

# **Cambria Heights Cyber Academy**

**Student/Parent Handbook**

**2023-2024**

**Educational Excellence through  
Technology**

## **CHCA Mission**

*We establish high standards of learning and expect all students to achieve. Our goal is to facilitate collaboration among staff, parents, and community to create an environment that supports, engages, and challenges students to achieve high levels of success. Finally, to promote a sense of lifelong learning and becoming productive members of society.*

## **CHCA Vision**

### **LEADERSHIP**

- District leaders promote a culture of learning, support and monitor use of best practices, and provide opportunities for professional growth.
- District leaders facilitate collaboration among all members of the school and community.

### **CLIMATE**

- Students are engaged. Teachers are motivating. Administrators are supportive. Parents and community members are involved.
- All members of the learning community feel safe, both physically and emotionally.
- Efforts and successes of students and staff are recognized and celebrated.

### **CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

- High expectations are met by providing research-based, data-driven instruction that is aligned to the state adopted standards.
- Curriculum and Instruction integrates technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- Curriculum and Instruction prepares and inspires students for future endeavors.

### **STUDENTS**

- Students take ownership of their learning through active participation.
- Students believe in themselves, put forth their best effort, and take pride in their abilities and achievements.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

- Parents, as the first and most influential teachers, are committed to their children's education.
- All members of the school and community share the responsibility for student success through continued involvement and commitment to the educational process.

## **PERSONNEL**

- Staff recognizes a shared responsibility for enforcing and modeling school rules and increasing student achievement.
- Professional Learning Communities collaborate to make data-based decisions and implement best practices to enhance student success.
- Staff effectively communicates with parents and community to support student success.
- Staff takes ownership for their professional growth.

## **STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance (traditional and/or virtual), conscientious effort in classroom work and homework, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students are responsible to share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process.

Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

It is the responsibility of the students to conform to the following:

- ◆ Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves accordingly.
- ◆ Be willing to volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- ◆ Conform with Cambria Heights policy (i.e., dress code) when attending district events or activities.

- ◆ Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- ◆ Be aware of and comply with state and local laws.
- ◆ Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- ◆ Attend school daily, except when excused, and be on time to all classes and other school functions.
- ◆ Make all necessary arrangements for making up work when absent from school.
- ◆ Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by state and local school authorities

## CYBER ACADEMY CONTACT INFORMATION

### Administration

**Mr. Kenneth Kerchenske**  
Cambria Heights Superintendent

### IU8 Cyber Academy

Eric Nagel	Cambria Heights Site Coordinator	814-344-8607 ext. 1106
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### Other Important Phone Numbers

Kimberly McCullough	Cambria Heights High School Guidance Counselor	814-674-3601 ext. 3327
Jeff Koss	Cambria Heights High School Guidance Counselor	814-674-3601 ext. 3328
Rhonda Sprenger	Cambria Heights Middle School Guidance Counselor	814-674-6290 ext. 2105
Janell Murphy	Cambria Heights Attendance Office	814-674-3601 ext. 3000

# Cambria Heights Cyber Academy

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Cambria Heights Cyber Academy is an educational learning environment designed to meet the needs of students who desire to pursue their education in a non-traditional format. The Cambria Heights Cyber Academy recognizes the value of virtual learning; yet, continues to carry the belief that the interaction with professional educators truly extends learning to a higher level. The educational program offers a distance learning program that includes a variety of interactions with professional educators and guidance counselors and opportunities to interact and collaborate with peers of the students' own ages.

Like the educational program of the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy traditional "brick and mortar" system, the learning environment of the Cyber Academy is based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards. This standards aligned curriculum emphasizes the students' demonstration of mastering specific skills by engaging in an academic program that emphasizes proficiency in all curricular activities, whether the academics are acquired through virtual or local learning.

The Cambria Heights Cyber Academy strives to engage students in a highly motivational, student-centered educational program that relies on basic educational principles while utilizing the latest information and communications technology to promote student achievement to foster higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

***While this handbook contains procedures that are specific only to students enrolled in the Cyber Academy, once a student enters any of the school buildings for meetings, activities, testing, etc., they are subject to the rules and regulations contained in the student handbook of that respective building and the student's grade level. Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures within this manual may result in a student's removal from the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy; however, every avenue will be pursued to help ensure student success in the program.***

## GOALS

The goals of the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy are to:

- Offer a non-traditional learning environment to the students of the area that is in line with the school's mission and vision statements.
- Provide students who desire a non-traditional learning environment with opportunities to acquire the education necessary to earn a diploma from Cambria Heights School District.
- Provide students who select the Cyber Academy with balanced educational experiences that include synchronous and asynchronous academic programs, interactions with professional educators, and opportunities to interact with peers.
- Establish individualized learning plans for participating students that are consistent with Pennsylvania's adopted standards and graduation requirements of the Cambria Heights School District.
- Provide students with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their academics.
- Utilize web-based learning and existing courses in addition to assignments, tests, products, and portfolios as means of assessing students' mastery of competencies in order to advance to higher learning.

