



EXCEL

HIGH SCHOOL

Staff Handbook

2007-2008

All you really need to know is...

www.excelhighschool.com



EXCEL HIGH SCHOOL



Message from the President

Dear Excel High School Instructors,

I would like to personally welcome you to the Excel High School faculty team. EHS offers its students a world-class education, through a rich and challenging curriculum and a highly qualified and experienced staff.

At EHS, we are all committed to quality and excellence. The virtual nature of our learning environment demands the very best from each and every one of you. With that first click of the mouse, our student's will begin a journey that will take them to new and even greater educational heights. But they will not be doing this alone.

As a member of the EHS online faculty, your role will be one of facilitator and mentor. You are expected to work with each of your students every step of the way providing encouragement, guidance, and instilling in each of them the motivation to succeed.

Communication is critical in an online learning environment. To that end, each of you must make every effort to make yourselves available to your students as well as their parents through emails, chat rooms, and scheduled office hours. Above all, our goal is to make every student and parent feel that they are a part of our virtual campus by building a learning community at EHS.

You will find teaching at EHS to be rewarding, challenging, and nothing like a traditional bricks-and-mortar school. The anytime and any place feature of online learning allows you and your students to teach and attend class from literally anywhere in the world. And, through the use of technology and the power of the Internet, you will be able to take them to places where they may otherwise never see and learn things in ways never thought of.

As a member of the EHS online faculty team, you will have a unique and thrilling opportunity to make a difference preparing our students for the virtual environment of the future.

Again, let me welcome you to the Excel High School and this exciting, cutting-edge teaching opportunity!

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. Kuczynski, MA
President, Excel High School
ken@excelhighschool.com
952.465.3700



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Welcome!

Welcome to Excel High School! EHS is a unique private high school dedicated to the highest quality of student learning delivered in a flexible, individualized online environment. At Excel High School, students follow an 18-week block schedule; similar to a college semester. Typically, this would equal four-credits per semester. Our instructors work closely with their students to help them not only with course content, but also to help them stay motivated and engaged. Throughout the learning experience, all participants will use the technology and the power of the Internet to interact with their curriculum and fellow students in the United States and from around the world.

This handbook is designed to present you with essential information about the school and its online approach to learning, as well as the important employment policies that help create the desired work environment. Excel High School is about student learning. Seat time for students is unimportant. Likewise, the number of hours you spend on the job is less important than the quality of your work. You can expect to work hard – perhaps harder than at a traditional school. However, your teaching will take place following your own schedule from wherever you have a computer and Internet access. It will surely be a different lifestyle than traditional teaching!

Vision and Mission

Excel High School exists to provide each and every student with a well-rounded American high school education. Following a pedagogical framework designed to meet the needs of online learners, EHS strives to be a leader in providing quality distance education programs to students world-wide through the use of technology delivered courses.

Non-discrimination

Excel High School does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or any other reason as defined by law.

Who is Excel High School?

Excel High School was founded by a group of educators, business people, and technology experts who understand the potential of the Internet to provide a world-class education to students who might not have access to such an education through other means. Every one of the founders of the school is also a parent of school-age children and



knows from personal experience the importance of providing their children with a superior education.

The school founders searched for like-minded administrators and instructors – people passionate about education, committed to student learning, and interested in creating a school where student needs drive the overall direction and the daily decisions of all individuals involved in the school. These instructors come from all over the United States and the world.

The Excel High School community consists of parents, searching for the best education for their high school students. The families might travel extensively, need scheduling flexibility, or simply be looking for a high quality individualized learning experiences for their students.

Most importantly, the Excel High School is made up of students, committed to their learning but interested in pursuing their education in a unique, safe, flexible environment. They may be looking for a few credits to accelerate their learning or a few credits of make up so they can graduate from their local school on time. They may be looking for a flexible online high school to more easily blend school with work, travel, or home responsibilities. Or they may be enthused about trying a new form of learning – more vibrant, up-to-date, and personalized than anything they have previously experienced.

Contact Information

As your work progresses, frequent communication is critical to your success and that of the school. Most interaction will take place online, but should you need to contact the school’s administrative offices call can call any of the numbers below:

Excel High School Administrative Offices	Kenneth L. Kuczynski President
Phone: 952.465.3700 Toll free: 1.800.620.3844 Fax: 952.465.3701 Admissions: 952.465.3705 Business office: 952.465.3707 EHS College Board ID#: 240-707	Phone: 952.465.3731 Email: ken@excelhighschool.com Cell phone: 952.215.7760
Kateri Lukkes Registrar	Judy Kuczynski Director of Counseling and Guidance
Phone: 952.465.3704 Email: klukkes@excelhighschool.com	Phone: 952.465.3706 Email: judy@excelhighschool.com
D. Ahmad Online Coordinator & Technical Support Phone: 952.465.3700 Email: dahmad@excelhighschool.com	



A different approach to high school teaching!

If this is your first online teaching experience, brace yourself. Don't be surprised if you feel like you did the first time you stepped into a classroom. You'll go through an adjustment period as you learn how to navigate the Moodle software platform, work with your students online, and adjust to teaching from home rather than a classroom.

You can expect to work hard – perhaps harder than at a traditional school. However, your teaching will occur largely on your own schedule from wherever you have a computer and Internet access. You will log in to the school several times each day, and be available to students via phone and email as well.

You'll use chat rooms, discussion boards, and other communication tools to work with students and other instructors, but the student is largely in control of – and responsible for – their learning.

In the online environment, the instructor is a facilitator of the student learning who responds to student questions, fills in gaps in the curriculum, and helps keep the student motivated and engaged. A great deal of ongoing professional development in online teaching will occur as part of your job, so there will be time for much greater discussion of the role of the instructor in the online environment.

The Student

Each student's day will be as individual as the student, and may vary from day to day, week to week or course to course.

The instructor, of course, needs to understand the flexibility of the student schedule and the commitment on the part of both the instructor and the student that makes such a schedule possible.



Is Excel High School right for me?

This is a question students often ask. During the student enrollment process, our students take the “Is Online Learning Right for Me?” self-assessment quiz. Although it’s written for students, you may find it valuable to review for yourself as well.

Public vs. Private

Most Excel Staff members come from a number of years teaching in public schools. The private school world is a bit different, and instructors need to be aware of the new expectations they may face.

In a private school, the student and family literally is the customer. All staff members must act accordingly and treat parents with a service-oriented approach that is second-to-none.

This approach, in all its forms, is critical to the Excel High School philosophy and culture. What does this approach really mean for you?

<u>Is Online Learning Right for Me?</u>					
<p>Online learning is a new way of pursuing education for most students. Even if a student is comfortable with chat rooms, discussion boards, and building relationships online, using Internet tools for rigorous academic work comes with new challenges for many students.</p> <p>This self-assessment will help you determine if online learning is right for you. You might want to discuss these questions with your parent/guardian too!</p> <p>Rate yourself from 1-4 on each of the ten items below.</p>					
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I am willing to share my thoughts and experiences in an online environment as part of the learning process.	4	3	2	1
2.	I can communicate well through writing.	4	3	2	1
3.	I am self-disciplined and well-motivated to complete the online courses.	4	3	2	1
4.	I am willing to seek help when needed with academics and technology issues.	4	3	2	1
5.	I am willing to commit 4-8 hours per week per course.	4	3	2	1
6.	I can think through issues carefully before responding to questions or discussion points.	4	3	2	1
7.	I believe that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.	4	3	2	1
8.	I can engage in critical thinking, including synthesizing and analyzing ideas.	4	3	2	1
9.	I understand that online learning may be a much more convenient way to pursue my education, and that it is not necessarily an easier way.	4	3	2	1
10.	I have consistent access to a computer and reliable Internet connection.	4	3	2	1
<p>Now add up your total score. If it’s 28 or above, online learning is probably a good fit for you!</p>					

High Standards for Student Work

Parents send us their children because we promise and deliver an education based on high academic standards. Our job is to do everything we can challenge the students and keep them engaged. Although the students are responsible for their learning, we are responsible not only for teaching content, but for helping to keep them focused on – and



enjoying – that learning. That doesn't mean making it easy for them, but it does mean helping them in any way we can.

High Standards for Staff Work

All work produced by the staff must be of the highest professional standards. From comments on student assignments to letters home to parents, all work should be clearly written, free of errors and in a professional tone. This is especially true of the mid-course and course-end progress reports that instructors will write on each student (see the grading section in this handbook).

