

Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School

8400 East Point Douglas Road South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Achievement Lab Handbook

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School. Our main focus in the upcoming school year is to provide you with a highly effective digital learning experience through consistent interaction and a rigorous curriculum.

This handbook is a reference to the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School. At the Achievement Lab we have high expectations for our students and staff. Throughout this guide we have given you various tools that will be beneficial to your success in our digital learning environment.

This handbook will also help you understand the expectations that allow us to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Please join us in continuing the South Washington Alternative High School mission of ensuring equity in learning for all students as they define and adapt their futures.

Contact List

Questions about courses, your schedule, accessing systems, passwords, logins, or general help:

- Send an email to Matt Casper at mcasper@sowashco.org, please include your name, contact information, and best way to reach you (phone or email and best time of the day to contact you).

Attendance: (Questions about attendance or need to report an absence)

- Send an email to Patty at pfreeman@sowashco.org, please include the student's name, that you are from the Achievement Lab, and the reason for absence. If you would prefer to call please call our attendance line at 651-425-7006.

Note: A Doctor's note may be requested to verify the absence.

Questions about curriculum, instructing, course assessments or general questions about the school or services:

- Matt Casper – Lead Instructor, Achievement Lab at SWAHS – (mcasper@sowashco.org)
- Kate Jenkins – School Counselor, SWAHS – (kjenkins@sowashco.org)
- Nick Falde – Principal, SWAHS – (nfalde@sowashco.org)

Questions about an assignment, broken link, or class progress:

- Contact Matt Casper at mcasper@sowashco.org or 651-425-7034

Common Questions asked about Digital Learning

Q: What factors play a role in the success of a student in a virtual classroom?

A: The following attributes will greatly contribute to a student's success in an online/hybrid environment:

Self-motivation - *Students can direct their own learning environment and methods to fulfill course requirements and achieve individual academic success.*

Independent learner - *The Hybrid/Blended environment enables students to learn at their own pace, relieving the stress of feeling rushed or pressured and providing enjoyment in the learning process.*

Computer literate - *Although it is not necessary to have advanced computer skills, students should possess a working knowledge of electronic e-mail, the Internet, as well as basic keyboarding skills.*

Time management - *Students must be able to organize and plan their own best "time to learn." There is no one best time for everyone, but the key to learning is to make the time to learn.*

Effective written communication skills - *Students must use electronic e-mail and discussion forums to communicate with their peers as well as the instructors. The ability to write clearly to communicate ideas and assignments is essential. This method provides the learner with rapid feedback as well as a means to inform instructors of any concerns or problems that they may be experiencing.*

Personal commitment - *Because there are no bells that begin and end classes, students must have a strong desire to learn and achieve knowledge and skills via digital courses. Making a commitment to learn in this manner is a very personal decision and requires a strong commitment to perform in order to achieve academic success.*

Q: How do I sign up for digital courses through the Achievement Lab?

A: As part of the South Washington Alternative High School the enrollment process is the same for all students wishing to attend one of our programs. That student would connect with their boundary high school counselor to discuss enrollment at SWAHS. The student would fill out all needed paperwork and then a meeting would be set up with SWAHS intake personnel to verify that SWAHS is the right fit for the student. Once a student is accepted and has a start date established. The student will work with the lead instructor of the achievement lab to develop a schedule, go through an orientation, and set timelines for completion of work.

Q: Can you accelerate through a course in the Achievement Lab?

A: Yes, you will be provided with three courses to work through during each term based on the needs of your credit check. The lead instructor will work with you to develop that plan. If you

accelerate through your courses prior to the ending of the term, an additional course will be added.

Q: How long do the terms last?

A: Academic Term Dates for the 2020-2021 school year are as follows:

Term 1 - September 1, 2021 – October 15, 2021
Term 2 – October 18, 2021 – November 23, 2021
Term 3 – November 29, 2021 – January 21, 2022
Term 4 – January 24, 2022 – March 4, 2022
Term 5 – March 15, 2022 – April 22, 2022
Term 6 – April 26, 2022 – June 3, 2022

Q: Where is the Achievement Lab located?

A: The Achievement Lab is located off of the main office inside of South Washington Alternative High School, 8400 East Point Douglas Road S, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Q: Do I need to attend in person?

A: Achievement Lab student groups are split into A groups (M/W) and B groups (T/TH). These groups would be expected to attend during their A or B group days.

Q: How are the classes laid out, are they completely online with limited interaction or do they have a hybrid feel to them?

