

HIGH SCHOOL

Student Handbook

2023–2024



**Oak
Meadow**

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Welcome to Oak Meadow

Oak Meadow helps students and families experience the joy of learning and create meaningful change in the world.

This Student Handbook gives a detailed overview of our educational program and is intended to serve both as an introduction to our distance learning school and as a useful resource throughout the school year. Please give this document your full attention.

Independent learning with Oak Meadow requires initiative and responsibility, and it offers great opportunities for a rich, personal, in-depth education. Our school is designed to foster caring and supportive relationships between the student, home teacher, and Oak Meadow teachers, and to allow the family to experience a quality education.

We at Oak Meadow are delighted that you are with us, and we send to you and your family our warmest wishes for a successful year. Please feel free to contact us directly if there is anything we can do to make your experience with us more enjoyable and fulfilling.

We look forward to working with you!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Fortescue', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Fortescue
High School Director
afortescue@oakmeadow.com

An Overview of Distance Learning

By enrolling in Oak Meadow, you have chosen a challenging, creative high school program. By working together with experienced teachers, you will take an important role in forming your own high school education.

High School Courses: Working with Your Teachers

For each course, you are assigned an Oak Meadow teacher. Each of your teachers will get in touch with you via their welcome letters within the two weeks leading up to your start date.

Throughout the school year, you will be responsible for submitting lessons to your teachers. In addition to grading and providing feedback on your work, your teachers are available to answer questions by email, phone, or Zoom. Maintaining consistent contact and communication with your teachers will allow for the best possible educational experience within Oak Meadow's independent learning environment.

Because your teacher's feedback on your schoolwork will come primarily through comments on the lessons you have submitted, it is important to maintain a consistent schedule and to refrain from sending too many lessons at once. Without feedback and comments from earlier lessons, you may not have the guidance and direction you need to get the most out of later lessons.

The schedule for sending work to your teacher is established by your teacher and may vary from what is in your printed coursebook.

Teachers often shape your course according to a particular teaching plan, and they may not require you to complete all the lessons that are in your coursebook. Be sure to pay careful attention to the Google course document that your teacher shares with you, as this clearly explain which lessons you are to complete.

If you find that you are unable to maintain a consistent schedule, please advise your teacher and review the options available to you. Our primary concern is that our students are able to benefit from the evaluations, suggestions, and ongoing relationships with teachers.

Find a Consistent Rhythm

Though part of the magic of distance learning is being free from the constraints of having to do school at a certain time, it is vital for students to develop a weekly routine as they work through each course. What this routine looks like is completely up to you, but it is important that you establish periods of uninterrupted time for schoolwork within your weekly schedule. A student should plan on 1–2 hours per subject per day.

An Overview of Distance Learning

continued

Set up a Supportive Physical and Psychological Space

It is important for you to find or create a supportive space where you feel comfortable as you study and work. Some students like to work within a public library with its clean, well-lit work spaces and readily-available research materials. Others prefer a quiet nook at home; still others prefer a tranquil place outdoors. Take the time to reflect upon where you work best and then integrate that space into your weekly routine.

Your Oak Meadow Educational Counselor

From the time you apply, you will have a dedicated educational counselor who will work with you during the enrollment process. Once you're enrolled, your educational counselor is there to support your family. They're available to answer questions and provide support if you need to make any changes to your enrollment. The name of your educational counselor can be found on the OM Gateway.

Finishing the Year

You must submit your final assignments for the course before the end date of your enrollment. If you have been sending in your work regularly, you will have plenty of time to submit your last two lessons and any final exams or projects. Staying in touch with your teacher is the best way to make sure that you have everything completed on time.

Important Forms, Materials, and the OM Gateway

OM Gateway: Online Parent/Student Portal

The Oak Meadow Gateway (also referred to as the OM Gateway) is our online portal for students and parents. Here, you will find several forms, some of which require your immediate attention, as well as a copy of this handbook. You will receive an email with login information when you enroll. You will also find an orientation slideshow that will provide you with important information about your school year. Please set aside some time to watch it with your family. As always, if you have any questions, your teacher will be happy to help you.

The OM Gateway also gives parents and students access to up-to-date information on lesson submissions and teacher comments. You can check the OM Gateway at any time to see which lessons have been received and evaluated by the teacher and which are still outstanding. By providing access to this information, parents and students will be better able to track their progress throughout the year. If you have questions about the OM Gateway, please contact your teacher.