All queries should be returned on a timely basis or directed to a more appropriate staff member if necessary.

In phone conversations with parents, the parents should feel that they are the customers, the instructor is listening to them, and the instructor and parent are working together to best serve the child.

Excel High School is a Business

Every piece of communication reflects on the brand and reputation of Excel High School, and you are part of that EHS team. Any document staff creates, including class handouts, letters to parents, and even your email signature line, should include some version of the approved Excel High School logo.

Internal discussions and external discussions may take very different tones. Internally, rich professional discussions about the strengths *and weaknesses* of the school are welcomed and encouraged. External discussions should emphasize the positives and address any negatives with a "we can fix that!" or "we're working on a solution to that and should have it resolved by the end of the month." Publicly criticizing the school is no more acceptable at Excel High School than it would be for an IBM computer engineer to publicly criticize that company's products.

Excel High School is a For-profit Institution

Excel High School is a business that is proud of its ethics and commitment to education. It exists to provide the best education we possibly can to the families who choose to join our community. However, Excel High School also exists to make money, just like companies that sell textbooks, computers or furniture to schools. Excel High School believes that the best way to grow as a school is to provide exceptional quality, exceptional service, and exceptional value. Therefore the owners of the school are very



proud of their focus on running a great business – and a great school. We hope you enjoy sharing in that pride.

The Participants

The Student

At Excel High School, the students are the ones primarily responsible for their learning. It is, after all, their education that will be with them for the rest of their lives. Students must take the initiative to log in to the school, participate in discussions, and complete their work at the highest possible level of quality. Students must seek help when they need it, establish their own daily schedules, and take responsibility for meeting deadlines. In return for all this hard work, students earn a world-class education that will serve them well in all their future endeavors!

The Parent/Guardian

The parent role at Excel High School is critical. Parents, of course, are responsible for providing adequate supervision for their students and supporting the student's learning. This includes providing a suitable working environment, encouragement and appropriate assistance with course content when possible. Parents also have access to many aspects of the school, including grade & participation reports, a student work gallery, discussion boards where they can communicate with other parents, and discussion boards for parent-instructor or parent-advisor discussions. Each student and parent/guardian is assigned an Excel High School email address. It is the responsibility of the student to check their school email account at least once a day or more often as needed.

The Instructor

Excel High School is very proud of its extraordinary teaching staff. You have been hired as an expert in your content area as determined either by teaching licenses, advanced degrees, or both. All of our instructors are also committed to online education and providing families the choices and flexibility inherent to the delivery method. Excel High School instructors will carefully monitor each student's progress and provide instruction via email, discussion boards, chat rooms, telephone and other distance education tools. Instructors will also work to motivate and engage students who suffer from waning enthusiasm. Instructors will work with parents in multiple ways to help them support their student's learning.



The Counselor

Each student will have access to the school counselor who acts as an academic advisor. The counselor can assist with course selection, help solve basic technical problems, facilitate participation in extra-curricular activities, and otherwise support the student's involvement and success at Excel High School. The counselor in addition to the student's parents and instructors, works to support, encourage and monitor the success of each and every EHS student. Although any questions about a specific course should usually be directed to the particular instructor, any questions about the school or the student's education will be directed to the counselor.

School Calendar

The Excel High School calendar is easy to describe. The school is open whenever you want it to be. Students enrolled in regular high school courses will have a definite start and end date within the semester. The school does close for the traditional seasonal holidays; however students can still participate in their classes during these times. Each student will develop his or her own Learning Plan with their counselor that includes an anticipated schedule for the year. Each instructor will customize the coursework and establish deadlines that match that schedule.

Our technology makes the school accessible 24/7/365, except for scheduled system maintenance. Instructors are expected to be available from 8 am to 8 pm (in their home time zone) five days each week, and every instructor schedules office hours several times each week for real-time phone or text chat conversations. This information can be found in the ***Course Information*** area of each course.

We believe this flexibility for students and families, combined with the consistent availability of instructors, is one of the greatest strengths – and most unique features – of Excel High School.

Application & Enrollment Process

Not surprisingly, the entire application and enrollment process for Excel High School takes place online and via the phone. At <http://www.excelhighschool.com> you'll find the application and registration forms for both full- and part-time students. Once those forms are submitted, a staff member will contact the student to complete the enrollment process.



Individualized Learning Plan

During the initial placement process, each full- or part-time student will complete an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) in collaboration with his or her counselor that outlines the courses they will take during the semester along with anticipated completion times. The Individualized Learning Plan serves as a contract between the student and the school that clarifies each individual's expectations. For full-time students, the ILP also documents the student's initial grade placement based on any high school courses previously taken. The ILP form is available electronically at the school's Website. See Appendix A as well.

Time & Learning Requirements

Not unlike a bricks & mortar school, the amount of time students spend on Excel High School courses will vary from student to student, and even course to course. However, at Excel, students will have the time they need to complete the work (within reason, of course!).

On average, students should expect to spend approximately 45 minutes to an hour per day per course to complete the course within the 18-week block schedule. Modeled after a college semester, a full-time student can complete the standard core curriculum requirements for two grade levels within 36 weeks or a typical two-semester school year.

Communication & Login (including "attendance" and absences) Expectations for Students

Regular participation in Excel High School classes is critical to student success. Regular participation will help to keep students motivated and keep them in touch with their instructors and peers. Although there is no "attendance" in the same way as it is defined at a typical bricks & mortar school, students should log in to each of their courses for substantive participation at least three times each week.

All high school students are required to establish a Skype account for themselves. This downloadable software allows for direct one-on-one chats with the instructor in real time. With the purchase of a Webcam, you and your instructor can have live face-to-face conversations over the computer. The Skype Web address is www.skype.com.

Instructors will contact students by email and phone if they do not appear to be engaging frequently or making satisfactory progress in their courses. If such efforts do not succeed in re-engaging the student, the parent will be notified. If a student does not participate in



the course within a month, the student will be dropped from the course unless other arrangements have been made with the family.

If a student knows they will not be participating in a course due to vacation, travel or other commitment, they must notify their instructors at least one week in advance of the planned absence. In the case of a prolonged emergency absence, the student and/or parent should notify the school as soon as possible.

Instructors should keep in mind Excel High School's emphasis on flexibility and be as accommodating as possible to family schedules. We believe this flexibility for students, staff and families, combined with the consistent availability of instructors, is one of the greatest strengths – and most unique features – of Excel High School. Please contact the President or Director of Counseling if you have any questions in this regard.

Communication & Login Expectations for Instructors

Instructors are expected *to be available* throughout the week either in the course area grading assignment, responding to questions, or observing student progress. Online learning allows for a certain degree of flexibility on the part of the instructor, so no set times other than scheduled virtual office hours have been established. We rely on the integrity and professionalism of our instructors to define what this time frame should be.

In addition, every instructor is required to have scheduled virtual office hours throughout the week in at least one-hour blocks, for real-time phone or text chat conversations. Office hours should be posted within each course and on any instructor Websites.

Instructors must log into Moodle to check postings and email correspondence at a minimum of twice per day during the work week, and if possible, once each day on the weekends.

All assignments, essays, and exams must be graded within 48-hours of a student posting within Moodle. In addition, each instructor is required to provide constructive feedback on all assignments, essays, quizzes, and exams taken by the student. This communication is important for student progress and success at Excel High School.



Full-time vs. Part-time Students

Excel High School serves both full- and part-time students and is equally committed to its students, regardless of their level of involvement. Part-time students might take just a few courses – or even just one. Full-time students complete a minimum of eight 1.0 credit courses per year.

Course List

The following is a list of all the courses Excel High School currently offers. With the exception of several summer only courses or those in development, all courses are available during any of the three school semesters; fall, spring, and summer.

If there are courses you wish to take that are not yet part of the Excel High School curriculum, please contact your counselor. In many cases, we can provide additional high quality online courses beyond those listed here.

