Online Course Handbook
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What to Expect

Online Learning vs. Traditional Learning
Online learning is very different than learning in a typical classroom setting. In a typical classroom, you interact with the teacher and other students face-to-face. You carry on conversations, participate in group activities, and watch your teacher’s instruction all in the same room and at the same time. Your school gives you a schedule that tells you what time and in what room you will take your classes. In an online course, you may never actually see your teacher or other classmates in person. Often, you will not even meet as a class at the same time. You may submit your assignments digitally and take tests online.

Online courses and traditional classrooms do have some similarities. Most importantly, your course has a teacher that will instruct you, guide you, and assess your learning throughout the course. Just because you may be sitting alone at your computer does not mean that you are learning on your own. You may be surprised to find just how involved your teacher is with you and your online classmates. You may still participate in group work and projects with your classmates, only you will use different tools to communicate with each other. These tools may include chats, forums, and document sharing. You may also view your teacher teaching a lesson through a recording or video presentation. There is even the opportunity to meet together as a group through a virtual classroom tool. This tool allows you to communicate with your class through video, audio, and text.

You may participate in two types of learning activities in your course;

**Synchronous learning:** learning that happens among all of the participants at the same time, or simultaneously. Watching a video conference, sitting in a classroom, participating in a chat, and working in a virtual classroom are all examples of synchronous learning.

**Asynchronous learning:** learning that is not simultaneous or concurrent in time. Each person logs into the course at different times to receive instruction. Watching a video recording, participating in a forum, or visiting a web site are all examples of asynchronous learning. You can expect to do a lot of asynchronous activities in your online course.

Being able to learn through an online course is an important skill to have and will be useful to you throughout your life. While it may be different at first, you will hopefully find it to be fun and engaging!

**What kind of work will I be doing?**
You may be wondering what kind of work you will be doing in an online course. You can expect to do many of the same types of activities that you do in a typical classroom, but using different tools. Depending on the course, you may be participating in online activities, writing papers, and making projects using various types of media. Your online course will involve a lot of different types of interaction and instructional methods. You will be actively involved in your learning. You might watch videos, listen to sound clips, or write in a journal.
For your online course, you will be using Moodle, which is the course management software. Instead of going to a classroom, you will login to your schools’ Moodle site and go into your online Moodle course. This is where all of your instruction and assignments will be housed. You will also be using other websites and online resources as part of your learning experience. You will learn more about Moodle and some other tools later on in this handbook. Online courses are not easier than traditional courses. In fact, at first it may feel as though you are doing more work than you would in a traditional course. However, as you become used to the online tools and setting, you will find it to be about the same amount of work as a traditional classroom.

How much time will I spend on a course?
The amount of time you will spend on a course will vary from student to student and from course to course. However, it will require much more responsibility on your part to complete the course material. Since you will not have a typical bell schedule telling you when to attend each class, you must be disciplined and organized when you take classes online. It will be important that you plan your time well, allowing enough time to learn the material, study it, and complete the assignments on time. You must also login to your course frequently to get important announcements and updates. Do not wait until the last minute to start your assignments or submit a quiz. Remember, in an online course, there are more potential unforeseen problems that may pop up. There may be a power or Internet outage due to a storm, or you have a technical difficulty with your computer. Your teacher may make accommodations in some extreme cases, but your best bet is to prepare ahead of time.

Communication
Communication is the key to your success in an online course. You should keep in touch with your teacher frequently. Participating in emailing, chats, and forums are all good ways of communicating with your teacher in an online course. Your teacher will establish “Office Hours” when he or she is available to answer your questions on the phone, or through the chat or virtual classroom. Be sure to take advantage of these times. If you are having difficulty, let your teacher know right away so you can set up a time to “meet” online, over the phone, or even in person to get you on track. While your teacher is not available online all the time, he or she will respond to your questions in a timely manner so you don’t fall behind. It is important that you do not wait until the last minute before a test or assignment is due to ask for help. Starting assignments early and making sure you are clear on the instructions and your teacher’s expectations are good practices to follow.

