

Your School Name

Your School District

# **Illinois Virtual High School**

## **Student Handbook**

*January 2003*



*In compliance with Title IX and Section 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, all participants of IVHS are advised that IVHS, IMSA, and ISBE provide equal educational opportunities to students regardless of race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, or handicap. Questions in reference to educational opportunities can be directed to the Coordinator for IVHS School Programs.*

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## Introduction

### The Illinois Virtual High School

The Illinois Virtual High School (IVHS) is an Internet educational service delivering a wide range of quality high school class content online to Illinois students. IVHS is a supplement and complement to your regular high school program.

In 1999, Illinois' Governor George H. Ryan included IVHS within his *Venturetech Initiative*, a program designed to provide the necessary funds towards the development of science, mathematics, and technology within the school curriculum. Illinois educators from a variety of school settings and regional locations guide the program, in order to ensure its relevance to students of varying abilities and educational backgrounds. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administers the program in conjunction with the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA). ISBE coordinates its effort with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Full time IVHS members are employed by ISBE, IMSA, and University High School at Illinois State University. Certified teachers, trained in online learning strategies and tactics, teach IVHS courses.

The IVHS first offered courses in a pilot program during the spring of 2001. This pilot was funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The creation of the IVHS followed the completion of a planning grant provided by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). After a successful pilot, full course offerings were made available to students in the fall of 2001. Course offerings were determined through a needs assessment of Illinois districts and through an analysis of existing course materials.

### IVHS Mission

As listed on the website at <http://www.ivhs.org>, the Illinois Virtual High School mission is “to use new and emerging technologies that expand the boundaries of space and time to provide Illinois students and their teachers with increased equity and access to the highest quality educational opportunities.” This motto underscores the trend toward online learning. IVHS aims to provide the freedom afforded by online learning while maintaining high quality course content and successful student experiences.

### IVHS Purposes (Goals)

The Illinois Virtual High School (IVHS) is designed to serve three primary purposes:

1. Assure equitable access to rich and varied learning opportunities for Illinois students, with emphasis on curricular areas needed to ensure that all students can meet the Illinois Learning Standards and succeed in higher education and the workplace.

2. Expand high-quality professional development opportunities for Illinois teachers and other educators; and
3. Support schools in integrating technology into teaching and learning by offering high quality educational services for Illinois students.

## **IVHS Courses**

IVHS classes are accessed via the Internet through the website at: <http://www.ivhs.org>. Some classes are licensed from accredited commercial content providers; for example, many of our Advanced Placement classes are provided by Apex Learning, an online content provider who is in direct partnership with the College Board (the entity who administers the Advanced Placement tests). These AP classes serve as preparation for the Advanced Placement tests administered by the College Board, which offer college credit to students earning a score of “3,” “4,” or “5.” Some classes are obtained from other virtual high schools such as Florida or Kentucky. Others are developed by Illinois entities such as the University of Illinois, Central Illinois Distance Education Network, and the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and IVHS instructors. All IVHS classes are designed with the goal to meet the Illinois Learning Standards and have the same, if not more, rigor than the traditional face-to-face class.

Being in an online class is like being in a face-to-face class because activities include assignments, quizzes, tests, projects and discussions. Communication occurs using online tools such as email, chats (within the class only) and discussion boards as well as the telephone. It is different than a face-to-face class in that you don’t physically SEE your teacher or the other students, and you and your teacher may not always be online working at exactly the same time. To see a demonstration of the tools, visit the “Demo Course” link for students on our website.

## **Instructors (Teacher Qualifications)**

IVHS classes are teacher-taught using online tools. You, the student, may be assured of receiving high-quality instruction from IVHS teachers. IVHS solicits award-winning teachers with an interest in online instruction to work with IVHS. IVHS only hires experienced teachers trained within the appropriate field of expertise; for instance, science, social science, language arts, languages, technology, or mathematics. Teachers must be certified to teach within the state of Illinois, and most teach for face-to-face schools as well as for IVHS. Additionally, IVHS teachers are required to complete an online professional development course to ensure familiarity with teaching online, not only within the traditional setting. Such courses ensure that the teacher will know how to use online tools, such as chat, threaded discussion, and document sharing on the software platforms used by IVHS for the instruction of the students. Over 50 teachers await your participation in this exciting and ground-breaking online project!

## Admission into IVHS

High school students from the state of Illinois are welcome to enroll in courses through the Illinois Virtual High School. IVHS is *not* a credit-issuing or a diploma-granting institution. The awarding of credit for successful course completion is a local school district decision.

Interested students should contact their local *public* high school administrator for information and/or questions regarding either IVHS enrollment, or the current IVHS policies within their district. Home school and private school students are welcome to enroll in IVHS courses. However, registration funnels through the local public high school. Public and private high schools should work together to decide which local institution should undertake which responsibilities. The local school serves as the registrar for the courses. The public and private school must reach agreement on how IVHS local team responsibilities are divided, including which school will award and transcript credit. Academic information and grade reports may be submitted to the private school if appropriate.

Public and private school personnel have options available for the management of information for IVHS. It is in the student's best interest to communicate his or her educational goals to both the private and public school prior to enrollment and for enabling the public and private schools to work together to find the most appropriate ways to manage the program.

Students who attend public high schools who are *not* participating in the IVHS project may call the Coordinator of IVHS School Programs to evaluate the available registration options.

## Tuition

*Current per student/per course fees for IVHS courses:*

	<b>Full Year</b>	<b>One Semester</b>
<b>Regular Academic Year</b>	\$390.00	\$195.00
<b>Summer</b>	\$225.00	\$175.00

IVHS is working to reduce fees; fees are liable to change from year to year. The local school district may decide to assume the costs of the course or may require the student to assume the cost. Determination of fee payment for IVHS courses is a local decision and the student must check with the local school to see who will be responsible for the cost of the course. All course fees are paid from the school district directly to IVHS. IVHS *does not* collect fees directly from students or other entities.