Excel High School 2007 – 2008 Course List

Registration Code	Course Name	Credits
ENGL111	English 1/Language	1.0 Credit
ENGL101	English 1/Literature	1.0 Credit
ENGL202	English 2/Literature	1.0 Credit
ENGL303	English 3/Literature	1.0 Credit
ENGL404	English 4/Literature	1.0 Credit
ENGL500	Creative Writing	1.0 Credit
ENGISP100	English Independent Study Project	1.0 Credit
MATH50	Foundations Math	1.0 Credit
MATH100	Pre-Algebra	1.0 Credit
MATH101	Algebra 1	1.0 Credit
MATH202	Geometry	1.0 Credit
MATH303	Algebra 2	1.0 Credit
MATH404	Pre-Calculus	1.0 Credit
MATH505	Calculus	1.0 Credit
MATISP100	Math Independent Study Project	1.0 Credit
SCIE101	Earth & Space Science	1.0 Credit
SCIE202	Biology	1.0 Credit
SCIE303	Chemistry	1.0 Credit
SCIE404	Physics	1.0 Credit
SCIE500	Conducting Scientific Research 1	1.0 Credit
SCIE501	Conducting Scientific Research 2	1.0 Credit
SCIE600	Summer Science Camp	1.0 Credit
*SCIE700	*Forensic Science	1.0 Credit
SCIISP100	Science Independent Study Project	1.0 Credit
SOCS100	Geography	1.0 Credit
SOCS101	World History	1.0 Credit
SOCS202	American History	1.0 Credit
SOCS303	US Government	1.0 Credit
SOCS404	Economics	1.0 Credit
SOCS505	Sociology	1.0 Credit



SOCISP100	Social Studies Independent Study Project	1.0 Credit
SPAN101A/101B	Spanish 1	1.0 Credit
SPAN202A/202B	Spanish 2	1.0 Credit
SPAN303A/303B	Spanish 3	1.0 Credit
SPAN400A/400B	AP Spanish	1.0 Credit
SPANISP100	Spanish Independent Study Project	1.0 Credit
FREN101A/101B	French 1	1.0 Credit
FREN202A/202B	French 2	1.0 Credit
FREN303A/303B	French 3	1.0 Credit
FREN400A/400B	AP French	1.0 Credit
GERM101A/101B	German 1	1.0 Credit
GERM202A/202B	German 2	1.0 Credit
CHIN101A/101B	Chinese 1 (Mandarin)	1.0 Credit
LATN101A/101B	Latin 1	1.0 Credit
CMPT100	Intro to Computers	1.0 Credit
HLTH200	Health & Wellness ISP	1.0 Credit
LMGT200	Lifetime Health	1.0 Credit
CHDV100	Early Childhood Development	1.0 Credit
PFIN100	Personal Finance	1.0 Credit
*PSYC100	*Intro to Psychology	1.0 Credit
ANAT100	Intro to Anatomy	1.0 Credit
MUSC100	Music Appreciation 1	1.0 Credit
MUSC200	Music Appreciation 2	1.0 Credit
MUSC300	Music History	1.0 Credit
SATPREP	SAT Prep	0.5 Credit
ACTPREP	ACT Prep	0.5 Credit
ONLNRDY	Online Learner Readiness	0.5 Credit
DRVED	Driver's Education	0.5 Credit

Academic Counseling

Academic counseling is available for all full- and part-time students. We will assist with course selection, post-secondary guidance and other academic counseling issues. Please call the school at 1.800.620.3844 for any academic counseling needs.



Awarding of Credits and Diplomas

Grading and Reporting

Excel High School uses a traditional A-F grading system. Instructors assign mid-course and final grades based on the following criteria:

A	Approximate average of 90-100%	Student effectively demonstrated exceptional understanding of all course outcomes. All coursework was completed at a high level of quality and in a timely fashion. Student participated actively and substantively by both initiating discussions and participating in discussions initiated by others.
B	Approximate average of 80-89%	Student effectively demonstrated solid understanding of all course outcomes. All coursework was completed at a solid level of quality and usually in a timely fashion. Student participated substantively by both initiating discussions and participating in discussions initiated by others.
C	Approximate average of 70-79%	Student demonstrated acceptable understanding of most course outcomes. All coursework was completed in a reasonably timely fashion. Student participated substantively in discussions initiated by others.
D	Approximate average of 60-69%	Student demonstrated some understanding of the most critical course outcomes. All major coursework was completed. Student participated only occasionally in course discussions.
P	100-60%	Student achieved passing grades for the course. Holds no grade value, but does indicate that the student has met the requirements necessary to pass the course.
F	Approximate average of below 55%	Student has not demonstrated sufficient learning to earn credit for the course. Student work was consistently of poor quality, and the student rarely participated in course discussions.
IN	Incomplete	Major coursework left uncompleted. Final grade is withheld until sufficient coursework is complete and submitted. Temporary F assigned within one month after last engagement. Final F assigned two months after last engagement.
W	Withdrawn	Student officially withdraws from the class.



Credit Requirements for Graduation

For full-time students who wish to earn an **Excel High School College Prep** diploma, EHS requires a total of 24 credits to graduate. Although this matches a typical traditional high school, at Excel, students can easily complete these credits by following a typical four-course block schedule per 18-week semester. The 24 credits must include at least the following:

24 Credit College Prep Curriculum

- 4.0 credits of English
- 3.0 credits of math
- 3.0 credits of science
- 3.0 credits of social studies
- 0.5 credits of personal fitness
- 0.5 credits US Government
- 10.0 Elective credits

Students planning to attend college are encouraged to enroll in either the SAT or ACT prep courses during their sophomore or junior years depending on when they intend to take either of these exams. Excel High School is registered with the College Board and has been assigned school ID#: **240-707**.

These credit requirements are intended to ensure a well-rounded education while still providing for a great deal of individualization through electives.

Excel High School also awards 18-credit **General Studies** diplomas to students interested in pursuing other academic avenues, employment, or contemplating the military.

18 Credit General Studies Curriculum

- 4.0 credits of English
- 2.0 credits of math
- 2.0 credits of science
- 2.0 credits of social studies
- 0.5 credits of personal fitness
- 0.5 credits US Government
- 7.0 Elective credits



Transfer Credits & Transcripts

Excel High School welcomes transfer credits from any public or private school. Students should request an official transcript be sent from their current or previous school to Excel High School at the following address:

Office of the Registrar
Excel High School
4445 W. 77th Street, Suite 209
Edina, MN 55435

Upon receipt of an official transcript, an EHS counselor will review the transcript and award transfer credits as appropriate. Such transfer credits will appear on the student's Excel High School transcript as transfer credits with a notation regarding where the original credit was earned.



Behavior Expectations

Excel High School expects exemplary behavior in all of its environments. Students come to Excel High School for a safe and productive environment, and any behavior that, in the judgment of any staff member, negatively impacts that environment can cause the student to be subject to disciplinary action.

Progressive Discipline

In any case of inappropriate behavior or violation of any school policies, the following progressive discipline plan is used. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the discipline process may begin at any Step in the plan.

Step	Action	Example trigger behavior
Step 1	Instructor/advisor conference with student.	Occasional breaches of netiquette that impact the learning environment.
Step 2	Instructor/advisor conference with student, parent and President.	Consistent breaches of netiquette that impact the learning environment.
Step 3	Instructor/advisor conference with student, parent and President. Student may be placed on probation, resulting in increasingly severe consequences for any subsequent violation. Terms of the probation will be determined by the President in consultation with the advisor, instructor and parent.	Moderate violation of the acceptable use policy in a way that does not impact any other student or the function of the school.
Step 4	A conference will be held with the student, the parent/guardian, the President, the student's advisor, and any instructors involved in the trigger incident(s). Depending on the results of the conference, the student may be placed on probation, expelled from a class, or expelled from school. In particularly severe cases, expulsion may occur without the conference.	Major violation of plagiarism, harassment or acceptable use policies



Appropriate Communication & Netiquette

Netiquette refers to rules of etiquette for Internet-based communication. Netiquette is intended to help staff and students communicate clearly in this environment with a minimum of misunderstandings or other unintended consequences. The basic rules of netiquette to which Excel High School subscribes are:

- 1) All course postings should be in standard written English when possible (except in foreign language classes, of course). Since Excel High School is an academic environment, slang is generally inappropriate. For brief, informal postings in discussion boards and text chats, it is not necessary to use standard written English; typos and grammar errors are to be expected.
- 2) Avoid using ALL CAPS. In an online text environment, using all capital letters is considered shouting.
- 3) Postings should be meaningful and demonstrate clear, critical and analytical thinking whenever possible. Remember that every posting in a course is part of academic work. Avoid comments that lack substance, such as “I agree” or “Good point.” Make sure that each posting adds substantially to the conversation. This helps make discussions more efficient for everyone.
- 4) Respond respectfully to people, especially when you disagree with them. The academic online environment is conducive to rich, thoughtful discussion. To encourage that, all perspectives should be honored and respected. Instead of “you’re crazy!” try asking clarifying questions, such as “I hadn’t thought of it that way – can you explain that a little more?”
- 5) Remember that your online skills may be less or greater than your peers. Be tolerant of others’ mistakes – and your own.
- 6) Be yourself! Don’t be afraid to inject your personality into your work.



