

CHEP/PCHS

Online Transition Program Orientation



Welcome CHEP Families!

Pacific Coast High School is a WASC accredited, college preparatory, Independent Study public high school. We are an Orange County Department of Education program and have a partnership with Coastline Community College. The PCHS academic program requires a high degree of parent and online participation.

This online orientation provides information regarding the CHEP Transition Program. Parents, please carefully read the following pages with your student to determine if the Transition Program is appropriate for him/her. As you read through these pages, you will find the answers to the questions on page 2 of your registration form. Please print and complete page 2.

Goals of the CHEP Transition Program

1. To provide familiarity and experience with online courses for CHEP students considering enrolling in PCHS
2. To provide CHEP students the experience of instructor-graded weekly assignments
3. To provide an alternative or supplement to traditional text-driven curricula

Expect an Adjustment Period

Students coming from a homeschool or traditional classroom background should expect to experience an **adjustment period** while enrolled in the Transition Program. The adjustment period may be uncomfortable for the student and/or parent. The length of the adjustment period will vary from student to student (or parent to parent).

Reasons for an Adjustment Period

- ★ **The Technology**: Parents or students may not be familiar or comfortable with their computer, their computer software, or with Internet access and research.
- ★ **The Format**: Transition courses are completely online and research-based. There are no textbooks, worksheets, or paper and pen assignments.
- ★ **The Work**: Transition courses are teacher-designed and graded. **Assignments are due weekly, not monthly.** Assignments are NOT of the *read-the-chapter-and-answer-the-questions* variety.
- ★ **The Involvement**: Students and parents must **ACTIVELY** participate in the online courses. An emphasis is placed on essential skills such as time management, following directions, attending to details, course navigation, research skills, and thinking skills.

Time to Update Excuses

- ★ We are in the digital age of the 21st century. As a result, students must update their excuses for not completing assignments on time.
- ★ Please be aware that online course instructors are able to track student activity within online courses. Instructors have access to information such as:
 - The date a student accesses a course
 - The time of day a student accesses a course
 - The number of times a student accesses a course
 - The date and time of day a student submits an assignment
- ★ The online gradebook is web-based. This means that **students and instructors see the same information regarding assignments and grades.** For example, it is not possible for a student's gradebook to indicate that an assignment is completed and the instructor's view of the gradebook to indicate that the assignment is not completed.
- ★ **Best Digital Age Excuse to Date:** *My cat stepped on the delete key.*

Things Go Wrong

Technology is sometimes fickle. Please understand that occasionally things go wrong. The online course instructors are aware of this. In fact, we plan for it. You may lose your Internet connection, get a computer virus, have your hard drive crash, and yes, the cat may even step on the Delete key.

Should you experience a techno-emergency - **Don't Panic!** Email your course instructor. There is a one-week grace period for bona fide emergencies.

Advantages of Online Courses

- 1. Higher Test Scores:** PCHS online students outperform PCHS offline students on every standardized test administered.
- 2. Increased Communication:** Online courses increase opportunity for teacher-student and student-student communication.
- 3. Active Involvement:** PCHS online courses are designed to increase student involvement in the learning process.

A Question of Design

PCHS online courses employ a unique design.

Passive learning is generally defined as presenting information that must be mastered and repeated back by the student.

A passive learning process is a prominent contributing factor to the student dropout rate. A disconnect exists between what happens in school and what happens outside school. (*Franklin P. Schargel, Education World*)

Many freshmen arrive at college passive learners. The learning style of the majority of college learners is passive and *grade oriented* rather than *learning oriented*. ***What Freshmen Don't Know About "Learning How to Learn,"*** Reed Mencke, Associate Director, University Learning Center, University of Arizona

Active learning requires a student to locate, evaluate, and apply information. PCHS online courses are designed to maximize active learning and minimize passive learning. This design, although possibly uncomfortable at first, ultimately benefits the student.

Students want more active intellectual learning engagement in their classrooms rather than passive learning. *Harvard Graduate School of Education July 2, 2002*

Research shows that encouraging students to learn through active problem solving and discussion . . . is an effective teaching tool. *The National Academies, April 19, 2002*

Examples of Active Learning Assignments

Following are examples from Transition Program research-based assignments that require students to discover, evaluate, and apply information.

Example 1



Be prepared to answer the following questions.

1. What is the historically incorrect or misplaced item in this picture?
2. Why is that item incorrect? (Provide details that **prove** you actually **researched** your answer. Do not answer with opinions, logical deductions, or guesses.)
3. What are your sources?

Example 2

Who said the following and what do YOU think he meant?

"...she (America) goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy...She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force..."

Example 3

Select the sentence that illustrates the use of proper parallel construction.

In English class, Mary learned to read poems critically and to appreciate good prose.

In English class, Mary learned to read poems critically and she appreciated good prose.

Guess What Is Inside!

Within every online course, you will find the following information.

- ★ A Course Syllabus containing
 - A letter to the parents
 - Important introductory material about the course
 - Course grading criteria
 - Plagiarism policy
 - Course description
 - Course objectives and California Standards

- ★ Course assignments that provide assignment instructions and expectations

- ★ Assignment due dates that provide, well, the assignment due dates

- ★ Additional information such as paragraph and essay format expectations, book lists, grading rubrics, etc.

ALL students are expected to read all course documents. One of the goals of PCHS is to help students become independent learners. Students asking questions for which the answers can be found within the course will be directed back to the course documents. Although it may be easier for both the student *and* instructor just to provide an answer to such questions, please keep in mind that our goal is to help students find answers and solutions to their own questions. This is in keeping with the active learning format of our program.

Emailing Your Instructor

When emailing your course instructor, please include the following information.

- ★ In the email subject line, the complete name of the course
(**Example:** CHEP U.S. History)
- ★ The **specific** assignment number or assessment question number to which you may be referring
(**Example:** Assignment 4, or Question 6 in Assignment 14)
- ★ The specific problem you may be having
(**Example:** Instead of emailing that an assessment does not work, explain **exactly** what happens on your screen when you try to open the assessment.)
- ★ Your first and last name
(**Example:** Bill Gates)

Important Points

Please take note of the following points regarding the CHEP Transition Program.

1. No high school units or credits are awarded for **ANY** Transition Program course.
2. The Computer Skills course meets a graduation requirement for PCHS **ONLY**. Do not expect another high school to apply the course to their graduation requirements.

Important Points - continued

3. Everything you need is online; therefore, you must have easy and reliable access to the Internet.
4. Students must complete weekly assignments that will be graded by the course instructor.
5. Spelling, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, and paragraph format **ALWAYS** count in the Transition Program courses.
6. Grades can be viewed at any time of day or night. Students and parents are expected to check assignment grades frequently. Do not wait until the end of the course to ask questions about grades. By then, it is usually too late.
7. The key to success is Following Directions!

For additional information about the specific courses that are offered, please refer to the online **CHEP Transition Course information page.**

Now What?

To proceed with the application process:

After answering all questions on page 2 of your registration form, give the completed pages 1, 2, and 3 to your CHEP teacher. Be sure page 3 is signed by both student and parent.

Your course access information will be emailed to you.