Parent/Caretaker Orientation 2012 - 13

Table of Contents

1. Welcome to Connections Learning!

Welcome to Connections Learning! We have prepared this orientation guide to provide you with some key information for Parents/Caregivers about our program.

Connexus®, the Education Management System (EMS), is the technological structure that contains our virtual program. Within it, everyone affiliated with the program has access to the resources necessary to complete their daily tasks and responsibilities. Each person has access to only materials and resources that are needed to perform his or her role in the school. For example, students can look at their own tests or practice assessments, but do not have access to view their fellow students' tests or a teacher's answer key.

This guide will review your roles and responsibilities and explain how Connexus works for you and your student throughout his/her school year. We also encourage you to review the Student Orientation Guide, located on the Links section of your Connexus home page, to see the specific guidance we have provided to your student.

2. The Parent/Caretaker Role

At Connections Learning, student participation is guided by our online curriculum and our certified teachers.

Your role as a Parent/Caretaker is to:
- Support your student(s) as they learn with us by logging in to Connexus regularly and checking the Planner and Grade Book.
- Contact your student's teacher if you have any questions or concerns, and work with the teachers to stay informed about your student's learning. You can stay connected easily and communicate with teachers through the tools available in Connexus, and reviewed in the sections below.
- Motivate and provide structure for your students should they fall behind in their studies.
- Congratulate your student on his or her successes along the way.

3. The Mentor Role

The role of the Mentor is to guide and monitor the student as he or she is taught by Connections Learning online teachers and to notify the online teacher of any issues that may be impeding upon the student's progress. The Mentor should encourage the student to become increasingly self-reliant in his or her academic pursuits and to be actively engaged in the process of learning. When possible, Mentors should monitor students while they take assessments to ensure that they are doing their own work. Mentors will also assist the student with moving forward through the curriculum in a timely and organized fashion.

4. The Online Teacher Role

The role of the online teacher (Connections Learning teacher) is to provide instruction, guidance, and support as the student strives to:

- Master the material presented in each course
- Develop strong study skills

- Become comfortable reviewing and analyzing opinions, ideas, data, and information
- Formulate and articulate, orally and in writing, his/her own opinions
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources to draw conclusions and to develop questions for exploration
- Develop and deepen his/her analytical and critical thinking abilities

Responsibilities of the Online Teacher:

The subject-specific teacher should be the primary contact for students, parents, Site Coordinators, and Mentors with regard to subject-specific questions. These teachers are qualified to provide instructional interventional strategies as needed and to handle instructional questions about topics such as:

- The curriculum or materials
- The course scope and sequence
- Modification of assessments for students with special needs
- Testing
- Grading and transcripts
- Help with a particular assessment or concept

Teachers will proactively monitor each student's progress using Connexus and through regular contact via phone, mail, streaming audio and video (LiveLesson® sessions), and WebMail messages (the Connexus-based e-mail system).

Teachers will add, expand, or modify assessments based on the student's demonstrated mastery of the material. The teacher will also score assessments and provide feedback on the student's performance. Feedback will be provided through formal means, such as assessment grades, comments, and regular progress reports, as well as informal means, such as phone calls and online communication.

5. Connexus Home Page Tour

The home page of Connexus is your home base. Remember, no matter where you are within

Connexus, you can always return to the home page by clicking on the home icon .

Welcome!

To Do List

Daily Tasks:
Complete Part 1 of the Learning Coach Orientation.
Record attendance.
Check WebMail (1 new message).

Alerts*:
Anderson has 1 overdue lessons.
Chelsea has 1 lesson pending approval.
Dee has 3 overdue lessons.
Emmy has 2 overdue lessons.

*This information is updated nightly.