Technical Information

Technology skills

No advanced technical skills are needed to participate in Excel High School courses. Students should be comfortable using the Internet, and they should be able to send email, use email attachments, and be familiar with an office productivity software suite such as Microsoft Office[®] or Appleworks[®]. An orientation to Moodle, the specific software used by Excel High School, will take place once a student enrolls in the school. An introduction to Moodle is available on the school's Website.

Necessary hardware & software

Students need only general computer hardware and office software to participate in Excel High School. Any up-to-date computer with a current Web browser should suffice. Excel High School has found that Microsoft Office[®] is the most preferred office software due to its ability to work on all computers and within the Moodle system. ***Microsoft Works[®] and WordPerfect are NOT recommended for EHS coursework.**

All Excel High School courses are designed to be used with a 56K modem or faster. Students with 56K or slower connections may want to print lessons and do some of their work off line. Students taking language courses will be happiest with some form of high speed Internet access.

For best results, student computers should have at least the following characteristics:

Browser Plug-ins

- Sun Java 1.4.2 JRE or higher
- Sun Java 3D 1.3 or higher
- Flash 7.0 or higher
- Acrobat Reader 5.0 or higher
- ActiveX
- DirectX
- Media Player
- QuickTime



PC Requirements

- Pentium II (233 MHz minimum, higher recommended)
- 128k Internet connection. A broadband connection is recommended.
- Windows 2000, 98, NT, XP, ME (Windows ME does not support software used in the following courses: Web Design 1 and 2)
- 256 MB Ram
- 12x CD-ROM (CD/DVD Recommended)
- Display setting 1024x768 resolution
- Printer required
- Internet Explorer (Web browsing software) - version 5.5 or higher
- Students need a method to save work to a removable disk (Floppy, Zip, CD-ROM)
- Audio: Sound card with speakers, microphone, headset, or webcam (needed in some courses)
- Microsoft Office[®]/Microsoft Word[®] (highly recommended) and/or WordPad

*** America Online[®] and KOL[®] are NOT recommended**

Macintosh Requirements

- Power Mac G3
- OSX
- Students need a method to save work to a removable disk (Floppy, Zip, and CD-ROM)
- 128 MB Ram
- 12x CD ROM (CD/DVD Recommended)
- 128k Internet connection. A broadband connection is recommended.
- Display setting 1024x768 resolution
- Printer required
- Safari browser and/or Mozilla Firefox
- Flash 7 player
- QuickTime
- Audio: Speakers and microphone, headset or webcam (needed in some courses)
- Microsoft Office[®]/Microsoft Word[®] (highly recommended)

***America Online[®] and KOL[®] are NOT recommended**



Moodle

Moodle is the name of the course management system used by Excel High School. Like all course management systems, Moodle is a suite of software products that includes chat rooms, discussion boards and other communication tools. Students will use these tools to work with their instructors and peers on their particular courses, as well as for the extra-curricular activities.

Each student will get a password that gives him or her access to all the courses for which they have registered, as well as general school areas such as the student work gallery. A thorough Moodle orientation is available within the system, starting at the Excel High School website.

Financial Information

Tuition

Tuition for the 2007-2008 school years is \$299.00 for all full and half-credit courses. Some science courses have additional lab fees, but these costs are minimal. The cost for licensing an eBook for the semester is added to the tuition costs.

Payment plans

Excel High School offers a 0% interest free payment plan to all full- and part-time students. Full payment may be made upon enrollment or through automatic monthly withdrawals from a personal credit or debit card account.

Other expenses

Some courses require that students purchase textbooks, eBooks, or other related course materials. These expenses are generally minimal, and rarely exceed \$50 per course. All textbook materials are readily available through online discount book stores or other convenient sources. Subscriptions to eBooks are made through the counseling and advising department at the time of enrollment. These online texts range in cost from \$34 to \$37 per eBook course.



Refund Policy

There are two components to the Excel High School refund policy. The first is the Excel High School Guarantee:

Excel High School guarantees that the credits you earn meet state academic standards and are accepted by post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, junior and community colleges, the military, and most employers. If they are not accepted, we will work with the institution to facilitate the acceptance of these credits. If the institution still does not accept these credits, Excel High School will refund the money paid for any non-accepted credits.

The second component to the refund policy is in regards to students who sign up for one or more courses, but then choose not to engage. Refunds will be made according to the following schedule:

We will issue a full refund upon written request, minus a \$ 25.00 processing fee, when the student enrolls in the course/program but never engages in the course/program within 30 days from the date of enrollment.

We will issue a full refund upon written request, minus a \$ 50.00 processing fee, when the student enrolls in the course/program, engages in the course/program, but chooses to un-enroll within 30 days from the date of enrollment.

No refunds will be made after 30-days of enrollment in a course/program.

****In most cases, you will have no trouble using a diploma from Excel High school for employment, college entrance, etc. We cannot guarantee that all credits will be acceptable for transfer to other schools. We ask that all students check on acceptance before enrolling at EHS. We do offer a 100% money back guarantee on all programs.**

Supporting the Scholarship Fund

Excel High School is a private school that functions based on tuition payments from families. However, Excel High School strives to be accessible for all students. To support this end, the Excel High School Scholarship Fund provides tuition assistance for low-income students. Donations in any amount are greatly appreciated and will be distributed according to the school's financial aid policies. Please contact the Excel High School business office for more information.



Application & Enrollment Process

Not surprisingly, the entire application and enrollment process for Excel High School takes place online and via the phone. At <http://www.excelhighschool.com> you'll find the application and registration forms for both full- and part-time students. Once those forms are submitted, a staff member will contact you to complete the enrollment process. If you have any questions at any time during the process, please call the school at 952.465.3710 or 800.620.3844 during business hours or email us at info@excelhighschool.com and we will respond to you as quickly as possible.

CPR Contract Communication + Participation = Relationships

Excel High School's goal is to create the best opportunity for success for each student. We have found the most effective way to do this is by building *Relationships* between our school, our students, and their parents/guardians. In these relationships, *Communication* and *Participation* are vital (**CPR**). The first step in building these relationships is the "Student Orientation Web-cast."

You will even be able to make personal appointments with our Online Coordinator (technical support specialist), meet the President of Excel High School and the Director of Counseling.

The second step in building relationships is the **CPR CONTRACT!** We are asking you to empower your student for success by agreeing to follow the contract. After reviewing it with your son or daughter, we ask that it be returned with your signature. See Appendix B for a sample CPR contract.

Please keep in mind the policies and procedures are put in place to provide an environment for success for your student. Please follow them carefully and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We desire to be in good communication with all parents and students. After all, we're on the same Team!

**Together
Everyone
Achieves
More**



Intellectual Property

Staff members undoubtedly will produce various paper and electronic documents, administrative tools, and instructional materials for their work at the school and with students. Because the instructor is being paid by Excel High School in part to create such documents, all such materials are intellectual property owned by Excel High School. The same policy applies to instructors hired to develop an online course and related materials for the school. In rare cases, arrangements may be made in advance to provide for exceptions to this policy. Such exceptions must be made in writing and clearly describe the materials to be exempted and directed to the President of the school.

Professional Development Expectations

Excel High School believes strongly in itself as a learning community in which all staff members and students are always striving to learn and improve. To this end, professional development is an integral part of Excel High School, and all instructors are encouraged to participate in individual professional and EHS staff development activities.

EHS also recognizes that our philosophy of individualized learning applies to staff members as well as students. Furthermore, instructors all come to Excel High School with differing backgrounds in their content areas, distance education, technology, and other competencies.

Excel High School has created a set of instructor standards that provides a framework for each instructor's professional development strategy. These standards are available in the staff section of the school Website and outline the skills and characteristics of outstanding online instructors. All instructors will find that they already have mastered some standards and are just beginning to explore others.

