Diagnostic Assessments are computer tests to be given in your home through a secure website. You will be e-mailed your child’s login information. The purpose of these tests is to provide your teacher with information on your child’s strengths, as well as areas which need additional focus this school year. All students should have their first assessments completed within two weeks of the start of the school year or their enrollment date if enrolled after the first day of school. The end-of-year exam must be completed before the student finishes the school year. Beginning and end-of-year Performance Assessments will be compared, and a growth score will be determined. Your teacher will share this information with you after the tests are taken. PLA tests are not optional. All students in all grades are required to take these tests. Students who do not take the assessments may not be eligible for course promotions.

Please note that you will need to use one of the following browsers so that the test can be scored: Internet Explorer 8 OR Mozilla Firefox Version 3.6.28. It is important to turn your pop-up blockers off and also always clear your cache and delete your cookies in between each assessment.

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**STUDY ISLAND**

Throughout the year, students will participate in Benchmark and Interim exams in Study Island (online test preparation program). The results of these and all other assessments will allow parents and teachers to work as partners in developing the best academic path for students. Students are also expected to work in this program on a daily basis and complete assigned lessons in order to both strengthen and build skills. Teachers will often use the Study Island program during Class Connect sessions.

Students who do not complete these assessments will receive a 0% for their grade. Failure to participate in these assessments may result in the student being required to attend mandatory tutorials, interventions or Class Connect sessions. Additionally, not complying with this requirement may result in your curriculum being locked until completed.
GRADING POLICY & REPORT CARDS

TOPS issues formal report cards every nine weeks. The final report card will be issued in June. Teachers will post all grades in the online grade book (Engrade). Parents will have a login for this online grade book and will be able to access student grades at any time. The final grade in each content subject, including electives, is determined by OLS progress from each reporting period, participation in all required school assessments, attendance to required Class Connects, teacher graded assignments, and work samples. If students do not participate in the assessments, they may not receive credit for the course, and promotion to the next grade level may be impacted.

To be promoted to the next grade, the student must meet the Texas Student Success Initiative requirements for that grade. Additionally, the student must have a final average of 70 or above in at least three core content courses. Students who fail two or more core courses, with one being math or ELA, may be retained. If a parent would like to request retention and the teacher does not agree, a Grade Placement Committee meeting will need to be held.

For each reporting period, the grade in a content area subject is comprised of the following:

Grading for Students in grades 3-8:

For Math, ELA, Science, and History:
60% OLS Progress/Assessments
40% Teacher Graded Assignments

For Art, Health, Technology, PE, and Music:
70% OLS Progress
30% Teacher Graded Assignments

For MS World Language (6-8):
This course is for enrichment only, so a grade will not be given.

Note:

If a student is taking a HS course, the grade for that subject will be determined by the HS teacher, and the scale above will not be used at all for that subject. Additionally, the grade will be reflected on the high school report card (each semester) and not on the quarterly 3-8 report card.

If the ARD committee decides upon a different grading scale for a student’s IEP, that grading scale will be used in place of the one outlined above.
3-8 Grading Scale for Grades 3-8 for Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies:
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 75-79%
D = 70-74%
F = Failing (below 70%)

3-8 Grading Scale for NON-CORE courses (Art, Music, PE, and Health) will be reported with a Pass or Fail:
P = 70-100%
F = Failing (below 70%)

- Grades for non-core subjects are determined by OLS assignments and work samples. CC attendance is optional for these courses.

S.O.A.R (Students on a Roll)

In an effort to encourage all students to get the best grade possible, this year, teachers will hold SOAR sessions to give any student a chance to earn a higher grade, even if they already passed. Please note: These sessions will be set up at the discretion of each teacher and will be based on the course content and needs of the students. No two SOAR sessions may look alike. The teacher reserves the right to determine which assignments apply to earn a higher grade for those who have already passed (may not include every assignment in the course).

Honor Roll
Honor Roll recognizes students for their hard work and provides an incentive to continue working diligently. Honor Roll status will be determined by teachers at the end of each quarter using the criteria below. Students will receive recognition after honor roll eligibility is determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal's Honor Roll</th>
<th>All grades must be an A (90) or better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honor Roll</td>
<td>All grades must be all A/B, with no more than two B grades (80+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OLS COURSE CALENDARS and OLS DAILY PLANS**

In order to differentiate the learning paths for our students, there are two options for planning out daily work.

1) **OLS Daily/Weekly Plan**: Students may choose to follow the daily plan as it is laid out in the online school. **Note**: The OLS lessons may or may not align with the content that is taught in the class connects each week, as teachers focus class connect lessons on the order in which content should be covered prior to state assessments. If grades or testing data shows the need, students may be required to starting following the course calendars instead.

2) **Specialized Course Calendar**: Students following this path will not use the OLS plan at all. Instead, they will follow a specific calendar provided by the teachers and do lessons in a particular order. The purpose of this plan is to re-order the lessons in the OLS in a way that they align perfectly with the class connect sessions and cover all state tested objectives before the test.

**Please Note**: Students in 8th grade Math are required to follow the course calendar instead of the OLS plan, to ensure they are the most prepared for the STAAR assessment.

All students are expected to complete at least 25% of each course by the end of each quarter. A progress grade will be assigned based on the amount of completed progress and will account for the progress portion of the overall report card grade for each course.
The Student Success Initiative

State Law Requirements
The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics.

Under the SSI grade advancement requirements, students are required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) grade 5 reading and mathematics tests to be promoted to sixth grade. Additionally, students are required to pass the STAAR grade 8 reading and mathematics tests to be promoted to ninth grade.

In addition to the SSI grade advancement requirements, state law mandates that high school students must not only meet all their course requirements but also perform satisfactorily on up to 15 end-of-course assessments in English, mathematics, science, and social studies to receive a diploma from a Texas public high school.

What Happens at Grades 5 and 8?
Fifth and eighth grade students have three opportunities to pass the STAAR reading test and three opportunities to pass the STAAR mathematics test. If a student does not pass one or both tests, the school must give the student additional instruction after each testing opportunity, and the student must participate in that instruction. Parents will be notified if their child does not pass a STAAR test that is required for promotion.

If a student has not passed after the second testing opportunity, a grade placement committee (GPC) is formed. The GPC, which consists of the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian, will create an instructional plan based on the individual needs of the student.

Parents’ Role in the Process
A student who is unsuccessful on the STAAR reading and/or mathematics test after the third testing opportunity will be retained automatically. However, the student’s parents may appeal the decision to have their child repeat the grade by submitting a request to the GPC within five working days of receiving the retention notice. The GPC may decide to promote a student to the next grade, but only if everyone on the committee agrees that the student is likely to succeed in the next grade. Even if the GPC decides to promote the student, the student must participate in the required additional instruction in order to be promoted.

Parents may request a waiver of the third testing opportunity if they do not want their child to test. If the waiver is approved, the student is automatically retained, but the parents may still appeal the retention. A student must participate in all additional instruction required by the GPC, even if the third testing opportunity is waived.

NOTE: For information about how the Student Success Initiative applies to students receiving special education services, check with the special education contact on your campus.
STATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Texas Senate Bill 42 states that students in elementary and middle school grades must have a minimum of 30 minutes of documented physical activity each day or a weekly total of 150 minutes. This daily activity needs to be tracked on the Fitness Log (found at the end of this POG). The time requirement is prorated for students enrolling after the first nine weeks. Students are required to complete 4 semesters of Physical Education in grades 6th through 8th.

ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT

It is important to understand that the decision to advance a student to the next course or grade level is made jointly by the parent and teacher and focuses on what is in the best interest of the child. Academic achievement through content mastery is the cornerstone of the Texas Online Preparatory School and the K12® curriculum. TOPS understands that children do not learn at the same rate or in the same manner. The program offers families flexibility in scheduling and instructional strategies. TOPS focuses on mastery of lesson objectives, encouraging families and students to spend the time needed daily and throughout the year to reach mastery of most lesson objectives.

It is the goal of TOPS to allow students to advance in Math and/or Language Arts at any time of the year up to April 1, 2017. Students cannot begin a high school course after September 12, 2016 unless they enroll mid-year and show documentation that the first semester of a high school course has been completed/started. Parents and teachers evaluate every student’s course level and grade level prior to the conclusion of the current school year. This evaluation does not affect course level changes, which can be made at any time up to April 1, 2017.

Together, the TOPS teacher and parent arrive at a decision on the advancement of the student. Advancement of a student from one course level to the next requires the approval of a Lead Teacher or the Principal. Sufficient progress in all courses is expected before course level advancement in one area may be considered. Students may only advance course levels in Math and/or Language Arts. Course level advancement in other courses will not be permitted unless a student enrolls with TOPS already having earned semester credit in High School. If a student is not on track with progress in any other subject, course level promotion requests will not be approved. In order to take a High School course in Middle School, a student has to complete the Middle School course first and/or score a Level III (Advanced) on the STAAR test in that subject the year before.
COURSE PROMOTIONS

Mid-Year Course Promotions

We intend that our students complete 100 percent of the content in each course, should time permit. With this in mind, mid-year course promotions are not ordered until a student has achieved at least 90 percent mastery of a course, with the understanding that a student will still complete 100 percent of that course. Students cannot begin a high school course after September 12, 2016 unless they enroll mid-year and show documentation that the first semester of a high school course has been completed/started.

