

Parent Handbook

Southern Oregon ESD Online Learning Programs

101 N. Grape St.
Medford, OR 97501
541-776-6768

Visit our website: www.o2learning.org

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Welcome!

The mission of the Southern Oregon Education Service District is to provide services and leadership to optimize educational opportunities for the children, schools and communities we serve. We feel that providing curriculum and instruction to children schooled at home is part of that mission.

SOESD offers two online learning programs, Oregon Online and SOAR, to help schools provide learning alternatives to students with unique learning circumstances.

This handbook is meant to provide a framework for understanding how our programs work and their procedures and requirements. Please take the time to read the entire handbook so that you are aware of the information, policies and procedures that will affect you and your child.

We are excited to work with you and your children. Please contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have.

Virginia Petitt
Online School Specialist
Southern Oregon ESD

Staff Directory

Online School Specialist, Virginia Petitt.....541-858-6723
virginia_petitt@soesd.k12.or.us
SOAR Teacher, Teena Staller.....541-776-6768
teena_staller@soesd.k12.or.us
Administrative Assistant, Maureen Criger.....541-776-6768
maureen_criger@soesd.k12.or.us

What is Online Learning?

Oregon Online and the SOAR program are both programs of the Southern Oregon Education Service District.

Oregon Online provides supplementary courses for students in grades 6-12 enrolled in a “brick and mortar” school, who need extra classes or flexible scheduling to meet their unique educational situation. In this program, students who are not registered through their resident school may enroll, but the family is responsible for the cost of tuition.

SOAR provides a comprehensive curriculum to students whose school district has determined that placement in the SOAR program is appropriate to meet the student’s educational needs. SOREOL (Southern Oregon Elementary Online) is being piloted for 4th and 5th grades beginning fall of 2007.

For both programs, it is recommended that families work closely with their neighborhood school to ensure that their child’s complete academic needs are fulfilled.

Instruction is delivered through a variety of methods including online, print material, and hands-on activities. Our Oregon certified, experienced teachers work closely with parents to assist in creating a schedule and structure that provides a successful setting for their student.

Enrollment

SOAR

Placement in SOAR is decided by the student's neighborhood school district, who determines if the program is appropriate to meet the student's educational situation. If the program becomes full, SOESD will maintain a waiting list and place students as openings become available.

Oregon Online

Oregon Online follows the schedules of our local school districts, so registration occurs three times a year: Fall, Winter, and Summer. Fall enrollment dates are from mid-August to late September, Winter term enrollment occurs in mid-January through late February, and enrollment for the summer session is May through late June. Students are registered through their neighborhood school, who have the exact dates.

Upon enrollment, each student will receive a schedule outlining important due dates for the course in which he/she is enrolled. Although online learning provides much flexibility, these due dates should be followed closely to ensure your student's ability to complete the course(s) successfully. If scheduling problems arise, please contact the course instructor for assistance.

Once it has been determined that students have stopped working or have been unenrolled from SOAR or Oregon Online for any reason, the entire registration/placement process may need to be repeated.

Orientation

- Students and parents new to the SOAR program will need to attend an orientation session to familiarize themselves with materials, procedures and online programs.
- For Oregon Online, both students and parents must sign the registration form as well as complete the student orientation course before enrollment can be finalized.

Part of the Orientation process includes preparing your student AND your computer for online learning. We recommend student and parent sit down together at the computer to complete these activities. Computer preparation may require downloading and installing computer updates.

Computer Requirements

In order to make your online experience a positive one, your computer must meet minimum requirements.

Recommended configuration for best performance:

Windows XP
Internet Explorer 6
1 GHZ+Processor
512 mb RAM
DVD/CDROM
Broadband Internet connection (DSL/Cable Fiber /Optic)

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements above, your computer must have a word processor that can read and save Microsoft Word documents, and a drawing program that can read and save BMP, GIF or JPG files (picture files).

Some Courses require students to print pages, complete activities, and fax or scan (Oregon Online only) them to back to the teacher. If students do not have a printer, scanner, and fax machine available at home, they should check with their school for assistance.