Finally, at least once each year a multi-day face-to-face professional development retreat will be held for all staff. The dates and location for these meetings will be provided well in advance of the event, and all staff will be expected to attend. These meetings will provide an important opportunity for everyone to work together and socialize. In some cases, instructors may be able to participate remotely.

Instructor Evaluation

The instructor evaluation process at Excel High School is critical to the quality of the staff and in turn, the student learning. EHS takes a multi-faceted approach to staff evaluation, and the administration seeks to gather comprehensive data on each staff member so that their performance can be thoroughly and fairly measured. Although



salaries, bonuses and employment status may be tied to the evaluation process, the main goal of the process is to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.

The foundation of the evaluation system is the EHS instructor standards described above, against which instructors will be measured. In order to gather comprehensive data, a wide range of sources will be used. The goal of EHS is to establish a “360” approach to evaluation by gathering information from all sectors of the instructor’s professional circle. These sources include students, parents, colleagues and the administration. Surveys will be given to selected individuals who have particular knowledge or a unique perspective on the instructor’s work. Additionally, transcripts from chat rooms, discussion boards and other electronic tools will be compiled and reviewed.

Based on the data, the President will complete an informal evaluation of each instructor during the teaching semester and formally each year.

At Excel High School, evaluation is not intended to be a threat; the focus is on professional growth. Any serious difficulties with instructor performance will probably be known to the President and discussed with the instructor well-before the formal evaluation process reveals any major concerns or inadequacies. Thus, the evaluation process should be approached by both the instructor and the President with an attitude of helping the instructor succeed to the best of his or her abilities.

At-will Employment

All staff members at Excel High School are “at-will” employees. EHS makes no promise or guarantee of long-term employment and reserves the right to fire or layoff any staff member at any time.

Payment and Compensation

At Excel High School, all instructors are contracted 1099 employees. Compensation is based on a fixed rate per student enrolled in the class. Additional compensation is paid for new course development and updating as determined by the President. Instructors are paid on alternate Fridays either by check or direct deposit.

Excel High School recognizes and rewards excellent performance. Whether you have been employed by EHS for a month or a year, and whether you are a full-time or part-time staff member, you may earn performance bonuses and salary increases whenever the school and administration see fit.



Vacation and Time Off

As 1099 employees, instructors are not eligible for vacation or holiday pay. If time off is needed, arrangements must be made in advance and submitted to the President in writing prior to taking any leave of absence.

Leaves of Absence

Excel High School recognizes that life circumstances sometimes require that instructors need a leave of absence for reasons of health (one's own or a family member), bereavement, jury duty, military activity or other reason. Requests for such leave should be made to the President in advance of the leave whenever possible. Excel High School will work with the staff member to determine the most appropriate course of action for each situation.



Policies^E

Excel High School has many policies, but none are more important than those pertaining to the safety, security, integrity and comfort of its staff and students. The following academic integrity, harassment and acceptable use policies are critical to this philosophy and are included here in their entirety. All students and parents will sign a pledge that they have read, understood and agreed to follow these and other school policies.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

I. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity throughout the school. Any learning environment is based on trust, honesty, and integrity. Excel High School's unique online learning environment is no exception.

II. General statement of policy

Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The school will respond vigorously to all violations of this policy.

III. Violations

Violations against academic honesty include but are not limited to:

- Using another student's school account to do work, participate in discussions, or otherwise post information in the school forums.
- Impersonating another student or adult, or having any person impersonates the student in any way.
- Copying and submitting another person's as one's own, whether or not that person is part of the Excel High School community.
- Representing someone else's work as one's own.
- Including without citation work from any other person or source.
- Any other action intended to obtain credit for work not one's own.
- Any form of cheating on any test or assignment.

IV. Student Responsibilities

^E Many Excel High School policies are adapted from similar policies in public and private schools around the country. We thank the many people who have laid the groundwork for these important practices and concepts. Please contact the school if you wish a list of references and resources.



Students take full responsibility for all work submitted in their name or from within their account.

Students are responsible for understanding academic integrity, plagiarism and related issues. If a student does not understand such issues, they are responsible for discussing them with an advisor or instructor at the earliest possible time and within one week of starting any Excel High School course.

V. School response

All violations or suspected violations of this policy will result in a report by the instructor to the school President and a phone call to the parent by the President, the instructor, or both.

The school's response to violations of this policy may include, but is not limited to:

- Denying credit for any assignment in which the violation occurs.
- Denying credit for any course in which the violation occurs without refund for that course.
- Suspension or expulsion

Harassment Policy

I. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning environment that is free from any form of harassment including but not limited to: religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. The school prohibits any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence or any type of behavior, verbal or written or electronic, which causes chronic or continual annoyance.

II. General statement of policy

A. It is the policy of the school to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment and violence. The school prohibits any form of religious, racial, sexual, or chronic harassment and violence or bullying.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil or staff member to harass a pupil or staff member through conduct or communication of a sexual nature or regarding religion and race or considered a chronic annoyance as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school staff includes school advisory board



members, staff, agents, volunteers, contractors or persons subject to the supervision and control of the school.)

- B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupils or staff members to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict religious, racial, sexual, or chronic violence or bullying upon any pupil or staff member.
- C. The school will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written or electronic, of religious, racial, sexual, or continual/chronic harassment or violence, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil or staff member who is found to have violated this policy.

III. Religious, racial and sexual harassment and violence defined

A. Sexual Harassment; Definition.

1. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
 - a. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, or of obtaining an education; or
 - b. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's education; or
 - c. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.
2. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:
 - a. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;
 - b. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
 - d. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual educational status;



- e. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's educational status; or
- f. unwelcome behavior, words, or emoticons directed at an individual because of gender, sexual orientation or alleged sexual orientation.

B. Racial Harassment; Definition

Racial harassment in an online environment consists of pictorial or verbal conduct relating to an individual's race when the conduct:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or
3. otherwise adversely affects an academic opportunities.

C. Religious Harassment; Definition.

Religious harassment consists of pictorial or verbal conduct which is related to an individual's religion when the conduct:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or
3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's academic opportunities.

IV. Reporting procedures

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of religious, racial, sexual or continual/ chronic harassment or violence or bullying by a pupil or staff member of the school or any person with knowledge or belief of



conduct which may constitute religious, racial, sexual, or continual/ chronic harassment or implied violence toward a pupil or staff member should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school official designated by this policy. The school encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from any staff member, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence the School Counselor or the President.

- B. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of religious, racial, sexual, or continual/ chronic harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or reporter's future grades or work assignments.
 - C. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
 - D. The school will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform to any discovery or disclosure obligations.
- V. Investigation
- A. By authority of the school, the President, upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence, shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by staff members or by a third party designated by the school.
 - B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
 - C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident



constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

- D. In addition, the school may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence.

VI. School action

- A. Upon receipt of a report, the school will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.
- B. The result of the school's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

VII. Reprisal

The school will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged religious, racial, sexual, or continual/ chronic harassment or bullying or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment or viral transmission to the individual's computer.

VIII. Right to alternative complaint procedures

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

IX. Dissemination of policy and training

- A. This policy shall be conspicuously posted on the school website in areas accessible to pupils, parents and staff members.
- B. This policy shall appear in the student and staff handbooks.



- C. The school will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and staff members.
- D. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

Acceptable Use Policy

I. Introduction

Obviously the use of the Internet is critical to the function of this school. Students and staff will all be using the school's software and servers via the Internet. This policy is designed to ensure that all students and staff use the school's system appropriately and help maintain a comfortable, safe, and well-functioning school.

II. General statement of policy

In making decisions regarding student access to the School computer system including electronic communications, the School considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Students may access the school software, including the course management system, and the student management system and tools contained therein. The School expects that staff will blend thoughtful use of the School computer system and the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in their use.

III. Limited educational purpose

The School is providing students with access to the School computer system, which includes access to the school software, including the course management system, the student management system and school email service. The School system has a limited educational purpose, which includes use of the system for project activities, course activities, and educational research. Users are expected to use school course management system access to further educational goals consistent with the mission of the School and school policies. Uses which might be acceptable on a user's private personal account on another system may not be acceptable on this limited-purpose system.