A: All Achievement Lab classes have a mix of both, there are some segments that will be completely independent and there will be some segments that an instructor will walk you through. When in the lab environment an instructor is present to help you with any content you need support in.

Q: Is there a student / parent orientation prior to the beginning of each term?

A: There will be a student orientation that takes place on the students first day so that they get accustomed to the programs they will be using, and the procedures laid out for the achievement lab overall. The lead instructor will be in contact with the family of new students to walk them through what they can expect and answer any questions they may have regarding the program.

Q: What if I have problems with the technology associated with the online course?

A: All students who encounter technology problems related to the software they will be using should contact the content provider (this will be covered during the orientation session) and contact Matt Casper at mcasper@sowashco.org.

Q: Who are the Digital Instructors?

A: Instructors that teach a digital course are South Washington Alternative High School licensed instructors. All digital instructors have completed professional development training on online learning development. During each term instructors will connect with students during their office hours when students are in the achievement lab.

Q: How long will a course take to complete?

A: To complete a 1.0 credit achievement lab course it will take between 50 and 65+ hours. Students signing up for the summer session may only take 2.0 credits, if you need to make up more than 2.0 credits please see your school's respective counselor.

Q: Do you have to have a large amount of technology experience to be successful in an online course?

A: No, in order to be successful in a digital course, only prior web browsing, file management skills, and in some cases a basic understanding of audio/video conferencing tools are necessary.

Q: Are digital courses easier than traditional face to face courses?

A: Digital courses offer the same academic rigor of traditional courses. Students may find digital courses more difficult because they are learning in a way that they may be unfamiliar with. A digital course will take the same amount of time to complete as a traditional course would.

What to do on a daily basis

1. Check your email (email that you provided on your application)
 - It's important to do this as class assignments may change, instructor schedules may fluctuate, and group members may have questions regarding certain projects.
2. Login to [Schoology](#).
 - a. Login using the login information and password that were given to you.
 - b. Click on the Achievement Lab Class
 - i. Check this page for any new announcements, class meeting changes, scheduled discussions, and/or conferences that your instructor may have set.
3. Through the Schoology page access your classes on Schoology or log into Edgenuity, these two sites house the majority of your curriculum.

Policies

Attendance Guidelines:

- School attendance is one of the most significant factors related to school achievement. The school, parents, and students share the responsibility of promoting regular attendance. The Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law requires students to attend all their classes every day.
- The Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School has adopted a progression model when reviewing attendance. Failure to meet the following criteria will mean the student is not progressing in the course and thus not attending on that day.
 - Each student must login to the Edgenuity or Schoology website five days a week.
 - Each student must make regular progress through each of their courses. Regular progress is considered progress that shows that the student is on track to pass the course by the trimester completion date. For a student to show regular progress, a student must:
 - Plan to spend five to ten plus hours of time each school week in each course
 - Submit assignments that show effort and are of the student's own creation (Work that is submitted that does not meet the Achievement Lab's Academic Integrity Policy will be given no points and count against the student's attendance).
 - Participate in other required learning activities.
 - Revise work based on recommendations or requirements of their instructor.
 - Each student must maintain regular communication with their instructor(s), this may include:
 - Giving your response to an e-mail or phone call from the Achievement Lab faculty and/or staff.
 - Updating your contact information prior to your contact information changing.
 - If you are under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must send an email to Patty at pfreeman@sowashco.org , please include the student's name, that you are from the Achievement Lab, and the reason for absence. If you would prefer to call please call our attendance line at 651-425-7006. A signed doctor's note may be required to verify the absence.
 - If you are over the age of 18, the student must email Patty at pfreeman@sowashco.org, with the reason for absence and, if required, provide a doctor's documentation to verify the absence.

- Students who show the most success in digital learning are those who dedicate time each day to work through their course. If you know that you will need to be offline for a day or more, please contact the attendance office at pfreeman@sowashco.org and give an explanation of your upcoming absences.

Excused Absences:

- Appointment, College Fair / Visit, Court Appearance (must be made three days in advance), Family Emergency, Family Vacation, Funerals, Illness, Religious Holidays, or School Caused (Field Trips, Athletic Trips, Music Trips, etc.)