End-of-Year Course Promotions

TOPS encourages students to complete all lessons in a course since courses in the subsequent grade levels assume completion of lessons in the prior grade. A lesson is completed when the student has mastered the objectives as measured by the lesson assessment. It may not be necessary to teach every lesson if the student can demonstrate mastery of the objectives on the assessments.

The Online School® is designed to collect and record data that substantiates the academic progress of our students. Therefore, it is mandatory that the Online School® be used to enter attendance and assessment data that reflects the standing of the student. The Online School® data serves as the primary tool for determining advancement into subsequent course levels. It is essential that parents understand that by signing on with Texas Online Preparatory School, they agree to participate in the program as designed including documenting regular and appropriate academic progress in the Online School®, participate in required conferences with the assigned teacher and participate in the state-mandated academic assessments.

TOPS requires that parents maintain samples of student work to assist teachers with the decision to advance a student to the next course/grade level. Examples of materials/work to keep on file include, but are not limited to, the following: handwriting samples, artwork, creative story samples, math worksheets and spelling tests.

At the Texas Online Preparatory School, we understand that our school is academically rigorous. Meeting the challenge of completing one year of course work in this model can be demanding.

Our certified teachers are here to assist parents and students to meet the associated challenges. Parents and students should utilize the teachers’ professional experience as students move through our program. Please see further information about this topic in the “Grading Policy” section of this document.
FINISHING THE YEAR EARLY

Students are required to work in the OLS every day through the last day of school, May 26, 2017. If a student needs to finish the school year prior to May 26, then a written request must be made to the Principal no later than May 1, 2017.

WORK SAMPLES / TEACHER GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to submit specific work samples as requested by their teachers. Work samples and their due dates will be communicated during Class Connect and in email. Part of a student’s grade is based on work sample submission.

Work samples will come from a variety of places: assignments, participation during CC sessions, graded quizzes, Study Island, OLS work, projects, etc. TOPS requires student work to be original with appropriate citations for references to published works when appropriate. Work samples must be turned in on time and submitted as requested through an online platform (surveys, k-mail, Blackboard Collaborate, Study Island, etc.). Parents should not "drop-off" work samples to teachers’ houses, at a school outing, or at the TOPS office at any time.

Work samples will be graded within 3 school days of the due date, with the exception of essays, which will be graded within 5-7 school days of the due date. Grades and comments will be visible in Engrade.

If a student completes an excessive number of lessons in one day, teachers will ask for work samples. If the requested work samples are not submitted by the due date assigned, those lessons will be put back on the student’s plan for completion again and the student may be placed on a Back on Track Plan. Do not discard any student work until after the school year ends.

COURSES

There are a few important points about the courses:

- Course Calendar plans from the teacher must be followed for 8th grade Math (not the OLS plan).
- If a student in grade 3-7 completes a Math or ELA course prior to April 1st, the next Math or ELA course will be ordered for that student once the teacher confirms satisfactory completion of the current course. This is not the case for 8th grade students, as high school credit courses cannot meet the "seat time" requirements if they are started that late. If a student receives a new course, that course is to be completed at the rate of 3% progress per week. It is not considered a “bonus” course that students can just work on as they choose.
- Grade 8 Health needs to be completed within one semester (90 days).
- Students in grades 3-5 are required to complete Art, Music, Physical Education and Health.
• Students in grades 6-8 are only required to complete one year of Fine Arts (Music or Art), two years of Physical Education, and 1.5 years of Health.
• Learning coaches can request for electives courses (in grades 6-8 only) to be dropped only within 6 weeks of the course's start date.
• World Language is available for grades 6-8 only and will be used for enrichment only. There will not be a grade given for World Language (Spanish or French).

• **COURSE ORDER CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>7th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td>TX2 Math + Purple</td>
<td>Texas Math + Red</td>
<td>Texas Math + Yellow</td>
<td>Texas Math - Fundamentals of Geometry and Algebra</td>
<td>Texas Math- MS Pre-Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td>Social Studies 3 (Texas)</td>
<td>Social Studies 4 (Texas)</td>
<td>Social Studies 5 (Texas)</td>
<td>Social Studies 6 (Texas)</td>
<td>Social Studies 7 (Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Science 3 (Texas)</td>
<td>Science 4 (Texas)</td>
<td>Science 5 (Texas)</td>
<td>Science 6 (Texas)</td>
<td>Science 7 (Texas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TX2 MS Pre-Algebra(new to K12 or struggled in Texas Math- MS Pre-Algebra) -OR- TX MS Algebra 1

American History A

Science 8 (Texas)
### ASSESSMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the year, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their acquisition of course academic objectives through the use of lesson assessments, work samples, unit assessments, online and offline benchmarking and STAAR testing. TOPS teachers request student work samples to assist in assessing a student’s academic progress. Additionally, TOPS teachers may ask the students to participate in conferences and small group or individual tutoring sessions to assess their understanding and comprehension. Students who do not complete required assessments may be referred to Academic Probation and have a Back on Track Plan.

Lesson assessments can be retaken up to three times to achieve mastery. If a student does not master an assessment on the first attempt, the Learning Coach should review the assessment with the student, re-teach whatever portions remain challenging to the student, allow for additional practice, and then allow the student to re-test. Students should never retake an assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art (opt) 6th needs art or music</th>
<th>Art 3</th>
<th>Art 4</th>
<th>American Art A</th>
<th>American Art B</th>
<th>Inter Art: World A</th>
<th>Inter Art: World B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music (opt) 6th needs art or music</td>
<td>Intro to Music</td>
<td>Intro to Music (new to K12 OR Intermediate 1 Music (Promoted from K12 3rd to 4th))</td>
<td>Exploring Music</td>
<td>Music Concepts A</td>
<td>Music Concepts B</td>
<td>Music Appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language (opt)</td>
<td>Spanish Middle School 1-AG</td>
<td>Spanish Middle School 2-AG</td>
<td>French Middle School 1-AG</td>
<td>French Middle School 2-AG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE 8th opt if 4 semesters PE in MS already complete</td>
<td>Physical Education 3 (Texas)</td>
<td>Physical Education 4 (Texas)</td>
<td>Physical Education 5 (Texas)</td>
<td>TX Physical Education 6 (Texas)</td>
<td>TX Physical Education 7 (Texas)</td>
<td>TX Physical Education 8 (Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
<td>Study Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness 3 (Texas)</td>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness 4 (Texas)</td>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness 5 (Texas)</td>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness 6 (Texas)</td>
<td>TX Health 8-1st semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>TX Computer Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
immediately after failing; not mastering is an indication that more work in the lesson is needed. Additional attempts will not be granted. If a student does not score 80% or better, the lesson will not show as “mastered,” but that is acceptable, and the grade earned may be recorded in the online gradebook (Engrade), depending on the grading policy for that specific subject. If a student takes an assessment multiple times, the most recent score is the one that is recorded in Engrade.

If a student completes an excessive number of lessons in one day, teachers will ask for work samples. If the requested work samples are not submitted by the due date assigned, those lessons will be put back on the student’s plan for completion and the student may be placed on a Back on Track Plan. Do not discard any student work until after the school year ends.

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**CLASS CONNECTS**

Teachers will hold Class Connect sessions throughout the week in the subject areas of Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, and PE per grade level. Some grade levels will also have Class Connect sessions for Health, Technology, and World Languages. Some lessons may be taught with an interdisciplinary focus (i.e. using reading strategies for social studies material).

Students are expected to attend all core subject sessions LIVE (Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts). Live electives sessions are optional. However, work sample grades may be taken, so it’s imperative that student review the recording to make up any missed assignments given out during the live session.

It is the responsibility of the parent/student to follow-up on any missed work. Attending class connect sessions live is equal to attending school. *Each student’s grades and standing in the course will determine their individual expectations for attending sessions.* Teachers will notify students if they are required to attend a session.

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**SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

Parents seek to provide the best possible education for their child and often enrich the child’s curriculum with extra activities and family trips. These activities may be logged in the student’s daily schedule and counted toward his/her mandatory hours of instruction if the activity directly relates to lesson objectives. However, it is important that parents discuss their supplemental activities with their student’s assigned TOPS teacher before logging the attendance time to ensure that the supplemental activities are permissible and recorded in the appropriate area(s) of the curriculum.
LOCKING CURRICULUM

A student’s curriculum may be locked for incomplete assessments (diagnostic, interim, benchmarks, and summative), missed required meetings or data conferences, missing immunizations and documents, and/or for other reasons the staff may deem necessary. Students should contact their homeroom teacher to get it unlocked. If curriculum remains locked for an extended period of time, the homeroom teacher will begin a Back on Track plan and potentially refer student to the Principal for possible administrative withdrawal.