IV. Use of system is a privilege



The nature of the School requires frequent use of the School system. However, the use of the School system is a privilege, not a right. Depending on the nature and degree of the violation and the number of previous violations, unacceptable use of the School system may result in one or more of the following consequences: suspension or cancellation of use or access privileges; payments for damages and repairs; discipline under other appropriate School policies, including suspension, expulsion, exclusion; or civil or criminal liability under other applicable laws. In the case of suspension or cancellation of access privileges for a student, the student and the student's parent or guardian must make arrangements for work to continue until the suspension or cancellation is revoked, or the student may withdraw or be expelled from school.

V. Unacceptable uses of the School Computer System

- A. The following uses of the School system and Internet resources or accounts are considered unacceptable:
1. Users will not use the School system to access, review, upload, download store, print, post, receive, transmit or distribute:
 - a. pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit material or other visual depictions that is harmful to minors;
 - b. obscene, abusive, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually explicit language;
 - c. materials that use language or images that are inappropriate in the education setting or disruptive to the educational process;
 - d. information or materials that could cause damage or danger of disruption to the educational process;
 - e. materials that use language or images that advocate violence or discrimination toward other people (hate literature) or that may constitute harassment, bullying or discrimination.
 2. Users will not use the School system to knowingly or recklessly post, transmit or distribute false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or to harass another person, or to engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
 3. Users will not use the School system to engage in any illegal act or violate any local, state or federal statute or law.
 4. Users will not use the School system to vandalize, damage or disable the property of another person or organization, will not



make deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt equipment, software or system performance by spreading computer viruses or by any other means, will not tamper with, modify or change the School system software, hardware or wiring or take any action to violate the School's security system, and will not use the School system in such a way as to disrupt the use of the system by other users. Users will not tamper with, modify or change any safety or security features, including filtering software, virus protection software, spy ware detection/elimination software, or other safety and security utilities.

5. Users will not use the School system to gain unauthorized access to information resources or to access another person's materials, information or files without the implied or direct permission of that person.
6. Users will not use the School system to post private information about another person, personal contact information about themselves or other persons, or other personally identifiable information, including, but not limited to, addresses, telephone numbers, school addresses, work addresses, identification numbers, account numbers, access codes or passwords, labeled photographs or other information that would make the individual's identity easily traceable, and will not repost a message that was sent to the user privately, without permission of the person who sent the message. Users may, but shall not be required to, post basic contact information about themselves within a secure, password-protected area of the School's systems for academic purposes.
7. Users must keep all account information and passwords on file with the designated School official. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the School system or any other system through the School system, attempt to log in through another person's account, or use computer accounts, access codes or network identification other than those assigned to the user. Messages and records on the School system may not be encrypted without the permission of appropriate school authorities.
8. Users will not use the School system to violate copyright laws or usage licensing agreements, or otherwise to use another person's property without the person's prior approval or proper citation, including the downloading or exchanging of pirated software or copying software to or from any school computer, and will not plagiarize works they find on the Internet.



9. Users will not use the School system for conducting business, for unauthorized commercial purposes or for financial gain unrelated to the mission of the School. Users will not use the School system to offer or provide goods or services or for product advertisement. Users will not use the School system to purchase goods or services for personal use without authorization from the appropriate school official.

B. If a user inadvertently accesses unacceptable materials or an unacceptable Internet site, the user will immediately disclose the inadvertent access to an appropriate school official.

VI. Limited expectation of privacy

A. Parents/Guardians have the right at any time to investigate or review the contents of their child's files and e-mail files by submitting a request to the school President. Parents/Guardians have the right to request the termination of their child's individual account at any time. Because the Internet and school computer system are essential for participation in this school, any such request will also serve as a request to withdraw the student from the school.

B. The School will cooperate fully with local, state and federal authorities in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities or activities not in compliance with School policies conducted through the School system.

VII. Internet use agreement

A. The proper use of the Internet, and the educational value to be gained from proper Internet use, is the joint responsibility of students, parents/guardians, and employees of the School.

B. This policy requires the permission of the school's designated professional staff before a student may use a school account or resource to access the Internet.

C. The Internet Use Agreement form for students must be read and signed by the student and the parent/guardian. The Internet Use Agreement form for



employees must be signed by the employee. The form must then be filed at the school office.

VIII. Limitation on school liability

Use of the School system is at the user's own risk. The system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. The School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss, damage or unavailability of data stored on School diskettes, tapes, hard drives or servers, or for delays or changes in or interruptions of service or miss-deliveries or non-deliveries of information or materials, regardless of the cause. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of any advice or information obtained through or stored on the School system. The School will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through unauthorized use of the School system or the Internet.

IX. User notification

- A. All users will be notified of the School policies relating to Internet use via the student handbook, staff handbook, and parent handbook. All students, parents and staff will sign the AUP notification form.
- B. This notification will include the following:
 - 1. Notification that Internet use is subject to compliance with School policies.
 - 2. Disclaimers limiting the School's liability relative to:
 - a. Information stored on School diskettes, hard drives or servers.
 - b. Information retrieved through School computers, networks or online resources.
 - c. Personal property used to access School computers, networks or online resources.
 - d. Unauthorized financial obligations resulting from use of School resources/accounts to access the Internet.
 - 3. A description of the privacy rights and limitations of school sponsored/managed Internet accounts.
 - 4. Notification that, should the user violate the School's acceptable use policy, the user's access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.



5. Notification that all provisions of the acceptable use policy are subordinate to local, state and federal laws.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What courses are available and how do we know they are of high quality?

Excel High School has over 50 regular and elective high school courses available online. EHS offers an accredited curriculum that meets state academic standards and has been approved by the NCAA for college bound high school athletes.

2. When do classes begin and how do we enroll?

EHS courses are taught following an 18-week block schedule just like you would find at a college or university. Typically a full-time student takes four classes during any given semester. In two semesters, a student can easily complete the core subject requirements for two grade levels. When combined with a summer semester, a freshman student following a college prep curriculum can complete their high school education in less than four years. The school calendar is divided into three semesters (fall, spring, and summer) allowing for maximum class planning flexibility. To enroll, complete the application at the school Website (www.excelhighschool.com)

3. How involved are the instructors and what are their qualifications?

Yes, instructors are actively involved with students throughout their courses at Excel High School. They use a number of technology tools to interact frequently with students and parents. All of our instructors have either advanced degrees or instructor licenses in the field in which they are teaching - and often both. In addition, we monitor the virtual classrooms and evaluate our instructors regularly to ensure that they are meeting Excel High School's high standards of performance.

4. Is the school's online environment safe? How is Internet security maintained?

Excel High School is proud of its safe online environment. Staff members monitor all school chat rooms and discussion boards. Staff members also regularly archive and review text conversations. We also have a comprehensive Acceptable Use Policy, which all students and parents must sign, and which we enforce vigorously.

5. How will we know how well are child is doing in his or her classes?

Parents have access to information about their student's work in a special parent section of the online school. Parents can view up-to-date information on their student's progress in all courses. Parents may also call instructors or the school President for more information regarding their child's progress. In addition, each instructor has established



office hours and they can be contacted during these times. Instructor's can also be contacted at anytime via email, phone, instant message, or by using the Skype communications portal.

6. How do we know the students are learning?

All courses include meaningful assessments of student work, and instructors are in regular contact with all students and parents. Parents are encouraged to enter any of the courses their child is taking to observe progress. The Parent Portal also allows you an opportunity to get a snap-shot view of the overall progress being made within the courses. In addition, progress reports are emailed to both parents and students during the semester as a way of communicating course progress as well as any deficiencies.

7. Is there a face-to-face requirement? What sort of attendance is required?

There is not a face-to-face requirement. Excel High School is a fully online private school. Although there is not a traditional attendance requirement, students will only learn to their full potential if they actively participate in all course assignments. Students are expected to log in to the school for substantive participation a minimum of at least once a day.

