



A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Parent Handbook

2019-2020



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome!	2
Taos Academy Parent Involvement Pledge	3
Parent Handbook & Pledge Signatures	5
Glossary	6

Welcome!

Welcome to Taos Academy! We look forward to partnering with you in your child's education. You are your child's first teacher. You have more of an impact on his or her values, behavior, expectations, work ethic, and actions than any other person in the world. When you teach your children that you believe in the value of their education, they will learn to apply a similar mindset to their role as a student. **Your involvement makes the difference!**

Research shows that parent engagement is one of the most important indicators of students' future success. Students with parents who are involved in their education tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance; they are more likely to complete high school and to continue on to higher achievement levels in both college and career paths.

Taos Academy is a hybrid model school, combining digital core curriculum with live taught classes; our design means that parents have a tremendous role in their child's learning, even more so than in a traditional educational setting. Many of your student's assignments will need to be completed outside of the scheduled academic day here at Taos Academy. Therefore, it is essential to schedule supervised blocks of time where you help ensure that your child is able to complete assignments and achieve expected academic progress.

We, the staff at Taos Academy, understand the huge impact that you, as parents, have on your children. We cannot do this without you!

Taos Academy Parent Involvement Pledge

As a parent of a Taos Academy student, I pledge that, to the best of my ability, I will:

1. Provide **high speed internet** access from home with access to a computer and printer.
2. Help my child outside the school for **approximately 20 active hours/week**, or as needed, to stay current with each class lesson schedule.
3. **Read all emails and school communications** with the intent to understand what is expected of me and my student to fully support my student's successful progress.
4. **Sit with my student** at least once per week, to go through his/her assignment calendar, grades and course completion, which are able to access 24 hours a day, seven days per week through the parent and student portals.
5. **Learn how to access the Edgenuity Family Portal** that lets me monitor my student's progress anytime I would like. I may learn to do this at orientation or any other day by making an appointment with the curriculum coordinator or my student's adviser.
6. **Familiarize myself with the terms** in the parent glossary at the end of this document.
7. **Assist my student in choosing the appropriate mode of coursework.**

All TA courses are available in three levels:

- a. *Honors Level (H)*: This course contains all of the course's original content, including essays, lab reports, and performance tasks. Retaining Honors-level designation requires a high standard of interaction with the material presented, strong written work, and staying on track such that Actual Grade does not drop below 70% for more than two weeks.
 - b. *Standard Level*: These classes contain most of the original content and meet or exceed all Common Core and NM State Standards. In Math, one or more Performance Tasks or Projects have been removed (they may be live-taught in enrichment or in math lab). In Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts, several lessons or assignments have been removed.
 - c. *Power Standards Level (P)*: These are versions of the courses with journals and Topic Test Reviews removed as well. These are used primarily for Special Education, for Credit Recovery students and/or to support a truly struggling student.
8. **Monitor my student's progress** to make sure she/he is "on pace" and not behind in studies. I will ask my student's advisor to explain this to me if I am unsure.

9. **Read and understand the Student Handbook** where all the school rules and policies are more fully explained and review these with my child.
10. Remember that **my student has live classes** he/she is responsible for as well, including all enrichment, 21st Century Learning, and STEAM classes. Activities for these classes are posted in Google Classroom, so there is no excuse for not making up work due to absence.
11. **Communicate with the Main Office in the event of an Absence.** When my child is absent from required school days, these are considered Physical Absences. I will call the front office and write the advisor to excuse my student when she/he is sick. A doctor's note is required to excuse any absences that grow to more than two days in a row.
12. **Understand TA Attendance Policy**, which requires a Student Success Contract and additional attendance if my student falls behind and receives Academic Absences for two weeks in a row. I will read the attendance policy to more fully understand these expectations and requirements. When my child is 'absent' from putting in the required time to stay on pace in his/her online curriculum, they may accrue "Academic Absences," which are unexcused.
13. Understand that **unexcused physical absences** are combined with unexcused academic absences and if they grow to total ten (10) the school is required by the state of New Mexico to report this to the Juvenile Probation Office.
14. Attend my child's **student-led conferences**, two per year.
15. Support the school community activities by volunteering **five hours of my time in various capacities** that I may choose to do and/or be asked to do. These volunteer hours could be chaperoning, baking items for special days, sharing a talent with our students/staff with an intent to teach/inform, school wide cleaning days, and more.
16. Support the T.A. **annual fundraiser known as Sweet Slide** where students obtain pledges or donations for a minimum of \$50 that goes into the Taos Foundation to help to pay for many T.A. programs--including our STEAM program, our leadership days' field trips, and more.
17. **Send my student to school with a lunch** or funds to purchase lunch items. Delivered lunches will be left with the front office before lunch at noon or right at noon so that my child may eat with her/his peers and be nourished for the remainder of the day.
18. Make sure my student is **in school for all state-mandated testing**.
19. **Attend at least one Parent Advisory Committee meeting** during the year. The once-per-month meetings are listed on our downloadable school calendar on our [website](#) for you. By attending these meetings, parents will become more aware of how Taos Academy operates and be able to ask questions and share ideas.