What if I have technical problems?
While your school and your teacher have done their very best to make sure everything in your online course runs smoothly, you may still experience some technical difficulties. Before beginning your online course, be sure to refer to the technical requirements section to ensure that you have the right equipment to participate fully in the course. Having the correct equipment will avoid a lot of frustration and wasted time down the road. If you do not have the correct equipment, you should contact your school right away to make arrangements to get it. There are three main categories of technical problems; computer or hardware issues, Internet Service problems, and application trouble. As part of this handbook, we have provided you with complete instructions for most of the applications you will use, including Moodle, VoiceThread, and the virtual classroom, as well as a
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, and a Trouble Shooting Procedures section. In addition, you will have access to a help desk if you cannot resolve the issue by yourself. Please see the section on trouble shooting for further information.

# Moodle

## What is Moodle?
Moodle is the course management system that will be used to deliver your online course content. This is where you will go to find all of your lessons and assignments. Moodle is a web-based application. This means that you access your course online, through a website. There is no software that you need to install on your computer to use Moodle. While your teacher will probably use other Internet resources as part of your online instruction, you will always return to your Moodle site as you move throughout the course.

Moodle is a safe, secure environment for you to work. Only those with a username and password, provided by the school, can access your Moodle course. While in your Moodle course, you do not need to worry about using personal information, pictures, or the risk of online predators as you do with typical website. For more information, please see the section on Internet Safety.

Your Moodle site has many built-in tools that you will use as part of your online class. These tools include a digital drop-box to submit assignments, forums, chats, journals, virtual classrooms, and a quiz tool. You may use these tools to communicate with your teacher, to participate in group projects with your classmates, and to complete assigned work.

## Accessing your Moodle site
To access your summer school course(s), navigate to http://wiueacademy.org.

A good practice is to now save that URL (web address) as one of your favorites in the browser toolbar. This will save you time with future logins. Firefox or Chrome is the recommended browser. Internet Explorer is not recommended.

In the upper right-hand corner, enter your username and password provided by the school. Click Login.
This is what you will see when you are logged into the system:

To access your courses, you will select the Moodle tab on the top right of the tabs. When you enter the Moodle site, you will see your courses listed and the respective assignments that are due.
Sample Moodle Course View

This is an example of what your online course may look like:

Your course page will generally have three columns. The center column contains your course content i.e. your lessons, assignments, tests, and resources. The center column is broken down into sections that break-up the course by topic or by weeks. Your teacher may setup your course so that only a few topics are available to you at one time. You can click on any of the links to open the course content.

The two columns on the right and left sides of your screen contain additional activities and resources that you may find useful throughout the course. These may include a calendar, links to frequently-used web sites, a list of other classmates who are online, and widgets. The tools in these columns will help you as you progress through the course.

Across the top of your screen is the banner. The banner contains your login name, which is also the link to your account information. Should you need to edit your account information or upload your picture, click on your name. The banner also contains the logout button. Be sure to logout of your Moodle course each time you finish your session. Do not leave a public computer (a computer in a computer lab, classroom or library) unattended while logged into your Moodle site.
Navigating in Moodle

_Breadcrumbs_

When moving around in Moodle, it is important that you do not use your Back button on your browser. Instead, use the links and breadcrumbs provided. Breadcrumbs are the links that appear along the top of your screen, directly under the banner. They tell you the path you’ve taken to get to a particular screen.

Clicking on the My Home link will take you back to the home page where your courses are listed. The next “live” breadcrumb is the link to the sub-category. In the screenshot above, the subcategory is Summer School Electives. The next breadcrumb is the main page of your course. Your breadcrumbs will change depending on where you navigate to in your course, but you will always have a My Home and a Course Title link in your breadcrumbs.