Important forms found on the OM Gateway

The following records and forms that need to be submitted immediately:

- Release of Records Form** Please mail this form to your previous school. Records from your previous school must be sent directly to the Oak Meadow office. We will need official transcripts if you are transferring in high school credits.
- Birth Certificate or Passport** A copy of your birth certificate or passport should be mailed directly to the Oak Meadow office, or emailed to registrar@oakmeadow.com.
- The Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA, for students in grades 9–12).** This form is required to set up the student's Oak Meadow Google email account. The agreement states you will not use the *Google Workspace for Education* for personal emails and social networking. You will respect others' privacy and security when using Google Workspace for Education, and you will be polite and respectful of other students and users.
- Math assessment tests** This online packet contains the Assessment Tests for any mathematics courses in which you are enrolled.

With Oak Meadow enrollment, you enjoy the benefits of an accredited school program—engaging coursework, full academic credit, and skilled teacher support—combined with the freedom and flexibility of learning within the home environment.

Oak Meadow is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). In addition, Oak Meadow is an Approved Independent School in the state of Vermont.



Founded in 1885

What does accreditation mean?

Accreditation means that Oak Meadow has been approved by an outside, independent agency that has determined that Oak Meadow meets accepted standards for schools. These standards address the rigor of academic programs, the processing of academic records, business practices, and long term goals for continued improvement.

Why is accreditation important?

Enrolling in a school that has received accreditation is important for a variety of reasons. You can be assured that the school has met strict professional standards and will continue to meet them to maintain accreditation. Additionally, it is much easier to transfer credits from an accredited school than from a non-accredited school. A student who receives school records or high school credits from Oak Meadow knows that these credits are backed by the prestige of the accrediting agency.

Oak Meadow cannot guarantee that other schools will accept our credits; however, accredited schools routinely accept the credits provided by one another. This is commonly referred to as reciprocal accreditation. Accreditation may be important when considering high school graduation and college admissions.

In most states, enrolling in Oak Meadow is similar to enrolling in a private school; therefore, you may not need to file an “intent to home school” or participate in testing in order to meet your state’s homeschooling requirements. ***Check with your state and local education departments for information about your state’s requirements.***

When enrolled in Oak Meadow, you can be assured that your academic records will be accurate, up to date, and maintained with integrity.

Guidelines for Submitting Work to Your Oak Meadow Teachers

All students will be assigned an Oak Meadow email address, which will become the primary method of communication between teachers and students.

Submitting Work

Work must be submitted to your Oak Meadow teachers electronically. You will receive detailed instructions via email. Each teacher will send you a **Google Drive course doc** where you will keep all your lesson assignments for that course. When your work is ready to be reviewed, you will notify your teacher via the “Email collaborators” function, and they will place lesson comments directly in the doc.

How to submit work:

- Unless otherwise directed by your teacher, you will submit your lessons via the Google Workspace for Education platform. **It is required that you notify your teachers via email when assignments are ready to review.** (Google Drive makes submitting your lessons easy and efficient. For help using Google Docs, visit: <https://support.google.com/docs/#topic>).
- For each course, you are responsible for submitting lessons weekly or bi-weekly to your teacher.
- To help you keep pace with your coursework, it is important for you to create a master schedule of when your lessons are due, this is the best way to be successful at Oak Meadow.
- Your teacher will return your lessons to you with a grade, providing encouragement, suggestions, comments, and instruction for improvement, as well as indicating new directions and possibilities for growth.
- After each semester, your teacher will provide you a written evaluation and final grade.
- Your grades are kept on file by the Oak Meadow registrar and become part of your high school transcript.
- If you are unable to complete your work before your end date, you will need to purchase an enrollment extension from the Oak Meadow office or re-enroll in the course. See the Policy Section in this handbook (page 12) for more information about extensions.
- If you have not finished a course by the time your end date passes, you will receive an “Incomplete” grade for the unfinished semester.

All lessons should be:

- Organized and presented clearly,
- labeled with your name, course, lesson number, and assignment number.

