

9th Grade FAQ'S: **Information for Students and their Parents**



Question: What happens if I arrive at school late?

Answer: *If you arrive within the first fifteen minutes of class, there is a tardy roundup at the tardy station where you will receive a tardy slip to go to class. If it is after the first fifteen minutes of class, you need to have a note from your parent/guardian and bring it to the front office. The note should include your name, the date, the time of arrival, the reason for arriving late, your parent's signature, and a number where your parent can be reached. After signing in, the front office will then issue you an excused/unexcused pass to class. If you were late due to a medical or court appointment, bring documentation from the appointment with your student ID number.*

Question: What happens if I get to class after the bell rings?

Answer: *The first few days of school, 9th grade teachers are lenient with students who are still learning their way around the halls. After that, though, students entering class after the bell rings are late, you must report to the tardy station to receive a tardy pass. After your third tardy, you will be issued a Saturday school detention.*

Question: What happens when I am absent from school? How do I get make-up work?

Answer: *An automated system calls home daily to notify parents of your absence from each class not attended. When you return to school from your absence(s), you must bring a note written by a parent/guardian to the attendance office, explaining the reason for your absence(s) in Student Services office). If a note is not submitted, the absence is listed as unexcused. Check your Studywhiz account to see what you have missed in your classes. When you return to school, talk to your teachers. Each student will receive one day to make up work for every excused absence. If you will be out of school for an extended amount of time (3 or more consecutive days), a parent/guardian needs to contact Student Services (830-885-1000) to make arrangements to obtain makeup work. Remember that once you reach 6 absences in a class, a computer-generated letter will be mailed home. This letter tells your parents/guardians that you are approaching academic failure. Students with more than 9 absences in a class are subject to failure, retention, or summer school. If you are approaching this 9-day mark in one or more classes in a semester, please contact your counselor immediately.*

Question: How do I check out for a medical/dental appointment, or if I'm sick?

Answer: *Your parent/guardian, or an adult who's listed as an emergency contact, should call Student Services at 830-885-1000. You may bring in written notes from parents/guardians to Student Services the morning of the appointment. Notes must contain a daytime number for parent/guardian. When it's time to check out, a pass will be delivered to you and you will need to sign out at the front office and then meet your parent/guardian outside.*

Questions: When is lunch? How long does it last? What's the menu like in high school? How do I set up a cafeteria meal account?

Answer: Lunch is currently thirty minutes before fourth period or after fourth period. There is a hot plate or a la carte items to purchase (ex: salads, sandwiches, wraps) or you can bring your own lunch. You can deposit checks to the cafeteria deposit box before school or pay cash or use the online payment service. Free/Reduced lunch information can be found at http://www.comalisd.org/Child_Nutrition/

Question: How much time do I have between classes? What do I do if I get lost?

Answer: There are five minute passing periods. The bell schedule can be found at http://www.comalisd.org/Schools/SVHS/SVHS_Bell_Schedule.asp Teachers are in the hallways at their classrooms and are available to help. Also, you can come to the office if you get lost and we will have a student aide help you find your class.

Question: How do I find out how I'm doing in my classes?

Answer: Students can check their grades anytime by checking their Gradebook account. Through this account, students can view their grades for class work, homework, quizzes and tests in each class. Missing indicate the assignment wasn't completed, so ask your teacher if you can still submit the work. Turning in late work is better than not turning in any at all! Remember, though, late work = points taken off of the grade, so get assignments in on time. StudyWhiz accounts will let students know what assignments they have missed and what is coming up in their classes. Parents, you can have your own Gradebook and Studywhiz account, too! Just sign up at the website, http://www.comalisd.org/Parent_Connection/ If you'd like to speak with a teacher about your student's grade, please contact the main office at 830-885-1000 or email the teacher directly.

Question: How do I get extra help with my classes?