_Course Content_

As stated in the Types of Content section above, you will be using many different types of resources as you progress throughout the course. To access any of the content, simply click one time on the link to the particular resource. Use may your breadcrumbs to return to your main course page.

_Main Course Page_

To open any of the documents and resources in your Moodle course, click on the link next to the icon. The document or web resource will open in a new window. To avoid scrolling, you have the option to collapse sections or topics of your course which you are not currently using. To collapse sections, click on the rectangle in the upper right-hand corner of the section that you want to view.
To expand the sections to see all available topics at once, click on the two rectangles in the upper right-hand corner of the section.
Types of Content

Your online Moodle course will contain many different types of content and resources to help you learn the course material and interact with your teacher and classmates. These resources may include the following:

**Page**
Links to resources on the Internet

**Chats**
Allow you to participate in a synchronous discussion through text.

**File**
May be a document, presentation, spreadsheet, or a PDF.

**Assignments**
A way for students to digitally submit their assignments to the teacher.

**Quizzes**
Online tests taken and submitted through the Moodle site.

**Forums**
Allow the students to participate in asynchronous discussions.

**Single Simple Discussion:** A forum focused on one specific topic
**Each person posts on discussion:** Each participant can start one discussion. Each discussion can have multiple replies.
**Q & A:** Students cannot see other students’ responses until after he/she posts his/her own response.
**Standard Forum:** An open forum where anyone can start a new topic at any time.
**Standard Forum displayed in a blog-like format:** An open forum where anyone can start a new topic at any time. Topics are displayed on one page with “Discuss the topic” links.
Technical Requirements

Hardwar

- **Windows:** Windows NT, 4.0, 2000, XP or Vista and a 56k V.90 modem or better Internet connection.
- **Macintosh:** Mac OS X and a 56k V.90 modem or better Internet connection.
- Depending on the use of streaming media, interactive multimedia, or other content in the individual courses, you might need additional hardware/software or browser plug-ins.
- Audio input and output. These speakers/headphones and microphones may be purchased for less than $20 each.

Browsers

- **Firefox 3** is the recommended browser for both platforms. [Free Firefox download](http://www.mozilla.org/firefox).
- Internet Explorer 7 may be used, but Firefox is preferred.
- Opera and Safari will not show build-in html editor in Moodle.

Pop-up configuration

- Some of the Moodle courses use pop-up windows; therefore you will need to disable pop-up blockers in your browser. Some blockers may be turned off on Windows by right clicking an icon on the system tray, next to where the clock resides. For complete instructions on disabling your pop-up blocker, please see the “Tools” section on your district’s Moodle site.

Software*

- Software should include a word processor; a spreadsheet; and a presentation program. The most common supplier is Microsoft Office. MS Office can be found at reduced price for students. Other open source or free programs are available such as Open Office and can be obtained online for free at [http://openoffice.org](http://openoffice.org).
- Adobe Reader 9.0 or later
- QuickTime 7.0 or later

*Please see the “Tools” section on your district’s Moodle site for a complete list of free downloads and plug-ins.
**Web Pages**

Your teacher may provide several links to outside web sites as part of your lessons. Web pages will open in a separate browser window. This means that you will have two browser windows open. If your web site does not open, you may have pop-ups blocked in your browser or an add-on toolbar such as Yahoo! or Google. If you are unsure how to allow pop-ups in your browser, you can refer to the *Pop-up Blocker Configuration* at the end of this handbook. These instructions are also located on the home page of your district’s Moodle site in the Tools section. When a new web page opens, you will be able to move back and forth between your course and the web page. You will be also able to use the browser’s navigation tools like the *Back* button in the web sites. You can close the second web browser when you’re finished with it and still have your course open.

**MS Office Documents**

Your course may include documents created in Microsoft Office such as PowerPoint, Excel, and Word. To open the file, click on the file link, then click *Open*. (Make sure your browser is set to allow pop-ups.) Your teacher may ask you to answer questions directly on the documents, or you may choose to make your own notes on them. You can then save the files to your own computer or external drive for your reference or later use. Don’t worry about changing the original document as it cannot be modified on the Moodle course.