## **Scholarships**

Currently, advanced placement, regular courses, and AP Review scholarships are available to schools and/or students who meet certain lower-income criteria. See the "Course Info" link on our website for more information. IVHS is working to expand the scholarship program to other courses as well. Check the IVHS website for updates to these issues.

## **The purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook is designed not only to help students become acquainted with IVHS policies, but also to underscore the difference between the online IVHS program and the traditional institutions to which they have grown accustomed. In these pages, both prospective and current students will find information pertaining to IVHS coursework, rules, regulations, requirements, suggestions for course of action, and resources for help. Students may contact a member of the IVHS administration for help should a topic arise that is not covered in this handbook. IVHS wants to provide students with a resource, so that they might feel comfortable in undertaking the challenges along the road towards enjoying the benefits of online learning. IVHS wants students to be satisfied and successful.

## **Part I: Why or Why Not to Take an Online Course**

Taking an online course presents both advantages and disadvantages to the student. While online courses permit flexibility with regard to daily routine, they lack the regimented structure of the traditional classroom setting. Therefore, it behooves the student to organize his/her daily activities around a coherent agenda of classroom obligations (i.e. what he/she deems important classroom duties) in accordance with the mandates of IVHS protocol, the syllabi of instructors, and local school policy.

### **a. Access to a Wide Range of Courses**

Let IVHS serve as both a frontier in which to explore new and challenging subjects, as well as a supplementary learning tool to overcome limitations in existing local school curricula. Choosing from among IVHS courses might enable a student to fit that one elusive course into a time slot in his/her schedule. For with IVHS, your schedule becomes flexible. There will, of course, be due dates posted by which coursework must be completed. However, the student will not need to sit at a desk, in a chair, at a specific time, and for a specific period of time each day. The student will possess much more freedom to complete coursework, and meet with teachers, at his/her own convenience.

IVHS is attempting to offer an online course program similar to one that would be available in a large traditional school. Therefore, IVHS provides as comprehensive a course selection as currently possible, to be augmented periodically semester by semester, and year-by-year, as new courses are developed or provided by internal sources or external educational service providers. With IVHS, there is the opportunity to broaden intellectual horizons by immersing oneself in challenging subjects. By trying out an unfamiliar subject, the student might discover a previously unknown aptitude, which could even ignite his/her engine on the track towards a future career.

For those interested in translating credit earned in IVHS classes onto academic records, students may be assured that IVHS has aligned its courses with both Illinois and national standards. Remember that awarding credit for courses is the responsibility of the local school, but grades administered under the IVHS grading system will be weighted roughly in accordance with such standards. Local policies supersede IVHS policies.

### **b. Different Way to Learn**

Before enrolling in an IVHS class, students should understand that online learning is a very different educational medium. Students will possess a greater degree of independence, which in turn requires a greater amount of individual responsibility. Perhaps the greatest difference between IVHS instruction and traditional classroom instruction is that of face-to-face contact vs. interaction over a computer interface.

Contrary to some preconceived notions, the Internet is not an impersonal means of communication. Students can still develop a rapport with their instructors and peers, just not in the accustomed ways. The communication may not be immediate (synchronous), but may be at a different time (asynchronous).

Given the many technological tools the student will use, he/she should feel comfortable using a computer. He/she should be able to at least surf the Internet, possess basic word processing skills and communicate via e-mail. Additionally, he/she should be able to adapt quickly to use, when instructed, new plug-ins, CD-ROMs, or other technological accessories. Online course materials may or may not include a textbook, but rather have materials online and may use a CD; all required materials are provided by IVHS. Adeptness with technology will enable the student to interact more readily with the professor, and thus assimilate the course material more easily.

### **c. Convenience of Time & Place**

Although online courses may require students to become more highly motivated and organized, they also afford the convenience of flexibility. Students can log in to the Internet from any desired location, whether at home, at school, or in a computer cluster. Also, they can e-mail their teachers, and request desired meeting times. Thus students have more leeway to work at their own pace; although teachers will still provide students with syllabi noting important due dates for homework assignments, scheduled examinations, and any other course requirements.

IVHS online courses are rigorous and require as much, if not more, time than traditional classes. Students will need to have Internet access beyond one (1) period a day to do homework or research outside of the classroom just as one would for a traditional class.

Chat and online discussion group forums, when mediated by an instructor, are encouraged by the IVHS administration. Chat groups are a good way for students to interact with the instructor and each other and to ask important course content questions that may help to clarify the course material for him/her and others. The instructor may wish to set up a weekly discussion group for his/her class, with a different topic pre-chosen for each week. IVHS encourages such open exchanges of ideas.

### **d. Requires responsibility, Dedication, Self-discipline, and Honesty**

To a large extent, the student's success relies on his/her own internal motivations. In other words, excellent instruction and comprehensive course materials will not compensate for a student's inability to manage time efficiently and to hand in work on time. The successful student will recognize that time is a precious commodity and favors the initiative-taking individual.

Indeed, online courses are not right for everyone. Students should take the online quiz, “Is Online Learning for Me?” found at: <http://www.ivhs.org>. They should seek input from local teachers, guidance counselors, and their parents.

Students should consider the following questions:

- 1) Do you require constant supervision from teachers pursuing you to hand in your assignments?
- 2) Would you be tempted to use the Internet’s anonymity or the lack of face-to-face classroom discussions to promote dishonest activity?
- 3) Do you want to use an IVHS class to bolster your local school GPA?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then an IVHS course may not be right for you. However, if you trust yourself to work independently to increase your knowledge in a challenging and rewarding subject area, then we encourage you to enroll in an IVHS class.