Macintosh OS X and Linux systems are not formally supported, but recent versions may work. Southern Oregon ESD/SOAR/Oregon Online are not responsible for diagnosing and repairing student or family computers.

For other software (plugins), see our plugin test page: www.o2learning.org/plugins.html

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SOAR Bi-Monthly Get Together

Optional bi-monthly meetings have been scheduled for SOAR students to meet face to face with their teacher and other students in the program.

These meetings are an opportunity to extend learning as well as an opportunity for students to participate actively with their peers.

These activities could include field trips, guest speakers, discussions, hands-on science or math activities, or a combination of these.

Parents are always welcome to stay and support their child's learning as they participate. Space limitations prohibit attendance by siblings, friends, or other family members.

Meetings are scheduled for Wednesdays from 1-3 PM at the SOESD, 101 N. Grape Street, Medford, Oregon. You will be notified of change in location or meeting times at least 1 week in advance. Below is the schedule for the 2007-2008 school year:

WEDNESDAYS:

October 10 & 24, 2007

November 14 & 28, 2007

December 12, 2007

January 9 & 23, 2008

February 13 & 27, 2008

March 12, 2008

April 9 & 23, 2008

May 14 & 28, 2008

Keeping Up-to-Date

To receive the most up-to-date information, check the Online Learning website at <http://www.o2learning.org>. Please bookmark this website as a source of information about both SOAR and Oregon Online. You may also link to this website through SOESD homepage, www.soesd.k12.or.us.

If you decide to unenroll in SOAR or re-enroll in public school courses, please notify the SOESD (541-776-6768). If you decide to return to SOAR, you must follow the initial enrollment procedure which includes placement by your school district.

Promoting Student Success

Because learning and school is your child's job and may require up to 5 hours a day of their time, adhering to the following guidelines will help promote their success:

- Set up a study area for your child. This does not have to be an area permanently dedicated to this activity, but should be a place where your child can work with a variety of materials for a period of time each day without undue interruption, yet still be part of the family experience. Study materials such as books, calculators, pencils, and paper should be readily at hand.
- Work with your student to set up a daily and weekly schedule that meets their individual needs, including time for work and rules for computer use. Most students benefit from routines on which they can rely. Some students need more quiet than others, and family schedules and rules need to support your student's learning routine.
- Computers used by children up through age 18 should be located in a common area such as the corner of a dining room, family room, or living room—NOT in the child's bedroom. This facilitates interactivity between student and parent as well as the ability to monitor the child's online activities.
- During the first several days of your Oregon Online/SOAR experience, re-evaluate your setup, plans, and routine. Give your student and your family time to adjust to this new program, but watch for signs that your new routine needs to be adjusted. Check with the teacher to find out how your student is progressing, and if she/he needs to devote more or less time to his/her studies.
- Provide for periodic breaks. Expecting students to complete their work in a condensed period of time without changing activities or taking a break does not respect their status as a child. Work with your student to determine times and duration of breaks, as well as a list of acceptable activities during their break time. Use tools such as timers and stopwatches to facilitate these breaks—this procedure also serves to strengthen math skills!
- Children need physical activity and opportunities to socialize every day. SOAR provides a perfect opportunity to customize your student's schedule to take

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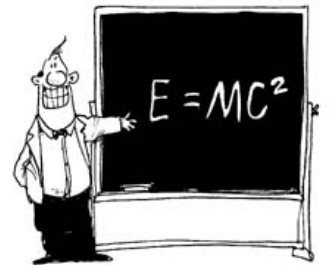
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advantage of the many activities in the community. Church and community activities such as youth groups, swimming lessons, 4H, and youth sports teams provide many opportunities for both physical and social growth.

- Supplement and strengthen your student's experiences by helping them to connect their learning activities with their own innate curiosity and unique interests. Locate books and videos that relate to their favorite animals, visit a local farm, plant flowers in your yard, or arrange for music lessons. Encourage your student to write, draw, and talk to you about these experiences.
- If possible, help your child participate in opportunities provided by SOAR and other community learning activities. These are designed to bolster your student's learning by harnessing resources in our community.

