

MSC Online Learning Program Student/Parent Handbook



*“Expanding quality online educational opportunities
for Minnesota students”*

<http://www.msconline.us/>

Contents

Welcome	Page 3
Program Information	Page 4
State Statute on Online Learning	Page 4
Being a Successful Online Student	Page 5
Parents Are Key to Success	Page 6
Academic Honesty	Page 7
Registration Flow Chart	Page 8
Registration Directions	Page 9
Summer Registration Directions	Page 10
Tech Requirements	Page 11
Computer Skills	Page 11
Login to Your Course	Page 11
ADA Compliance	Page 11
Drop Procedure	Page 12
Extension Procedure	Page 12
NCAA Information	Page 13

Welcome

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

Welcome to the MSC Online Learning Program! This Handbook will provide you with a wealth of information about our program, policies, and procedures.

We are proud to help meet the needs of students, parents, and school districts across the state by providing a wide range of challenging online learning opportunities for students. The following statements from a school counselor, a parent, and a student express how their involvement in the MSC Online program has been a positive experience.

- “We are a small district and it’s hard to compete with larger districts in what we can offer. The online courses have enabled our school to offer our students many more opportunities than we would have been able to offer otherwise.” -School Counselor
- “This program has been a life changer for our family. Our son has a severe anxiety disorder. By taking his morning classes at school, and then taking his afternoon classes online, he is able to relax, feel good about himself, and experience academic success.” - Parent
- “I love online learning! The program has helped me by providing classes that my school cannot afford to offer in a traditional classroom setting. It is very easy to follow the course schedule, and very easy to communicate with my teacher. I’m glad I have this option available to me.” -Student

Sincerely,

Tim Caroline
Program Director

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Program Information

Our program started in 2004 as a pilot project funded through the Minnesota Department of Education. This early pilot, known then as the NE Online Learning Project, has since evolved to become the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) Online Learning Program.

MSC Online is a supplemental program that provides challenging educational opportunities for students in grades 7 through 12 who would like additional courses, credit recovery, or access to advanced or specialized courses in a flexible learning environment. Our online courses are offered in a rich, multimedia environment and include many opportunities for individualized learning and teacher contact. MSC Online is a part-time, non-diploma program, so students remain enrolled in their own school districts while taking courses online.

Program information and a complete list of courses and can be found on our website. Go to: <http://www.msconline.us/>

Highlights of the State Statute 124D.095 The Online Learning Option Act

Link to full statute

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124D.095>

- A student age 17 or younger must have the written consent of a parent or guardian to apply.
- Online learning is open to all Minnesota students. No school district or charter school may prohibit a student from applying to enroll in online learning.
- Students can complete course work at a grade level that is different from the student's current grade level.
- Students seeking supplemental online course offerings may take up to 50% of a full schedule of courses per term. Students may exceed the 50% with permission from their district.
- An online learning student may participate in the extracurricular activities of the enrolling district on the same basis as other enrolled students.
- School districts and charter schools must make available information about online learning to all interested people.

Being a Successful Online Student

The MSC Online Learning Project is committed to providing equal access to high quality online learning opportunities for all students. Taking an online course can be a great experience, but it does require some special skills, like good time management and being able to work independently. Students and parents should also make sure that the online course will meet the student's educational goals before the student enrolls in the online course.

Good Study Habits

One of the best ways to be a successful distance learner is to develop and execute good study habits. Some are:

- Login to your course on a daily basis.
- Don't procrastinate... Keep up with your assignments and tests.
- Work in a quiet, uninterrupted area as much as possible.
- Dedicate at least 5 hours per week for *each* semester credit.
- Communicate with your instructor... Reach out when you need help.

Self-Discipline and Motivation

Another characteristic shared by successful online learners is self-discipline. This distinguishing feature is usually seen in the learner's ability to stay current with class assignments, participate on a regular basis in online discussions, and adhere to assignment due dates.

One way to promote self-discipline is to work with a calendar. Schedule time to study for an exam, work on assignments, and complete assigned readings in the calendar.