![Open file dialog box](image.png)

**Forums**

There are several types of forums in Moodle. A *standard forum* where anyone can post a new topic, a *single simple discussion* with one focused topic, and a *Question and Answer forum* where students cannot read other students’ responses until they have posted one of their own. Your teacher will set up the forum and give you instructions for how you should respond.
To participate in a forum, click on the forum title on your Moodle course.

To contribute to the forum, click Reply or Add a new discussion topic, depending on the type of forum your teacher has set up.

**Chats**

Chats are a great way to communicate with your classmates and teacher. Your teacher will setup the chat and let you know in advance when the chat will take place.

At the designated time, login to your Moodle course and click on the designated chat session.

Click the link to enter the chat.

The chat room looks like the image below. The conversation appears in the main frame of the window. The chat members are listed on the right. To participate in the chat, type your text in the field at the bottom of the screen. All conversations in chats are recorded and logged automatically by Moodle for the teacher to view.
The Virtual Classroom

Moodle also has a virtual classroom tool that can be used to conduct synchronous lessons between your teacher and students. In order to participate in the virtual classroom environment, you will need to have headphones and a microphone. If you do not have a microphone, you will still be able to hear what is being said, but you won’t be able to contribute to the conversation. A webcam is also a helpful tool to have in the virtual classroom, but is not necessary in order to participate. Be sure to check with your teacher to see if a webcam is required for the virtual classroom.

Your teacher will let you know ahead of time when sessions will be held in the virtual classroom. He or she will post a link to the live session in your course.

*BEFORE you login to your course, make sure you have plugged in your microphone, speakers or headphones, and your webcam.*

To access the virtual classroom, login to the Moodle course a few minutes before the designated start of the session and click on the link to the session.

Click on the link to the Enter Class button

Click Allow on the Adobe Flash Player Settings window
Click on the “Device Settings” button to check your microphone, audio and webcam.

You can adjust your settings and/or select the appropriate device in this window.

Once you have successfully tested your devices, click OK.

If you are not speaking, it is best to mute your microphone. To mute your microphone, click on the “Stop broadcasting audio” button. You can click the “Stop broadcasting video” button to stop sending video from your webcam. You will not have audio or video control unless your teacher gives you permission to speak. If your teacher gives you permission, you will see the whiteboard tools become active. You can control the tools with your mouse. If you do not have permission, your tools will appear grayed out.
After the session is over, you may go back and view the lesson as many times as you wish. Simply click on the session link in your course, and then go to the View Recording URL. You will be able to view the session as if it were a video.
VoiceThread

A VoiceThread is a collaborative, multimedia slide show that holds images, documents and videos and allows people to leave comments in five different ways: using voice (with a microphone or phone), text, audio file, or video (via a webcam). Users can doodle while commenting, use multiple identities and teachers can choose which comments are shown through moderation. VoiceThread is a place for creating and collaborating on digital stories and documentaries, practicing and documenting language skills, exploring geography and culture, solving math problems, or simply finding and honing student voices. **Students must sign up for a free VoiceThread account in order to participate in a VoiceThread.**

**Signing Up for a VoiceThread Account**

Before you go to the VoiceThread web site, make sure that your peripherals (microphone, headset, webcam) are plugged into your computer.

1. Go to [http://voicethread.com](http://voicethread.com)
2. Click on the **Sign in or Register** button

2. Click on **Register**

3. Complete the information. You may choose your own password. If you do not have an email, you may enter a “fake” address.
### Watching a VoiceThread

**Finding and watching a VoiceThread**

- Enter a keyword and click the Magnifying glass to search.
- Filter using these options if desired.
- Click on a story to view it.
- Navigate through the pages here.