Answer: There are many ways to get help, all you have to do is ask! Find out when your teachers offer tutoring and make plans to attend. See your counselor in Student Services to get paired with a National Honor Society (NHS) student tutor. The San Antonio Library has free online tutoring help with a library card number. <http://www.mysapl.org/services.aspx> You also might try <http://www.homeworkspot.com/> for help as well.

Question: If I need to stay after school for tutoring and I don't have a ride, how do I get home?

Answer: The school provides a late bus that run routes through the district. These buses leave campus at 6:00 pm, Monday-Thursday (buses don't run on Fridays). Students must have a signed pass from a teacher or administrator to board the buses.

Question: When can I use the library and its computers?

Answer: The library is open Monday- Thursday from 7:30-4:30pm and Friday 7:30am-4:00pm. It is also available during lunch time. You must have a pass from the office or teacher to be in the library except before/after school and at lunch. The research databases, online resources, and catalog is available 24/7 at the link below.

<http://lib.comalisd.org/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?l2m=Home&tm=Home&l2m=Home>

Question: What is a GPA and what is it for?

Answer: GPA stands for Grade Point Average and it's the average of all of the final grades in the classes you've taken. Every semester, you are issued final grades on your report card and those are averaged with all of the final grades you receive, starting with all high school credit courses taken in 8th grade, all the way

through your senior year. Your GPA is a part of your transcript. Transcripts are evaluated by college admission offices to help them determine whether or not you would be a good candidate for admission. GPA's are also used in scholarship decisions, as committees decide to whom they'll award scholarship money. Employers often review transcripts as a part of screening potential employees. For these reasons, it's important to get the best possible grades, which will result in the best possible GPA for you. Did you know? While an 89% is only one percentage point below a 90% in your GPA, that's the difference between a 3.0 (B) and a 4.0 (A) averaged into your GPA. Challenge yourself to do your best.

Question: What is a transcript?

Answer: A transcript is a record of the 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th grade classes you've taken, the final grades you've earned, your cumulative GPA and your class rank. The moment you enter high school you have your very own transcript. Your transcript lists every class attempted and the grade received for each course. All of those grades are averaged after each semester, resulting in a new cumulative GPA. You will see cumulative with GPA a lot and it just means that the GPA is not just based on one semester, it's based on all of the semesters you've completed. This is a very important document to college/university admissions offices, as transcripts are reviewed if you apply for admission as a senior. If you pursue enlistment in the military, your recruiter may wish to review your transcript, and your future employer may wish to review your transcript, as well.

Question: When do my grades start "counting" for my college applications?

Answer: It is important for you to know that 9th grade is not a "practice year" when it comes to grades. In other words, your freshman grades count just as much as the grades you earn as a junior or senior, and college admissions officers will see all of those grades on your high school transcript. All high school grades are factored into your Cumulative GPA. You send out your transcript from the end of junior year to colleges. Please remember that your GPA starts now and will follow you all through high school. If you start out earning poor grades you'll have a low 9th grade GPA and that means a more difficult time bringing it up. If you have questions about how your GPA from this year can impact your senior year and college admission, make an appointment to meet with your counselor.

Question: I want to make sure I'm ready for college. How do I decide what classes to take?

Answer: The best advice... Challenge yourself to take the toughest classes in which you can be successful. You'll be better prepared for success in college and many colleges consider the difficulty of an applicant's high school curriculum in making admission decisions. A number of courses are required—for instance, certain courses in math, science, language arts, and social studies—and that each class has several options or levels, with some offering an accelerated format or a more in-depth approach for students who excel in that area of study. For some courses, especially upper-level ones, you may be able to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes or Dual Credit (DC) classes. Students who take these college-level courses and do well on AP exams may earn college credit or skip required entry-level classes in college. Talk to your parents, your teachers, and your counselor about which option best suits your academic strengths and prepares you for the courses you'll take in college.

Question: I've been told that I all ready earned some high school credits for the classes I took in middle school. Is that true?