## Part II: How to Learn More about IVHS

### a. Whom to Contact

In addition to this handbook, there are a number of people to contact for more information about the IVHS program. The local public school may be the best resource. A list of participating schools can be found on the IVHS website under the link “Getting Started.” Three particular individuals from each participating local school are requested to make contact information available:

- 1) The local IVHS program administrator (often the principal or registrar)
- 2) The technology facilitator (he/she will answer questions of a mechanical nature related to, for example, computer hardware problems)
- 3) The student service coordinator (frequently the guidance counselor/mentor)

### b. Publications

- 1) This Student Handbook
- 2) Newspaper or magazine articles
- 3) The online information packet available via the website, under the link “Getting Started” for students.
- 4) The IVHS FAQ (frequently asked questions) distributed at fairs and conferences.

### c. IVHS Website

The website at [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org) contains a great deal of information related to IVHS and its programs. There, the student can find updated directories of faculty and contacts for the IVHS program containing names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers. In addition, the student can read about the school’s motto and history, find price, platform and tutorial information, and receive introductory details from the online course information packet listed above.

## Part III: Enrolling in an IVHS Course

### a. Process for Student Registration

If the student attends a school participating in the IVHS program, he/she may submit a request to register by clicking the “Registration” link on the IVHS website, located at <http://www.ivhs.org>. At the prompt, one should follow the steps, and fill in the blanks with the requested information: an active e-mail address, and either the last four digits of one’s social security number or student ID number. He/she will then be asked to indicate which course(s) desired, and the semester(s) in which he/she plan to enroll. At this point, IVHS will advise the student to print out the information just entered, since that information will be needed to log into the course(s). After the student has completed this initial online registration process, the local school will be electronically notified of the student’s wish to enroll, and will either approve or deny the request. Members of your local school administration may wish to talk with the student before a final decision is reached. The decision may be based on such factors such as current academic standing or daily computer access. Remember that which, and how many, courses one is allowed to take is always the decision of the local school. In the meantime, IVHS does advise that the student log in and complete the Student Orientation Tutorial. For those students who are approved, this will ensure greater familiarity with the IVHS program, prior to acceptance. However, no student will be allowed to access actual course content or materials prior to approval.

If the local school is not participating in the IVHS program, we advise that the student contact the local public school’s guidance office, and encourage them to participate. Students should explain that he/she and other students would like to take advantage of the great opportunities afforded by online learning. The local school administrators should be encouraged to visit the “Getting Started” link, for schools, on the IVHS website. There, they will find introductory information related to participation in the IVHS program. Should any questions arise, they should be invited to contact the members of the IVHS staff listed in this handbook.

### b. Cost

The semester cost for courses will be billed directly to the student’s local public school. In some cases, the school itself may decide to cover the costs; in others, the school may ask to be reimbursed by the student. This decision may be made in accordance with the current code for Illinois schools, or the local school budget. Scholarships stemming from demonstrated financial need are also available.

For 2002-2003, IVHS offered courses at the low price of \$195/class/semester. There is no cost in addition to the enrollment fee; all technological materials, supplementary handouts, and textbooks are lent to the student. IVHS hopes that with increased enrollment, the cost will be decreased even more substantially in the upcoming years.

### c. Prerequisites for Enrollment

IVHS wants every participating student to meet with success at his/her individual level. Therefore, there is a checklist of prerequisites the student must satisfy prior to enrollment. Most importantly, IVHS wants students to be comfortable with the course material. Thus, a student should not enroll in AP Calculus AB, for example, before he/she has taken Pre-Calculus. Local schools are responsible for checking that course prerequisites have been fulfilled. Check the website at: [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org) Course Information tab for course descriptions and prerequisites.

Secondly, though students with a variety of educational profiles succeed in IVHS courses, we know from experience and common sense that there is a particular set of attributes most conducive to academic success in an online environment: self-motivation, the ability to manage time, and the ability to work independently and without much supervision. The student will likely need these qualities to complete the required work on time, including offline activities, such as reading and homework assignments. Online class attendance is required, and unexcused absences (no log-in activity) may result in being dropped from the course. Also, a certain percentage of the student's semester grade will be contingent upon proactive classroom participation.

Lastly, the student must possess *basic* technological capabilities and have computer and Internet access, and a valid, active, e-mail address. An Internet browser and e-mail address are required since they are the basic communication/information tools used in an online course. There are a variety of places from which a student might be able to access the computer: from home, school, or the local library. However, the student should be able to set aside a block of time each day in order to be at a computer.

## Part IV: How to Succeed in an IVHS Course

### a. Are you ready to take an IVHS course?

Before enrolling in an IVHS course, you should sit down with the Academic Guidance Counselor from your local school, in order to assess your readiness to take the courses you have requested. You should discuss whether you have fulfilled all necessary prerequisites, and whether you are prepared to confront the upcoming challenges of this new subject material.

Next, please access the IVHS website and take the “Is Online Learning for Me” Quiz, reachable via the “Getting Started” link. Here, you will find 10 multiple-choice questions designed to determine whether, based on your personal habits and/or individual skills, you are a good bet for success in an online course.

As covered in the previous section, **Prerequisites for Enrollment**, you must possess access to the appropriate technological tools. In part, your success may depend upon how convenient it is for you to access a computer. If you do *not* have a computer at home, we would advise you to check all possible computer-ready institutions, including church, boys and girls clubs, libraries, community centers, and, of course, your local school.

One point that we cannot stress enough: the importance of e-mail. Some people have an aversion to e-mail communication. If this is you, an IVHS course is not a feasible alternative. Online learning restricts face-to-face communication. Therefore, a student must possess a valid e-mail address to communicate with teachers, members of the IVHS administration, local school mentors, counselors, etc., service providers, or even other students in the class.