### Auto play a VoiceThread

- Close
- Go Full Screen
- Progress bar
- Play
Manual Play a VoiceThread

Zoom feature: click one time over an image to zoom in. Release the mouse button and move your mouse around the page to view different areas. Click your mouse button again to zoom out the full page.
Commenting in a VoiceThread

Anyone can view a public VoiceThread. Public VoiceThreads are those that are available on the Browse tab of the site. You do not need an account to view a VoiceThread on this tab. You do need an account to make a comment on any VoiceThread.

Click the Comment button to make a comment. Comments can be made in five different ways:

- By telephone
- By video
- By voice
- By text
- By file upload (requires a paid account)

Making an audio comment using a microphone

Click the record button. Begin speaking into your microphone.

When you are finished commenting, click Stop recording. Note: comments cannot span across multiple slides in a VoiceThread. In order to advance the presentation to the next slide, you must first finish your comment, then click on the right arrow.

Listen to your comment. Click Save to keep your comment, or Cancel to delete it.
**Making a text comment**

Click the *Comment* button. Then click on *Type*.

Click in the text bubble that appears. Type your message.

Click *Save or Cancel*.

**Video comment using a web cam**

After clicking on *Comment*, click on the video camera icon.

Click *Allow*

Record your comment. Click *Stop recording* when you are finished commenting. Then click *Save or Cancel*.
Doodling Comment

You may use the doodle feature in VoiceThread to make notations on the screen. You may also doodle while you are recording a video or audio comment to add emphasis to your comment.

To begin doodling, click on a color on the color wheel. Use your mouse to draw or write on the slide. After a few seconds, your doodle marks will start to fade. If you want your marks to remain on the screen, click the white circle in the center of the color wheel. Click Save.

Deleting or hiding a Comment

You may delete a comment that you have made at any time on VoiceThread; even if it is in a different session of watching the VoiceThread. Click the curtains to hide your comment from others. When you want your comment to be viewed, click the curtains again. To delete a comment, you must first select your comment, and then click on the trash can. Click Delete to confirm the deletion.
Creating a VoiceThread

Click on the Create tab
Click Upload to upload content from your computer.

You may upload pictures, documents, PowerPoints, PDFs and movies from your computer. You may also choose to use files uploaded to previous VoiceThreads that you have created. To use a web page, click the URL button and navigate to the web page. Copy the URL and paste it in the field.

If you select a previously created VoiceThread, you can also choose the specific slides you would like to use in your new VoiceThread. Select the slides, and then click Import.

Editing your VoiceThread

Click on an image to select it.
Click replace to choose a different image.
Click here to add a title and/or link.
Click *Add a title and description* to give your new VoiceThread a title.

To add comments to your VoiceThread, click the *Comment* button. Add comments following the instructions in the section above.

To publish your VoiceThread so others in your class can see it, click on *Publishing Options*.

Your VoiceThread will *NOT* be viewed by the public on the *Browse* tab unless you check the box *Show on Browse Page*. It is recommended that you do not check this box. As you check the boxes on this screen, the paragraph at the bottom at the bottom will explain your choices.
Sharing Your VoiceThread

Click Share
Click Get a Link

The link will automatically be copied to your clipboard. You can paste the link in any application. Check the appropriate boxes for allowing commenting and for listing on the Browse page. Again, it is recommended that you do NOT post on the Browse page.

ALWAYS SIGN OUT WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED WORKING

*Always logout of VoiceThread at the end of EACH session. Even if you shut down your computer, you will remain logged in to VoiceThread. The next person who uses that computer will have access to your VoiceThread account. Click Sign Out at the bottom of the My Voice tab to logout.
Peripheral devices are external hardware that you may plug in to your computer. The most common peripheral devices you will use are headphones, microphones, and webcams. This section will help you to troubleshoot your peripheral devices.

Before using any peripheral device, make sure that it is plugged into your computer **BEFORE** you begin working in the program or application. For example, if you are going to participate in a session of the virtual classroom in Moodle, it is best to have your headphones, microphone and webcam plugged into your computer **before you get on the Internet**.