## REGISTRATION/ORIENTATION

Students wishing to register with the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy must schedule a meeting will be scheduled with the Cambria Heights Site Coordinator, who works closely with the content area teachers to determine in which courses a student will be enrolled. **Each student, accompanied by a parent/guardian, MUST meet with the Coordinator in order to begin coursework. It will be at this time that courses will be assigned, passwords will be given, and the enrollment process will be completed. Once enrolled by the Cambria Heights Site Coordinator, students/guardians will be contacted by Admiral Peary to make arrangements for receiving necessary materials.**

# STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Your participation in the Cyber Academy requires you to be organized, motivated and willing to assume responsibility for your education. Failure to adhere to any of the following requirements may contribute to your removal from the Cyber Academy.

Cyber Academy students must:

- Complete 4 hours per day of online work 5 days per week
- Complete end of course exams and state mandated tests on the C.H. campus
- Access their electronic communication account daily
- Make contact with the appropriate Cyber Academy staff if you need support
- Complete offline activities by established deadlines
- Complete & submit your own work
- Work in the order in which your assignments are posted; no skipping around
- Only use the laptop assigned by the Cyber Academy for school work

## CYBER ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken daily to ensure that students are working online. A **MINIMUM** of 240 minutes or 4 hours must be recorded between the hours of 8am and 3pm to be considered present for the day. However, students may find it necessary to spend more time working in order to complete assigned courses each semester. Students must attend school every day on the school calendar (see pp. 2-3). Due to the nature of the cyber school model, instructional time and progress can be entered on any day (e.g. weekends, holidays, etc.) and at any time, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. **However, time logged on a non-school day will count toward hours and progress, but NOT toward the 180-days.** Students are expected to log into the online system each **scheduled school calendar day**. If attendance is not recorded on a school day as listed on the school calendar, the student is marked as absent. This does not include offline activities.

Students should use the guide set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education of 180 days of instruction with 990 (secondary) instructional hours per year. As a student in the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy, there are no half days of attendance. Daily progress reports are generated using the instructional software and district monitoring tools to ensure that the student is “present” and working for the minimum amount of time. Students who are absent from online school work must submit a written excuse (can be emailed or delivered) by the parent/guardian to the Cambria Heights Attendance Secretary within three (3) days of the absence. In the case of extended illness, the student should make arrangements with the Cambria Heights Site Coordinator to complete all work missed in a reasonable length of time. Failure to follow this policy may result in dismissal from the Cyber Program. Students should promptly notify the Site Coordinator if experiencing problems with hardware, software, or Internet connections that would prevent access to courses during scheduled instructional times.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students may be excused from school for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness verified by parent's note or doctor's excuse
2. Attendance at funeral of immediate family member or other relative
3. Observance of religious holidays observed by **bona fide** religious groups, upon written parental request
4. Absence due to the student's participation in a scheduled school-sponsored program
5. Trips or events that have **prior** approval of the Cambria Heights Principal
6. Required court attendance

**Illegal:** Any unexcused absence of a student under the age of 17

**Unexcused:** Any unexcused absence of a student over the age of 17

## ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

1. When a student has missed more than ten (10) days of school due to illness with a parent excuse, a doctor's excuse is required for subsequent absences. The doctor's excuse is to indicate that the student had a medical condition that interfered with the student's ability to attend school on the date of the absence(s) in question.
2. Upon receiving three (3) full days without a lawful excuse, a Truancy Conference will be held with the student, parent, Cambria Heights Site Coordinator, and Principal.
3. The Truancy Conference will address the student's violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law.
4. The student will be asked to sign a Truancy Acknowledgment Form. As soon as the school issues a referral to the District Magistrate, a referral will be made to CYS (Children & Youth Services). A doctor's excuse will be required to be presented to the school after the referral is sent to the District Magistrate, in order for subsequent absences to be considered excused absences.
5. A warning letter will be sent home to the parent/guardians of all students who have accumulated three illegal absences.
6. For Cyber School Students, a minimum number of days of attendance will be required in order to obtain credit for courses. The list below indicates when credit would be denied:

One Credit Courses:	15 days or more of absence/classes missed
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## PARENTAL EXCUSE

1. When a student has been absent from school, a written statement from the student's parents/guardians must be submitted to the Cyber Academy Secretary within **three (3) school days** following the student's return to school. Parents may also e-mail excuse to the Cyber Academy Secretary's office within the three-day period.
2. The parent excuse must contain the following items: the student's first and last name, the date or dates of the student's absence, the reason for the absence, a signature of one of the parents/guardians.
3. The excuse will be kept on file in the attendance office.
4. If no excuse is submitted by the student within **three school days**, the absence will be considered unexcused or illegal depending on the student's age.

