

# HANDBOOK for Individual Courses (online curriculum)



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Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools



**NAPS**  
National Association of Private Schools

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## “Academic Excellence for God’s Glory”

Dear Parent:

Welcome to Christian Academy of America, a fully accredited, distance-based private school. We appreciate the privilege to partner with you in your child’s education. CAA’s online Individual Courses program primarily uses Ignitia, a high-quality, rigorous, digital Christian curriculum. (Some elective courses may use other digital platforms, including Rocket Languages and Film School 4 Teens.)

Please read and follow the instructions in this handbook carefully. These tried and proven procedures will help you and your student meet your academic goals and must be followed to be in compliance with CAA procedures. Remember, success in this endeavor will be accomplished one day at a time.

This handbook contains CAA policies that may not be found in any other Academy document. Please keep it accessible and refer to it first when you have questions.

The Academy will be sending a Required Training form to you by email. Your response on this form will ensure that you have successfully started your individual course(s). This form should come to your email approximately one week after your student’s official start date (noted in the login email you will receive). Completing it is required for continued enrollment with CAA.

Your compliance with the procedures in this handbook deserves your utmost attention.

We look forward to working with you to make your distance learning experience a success!

God bless you!  
Jonathan M. Pulaski  
Administrator

Note: Throughout this handbook, Christian Academy of America will be referred to as CAA.

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# Getting Started

Note: Some of these steps are specific to courses taken using Ignitia. If your student is not assigned an Ignitia course, you may skip steps noted with IGNITIA.

1. **IGNITIA: Watch the Welcome Video.** This is a message from our administrator and contains important information for getting started. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j72m5jZPIZ4>

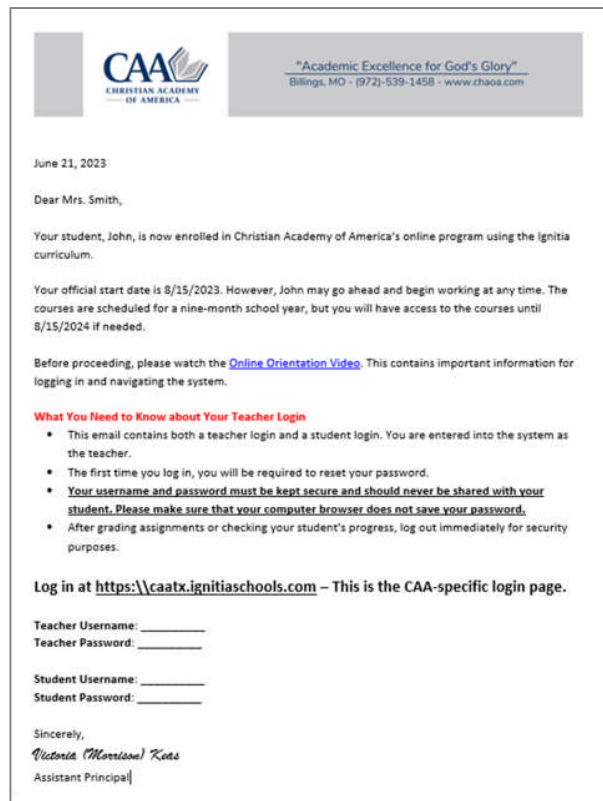


2. **IGNITIA: Watch the Online Orientation Video.** This will give you an overview of Ignitia, including how to log in, successfully navigate the site, check your student's progress, and more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfjckMEDS-M>



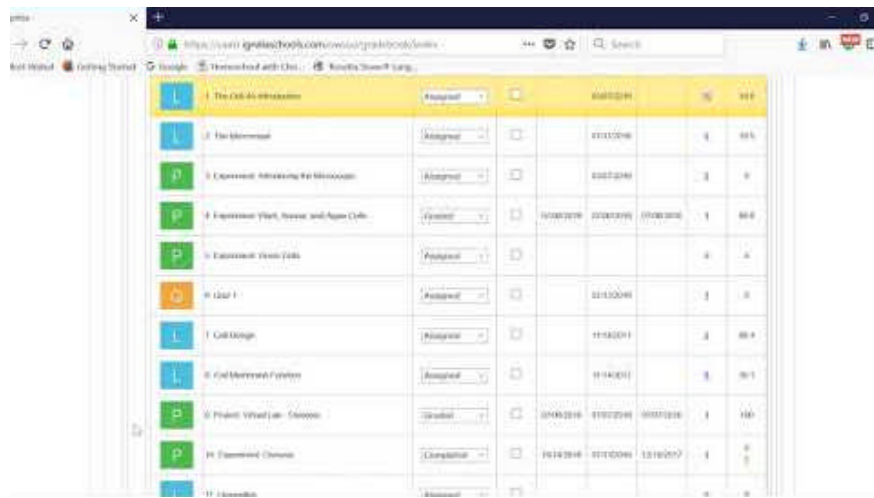
3. **Read the login email thoroughly.** Follow all steps and note any information regarding access end dates and other requirements.
  - IGNITIA: Before your Start Date, you will receive an email with your teacher and student IDs and passwords, along with a link to the login page (example below). Do not forward this email to your student or allow them to view it. **Your teacher ID and password must be kept secure.**