STRONG START WEBSITE

This website is an important resource for our families. It includes outing and testing calendars, videos to help orient you to the school, a link to K12’s Parent Network, parent workshop recordings and much more. Be sure to bookmark it and check back often! http://tops.k12start.com/

PARENT/ STUDENT/ TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Certified Texas teachers are an essential component of the educational model utilized by the Texas Online Preparatory School. The teacher is responsible for validating student attendance, curricular progress and educational growth. The teacher is also the first point of contact for the parents and students with all issues regarding the school. Resources provided by TOPS teachers include: instructional and curricular support, organizational assistance, Blackboard Collaborate instruction and tutoring, and ‘good old-fashioned’ encouragement.

A healthy working relationship between the student/parent and the assigned TOPS teacher is essential. Parents and students are required to participate in conferences and class meetings with their TOPS teacher. It is essential for teachers to be able to speak with students. If a student is not available for a conference, the teacher will reschedule the meeting.

Email is a primary source of contact between the TOPS teacher and the parents/students; therefore, parents and students are encouraged to check their email at least twice a day (morning and evening). Parents and students are asked to promptly reply to any email received from TOPS or K12®. TOPS teachers are instructed to allow their voice mail to answer all incoming calls. This allows teachers to thoroughly research the answer to questions or problems posed by parents and to prioritize returning calls to make the most efficient and effective use of their time. This also allows long-distance calls to be charged to TOPS and not to the parent. Please be aware that teachers will be in class for a minimum of 20 hours per week and will not be available during instruction, meetings, conferences, and training sessions. Teachers are not expected to respond to messages after hours, on weekends, or holidays.

Parents and students are expected to inform their TOPS teacher of any changes to contact information. Parents must also update contact information within the account setup on the Online School®
The Online School® includes a landing page for each parent and student account. The landing page provides families easier access to all aspects of the Online School®. TOPS posts important, school-wide information in the Announcements section of the landing page.

CONFERENCES

One of the strongest points of the school’s program is the close monitoring of each student’s educational progress. Parents and students are required to participate in scheduled data conferences with their teacher. Conferences will be held each quarter. The conference is an opportunity to voice concerns, relay good news about the student, obtain enrichment ideas for the child, and discuss attendance and progress through the curriculum, which are vital to success in the program. The teacher and learning coach will also work together to set goals for the student and progress toward those goals will be reviewed during each conference.

The students are expected to participate in all conferences. Since regular attendance at these conferences is mandatory, it is expected that students and parents attend all of their scheduled conferences, provide 24 hours’ notice if a cancellation is required for the conference, and reschedule when it is cancelled.

CLASS MEETINGS & SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

School-wide assemblies will be held each Monday with the Principal and homeroom meetings will follow. All students in grades 3-8 will be expected to participate in Monday Morning Meetings (MMM) with their teachers. Each meeting will last no more than one hour. Teachers will present important information for both the students and parents. However, parental attendance is optional. These meetings are also a time for school announcements, reminders, homeroom celebrations and fun student activities. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce the relationship between the student and the teachers and also for students to have more time with their peers. This will also allow for building our school community. We encourage students to actively participate in these sessions, as it will contribute to the overall school experience.

CHILD FIND

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act includes the Child Find mandate. Child Find requires all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.

Parents are required to complete a Child Find questionnaire as part of enrollment. The form asks questions concerning a student’s history and identified needs in order to ensure that all TOPS students are properly identified and served. Additionally, parents can list academic concerns with their students and the Special Programs Team will follow up accordingly.
Parents who believe their student may have a disability can make a referral through their Homeroom Teacher/Advisor for academic assistance provided through the Response to Intervention Program and consideration for accommodations provided under Section 504 or Special Education services.

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**SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

TOPS is responsible for providing a free and appropriate education under the federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Documentation of the student's disability must be secured; including a previous Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a Full and Individual Evaluation. Special Education professionals assist parents in accessing and coordinating services pursuant to a current Individualized Education Plan. TOPS offers a wide continuum of services which may include: adaptations and modifications to the general education curriculum, specialized instructional strategies, and adjustments in pacing.

**What to expect:**

- Every special education student will be assigned a special education teacher in addition to their regular education teacher.
- The special education teacher will work with the learning coach on IEP goals; how to modify and adapt the learning environment; and curriculum paths for success.
- The special education teacher, the regular education teacher, and the learning coach will meet together for a conference via Blackboard once every quarter.
- The special education teacher will hold Class Connects online to assist students with their specific learning needs.
- The special education teacher is available to be used as a resource for instructional strategies and adaptations and modifications to the curriculum.
- ARD meetings will be held either online or through the use of a conference call line.
- The special education teacher will provide a progress report at the end of each grading period noting the progress on the student's IEP goals.
- Special Education students are required to meet the same attendance policies as their peers. The home environment, one on one instruction, and flexible schedule can help the students create a learning environment that meet their specific needs.

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**RELATED SERVICES**

Related services, placement and goals are determined by the ARD Committee. TOPS provides related services through contracts with service providers (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.). It is important for students and parents to attend all related services appointments in order for the student to receive maximum benefit and achieve IEP goals. We understand that it is our responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education to each enrolled special education student. Because TOPS is a virtual school of choice, we strive to provide speech and other related services virtually whenever possible. However, we understand that each student’s needs are different and the virtual model for related service delivery may not be
appropriate for all. Face to face therapy can be considered based on the needs of the individual student. When face to face services are necessary, they will be offered at the nearest office to the family’s home or virtually with a licensed provider.

Communication between General Education and Special Education Staff is extremely important. Any questions regarding Special Education services for a specific student should be directed to that student’s Special Education Teacher. General questions about Special Education programs can be directed to any of the following:

Teri Heims, Special Programs Manager, theims@k12.com

Thomas Troxell, Special Education Curriculum Coordinator, thtroxell@k12.com

**RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)**

Response to Intervention (RTI) Services at TOPS is available for students who have been identified as academically “at-risk”.

A student can be determined as “at-risk” by looking at data we accumulate; this can include:

- Significantly below on assessments,
- Struggling with the current curriculum
- At-risk identifiers on the PLA or benchmarks
- Low performance on the STAAR exams
- Some other need found on the Child Find screening

RTI is based on the concept of providing evidence-based instructional and behavioral strategies by highly qualified personnel that are matched to the student’s needs, and those needs are monitored on a frequent scheduled basis.

**The goals of RTI at TOPS:**

- Create a productive learning experience for all TOPS students
- Support students in reaching grade level performance
- Use prevention rather than reaction to student difficulties
- Exhaust all general education options before making a special education referral.

**How to request RTI assistance and what to expect:**

**1st:** Students can be placed into the RTI program through a referral of a teacher, administrator, or learning coach. The learning coach can make a request through the teacher for RTI support.

**2nd:** The teacher will make a tier 1 plan based on the student needs. This will include gathering data from whole group and small group interventions and the effectiveness of those
interventions. Monitoring of the RTI plan should take place every two weeks.

3rd: If after the first 30 days the tier 1 plan shows not to be effective, a tier 2 referral can be requested by the teacher. A Response to Intervention team member will set up an initial tier 2 meeting with the learning coach and the regular education teacher to review the needs of the student and develop a tier 2 plan for interventions.

4th: The Response to Intervention team will review the case after the student has had ample time to work through the coursework with appropriate interventions to determine whether the student will need ongoing interventions or a referral for a tier 3 intervention plan.

The process for RTI requires the student to move through three tiers of intervention (for a minimum of 30 days in each tier). The process includes monitoring meetings and RTI sessions that are mandatory for the student and/or Learning Coach. Our goal is to support the student’s needs without placing a learning disability label on them. *The entire process of intervention before a possible referral will take a minimum of 90-120 days depending on the outcome of each tiered plan.*

You may contact Teri Heims, Special Programs Manager, at theims@k12.com if you have further questions.

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**ADVANCED LEARNERS**

Many TOPS students have participated in Gifted and Talented or Advanced Learner programs before enrolling in our program. The OLS curriculum is already very complex and all students may work above level in their courses (if that is where they are placed) or at a faster pace. However, TOPS and K12 do offer some ALP activities and events for students. If you feel that your student needs enrichment or more challenging work, please speak with your TOPS teacher and he/she will assist you with finding a way to meet the needs of your child.

You may also contact Teri Heims, Special Programs Manager, at theims@k12.com for more information.

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**SECTION 504 PROGRAM**

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (such as a public school like TOPS). Under this law, *individuals with disabilities* are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Individuals who have a history of, or who are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, are also covered.
Major life activities include caring for one’s self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. Some examples of impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, even with the help of medication or aids/devices, are: AIDS, alcoholism, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, deafness or hearing impairment, diabetes, drug addiction, heart disease, and mental illness.

“No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”

9 U.S.C. 794(a)

What does this mean? This means if your student has a physical or mental impairment, they may qualify for services under Section 504. This allows the District to provide accommodations to help your student better access the curriculum if their physical or mental impairment is preventing them from being successful.