We would advise that you thoroughly read this student handbook to become acquainted with IVHS’ policies and procedures. Although it is not strictly required, reading the handbook will give you a “leg up” on the competition. It will help you to become familiar with expectations and requirements at an early stage, and will save time later, when you are acclimating yourself to a course workload. In addition, you should review all available local school policies and procedures regarding IVHS.

### b. Registration

Before registering for an IVHS course, your local school must grant its consent. Make sure that you are cleared to proceed by your local school before taking any further steps in the registration process. You will not be able to access a course’s content beforehand.

After you have successfully registered, you will receive automated IVHS e-mail containing information for logging into IVHS, including a personal identification

password. PLEASE RETAIN THIS E-MAIL AND KEEP IT FOR YOUR RECORDS! YOU WILL NEED THIS INFORMATION LATER.

In addition, maintain a record of information pertinent to the course (see the page included at the end of this handbook), including course title, your IVHS instructor's e-mail address, mailing address, phone and fax numbers, lists of IVHS resources, and your personal log-in information. If you do not currently have this information, ask your local school administrator. Your counselor should also be able to tell you whom to contact at the local level for questions (mentor, school technology specialist). When obtained, write this information down as well.

After all the initial steps in the registration process have been completed, you will be ready to begin the course. Before the semester starts, however, it is recommended that you do the following:

- 1) Perform a "test" log-in to ensure that you are able to access the IVHS homepage from your platform.
- 2) Complete the Student Orientation Tutorial to adjust yourself to IVHS' online learning environment, and get a better feeling for IVHS' expectations.
- 3) Read carefully the following *IVHS Ethics Statement* regarding honesty, and acceptable use policy (AUP) for conduct in the electronics media at both the IVHS and local school levels.

### **c. IVHS Ethics Statement**

Prior to registration for any course, each IVHS student must sign a waiver to ensure the integrity of the educational experience. The waiver states:

*ETHICS:* As a student enrolled in an Illinois Virtual High School course, I will abide by all rules and regulations published by the Illinois Virtual High School, as well as the rules and regulations published by my local school. I agree that I am subject to the jurisdiction of all disciplinary panels and procedures established by the Illinois Virtual High School and/or my local school, to address violations of rules or the honor code of the Illinois Virtual High School. All assignments I submit to the instructor and all tests I take shall be solely performed by me, except where the instructor has requested that I participate in a group project. I will not submit work that is plagiarized or otherwise violates copyright laws of the United States of America.

As a user of the Internet courses of the Illinois Virtual High School, I agree to access Illinois Virtual High School Internet courses only for lawful purposes. I will respect the privacy of other users, and I will respect the integrity of the computer systems and other users' data. It is my responsibility to respect the copyright protection of licensed computer software. I will not obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the teaching and learning occurring on the website, through computer "hacking" or any other

nefarious methods. I will not harass, stalk, threaten, abuse, insult, or humiliate anyone using the Illinois Virtual High School computer system or any other computer system utilized by the Illinois Virtual High School. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, sexist, or racist nature as well as unwanted sexual advances or intimidation. I understand that I may be held liable for monetary damages for any wrongful actions I undertake.

As a member of the Illinois Virtual High School community, I am solely responsible not only for adhering to all relevant **state and national** laws, statutes, rules, and regulations, but also Illinois Virtual High School standards, rules, and regulations as well. Enrollment does not confer either immunity or special consideration with reference to civil and criminal laws. Disciplinary action by the Illinois Virtual High School or my local school will not be subject to postponement, on the grounds that criminal charges involving the same incident have been dismissed, reduced, or are pending in a civil or criminal court. In addition, the Illinois Virtual High School and the local school reserve the right to pursue disciplinary action if a student violates a standard and withdraws from the Illinois Virtual High School before administrative action is final.

*COPYRIGHT:* The IVHS website comprises and contains copyrighted materials. All course material has been licensed for use by the Illinois Virtual High School and is the property of the respective course provider. The course delivery system is the property of *eCollege.com*. The IVHS website is provided solely for the use of students and prospective students of the Illinois Virtual High School. I may not distribute, publish, or reuse the materials, audio files, images or design, or any part of the materials, audio files, images, or design of this website whatsoever. I am only authorized to view, copy, and print documents contained within this website, and are subject to the agreement that:

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3. I will not reuse any material contained on this website, including, but not limited to, the “look and feel” of the course delivery system, and the functionality of the course delivery system;
4. I will not copy the course delivery system used in this website for any commercial or non-commercial purpose;
5. I will not copy any codes or graphics contained in this site, except those graphics used in courses, subject to the above terms;
6. I will not share any information about the functionality of the courses in this website with any party outside of the Illinois Virtual High School system;
7. I have not gained access to this website for the purpose of copying the contents of the courses or the course delivery system for the personal, commercial, or non-commercial use, or my company’s commercial or non-commercial use;

8. I understand I am subject to the copyright laws of the United States of America and will not violate those laws.

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#### **d. Beginning Your Class**

First, if you experience any problems logging in to either your IVHS homepage or the course(s) for which you are registered and approved, contact your local school mentor or IVHS coordinator ASAP for assistance.

Provided that you log in successfully, there are several things to do at the very beginning of the course.

- 1) Read opening course announcements posted by the instructor or IVHS staff. These may include an overview of the course material, as well as a syllabus of course assignments and a listing of the instructor’s individual expectations.
- 2) Communicate with your instructor via e-mail and/or phone ASAP. Since you will not meet your instructor face-to-face, it is important that you establish some familiarity with him/her from the outset. Early verbal communication via the telephone is preferred, since the impersonality of e-mail is more likely to result in miscommunication. Make sure that you have provided the instructor with your home phone number, so that he/she can contact you at home, should the need arise.
- 3) Familiarize yourself with the IVHS program by completing orientation sessions for as many platforms as appropriate.

