



A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING COMMUNITY

TA Family Handbook

2023-2024



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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!

NEW TA Policy Changes for 2023-2024

Taos Academy will be implementing several new classroom policies for SY2023-2024. These changes are to support student learning and improvement. Please read the following with your child and talk about these changes to be sure the values set in TA policy are also the values you have as a family. We will be implementing these beginning on the first day of school in August.

Personal electronics:

1. Students **will not** be allowed to have earbuds of any kind at school. The school will be providing headphones for academic use. This is to maximize engagement with the curriculum and with one another.
2. Students will be required to turn in cell phones to teachers at the beginning of each class. The phones will be returned at the end of the class period. The school will provide cell phone holding devices for each classroom.
3. Students **may not** keep cell phones with them in any class. If a student needs to call home or has an emergency, he/she will need to use school phones only.
4. Students **will** be able to use personal cell phones during break and lunch/recess. However, once again, no earbuds are permitted on campus.
5. Personal computers or devices of any kind are not permitted on campus.

Academic performance:

1. Student schedules at TA are individualized to accommodate the needs of each learner. As a reminder, if a student is in credit recovery, has a GPA below 2.0, or is not academically on grade level, they may be required to attend Taos Academy campus **5 days per week** for additional intervention and support.
2. Students who fall behind in academic or elective coursework may be required to attend **5 days per week**.
3. Enrollment in our virtual FLEX program will only be available for those students who meet the criterion set by the school. Students and families will need to apply to the FLEX program. Be on the lookout for applications!

Elective days or Choice days:

1. Taos Academy offers many opportunities to support student learning beyond academics. These include our STEM programming, tutoring, internships and more. Students may take advantage of these opportunities by choice. However, the school may require a student to participate in one or more of these programs to support growth in experiential and career technical education.

Taos Academy Family Involvement Pledge

As a parent, family, member, or guardian 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. I understand that my first point of contact is my child's Advisor.
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 be accessed 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. Successful completion of an Honors-level class adds one additional GPA point to the weighting of that course.
- b. *Standard Level*: These classes contain most of the original content of the course and meet or exceed all Common Core and NM State Standards. Students are expected to maintain a 70% or higher actual grade at all times or to attend Student Success Lab, MidSchool Plus, or Friday Tutoring as needed.
- c. *Power Standards Level (P)*: These are the most streamlined versions of the classes. All meet Common Core and NM State Standards. The student is still responsible for essays, projects, lab reports, etc. Students are expected to maintain a 70% or higher actual grade at all times or to attend Student Success Lab, MidSchool Plus, or Friday Tutoring as needed.

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 STEM-Arts classes. Activities for these classes are posted in Google Classroom and it is expected that all work would be made up in case of any absences.
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, either virtually or in-person.
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 any **TA fundraisers** which 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.
18. Make sure my student is **in school for all state-mandated testing.**
19. **Attend at least one Parent Advisory Committee/Equity Council 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.

Glossary of TA Terms

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 takes 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.

Mid School Plus - A free enrichment program hosted on Tuesdays and Thursday on the TA campus from 8 am - 4 pm. Staffed by TA teachers, this is a fun learning setting for additional academic support, time in digital curriculum, connection with peers, intramurals, art classes, and more. These face-to-face Math and English classes are taken on campus, on regular school days with a teacher.

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).

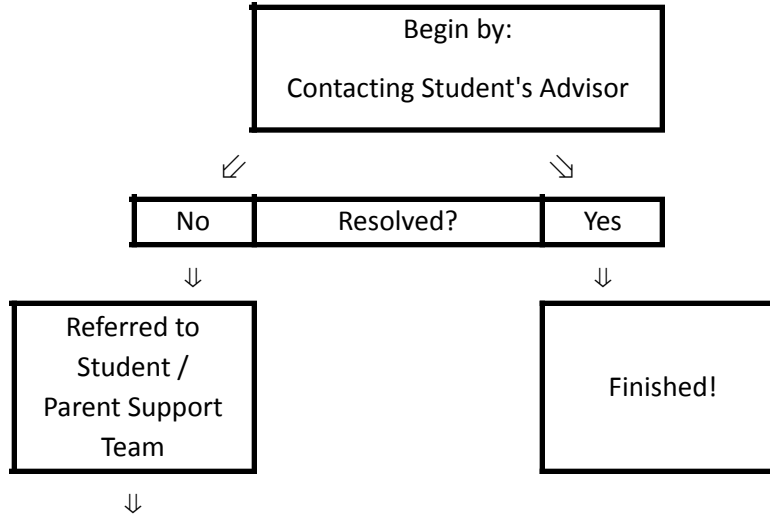
Student Success Contract - If the student continues to stay behind in work for a period of three weeks, the advisor will place the student on a Student Success Contract per TA policy. This step is designed to help the student get back on track and provide more structured time. Students on contract are 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.

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.

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.