Guidelines for Submitting Work to Your Oak Meadow Teachers

continued

In order to maintain enrollment with the school, Oak Meadow has the following specific requirements that need to be met:

- Students must maintain continual progress toward completion of the course. If a student falls 60 days behind in his/her/their work at any point they may receive a notification that their enrollment is in jeopardy. Students will have two weeks to contact their educational counselor to remedy the situation.
- If you have enrolled in the FACTS payment plan your monthly payments will need to be paid on time. Failure to pay your monthly payments may result in a student being withdrawn.

Graduation Requirements

For students who are planning to graduate high school with Oak Meadow, we require a distribution of credits across academic subjects that will provide a full and balanced high school education and a well-rounded transcript for college entrance requirements.

Important Considerations

- Students must take at least three credits per year to be considered fully enrolled.
- Seniors transferring to Oak Meadow for their final year must enroll in a minimum of three credits to be eligible to receive an Oak Meadow diploma.
- Graduating seniors must be enrolled as a full-time student for both semesters of their 12th grade year to receive a diploma.
- Oak Meadow accepts transfer credits from other accredited high school and college programs. An official transcript is required.
- Oak Meadow diplomas will be issued only to students who have completed the Oak Meadow graduation requirements. Students who wish to receive a high school diploma from Oak Meadow must complete a minimum of 22 credits. (a full-year course equals one credit, a semester course; 0.5 credit equals a half-year.)
- Oak Meadow requires three credits of math for graduation; however, we recommend that college-bound students carefully review each school's math requirements.
- Students may choose to earn credit through our Life Experience Credit (LEC).
- If you plan to apply to college, include college entrance requirements in your academic planning process.

The number of credits in each subject area required for graduation, and the Oak Meadow courses currently available in each subject area, are listed on our web page at: <https://www.oakmeadow.com/high-school/course-selection/>. Courses are 1 credit unless otherwise noted.

Oak Meadow Grading Scale

100–94	A	79–77	C+
93–90	A–	76–74	C
89–87	B+	73–70	C–
86–84	B	69–67	D+
83–80	B–	66–less	F Failing—no credit

In addition to a student's academic achievement in a course, Oak Meadow values student effort, attitude, and work habits. As well as content mastery, grades earned in a course will reflect how well a student demonstrated their level of engagement through consistent submission of work, ongoing communication with their teachers, and attention to detail in following directions and in the general organization of their submissions.

Provisional Certificate of Enrollment:

Upon enrollment with Oak Meadow your student will receive a Provisional Certificate of Enrollment. In order to receive the Certificate of Enrollment the following conditions must be met:

- At least four lessons per course must be submitted within the first 60 days of the enrollment period (or two lessons for math courses).
- All required admission forms must be submitted within 45 days.
- Families must either have paid the tuition in full or be successfully enrolled in the FACTS payment plan.
- Once these requirements are met, an Official Certificate of Enrollment can be retrieved from your OM Gateway account.
- If these requirements are not met, you will receive notification that the student's enrollment is in jeopardy. You will have two weeks to contact your educational counselor to remedy the situation. If we do not hear from you within this time, your student will be withdrawn from the program.

Transferring Credit to OM

Oak Meadow will transfer credit from other accredited schools or programs to a student's OM transcript. Transcripts should be sent to registrar@oakmeadow.com

Credit Recovery Policy

Oak Meadow offers credit recovery in two different ways.

If a student takes an Oak Meadow course to improve a failing grade earned elsewhere, the following condition applies: The prior course is marked "Fail" on the transcript, but does not impact GPA. The Oak Meadow course (when completed and passed) will be manually entered by the registrar and designated as credit recovery. For example, if the course being recovered was Algebra II, it will be noted on the transcript as "Algebra II (CR)".

If a student fails and repeats an Oak Meadow course, the following condition applies: If the student receives a better grade, the course, grade, and credit will replace the previous attempt.

Changing Your Start Date

Your Oak Meadow start date is the beginning of your enrollment period. This date can be found on your Oak Meadow welcome letter and on the OM Gateway. If you need to change your start date, please contact your educational counselor.

Prior to your originally-scheduled start date, you may change your start date once at no cost, and for \$75 thereafter. Any changes made on or after the start date will incur a \$300 charge and can only be done once, within 30 days of the original start date.