Online learners need to be self-motivated. Unlike traditional courses in which the students and instructor meet face-to-face, learning activities and communication in online present a different dynamic. This arrangement allows you the flexibility to work when it is most convenient for you. It will be your responsibility to remain motivated and engaged to complete the course requirements wholly and on time. You are responsible for knowing when course activities are due.

Time Management

Time management is a commitment; you must set aside a significant amount of time each week for class work. Online learning classes require as much time and effort as traditional seated classes, if not more. Each course typically requires about 90 hours of dedicated time to complete. It is important that you pace yourself and not wait until the end of the semester to complete your work.

Communication

Online learning requires regular communication with instructors. As an online student, effective communication is a key to success. If you have questions, ask for help. If your instructor messages you, make sure you reply within 24 hours.

Parents Are Key to Student Success

Researchers have found that — for all family income levels — students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in advanced classes and programs
- Pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted to the next grade level
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education

Parent involvement is just as important for online learning as it is for in-class learning.

Parents' Checklist for Supporting Student Success

- Encourage your child and give positive feedback.
- Allow your child to ask you for help, but don't do the work for them.
- Encourage your child to contact his or her teachers rather than having you do it for them.
- Become familiar with the curriculum. Work with your child to develop a study schedule.
- Talk with your child about the appropriate ways to communicate with teachers and classmates.
- Make sure your child has basic typing and computer skills.
- Evaluate your child's level of self-motivation. Talk about the many advantages of getting an education and earning a degree.
- Check your child's progress by using the methods the online program provides. Review and discuss Academic Progress Reports. Talk directly with your child about his or her progress and grades.
- Provide study space at home with few distractions. Make sure it has good lighting, comfortable seating, a working computer, and good wrist support.
- Don't hesitate to contact staff if there is something going on that is keeping your child from being successful.



Academic Honesty

MSC Online students are expected to abide by the highest standards of academic honesty in their online work. In addition to being subject to the academic honesty policies of their enrolling districts, MSC Online students agree to not engage in any of the following activities:

Cheating refers to intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic activity. An academic activity includes all forms of student work submitted for a score, a grade or for credit. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid from another person on any academic activity;
- Giving or receiving advance information about quizzes, tests, or examinations;
- Using or consulting unauthorized materials or using unauthorized devices on any academic activity;
- Using any portion of a paper or project to fulfill the requirements of more than one course, without receiving prior permission;
- Participating in unauthorized collaboration with other students;
- Intentionally misrepresenting the need for extra time on any academic activity, in order to gain more information;
- Lying about any of the above or assisting another student to cheat.