8. How much does it cost?

Full credit - \$ 299.00 USD * Financing charges may apply

½ Credit - \$ 299.00 USD * Financing charges may apply

HSED/GED Diploma - \$ 299.00 USD, Plus \$ 4.60 S&H * Financing charges may apply

Driver's Education - \$ 99.00 USD

GED Tutoring Center - \$ 39.00 USD (**\$10.00 discount for enrolled EHS HSED/GED students**)

***Excel High School offers convenient and affordable payment plans.**

The average semester full time cost for attending Excel is about \$ 1200.00 - \$ 2400.00 USD per year for US and Canadian residents. (4 to 8 credits)

You will notice the cost to attend Excel High School is about half the cost of comparable accredited private high schools in the US. It is our goal to keep education affordable for everyone. Since we are able to keep our costs low, we pass these savings on to our students. We have no buildings to maintain, other than our administration offices; we have no schools busses to operate; we do not employ a facilities maintenance crew; we



do not offer school lunch programs; so you can quickly see how we can be such an affordable option.

9. Will colleges accept Excel High School credits?

Yes. We have found that graduates of Excel High School have gone on to attend a number of well-know post-secondary institutions to further their academic careers. Others have gone on to enroll in local community and junior colleges in their area, vocational/business schools, and some have even joined the military. If you find that your credits are not accepted by any institution, we will work with the institution to facilitate acceptance. If these efforts fail, we will refund the money paid for the non-accepted credits or diploma.

10. Who started Excel High School?

A group of people passionate about education started Excel High School to provide additional learning opportunities for students around the country and around the world. The owners and developers of Excel High School are businessmen, technology experts and educators who have pooled their expertise to provide the best education possible. All owners and developers have children of their own and appreciate the critical importance of education in families' lives. For a complete list of owners, developers, and advisory board members, please visit the school Website at www.excelhighschool.com.



APPENDIX B

The academic survival of your student depends on CPR!

Parents, students and instructors need to **C**ommunicate and **P**articipate in order to form a **R**elationship that will lead to success.

CPR CONTRACT

Excel High School Instructors desire to empower parents and students through good communication and participation. We commit to the following:

- To grade assignments within 48 hours.
- To respond to all questions/comments within 48 hours.
- To honor all appointments with students and/or parents.
- To be available during posted office hours to work with students and parents.
- To provide monthly reports on your student's progress- more frequently if necessary, this can be viewed by parents at the posted Excel High School email.

Parent/Guardian commits to the following communication and participation:

- To watch the Orientation Web-Cast with my student(s).
- To take the initiative to keep my student accountable and on task.

- To go online and check my Excel HS email and Instant Message 5 times a week (takes 1 minute to do and will be explained in Orientation web-cast).

- To respond to any weekly progress report that are marked "URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED" within 48 hours.

- To inform Excel HS within 48 hours of any changes in :
 - o Contact information.
 - o Technical problems or events that affect the students work.
 - o Student or Family health issues that affect the students work.

I have read and understand the CPR contract:

Name of student

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Please sign, date and send to the contact below. Please keep the original for your personal files.

SEND TO: Excel High School Fax Number: 952.465.3701 or scan and send attachment to Email: judy@excelhighschool.com



Appendix C

Instructor Competencies

The following instructor competencies are designed as targets for all Excel High School instructors. These competencies have been adapted and compiled from the Council of Chief State School Officers' INTASC standards, the International Society for Technology Education's NETS-T standards, the Minnesota State Standards for Effective Practice, and distance education experts.

EHS expects all of its instructors to have at least minimum competency in all areas below. However, EHS does not expect any instructor to truly master all competencies. They are intended to be used as goals and guidelines for each instructor's growth-oriented evaluation and Professional Development Plan (PDP).

1) Learners & Learning	
L1	The instructor understands how a student's learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, economics, family, and community values. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L2	The instructor understands how to recognize and deal with dehumanizing biases, discrimination, prejudices, and institutional and personal racism and sexism. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L3	The instructor uses a student's strengths as a basis for growth, and a student's errors as opportunities for learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L4	The instructor understands that all students can and should learn at the highest possible levels and persists in helping all students achieve success. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L5	The instructor develops a learning community in which individual differences are respected. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L6	The instructor understands the influence of use and misuse of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and other chemicals on student life and learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L7	The instructor understands developmental progressions of learners and ranges of individual variation within the physical, social, emotional, moral, and cognitive domains, is able to identify levels of readiness in learning, and understands how development in any one domain may affect performance in others. (MN SEP, INTASC)
L8	The instructor understands how students internalize knowledge, acquire skills, and develop thinking behaviors, and knows how to use instructional strategies that promote student learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
2) Pedagogy	
P1	The instructor maintains maximum flexibility in accommodating a student's learning differences or needs regarding time and circumstances for work, tasks assigned, communication, and response modes while simultaneously ensuring that the student



	maintains high quality work and a reasonable pace toward completion. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P2	The instructor clearly presents objectives for the course and all activities.
P3	The instructor encourages participation through small group discussion, debates, polling activities, email, chats and other techniques. (Berge, 1995)
P4	The instructor maintains a non-authoritarian style and functions primarily as a learning partner and facilitator while consistently using a supportive, encouraging and professional tone in all communications with students, parents and colleagues. (Berge, 1995)
P5	The instructor promotes the development of relationships while maintaining academic focus in courses by encouraging social conversations in the appropriate discussion forums created for that purpose.
P6	The instructor identifies unifying threads throughout multiple discussions. The instructor weaves several strands of conversation into a summarization that may prompt people to pursue the topic further. (Berge, 1995)
P7	The instructor draws attention to opposing perspectives, different directions, or conflicting opinions that could lead to debates and peer critiques. (Berge, 1995)
P8	The instructor enhances learning through the use of a wide variety of materials, people and technologies, including inviting visiting experts to join discussions with students, to respond to posted contributions, or to respond to student questions. (Berge, 1995; MN SEP, INTASC)
P9	The instructor responds to all voice messages within three hours, all direct emails within 12 hours, and to all contacts within 24 hours during work periods.
P10	The instructor understands principles and techniques, along with advantages and limitations, associated with various instructional strategies and apply them accordingly. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P11	The instructor knows how to ask questions, use open-ended remarks and examples and stimulate discussion in different ways for particular purposes, including probing for learner understanding, helping students articulate their ideas and thinking processes, promoting productive risk-taking and problem-solving, facilitating factual recall, encouraging convergent and divergent thinking, stimulating curiosity, and helping students to question. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P12	The instructor develops a variety of clear, accurate presentations and representations of concepts, using alternative explanations to assist students' understanding and presents varied perspectives to encourage critical thinking. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P13	The instructor understands learning theory, subject matter, curriculum development, and student development and knows how to use this knowledge in planning instruction and assessment to meet student needs and curriculum goals. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P14	The instructor implements learning experiences that are based on principles of effective instruction including activating student prior knowledge, anticipating preconceptions, encouraging exploration and problem solving, and building new skills on those previously acquired. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P15	The instructor understands the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of different types of assessments including criterion-referenced and norm-referenced instruments, traditional standardized and performance-based tests, observation systems, and assessments of student work. (MN SEP, INTASC)



P16	The instructor understands measurement theory and assessment-related issues, including validity, reliability, bias, scoring concerns and the differences between assessment and evaluation. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P17	The instructor uses varied and appropriate formal and informal, graded and ungraded, assessment techniques to identify student strengths, promote student growth and maximize student access to learning opportunities. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P18	The instructor uses assessment data and other information about student experiences, learning behaviors, needs, and progress to increase knowledge of students, evaluate student progress and performance, and modify teaching and learning strategies. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P19	The instructor implements students' self-assessment activities to help them identify their own strengths and needs and to encourage them to set personal goals for learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P20	The instructor evaluates the effect of class activities on both individuals and the class as a whole using information gained through observation of classroom interactions, questioning, and analysis of student work. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P21	The instructor establishes and maintains student records of work and performance and responsibly communicates student progress based on appropriate indicators to students, parents or guardians, and other colleagues. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P22	The instructor assesses both individual and group performance and designs developmentally appropriate instruction that meets the student's current needs in the cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and physical domains. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P23	The instructor uses a student's thinking and experiences as a resource in planning instructional activities by encouraging discussion, listening and responding to group interaction, and eliciting oral, written, and other samples of student thinking. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P24	The instructor understands and identifies differences in approaches to learning and performance, including varied learning styles and performance modes and multiple intelligences; and knows how to design instruction that uses a student's strengths as the basis for continued learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P25	The instructor knows about areas of exceptionality in learning, including learning disabilities, perceptual difficulties, and special physical or mental challenges, gifts, and talents; and identifies when and how to access appropriate services or resources to meet these exceptional learning needs. (MN SEP, INTASC)
P26	The instructor can apply knowledge about the process of second language acquisition and implement strategies to support the learning of ELL students. (MN SEP, INTASC)