Oak Meadow Policies

continued

Drop/Add Policy

After enrolling in a course, students may discover that the course level is not appropriate for them or that the course content is not aligned with their greater academic plan. Students may drop a course within 30 days after their start date, whether or not any work has been submitted. Students are welcome to add a new course to replace the dropped one or withdraw from the course and receive a refund. Contact your educational counselor if you want to drop a course and add a new course.

Withdrawal Policy

If a student withdraws within 30 days of their start date, the course will not show up on their transcript and a refund or credit of 80% of the teaching fee costs and the full cost of the books (if they are returned in like-new condition) will be issued (per our return policy). If books can not be returned then the cost of the books will be deducted from the refund. To withdraw please email registrar@oakmeadow.com or contact your educational counselor.

If a student withdraws from a course after the 30 day period, it is noted on the transcript with a W (Withdrawn). If the student fails to complete the course and fails to notify the school that they intend to withdraw from a course, the transcript will designate the course as incomplete (INC).

Pass/Fail Evaluation Policy

We understand there are times when unusual circumstances make the regular submission of work difficult. If you fall behind in your work, please make sure to contact your teacher to create a plan for catching up. In the event that you must submit a backlog of your overdue lessons in order to catch up, bear in mind that a pass/fail evaluation may be in effect (per teacher discretion). Pass/fail evaluation means that the level of teacher feedback on each lesson will be reduced, and the evaluation of the work will reflect a general picture of the student's current academic abilities.

Considerations of pass/fail review:

- Teachers may need more time to review large submissions of work.
- If a failing grade is received for a bulk submission, the student may be required to re-enroll in the course.

School Year Extensions

Students enrolled in a full-year course have 10 months to complete their courses. Students enrolled in a semester-long course have 5 months to complete their course. If additional time beyond the 10-month school year or 5-month semester is needed to complete a course, there are two options available: purchase a two-month extension or re-enroll for an additional semester.

Two-month extension: Because courses for enrolled students vary in regard to the number of lessons a student will be asked to complete, a student's teacher will determine if they are eligible for an extension. The fee for their first extension is:

- First course: \$300
- Second course: \$150
- Additional courses: \$100 each

As a rule of thumb, students will NOT be granted an extension if they have more than 15% of a course yet to finish.

If you are behind on your work and feel you might need an extension, you must contact your teacher to determine if you are eligible. If your teacher determines that you are not eligible, you may be required to re-enroll for an additional semester in order to complete the course.

Re-enroll for an additional semester: For students who are unable to complete the course by the original end date and who do not qualify for an extension, we offer the option of re-enrolling in the course. Students who have finished their first semester work with a passing grade will be awarded first semester credit, and are welcome to re-enroll in the second semester only. A single semester enrollment allows students five months to complete the remainder of the lessons in the course. When re-enrolling in a course, students begin where they left off and are not asked to resubmit lessons they have already completed. If first semester credit has not been earned, however, the student will need to re-enroll for a full year.

Leave of Absence Policy

Oak Meadow recognizes that there are occasions when a student may benefit from a leave of absence from school while still remaining in good standing. Leave is initiated by a student or the family and must be approved by the Oak Meadow administration. Oak Meadow will confirm the effective dates of leave and will make adjustments to the course end dates based on this information.

A leave is awarded in one-month and two-month increments. Students are eligible for up to two months of leave time per course. This leave is designed to allow students to remain in good standing while they focus their attention on other matters. Teachers will be notified of the absence. The student's enrollment will be placed on hold and the approved leave time will be added to the student's enrollment period without charge. For example, if a student needs one month of leave, one additional month will be added to the enrollment end date.

During approved leave a student may not submit any work to their Oak Meadow teachers. After the leave, the student may return, resuming each course at the last lesson submitted. For example, if a leave was granted while a student was on lesson 10 in a

Oak Meadow Policies

continued

particular course, the student can begin again at lesson 10 upon returning to school. All teachers will be notified of the leave and will be prepared to work with the student upon return.

Medical Withdrawal

Medical withdrawal is for students who have a documented injury, illness or psychological needs.

When a health issue arises, the family of the student is required to present Oak Meadow with medical documentation from the family's/student's physician that clearly describes the issue.

Medical withdrawals are eligible for a prorated refund (less an administrative fee) for tuition up to the day on which the student withdrew. If a student initiates medical withdrawal and has completed a significant portion of the course, a final grade for that course (or semester, if appropriate) can be requested. The program director and the student's teacher will determine whether sufficient work has been completed for credit to be granted. If credit is granted, the student may advance to the next term or course upon return.