**Example Login Email**  
 (Email pictured is for Ignitia. Login emails for Rocket and Film School 4 Teens will vary in appearance.)



4. **Establish a work area for your student** that is comfortable, quiet, well-lit, uncluttered, and free of distractions. This is essential for a successful educational experience. Distractions might include siblings, T.V., radio, video games, a smartphone, or any other electronic device not needed to complete work on Ignitia. **Keep in mind that when working on a computer, there are also the distractions of other websites and apps.** Equip your student for success by being aware of their surroundings and potential distractions. It may be helpful for you to sit where your student will be doing their work so you can observe their environment and recognize distractions that they might see or hear while working. Once you note potential distractions, do your best to eliminate them.

5. **IGNITIA: Although not required, it is highly recommended to watch the Gradebook Video** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzJSDFo5idU>). This will give you detailed instructions on how to assign, unblock, skip, and grade assignments through the Gradebook tab on Ignitia. If you are keeping up with your teacher responsibilities through your home page as shown in the Online Orientation Video, you may not need to use Gradebook. However, it can be very helpful for getting an overall view of your student's progress, checking for assignments that need grading, and skipping projects that are not required. Please return to this video any time you have specific questions about using Gradebook.



Assignment	Status	Due Date	Score		
1 The Cell-As Introduction	Assigned	08/02/24	0/0		
2 The Membrane	Assigned	07/11/24	0/0		
3 Experiment: Introduction to Microscopes	Assigned	02/27/24	0/0		
4 Experiment: Plant, Animal, and Fungi Cells	Graded	10/02/23	07/02/23	10/02/23	0/0
5 Experiment: Plant Cells	Assigned		0/0		
6 Quiz 1	Assigned	07/13/24	0/0		
7 Cell Design	Assigned	11/18/24	0/0		
8 Cell Membrane Function	Assigned	07/14/24	0/0		
9 Project: Virtual Lab - Osmosis	Graded	02/09/24	07/07/24	02/07/24	0/0
10 Experiment: Osmosis	Completed	10/14/24	07/10/24	12/10/24	0/0
11 Osmosis	Assigned		0/0		

If you need technical assistance with Ignitia, use the *Help* button (located at the bottom of every Ignitia page when you are logged in as the teacher). This will take you to the help page, where you will find Ignitia Tech Support contact information. When contacting tech support, please reference Christian Academy of America.

**For help with grading, refer to our Essay Grading Guide** ([www.chaoa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Essay-Grading-Guide-1.pdf](http://www.chaoa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Essay-Grading-Guide-1.pdf)) on the Resource Center.

**Remember, the Academy staff is here to help you every step of the way!** If you have questions or need assistance during the school year, please email [administrator@christianacademyofamerica.com](mailto:administrator@christianacademyofamerica.com). Your email will be forwarded to the staff member who can best assist you. You may also call the office at (972) 539-1458.

Be sure to check out our parent/student Resource Center (<https://www.chaoa.com/parent-student-resources/>) for many fun, practical, and educational resources for the whole family. New content is added each month. The password for this page is 777.