#### **e. Class Schedule/Assignments**

At the beginning of the course, the instructor will distribute a syllabus to the students or make it available online. This syllabus may contain a calendar listing of important dates, including end of semester dates for final examinations,

homework/reading assignments, and online meeting times. You should read through this, and ask your instructor to clarify anything that you do not understand.

The instructor will probably ask you to complete an opening assignment of a personal nature, in order for students and instructor to get to know each other a little bit better. The nature of this assignment may differ from course to course. Some examples are a brief autobiography (personal history, interests, educational background, etc.), an e-mail of introduction to your classmates, or an introductory survey on a topic of relevance to the virtual environment of IVHS.

Get to know the IVHS website, and your own individual course “classroom” site, by clicking on all available links, and reading the material contained therein. In particular, we advise you to browse through the faculty, technical and administrative contacts, so that you know whom to call for help. The help link on the website will provide additional “troubleshooting” hints.

Make sure that you clean out your e-mail inbox at the beginning of the course, in order to avoid e-mail being returned to instructors. Remember that e-mail is the only way for an instructor to reach you at all times, especially for such important matters as a change in the syllabus assignments. As the course progresses, you should clean out your inbox periodically. This should be no problem if you, as recommended, check your e-mail each day. If this does pose a problem, however, sign up for extra storage with your e-mail provider. If you change your e-mail address, you must notify IVHS so it is changed in the course and the instructor knows the change.

Check for and read any announcements posted during the course.

#### **f. Time Management**

It is recommended that you keep a scheduling book, personal electronic organizer, or other organizational system, for remembering, for example, assignments and meeting times for IVHS chat group forums, assignments or test dates, and instructor’s office hours. This will assist you in budgeting your time, and turning in all required assignments on time. Most courses, indeed, will require homework assignments in addition to online class work. Time management will help you to better understand, and consequently enjoy, the subject material.

#### **g. Regular, active participation is required**

Classroom participation will account for a percentage of the final course grade. Therefore, it is required that all students log in to their course sites regularly. IVHS, the course instructor, and the local school will monitor student log-ins, to verify each student’s participation.

However, requirements for participation vary from course to course, and instructor to instructor. Types of participation include online discussions, chat-group forums, and group e-mails. Requiring such types of classroom participation enables IVHS to monitor student progress to ensure the student's comprehension of the material, as well as his/her focus to learn and progress. Good communication between teacher and student is the essential ingredient in the achievement of realistic goals.

IVHS wants students to feel comfortable and satisfied with the online learning environment. For this reason, survey forms will be distributed to students at the conclusion of their courses. On these forms will be printed questions asking about the content, instruction, and other issues related to online coursework. IVHS asks that students write their answers reflectively. Your feedback may help IVHS add improvements to future courses.

#### **h. IVHS Protocol**

This brief section is meant as a guide to help students remember several basic elements of IVHS protocol.

First, with regard to handing in homework assignments and/or examinations, **SAVE YOUR WORK AND BACK IT UP BEFORE FAXING IT OR SENDING IT AS AN E-MAIL ATTACHMENT.** This basic rule protects both teacher and student. Students will often use the excuse that "my computer crashed" or "I sent it" in order to explain the loss of an assignment's data. While in some cases this may be an honest excuse, in others students will use this excuse under false pretenses in order to get extensions. Likewise, from the teacher's standpoint, he/she may accidentally erase your assignment upon receiving it or lose it in hard copy after printing it out. You can avoid the consequences of having to redo an assignment or being docked grade points by using the failsafe approach of saving your assignment on both a hard disk and a floppy disk, while maintaining a printed hard copy for your records, before sending it to your instructor.

Also, remember **do not** use your mouse to click on the "X" at the upper right hand corner of the screen to exit the course. That method will **not** internally save your work. Remember to use the log-out icon, the proper way to exit an IVHS course.

Next, use e-mail efficiently and courteously. Remember that IVHS, your local school, and/or your instructor may monitor your "netiquette." It is recommended to establish a separate e-mail account for IVHS e-mails, since you will be e-mailing frequently. This would avoid confusion over a mixture of school and personal related e-mails appearing in your inbox. Also, under no circumstances are you to harass or threaten other students via e-mail, or send out mass spam e-mails. This would constitute discourteous Internet behavior, and would most likely result in loss of privileges.

The IVHS administration has attempted to create a learning environment conducive to the open exchange of ideas. In no way does IVHS wish to squelch online communication, since such communication plays an integral role in the student's assimilation of course material, and thus in his/her academic success. However, IVHS wishes to remind students of the possible temptation to engage in dishonest behavior over the Internet.

In conjunction with the IVHS Ethics Statement (contained earlier in this handbook), required reading of all students, plagiarism of any kind (copying, faking data or figures, handing in of "group" work without otherwise instructed) is strictly prohibited. Violators will be harshly penalized. Resulting penalties, depending on the seriousness of the offense, may range from loss of grade points, loss of certain computer privileges, up to and including failure/expulsion from the course. IVHS does not so much intend this severity as a scare tactic to discourage potential transgressors; rather, think of it as an exhortation to the student, that he/she should take pride in honest work.