Unexcused Absences:

- Some examples of unexcused absences are: Babysitting, Driving Lessons, Driving Permit / License Tests, Missed Bus, Oversleeping / Running Late, Personal (no reason given), Staying home or going to another location to do homework, Transportation Problem, Work

Truancy:

- Truancy is any unexcused absence from school or class. A student is truant if he/she leaves school without a pass, has an unexcused absence, obtains a pass to go to a certain place and does not report there, or comes to school but does not attend class. When truancy occurs, a school representative will notify parents via referral, phone call, or letter. When a child accumulates seven truanies in one school year, school administration will notify the county truancy officer.

Excessive Absences:

- The average student in the state of Minnesota misses a total of seven (7) days, excused and/or unexcused in a school year. Students, who miss more than seven days, whether they are excused or unexcused, are considered excessively absent. When absences become excessive for any reason, parents will be contacted. The school is the arbiter of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Medical, legal, or other professional verification for future absences may be required to excuse the student from school.
- After 7 unexcused absences, the county truancy office is notified. Typically, formal written notice will be sent home from a member of the county district attorney. Students accumulating 7, or more, absences at any point during the school year will be referred to the appropriate county services for formal truancy intervention.

Extended Absences:

- If a student has suffered an extended, long-term illness and required work has not been completed, the class record will show an incomplete. A grade will be assigned after the work is completed according to the make-up policy guidelines.
- A student absent for an extended period (typically 15 days or more) due to illness is eligible for homebound instruction. Parents should contact the building principal to make these arrangements.

Academic Dishonesty:

- At the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School, students are expected to adhere to the highest codes of academic conduct. Not only at SWAHS, but also in college and work environments, will students be expected to respect and obey guidelines of honesty and integrity. Therefore, we require that all students understand and obey the following rules.
 - **Academic Integrity** is being honest when conducting business or completing assignments at School or Online. A student has violated the code of academic integrity when he/she plagiarizes, forges a document or parent note, falsely records data from a science experiment, cheats or helps a classmate to cheat, submits work that he/she did not do, or submits work that has already been turned in for a grade in another class without connecting with those instructors first.
 - **Plagiarism** is using another person's words or ideas without properly citing your source. It can be either intentional or unintentional. The following are forms of plagiarism:
 - Using another writer's words without citation. If you use someone else's words (even just two or three significant words), you must put the words in quotation marks and cite your source with footnotes or parenthetical citation with a works cited list. Even using quotation marks alone is plagiarism unless accompanied by citation.
 - Using another writer's ideas without citation. Your instructor should be able to tell which ideas you came up with on your own and which ones you read elsewhere. In some cases, it is okay to integrate opinions of other experts as long as you cite the material that is not yours. This includes paraphrasing, or putting the ideas in your own words, which must also be cited.
 - Borrowing another writer's sentence structure or phrasing. It is easier to borrow someone else's structure than to come up with your own, but this is also plagiarism.
 - Borrowing another student's outline to write your paper or using all or part of another student's paper.
 - Purchasing an essay online or having someone else write all or some of your paper.
 - Multiple Submissions are also a breach of academic honesty. If you submit an assignment to a teacher, it may not be resubmitted again for the same or another class. If you retake a course, it is also dishonest to submit work that was completed for the class when you took it before.

- **Tests and Quizzes** must be completed in an honest fashion. The following activities are unacceptable in testing situations:
 1. Talking to other students while any are still taking the exam.
 2. Using materials, such as notes, calculators, cell phones, internet search sites, etc., when not permitted by the instructor.
 3. Copying answers from another person's test or quiz.
 4. Sharing answers with other students.
 5. Sharing or selling copies of the test or answer key

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

- Any of the following consequences may be imposed by the instructor or administration in cases of academic dishonesty.
 1. Disciplinary Warning: This may include a conference with the administrators, parents, instructors, and students.
 2. Loss of Credit on the Assignment: A student may lose partial or full credit for the assignment. Depending on the situation, this may jeopardize the student's chances of passing the course.
 3. Loss of Credit for the Course
 4. Suspension: This punishment is reserved for especially severe cases of academic dishonesty

Internet Policy:

- All students at the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School have access to the school's computer labs and internet. To ensure quality use of the computers and Internet, the Achievement Lab has established a Computer Lab and Internet Policy which provides guidelines for student use. The Student Computer and Internet Use Form must be signed by the student and his/her parent prior to student computer use and Internet access. This form is kept on file while the student attends the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School. Students who do not meet the expectations for appropriate computer and Internet use may lose these privileges for extended periods of time, in addition to facing other disciplinary consequences.
- If a student loses computer privileges for any amount of time this could have an adverse effect on that student's overall course completion and grade.