Reinstatement after Medical Withdrawal

When the student is ready to return to Oak Meadow, they may do so with the approval of the Medical Leave Committee. In order to consider reinstatement, the Medical Leave Committee may require an updated medical assessment. When the family requests reinstatement, the committee will assess the readiness of the student to return to school. Once approved, the student may re-enroll in their courses at the advertised tuition rate and may be required to start classes from the beginning (lesson 1).

Dual Enrollment: Advanced Placement, College, and other Course Enrollment

Many Oak Meadow students augment their coursework with learning in other structured settings, using credit earned to meet either core or elective graduation requirements for their high school diploma. Additionally, students may take some courses during high school that qualify them for college credit.

It's important to work closely with an Educational Counselor prior to enrollment in non-Oak Meadow courses, to ensure that credit will be transferred as you expect. Generally, courses need to be from an accredited institution, or occasionally from another widely recognized and approved source.

Many Oak Meadow students take advantage of Advanced Placement courses, available perhaps locally, or through online programs. Typically, these courses will be offered in a traditional school year calendar, will involve a significant number of tests (as opposed to the papers and projects commonly found in Oak Meadow), and will culminate in students taking the College Board's Advanced Placement exam. High school credit for the course can be applied if the student did not take the College Board exam or did not perform well; college credit is typically only awarded for a score of 5 or perhaps 4. [Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth](#) (CTY) is an oft-chosen option, but many other purveyors of Advanced Placement courses can be found.

Increasingly often, Oak Meadow students might extend their program and jump-start their college degrees by enrolling in one or more college courses, as a non-matriculated student. These courses could be in-person or online, and provide the opportunity to experience college-level learning in a format that would likely be less test-driven than an AP course. Especially if a student is hoping to attend a selective college, evidence of success in college classes is a strong indicator of the student's academic potential.

Our college counselor is available to help students and families decide if an AP or college course is the right choice for them.

Advanced Study Project

The Advanced Study Project (ASP) offers students the chance to create a course of their own design. Students have the opportunity to develop a specific area of interest by working with an Oak Meadow faculty advisor who will guide them through the initial process of shaping and fine-tuning their proposal, developing an outline and planning sheet, all the way to the completion of the final project. As part of the experience, students will be required to present their final project to peers and attend three other student presentations at the Oak Meadow Project Seminar Series (a student-run forum at which students share their work).

Oak Meadow requires one semester of an Advanced Study Project for graduation. However, students may choose to design and complete a full-year study project or two single-semester projects spread throughout their Oak Meadow career.

Life Experience Credit and Physical Education Credit

The Life Experience Credit (LEC) and Physical Education Credit (PEC) applications are available on the OM Gateway and our website ([FAQs & Resources > Forms](#)).

Use the LEC application to:

- earn credit for non-credit-bearing elective activities, such as dance, cooking, a part-time job, pottery, theatre, etc., as long as the activity meets regularly (at least once per week) and is taught or mentored by a qualified individual. You will receive .25 (1/4 credit) per 30 hours of work for a given experience. There is no tuition fee associated with the Life Experience Credit Program.
- receive work experience credit for relevant volunteer service. You must volunteer a minimum of 30 hours to be eligible for credit.

Students can earn up to one LEC each year. If you have questions please contact your educational counselor.

Use the PE Application to:

- complete your physical education requirement. Use the form for organized sports or other physical activities such as gymnastics, dance, or martial arts (anything with a coach or instructor). Alternatively, you may keep a detailed log of your physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, gardening, rock climbing—anything that gets you up and moving. The log should be reviewed by a parent or guardian and used when filling out the PE form. During your four years of high school, you will be required to complete 120 hours (1 credit) of physical education in order to graduate.

If you have questions about how to apply for Life Experience or Physical Education Credit, or about what activities may or may not qualify, please call your Oak Meadow educational counselor.

Forms should be submitted to registrar@oakmeadow.com.

College Counseling Information

Oak Meadow High School graduates successfully follow diverse paths, not all of which include college. Some students have started their own businesses, while others have chosen to take a Gap Year or have entered directly into various fields as apprentices. What is most important to us is that our graduates love what they are doing and continue to learn and grow.