Parent Handbook & Pledge Signatures

Please, sign and return this page to your student's advisor indicating you have read and understand the Parent Handbook & Pledge.

Student Name

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date

Glossary

Academic Absence - Students not maintaining an actual grade of 70% by Sunday afternoon of each week will receive an Academic Absence, which is an unexcused Absence.

Actual Grade - The grade the student is earning in the class at that moment. The Actual Grade is weighted for work that is missing or incomplete. These assignments are scored at 0% until completed. When all assignments are “on pace,” the actual grade and the overall grade are the same. TA requires that students’ Actual Grades remain at 70% or higher throughout the semester. We pull our weekly academic report on SUNDAY evening at 5 pm.

Assignment Calendar - The Edgenuity core classes have lessons assigned each week Monday-Thursday. Through the student portal, one can read names of assignments which are to be completed in each subject, each week for the entire semester. This is for planning purposes, to help you and your student know what work he/she is accountable for on an ongoing basis.

Efficiency Rate - This is the amount of time it takes a student to complete a lesson in Edgenuity. If it take a student 1 hour to complete 1 lesson, this would equate to 100% efficiency. If it takes a student 2 hours to complete 1 lesson, this would equate to 50% efficiency. Advisors help students calculate and understand their individual efficiencies and advise them on ways to work more effectively in their studies. Understanding one’s efficiency rate is important for making a schedule that takes into consideration all factors for successful completion of each week’s assignments.

Enrichment Classes - These face-to-face Math and English classes are taken on campus, on regular school days with a teacher. The assignments & participation grades contribute to the Edgenuity actual grade for that subject.

On Pace - This term means that the student has completed all assignments given by the assignment calendar for Edgenuity classes for that day or week.

Overall Grade - The average grade student has earned based on all assignments that have been completed in a course.

Parent Portal - The parent access to the student’s assignments and grades for all Edgenuity courses. Each parent is given a username and password to access this portal so that he/she can view his/her student’s progress 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Parents are trained to do this during orientation or by making an appointment with the Curriculum Coordinator.

Pending Grade - Projects, Performance Tasks, and Essays are not graded by Edgenuity. Students should notify advisors that the tasks are ready to be graded. Teachers grade these as needed and may ask students to revise their submission for a higher grade or to demonstrate mastery of the concepts covered.

Regrade - Some assignments (online contents, journals, assignments, quizzes, tests) are automatically graded by Edgenuity; if a student does not agree with grade given, he/she may ask the advisor to regrade it and/or give feedback on what the student needs to accomplish to earn a higher grade.

Reset - Each advisor has her/his own reset policy. Reset means that the assignment and/or lesson can be redone for better understanding and mastery. Students may ask for resets and/or advisors can require a reset.

Rosetta Stone - The online program that we use at Taos Academy to earn foreign language credit required for graduation from high school in New Mexico. It is a separate platform/web site than Edgenuity and has its own URL, login and password. High School students are required to complete 2 years (4 semesters) of a foreign language in order to graduate. Additional foreign language credits after the first 2 are applied to electives. On average, it takes about 20 hours to complete a semester worth of RosettaStone coursework. Students register for RS through their advisor. Middle school students are not required to take RS. They may receive and bank high school credit if they complete the semester course.

Rosetta Stone Edgenuity Placeholder - This shows up in your child's Edgenuity lobby and is where you/they can check for current grade in RosettaStone and target completion %. The placeholder is manually updated weekly and takes into account work done from the previous Thursday through the previous weekend until current Thursday. High School students are required to maintain at least 70% grade in Rosetta Stone each week to avoid an Academic Absence.

STEM Classes - Elective classes students take on their off-days in the afternoons. These have a minimal registration fee and you may sign up in the front office at the start of each quarter (middle school) or semester (high school).

Student Success Contract - If the student continues to stay behind in work for a period of three weeks, the advisor will place the student on a Student Success Contract per TA policy. This step is designed to help the student get back on track and provide more structured time. Students on contract are required to attend the Taos Academy Student Success Lab on non-school days Monday through Thursday and often on Friday, too, from 8 a.m. -12 p.m. for a period of 30 days. Academic Absences do not accrue during this period. Appropriate school placement will be discussed with parents, student, advisor and Director if the student continues to struggle.

**** New SY1819** Student Success Programming:** Students not showing grade level proficiency in Math and/or Reading, dropping below 2.0 GPA, or in credit recovery for on-time graduation will be placed on Student Success Programming, requiring participation on campus 4.5 days per week to ensure appropriate instructional time, promoting educational success. This may also continue into the summer to promote further need for success and academic growth.

Sweet Slide - Taos Academy's annual fundraiser which takes place during Winter Activity Days. Each student is expected to seek pledges and/or donations totaling a minimum of \$50.00.



These funds fund programs such as STEAM classes, Leadership Days' field trips and more.

Winter Activity Days - Taos Academy students are required to attend planned outdoor activities. They are given a choice of activities to participate in and seek pledges for our annual school fundraiser. Refer to the downloadable calendar on the Taos Academy website for actual dates. These are school days and attendance is expected from students and staff.