Coursework and Activities

Instruction will be delivered through a variety of methods including online, print material, and hands-on activities. Our Oregon-certified, experienced teachers will work closely with parents, schools, and ESD staff to assist parents and tailor the program of instruction to meet student's needs.



Coursework is:

- Engaging and interesting
- Designed to meet Oregon content and assessment standards
- Designed and assessed by an Oregon-certified teacher

SOAR Field Trips and Activities:

- Optional
- Engaging and interactive
- Related to course content
- Require parent transportation

Completing and Submitting Student Work

Completed school work (math, language arts, science, etc.) may take a variety of forms: print, online, photos and/ or projects. Students' work can be turned in using; e-mail, fax USPS, or the SOESD courier.

Assessment, Evaluations, and Progress Reports

Students' work will be assessed and evaluated using teacher-created tests and standardized assessments. Student progress will be reported to both the parent and the resident school district according to their established reporting cycle by the SOESD.

SOAR students will participate in state-mandated testing for their grade level according to the cycle established by the state and their district. State testing will be proctored according to the guidelines set by the State of Oregon (www.ode.state.or.us)

SOAR teachers will communicate testing schedules to parents. Parents are responsible to bring their student to the testing site.

Field Trips

- Only students enrolled in the SOAR program may participate in program-organized field trips.
- Parents are responsible for transportation, food, and any additional costs incurred, e.g. admission price.
- Registration for field trips can be done via email or by calling the Teacher or the Administrative Assistant. Signups must be completed at least 24 hours in advance. Please clearly state which field trip your student will attend.
- If your student signs up, please be sure they attend. A spot has been reserved and unless you call we are expecting your child to be there.
- Food, drink and chewing gum are not appropriate at the SOESD or on field trips; please do not bring these items unless requested to do so.
- Every effort will be made to hold field trips as scheduled. However, due to lack of signups, weather conditions, equipment failure, or other circumstances beyond our control, it may become necessary to cancel a field trip. A notice will be posted on the SOAR website and every effort will be made to contact families ahead of time by email and telephone.

For more information, check the website at <http://www.o2learning.org/>, next click on the "Calendar" link, then click on the link for either SOAR or Oregon Online.

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Books, Materials, and Supplies

Oregon Online

Materials for Oregon Online students are primarily online, but supplementary materials such as novels, calculators, paper, and printer ink are the responsibility of students and parents.

AP (Advanced Placement) courses may require the purchase of an additional textbook, and/or materials as well as payment of the AP testing fee and transportation to and from the AP testing site. These costs are the responsibility of the parent.

SOAR

SOAR will provide a subscription to online educational materials. Textbooks/books needed to complete lessons will be checked out to families and must be returned upon completion or at the end of the school year, in good condition, or families will be billed for replacement costs. Parents withdrawing their student from SOAR will need to officially notify the teacher and return all materials within one week.

Occasionally, hands-on projects may require materials commonly found in households such as baking soda, salt, bowls, etc. These will not be supplied by SOAR. If you have trouble furnishing these types of supplies, necessary for completion of course content, please contact the teacher for assistance.

Neighborhood schools may provide access to media (library) materials. District policy for materials return will apply to SOAR students.

Dual Enrollment: SOAR and "Regular/Neighborhood" School

Students may be able to access programs not offered as part of SOAR's core curriculum (i.e. music, P.E.). Please contact your school district for their policy.

Special Education

Oregon Online and SOAR **DO NOT** provide any special education services. If your child qualifies for Special Education services or requires special testing, these are provided through the student's school district.

Instructor Certification

All Online learning teachers are certified and licensed by the State of Oregon including passing a criminal history and background check through Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC).

Classroom Content

Academic content for both SOAR and Oregon Online are developed and updated to match the requirements set forth in the Oregon State Standards. If you have questions or concerns regarding curriculum, content, or instruction, please contact the teacher.

