New Families: Eight Steps for Getting Started in K-9

WELCOME!

You're signed up with HCOS. You've talked with a Regional Administrator, and your child has been accepted. Here are the next steps.

The purpose of this page is to help new to HCOS families get started in their school year. Hopefully, following this step by step guide will make the start of the new year as smooth as possible for you.

Step 1: Connect with your Support Teacher

Your support teacher is your primary connection to the school. They are responsible for collaborating with you in planning your year. They support, encourage and empower you in your home education journey. Your support teacher will help you choose and order curriculum for the year. They will, also help you with weekly input and guidance and help answer all your questions. Your support teacher will collect work samples throughout the year and will provide formative assessment (feedback). Your support teacher will write report cards for your children and play a large role in your child's educational journey as they work to support you.

Regular communication with your Teacher

It is very important that you work out a system for *communicating regularly* with your support teacher. The most used options include email, phone calls, texting, and reporting programs such as SeeSaw. The more your teacher knows about the work your children are doing and the areas you need help with, the better they are able to support you. Good, regular communication and relationship building is what makes the Enrolled Program work best.

Step 2: Get into Encom

Encom is our school database. It is where we house student applications, documents, Student Learning Plans (SLPs), report cards, Proof of Work, your curriculum spending account, and more. It's also where you choose any online courses. You will have received your Encom username and password in your "Welcome to HCOS" email (that is an important email to hang onto).

Here is the link to the **Encom How To page**.

Step 3: Work together with your support teacher to create Student Learning Plans (SLPs) for each of your children.

The Student Learning Plans (SLPs) are very important documents. It is the main document that reflects the education plan for the year for each of your children enrolled and is specific to each student. Collaborating to write the SLP is usually your first contact with the support teacher. It's important to remember that the SLP is a living document, meaning that it can be revisited and revised during the school year. Parents are required to sign off on the SLP once it has been completed.

Please view **Understanding your Student Learning Plan (SLP)** for more information.

Please view our **required courses** for course requirements for students in K-9.

Step 4: Order your resources and sign up for courses

How do you purchase curriculum? Your support teacher can help to guide you through this process.

HCOS Curriculum Picks (For families who do not know where to start when it comes to selecting print curriculum, we have put together a collection of kindergarten through grade 9 print curriculum resources).

Vendor Purchases

The HCOS website has a list of vendors who accept HCOS PO#s. After reviewing the resource choices with your teacher, you can order those from one of the approved vendors.

Here is the link to the **Vendors and Ordering page**.

Non-Vendor Purchases

New guidelines have changed how HCOS can process the purchasing of resources from companies that do not accept HCOS PO#s. For more information please see our **Curriculum Purchasing Procedures.** For a list of vendors which do accept HCOS PO#s please go to our **Resource Vendor Directory**.

For more information, visit **Purchasing Process for Parents**.

Computer / Tablet Leases

Computers, tablets and iPads can be leased through our computer lease program: **Computer On Loan Agreement**. Please note that you must obtain your support teacher's approval in order for the lease request to be processed.

Online Courses

If your student is taking any online courses, you can choose courses in Encom using the **Course Selection Instructions** (note: although this link refers to high school courses, the process is the same for Grade 5-9 online courses). After you do this once, you will need to have your support teacher do any other online course sign up for your students.

> Visit the page titled**Logging in to Brightspace and Accessing Course Pages** if you need assistance setting up your student's Brightspace username and password for the first time. Reach out to your support teacher for additional help as needed.

Step 5: Check out the Learning Commons

The Learning Commons is our library. This is where you can find a variety of resources that can add to your home education with minimal to no costs. You can sign out physical books, eBooks, and audio books. We also have unit kits for Science and Social Studies. HCOS pays for many subscriptions, which both enhance and reinforce learning in all subject areas. To find out more information on our subscriptions, head to the **HCOS Subscriptions** part of the Learning Commons site.

Your "Welcome to HCOS" email will also contain your login information for our Learning Commons.

Related links:

- **Learning Commons General Information**
- Learning Commons Access

Step 6: Subscribe to your region's Learning Groups e-alerts

We have many Learning Group activities around the province. Everything from writing workshops, robotics, drama, field trips, to one day a week campus programs happens in Learning Groups. It is important to subscribe to Learning Groups for your region so that you will receive notifications of upcoming events.

- Click this link to the Learning Groups page. **Learning Groups**
- On the top menu bar, choose <Get E-ALerts>
- Fill in the information for the region that you wish to receive notifications for.

Most events can be paid for using your child's resource budget funds.

Step 7: Set a daily schedule

You will find the greatest success if you have a set schedule and location to do your school work.

When scheduling for the year

- look at the total number of weeks (usually 30-36) and then divide your lessons so that you will complete the resource on time. Do this for all of the courses. Online courses have a built in scheduler to help and be sure to factor in holidays.

Schedule your week.

- This largely depends on the age and ability of a student. A very general guideline would be thirty minutes of seated work time per grade for the core academic subjects. For

example, a grade 5 student would spend three hours each day working on Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Second Language resources. The other four subjects (Christian Studies, PE and Health, Career Education, and ADST) would be completed largely through activity based learning.
- This general guideline needs to be considered as just that, a very general approach as each student will have a learning plan designed to meet their individual needs and abilities.
- Parents are encouraged to review this with their support teacher and online course teacher as they will be able to offer insights and suggestions on how best to organize a work day.

Step 8: Note the important dates

For specific information about deadlines and due dates please go to our SOPHIE page: **Important Dates.**

It's useful to have these dates on hand so that deadlines aren't a surprise.

You CAN do this!! You're ALREADY doing this. You've been teaching your child(ren) since the day you came home from the hospital. This is just taking another step. Your support teacher and our school are all committed to your success, and most importantly, Jesus is walking with us every step of the way.

If there are other items that you would see as being useful that we should add to this page, please contact your support teacher or Regional Administrator.

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