Links

Computer Resources and Simulations
2011-12 Handbook
My School: MyCA
Honor Code
CheckMyWork; Resources
Discovery Education™
Grolier Online®
EBSCO
What's Next

My School

Rate your school experience:
☆☆☆☆☆
Contact Information:
My Connections Academy
Phone: 999-833-7020
Fax: 999-332-6384

My Household

Name	Role	Grade	Tools	Homeroom Teacher	Overall Score*	Attendance*
Anderson	Student	7		Jen Teacher	91%	On Track
Chelsea	Student	4		Jen Teacher	88%	On Track
Dee	Student	1		Jen Teacher	89%	On Track
Emmy	Student	10		Jen Teacher	86%	On Track
Frankie	Student	9		Jen Teacher	88%	On Track
Coach	Caretaker					
Demo Family						

*This information is updated nightly.

Important Message

National Announcements

Pens and Lens Magazine!
It's that time again! The second edition of Pens and Lens is out and ready for you to read! Can you believe the wonderful poetry and photographs created by our students?

Chess Club Strategy!
Does your student enjoy strategy games, competition, and meeting new people? If so, sign him or her up for the Chess Club! Your student will learn all about chess and play with other students on the same skill level using the Connections Academy Chess Gaming System. In the spring, your student can participate in our annual Match Madness tournament and win the grand prize trip to Baltimore, Maryland! Watch a short movie about Jeremy Coste, last year's tournament winner, by clicking here.

To sign up for the Chess Club, follow the Clubs and Activities sign-up process outlined in the "Getting Started with Clubs and Activities" movie.

MyCA Announcements

Get to know your teacher!
Visit the MyCA Schoolhouse to get to know your teachers.

State Testing Dates
All MyCA testing dates are now posted in the My School section of the Virtual Library.

Is your student on the Honor Roll?
The full list of MyCA students who have earned Honor Roll and President's List distinction is now available in the Virtual Library.

5.1 Toolbar

The top toolbar in Connexus displays icons that take you to commonly used tools. More detailed information on how to use each of these tools is presented below.

You can send a **WebMail** message to the teachers or Connections Learning staff. This mailbox icon will flash whenever you have a new WebMail message.

Look at your student's daily lessons on the **Planner**.

The **Online Help** area provides detailed information to answer all of your frequently asked questions and instructions on how to use specific features within Connexus.

5.2 To Do List and Links Area

The top section of your home page is your **To Do List** which reminds you when certain things need to get done. You will see links to new WebMail messages and new training releases. Alerts will appear in this section when your student has overdue lessons.

The **Links** section lists commonly-used support materials and online curriculum resources. Explore them with your student! Access to certain links may vary by program.

5.3 My Household

The My Household section is your "dashboard" for viewing and accessing all of your student's educational information from one central point. From here, you can see your student's courses and associated materials, view the daily Planner and Grade Book, contact a teacher, and monitor your student's performance.
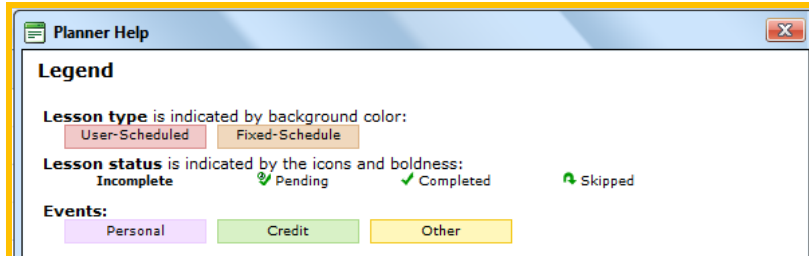
5.4 My Daily Planner

The school year will move very quickly. The Daily Planner displays which lessons your student should complete each day. Successful completion of each day's lessons and assessments is critical to stay On Track to finish the course on time. Upon completion of each lesson, your student should check it off in Connexus. Once they check off their assignments, both you and your student will know which lessons have been completed. Today's lessons are displayed in the day view. You can access your student's Planner by clicking on the Planner icon next to his or her name in the My Household section.

The symbols to the left of the lesson signify different things:
- A check mark means the lesson is complete.
- The arrow means the teacher is letting the student skip that lesson.
  *Note that the ability to skip lessons varies by program.