Expectations: Students

Students who are enrolled in Oregon Online and SOAR are expected to meet the following guidelines:

Attendance Expectation and Policy

Attendance and participation are important for learning. Although schedules are somewhat flexible, it is important that students complete assignment on a regular basis. The following explains the attendance policies for the two programs.

SOAR

- Daily attendance in the SOAR is required. Parents are expected to send an email to the teacher on a **daily** basis (5 days a week, Monday through Friday) to indicate that their student is completing coursework.
- It is important for students and parents to work closely with the teacher to set up a weekly schedule. Any change from this schedule needs to be communicated to the teacher immediately, either by email or by telephone. We acknowledge that flexibility is important, but electronic communications should ease this burden.
- If two scheduled school days without communication have passed, the teacher will call your home to determine the problem and assist the family in rescheduling student's work.
- Lack of communication or attendance for more than 10 consecutive days will result in the student being dropped from SOAR. Re-Enrollment may require parents and student to repeat the entire enrollment process (see Page 4)

Oregon Online

- Oregon Online students need to communicate with their teacher as requested (minimum twice per week) via email, telephone, or instant messaging.
- It is important for students and parents to work closely with the teacher to set up a weekly schedule. Any change from this schedule needs to be communicated to the teacher immediately, either by email or by telephone. We acknowledge that flexibility is important, but electronic communications should ease this burden.
- If more than 3 days without communication have passed, the teacher will email the student. If the student does not respond within 24 hours, the teacher will then call the student's home to determine the problem and assist the family in rescheduling student's work.
- If communication problems persist, the student's school counselor will be notified and asked to help design a program of success for the student.
- **Students who have not contacted the teacher for a period of 10 school days will be dropped from the program with no credit. The policy of the school district in which the student is enrolled will determine whether or not dropping a course will result in an F on the student's transcript.**

Student Behavior

- In both online (email, discussion boards) and face-to-face situations such as field trips or testing, students are expected to communicate with teachers, other students, and community members in a respectful, polite manner, without obscene, degrading, discriminatory, bias-related, or profane remarks, insults, or threats.
- Students are prohibited from using any electronic communication device to harass, intimidate, or bully others.
- Students are prohibited from the use of language containing drug, alcohol, or sexual references, except as appropriate for a class, e.g. Health.
- Students must turn in work which is authentic, original, student-created and properly cited. Plagiarism and/or copyright violation are not acceptable and will result in loss of credit (please see philosophy, page 18)
- Students must use materials, resources, equipment, and communication systems in a safe, legal, and ethical manner, including **not** sharing usernames and passwords.

Student Responsibilities

- Maintain a working, stable email address for communication between student and Oregon Online/ SOAR staff.
- Create and follow a routine and schedule for successful completion of school work. Although Oregon Online and SOAR are designed to be flexible, students are still expected to do the same amount of work that they would if they attended school face-to-face. If activities prevent spending this amount of time on a daily basis, students will probably need to spend more time on other days.
 - SOAR students should plan to spend about 6 hours a day on school-related activities, 5 days a week.
 - Oregon Online students should spend the equivalent of 5 hours per week on coursework for each class in which they are enrolled.
- Read through each assignment and take notes (or printout) before trying to complete the work. If you are confused, call or email the teacher with your questions. It is good practice to organize your email in folders, and to save a copy of every email sent into a folder created for this purpose.
- Communicate with their teacher as requested by the teacher (minimum twice per week) via email, telephone, or instant messaging.
- Put forth their best effort when completing assignments and do authentic, original work.
- Communicate significant changes in schedule to Oregon Online/SOAR staff immediately.