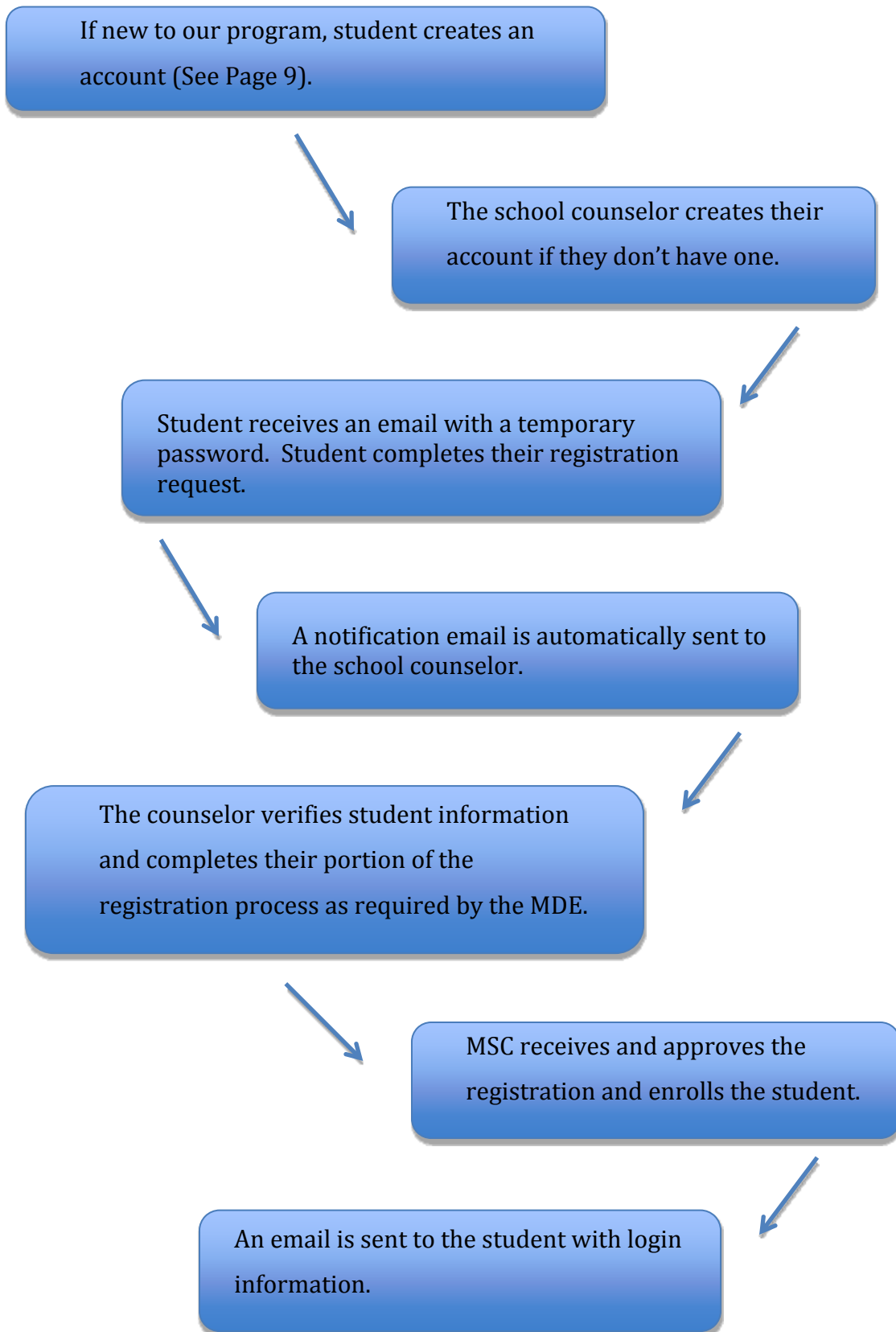
Plagiarism refers to the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, data, language, or statements of another person as your own without proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own;
- Having a parent or another person do work which you then submit as your own;
- Including another person's work as part of your work, without proper acknowledgement or documentation.

The first violation of these guidelines will result in (at a minimum) a score of "0" (zero) for the work submitted, plus any additional consequences defined by the student's enrolling district.

A second offense may result in expulsion from the course with a failing grade, plus any additional consequences defined by the student's enrolling district.

Registration Flow Chart



MSC Online Registration Directions

Go to site: <http://www.msconline.us>

NEW STUDENTS

- Click on the 'Enrolling in Our Courses' link on the left side menu bar.
- Click on the Online Registration Link <https://register.msconline.us>
- Click on Sign Up
- Choose Student from the drop down menu
- Provide your Name, Email Address, Date of Birth, and complete the Captcha, then select the Sign Up button.
- You will receive an email with your temporary password. (You may need to check your spam or junk mail folder for this email.)
- Complete your account registration using the Registration directions below.

RETURNING STUDENTS

- Click on the 'Enrolling in Our Courses' link on the left side menu bar.
- Click on the Online Registration Link <https://register.msconline.us>
- Login with your email and enter your registration password.
- If you do not remember your registration password, enter your email on the bottom and press the 'Reset Password' button.
- You will receive an email with your temporary password. (You may need to check your spam or junk mail folder for this email.)
- Complete your account registration using the Registration directions below.