To determine if your student is eligible for Section 504 services, we will need to conduct an evaluation which includes gathering information from teachers, medical professionals, and you as the parent. If you would like to further investigate your student’s eligibility for accommodations provided under the umbrella of Section 504, please reach out to our 504 Coordinator, Debby Hester, at dhester@k12.com.

**TOPS DYSLEXIA SERVICES**

Children learn to read in different ways. When conventional instruction is not working, we must intervene on behalf of that child’s future education. Students who show signs of dyslexia may need intervention to be successful in school. The TOPS Dyslexia Intervention Program is offered for those students who meet program specifications according to the State of Texas.


**Response to Intervention (RTI):**

Students showing academic difficulties are referred to the RTI program. A child can be referred to the RTI program by a parent, teacher, or administrator for State Testing difficulties. Preventative measures and remedial strategies are a part of the intervention process. After working with a teacher(s) in the RTI program, students still showing academic difficulties can be referred for a dyslexia screening.

**Referral to Dyslexia Program:**

Students should be referred to the Dyslexia Program after being identified through RTI as showing characteristics associated with dyslexia.
From *The Dyslexia Handbook (2007, 2010)*; Common Evidence of Dyslexia can include:

- [Student who] Fails to understand that words come apart; for example, that snowman can be pulled apart into snow and man and, later on, that the word man can be broken down still further and sounded out as /m/ /ă/ /n/
- Has difficulty learning the letter names and their corresponding sounds
- Has difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)—lacks a strategy
- Has difficulty spelling phonetically
- Reads dysfluently (choppy and labored)
- Relies on context to recognize a word
- Has a history of reading and spelling difficulties
- Avoids reading aloud
- Reads most materials slowly; oral reading is labored, not fluent
- Avoids reading for pleasure
- May have an inadequate vocabulary
- Has difficulty spelling; may resort to using less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell (*The Dyslexia Handbook*, pp 11-12)

The referral should consider that the Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia in the following way:

*1* Dyslexia means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

*2* Related disorders includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

(http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003)

**Evaluation**

Students can receive services for Dyslexia remediation under the umbrella of Section 504. If a student is referred for a Dyslexia Evaluation, the District must gain signed permission to evaluate from the student’s legal guardian. This permission allows the student to be assessed in the suspected deficit areas and allows those assessment results to be used to determine eligibility for an accommodation plan provided through Section 504.

Trained personnel administer the Dyslexia assessment face to face with the student. This assessment typically takes place close to the student’s residence and arrangements are made with the student’s parents and the assessor.

When the evaluation is completed, a Section 504 meeting will be scheduled in a timely manner with the parent/guardian and school staff to discuss the assessment results and determine eligibility. The 504 committee will discuss a plan of action based on the assessment results and the
documented needs of the student. This may include a 504 Accommodation Plan with Dyslexia services.

**Dyslexia Program**

TOPS’ Dyslexia program is much like the pullout classes that are offered for students in a traditional school setting. We offer class connects and an online reading program based in phonics instruction. Dyslexia classes are offered throughout the grade levels (3-12). The dyslexia teacher coordinates office hours and optional classes to help students in other courses as well.

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**FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights regarding the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. **The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.**

To request an inspection and review, the parent or eligible student should submit a written request to the Head of School that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Head of School makes arrangements for access and notifies the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. **The right to request an amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate.**

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the Head of School, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School notifies the parent or eligible student of the decision and advises him/her of his/her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures is provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA allows disclosure without consent.**

One exception that permits the School to disclose information without consent is when the School discloses information to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by or contracted to provide services to or designated by the contractor to provide services to the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors of the School; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a
disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

(5) FERPA requires that the School, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent’s or eligible student’s written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child’s education records. However, the School may disclose “directory information” without written consent, the parent or eligible student, have advised the School in writing that he/she does not want all or part of the directory information disclosed. The method for objecting to disclosure of directory information is specified below. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include the following information from education records in certain school publications or disclose it to certain parties. Examples include:

- Shipment of computer and school materials to and from student’s home
- Entry of student enrollment information into a computer database for use by school officials
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. In addition, federal laws require the School to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents or eligible students have advised the School in writing that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without prior written consent.

The School has designated the following information as directory information:
- name
- address
- telephone number
- e-mail address
- photo
- athletic information
- grade level
If there are certain items the School has chosen to designate as directory information that parents do not want disclosed from their student’s education records, without their prior written consent, parents are encouraged to send an e-mail identifying the information they do not want disclosed, the student’s name, and the name of the virtual academy or affiliate school in which the student is enrolled to: directoryinformation@k12.com. This e-mail must be sent within 30 days of the first day the student attends school.

Notice of these rights is available, upon request, on audiotape, in Braille, and in languages other than English.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

TOPS provides materials, computer (if applicable), printer, books and other curricular supplies. These materials are school property and must be kept in good condition. Parents are responsible for the repair or replacement of all lost, stolen or damaged school property. A list of property that must be returned is provided to parents. All property and equipment must be returned in good, working condition upon withdrawal from the program or completion of the school year. If a piece of TOPS electronic equipment isn’t working properly, the parent should contact K12 Customer Care at 1-866-512-2273 and troubleshoot with the technical support team. Parents should not repair any of TOPS/K12’s equipment. All printed materials are copyrighted and unauthorized copying of that material is a copyright infringement. Materials cannot be sold or transferred and are to be used solely by the student in his/her studies while enrolled in the school. Parents are to comply with this policy and all the terms and conditions of the Use of Instructional Property Agreement submitted with the enrollment materials.

OBJECTIONABLE MATERIALS POLICY

There may be times a parent finds certain lessons, books or materials objectionable for various reasons. If a parent finds objectionable material, he/she should contact his/her TOPS teacher via email. Teachers work with parents to find alternative lessons to meet the lesson objectives. The assessment for the lesson must be completed to show that the objectives have been met. Parents should also contact K12® directly using the feedback option of the OLS®.

REMOVAL FROM TOPS

Students may be removed from TOPS due to disciplinary action, lack of attendance/progress, failure to participate in state-mandated assessments, or attendance in another school. The Head of School must approve re-enrollment in TOPS. Students are provided all necessary due process rights before removal. TOPS administrators and teachers may recommend
expulsion to the Expulsion Hearing Committee for student violation of school policies. Students and parents are made aware of the date and time for an expulsion hearing before the Expulsion Hearing Committee. Public schools in the state may refuse admission to a student who has been expelled from TOPS.

ADMISSION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The McKinney Act of 1987, or P.L. 100-77, ensures that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. Under the Act, schools are prohibited from delaying a homeless child's entry into school due to delays in obtaining school records. Rules regarding guardianship must be waived for homeless students living with foster parents or relatives other than their legal guardians.

Parents may review the Texas Online Preparatory School’s Admission of Homeless Children and Youth policy by calling the school office at 972-420-1404.

PARENT ACCESS TO STAFF CERTIFICATIONS

Parents may review certifications of Texas Online Preparatory School teachers by request.

COMPLAINT RESPONSE PROCEDURE

The Texas Online Preparatory School is interested in achieving and fostering student/family satisfaction. The following procedure ensures that student/family grievances are addressed fairly by the appropriate people in a timely manner. TOPS prohibits discrimination against students/families on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, or religion.

The student and parent(s), custodian(s) or legal guardian(s), address in writing any concern or grievance to the Head of School. The Head of School responds within ten (10) working days.

If the concern or grievance is not resolved by the Head of School, the parent(s), custodian(s) or legal guardian(s) may, within ten (10) working days of the Head of School’s response, request in writing a meeting (via phone or in person) with the Head of School to discuss the concern or grievance. He/she investigates and responds within ten (10) working days.

If the family’s concern is not resolved at the meeting with the Head of School, the family may file a complaint with the Huntsville ISD. The district may address the complaint directly.
FAMILY DIRECTORY

The TOPS parent directory is accessed through the OLS. Parents are able to find other parents by location of their homes and student grade levels. Parents may search by name and other information in a parent profile. The new directory is automatically updated as a parent's status changes, such as moving across town or changing an e-mail address. There is an online opt-in/out capability on the OLS so parents can easily include or exclude themselves from the directory.

PARENT CONNECTIONS

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their school community through participation in outings and clubs and also arranging other "non-official" outings with TOPS parents. Parents may freely meet and organize unofficial outings as they wish. These outings are not considered “official” outings unless a TOPS representative attends.

Weekly newsletters called “The Weekly Scholar” are distributed each Monday. It is paramount that parents take the time to review these. The newsletters contain important information about upcoming events, special announcements and other helpful school information.

A school directory is housed in the OLS. The directory allows parents and students to search for other community members based on grade levels of students, geography, and areas of interest. The directory is updated to allow parents to complete an informational form and search for other parents based on interests, such as scrapbooking or hiking.

K12 also offers the Parent Network, which can be found on the Strong Start page: http://tops.k12start.com/
SCHOOL OUTINGS & STUDENT ACTIVITY CLUBS

TOPS sponsors optional outings for students and families on a regular basis that enhance the K12 curriculum/learning activities. While attendance is not mandatory, it is a wonderful opportunity to meet other school participants and share information about programs and successful practices. Outings are opportunities for both the students and parents to socialize. It is our hope that the teachers and parents will work together to plan and implement these activities. Parents are responsible for the cost of transportation and any entrance fees associated with optional outings. Credit for field trips is not offered in lieu of the regular OLS requirements.