The small help icon at the upper left corner of the page displays the key for the different colors and symbols in the Planner.

Planner Help

Legend

Lesson type is indicated by background color:
| User-Scheduled | Fixed-Schedule |

Lesson status is indicated by the icons and boldness:
Incomplete   Pending   ✓ Completed   ⟳ Skipped

Events:
| Personal | Credit | Other |

5.5 Announcements
We use the bottom of our home pages to post general announcements for all our Connections Learning students. Although many of these announcements may not apply to you, you may find useful information there for you and your student.

5.6 Log Out
Remember to have your student log out of the system when he or she is done working in Connexus each day. Click the **Log Out** link in the upper-right hand corner of the screen to exit Connexus.

6. Grade Book
6.1 Overview
The Grade Book shows the current snapshot of your student's performance in each course. Click the Grade Book icon 🔖 next to your student's name in the My Household section of your home page.

If you have questions about the grading policy for your student's course (s), please contact the online teacher.

Full Transcript • High School Transcript

User Grade Book for Chelsea Demo (ID 146122)

Show me [active ▾] sections [?]

Grade Book Details

Section Summary: *Click a section name to view details.*

Section	Score	Grade	Lesson Completion	Teacher
Art 5	74%	Pass	29/29 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Children's Spanish I	95%	Pass	54/54 (100%)	Professeur, Jean-Pierre
Educational Technology and Online Learning 5	97%	Pass	50/50 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Language Arts 5 B	86%	B	75/75 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Learning Support	--		0/0 (0%)	Special, Kay
Math 5 B	94%	A	78/78 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Physical Education 5	98%	Pass	30/30 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Science 5 B	89%	B+	60/60 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Skills for Success	--		34/34 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Social Studies 5 B	97%	A	45/45 (100%)	Teacher, Jen
Overall	**91%**		**455/455 (100%)**	

6.2 Grade Book Details
The Grade Book lists your student's courses and shows the current percentage score and the percent of the course the student has completed.
- The Lesson Completion fraction and percentage displays how far the student has progressed in each course.
- If you see a Grade Book alert icon [A+] beside an individual course name, that means the teacher is reviewing or grading an assessment submitted by your student.

6.3 Course Details
Click on the course name to review individual assessments and their associated grades. The Assessment Summary displays the types of assessments for this course, the weight or importance each assessment type carries, and the current score in the course for each type. Below the summary, in the Assessment Details section, a status and grade for every assessment is shown.

- A check mark indicates that your student has marked the lesson complete.
- Each assessment has its own icon to denote the type:
  - Quick Check 🖊
  - Quiz 🄌
  - Discussion 🄳
  - Portfolio 🄿
  - Tests 🅃
  - Final Exams 🄵
  - End of Course Exam 🄴
  - Skills Check (Grades K-2) 🅂
  - Practice 🄿

- The Points column displays the number of points the student received on each assessment.
- Click on the link in the Points column to see the teacher's comments or review which questions your student answered correctly or incorrectly.
- The Weight column indicates the significance of a particular assessment relative to other assessments within the same type.
- The paper clip icon indicates a Drop Box assessment.

If *Grading* or *Reviewing* appears beside an assessment, it is being reviewed by the teacher. These terms are replaced with a score when the grade is finalized by the teacher.

Some courses may contain custom assessments, which teachers create to replace an existing lesson, or to supplement the course content. Custom assessments appear in the Grade Book at the top of the Assessment Details section. The weight for all assessments of the same type will be adjusted to reflect the addition of a new assessment.

6.4 Transcript
A transcript is a documented snapshot of your student's Grade Book. You may print a copy of the Connections Transcript for your own record at any time by clicking on the Full Transcript link at the top of the Grade Book page.

*Note: Connections Learning does not award course credits to your student. Credits earned through online courses are recorded on the Connections Transcript. You must provide this document to your student's local school for review and awarding of course credit.