### **Resources and Support:**

The following is a list of people – in both the local school in environment and within the IVHS administration -- whom you can call upon for help in the event of problems, questions, or concerns. Contact information can be found: 1) for your local school – your school directory; 2) for IVHS: the website located at [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org)

- YOUR SUPPORT TEAM at the LOCAL SCHOOL
  - Administrator
  - Department Chair if available (specific to your class)
  - Local school technology facilitator (for your computer questions)
  - Mentor/Counselor/Facilitator
  - Parent/Guardian
  - Registrar
  - Tutor/Teacher, other
- IVHS
  - Instructor
  - Help Desk (phone number)
  - Platform Help
  - IVHS on-line contacts ([www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org))

## Part V: What to Expect from Your High School

### a. Registration

Your local high school will appoint an individual with the responsibility of answering essential questions about IVHS for students who wish to enroll. He/she will have answers to frequently asked questions related to the following topics:

- Course offerings: such topics as the course catalog, scheduling
- Prerequisites: What do I need to have taken in order to be ready for the material of a course? As an example, A student will not be ready to take Advanced Placement Calculus AB without having taken Pre-Calculus, and will not be ready to take advanced computer programming without knowing basic computer programming.
- Online Registration: Proper registration process for an IVHS course
- Student Expectations: Guidance counseling; what does the student want to get out of his/her IVHS experience?
- Fees and local policies: See this handbook, Introduction, under tuition. Students will only be charged for the cost of the course; all necessary materials, textbooks, etc will be supplied by IVHS.
- AP Exams: Registration for, and local locations administering College Board advanced placement examinations.
- IVHS scholarship opportunities: In each particular case, determine whether a student is eligible to receive financial aid based on demonstrated need. Also, some schools have budgets that will pay for the course costs for students.

*\*\* Note: Private, parochial, or home school students should contact their local schools to investigate the available registration options.*

### b. Access to hardware and assistance with technology

Refer to local school policy regarding access and hardware availability. Minimum system requires are found in the Appendices.

- Technology assistance can be provided by:
  - Local school Student Service Coordinator/Mentor
  - Local school Technology Facilitator
  - IVHS instructor
  - IVHS Help Desk
  - IVHS Platform Help Desk

### **c. Policies**

The local school has the final say in determining all policies related to involvement in the IVHS program. The following are some of the topics for which your local high school will possess its own rules and regulations:

1. **Grading:** THE LOCAL SCHOOL, *NOT* IVHS, GIVES CREDIT FOR THE COURSE. The local school will administer the final course grade to the student, based on the grading information received from the IVHS instructor. The local school will also determine how the grade is to be weighted within its own grading scale system (usually GPA). In some cases, the local school may not wish to use the grade towards the determination of class rank, but as a supplementary grade for the student's record. The local school is in charge of recording all grades on the student's transcript, which will contain the student's academic (grading) information, including the drops and adds of courses.
2. **Fees:** The local school will be charged for each student if the student is not on scholarship. The local school may charge the student or parent or private school if the course does not fall within the Average Daily Attendance guidelines. That fee will then be forwarded to IVHS administration.
3. **Eligibility:** The local school is in charge of deciding whether a student is eligible to take an IVHS course, and for eligibility reporting for student athletes.
4. **Communication between home school and IVHS Instructor regarding IEP students**
5. **Communication with parents concerning such issues as attendance disciplinary action, etc.**

### **d. Resources and Services Provided by the Local School**

The local school should serve as an intermediary organization between the IVHS administration and the student. Since the local school has a tangible presence in the student's affairs, it will assist IVHS in monitoring the student's daily classroom progress, including any academic difficulties he/she may experience. The local school may also assist with communication between student and instructor. It may also provide a plan of classroom activities and expectations to help with the student's daily organization.

Thirdly, when required, the local school may serve as a location for the proctoring of examinations administered by IVHS. This option might also be particularly useful, when a student has a conflicting obligation occurring during the normal scheduled IVHS examination time.

Also do not forget that your local school has a technology specialist to answer computer and software/hardware related questions. In most instances, this will probably prove a quicker alternative than asking for help directly through IVHS.

## **Part VI: What to Expect from IVHS**

### **a. Quality Courses**

IVHS screens all potential courses with the result that each and every IVHS course is of the highest quality. We offer courses in a wide variety of subject areas from lower and upper-level mathematics, to A+ certification, to oceanography, to advanced placement English literature! Course descriptions are printed on the website and contain a brief overview of the course, the course's approximate difficulty level, required supplementary course materials, prerequisites, and expectations for the student. Please keep in mind that IVHS does not grant credit for courses; such is under the jurisdiction of the local school.

Course types include those developed internally by local Illinois educators, or externally by outside vendors or Internet service providers such as Apex Learning. Courses have been reviewed for appropriateness of material by a cross-section of Illinois state educators, who will verify that IVHS courses are aligned with state and national standards.

### **b. Highly-qualified Instructors**

Through a screening process prior to hiring, IVHS ensures that all teachers possess the credentials necessary to deliver high-quality instruction. All teachers must possess at least the equivalent of a BA degree (preferable a Masters), must be certified to teach within the state of Illinois and undergo IVHS' specific teacher hiring process (detailed in the Teacher's Handbook). The application process is rigorous and competitive, consisting of and the mandatory attendance at a professional development conference, a face-to-face and an online interview, and courses in online learning.

### **c. Communication**

IVHS believes that good communication is the proven stepping-stone towards success, for successful communication averts problems. Both student and instructor alike should be skilled in effective modes of communication. Because this is not a traditional face-to-face learning environment, students and instructors should be well-versed in communicating through technological mediums, such as the telephone, computer (e-mail, threaded discussions, and chat groups) and the fax machine.

The instructor is the focal point in the communication chain. He/she will contact the student's local school's student service coordinator or mentor upon the student's acceptance into the IVHS program. After this, he/she will telephone students and parents at least once a month to discuss problems, issues or concerns, and to talk about the student's progress. Communication may be more frequent in the event of

outstanding circumstances, or at the teacher's own discretion. In addition, instructors are required to have posted online office hours at designated times meeting at least once a week, during which time students can log in to discuss course-related topics with their instructors. Finally, teachers will write up periodic progress reports approximately three times per semester, submitted to the IVHS administration. IVHS will then forward these reports to the student's local school. If requested, local schools will supply reports more pass/fail reports even more frequently.

As a general rule, e-mails and telephone calls should be returned within 24 hours of their receipt. Often the subject of these communications will be important problems that need resolution ASAP. All instructors and members of the IVHS administration are available for contact via e-mail addresses within the course or listed on the IVHS website.