TOPS expects students to dress appropriately when attending outings. Examples, of inappropriate dress include:

- Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures, or any other combinations thereof, advocates or promotes sexual activity, violence, death, suicide, or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans, degrades, or intimidates another because of race, sex, religious persuasions, national origin, disability, or gang membership.
- Apparel that reveals or exposes the midriff/lower back or sides of the upper body or torso and/or undergarments.
- Any clothing that is excessively tight, is of transparent material, see through material, or that is ripped or torn, or has suggestive signs or symbols.
- Any clothing through which underwear or any type of undergarment may be seen.
- Spandex, clothing that does not cover backs, clothing that permits viewing of cleavage, halter tops, tank tops with open sides, spaghetti strap tops, and muscle/tank shirts.
- Spikes, dog chains/chokers, ball bearing chains, wallet chains, or other jewelry that increases the risk for accidents.

TOPS parents and students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all optional outings. Parents are responsible for supervision of their children at all times.

This year, we will host school-wide outings each month across the state. If a student is not able to attend an outing, there will be virtual field trips offered on these dates. Please check the events calendar [http://TOPS.k12start.com/](http://TOPS.k12start.com/) for more information.

K12 offers a large selection of national virtual clubs for all grade levels. You can ask your homeroom teacher for more information about these great opportunities!
TECHNOLOGY ISSUES AND USAGE

All issues regarding K12® computers can be directed to K12® technical support directly. Technical support is available at 866-626-6413 between the hours of 7 am and 7 pm central time. Access to the Internet via equipment and resource networks provided to families as a result of their enrollment in TOPS are intended to serve and pursue educational goals and purposes. In addition, parents are to comply with the Use of Instructional Property Agreement completed as part of the enrollment process.

Communications and Internet access should be conducted in a responsible and professional manner reflecting the school’s commitment to honest, ethical and non-discriminatory practice. Therefore, the following is prohibited:

- Any use that violates federal, state, or local law or regulation.
- Knowing or reckless interference with the normal operation of computers, peripherals, or networks.
- The use of TOPS Internet-related systems to access, transmit, store, display, or request inappropriate materials.
- Any use that is deemed to adversely affect TOPS.

Violation of TOPS or K12®’s Terms of Use for any TOPS or K12® website.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP) SUPPLEMENT POLICY

ISP checks are issued automatically to those families who qualify twice per year; after the end of each semester. Typically, this is in the February/March timeframe for the 1st semester and the August/September timeframe for the 2nd semester.

In order to be eligible for the ISP supplement, each TOPS student in the family must meet all of the following criteria:

- Meet income eligibility requirements
- Participate in the Online School for sixty (60) calendar days
- Be enrolled on the last day of the semester
- Participate in all required standardized testing including PLA and Study Island benchmarking, and all State required testing including STAAR assessments
- Successfully complete assigned coursework (pass all courses with either a “P” or a “C” or better)
- Have an average of at least 6 hours of attendance per day

Families enrolled prior to the 15th of each month will be eligible for the supplement for that month’s ISP. Families enrolling after the 15th of the month will qualify for the supplement beginning the 1st day of the next month.

The amount of the supplement for those families who qualify is $12.00 per eligible month per family.
**Families with Two or More Students**
Families with two or more students will receive the supplement at the rate of $12.00 per eligible month.

**Lost Checks**
Please be aware if an ISP check is lost, TOPS does not automatically reissue a check to that family. If a check is lost, parents need to notify the Finance Coordinator (Sherrill Johnston shjohnston@k12.com or 972.420.1404 ext. 2016) within 90 days for a replacement check to be issued.

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**STUDENT INTERNET SAFETY**

Please consider the location of the computer your child works on. The K12 lessons sometimes have links to other sites, but before you leave their website, there is always a pop-up that verifies that you want to leave. While the internet is a fabulous tool, we all know that it can present dangers to our children. We ask you to take some time to talk with your child about internet safety and do what you feel is appropriate for your family.

Do not reveal on the Internet personal information about yourself or others. For example, you should not reveal your name, home address, telephone number, or display photographs of yourself or others to people outside of the TEXAS ONLINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL.

Do not agree to meet in person anyone you have met only on the Internet and who is not affiliated with the TEXAS ONLINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL.

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**NETWORK ETIQUETTE**

As a TEXAS ONLINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL student, you are expected to follow the rules of network etiquette or 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 being discussed, not on the individuals involved.
* Focus your responses on the questions or issues
* 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.
CYBER BULLYING

What is cyber bullying?
Cyber bullying is sending any type of threatening or hateful message to someone over the Internet or a cell phone. Many people believe that they can get away with this type of behavior. They mistakenly think they can hide their identity and won’t have to take responsibility for their actions.

How can cyber bullying be prevented?
Talk about it before it ever happens. Many young people are not aware that saying hurtful things about another person, calling him/her names in an email, or telling lies about someone, even as a joke, is a form of cyber bullying.

What do you do if you are a victim of cyber bullying?
- Ignore the person and the comments. Most bullies want the attention they gain and will give up if they are ignored. If you respond to their messages, they will know that you are affected, which will encourage them to continue.
- Leave the site or get off the Internet immediately. Most email services and instant message sites also allow you to block access to another person.
- Change your screen name or email address. Be sure to only give the new one to your friends.
- Tell your parents.
- Make a copy of any threatening or outrageous email messages in case you need proof later.
- Report the bullying behavior to the proper authorities – the site moderator, the school, or even the police.
INTERNET SAFETY TIPS
1. Keep your computer in an open room with the front of the monitor visible. That way, you can easily see what sites your children are viewing.
2. Establish rules for going online, including what time of day, the amount of time, and what sites they can access.
3. Bookmark child friendly sites for your student to visit.
4. Teach your students never to open email or attachments from anyone they don’t know.
5. Remind students that people they meet online may not be who they say they are.
6. Never allow your student to meet face to face with another person they meet online unless they have your permission and you accompany them to the meeting.
7. Teach your student to immediately turn off the computer and tell you if they have any experience that makes them feel uncomfortable.
8. Remind your children not to share any personal information, including passwords, on the Internet.

INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES
The following websites may prove helpful when computer questions or technical difficulties arise.

http://www.google.com – Widely used search engine
http://www.whatis.com – provides definitions of most technical terms, concepts and ideas
http://www.howstuffworks.com – provides information on how computer hardware and software work in addition to about everything else one could ever want information about
http://housecall.antivirus.com – free online virus scanner that can be used as a “second opinion” to the installed antivirus software
http://www.homenethelp.com – provides information for setting up and troubleshooting a home network environment
http://support.microsoft.com – Microsoft’s self-help support web site including data base of common issues and resolutions
http://www.webopedia.com – online dictionary and search engine for computer and internet terms
http://www.modemhelp.net – more advanced site that provides information on error messages and screenshots for troubleshooting technical issues
http://www.dslreports.com – information on DSL, Cable, and other high speed internet connections
http://help.k12.com – K12™ website that provides troubleshooting information for common issues experienced by families and download points for technical tool.
OPENING E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS

No matter which program is used to check e-mail, or who is providing the e-mail account, the user should be familiar with the provider and process used. Throughout the year, TOPS teachers distribute e-mails with documents or other files attached that need to be read, saved, and/or printed out. These instructions address opening attachments in the most common e-mail situations.

Users must not download attachments or other files from an unknown or mistrusted source. They should also take precaution to ensure that the McAfee antivirus program runs at all times. Following these suggestions should reduce the likelihood of contracting a computer virus.

TO OPEN ATTACHMENTS IN MICROSOFT OUTLOOK AND OUTLOOK EXPRESS:

Open a file attachment from within an e-mail

1) Open the e-mail that contains the file attachment, and double-click the icon for the attachment. An Opening Mail Attachment window will appear, giving the user the option of Opening or Saving the attachment.

Notes

- An attachment in a message that uses HTML or plain text as the message format appears in a line below the Subject line, whereas an attachment in a Rich Text message or in other types of items is included in the body of the item.
- By default, Microsoft Outlook blocks attachment files (such as .bat, .exe, .vbs, and .js) that can contain viruses. In this case, the attachment itself cannot be seen by the user. The Inbox will display the paperclip icon in the Attachment column to let the user know that the message has an attachment, and a list of the blocked attachment files in the InfoBar at the top of the message will appear.  

Open a file attachment without opening the e-mail

1) Right-click the item that contains the attachment
2) On the shortcut menu, point to View Attachments, then click the name of the attachment

Note

1 Source: Microsoft Outlook Help

- If the attachment in the message is one of the types of files which Outlook blocks (see above), View Attachments will not appear on the shortcut menu.