7. WebMail

7.1 Overview
WebMail is the internal e-mail system that only people within Connections Learning use. Use WebMail messages to communicate with your student's teachers. Please note that the WebMail system must not be used for non-academic messages such as chain letters or jokes; it is for educational purposes only. Students may be subject to disciplinary measures if they use the Connections Learning WebMail system to harass or annoy other students.

To open your WebMail box, click on the WebMail icon on the toolbar or click the WebMail link in your **To Do List**. When new messages arrive, you will see a blinking mailbox on the toolbar and a note in your **To Do List**.

7.2 Inbox
You receive all of your messages in the Inbox. A closed ✉envelope means the message has not yet been read. An open ✉envelope indicates the message has been read. The paper clip 📎 indicates a file (attachment) was sent with the message. The preview pane icon hides or shows a preview of the message.

7.3 Message Contents
The message tells you who sent the WebMail message and when. Click **Reply** or **Reply To All** to respond to the message. Click **Forward** to send the message to someone else. Click **Delete** to erase the message. *Be careful—once you delete a message it cannot be retrieved.* Some messages contain attachments, which can be documents, pictures, sound clips, or video clips. The attachment is at the bottom of the message. To see the attachment, click on the link to download the file. You can either open it now or save it to your computer.

To write a new message:
- Click on the new message icon.
- Click the **To** link to pick the person to whom you want to write.
- Choose a group from the address book in the dropdown list. On the left side, you will see the people you can choose.
- Pick the intended recipient and click `To -->`. That person's name moves to the right side. You can add more than one person to receive the message. Use the backwards arrow `<--` under **To** if you want to remove a recipient. The CC and BCC fields work the same way. Add someone to CC who should get a copy of the message. Use BCC if you want someone to get the message, but be kept private from the other recipients. All names on the right side of the window will get the message.
- Click **OK**.
- Type a title for your message in the Subject field, and write your message in the large box.

To add an attachment to your message:
- Click on the arrow beside `▶ Options`. The Options box will expand and look like the blue box below:
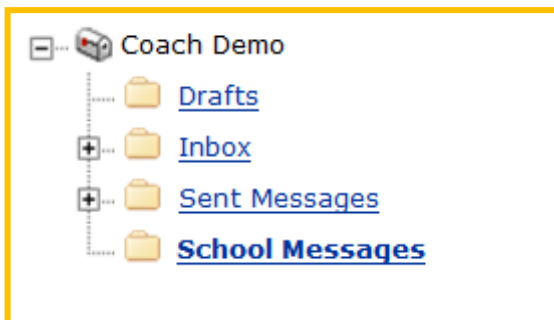
9

- Click the **Browse** button to find the file on your computer that you want to attach.
- Select the file and click **Open**. The name of the file will appear in the Attachments box. If you want to send more than one attachment, click **Save Draft** and repeat for each file.
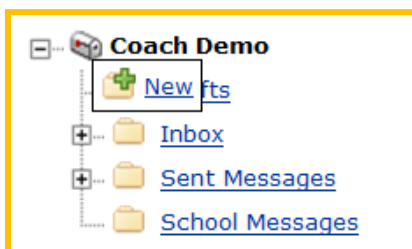
7.4 Folders

The left side of the WebMail screen shows your mailbox folders. All of your incoming messages will go into your Inbox. Messages that you have started writing but haven't yet sent are saved in your Drafts folder. Likewise, all of the messages and replies you send are kept in your Sent Messages folder.

Organize your messages by creating folders and moving categorized messages into them. For example, students often sort their messages by course and create separate folders for Algebra, History, Health, etc.

To create a new folder:

- Click on either the mailbox icon or the folder icon in the folder tree and click on the **New folder** icon.

- Type the name of the folder you want to create and click **Save**.