Instructors and students can help provide IVHS with important information geared at improving the quality of the online experience. Each instructor will submit a course evaluation at the end of the semester. In addition, students are surveyed for input on what he/she liked or disliked about the course, along with suggestions on how certain aspects could be improved.

#### **d. Online Student Orientation**

IVHS will offer orientation courses to the student in order for him/her to become familiar with the online course format. Such courses will be available to the student after he/she has completed an approved registration at the local school. The online orientation course will not cover course-specific material; rather it aims at acquainting students with the online instruction process, as well as with the technological tools used within the IVHS program.

#### **e. Materials and Textbooks**

Students need not pay for any supplementary materials or textbooks required by the course; IVHS or the course provider will supply the student with all required materials. However, usually the student can begin work in an IVHS course prior to receiving the materials, since a large part of what the student learns will come from online resources. Some of these materials may need to be returned to IVHS upon completion of the course, depending upon the funding involved and the nature of the materials.

#### **f. Individualism with Respect to Pace**

IVHS does permit a considerable amount more flexibility than the traditional classroom setting for students setting their own paces, and deciding when and where work should be completed. However, each IVHS instructor will still post deadlines by when work **MUST** be completed. Given human nature, this is the only way we

can ensure that work will be handed in at a reasonable time. IVHS does understand that students possess varying levels of aptitude and knowledge. Thus, it will respond to deadline problems on a case-by-case basis. Extensions are possible (see section 8) under extenuating circumstances.

**g. Privacy Policy**

Under the FERPA (Federal Education Records Privacy Act), IVHS will maintain the confidentiality of all student records released under the jurisdiction of the IVHS administration.

## Part VII: Grading and Credit

### a. IVHS Progress Reports

IVHS will send mid-term progress reports to the student's local school. These will be in an Excel spreadsheet format similar to the one pictured below

				IVHS Progress Report			
Name	High School	Course	Quality Percent	% Complete	Suggested Grade	Comments	Instructor
Joe Cool	Mather HS	Intro. to Technology	80%	30%	B-	Joe is working consistently	Mr. Styles

At this point, IVHS will indicate the percentages for both quality of work completed as well as percent of course completed. The quality of work is the student's cumulative score on an A-B-C- scale; the percent of course completed indicates the amount completed of the semester's work. All grades are listed as suggested, because the local school will administer the final grade in accordance with its own grading scale and discretion.

### b. Final Grade Reports

Final semester or year-end grade reports will also be sent to the local school and will be in Microsoft Word format such as the one pictured below:



# Illinois Virtual High School

## Final Grade Report - First Semester 2002-2003

Taking into account any required work not completed by course end, IVHS will provide a final percentage rating based upon the quality percentage on all work: daily work, assignments, class participation, quiz and test grades, projects and portfolios. Letter grades indicated on this report are suggested based upon the criteria listed below. Just as local schools are responsible for determining if and how credit will be awarded and how the course will appear on the student's transcript, the school has final authority regarding the letter grade issued and how any "weighting" factors will be applied.

**Date:**

**Student's Name:**

**Course: IVHS**

**Instructor's Name:**

**Final Percentage Rating:**

**Suggested Final Letter Grade:**

**Additional Comments:**

### Expanded Description of the Grading System

**A=SUPERIOR** - The student is more than meeting the expectations of the teacher. Given the nature of the class, the work is of superior quality. The student has turned Work in on time and shows mastery of the subject matter.

**B=ABOVE AVERAGE** - The required work is above average in quality and is on time. The student meets the expectations of the teacher.

**C=AVERAGE** - The student satisfactorily completes the required work. The work is generally on time and is of average quality. The student shows achievement.

**D=BELOW AVERAGE, BUT PASSING** - The student is not doing all the assigned work or is inconsistent in doing work.

**F=DOES NOT MEET MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PASSING** - The student consistently submits unsatisfactory work. The work shows lack of interest, attention, or is incomplete and or not attempted.

## **Part VIII: Extensions and Withdrawals**

### **a. Extensions**

Extensions are only to be granted under special circumstances. IVHS will allow extensions in the case of extreme personal emergency or sickness, when the student has been working consistently, and shown steady progress throughout the term. EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GRANTED OWING TO PROCRASTINATION OR OTHER FACTORS OF NEGLIGENCE. Ask a member of the IVHS administration for details. Extensions must be approved by the student's local school, IVHS, and the course's instructor. The student's record will register an incomplete at the end of term until the overdue work is submitted.

### **b. Incomplete**

A mark of incomplete on the student's local school transcript will be recorded at the end of the semester, provided that the extension has been approved. A grade will be submitted by IVHS to the local school at the end of the extension period.

### **c. IVHS Drop Policy**

Students may drop the course without penalty prior to the final drop date listed in the IVHS calendar (posted on the [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org) website). The student must be approved for dropping by the local school, and IVHS must be notified. Drops after the deadline will result in a withdraw/F. IVHS will maintain the student in the database as a withdrawal. It is the discretion of the local school to accept the withdrawal or issue a failing grade. If the student drops (or becomes inactive) after completing 50% of the coursework, he/she will be issued an F and considered a "Non-complete".

(Disclaimer: Local district/school drop policies supersede IVHS policies.)