Taos Academy Charter School

Family-Student Communication Process



Email Contact Information
TA Principal: Elizabeth LeBlanc, eleblanc@taosacademy.org
TA Dean of Students: Mark Richert, mrichert@taosacademy.org

STEM Coordinator: Jamie Lucero-Martinez
jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org
STEM Admin Support: Cruz Duran

ECHS Coordinator/UNM Liaison: Kelci Pike
kpike@taosacademy.org
Internship Coordinator: Jason Weisfeld
jweisfeld@taosacademy.org

MidSchool Plus Coordinator: Cal Van Willigen
cvanwilligen@taosacademy.org

TA FLEX Academy: Elizabeth LeBlanc, eleblanc@taosacademy.org

Special Education: Jeanette Henshaw, jhenshaw@taosacademy.org



Facility: Jose Espinoza, jespinoza@taosacademy.org



Business Office: Pamela Rodriguez, prodriguez@taosacademy.org



Front Office:
Amy Lucero, alucero@taosacademy.org



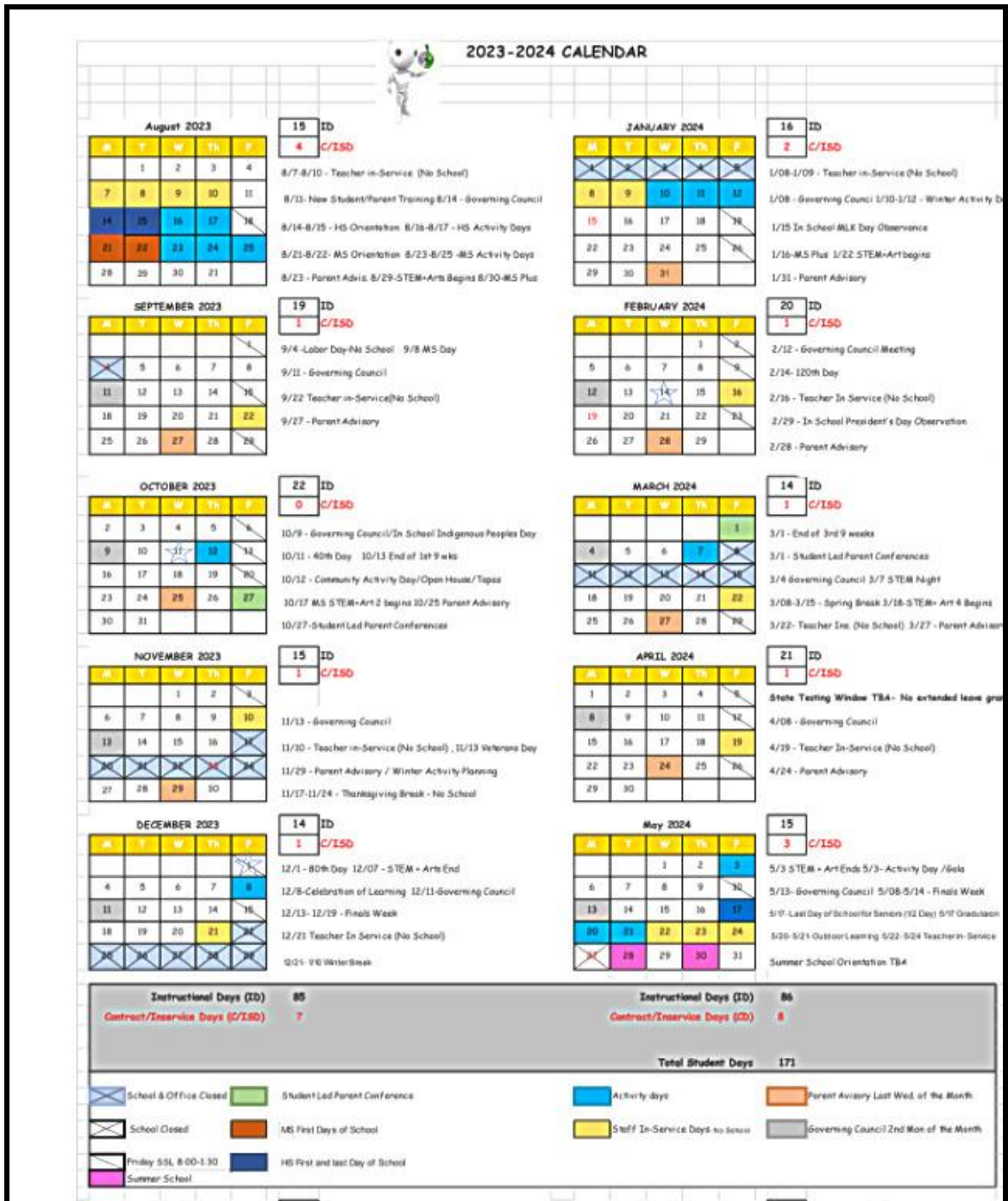
Resolved?

No	Yes
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Refer to Superintendent Dr. Traci Filiss	Finished!
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SY2324 Approved Calendar



Family Handbook & Pledge Signatures

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

Student Name

Parent Name

Parent Signature Date