**A student with unexcused/illegal absences will receive a grade of "F" for each day of the unexcused illegal absence.**

## END OF SEMESTER AND STATE MANDATED TESTS

Most courses require students to complete a post test at the conclusion of the semester. For those tests, students must schedule a time to report to the Cambria Heights campus to complete their testing requirements.

Students are also required to complete the state-mandated Keystone Exams (high school) and PSSA exams (middle school). Students will be notified by Cambria Heights and must report to the school campus to complete these requirements.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All Cyber Academy students will have access to the Cambria Heights Site Coordinator and teachers via electronic communication. Students are required to check their accounts each time they log in and out of their cyber courses.

### COMMUNICATION

Communication between Cyber students and the Cyber Academy staff is crucial for your success. You can contact Cyber Academy staff by e-mail, in-person or on the phone. Failure to communicate on a regular basis will result in a poor performance.

### OFFLINE ACTIVITIES

Offline activities may be required as part of your Cyber curriculum. Offline activities may be printed or completed in a Word document for submission. Your Cyber teacher will inform you of due dates and you are required to adhere to those dates.

## FOLLOW COURSE SCHEDULE

You are required to follow the order in which your assignments are listed. Students are not permitted to work out of order, unless instructed by a Cyber Academy staff member.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, RESPONSIBILITY & EXPECTATIONS

Student success is greatly impacted by parental involvement. Parents/guardians of a Cyber student may contribute to their child's success by logging into the student's account to ensure both **attendance and progress** regularly.

### CHEATING/PLAGARISM

Cheating is defined as copying, falsifying or assisting in copying another's work; specifically, a student giving another student their work to copy; and submitting the same as your own without teacher authorization or author citation. This policy refers to tests, homework, reports, projects, library work, etc. Depending on the weight of the assignment where the cheating occurred, the student may fail the marking period or even the entire course.

You are required to complete and submit work done by you and only you. Participation in a cyber program requires honesty and integrity. Failure to follow this policy may result in dismissal from the Cyber Program.

The penalties for cheating are as follows:

**First offense:** "0" for graded activity; parent and Cyber Office notified by cyber teacher, meeting will occur with student, parent, teacher, and Cyber Coordinator present, and student is automatically put into the "Probation Period" as outlined in the Academic Expectations Chart.

**Second Offense:** Failure for the marking period, parent and Cyber Office notified by the Cyber teacher, meeting will occur with student, parent, teacher, and Cyber Coordinator present, and student will be removed from the Cyber Academy for the remainder of the school year.

## **BORROWING/USE OF DISTRICT PROPERTY**

The instructional materials, textbooks, equipment and/or technology (i.e. computers, etc.) are at all times the property of the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy, even when in physical possession of the student/guardian. The student and parent/guardian will sign an ***Equipment Agreement*** which will outline the specific regulations with regard to this equipment. The school district/Cyber Academy will NOT provide “consumables” to the students at home (i.e. printer paper, ink, etc.).

All students enrolled in the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy must be equipped with a high speed internet connection. High speed internet is preferable to dial up, as many of the educational programs which the student will utilize are complex and require a high speed connection to work efficiently and properly. Preparing for this connection in the home is the responsibility of the student/guardian. The Cambria Heights Cyber Academy will reimburse cyber families a portion of the cost to have the high speed internet connection in their homes.

Students are personally responsible for the textbooks, computer and other school property issued to them. If these items are lost or damaged, students will be required to pay the prorated replacement fees. Textbook damage through misuse or carelessness will result in students paying for the damaged books. Any outstanding bills at the end of the year may result in the withholding of a student’s report card and other materials. All financial obligations must be satisfied with the School Main Office.

If a student is removed, returns to the brick and mortar building, leaves the district, or has completed all assignments at the end of the school year, the borrower (i.e. student/family) must return all equipment within five (5) business days. If equipment is not returned or damaged, the parent or guardian is responsible to compensate the district for the cost of the equipment or legal action may be taken.