### **d. Local drop policies**

## Part IX: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions	Answers/Where to Find
Who pays?	Refer to local school policy/handbook
Who decides if I can take a course?	Refer to local school policy/handbook
Who decides if I can drop a course?	Refer to local school policy/handbook
Will the course be recognized by prospective colleges and/or organizations (NCAA, etc.)?	Contact IVHS and local school for detailed information about each course
Are IVHS courses aligned to Illinois Learning Standards?	Where possible, yes, check with IVHS
Are IVHS courses easy or hard? Easier or harder than face-to-face courses?	Like any HS course, courses vary
Do courses have prerequisites?	Courses may presume background experience, but enrollment is still a local school decision
Do IVHS courses have age limits? Middle school? Adult learners? GED students?	Generally, IVHS courses are currently designed for HS students. Contact IVHS for other specific situations.
Unable to log in?	(System is case-sensitive – capitalization matters!) Involve your mentor/tech support at your school
Some classes will be directed to second site	So you will have two log-ins (name & passwords.)
Cannot access your course?	Involve your mentor/tech support at your school; then IVHS help
Your browser might need to be updated and cookies enabled See your tech. person.	See your tech. person.
Registration problems?	Contact your local school first. If still having problems, contact IVHS staff.
Problem of access resolution?	Get online help, phone help desk of e-college or the platform you are using
Problems with content of course?	Contact your instructor
How will my IVHS course affect my athletic and/or extra-curricular eligibility?	This is determined by your local school.
Will my IVHS course affect my GPA, honor roll status, weighted courses, class rank, etc.?	This is determined by your local school.

Will colleges accept IVHS courses for credit?	The local high school is responsible for issuing credit and placing the course on the transcript. You should talk with your guidance office to see how they list IVHS courses on the transcript.
Will IVHS courses count towards NCAA eligibility?	The local high school is required to submit the course for NCAA eligibility.
How is my grade determined?	IVHS provides a report to the school that indicates the percentage of work completed and quality percentage of that work. The school makes the final determination of the assigned grade.

## **Part X: Appendices**

### **Glossary:**

Synchronous: Real time communication

Asynchronous: Communication, but input and/or read at different times

Online Chat: This synchronous communication tool is a discussion room  
That allows colleagues to meet and chat in real-time by typing.

Threaded Discussion: This is an asynchronous discussion center for faculty and  
students to exchange ideas and insights. One can add to both  
topics and responses.

Journal: Online tool where students may post journal entries. These can  
Be private or open to the instructor

Weblibliography: On line site for posting web-page references to be used within  
The course; these are usually linked for easy access.

Drop Box: Place to upload a file/assignment to be accessed or graded by the  
instructor.

## Minimum System Requirements

1. Computer. To take full advantage of the interactivity of the courses, the following *minimum* system profiles are required:

### PC

Windows 95, 98, or NT  
90 MHZ Pentium Processor  
32 MB of RAM  
28.8 kbps modem  
Sound Card  
Speakers  
[RealPlayer](#)® Basic  
Updated Browser with  
QuickTime®

### MAC

Mac OS 8.1 or Later  
604 PowerPC Processor  
32 MB RAM  
28.8 kbps modem  
Speakers  
[RealPlayer](#)® Basic  
Updated browser with  
QuickTime®

*Note: Courseware cannot be accessed using Web TV. Accessibility is also limited with [America Online \(AOL\)](#), [Prodigy](#), and [CompuServe](#).*

2. Internet Service Provider (ISP). An ISP is a company that can provide you with the software necessary for going onto the Internet. You will need Internet access to take your courses.
3. Email account. Your email address is established when you sign up with an ISP. Check with your ISP if you do not know what your email address is. Check out [Yahoo! Mail](#) or [MSN Hotmail](#) for information on these two free email providers. Keep it active.
4. Browser capable of handling the data and graphics presented in the coursework. Please refer to [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org) for the most current information regarding the specifications.

**IVHS Class Information Form**

IVHS Course Name \_\_\_\_\_

Semester \_\_\_\_\_

# Credits \_\_\_\_\_

User ID \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

My e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

If taking a class.com course through IVHS (my 2<sup>nd</sup> log-in):

Username \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

My IVHS Instructor:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

My school Mentor:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

My school IVHS Student Service Contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone

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My school Technology Facilitator:

Name

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E-mail

---

Phone

---

My local school IVHS Division Administrator:

Name

---

E-mail

---

Phone

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## Contacts for Help

For technical assistance, you may contact the IVHS helpdesk 24 hours a day at:

303-873-0005 or  
[helpdesk@ivhs.org](mailto:helpdesk@ivhs.org)

On the Web site courses you may also click on Help.

You may also submit an Inquiry at [www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org), Click on Contact Us

### For IVHS school support information:

Dr. Sandi Atols  
Coordinator of Participating IVHS  
Schools, Northern Region  
Illinois Mathematics and Science  
Academy (IMSA)  
1500 W. Sullivan Road  
Aurora, IL 60506  
[satols@imsa.edu](mailto:satols@imsa.edu)  
630-907-5063  
FAX: 630-907-5882

Dr. Brad Woodruff  
Coordinator of Participating IVHS  
Schools, Central/Southern Region  
Illinois Mathematics and Science  
Academy (IMSA)  
1500 W. Sullivan Road  
Aurora, IL 60506  
[satols@imsa.edu](mailto:satols@imsa.edu)  
630-907-5063  
FAX: 630-907-5882

### For IVHS faculty information:

Mr. James Kinsella  
Coordinator of IVHS Faculty  
University High School  
Illinois State University  
500 W. Gregory  
Normal, IL 61761  
[jkinse@ilstu.edu](mailto:jkinse@ilstu.edu)  
309.438.8346  
FAX: 309-438-5198

### For general IVHS assistance:

Ms. Maria Gottschalk  
IVHS Support  
Illinois State Board of Education  
(ISBE)  
100 North First  
Springfield, IL 62777  
[mgottsch@isbe.net](mailto:mgottsch@isbe.net)  
217-782-5439  
FAX: 217-785-7650

### For general program issues:

Mr. Matthew Wicks  
Director of Virtual Learning  
Illinois Mathematics and Science  
Academy (IMSA)  
1500 W. Sullivan Road  
Aurora, IL 60506  
[wicks@imsa.edu](mailto:wicks@imsa.edu)  
630-907-5883  
FAX: 630-907-5882