Your computer may also have built-in speakers and a microphone. In this case, you may have to tell your computer which device you want it to use; the built-in speaker and mic, or the external headphones and mic you have plugged in. Checking the default settings for your devices will also help you to identify why they may not be working properly.

**For Windows users:** Navigate to your control panel and click on sounds. Use the Audio and Voice tabs at the top of the window to make sure that you have the correct device selected and that the volume is turned up on that device.
For Mac users: Navigate to your System Preferences and click on sound

Make sure that you have the correct device selected for your sound output and that the volume is turned up. Click on the Input tab to select your microphone and again, check the volume.
Frequently Asked Questions

Moodle

Q: I don’t see any editing tools in my text editor when I am working in a journal, online assignment or forum.
A: Check to make sure you are using Mozilla Firefox or Chrome. Text editors do not show up in Safari.

Q: I can't see all of the sections of my course.
A: Expand your course topics by clicking on the icon in the upper right-hand corner of the section.

Q: What Browser should I use?
A: Firefox 14.0.1 or higher are recommended. Do not use Safari.

Q: I do not have Microsoft Office on my computer, what program should I use?
A: If you have a school issued computer, each computer has Libre Office installed and has the full functionality of all the Microsoft Office programs.

Audio

If you are using a laptop with a built-in web cam, it is best to use that camera and not another device.

Q: I can't hear through my headphones or speakers.
A: Make sure your volume is turned up both on your speakers or headphones, and on your computer. Check to be sure your volume is not muted. If your sound is turned up, close your browser or application and open it again, making sure that your speakers or headphones are plugged in. You may need to restart your computer with your device plugged in.
If you are working in the virtual classroom in Moodle, click on the device settings icon and make sure you have clicked Allow in the Flash pop-up window and have selected the appropriate device in the speakers’ drop-down menu. If you do not see your device listed, you will need to restart your browser with the device plugged in. (page 11)

Q: My microphone isn’t working.
A: Make sure your mic isn’t muted. You may need to restart your browser or application while your mic is plugged in.
If you are working in the virtual classroom, click on the device settings icon (page 11) and make sure your microphone is selected in the menu. If you do not see your device listed on the menu, you will need to restart your browser with the microphone plugged in.
**VoiceThread**

**Q: My VoiceThread won’t load or is taking a long time to load.**

**A:** Go into your browser settings and clear your cache. Check to see that you have the most recent version of Flash installed on your computer. Flash updates can be found at http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer.

**Q: The PowerPoint I have uploaded looks different or hasn’t retained its formatting.**

**A:** We have found that PowerPoints created in MS Office 2007 that include Smart Art sometimes do not appear correctly in the VoiceThread. To remedy this situation, save your PowerPoint as Office 97-2003 document. Then upload your PowerPoint to VoiceThread again.

**Q: I can’t make a comment**

**A:** Make sure you are logged in to your account. Some VoiceThreads do not allow others to comment.

**Q: When I go to the VoiceThread website, I don’t see my VoiceThreads on the My Voice tab.**

**A:** If you are using a public computer, the person who used VoiceThread before you probably forgot to logout. Go to the My Voice tab and click Sing Out. Click Sign in at the top of the page and login to your own account.
Trouble Shooting Procedures

If you are experiencing any type of trouble using any of the technology in your online course, you should follow these procedures to get assistance.

1. Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the handbook. If you can’t find the answer, proceed to step 2.
2. If your question pertains to the course material, an assignment, any class procedure, please contact your teacher.
3. If your question pertains to a technical issue i.e. Moodle logins, viewing course material, audio or video problems, please click the Help Desk tab in the top left of the Moodle page.
4. If you cannot access the Moodle page, please e-mail the Help Desk at helpdesk@wiueacademy.org.
5. At last resort, call 888-836-2269. Only call the Help Desk when you do not have access to a computer. Otherwise, use the Help Desk tab or send an e-mail to the Help Desk.