## **INTERNET REIMBURSEMENT**

Parents will be reimbursed the sum of \$20.00 per each month their child is enrolled in the Cyber Academy, for a total of up to \$200 per year if the student remains in the Cyber program, in good standing for the entire school year. This payment will be issued in 2 payments during the months of January and June of each year.

## **PSSA TESTING**

**All students are required, by law, to participate in PSSA testing in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 and in Keystone testing at the high school level.** Students will be required to take all portions of these tests at the appropriate school for their grade level (elementary, middle, or high school) and will be notified of the specific testing arrangements by the Home School.

In addition to the required Keystone exams, high school students may also choose to participate in other testing (PSAT, SAT, ASVAB, etc.) geared toward post-secondary plans. Please contact the Guidance Office for more details on these tests.

## HEALTH RECORDS

Students enrolled in the Cambria Heights Cyber Academy are required to acquire health screenings and maintain a school health record, just like the students in each grade level within the “brick and mortar,” in accordance with regulations set forth by the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education. **This means that every student, in all grades, must receive a height, weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), and vision screening each year of school.** These screenings will take place in the Nurse’s Suite at the Home School. The school nurse will then maintain these records. In addition, other health services are required in the following grade levels:

6 <sup>th</sup> grade:	Medical Examination and Scoliosis Test
7 <sup>th</sup> grade:	Hearing Test, Scoliosis Test, and Dental Examination
11 <sup>th</sup> grade:	Medical Examination and Hearing Test

As stated above, each of these examinations can be conducted by school health officials At the Home School when offered to traditional students in those grade levels for no cost, or parents can elect to have their own private family physician/dentist perform these examinations at the cost to the families. If the latter is the case, parents must provide proof to the school district of these exams. Forms for this purpose can be obtained from the Cyber Academy Office or from the school nurse.

The school district is also obligated to ensure that students have the proper immunizations and can request these records from parents at any time. If you have any questions about required immunizations, please contact your family physician or the school nurse.

## CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please report any change of name, address, or telephone number to the Cambria Heights Site Coordinator as soon as possible. Emergency situations sometimes occur which necessitate parents or guardians being reached, and it is essential that pertinent information be on file.

## UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY TO BUILDING

It will be necessary for students who are enrolled in the Cyber Academy to enter the school building(s) on a regular basis for scheduled appointments, testing, and/or other activities. Cyber students should **ALWAYS** sign-in at the Main Office before proceeding to their destination. If students are entering for a reason other than a pre-scheduled visit, notice should be given to the Cyber Academy Office as well.

Students are not permitted to remain on or re-enter any school building after regular school hours or on days when school is not in session unless they have permission and are under supervision.

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense will result in verbal warning
- Repeated offenses will result in further discipline according to the student code of conduct

### **ATTENDANCE AT DANCES/PROM/ASSEMBLIES**

Students enrolled in the Cyber Academy are permitted to attend school dances and the prom and assemblies scheduled for a school or grade level if eligible. Please refer to the Home School Student Handbooks for policies and guidelines.

### **PROMOTION AND CLASSIFICATION**

Students must demonstrate satisfactory progress in order to be promoted to the next grade level at the close of the school term. Promotion and classification will be based on tests, on-line activities, off-line activities and additional data which may contribute to the decision on placement of the individual pupil.

**Note:** Exceptional cases may justify modification of the above criteria. Final decisions regarding promotion and retention will include input from the Superintendent, Cyber Academy Coordinator, guidance counselor, and special education supervisor if applicable. Parents/guardians may present evidence in exceptional cases to be considered in the decision making process. **All middle school students who fail two major core subjects for the school year will be required to repeat that particular grade level or attend summer school to fulfill promotion requirements. The Grading scale will be determined by Cambria Heights and will supersede any grading scales in use by providers of Cyber services.**

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to earn a diploma from the Cambria Heights School District, students must complete/achieve the following four objectives:

- 1) Successful completion of credits, with a minimum distribution in the following specified content areas:

<i>English</i>	<i>4 credits</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>3 credits</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>3credits</i>
<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>3 credits</i>
<i>Physical Education</i>	<i>2 credits</i>
<i>Electives</i>	<i>9 credits</i>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>24 credits</i></b>

***\*\*SENIORS MUST COMPLETE THE REQUIRED CREDITS IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE  
IN THE COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM***

- 2) Demonstration of proficiency on require state exams
- 3) Satisfactory completion of a Graduation Project
- 4) Adherence to the school district attendance policy

**Name**\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian**\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**\_\_\_\_\_