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NOTE: Special circumstances while on SOESD property or field trips:

- Possession of firearms, look-alike firearms or other instruments, devices or substances capable of causing physical injury, such as knives, matches and lighters is prohibited.
- Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, unlawful drugs, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited.
- Theft, damage, or destruction of property is prohibited.
- Students may not leave the ESD or a field trip site without permission and coordination between parent and the SOESD staff member in charge.
- Clothing should be appropriate for the activity, which may include a jacket, sturdy shoes, hat, sunglasses, or even a swimsuit and towel. Please be sure classroom and field trip clothing covers the student's body adequately and does not display obscenities or drug or alcohol-related messages. Clothing needs to adequately cover students' bodies. Students with inappropriate clothing may be asked to change.
- Students are expected to pick up after themselves by cleaning up workstations, recycling, and discarding garbage appropriately.
- When participating in a SOAR gathering of any kind, please reserve use of cell phones for true emergencies only. Personal conversations may be overheard, and cell phone use is distracting to others. Any use of cell phones is inappropriate during testing.
- Food, drink and chewing gum are not appropriate at the ESD or on field trips; please do not bring these unless requested to do so.
- Students must not leave the ESD or a field trip site FOR ANY REASON without express permission of the ESD staff person in charge.
- Parents are not allowed to be present in the room during proctored student testing in accordance with State guidelines.
- In accordance with State regulations, no smoking is allowed on ESD property or for the entire duration of field trips.
- In accordance with Oregon law regarding alternative programs, parents are responsible for providing alternative transportation for their student to and from testing sites and optional get-togethers.

Philosophy

- Learning occurs by the person completing the work. While parent coaching is critical to elementary students, parent should be the “guide on the side” and not the one with the pencil completing the work. Encouraging kids to try and to do their best, while letting them learn from their mistakes, will develop self esteem and perseverance.

Expectations: Parents

- As a parent, you are your student’s primary learning coach. Model the behavior you expect from your student by being organized, consistent, and patient. Help them set up a study schedule as well as a study space (see **Promoting Student Success**, above). At any age, students benefit from parents’ guidance and support.
- Although parents should be available to assist or coach the student, all work should be completed by the student. It is expected that students turn in work which is authentic, original and properly cited. Plagiarism is not acceptable and will result in loss of credit.
- A fairly robust, up-to-date computer with a (Broadband) Internet connection is a necessity for success in both Oregon Online and SOAR. Run your computer through the updates and plugins page to make sure it will be compatible with our online content: <http://www.o2learning.org/plugins.html>
- Students need to save a copy of every email that is sent; this habit is also a useful life skill.
- Although schedules in Oregon Online and SOAR are designed to be flexible, learning online is more focused and paced for individuals than a typical classroom setting. Students are still expected to do the same amount of work that they would if they attended school face-to-face.

Oregon Online

- Oregon Online students should plan to commit at least 5 hours a week to their course. If an entire week is missed, they should plan to double up and work 10 hours the following week.
- Parents should sit down with their student at the computer and take an interest in the subject the student is studying. Familiarity with the material can be helpful when questions arise. Calling or emailing the teacher with questions is encouraged.

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SOAR

- SOAR students should plan to spend about 6 hours a day on academic activities, 5 days a week. If your family participates in activities that take up more than two days in a week, plan to spend more time during each “school day”, making sure to work plenty of breaks and recreational time into your student’s schedule.
- Parents should read through each assignment with their student and encourage them to take notes. If parents are confused, it is likely students are also. Please call or email the teacher with your questions.
- From time to time, field trips and activities will be scheduled to provide both curriculum support and social opportunities (see Page 6). These field trips and activities are optional, and parents will be required to provide transportation. Please sign up at least 24 hours in advance by contacting the teacher.
- If participating in a SOAR sponsored activity, please be prompt. It is disruptive to the rest of the class if others show up late.
- If you sign up, please attend. A spot has been reserved for you and unless you call we are expecting your student to be there.
- Parents need to be conservative with private, side conversations. Often, there are children within “earshot” of our conversations and conversations must be kept relevant and respectful.
- Please pick up after yourself and your student.
- Students enrolled in SOAR will be required to complete state-mandated testing. Testing sites and schedules will be announced in advance, and parents will be required to transport students to and from the testing sites. Siblings, parents and cell phones will not be allowed during these testing activities.
- Because the ESD is a school setting, possession of firearms, look-alike firearms or other instruments, devices or substances capable of causing physical injury, such as knives, are not allowed on ESD property or at ESD-sponsored activities. This policy includes the interior of locked vehicles.
- Likewise, because the ESD is a school setting, possession or use of tobacco, (Smoking Policy, see pg. 16) alcohol, unlawful drugs, or drug paraphernalia is not allowed on ESD property, or at ESD sponsored activities.
- When participating in a SOAR gathering of any kind, please reserve use of cell phones for true emergencies only. Personal conversations may be overheard, and cell phone use is distracting to others. Any use of cell phones is inappropriate during testing.
- Students must not leave the ESD or a field trip site FOR ANY REASON without express permission of the ESD staff person in charge. Please notify the ESD staff person if you are taking your child away from the site.