OPENING ATTACHMENTS IN OTHER E-MAIL PROGRAMS

See the documentation or “Help” pages for the program being used to check e-mail.
FAQ’s

What if I am having trouble with my login?
K¹² customer service is the best ones to call to help you with that. 1-866-512-2273

Do I need to have a student account set up for my child?
Students in EVERY grade are required to have their own student login. The reason for students needing their own OLS login is so that when they sign into their Class Connect sessions, their name appears in the online classroom and not the learning coach’s name. The student log in will not have answer keys or teacher guides. Each student should have their own account that they actively use each day.

How do I create a student account for my child?
At the top of your OLS pages is a My Account menu that lets you manage your account information and the account information for each of your students. You can also check your orders and shipments from this menu. If you haven’t set up your student’s account yet, choose your student’s name from the My Account menu and enter a user name and password. Once you save this information, your student can log in to their own OLS account.

What should I do when I have a question?
Contact your teacher via email or by phone. It may be easier to email your teacher so that s/he can read over what the issue is and take the time to help find the answer if needed. Office hours are from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

There is so much to do. Do I really need to read everything my teacher sends me? Definitely!
Your teacher will send out pertinent information and it is very important that you open and read each email. Emails are the teacher’s primary communication tool with his/her classroom.

Can we write in the student guides or will we have to return those materials?
Yes, you may write in the student guides, teacher guides, and most other workbook type books. Please do not write in textbooks or story books.

² Source: Microsoft Outlook Help
K12 MY INFO

My Info allows you to track materials and shipping information for each of the students in your home. You can also communicate directly with your students’ teachers through the use of the secure in-system message center (email) that was designed explicitly for use by our students and families.
ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can K12® Customer Support help me solve a computer problem?

*Please note that K12 can only help issues related to THEIR computers that you are borrowing, not your own personal computers.

If you need help solving a computer problem, please call K12® Customer Support at 1-866-626-6413. To help us solve your problem as quickly as possible, please take the following actions before you call:

- Make note of the exact wording of any error messages that pops up on your computer so you can relay it to the Customer Support representative.

- Write down details of the problem, such as how often it happens and what you were doing immediately before the problem occurred. Be prepared to describe the problem in detail. Your description will help the Customer Support representative analyze the problem and suggest a solution.

- Place your phone near your computer so you can easily answer questions about your computer system and the problem you are experiencing.

- Be ready to help the Customer Support representative walk you through a resolution. He or she may ask you to perform some tasks on the computer to get a better picture of what’s happening. If you’ve already performed those steps, tell the Customer Support representative what happened when you performed the steps. You may need to repeat them.

- If you don’t understand something, let the Customer Support representative know you don’t understand. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

How do I choose an Internet Service Provider (ISP)?
You will access the K12® Online School® via the Internet, so you will need to choose an Internet Service Provider (ISP). You may choose any ISP you want.

Setting Up Your Account: Once you have decided on an ISP, you will need to call the company to set up your service. Most companies have a toll-free number and can help you set up your account over the phone.

Email: Whatever ISP you choose, be sure the service provides email. Most ISPs provide e-mail and will be happy to help you set up your account.

Subsidy: Some of the K12® Partner Schools have set up an ISP fee subsidy plan. Please refer to the section on Internet Subsidy in that section of the Parent Orientation Guide.

What do I do if my internet goes out?
Internet is a requirement of TOPS. If your internet temporarily goes out, you will still need to school. We suggest going to a local library, a local business that provides Wifi, or a friend’s house to use their internet, while you resolve your internet issues.
**How do I change my password?**

1. Log on to your computer.
2. Press the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys on the keyboard at the same time and then release them.
3. Select “Change Password” from the menu that appears on the screen.
4. Make sure the user name is correct.
5. Make sure the account in the second box is correct (whether it's a domain account or local computer account).
6. Type your old (current) password in the third box.
7. Type your new password in the fourth box.
8. Type your new password again in the fifth box.
9. Click “OK.”
10. Click “OK” to acknowledge the message that your password has been changed.
11. Press the Esc button, or click “Cancel” to return to the Windows desktop.

**How do I clear my cache?**

The cache is the area where your computer stores Web addresses of sites that you have visited recently. Your computer can retrieve an address much faster from the cache than it can from the Internet. When many addresses are stored in the cache, however, your computer is much less efficient than it is when the cache is empty.

We recommend that you clear your cache about every two weeks. Clearing the cache deletes temporary files only. It will not affect any other files on your computer.

*If your browser is Internet Explorer (IE):*
1. Go to “Tools” at the top of the IE screen and select “Internet Options” from the pull-down menu.
2. In the Temporary Internet Files section, select “Delete Files.”
3. When a new window appears, check “Delete all offline content,” and then click “OK.”
4. Click “OK” again.

*If your browser is Netscape:*
1. Go to “Edit” at the top of the Netscape screen and select “Preferences” from the pull-down menu.
2. Click once on the plus sign next to the word “Advanced.”
3. In the list that appears, click “Cache.”
4. For Netscape Version 7.1, click “Clear Cache.” For Version 7.0 or lower, click “Clear Memory Cache,” and then click “OK.” Click “Clear Disk Cache,” and then click “OK.”
5. Verify that the “Every time” option is selected.
6. Click “OK” at the bottom of the window.

*If your browser is Internet Explorer 7:*
1. Go to “Tools” at the top of the IE screen and select “Internet Options” from the pull-down menu.
2. Click "Delete" under "Browsing History"
3. Click "Delete All" at bottom of new window that pops up.
**What should I do if my computer doesn’t respond when I type or move the mouse?**

One or more applications may be conflicting with the program you are using. Follow these steps to check for other applications that may be running in the background.

1. Press the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys on the keyboard at the same time and then release them.
2. Select “Task Manager” from the menu that appears on the screen.
3. Highlight any applications described as “Not Responding.”
4. Click the End Task button in the bottom right corner of the window.
5. If another dialog box appears with the message “This program is not responding,” click the End Task button in the second box.
6. As a last resort, shut down and restart the computer.

**I can’t hear any sound or play music on my computer. What should I do?**

1. Check your speakers. Are they on? Is the volume turned up?
2. Check the electrical connections. Are they securely connected to the speakers and the computer?
3. Click the volume icon (the one that looks like a speaker) in the group of icons at the bottom of your screen and make sure the volume button is up and the mute box is unchecked. Adjust the volume as necessary, or uncheck the mute box. Then, double-click the volume icon and make sure the rest of the volume controls are up and that the mute boxes are not checked.
4. If you still can’t hear any sound or play music on your computer, check the multimedia settings:
   a. Click “Start” at the bottom left of your screen; select “Settings”; then click “Control Panel.”
   b. Double-click “Sounds and Multimedia” on the control panel.
   c. On the Sounds tab, make sure the sound volume control is up and that there is no red line through the speaker icon in the lower-right corner. If there is a red line, click the icon to remove it.
   d. Click the Audio tab. Look at the “Preferred device” boxes in the Sound Playback, Sound Recording, and MIDI Music Playback Synthesizer sections. The settings should match the name of your computer’s sound hardware.
   e. If you made any changes, click “Apply,” and then click “OK.”
5. If you still have no sound, call or e-mail your teacher in order to document the issue and arrange for further technical support.

**What can I do if my mouse does not work properly?**

If the pointer on the screen does not move smoothly when you move your mouse, the mouse may need cleaning.

![The parts of a typical computer mouse](image)

1. Shut down your computer.
2. Turn the mouse over and twist the retainer ring to the unlocked position.
3. Turn the mouse over so that the retainer ring and ball fall out into your hand.
4. Wash the ball in warm, soapy water and dry it with a clean cloth. Blow carefully into the ball cage to dislodge dust and lint.
5. Look for a buildup of dirt on the rollers inside the ball cage. This buildup usually appears as a stripe running across the middle of the roller. If the rollers are dirty, clean them by using a cotton swab dampened with isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. Turn the rollers with your finger and continue swabbing them until all the dirt is removed.
6. Remove any fibers from the swab that remain on the rollers.
7. Replace the ball and the retainer ring.
8. Restart your computer.

**Does my computer need any routine maintenance?**
The following preventive maintenance information will help you keep your computer running smoothly. You can also find tips in the user guide that came with your equipment.

- Keep the computer on a sturdy, flat surface in a clean, dry environment.
- Do not place items on top of the monitor, or cover any of the computer or monitor vents. The vents let air flow over the equipment and keep it from overheating.
- Keep food and drinks away from the computer. Spills and food particles can ruin the mouse, keyboard, and other equipment. Moisture on the power switches or other controls may damage the parts and create an electrical hazard.
- Always disconnect power cords by grasping the plug, not the cord.

**Periodic cleaning**
It is a good practice to periodically clean the equipment to ensure trouble-free operation. Always turn off your computer, monitor, and any electrical equipment connected to your computer before cleaning.

- **Computer and keyboard**: Use only a mild cleaning solution and a slightly damp cloth.
- **Monitor screen**: Do not use any abrasive cleansers on the monitor screen, as the surface is easily scratched. Gently wipe the screen with a soft, dry cloth or blow on the screen to remove grit and loose particles. Next, use a soft cloth moistened with a nonabrasive liquid glass cleaner. You can also use an antistatic cleaner to slow the buildup of dust.

