

Chatham School District Correspondence Program

Parent Handbook
Updated July 1, 2018



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....2
How it Works.....3
 Flexibility.....3
 Curricular Allotment.....4
 Access to Local School.....7
Parent Responsibilities.....8
 Dates and deadlines.....9
Enrollment and Withdrawal.....11
FAQ.....12
Forms.....13

Appendix A: Possible Vendors.....14

Dear Parent,

Hello and welcome to Chatham School District's Correspondence Program; we're so glad that you're here! Chatham Correspondence strives to support the families dedicated to educating their children at home, while also offering ways for students to remain connected to their home district and community.

Chatham Correspondence started when the district realized that many families in the Chatham District were choosing homeschool. Since Chatham School District strives to provide students with the best education available, naturally we needed to support this growing interest in homeschool with a district-wide homeschool program. Thus, the Chatham Correspondence Program was born.

Chatham Correspondence has been structured to provide students with a hybrid public-homeschool education. Students are taught primarily by a parent, while still having access to the brick and mortar school for social, extracurricular and some academic purposes. In Gustavus, Angoon and Klukwan, this means that students may participate in school sports, use facilities such as the library or gym, or they may join public school students for a single class or event. In Tenakee, where there is no open public school, an Independent Learning Center (ILC) is open three days per week. At the ILC, parents and students may come together to work independently or collaboratively to meet educational goals. Our hope is to provide Chatham Correspondence Students access to public school facility and resources, while families can still create an adaptable, child-tailored homeschool education.

In the following pages, you'll find the information you need for this year. However, this is just a starting point. While you do the job of home-education, Chatham Correspondence is here to support you. As Chatham's Correspondence Coordinator, I'm available Monday through Wednesday to help guide you through your homeschool journey. Please ask as many questions as you need.

Thanks, and welcome!

Megan Moody

Chatham Correspondence Coordinator

Mmoody@chatham.sd.org

907-209-2204

How does correspondence through Chatham work?

Chatham Correspondence is a homeschool program for those students who reside within Chatham School District boundaries. This handbook will focus on three aspects of the program in the following sections: flexibility, curricular allotments, and participation in the public school. Correspondence students are primarily taught at home, by their parent. The school district helps cover the cost of curricular supplies through a curricular allotment. Because students are enrolled in their home district, they also have the opportunity to participate in some public school activities.

FLEXIBILITY

One of the most exciting aspects of homeschool is the freedom and flexibility to tailor school to best suit your child and your family's needs. Chatham's correspondence coordinator will work with you to ensure all state standards are met while also choosing the right curriculums for your child.

There are many quality homeschool curriculums out there, and you get to select the materials and course-style that best works for your student. You may choose courses at home, through the local school (two maximum) or online. Talk to the correspondence coordinator for course suggestions and ideas. In the fall, you will fill out an Individual Learning Plan, which is a rough roadmap to the year's homeschool plan.

**A Note on Religious Material:* Any material you deem appropriate for your child may be used in their schooling, including personally-purchased faith-based materials. As a public school district, state law prohibits us from using public funds for the advocacy of sectarian or denominational doctrines, but you are free to use any such materials that you purchase yourself.

Allotment is based on number of courses enrolled. For a student to be enrolled as full-time, the student must enroll in four courses through Chatham using "fundable materials". Courses that are fundable include those that use materials that do not advocate "partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrines." Two of those courses need to be Core courses, while two can be extracurricular. Core courses include English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Technology, World Language, or a course that may be required to meet a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Half-time students must enroll in exactly half that of full time, which means two Chatham courses, one of which is a core course.

CURRICULAR ALLOTMENT

Each year, Chatham provides each student an educational allotment to cover curriculum costs. These can be used for both core subjects as well as exploratory subjects such as art, physical education and music. In order to receive a full allotment, a student must be enrolled full-time, which is defined by the State as four or more classes using non-sectarian materials, at least two of which must be in the core subject areas of math, science, language arts, social studies, foreign language, and technology.

	Full-Time	Part-Time
K-3	\$1,800	\$900
4-8	\$2,000	\$1,000
9-12	\$2,400	\$1,200

How do I purchase supplies from my allotment?

There are two ways to use your allotment. The first is by purchasing supplies, and submitting a receipt and reimbursement form (provided in Appendix A). Before you do this, you *must check with the correspondence coordinator to be sure that these supplies can be reimbursed*. Chatham is not responsible for purchasing supplies that have not been first cleared with the coordinator.