3) Social & Communication

S1	The instructor creates a friendly, safe educational and social environment where learning is promoted and encourages all participants to introduce themselves to help build the sense of community. (Berge, 1995)
S2	The instructor fosters strong learning communities by providing a variety of communications channels (e.g., e-mail, telephone, discussion forums, online chats) to encourage student-to-instructor and student-to-student interaction. (IPSE, 2004)
S3	The instructor closely monitors online bullying, inappropriate tone in postings, and other potentially intimidating or stifling behaviors by any participant. (Berge, 1995)
S4	The instructor uses humor carefully and includes basic emoticons to clarify tone whenever necessary. The instructor avoids sarcasm. The instructor is sensitive to different cultural



	and ethnic backgrounds that may be represented and how they may interpret attempts at humor. (Berge, 1995)
S5	The instructor establishes compartmentalization of discussions by encouraging purely social discussions to move from the academic discussion areas to the social discussion areas.
S6	The instructor appropriately uses one-to-one communication tools to address a particular student's behavior or performance issues. The instructor avoids any public ridicule or embarrassment.
S7	The instructor uses knowledge of effective verbal, written and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, self-expression, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the virtual classroom. (MN SEP, INTASC)
S8	The instructor fosters sensitive communication by and among all students and understands how cultural and gender differences can affect communication in the virtual classroom. (MN SEP, INTASC)
S9	The instructor uses effective communication and listening strategies in conveying and receiving ideas and information and in asking and answering questions. (MN SEP, INTASC)
4) Virtual Classroom Management	
M1	The instructor establishes a positive climate in the virtual classroom and participates in maintaining a positive climate in the school as a whole in order to make the entire school a productive learning environment. (MN SEP, INTASC)
M2	The instructor appropriately chooses and communicates to students the level of informality that is expected or allowed in a course or discussion forum. In many cases, perfect grammar and typing are much less important than making clear one's meaning. All final individual and group work should be carefully edited and in appropriate academic language. (Berge, 1995)
M3	The instructor encourages ongoing feedback and discussion regarding how the students are managing their work, using the electronic tools, and communicating with instructors and peers.
M4	The instructor uses email to urge participants to join in the discussion, to initiate debates, and to solicit suggestions. Email is also used to ask students who might be dominating conversations to moderate their postings. (Berge, 1995)
M5	The instructor helps keep discussions focused by encouraging students to change subject headings as the discussion progresses, minimize the number and length of digressions, and encourage use of the social areas of the school.
M6	The instructor encourages students to take leadership roles in course discussions.
M7	The instructor effectively prepares and double-checks course materials, including hyperlinks.
M8	The instructor participates for an appropriate amount in course discussions and effectively and appropriately ends discussion threads after they have served their purpose. (Berge, 1995)
M9	The instructor establishes productive relationships with parents and guardians in support of student learning and well-being, consults with parents, counselors, instructors of other



	classes and activities within the school, and with professionals in other community agencies to link student environments and to foster student learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
M10	The instructor knows how to help people work productively and cooperatively with each other in complex social settings. (MN SEP, INTASC)
M11	The instructor applies knowledge of factors and situations that are likely to promote or diminish intrinsic motivation, of how to help students become self-motivated, and the critical role of participation in developing commitment. (MN SEP, INTASC)
M12	The instructor organizes, allocates, and manages the resources of time, space, activities, and attention to provide active engagement of all students in productive tasks. (MN SEP, INTASC)
5) Technology	
T1	The instructor makes participants comfortable with the school systems and software with the ultimate goal of making the technology transparent. (Berge, 1995)
T2	The instructor assists students with basic, common technical issues with common software and hardware used for the course. The instructor uses -- and encourages students to use - email and phone technical support.
T3	The instructor provides adequate time and orientation for new students to ensure that they are comfortable with the technology before they must participate. (Berge, 1995)
T4	The instructor demonstrates continual growth in technology knowledge and skills to stay abreast of current and emerging technologies. (NETS-T)
T5	The instructor designs developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies to support the diverse needs of learners. (NETS-T)
T6	The instructor applies current research on teaching and learning with technology when planning learning environments and experiences. (NETS-T)
T7	The instructor identifies and locates technology resources and evaluates them for accuracy and suitability. (NETS-T)
T8	The instructor implements curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for applying technology to maximize student learning. (NETS-T)
T9	The instructor facilitates technology-enhanced experiences that address content standards and student technology standards. (NETS-T)
T10	The instructor uses technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the diverse needs of students. (NETS-T)
T11	The instructor applies technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity. (NETS-T)
T12	The instructor applies technology to facilitate a variety of effective assessment and evaluation strategies. (NETS-T)
T13	The instructor uses technology resources to collect and analyze data, interpret results, and communicate findings to improve instructional practice and maximize student learning. (NETS-T)
T14	The instructor applies multiple methods of evaluation to determine students' appropriate use of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity. (NETS-T)
T15	The instructor uses technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice. (NETS-T)
T16	The instructor uses technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning. (NETS-T)



T17	The instructor continually evaluates and reflects on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning. (NETS-T)
T18	The instructor uses technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning. (NETS-T)
T19	The instructor understands the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the use of technology in PK-12 schools and models and applies those principles in practice with an emphasis on safety. (NETS-T)
T20	The instructor applies technology resources to enable and empower learners with diverse backgrounds, characteristics, and abilities. (NETS-T)
T21	The instructor identifies and uses technology resources that affirm diversity. (NETS-T)
T22	The instructor facilitates equitable access to technology resources for all students. (NETS-T)
T23	The instructor uses educational technology to broaden student knowledge about technology, to deliver instruction to students at different levels and paces, and to stimulate advanced levels of learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
6) Content	
C1	The instructor understands major concepts, assumptions, debates, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to the disciplines taught. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C2	The instructor understands how students' conceptual frameworks and misconceptions for an area of knowledge can influence the students' learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C3	The instructor connects disciplinary knowledge to other subject areas and to everyday life. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C4	The instructor understands that subject matter knowledge is not a fixed body of facts but is complex and ever developing. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C5	The instructor uses multiple representations and explanations of subject matter concepts to capture key ideas and link them to students' prior understandings. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C6	The instructor uses varied viewpoints, theories, ways of knowing, and methods of inquiry in teaching subject matter concepts. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C7	The instructor evaluates teaching resources and curriculum materials for comprehensiveness, accuracy, and usefulness for presenting particular ideas and concepts. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C8	The instructor engages students in generating knowledge and testing hypotheses according to the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in the discipline. (MN SEP, INTASC)
C9	The instructor designs interdisciplinary learning experiences that allow students to integrate knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry across several subject areas. (MN SEP, INTASC)
7) Ethics, Professionalism and Professional Growth	
E1	The instructor continually reflects and evaluates the effects of choices and actions on others, including students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E2	The instructor understands the role of reflection and self-assessment on continual learning and actively seeks out opportunities for professional growth. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E3	The instructor understands methods of inquiry, self-assessment, and problem-solving strategies for use in professional self-assessment. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E4	The instructor understands the influences of the instructor's behavior on student growth and learning. (MN SEP, INTASC)



E5	The instructor knows major areas of research on teaching and of resources available for professional development, including professional literature, colleagues, and other resources. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E6	The instructor understands professional responsibility and the need to engage in and support appropriate professional practices for self and colleagues. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E7	The instructor uses classroom observation, information about students, and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for reflecting on and revising practice. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E8	The instructor collaboratively uses professional colleagues within the school and other professional arenas as supports for reflection, problem-solving, and new ideas, actively sharing experiences, and seeking and giving feedback. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E9	The instructor consistently behaves ethically with all students, parents and colleagues. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E10	The instructor understands the historical and philosophical foundations of education, schools' role as organizations within the larger community context and the operations of the relevant aspects of the systems within which the instructor works. (MN SEP, INTASC)
E11	The instructor understands mandatory reporting laws and rules, data privacy and record-keeping practices, including student rights and instructor responsibilities to equal education, appropriate education for students with disabilities, confidentiality, privacy, appropriate treatment of students, and reporting in situations of known or suspected abuse or neglect. (MN SEP, INTASC)

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