**What else do I need to do to keep my computer running smoothly?**
You should run an antivirus scan at least once a month, using the included McAfee Total Protection for Small Business software.

You should run a spyware scan at least twice a month, using one of the spyware-scanning programs mentioned earlier.

You should defragment your hard drive at least once a month. To do so, perform the following steps:

1. Click the **Start** button, and select **All Programs**
2. Select **Accessories**
3. Select **System Tools**
4. Select **Disk Defragmenter**
5. Highlight your hard drive (C:) and click the **Analyze** button
6. If you get a message saying you do not need to defragment the hard drive, close the application. If the message says to defragment the hard drive, click the **Defragment** button.

**Note:** Your computer will run very slowly during the defragmentation process. It’s best to schedule a time to defragment when you’re not planning on using the computer. Do not turn off your computer or let it go into Standby mode while the disk is defragmenting.
Where can I go to get more help?

K12® Customer Care is the first point of contact for parents and students who need computer help. Call 1-866-626-6413 to speak with K12® Technical Support.

BLACKBOARD TIPS AND TRICKS

Setting up Your Computer for Blackboard Collaborate
The first time you log into a Blackboard classroom, it can take up to 30 minutes to download the software so be sure to login with plenty of time allotted.

Please note that if you are on dial up, Blackboard is not going to work properly.

After you have successfully installed the software onto your computer, you may want to view some brief recorded orientations. http://help.k12.com/support-topics/k-8/class-connect/blackboard-collaborate-launcher-class-connect

Problems With Wireless Connection and Blackboard
When using Blackboard and you continue to lose connections, you should attempt the following suggested fixes (attempt them in this order):

1) Be sure you are not too far from your router
2) Be sure there is no problem with your Internet. Check another computer to see if the Internet is still active.
3) While in Blackboard, go to TOOLS>PREFERENCES>then choose the lowest connection speed (ie. 28.8). If this works, you can continue to raise the speed until you begin to get kicked off again.
4) Close all applications that are not being used during Blackboard. Outlook continues to check for email and uses bandwidth. The fewer applications you have open, the better the program works.
5) Empty your Java cache. This will also help with most Blackboard problems such as the microphone or whiteboard not working properly.
6) Delete old versions and updates to Java and get the new version. Go to START>CONTROL PANEL>ADD/REMOVE PROGRAMS>then delete all Java applications and updates. They can be identified by the little coffee cup. Then go to www.java.com and get the latest version.
7) Hard wire your computer to the Internet. This allows for much more information to be sent to your computer and keeps the signal strength constant. When hardwired to the Internet, you should disable your wireless card.

It is important to note that when using a wireless connection, your signal and bandwidth will fluctuate, even though your wireless connection may say “excellent”. When a wireless connection says excellent it is ONLY notifying you of the connection to the Wireless Access point (router: i.e. Linksys, Netgear, etc.). You can have an excellent connection to your router and still NO Internet connection. This does not constitute a wireless issue.
Clearing the Java Cache
Clearing the JAVA cache should help clear up many problems that occur in Blackboard, such as Audio problems (choppy audio, echo) and components not fully installed.

- Click on the **Start** menu and select **Control Panel** (Settings -> Control Panel)

  ![Control Panel](image1.jpg)

- Open “Java”

  ![Java Control Panel](image2.jpg)

- Click the “Settings” button.
• Click the “Delete Files” Button.

This will open a “Delete Temporary Files” dialog box. Select “OK” for deleting “Applications and Applets” and “Trace and Log Files.”

• Close the Java Control Panel

MOTIVATING STUDENTS

Many students begin the school year excited about their new classes. However, at some point students may procrastinate, and do everything possible to avoid completing their assignments. Many students (and parents) experience difficulty becoming and remaining motivated. Below, parents can find suggestions, incentives, and resources for maintaining enthusiasm and excitement about learning.

To Do:
Be consistent.
- Stick to a schedule.
- Attend outings offered throughout the year.
- Send in required work samples.
**Involve your student in creating and completing a daily schedule.**
- Discuss courses and create a plan to work toward goals set for the year.
- Discuss accomplishments each day.

**Create an inviting work environment.**
- Provide a space for your student to work.
- Keep a space for ongoing projects.
- Keep materials where they are easily accessible.
- Make sure you have a working microphone.
- Eliminate distractions.

**Focus on the positive.**
- Become your student’s learning partner.
- Offer incentives for your student to complete his/her work.
- Enjoy a fun activity once a goal is achieved.

**Don’t:**
- Leave school up to your student alone; he/she needs your help on a daily basis because you are their primary learning coach. Your child’s success depends on this partnership.
- Blame your child if schooling does not run smoothly. Step back, take a break, and evaluate what is working and what isn’t. Talk to your child and his/her homeroom teacher to discuss possible solutions. Your child’s education is paramount to all involved.

**Incentives:** Incentives allow students to control whether or not they earn rewards. Once incentives are earned, they are not to be taken away. Below are some examples of incentives, but parents can be creative and determine what works best for their families.

- Buy a set amount of game tokens. Designate a cup or bowl for collecting earned game tokens. Tell your student that every assignment he/she completes without complaining, earns him/her 1 - 2 tokens (or whatever amount you decide). Indicate on a calendar the day that your student may use the tokens for a reward of your choice.
- Prepare a “treasure chest” and stock it with various prizes that your student has helped you select. Students can place stickers for completed lessons on small incentive chart that can be purchased at a local teacher supply store. Once the chart is full, the student may select a prize from the treasure chest.
- When schooling multiple children, a “happy bean jar” may work wonders. Obtain a glass jar and a bag of beans. When students work together cooperatively, place a bean in the jar. Once the bean jar is full, reward students with an item or activity of their choice.
- Create a chart that lists activities that a student can complete to earn tickets. For instance: getting himself/herself up and ready for school on time= 2 tickets, completing an extra assignment = 5 tickets, staying on track for an entire week in his or her OLS assignments=5 tickets, etc. Students can redeem tickets for free time to do what they like. Students can even redeem tickets for a bigger reward: lunch or dinner out, going to a movie, bowling, or the mall. These types of rewards are more motivating for the older students.
Along with the do-and-don’t checklist and the aforementioned incentives, parents may find information about motivating students by searching the Internet. Some well-established philosophies and strategies to motivate students are listed in book form below and can be found at your local library:

- Logical and Natural Consequences: Dinkmeyer and McKay
- PAT- “Preferred Activity Time:” Fred Jones, author of Positive Classroom Behavior
- Discipline with Love and Logic: Foster Cline and Jim Fay
- Choice Theory and Control Theory: William Glasser

**PARENT TIPS AND TRICKS**

Some of the most valuable tips and tricks are provided by experienced TOPS families. Below is a list of suggestions and advice that may work for your family, too.

**Starting School:**
- Give yourself time to get familiar with the material, and develop a daily schedule based off your OLS requirements. It is very helpful to refer to your child’s daily schedule when setting up a schedule.
- Maintain open communication with teachers and make schooling your priority.
- Persevere as a family. Do not allow yourself or your family to become overwhelmed. Work cooperatively and patiently to troubleshoot challenges (i.e., computer or software problems, lifestyle change, etc.).
- Understand that some families need up to a year to become completely comfortable with the online school model. Over time, the curriculum and instructional techniques will become more familiar and easier to understand.
- Keep in mind that parents who have no schooling at home experience may be surprised to discover that schooling at home is time consuming—particularly in the first two or three months as everyone acclimates to the new arrangement. Nevertheless, the reward of knowing that the nature of TOPS' program leads to high-quality education far outweighs the challenges.
- Check email daily and thoroughly read the information sent. This is our main form of communication, and you will have correspondence from many departments.

**Organization:**
- Don’t be overwhelmed when the abundant school materials arrive, which you need to open and inventory. Once the school year’s materials are organized, you and your student will be reassured that you will tackle only one lesson at a time and use only the resources required for each lesson.
- Get ready for the school year and organize your workspace as early as possible. Consider using simple hanging files or binders for the student’s finished work organized by subject, and separate a hanging file for monthly work sample submissions.
- Establish a reward system based on daily attitude and activity. Verbal praise is more effective than a trip to the mall. (See the previous section that covers motivation.)
- Daily schedules are imperative for your child’s online learning success. Establish a schedule and try to stick to it.
- Obtain a notebook and write down questions for discussion with the teacher. Leave space to record responses.
Preparation:
- Prepare all of the materials and look at the OLS and your course calendar daily and/or weekly plan the night before.
- Print out the course calendar pacing chart sent by your teacher.
- Plan ahead by preparing worksheets and documents for the student. Tear out and staple workbook pages into small sections. Mark pages to read with sticky notes.
- Visit the “Advance Preparation” option every day to optimize planning. Science lessons may require some advance preparation.

Coaching:
- Keep in mind that parents may modify lessons. If the student already demonstrates mastery of the objectives, he/she may choose to complete the lesson/unit assessment.
- Strive to begin school each day at a specified time. Stay on top of your schedule. Catching up can be challenging.
- You might choose to post a motto in the classroom area of your house to motivate. Some suggestions: “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” or “Just do it”.