The second way to use your allotment is by requesting an item to be purchased. Email the correspondence coordinator with the vendor and specific details of the item (links and screen shots are helpful). The school district will then purchase and send this item to your home school district. (If you are farther flung and do not reside in a town with one of Chatham's four school sites, these items can be sent to your doorstep).

What does your Chatham allotment cover?

Your allotment pays for most educational opportunities set forth in your student's ILP. The ILP can be revised throughout the school year as new opportunities arise. Purchases must reflect the needs of the ILP and will be reviewed before purchase. Allotments may be used for:

- Curricular materials, including textbooks, workbooks, educational games, online courses, CD-ROMs, art materials, science kits, school supplies, ebooks, tablets and iPads, apps for tablets, etc.
- Educational toys and games that are consistent with ILP and student's age.
- Activities for P.E.(including yoga, gymnastics, swimming instruction, etc.), music lessons, art instruction, field trips, small-group foreign language instruction, etc. Include all activities in the ILP (ILP can be revised throughout the schoolyear).

The following *may* be covered (request approval with Chatham Correspondence Coordinator beforehand):

- annual memberships, passes, or punch cards (students and one parent/guardian)
- entrance fees (i.e. field trips) (student and one parent/guardian)
- entertainment related educational events/activities (student and one parent/guardian)
- transportation – Reimbursement will be considered for transportation expense (in-state only mileage/airfare/train/ferry) when travel is primarily for a one-time event with a specific educational purpose. All other travel expenses are the family's responsibility. Pre-approval necessary. (Student and one parent/guardian)
- any testing fees
- daily/hourly parking fees when the primary purpose for the fee is related to a specific educational purpose supported by the ILP.

What would not be covered by Chatham funds?

Homeschool offers you the choice to select curricular materials from any vendor, however, there are some items for which Chatham cannot provide funding.

*State Regulation prohibit us from paying for:

- textbooks or other materials that advocate religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrines
- services provided by a family member

We do not typically pay for:

- food, lodging, or other travel expenses other than transportation (exception is if you are on a Chatham-sponsored field trip).
- Clothing
- animals or supplies for animals (vet bills, feed, etc.)
- power tools
- special equipment that will carry a liability with operation
- equipment that duplicates what Chatham provides
- food items or cookware
- household items
- any items purchased from your own business
- licensing and certification
- Anything considered excessive by Chatham Administration

*We do not pre-pay for services: instruction, subscriptions, rentals, internet, etc. These can only be paid for after they occur.

What limits are there on allotment expenditures?

There are also a few limits on some possible atypical items, especially for large extracurricular learning endeavors. Purchase must be fully paid with Chatham allotment; there can be no “co-ownership” with some of the funds coming from Chatham and some coming from the family. Items such as cameras, sewing machines, gardening material, musical instruments and computers may be purchased within reason. Also, if your child has any other specific learning needs these may be paid for through Chatham. Be sure to speak to the correspondence coordinator about any atypical or extracurricular purchases.

Must items purchased with Chatham funds be returned?

State regulations require that textbooks, equipment, and other curriculum materials purchased with state money, including money provided to the parent through a fund account, are property of the district. Materials that are not consumables must be returned to the district when the student leaves the program, unless they will be used by his/her siblings who are still enrolled in Chatham. (See the Withdrawal section for more details about what might need to be returned.)

What curriculum vendors are out there?

Appendix B provides a list of possible vendors. These independent vendors are listed as a service to our families and such listing conveys no particular recommendation or special relationship with Chatham. Any material funded by Chatham, whether purchased from vendors on our list or not, must adhere to the same purchasing guidelines: they must be secular and must support topics on the student's ILP.

General guidelines for guided instruction: Chatham will reimburse for guided instruction that is part of a student's educational plan as outlined in the ILP. This includes PE, art, music, or foreign language instruction, but can be for any subject area. All of these must be preapproved.

ACCESS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

By enrolling in Chatham, you are enrolling in your local school district. Not only are you supporting your local community, this means that your student may participate in school activities, and use the school facility in select ways. Students may take a course (or in special circumstances two) at their public school, participate in extracurricular activities, participate and travel with sports and academic teams, walk in graduation, use facility library or other public venues and otherwise be part of the social network of your community's school. Students may also participate in local school field trips such as transition camp, or any other field trips organized by the local school or correspondence program.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As the parent of a homeschooler, you will be in charge of more academic responsibility for your child's education. Here are the parent responsibilities of a Chatham correspondence student.