*Note: You can only make changes to *your created* folders, not to the Inbox, Drafts, or Sent Messages folders.
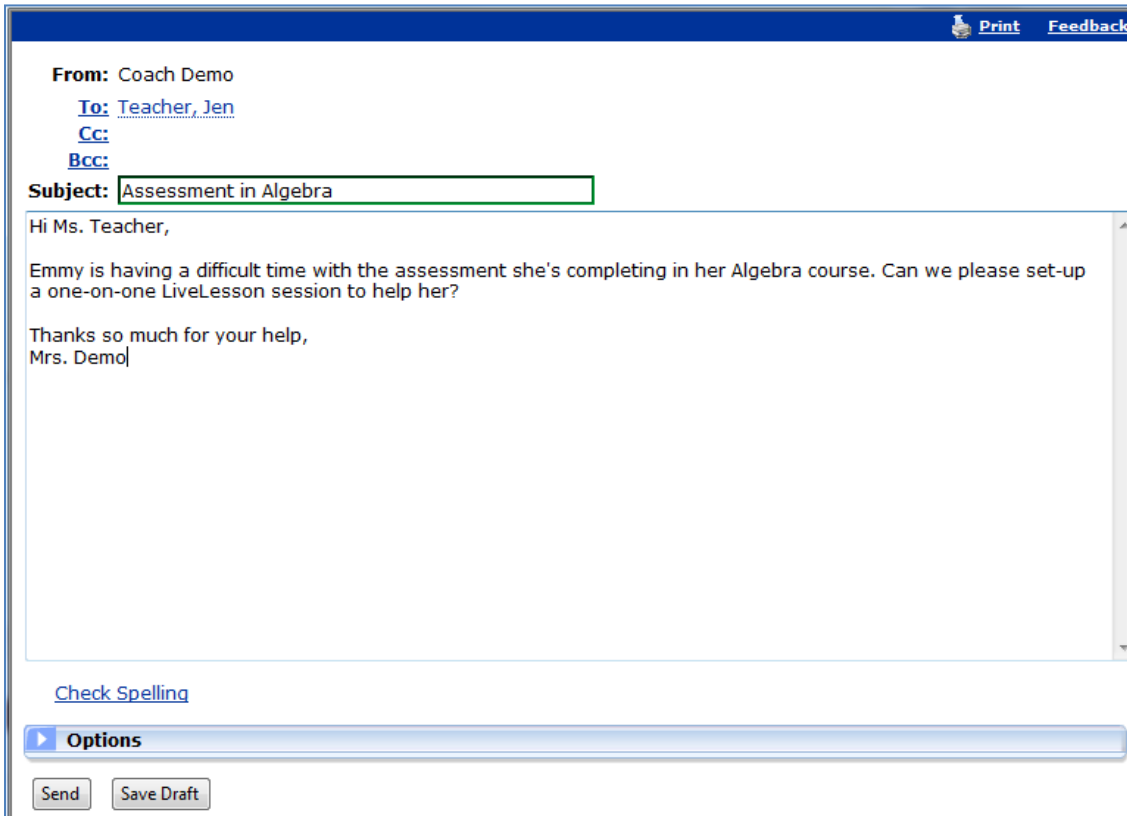
To move messages into a specific folder:
- Click on a message to select it.
- Click on the folder icon beside the desired destination folder and click **Move Here**. The highlighted message will move to that folder.
- To move multiple messages at once, hold down the <CTRL> key on your keyboard while you click to select multiple messages with your mouse.

*Note: You cannot move messages into the Drafts folder.

7.5 Teacher Contact

Sending a WebMail message to the teacher is easy from your home page:

1. Click on the mailbox icon beside the teacher's name in the My Household area.
2. A message window will open that is already addressed to the teacher.
3. Type a subject for your message.
4. Write your message in the large box.
5. Click **Send**.

Don't forget that you can call the teacher, too. Phone numbers for your students' teachers are at your fingertips. Click on the Data View icon beside the teacher's name in the My Courses area. Then click on the **Teacher Communication** link. Here you will find information about the teacher and all of the links to the teacher's communication tools including: WebMail, Message Boards, LiveLesson sessions, phone number, office hours, and more – all in one place!