# Daily Procedures

- After getting started, make sure your student spends time on the coursework regularly. **Students should complete assignments within each subject in the order given and make sure to complete all originally assigned assignments in each unit/module.** (IGNITIA: See “Project Requirements” on p. 8 for exceptions.) **Do not allow your student to skip ahead or complete assignments out of order.** Completing assignments in order with passing grades is considered mastery-based learning and is designed to ensure that students comprehend each concept that is taught before proceeding to the next concept.
- **Your student must have adult supervision during study time.** (This does not have to be you or the same person all the time.) The adult is not required to stay in the same room as the student, but they do need to regularly check in on the student.
- **IGNITIA: Use your teacher login to monitor your student’s progress.** When you log in each day, you will be notified of any assignments that are blocked, need grading, or are overdue. Address these responsibilities as soon as possible. Most of the grading on Ignitia is completed automatically by the program. However, some assignments such as essays and short answer questions need to be graded by you as the supervisor. **Be sure to check daily for assignments that need grading. Teacher grading should be completed regularly and not left until the end of the year.** Assignments that are completed but not graded will not count toward your student's progress percentage. Ungraded assignments may also hinder your student from moving forward.
- **Take time regularly to look over your student’s assignments,** check to make sure they are complete, and ask your student about new things they have learned. It is important to engage in conversation to better assist them academically, socially, and spiritually. Engage them by using question words such as: who, what, where, when, and why. As a parent, God has given you the unique gifts and ability to help your student as you seek His help. Be careful to note difficult areas and study them with your student. Help them through problem areas in a caring, gentle way, without "giving the answers".
- **IGNITIA: To check your student’s progress, click on the “Gradebook” tab.** More details are available by clicking on the “+” sign next to each subject or unit. (See the Gradebook Video linked on page 6 for detailed instructions.)
- **IGNITIA: If your student falls behind at any point, please contact the Academy staff to request a reschedule.** When your student’s online course(s) is set up, it will be scheduled based on when the report card or credit is needed, with due dates spaced out accordingly. Rescheduling redistributes all due dates to eliminate past due notifications and assigns the right amount of work each day to help your student catch up. Students may also work ahead of due dates.

## Project Requirements (Ignitia)

Projects are indicated by a green icon and may be titled as an experiment, essay, report, performance task, project, or another content-specific title. **For elementary students, all projects are optional. High school students must complete a *minimum of one project per unit in each subject*** (excluding units in which no projects are assigned by default). More projects are required in project-based electives. (See below for details.)



**Projects must have work either typed in the writer box or uploaded as an attachment** (Microsoft Word or Google Docs document, spreadsheet, photo, video, etc.) to verify completion. This includes any projects or questions that are completed on paper. (Note: If Google Docs links are used, privacy settings on applicable documents must allow access to anyone with the link so CAA staff can view the documents to verify completion.)

In many units, multiple projects are assigned by default. This allows you to choose which one(s) you want your student to complete. You can look ahead in Gradebook at the project options and make decisions based on topic, student interests, time or skills involved, supplies needed, etc. Any projects that are not required for your student and will not be completed should be changed to the “Skipped” status. This allows a student to continue to the next unit once all remaining assignments in the current unit are completed.

**For project-based electives, most of the learning is hands-on and designed to be attained through the projects. Therefore, all projects that are assigned by default must be completed.** (You may also choose to replace an originally assigned project with another project in the same unit that was skipped by default.) Refer to Project Requirements (<http://www.chaoa.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Ignitia-Project-Requirements.pdf>) on the Resource Center for a list of all project-based electives.

### Optional

Most units have a blank project titled “Special Project.” Special projects do not have instructions because the purpose is to give the supervisor the option to create a personalized project which can be used in place of an originally assigned project or for additional learning. For example, if there is a specific concept within a course that your student is especially interested in, you could come up with an assignment in that area and skip the originally assigned project.

If you assign a Special Project, you will need to provide instructions and **make sure your student shows his/her work**. Special projects are skipped by default. If the only project in a unit is a Special Project, it is not required.



# Course Completion Procedures

When your student has completed their coursework, follow these steps:

1. IGNITIA: Check Gradebook to make sure you have completed any outstanding teacher grading.
2. Film School 4 Teens: Email us the certificate of completion you received.
3. All platforms: **Submit the Authenticity Form** ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeiZ4r39hns3g9H0dhfTxfz80oy8n0xD-rKObRtnTbNB59\\_BA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeiZ4r39hns3g9H0dhfTxfz80oy8n0xD-rKObRtnTbNB59_BA/viewform)) to certify that the coursework was solely that of the student and completed in total compliance with the instructions stated in this handbook. This form can also be found on the CAA Resource Center (password: 777). Submitting this form notifies the Academy staff that your student has completed their coursework. No report card or transcript will be issued without both parent and student signatures on this form.