How to access the Help Desk Page in Moodle

Click the Help Desk tab in the top left of the Moodle page.

The first step to contact the Help Desk is to use the tab to go to the Help Desk page.

Fill out your information into the required fields area and then click Submit.
How to send an effective e-mail to the eAcademy Help Desk

If you cannot access the Moodle site to click the Help Desk tab, you will send an e-mail. Sending an effective e-mail to the eAcademy Help Desk can help you receive a prompt response to your issue. Please include in your e-mail: your full name, your school district, the course and teacher in which you may be having an issue, any related links, and a detailed description of the issue. The eAcademy Help Desk personnel will be able to better serve you with these details.

Here is a sample on an appropriate email to the eAcademy Help Desk:

![Sample Email]

How to leave an effective voicemail message to the Help Desk

Only call the Help Desk when you have issues where you cannot get on to your computer to link to the Help Desk page or to send an email to the Help Desk. Leaving effective voicemail at the eAcademy Help Desk is similar to sending an email. An effective voicemail can help you receive a prompt response to your issue. Please include in your voicemail: your full name, your school district, the course and teacher in which you may be having an issue, any related links, and a detailed description of the issue.
Internet Safety

All Westmoreland Intermediate Unit policies, including the Acceptable Use Policy, apply to all interactions during your online course. Please be sure to read the IU’s policy before you begin your course.

Users agree to the following practices to ensure personal safety and well-being:

1. The student agrees that all information transmitted through the use of technology resources (e-mail, web page publication, and Moodle) will pertain specifically to course subject matter and/or assignments. All other uses of these resources for the purpose of communication are prohibited.
2. The user agrees never to transmit personal information (name, age, gender, photo, address, phone number, e-mail address, credit/debit card information and the like) of himself or herself as well as that of any other person.
3. The student agrees never to arrange for a meeting with any person at any time using the school's technology resources. Student users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online without their parents’ full approval and participation.
4. The student agrees to notify a staff member immediately if he or she is asked for personal information, views inappropriate materials, or in any other way feels violated, harassed, uncomfortable, or accosted through the school's technology resources.

Users agree to the following statements regarding illegal/unauthorized activities and system security:

1. The user agrees to access only the Internet and course resources, software and/or hardware provided expressly by the school for educational purposes.
2. The user agrees to follow the procedures and best practices recommended by the teacher or system administrator. These procedures and practices may address respect for the resource limits of the School, personal safety issues, and/or access to appropriate materials.
3. The user agrees never to trespass into another user's folders or files.
4. The user agrees never to use another user's password or account or provide personal user information to anyone. This includes all network and student resource accountIDs. The student user additionally agrees not to change passwords without permission of the system administrator.
5. The user agrees never to use the course management system or any related online resource in such a way that would disrupt the learning environment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to: distributions of unsolicited advertising; propagation of viruses; posting information that if acted upon could cause damage, danger, or school or system disruption; attempting to log in through another person’s account; and sending unnecessary messages to a large number of people (spamming). Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users.
6. The user agrees never to tamper with or vandalize the property of the school or other user including: equipment; textbooks, and other course materials. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data or equipment of another user or the school.

7. The user agrees to respect another’s email by never tampering with, interfering with, or intercepting it. The Electronic Communications Privacy Act places electronic mail in the same category as messages delivered by the U. S. Postal Service.

8. The user agrees never to use eAcademy resources to gain unauthorized access to another computer or network (hacking).

9. The user agrees never to use or respond to inappropriate, obscene, profane, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.

10. The user agrees never to post false information or engage in personal, prejudicial, or discriminatory attacks.

11. The user agrees never to harass another person by use of any of the school or Moodle resources. Harassment is defined as any action that distresses or annoys another person. The user agrees to stop immediately any and all behavior that is construed by another as unwelcome.

12. The user agrees never to access, possess, transmit, retransmit or respond to material which promotes violence or discrimination or advocates destruction of property, including, but not limited to, access to information concerning the manufacture of destructive devices, such as explosives, fireworks, smoke bombs, incendiary devices, and the like.