Lessons and Courses:
- Understand the percentages of assignments that students need to complete on time so their progress will be kept up to date.
- Keep in mind those students who start the school at mid-year still must reach mastery in their courses to be promoted the following school year. The lessons will be prorated to match his or date of enrollment.
- Remember that optional lessons in the OLS are not figured into the percentage of core lessons used to calculate course promotion eligibility.
- Understand the difference between viewing all lessons and core lessons on the progress screen.
- Keep in mind that each student has a unique readiness level and cannot be compared to other students. The K12 curriculum is rigorous and students often place one or two grade levels below in math and language arts.
- Adjust the schedule set-up to ensure the student is on track to finish the course by the school end date, but be reasonable in the expectations you set. Talk to your homeroom teacher for guidance with this, and with the student—particularly the older ones.

General:
- Attend a parent training or chat session. They are very informative.
- Attend as many outings as possible. Meeting other families and students helps families create a sense of community and belonging, and provides them with the opportunity to share experiences.
- Make marking progress and attendance in the OLS daily a habit. If you are taking a vacation day, mark that in the “schedule set up” area of the OLS and let your teacher know you’ll be out.
- Make the scheduled teacher conferences a priority. Your teacher is an important component of this program and can really contribute a lot. Please take advantage of their professionalism and willingness to help.
WORKING PARENT TIPS AND TRICKS

We know that some parents/learning coaches need to work part-time or even full time. Below are some suggestions for you:

- Always plan ahead. Print up the pacing chart from the teacher. Use it as a way for you and your student to keep track of what work is getting done daily.
- Have an inbox for your child to turn in the work they complete during the day.
- Keep a log. Use a notebook or computer paper for your child to record the time they spent working on each lesson. (You can also use the weekly plan to have your child put down times and check off what they completed).
- Check in with Text Messages or Calls during the day. For example, coffee break is at 9:00 - text or call for wake-up call; 12-1:00 is lunch - check in call; 3:00 - check in call.
- Check k-mails and OLS progress when you have breaks. Only takes a couple of minutes. If you check progress throughout the day, you can see what your child has started working on or hasn’t started working on. If you see no work, then give a check in call. This might be tough at the beginning but if you stay consistent, it will pay off and your child will get on a regular schedule of working and knowing that you are following through with checking in.
- Set up consequences when work is not done and stick to them.
- Have a time set aside to work with your child on subjects they struggle with or subjects that you LOVE working on with your child.
- Set aside a time to check work that was completed during the day. Give feedback and encouragement. Be prepared to "re-teach" a concept, reach out to the HR teacher for assistance if needed or talk to student about making a plan for attending tutoring sessions.
- Review student work log and record attendance in the OLS every night.
- Be Realistic - it is not always easy at the beginning. It is okay to change up the schedule, try out new ways to work on lessons and ask for help.
TOPS Physical Activity Log 2016-2017

Student's Name:  
Grade Level:  
Homeroom Teacher:  

This form must be completed and turned into your teacher at the end of each quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MINUTES</th>
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LIABILITY RELEASE AGREEMENT

(Print Minor’s Legal Name) __________________________ (Please indicate if there is more than one child per family participating and if so provide their legal name(s)):

_________________________ ______________________

(collectively referred to as “Minor”) wishes to participate in __________________________ “Activity”

sponsored by K12 Virtual Schools L.L.C., a Delaware limited liability company and Huntsville Independent School District.

The Sponsors and the undersigned parent or legal guardian of Minor agree that the Activity may pose risks, including possible illness, injury, as well as similar and dissimilar risks (“Risks”). The undersigned is fully aware of the Risks and other hazards inherent in the Activity and is participating in the Activity voluntarily and assumes the Risks and all other risks of loss, damage, or injury that may be sustained while participating in the activity.

K12© makes no representations or claims as to the condition or safety of the land, structures, transportation or surroundings that may be involved in the Activity, whether or not owned, leased, operated or maintained by the Sponsors. It is understood that the Sponsors do NOT provide any insurance coverage for the Minor’s person or property, and Minor’s parent (s) or guardian (s) acknowledge that they are responsible for the Minor’s safety and the Minor’s own health care needs, and for the protection of the Minor’s property.

In exchange for allowing the Minor to participate in these Activities offered by the Sponsors, the Minor, by and through the undersigned, the undersigned, and their respective heirs, personal representatives and estates agree(s) to release from liability and hold harmless the Sponsors and any agent, officer or employee of the Sponsors acting within the scope of their duties for any injury to the Minor’s person or damage to the Minor’s property. I authorize the Sponsors to take any action, including seeking medical care, necessary in its judgment if I am not present or reachable in the event of an emergency. The undersigned acknowledges that as a part of this Release he or she shall be 100% liable to pay for all medical expenses resulting or to result from any injury incurred during, or as a result of, participation in the Activity.

If any term of this agreement or the application to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder shall not be affected thereby, and each and every remaining term of this agreement shall be valid and enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law. In the event of any need to enforce this agreement, the Sponsors shall be entitled to its attorney fees and costs. This agreement will be governed by Texas law.

I, the undersigned, state that I am the parent or legal guardian of the Minor. I have fully read and understand the above terms and conditions and that they apply to said Minor and to myself, and that no oral representations, statements or inducements apart from the foregoing written agreement have been made to the undersigned. This document is binding on myself, the said Minor, and any person suing on behalf of said Minor.

DATE: ____________________________

Minor’s Address: ____________________________________________________

ADDRESS: __________________________________________________________

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME

SIGNED
MY LOGIN INFORMATION & PASSWORDS

Learning Coach OLS login:
ID:__________________
Password:______________

Student OLS login:
ID:______________
Password:______________

Study island login:
ID:______________
Password:______________
**Online Gradebook login:**
ID: ____________________________
Password: ____________________________
Student ID #: ____________________________

**Homeroom Teacher’s Name and Information:**
Teacher’s Name:
Phone Number:
Address:

**Additional log in and password information:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Login ID</th>
<th>Password</th>
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# Tops Elementary Schedule (Gr3-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30</td>
<td>Music 5</td>
<td>Art 3</td>
<td>Art 4</td>
<td>Art 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>School Assembly &amp; MMM</td>
<td>Music 3</td>
<td>1:1 TT / Conferences</td>
<td>Music 4</td>
<td>New Student Onboarding, Outings &amp; Teacher Open Office Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Writing Workshop 4 / TT</td>
<td>Writing Workshop 5 / TT</td>
<td>Writing Workshop 3 / TT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:30</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - STEM</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - ARTS</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - STEM</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - ARTS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:30</td>
<td>S.O.A.R Math/ELA</td>
<td>S.O.A.R Sci/SS</td>
<td>Physical Ed (PE) 3</td>
<td>Physical Ed (PE) 4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Physical Ed (PE) 5</td>
<td>Physical Ed (PE) 5</td>
<td>Health 5</td>
<td>Health 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:50-4:30</td>
<td>1:1 Target Teach, Data Conferencing, Planning</td>
<td>1:1 Target Teach, Data Conferencing, Planning</td>
<td>1:1 TT / Conferences</td>
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# Tops Middle School Schedule (Gr6-8)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30</td>
<td>Art 8</td>
<td>Art 6</td>
<td>Art 7</td>
<td>Music 7 TXVA/Technology 8</td>
<td>New Student Onboarding, Outings &amp; Teacher Open Office Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>School Assembly &amp; MMM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:1 TT / Conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
<td>Target Teach (SG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Writing Work Shop 7 / TT</td>
<td>Writing Work Shop 8 / TT</td>
<td>Writing Work Shop 6 / TT</td>
<td>Writing Work Shop 7 / TT</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-1:00</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - STEM</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - ARTS</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - STEM</td>
<td>Principal’s Academy - ARTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:00</td>
<td>S.O.A.R Sessions Math/ELA</td>
<td>S.O.A.R Sessions Sci/SS</td>
<td>NHS Meeting/Activities</td>
<td>Tiger’s Den Social Hour</td>
<td>Student Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
<td>Physical Ed (PE) 7/Music 6 TXVA</td>
<td>Technology 6 TXVA/8th PE and Health</td>
<td>8th Grade Music TXVA/ Technology 7 TXVA/ 6th grade Health and PE</td>
<td>French TXVA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>1:1 Target Teach, Data Conferencing, Planning</td>
<td>1:1 Target Teach, Data Conferencing, Planning</td>
<td>1:1 TT / Conferences</td>
<td>1:1 Target Teach, Data Conferencing, Planning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Dear Parents and Students:

You have just reviewed the Texas Online Preparatory School Parent Orientation Guide. We have attempted to cover all the important rules, regulations, and procedures for which you are responsible during this school year. Your success at the Academy is equal to your effort and desire. Please complete the survey at the link below in order to confirm your acknowledgement of this document and all information included.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1far_AyCaXCQEFZqDst3F7o9YFcEGMml2PEgO4sgtzZ0/viewform