Computer Labs:

Computer access is a privilege for students and may be denied if students do not adhere to district use policies. All students and parents must pay particular attention to policy #524 which outlines policy around computer and technology use. The computer lab is open from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm daily. Students are responsible for the care of the equipment and the lab. Tampering with equipment will result in losing computer use privileges. In addition, students accessing another student's file will also lose privileges. Playing computer games is not permitted.

As a student at the Achievement Lab at South Washington Alternative High School, you have access to the school's computer lab and the Internet. This is an incredible resource tool for you. Unfortunately, there is some information on the Internet that has no educational value and can put you, the district and the network at risk. To ensure quality use of the network we have established an Acceptable Use Policy which is summarized below (the entire district Acceptable Use Policy #524 can be found on the district website).

1. You should always have a specific topic of educational interest for research when using the Internet.
2. No information should be downloaded from the Internet without teacher approval.
3. Students are not allowed to view, listen to, or download any material that is obscene, vulgar, and sexually explicit or in any other way violates the district's Harassment or Acceptable Use Policies. Additionally prohibited, materials/activities are the following: gambling; online gaming; downloading or streaming of audio or video files; promotion of private causes; entering into contractual relations; accessing information on violence, hate groups, or controlled substances; modification of passwords or assigned user names; downloading and/or installing software without authorization; modifying software default settings; accessing the network/Internet through any means other than that provided by the School district; accessing or using newsgroups or list services without permission; transferring district files without prior permission; releasing or spreading malicious software (viruses, etc); unauthorized access to the district's network and its resources, intentionally bypassing filtering and security measures.
4. Consequences for misuse/ abuse of the district's technology will include any, or combinations of the following:
 - a. Call home
 - b. Loss of credit for the Internet/computer lab assignment(s)
 - c. Loss of privilege to use district technology
 - d. Referral to the principal for discipline

Tobacco Free Campus:

South Washington County Schools are tobacco free. This includes but is not limited to e-cigarette devices, cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and any other nicotine containing materials (including smokeless tobacco products).

Tennessean Warning:

The purpose of an administrator's questioning is to find out what happened and impose proper discipline. The South Washington Alternative High School discipline policy requires that the student cooperates. Non-cooperation may subject the student to further discipline. Other than school officials, parents, guardians, and, if necessary, the MSHSL, no one else will receive the information. Suspected criminal information will be submitted to the School Resource Officer or designee.

Drop / Add Policy:

At South Washington Alternative High School, we understand that some forms of learning do not fit all students' learning styles. With that being said we offer a few options in response to adding and dropping classes. We hope our efforts and the students' efforts allow all of the students to complete our courses at a proficient level, when the student or the instructor does not believe that will be the case, the student has until the end of the first week of a term to adjust their course schedule. They would make this adjustment by working with the lead instructor of the achievement lab.

Course and Graduation Requirements

General Statement of Policy:

It is the policy of South Washington Alternative High School within South Washington County Schools that all students, in order to earn a high school diploma, must meet established Minnesota K-12 academic standards, required state tests, and South Washington County Schools graduation requirements.

The South Washington Alternative High School will provide a comprehensive academic program which addresses knowledge, skills, concepts, and processes as determined by the setting of high academic standards that meet or exceed state and national standards.

Special education students who properly complete the programs specified in their Individual education Plan (IEP) and have received the recommendation of their IEP Team shall be awarded a diploma.

Information taken from South Washington County Schools School Board Policy 613

Graduation Requirements:

It is the responsibility of each student to register for and successfully complete all required credits. Students must have accumulated credits as listed below in the following areas:

	Class of 2019	Class of 2020	Class of 2021
English / Language Arts	12 credits	12 credits	12 credits
Fine Arts (Art or Music)	2 credits	2 credits	2 credits
Mathematics	9 credits	9 credits	9 credits
Physical Education	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Health	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Science	9 credits	9 credits	9 credits
Social Studies	9 credits	9 credits	9 credits
Economics	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Electives	22 credits	22 credits	22 credits
Total Credits	66 credits	66 credits	66 credits

Incompletes:

A grade of incomplete (I) will be given to a student who has unfinished course work. A grade of NC will be given if a student has not begun coursework in a specific course.

Early Graduation:

Students may be considered for early graduation, as provided for within Minn. Stat 120B.07 upon meeting the following conditions:

- A. The student must meet established Minnesota K-12 academic standards, required state tests, and South Washington County Schools graduation requirements;
- B. The principal or designee shall conduct an interview with the student and parent or guardian, familiarize the parties with opportunities available in post-secondary education, and arrive at a timely decision; and
- C. The principal's decision shall be in writing and may be subject to review by the superintendent and school board.