The majority of Oak Meadow graduates, however, choose to go on to college. Our graduates have chosen to attend a wide range of schools, from large public universities, to arts colleges, to ivy league schools, and beyond. To see where Oak Meadow graduates have been admitted in recent years, see the College Acceptance List on our website at oakmeadow.com/college-acceptance-list/.

Our college counselor and registrar are available to assist all juniors and seniors in the college application process. This includes assistance with transcript requests and letters of recommendation. Visit the [college counseling page](#) on the Oak Meadow website for more information, resources, and helpful links. Oak Meadow also offers a [college counseling webinar series](#) twice a year, which provides a wealth of information on navigating the admissions process. We know our students are focused on their future, and we want to make their transition to life after Oak Meadow as smooth and successful as possible.

College Entrance Exams: PSAT, SAT, ACT

Since the onset of the pandemic, markedly fewer colleges use standardized admissions tests to measure a student's aptitude. The most common tests have traditionally been the SAT ([Scholastic Aptitude Test](#)) and the ACT ([American College Test](#)).

Currently, it's important to scrutinize any college/university the student may wish to apply to for the most up-to-date information on their standardized test and scholarship requirements. Some students go ahead and take the tests, knowing they have the option of submitting them to individual applications, depending on school requirements and also, perhaps, how well they have done.

Students may take the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) during October of their sophomore year; these are available only through local high schools. SATs or ACTs are typically taken between the second semester of the student's junior year and the first semester of their senior year.

For more advice on college entrance exams, please contact our college counselor KD Maynard at kmaynard@oakmeadow.com.

**The Oak Meadow
School code for
the SAT is 460-341.**

National Honor Society

Oak Meadow has a chapter of the National Honor Society. If you are a student that exhibits strength of character, leadership qualities, and demonstrated service you may be selected to be a member of our NHS chapter. Eligible students must have a 3.5 grade point average. oakmeadow.com/national-honor-society

Oak Meadow is committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior and personal accountability. Our school community is dedicated to learning and values responsible citizenship. Ethical behavior is expected of every community member in all aspects of school life. At the core of academic integrity is a bond of trust between teacher and student, family and school.

To reflect the importance of this behavior, Oak Meadow expects students and families to adhere to the following Honor Code from the time of admission through the actual awarding of a diploma.

Oak Meadow students and families agree to the following:

1. Students agree not to plagiarize and promise to show due diligence in accurately acknowledging sources (please see full plagiarism statement below).
2. Students and families agree not to falsify records or official documents, nor to invent any information pertaining to a student's record or enrollment.
3. Students and families agree not to verbally misrepresent themselves or make untrue statements regarding any aspect of their experience with Oak Meadow.
4. Students agree to collaborate and interact with other students and teachers with respect.
5. Students will conduct themselves at all times with honesty, responsibility, and accountability for their actions.

Should a student or family knowingly violate this code by intentional misrepresentation or misinformation, such violations are grounds for immediate dismissal from the school without a refund.

Original Work Guidelines

At Oak Meadow we frequently ask students to write essays and conduct research because we believe that these types of assignments provide students with an opportunity to ask real questions, to think critically, and to express their own views. Additionally, expository writing allows students to explore topics in greater depth than they might otherwise and calls for students to interact with the words and ideas of other writers in order to gain new insights.

One of the biggest challenges students face with these types of writing assignments is how to distinguish between their own ideas and the ideas of others. We have provided the information below to help you avoid some of the common mistakes students make when completing writing assignments for Oak Meadow.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means taking someone else's ideas or words and claiming them as your own. Some people commit plagiarism on purpose, but many others do it unintentionally. Recognizing plagiarism isn't always easy, but the important thing to remember is that whenever you use someone else's words or ideas in your own writing, you must always give that person credit. This is called citing your source, and it is important that you learn how to do it correctly.

Neglecting to cite your source is a serious offense. Many schools and colleges treat plagiarism as grounds for suspension, and sometimes even expulsion. This may seem extreme, but it is necessary in order to protect the intellectual property of writers, scientists, artists, and other people who make a living by creating and exchanging ideas.