After the Authenticity Form is received, your student's work will be reviewed to verify completion of all required assignments according to CAA policies and procedures. Any noncompliant work will be brought to your attention and must be corrected before a report card is processed and credit awarded. Common issues include but are not limited to plagiarism, AI use, projects that do not show work but are assigned a grade, and required assignments that are skipped.

**Christian Academy of America reserves the right to review all coursework and further reserves the right to withhold passing grades for a course that is incomplete, shows signs of program abuse, or is non-compliant with procedures. See the *Non-Compliance and Program Abuse* policy on page 12.**

## Tips for Review (Ignitia)

Ignitia allows students to access and review any completed assignment once it has been graded.

- The first unit of each subject begins with a **Course Overview** assignment. This provides a summary of the course, a list of learning objectives, notes on additional resources that may be required to complete assignments in the course, and more. A student can access this assignment by going to their Courses page and then to the first unit in the subject.
- At the end of each unit is a **Reference** (sometimes called **Glossary and Credits**) assignment that lists and defines all vocabulary words taught in that unit. It also provides web links and further information on the topics covered in the unit.
- Most units include a **Review Game** immediately prior to the test. These assignments will help your student with review and can be accessed through the student *Courses* page and through the parent/teacher *Gradebook* page.

# Tuition Information

After your student's online work is set up, you will receive an email with an invoice showing any tuition and fees paid, as well as your access end date. If your student does not complete their coursework by the access end date noted, please contact the office.

## Refund Policy

If a student is withdrawn from Christian Academy of America's Individual Courses program (online curriculum) for any reason by parent/guardian or CAA, the following refund policy will apply:

1. If withdrawn before online setup, 90% of tuition will be refunded upon request. Please allow ten (10) business days from receipt of your written notice of request for a refund for the refund to process.
2. If withdrawn after online setup, there will be no tuition refund.
3. Registration is non-refundable.

# General Policies

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is of great importance to CAA and should be of the highest importance to each parent, guardian, or supervisor. For this reason, CAA implemented the Authenticity Form (for 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students). This form is found on CAA's Resource Center (password: 777). No report card will be issued without both parent and student signatures on this form, which certifies that the coursework was solely that of the student and completed in total compliance with the instructions stated in this handbook.

## Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a growing problem due to the variety of resources available on the internet. CAA is committed to ensuring that students are equipped to follow accepted guidelines for research, properly cite sources that are used, and receive appropriate feedback and consequences when they fail to do so. Please review "What is Plagiarism" (p. 11) with your student to ensure they understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it in their work.

## AI Policy

CAA policy prohibits the use of Chat GPT, Bard, Claude, or any other generative AI system for the completion of CAA schoolwork assignments. In order to verify that your student has genuinely learned from the assignment and has not resorted to using AI or other noncompliant methods of answering questions, they should be able to discuss the topic verbally and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of anything submitted. An inability to support/extend their work through conversation or extension questions demonstrates a need to relearn the material and provide new answers. We recommend utilizing AI checker tools, such as GPTZero (<https://gptzero.me/>), to identify any potential use of AI-generated content before submission.

# What is Plagiarism<sup>1</sup>

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the *Merriam-Webster OnLine Dictionary*, to "plagiarize" means

- 1) to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- 2) to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- 3) to commit literary theft
- 4) to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of *fraud*. It involves both **stealing** someone else's work and **lying** about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen? According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. In the United States and many other countries, the expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some media (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Attention! **Changing the words of an original source is *not* sufficient to prevent plagiarism.** If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, *you have still plagiarized.*

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

<sup>1</sup> For more information and help in this area, visit

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/repository/files/What%20is%20Plagiarism.pdf>.

Document provided by Turnitin.com and Research Resources. Turnitin allows free distribution and non-profit use of this document in educational settings.

## **Non-Compliance and Program Abuse**

Parents/supervisors are responsible to ensure that all coursework is completed in compliance with the instructions stated in this handbook. Any deviation from these procedures is a violation of the Parent/Supervisor Agreement on the New Student Application and is considered non-compliant.

Program abuse occurs when a student employs an alternate means of completing the coursework, and usually takes the form of students accessing the Teacher login, copying answers from the Answer Key, plagiarizing, or using generative AI. However, program abuse can take other forms, such as using outside resources (notes, books, or websites) to complete a test. During a test, students should rely solely upon their mental capabilities to recall the concepts and processes.