13. The user agrees never to access, possess, transmit, retransmit or respond to any information containing sexually oriented material.

14. The user agrees never to use technology resources to engage in any illegal, criminal activity or any behavior which is morally inappropriate.

15. The user agrees never to use the course management system for making purchases, commercial sales, multilevel marketing, gambling, sweepstakes, chain letters, or similar unauthorized purposes. On-line games may only be accessed for educational purposes with the consent of the user’s teacher.

16. The user agrees to never access the course management system for political lobbying, although it may be used, with the permission of the principal, to communicate with elected representatives to express opinions on political issues.

17. The user agrees never to plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as taking the idea or writing of others and presenting them as one’s own.

18. The user agrees to respect the right of intellectual property of other people and to respect all copyright laws. Students agree that if they are unsure whether copyright law is being respected, they will bring this question immediately to the attention of a staff member.

Users agree to the following statements regarding the use of new Web 2.0 tools:

1. Online communication is critical to our students’ learning of 21st century skills and tools such as blogging and podcasting offer an authentic, real-world vehicle for student expression. Again, as educators, our primary responsibility to students is their safety. Hence, expectations for classroom blogging, using wikis, sharing music or sound files, sharing visual media, posting messages, participating in virtual worlds, and playing interactive games must follow all established Internet safety guidelines.

2. The use of blogs, podcasts or other web 2.0 tools is considered an extension of your classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also
inappropriate in all uses of blogs, podcasts, or other web 2.0 tools. This includes but is not limited to all disrespectful content including profanity; racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks.

3. Students using forums, chats, blogs, podcasts and other web tools are expected to act safely by keeping ALL personal information out of their posts.

4. A student should NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including address or phone numbers, or photographs). Do not, under any circumstances, agree to meet someone you have met over the Internet.

5. Students using such tools agree to not share their user name or password with anyone besides their teachers and parents and treat blog spaces as classroom spaces. Speech that is inappropriate for class is also inappropriate for a blog.

6. Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or be subject to consequences appropriate to misuse.

**Privileges and Enforcement**

The use of electronic networks and technology is a privilege, not a right. Access is given to users who agree to the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement. Inappropriate use or a violation of this agreement may result in the user’s access privilege being denied, revoked, or suspended. Misuse may also subject the user to further disciplinary action as deemed necessary by the student’s home district administration. Any violation of federal, state or local laws will be reported to the appropriate agencies.

There is no absolute right to Freedom of Speech when using the school’s technology resources and/or personal technology devices, which are viewed by the administration as a limited educational forum. All electronic mail communications remain school property. The right to use and disclose the contents of electronic mail files for legitimate school purposes, including response to legal processes in any matter consistent with state and federal law, is retained by the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit and the WIU eAcademy Consortium member districts without the permission of the user.

Outside of school, parents, guardians, and families bear responsibility for guiding students toward appropriate materials found through information sources such as the Internet, television, telephones, PDAs and other media. A student, instructed by a parent or guardian about accessing additional materials they feel are inappropriate, is expected to follow the parent’s wishes in this matter.

**Privacy**

There is no absolute Right to Privacy when using the school’s technology resources. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. School administration, faculty, and other authorized persons will have the right to review any and all material saved, transmitted, accessed, or momentarily in use by the student in accord with the policy set by the school’s administration. This right is extended to the student’s parents and/or legal guardian in accord with the school’s policy for review of student records and/or work. Users should not expect that files will be private.
Liability

The Westmoreland Intermediate Unit, the WUe Academy Consortium member districts and its employees will not be held responsible for the actions of a user who is in violation of any of the terms of this policy. This responsibility is extended to, but not limited to: loss or unavailability of data or interruptions of service, violations of copyright restrictions, the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the school's system, or any liability, damages, or financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the school's and/or personal technology resources.