1. **Parent or guardian acts as primary educator, at home or in a Chatham facility.** Essentially, you are your child's primary teacher. Teaching and learning at home is an enormous commitment. One or both parent must be in the home during the day taking an active role in teaching the enrolled Chatham Correspondence Student, as well as making sure your student is safe and supervised in all teaching/learning contexts. If there are subject areas that you are less confident in, or if your student's needs are beyond your skill level, please talk with the

correspondence coordinator about potential instruction options available.

2. ***Keep in contact with Chatham Correspondence Coordinator.*** State law requires that the correspondence coordinator must communicate with you at least once per month. This can be via a short phone call, an email, in person, or a longer conference. Of course, the correspondence coordinator is available more frequently, whenever you have questions or concerns. However, you can expect contact once per month. Please keep information current, let us know of any changes, and check email regularly.
3. ***Check email at least weekly.*** Email is the primary information flow for Chatham. We know that some families prefer to be reached by phone, and we will try to accommodate these preferences, but please be sure to check email at least once per week. You can choose to use allotment funds for internet connection. If you have bundled service that is not broken down, you will need to get documentation from your provider stating what portion of the invoice applies to the Internet connectivity.
4. ***Submit an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Two Progress Reports.*** Parent and correspondence coordinator collaboratively construct an ILP, and parents fill out the progress reports at the end of each semester. Both of these forms will become part of your student's transcript, and it is essential that they be submitted on time.

What is an ILP? An ILP is your student's educational plan for each subject area. You'll find an ILP form in Appendix A. Here, you will plan out what material you will use, what topics you will cover, and other instruction strategies. Contact the correspondence coordinator if you'd like help with ILP development. Once you've turned in your ILP, the correspondence coordinator will contact you to meet to develop or review your plan. If we do not receive an ILP by the deadline, allotment funds will be locked until the ILP is turned in. The state requires an ILP for each student, and any student who does not have one will be automatically withdrawn from the program in October.

What is a Progress Report? In the progress report, you give recommended grades to the correspondence coordinator for all courses included in your ILP. For grades K-3, we recommend using descriptions

to indicate the student's level of achievement, and may also furnish examples of student work. O, S, & N (Outstanding, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement) also work well for grades K-3. For grades 4-12, traditional A-F letter grades must be used.

5. ***Submit quarterly work samples*** The state also requires four samples of work for each subject on a student's ILP. You may submit samples in a number of ways: as mailed hard copies, as emailed submission (scanned or photos of student work), or during an in-person conference. Unless you let us know, we will assume you do not want work returned.

Samples are an opportunity for you and your student to celebrate and showcase what your student has accomplished. They can take any number of forms. Here are a few of the most common: corrected worksheets, written reports or essays, PowerPoint presentations, science experiments, presentations to contact teacher (physically present or through audio or video tapes), photos with a short description of the demonstrated skills, or copy of a completed certification. Be creative!

6. ***Plan for state assessment.*** State testing is offered to 3rd through 10th grade students in Math, English/Language Arts, and Science. These tests will happen at the Chatham school sites, and dates will vary slightly depending which community you live in, though they will be in March or April. Grades 3-10 take language arts and math assessment, while grades 4, 8, and 10 take science assessment. Parents have the right to opt out of state-mandated testing if they do not want their child to participate. Please let the correspondence coordinator know by January if you plan to opt your child out. Otherwise, we will plan to have each student test at their home school site.

2018-2019 Important* Dates/Deadlines for 2018-2019:

- September 17 – ILP due
- October 15 – Samples due (1st quarter)
- January 14 – Samples due (2nd quarter) and 1st Progress Report due
- March-April – State assessment (grades 3-10)
- March 11 – Samples due (3rd quarter)
- April 30 – Final date for Allotment Requests or reimbursements
- May 6 – Grades due for Seniors participating in graduation.
- May 20 – Samples due (4th quarter) and 2nd Progress Report due

* Check the CSD webpage for the correspondence calendar with other dates.

ENROLLMENT

Chatham Correspondence accepts new enrollments starting in the spring of the upcoming academic year. You may enroll anytime throughout the year, however curricular allotment will depend on your specific situation. To enroll, fill out the forms provided in Appendix A.