When it is determined that program abuse has occurred, an appropriate response will be made by the CAA staff. Depending on the form and extent of the abuse, consequences can range from having to redo specific assignments for resubmission, to failing courses, to administrative withdrawal. It is important that parents/supervisors take measures to prevent program abuse by always providing sufficient supervision.

**CAA reserves the right to review all schoolwork and further reserves the right to withhold passing grades for courses which are incomplete, show signs of program abuse, or are non-compliant with procedures.**

## **Withdrawal**

Withdrawal of students by CAA is not common, although extenuating circumstances will from time to time necessitate withdrawal during enrollment. Most issues are addressed and resolved before withdrawal is even considered. However, unresolved issues in the following areas may result in withdrawal:

- Lack of compliance with CAA policies and procedures
- Lack of communication after repeated attempts by CAA to establish contact
- Failure to complete Required Training in a timely manner

## **Conflict Resolution Policy**

Most conflicts can be avoided by following the guidelines and policies in this handbook. Should a conflict arise that is not addressed in the stated policies, it will be resolved in the following manner:

- Parents are encouraged to contact CAA to work toward resolving the situation.
- If the conflict is still unresolved, parents may appeal to CAA administration.
- Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the activities of parents or students pertaining to enrollment with CAA and interaction with staff, shall be settled by binding Christian arbitration. Such arbitration shall be conducted by the National Center for Life and Liberty, Christian Brotherhood Mutual, or another mutually agreed upon Christian arbitrator, and judgment on the award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof. Parents or students who make demands, threaten to sue, or actually litigate a matter against CAA or its

staff violate biblical teaching and practice and shall constitute sufficient grounds for immediate suspension or expulsion of the student.

- If the conflict involves non-academic issues, parents are encouraged to seek assistance from other Christian counseling professionals.

## **Privacy Policy**

CAA has never and will never share the mailing and/or email list of past or presently enrolled families and students. CAA will not use yours or your student's personal information for any reason other than providing your student with the highest-quality education. Our staff is committed to upholding your privacy.

Student academic records are stored and reviewed only by CAA staff members that are directly involved with your student. No outside persons or agencies will be allowed access to academic records without the parent/guardian's permission unless it is another educational institution in which your student has enrolled or is seeking enrollment, or it is an accrediting organization of which CAA is a member.

## **Non-Discriminatory Policy**

CAA declares that no application for admission to the courses and programs offered by this school shall be denied because of race, color, or national origin of the applicant. Furthermore, CAA does not discriminate in enrollment practices on the basis of race, ethnic origin, gender, creed, nationality, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

As a private institution, CAA reserves the right to set and maintain its own standards of staff and student conduct. We maintain the right to refuse admittance to, suspend, or expel anyone who violates the standards outlined in this handbook.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. "How do you help those with an IEP, 504 plan, or other special needs?"**

**A.** CAA has many tools & resources to help students who have an IEP, 504 plan, or other special needs. Our desire is to accommodate the needs of students as much as possible while still meeting the standards of our accrediting institutions. For more information, please see Special Accommodations (<https://www.chaoa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CAA-Special-Accommodations.pdf>). Since CAA is not a state- or tax-funded school, there are some programs that we may not be able to provide.

### **Q. "Do high school credits taken at CAA transfer to private and public schools?"**

**A.** Public and private schools have varying rules and policies regarding the acceptance of transfer credits, so we cannot guarantee transfer. However, because we are a fully accredited private school, high school credits awarded by CAA are typically accepted at most public and private schools.

# Grading Scale and GPA

Most high schools and colleges report GPA (grade point average) on a 4.0 scale.  
The highest grade is an A+, which equals 4.0.

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	65-66	1.0
E/F	Below 65	0.0

## Weighted Grading System (Ignitia)

This is CAA's weighted grading system for courses taken using Ignitia. Different types of assignments are worth a different percentage of the overall course grade.\* Weights also vary between courses.

Most Courses	High School Math Courses	Project-Based Electives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons – 30%</li> <li>• Quizzes – 30%</li> <li>• Projects – 20%</li> <li>• Tests/exams – 20%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons – 30%</li> <li>• Quizzes – 30%</li> <li>• Projects – 10%</li> <li>• Tests/exams – 30%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons – 30%</li> <li>• Quizzes – 30%</li> <li>• Projects – 20%</li> <li>• Tests/exams – 20%</li> </ul>

\*Percentages are for all assignments of one type, combined. For example, in a math course, all the lesson grades combined are worth 30% of the course grade.