REGISTRATION

- Once logged in, complete or update the requested information.
 - Enter your Parent or Guardian information (If you are under 18, this step is required)
 - Select your course(s) from the list.
- ➡ Click on course name to highlight it, then click the Add button at the bottom of the box.
- ➡ If a course is added by accident, highlight the course and click the Remove button at the bottom of the box
- Once all the courses you wish to take are in the selected courses box, click the 'Submit Enrollment' button.
 - Your enrollment will now be available for your school counselor to approve.
 - You (and a parent or guardian, if applicable) will need to communicate with your school counselor to verify your enrollment before the counselor can submit the enrollment request to MSC Online.
 - You will receive an email that will provide you with further instructions on how and where to access your course(s). The email will contain a new temporary password to enter the course site. The password should be changed to something you will remember.

MSC Online Summer Registration

<http://www.msconline.us/>

During the summer, MSC Online offers all of the courses listed on our website.

- [High School Courses](#)
- [Middle School Courses](#)

Our courses are semester courses and are designed to be completed in 18 weeks. It is estimated that the typical student will need to dedicate approximately 90 hours per course. Depending on when a student registers, they may need to dedicate more time to complete the course by the end date.

Step 1

Register by going to the following link: <https://register.msconline.us>

A Help Document can be downloaded at: [Student Online Registration Help](#)

Step 2

Your school counselor or school official must process registrations. Contact the school so the counselor or official can set up an account with MSC Online if they don't already have one. A Help Document is available for counselors on our website under the "Enrolling in Our Courses" link.

Step 3

Once a student registers, an email will automatically be sent to the counselor or school official notifying them of the registration request. Once the counselor approves the course(s), MSC will be able to process the enrollment.

Step 4

If a parent is paying for the course(s), a check made out to MSC Online should be sent to the address below. Once payment is received, the course will be opened for student access. Students will receive an email with login directions. The cost for summer courses is \$450 per semester credit.

Northeast Service Cooperative
MSC Online Learning Program
Attn: Kijo Pulford
5525 Emerald Avenue
Mt. Iron, MN 55768

Questions can be emailed to msconline@nesc.k12.mn.us

Tech Requirements

1. Students should have access to high speed internet.
2. We recommend that students use Firefox 10.0 or higher as their web browser.
<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>
3. Make sure that Plugins are up to date.

Computer Skills Needed

Specific computer skills are needed to be successful in an online environment. The following list of skills will help you in the course:

- Create, save, copy, and locate files/folders
- Navigate between two or more applications
- Go to a specific URL
- Follow a hypertext link
- Conduct a basic search using using a search engine
- Download, install, update plugins
- Upload an assignment
- Respond to teacher/students through messaging and post

Login to Your Course

1. Login at <http://www.msconline.us> to start courses.
2. Your username will be your email address
3. Your temporary password will be: *changeme*
4. After you login for the first time, change your password to something you will remember. Write it down.

ADA Compliance

During the registration process, counselors are asked to identify students with an IEP or 504 plan. MSC Online will work with the school counselor to implement appropriate accommodations.

Drop Procedure

- Students may only drop a course during the initial ten (10) calendar day period calculated from the date listed on the enrollment notification email. A grade will not be issued.
- During the initial ten (10) day drop period, the MSC drop form must be submitted to MSC Online by a school official.
- Students may **not** drop a course after the initial ten (10) day window.

Extension Request Procedure

The MSC Online Learning Program recognizes that students may encounter extraordinary circumstances that make it difficult to complete coursework within the time frame of a course term. In limited circumstances, such as severe illness, medical treatment, or other extenuating circumstances, counselors may request an extension for a student not to exceed two weeks. In order for an extension to be granted, 50% of the course must be completed. Extensions will not be granted during the last fourteen (14) days of a course.

Procedure

- Must meet eligibility requirements outlined above.
- Counselors must request a course extension through the Program Director
- If requested, Counselors must provide documentation to support the extraordinary circumstances.
- If an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to complete all coursework prior to the end date of the course extension.