As we were researching our policy on plagiarism, we went to the websites of other high schools, colleges and universities to read what they had to say. One policy that stood out was from the Rutgers University Writing Program: "Understanding plagiarism means understanding the boundaries between your ideas and the ideas of others, knowing where your ideas end and theirs start. In fact, the word 'plagiarism' comes from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning "kidnapper." . . . To avoid plagiarism, you'll need to maintain that boundary between yourself, your ideas, and the many others you'll encounter in class and your readings."¹

When completing any type of writing exercise for Oak Meadow, we expect you to use your own words. This includes answers to comprehension questions, as well as longer projects such as essays and research papers. For example, suppose you are completing a short-answer assignment for your course. You find the answer in your textbook, concisely explained in a single paragraph. Can you simply copy that paragraph and supply it as your answer? Of course not! Copying someone else's words and presenting them as your

¹ http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/intellectual_boundaries

own is plagiarism. So can you just put quotation marks around it and cite the textbook as your source? Actually, no—because it doesn't show your teacher that you understand the concept. All it shows is that you know how to locate the answer in the textbook.

The solution in a case like this is to restate the answer *in your own words*. Read the material in the textbook, and fully understand it. Then you can answer the question in the assignment from your own knowledge, without referring to the textbook except for specific details such as dates, places, or numbers. You will be able to discuss the issue in greater depth and make connections with other issues—and you won't be wasting time trying to copy the words verbatim from the textbook.

If you do choose to use someone else's words to support one of your ideas, you must put those words in quotation marks and tell your reader where the words came from originally. In shorter, daily assignments, quotation marks and a page reference will do. In longer essays and papers, you must use footnotes or proper textual citations (see below).

Using ChatGPT and other AI systems for school work is not allowed at Oak Meadow School. Your Oak Meadow teachers will use software to scan for and identify AI-assisted writing in submitted coursework. Using AI-assisted writing tools to complete coursework is considered plagiarism and will result in the same penalties as other forms of plagiarism.

How to Cite Sources

At Oak Meadow, we ask students to format their papers using the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines. Style manuals such as *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and *MLA Handbook for English Students* are available at bookstores as well as your local library. You can also find information about MLA guidelines on the internet. **Our favorite website is the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University:** https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html. This website provides useful information about writing in general, and it has a whole section devoted to MLA formatting: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/. Please refer to one of these sources for a complete discussion about how to format your research paper.

In addition to the information you will find in an MLA handbook or on the internet, here are some guidelines we'd like you to follow:

1. When answering questions for an assignment, use your own words. Do not copy the words of the text or textbook straight into your answers without citing your source. Copying answers straight from a book is considered plagiarism.
2. Always use two or more sources when conducting research.
3. Try to use primary sources whenever possible. A *primary source* is a document created by a person directly connected to your research topic. For example, a letter

Original Work Guidelines

continued

written by John F. Kennedy is a primary source. An article written by a historian about John F. Kennedy's letters is a *secondary source*.

4. When you conduct research, it is important that you use reputable sources. *Reputable sources* undergo extensive review to ensure that the information they provide is accurate. Nonfiction books, encyclopedias, news magazines, and newspapers are generally considered reputable. Reputable websites include sites that are connected to reputable print and media sources, such as newyorktimes.com or cnn.com.
5. **Wikipedia.com is not considered a reputable source by academic standards.** Anyone can go into Wikipedia and change the entries without having to prove that the information is correct. Wikipedia is a good website for getting a general overview of your topic, and Wikipedia writers often provide a list of the sources they use to write their articles. However, you should never quote directly from Wikipedia, and you should always double check anything you learn on Wikipedia with a reputable source.
6. If you are worried about a particular paper or passage, consult with your home teacher or your Oak Meadow teacher. Your teachers will help you find a way to use a reputable source without resorting to plagiarism.
7. Re-submitting work for one class that you have already submitted for another class is considered plagiarism. It is possible to use work from multiple classes, but it must be substantially changed to meet the unique requirements of each class, and you must note that you are submitting the material to other courses.

If a teacher receives work that constitutes plagiarism, they will contact the student and ask that the work be re-submitted. Continuing to plagiarize will result in the following consequences:

1. An official warning will be issued to the student.
2. If the plagiarism continues, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignments in question or the entire course.
3. If concerns regarding the integrity of a student's work persist, the high school program director will contact the student's parents or guardian to review the situation and determine the next step.
4. If plagiarism continues after this conference, the student will be dismissed from the school.