Other Rules and Procedures

Cell Phones

Cell phone use during SOESD-sponsored events is prohibited except in true emergencies.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, students and parent chaperones need to follow the directions of the ESD official and posted exit plans.

Illness, Communicable Diseases, and Immunizations

Rules for immunizations of students enrolled in SOAR are the same as for all public school students. Student's records must be on file at their resident school. Please contact your neighborhood school for more information.

Students who are ill are asked not to attend field trips, gatherings, or testing. Missed test dates need to be rescheduled with the teacher.

Students taking Medication

- The parent or guardian is responsible for administering medicines to a child while visiting the ESD and should be in the possession of medication at all times.
- Students are not allowed to share any medicine with other students.
- Student's medication is for their personal use and should not be made available to other students or parents.

Visitors and Siblings

No visitors, friends or siblings are permitted to attend field trips, gatherings, or testing days.

Solicitation Policy

Please do not solicit personal business, post flyers or petitions, or hand out voting materials at the ESD or on field trips without first discussing it with the SOAR teacher.

Computer Lab

The Southern Oregon ESD has a small computer lab with educational programs and Internet access that may occasionally be used for SOAR activities and/or testing.

Students and families are expected to comply with the following guidelines:

1. Follow directions given for computer use by the ESD staff
2. Check with ESD staff before installing software, games, or any other programs
3. Check with ESD staff before connecting or disconnecting hardware
4. Have a signed AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) on file at their neighborhood school.

Disciplinary Policy:

Consequences for inappropriate behavior will vary from student/parent conferences to removal from the program.

Testing

SOAR will comply with State and Federal regulations regarding testing of students. Testing will happen at the SOESD or other location arranged by ESD staff.

Schedules and details will be distributed by the SOAR teacher.

Forms

The following forms are required to be on file for each student who participates in SOAR:

1. Emergency Information Form

Emergency Information Form

(One form for each student)

Student Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____

Home Phone: () _____ Other Phone: _____

Emergency Information

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone: _____

Additional Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Information

Insurance Company Name: _____ Policy Number: _____

Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Medical Information: _____

Special Prescription Information: _____

List any medical problems, limitations, allergies or special needs (disabilities) or related _____

Medical Release

I, _____, do hereby grant the adults of the ESD/SOAR to get my child, _____, medical attention in the event of an emergency. I understand that every attempt will be made to contact me, but in the event I cannot be reached, the ESD/SOAR is authorized on my behalf. I also release those said adults and the ESD/SOAR from any liability.

I also understand the following conditions if my child is taking medicine:

- Parent or guardian is responsible for administering medicines to child if needed while visiting the SOAR/ESD.
- If a student is without parent or guardian and medicine is required while in the center, a doctor's note of permission is required. If the medicine is on-going (e.g.: inhaler, allergy medicine) a copy of the doctor's note should be on file (this should be updated for each SOAR session)
- If a student requires over-the-counter medicine (aspirin, cough drops, etc.), a parent note with a beginning and ending date of permission is required.
- Students are not allowed to share over-the-counter medicine with other students.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____ Parent Printed Name: _____