If you are enrolling for the first time with Chatham, please provide and return:

1. Enrollment form
2. Student Parent Compact
3. Authorization to Release Official Education Records
4. Home Language Survey
5. Migrant Education Parent Questionnaire
6. Indian Education Form (for Alaska Native or American Indian students only)
7. Copy of student's birth certificate

If you are re-enrolling, or are moving from Chatham public school to Chatham Correspondence Program, please provide and return:

1. Enrollment Form
2. Student Parent Compact

If your student plans to take a class at their local school ***or join in public school extracurricular*** such as sports or music:

1. Current Immunization Records

WITHDRAWAL

Whether its graduation or a change in your student's needs, at some point, you will complete your time with Chatham Correspondence. Here is what you will need to know when that day comes:

Withdrawal may be initiated for the following reasons:

1. **Parent Notification** - If you plan to withdraw for any reason, please let the correspondence coordinator know.
2. **Graduation** - Graduation of last Chatham student in the family will initiate withdrawal from the program.
3. **Moving out of Chatham School District** - Students must physically reside within Chatham School District to be enrolled.
4. **Records request is received from another school** – If another school requests a student's records because the student has been enrolled in that school, Chatham will automatically withdraw you.
5. **Non-compliance** – Families who go extended periods of non-compliance to Chatham requirements may be withdrawn at any time throughout the year.

Other important Information about Withdrawal:

Upon withdrawal, will you have to pay back funds? If you withdraw before October 1st, or decide to keep non-consumable items upon withdrawal, you will need to reimburse Chatham school district these allotment costs.

A note on depreciation: Of non-consumable purchases by Chatham, almost all depreciate to \$0 over three years, at a rate of 1/36 per month. This means that if you use allotment funds to purchases a non-consumable item like a sewing machine, a tablet, a musical instrument or non-consumable curriculum, you will be responsible for either returning the item upon withdrawal (if it has been less than three years since the purchase date) or for purchasing the item for the depreciated amount. If your non-consumable purchases are less than three years old, you must either return items so that other families may use them, or you must reimburse for the depreciated value. If an item is more than three years old, you will not be charged, however we welcome the return of items that other families in the district might have use for.

FAQ

1. What does it take to be eligible for enrollment in Chatham

Correspondence? Your student must:

- *Physically reside in Chatham School District Boundaries.
- *The student must be between the ages of 5 and 19 on September 1st.
- *The student must be enrolled in at least four courses to be considered full-time, and at least two courses to be considered half-time, and at least fifty percent of these courses must be in core courses. (Exceptions can be made for seniors who have completed most of their coursework).

2. How do I reach the Chatham School District?

Megan Moody, Correspondence Coordinator, works Monday through Wednesday, 8:30 to 4:30. She can be reached at: 907-736-2204 or mmoody@chatham.sd.ak.us.

The Chatham Correspondence Program address is:

Tenakee Independent Learning Center

PO Box 62

Tenakee Springs, AK 99841

Chatham District Office can be reached at:

Chatham School District

P.O. Box 109

Angoon, AK 99820

Phone: 907-788-3302

Fax: 907-788-3252

Chatham Superintendent Ann Hilburn can be reached at the district office or at ahilburn@chatham.sd.ak.us

3. My child has special education needs. How does he/she receive

services? Chatham provides services for all students within the district. If your student needs special education, occupational therapy, or speech services, these will most likely be provided at your local school site. Talk with the correspondence coordinator for further information.

4. ***I'd like to enroll part-time. Is this an option?*** Students may be enrolled on a part-time basis in CSDCP taking 1, 2, or 3 courses through CSDCP. The allotment available to them would depend on what other enrollment they may have elsewhere, and will be handled on an individual basis.

5. ***My student is in high school. Do you have any additional information for high school students?*** Yes. You should have received Chatham Correspondence's High School Handbook along with this handbook. If you haven't, contact the correspondence coordinator and she'll send it to you.

FORMS PACKET

You should also receive a forms packet, with forms for registration as well as throughout the year. The forms packet includes:

1. Student Registration Form
2. Parent Compact Form
3. Indian Education Form (for Alaska Native or American Indian students only)
4. Parent Language Questionnaire
5. Education Record Request Form
6. Migrant Education Form
7. Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)
8. Progress Report Form
9. Receipt and Reimbursement Form
10. Withdrawl Form

APPENDIX A: Possible Vendors

These independent vendors do not work for Chatham. They are listed as a service to our families and such listing conveys no particular recommendation or special relationship with Chatham. Any material funded by Chatham, whether purchased from vendors on our list or not, must adhere to the same purchasing guidelines: they must be secular and must support topics on the student's ILP.