Teacher Communication - Jen Teacher

How to stay connected and in touch

Visit my **Message Board** to get the most recent and updated information. When you have a LiveLesson session scheduled, click on the link below to a
LiveLesson Meeting Room.

Business Phone: 410-123-4567
Office hours: Monday - Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
LiveLesson Link: Mrs. Teacher's LiveLesson Classroom
LiveLesson Schedule: Monday 3:30 - 4:00p.m., Thursday 8:00 - 9:00 a.m., Friday 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Teacher Message Board Link: Mrs. Teacher's Message Board
WebMail Link: Mrs. Teacher's WebMail
Classes Taught: Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Pre Calculus
Attachments: Welcome back to school.pdf 19k

School Information

Additional Information

My Connections Academy
1001 Lancaster Street 5th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 800-382-6010 ext. 2339
Fax: 800-382-6011

OK

Click on the **Teacher Profile** link to find out more about your teacher and see your teacher's picture too.

Teacher Profile - Jen Teacher

Professional Picture:

Experience

Mrs. Teacher taught for 15 years before coming to Connections Academy and has taught for a total of years.

Qualifications

Mrs. Teacher's highest degree is a Bachelor's Degree.
A complete list of his/her degrees and certifications follows:
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of South Florida
Elem k-6, Math 6-12, Gifted

Fun Picture:
Caption:

OK

12

8. Escalation Policy

Connections Learning prides itself on having high standards for our students. The escalation policy may vary by program. You will be contacted by WebMail message if your student has fallen behind in progress or performance.

9. Honor Code

Connections Learning is very serious about enforcing the Honor Code and uses many strategies to ensure academic integrity and to guard against academic dishonesty. First and foremost, our teachers get to know their students and their students' work very well, so it is easy to detect something suspicious. Teachers have also been trained to spot cheating and plagiarized works. Students and teachers are provided with reliable online tools and resources to support the development of original work and for identifying questionable material. Our staff regularly scans the Internet for posted test questions and answers and has put an effective process in place to contact Internet services to remove this type of information and to inform administrators of these postings.

Please take a moment to review the [2012-13 Connections Learning Honor Code](#) found in the Virtual Library.

10. Technical Support

The Support Team is always available to help you with technical issues whether you need help setting up your computer system or diagnosing a hardware or software problem. Before calling for support, try to ascertain the nature of the problem so support staff can help you more easily.

Consider questions like:
- What steps did I take before having a problem?
- Did I recently download or install any new software?
- Have I seen any error or alert messages recently? If so, what did they say?

Check the Online Help area for basic troubleshooting ideas to consider (keyword: *troubleshooting*).Contact the Support Team at 800-382-6010 for assistance. Online Help lists the Support Team's hours and available services.

You can also use the Feedback link on your home page to send us compliments, complaints, and suggestions as well as to report Connexus bugs.

Do not use this link if you have a specific question or need help; contact the Support Team by phone or send a WebMail message.

11. Internet Security

Connections Learning uses the Internet as its backbone for communication as well as connection to important curriculum components. As educators and parents, we must ensure that

our students make good choices whenever they engage in online activities. It is ultimately the parent's responsibility to monitor how the student is using the Internet and the content he or she is viewing.

Connections Learning provides an Internet Safety course, which all Parents/Caregivers are urged to complete. A link to the course is located on your home page at the beginning of the school year (or when the student first enrolls) and is always available through the Virtual Library. For more information, please call Technical Support at 800-382-6010, and press 5.

12. Ready to Begin

You're now ready to support your students as they begin their courses! Remember, there are several ways for you to get help whenever you need it.

Just ask or consult:
- Your Teacher(s): send a WebMail message or call.
- Our Support staff: if you have any technical issues, please contact our support staff at 1-800-382-6010, Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET.
- Connections Learning Honor Code: full of information about our school policies and procedures.

Online Help: just click on the help icon at any time
We wish you and your student an enriching and enjoyable online learning experience!