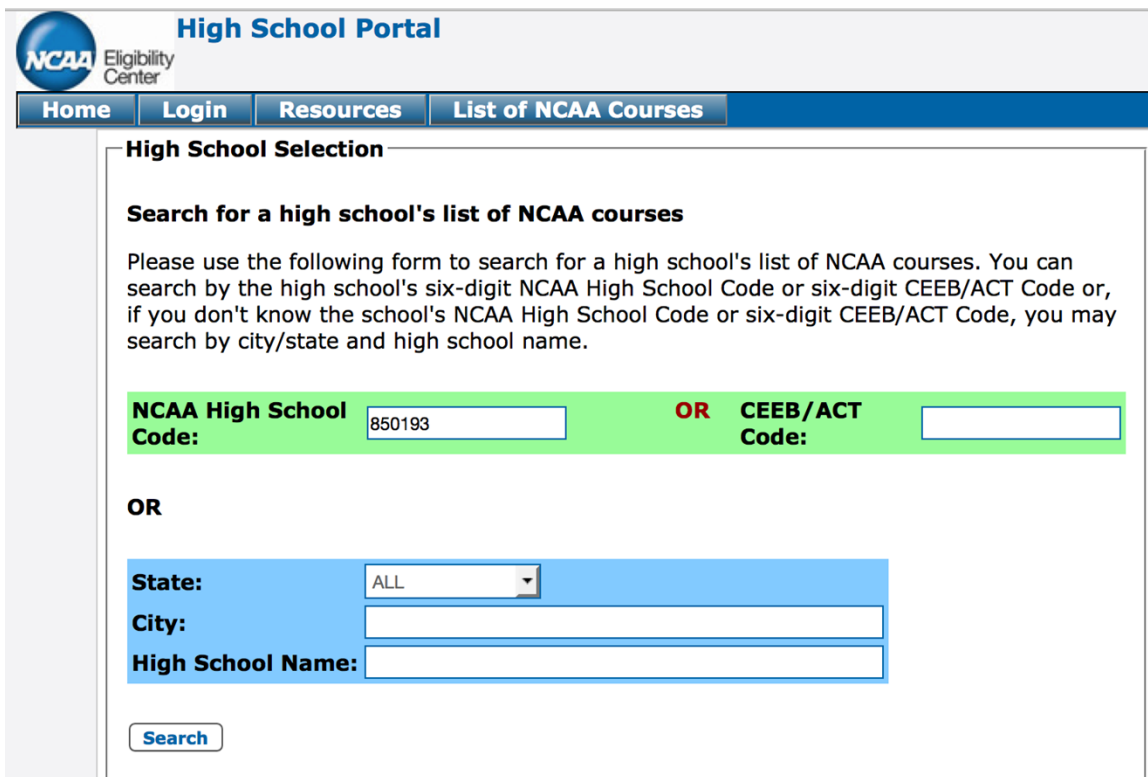
NCAA Eligibility Information

The MSC Online Learning Program has received initial approval from the NCAA Eligibility Center. Our program is under an extended evaluation period to determine if it meets the academic requirements for NCAA cleared status. During this evaluation period, the courses listed may be subject to further review on a case-by-case basis, which will require additional academic documentation.

NCAA legislation permits a student to receive credit for a core course only one time. As a result, if a student repeats a core course, the student will only receive credit once for the core course, and the highest grade earned in the course will be included in the calculation of the student's core course grade point average. Likewise, if a student completes a course that is duplicative in content with another core course, the student will only receive credit for one of the duplicative courses, and the course with the highest grade earned will be included in the calculation of the student's core course grade point average.

To View Approved Courses

1. Go to the NCAA Eligibility Center at: <https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/hsAction>
2. Enter the 6-digit NCAA High School Code: 850193



The screenshot shows the 'High School Portal' interface. At the top left is the NCAA Eligibility Center logo. A navigation bar contains 'Home', 'Login', 'Resources', and 'List of NCAA Courses'. The main content area is titled 'High School Selection' and contains a search form. The form has two main sections. The first section is for searching by code, with a green background. It has two input fields: 'NCAA High School Code:' with the value '850193' and 'CEEB/ACT Code:'. An 'OR' label is between them. The second section is for searching by location, with a blue background. It has three input fields: 'State:' with a dropdown menu set to 'ALL', 'City:', and 'High School Name:'. A 'Search' button is at the bottom left of the form area.

3. This will take you to the list of MSC Online courses approved by the NCAA.