Academic Planning Worksheet

For students who plan to graduate high school with Oak Meadow, we require a distribution of academic credits that will provide a comprehensive education and a well-rounded transcript for college entrance requirements.

Courses marked with (*) require prerequisite courses

<p>English 4 credits</p> <p>Composition: Expression and Understanding The Hero's Journey: Literature & Composition American Literature: Classics World Literature: Classics World Literature: Africa & Beyond (0.5 cr) British Literature: Heroes, Monsters, Faeries, and Kings Women's Literature: Worlds of Science Fiction and Fantasy (0.5 cr) American Literature: Social Transformation (0.5 cr) American Literature: The Westward Journey (0.5 cr) Word: The Poet's Voice (0.5 cr) Speak Your Truth: Poetry Part II (0.5 cr)</p>	<p>Social Studies 4 credits</p> <p>U.S. History World History United States Government: By the People, for the People (0.5 cr) A Sense of Place: The Geography of Global Change World Religions: Finding Common Ground (0.5 cr) Psychology: The Journey Toward Self-Knowledge (0.5 cr) Critical Media Literacy (0.5 cr) Foodways: Sustainable Food Systems (0.5 cr) Race & Ethnic Studies: Power and Perspective (0.5 cr)</p>
<p>Fine Arts 1 credit</p> <p>Integrated Drawing Drawing and Design Painting * Introduction to Photography: The Eye, the Shutter, the Light, the Color (0.5 cr)</p>	<p>World Languages 2 credits</p> <p>Latin I Latin II * Spanish I Spanish II * Spanish III * French I French II * French III * Level IV languages offered for independent study *</p>

A minimum of 22 credits is required to qualify for a diploma: one credit equals a full-year, two-semester course; 0.5 credit equals a half-year, one-semester course.

<p>Math 3 credits (4 recommended)</p> <p>Algebra I Geometry Math Connections * Algebra II * Advanced Mathematics * Calculus I * Calculus II (0.5 cr) *</p>	<p>Science 3 credits (4 recommended)</p> <p>Environmental Science for a Changing World Biology: The Study of Life Human Anatomy and Physiology (0.5 cr) * Chemistry Matters* Physics * Forensic Science (0.5 cr) * Global Climate Change in the 21st Century (0.5 cr)</p>
<p>Health 1 credit</p> <p>Integrated Health and Fitness</p> <p>Physical Education 1 credit</p> <p>Physical Education Electives</p>	<p>Advanced Study Project 0.5 credit</p> <hr/> <p>Electives 2.5 credits</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Oak Meadow Online

Get Connected!

Looking to stay in touch with Oak Meadow and connect with other Oak Meadow families? Here are some ways to stay engaged and inspired.

This Month in the Meadow: In our email newsletter for enrolled families, we share Oak Meadow news, celebrate student work, and offer ideas and activities to supplement your schooling.

News & Events on the OM Gateway: Looking to connect with the Oak Meadow community and engage in extra curricular learning? You can find upcoming gatherings for students and parents on the OM Gateway under "News & Events."

Living Education: Find inspiration, support, and ideas in Living Education, our free online magazine. In each issue, we explore topics most relevant to homeschooling families through articles submitted by home educators and Oak Meadow parents. oakmeadow.com/living-education



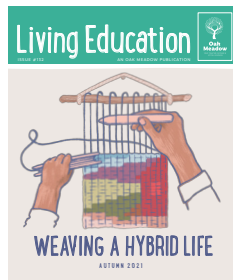
Facebook: Join over 30k other Oak Meadow fans and follow the Oak Meadow Facebook page for inspiration, news, updates, and more. facebook.com/oakmeadow



Instagram: Instagram is where we share student stories and projects, and we love to see what you're working on! Share and connect with other grade-level families using our hashtags: #oakmeadow #oakmeadowK #oakmeadow1 #oakmeadow2 #oakmeadow3 #oakmeadow4 #oakmeadow5 #oakmeadow6 #oakmeadow7 #oakmeadow8 #oakmeadowHS instagram.com/oakmeadowschool



Pinterest: We fill our Pinterest boards with ideas for creative learning and projects for all ages, seasons, and interests. Follow us now! pinterest.com/oakmeadow



Oak Meadow

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