Answer: Students who have taken Algebra I, health, speech, High School Art, Career Connections, and/or Spanish I have earned high school credit for those classes if they earned a passing grade in the class. Students meeting the criteria for high school credit will have the course(s) and grades earned listed on their high school transcript coded with a "J", for "junior high". Eighth grade classes will be included calculating

the student's GPA. The courses that receive credit will count toward the student's credit total, and toward graduation requirements in the courses of study.

Question: How can I make sure I'll do well in my classes?

Answer: Your teachers, your counselor, and your family will all be behind you and encouraging you to do your best work from the first day, but a lot of your success in high school depends on you! Make sure you have a classmate's email and/or phone number to help you with classnotes/assignments in case you are absent.

Question: What are some things I can do at home?

Answer: Be organized, and keep up with homework assignments and projects. Study class lecture notes to review what was taught in class, even when you do not have assigned homework in a subject. Begin studying for a test several days ahead, so you have time to review the material and retain it.

Question: If I am not doing well in a course, what should I do?

Answer: The first step is to speak with your classroom teacher and set up a time before or after school (or during school, depending upon your schedule) for extra help from your teacher. If you need additional suggestions, schedule an appointment with your school counselor.

Question: If I am failing a class, can I drop it mid-semester?

Answer: No. Dropping a class mid-semester is not an option.

Question: How do I make up a course if I fail?

Answer: Courses can be made up during summer school, through e2o2o credit recovery program, or through Credit by Exam. See your counselor for more information.

Question: If a student fails a course and retakes the course, is the first failed grade cancelled out?

Answer: No. Once a student earns a semester grade, it will never be removed from the academic record (transcript). Required courses must be retaken if failed. Both semester grades will be a part of the academic record and the high school grade percent average.

Question: What are exam days like at the end of the semester?

Answer: An exam schedule will be announced near the end of each semester. All freshmen, sophomores and juniors must attend exam days.

Question: What tests do I have to pass in high school before I graduate?

Answer: Beginning with the Class of 2015, the spring semester of 9th grade you will take End of Course Exams (EOCs) for English, Algebra and/or Geometry, Biology, and World Geography. In the spring of sophomore and junior year, you will take the four corresponding EOCS for English, math, science, and social studies for a total of 12 tests. If you pass your classes, but do not pass all the EOCs, you will receive credit for the courses but will need to retake the EOCs.

Question: When will I have an opportunity to take elective courses that interest me? What electives can I take?

Answer: Once you fulfill the requirements for Speech, Fine Art, and PE— either during the school year, or in summer school— you will have more flexibility in your schedule. Elective courses are available in

academic areas, fine arts, technical/vocational education, and PE/fitness. Many students consider possible careers and select elective courses accordingly. However, taking additional electives will require careful planning. See your school counselor for more information.

Question: How do I register for classes in high school?

Answer: *If you registered for your 9th grade classes online at your middle school, then you already know what to do! Sometime in the fall, all accounts will be reset and you'll be given your new login information. Your counselor will visit English classes to review the graduation requirements. Students will be asked to review this information with parents before choosing selections and "finalizing." Once courses are finalized, students should print a course verification sheet, both student & parent should sign, and then the student should submit it to Student Services.*

Question: How important is it to be involved in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, sports, and volunteer projects?

Answer: *School leaders recommend that all students participate in one or more extracurricular activity and/or community service opportunities while in high school. Students who are involved in activities feel more connected to the school and their community. You can learn a lot about life, possible careers and your own strengths and weaknesses when you volunteer. Also, colleges and scholarship committees frequently request information on extracurricular participation and demonstrated leadership while in high school. Volunteer work is also a great way to make a difference in the community.*

Question: How can I sign up for driver's ed?

Answer: *Classes are offered several times a year after school. The 2011-2012 school year classes will be posted later in the summer. <http://www.centralparkdrivingschool.com/>*