Taken from South Washington County School Board Policy 613

Records

According to the Minnesota State Law Relating to Pupil Records, the parent/legal guardian, or a pupil 18 years of age or older, may examine or obtain copies of the student's file. She/he may do this by making an appointment in the Guidance Office. Records will be reviewed in the presence of a counselor or administrator. His/her school may release directory information upon request. For further information refer to Board Policy #515.

Substitute Teachers

If the regular teacher is absent from the classroom, students will have a substitute teacher to guide learning for the day. The substitute teacher assumes all the responsibility as well as the authority of the regular teacher. It is expected that all students will treat substitute teachers with respect and provide assistance in making the classroom experience worthwhile and productive.

Textbooks

Textbooks are district property and are loaned to students for their use. It is the responsibility of students to take care of all property. Students must return the book that was checked out to them

at the beginning of the course. Fines will be assessed for any damage over and above wear of normal use. Lost or stolen textbooks will result in a replacement cost to the student.

Other Resources

When logging in to Schoology for the first time, you'll learn about the resources that your teachers have chosen for your particular courses. Most are provided by South Washington Alternative High School, however in some cases you may need to use your own equipment or materials in order to successfully complete the learning activities. As a basic rule if you are missing any required materials for participation in your course(s) please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Important parts of your courses and school

1. Schoology

- *Course announcements*
 - Course announcements are posted in the “messages” section on the right-hand side of the course page. Be sure to check this often as updates regarding your course will be posted here.
- *Discussion Forums*
 - Discussion Forums are places in your Schoology course page where you will communicate with your classmates.
 - Discussion forums are planned discussions posted by your teacher within their course, this is where you will post answers to questions given by your teacher and respond to classmates posting within the same forum.
- *Courses*
 - Some courses are designed by our staff at AHS and these classes are housed on Schoology.
 - Students will complete all of their course work for these classes on Schoology. All of these classes will be under the “courses” tab.

2. Edgenuity

- *Elective Classes*
 - Edgenuity has a wide range of classes that students can use to complete elective courses as well as some required classes that have not yet been added to Schoology.
 - Students may have classes on Schoology and some on Edgenuity in the same term.

3. Email

- *Email*

- Email is one of the main forms of communication between students and teachers at the Achievement Lab. When registering, clearly write/type your email address on your registration material.

4. Conferencing

- *Audio/Video Conferencing*

- Audio/ Video conferencing is another one of the ways that teachers communicate with students in the Achievement Lab. Some teachers may use this form of communication more than others. During your course orientation, your teacher will instruct you on the audio / video conferencing platform and how they plan to use it in their course.

Parents & Guardians Role

Parents and/or Guardians are encouraged to take an active role in your student's success in their achievement lab courses. Parents and/or Guardians are encouraged to connect with their student's teacher to learn about the activities that their student will be taking part in as well as their student's progression throughout their course(s). Some specific things parents and/or guardians can do to help their student(s) succeed in this environment are:

- Review all registration and course information with your student.
- Provide a study space at home with minimal distractions, making sure that it has good lighting, comfortable seating, and a working computer with working internet access.
- Help your student develop a schedule for completing their work.
- Speak with your student about how their achievement lab courses are going and what they are learning in the courses.
- Be aware of mandatory class sessions scheduled and help minimize student conflicts.
- Encourage your student to contact his or her teacher rather than having you do it for them.
- Contact Lead Achievement Lab Instructor or administrator with any questions you may have.

Handbook Updates

Your use of this handbook is one of the essential factors in your success at the Achievement Lab located in South Washington Alternative High School.

We recommend that you keep a copy of this document for reference purposes either bookmarked in your web browser or in hard copy format. Throughout the school year there may be times when we need to make corrections or update sections of this handbook. When these are made you will receive an email notification directing you to check the handbook tab located on the South Washington Alternative High School website.

Besides the policies that are included and/or referred to in this handbook, students are expected to be aware of and to abide by all of the District's policies. All of the District's policies can be found on the District's website at <http://sowashco.org/> under the "About" tab and then click on the "School Board" link and then "School Board Policies" link. Students should pay particular attention to the policies in Section 500 which specifically pertains to students. Questions regarding policies can be directed to your building administrator.

Revised 8/25/2021 by MC