

Academic Policies

Designations, Grades, and Assessments

Grades at Silver Oak High School are on a numerical scale. For GPA calculation and other purposes, the following chart shows the way in which numerical quarter and semester class grades convert to the standard A, B, C scale.

GRADING SCALE AND GPA EQUIVALENTS

<u>LETTER GRADE</u>	<u>NUMERICAL RANGE</u>	<u>College Prep*</u>	<u>Honors</u>
A+	97-100	4.3	4.8
A	94-96	4	4.5
A-	90-93	3.7	4.2
B+	87-89	3.3	3.8
B	84-86	3	3.5
B-	80-83	2.7	3.2
C+	77-79	2.3	2.8
C	74-76	2	2.5
C-	70-73	1.7	2.2
D+	67-69	1.3	.NC
D	64-66	1.0	N.C
D-	60-63	0.7	NC.
F	59 and lower	NC	NC

*All courses are offered at college prep designation, designed ABOVE common core curriculum standards.

NC = Insufficient Evidence or Growth Towards Standard to Earn Credit. Any mark in any course that dips below the level of “C-“ is considered NC and no credit towards graduation will be awarded.

Please note that we will not be using a grade of “D” or “F”.

Semester Grading

At all levels, for all students, semester grades will be calculated by averaging the first and second quarter grades. Neither of the quarter grades will be weighted more heavily than the other. For all students there will be an exact averaging of the two quarterly grades to yield the final semester grade.

College Prep Designation

Silver Oak High School offers a challenging curriculum. All core classes are taught at a “College Prep” level. Therefore, students are expected to complete classes with an eighty (80)% mastery of the material on major assessments. The general rule is that quizzes or formative assessments are for feedback and tests or final assessments are for mastery. A student receives an incomplete as a grade until mastery is reached. All class work must be completed before taking the test on related material. Students’ grades are based on individual

work, group work, classroom participation, and assessments. Please refer to an individual teacher's study guides and rubric for grading information.

The requirements are:

Class work completion rate at least 80%
Tests for Mastery at 80% or higher with no retest needed
High Quality Work

Gifted and Talented Designation: At the freshman level there are options for students to do the coursework at advanced/in depth levels. This choice is made for an entire semester and is a commitment upon which the student enters. The requirements are:

Attendance, Individual Work – at least 90%
Tests for Mastery at 90% or higher
Highest quality projects
Takes on additional in depth projects approved by

teacher

and shared with the class.

Honors Classes

At the sophomore, junior and senior levels there are options for students to enroll in a core curriculum course at an Honors Level. Enrollment in an Honors class is designated for the entire year and is a commitment upon which the student enters. The requirements are:

Attendance, Individual Work – at least 90%
Tests for Mastery at 90% or higher
Highest quality projects
Takes on additional in depth projects approved by

teacher

and shared with the class.

Receives an additional .5 point per grade towards

the GPA

Mathematics Placement Policy

This policy of the Silver Oak High Public Montessori Charter School (the “Charter School”) Board of Directors (“Board”) has been adopted to establish a fair, objective, and transparent protocol for placement in mathematics courses for students entering 9th grade, in order to ensure the success of every student and to meet the Legislative intent of the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015.

1. In determining the mathematics course placement for entering 9th grade students, the Charter School systematically takes multiple objective academic measures of student performance into consideration, including:
 - a. Statewide mathematics assessments, including interim and summative assessments through the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”);

- b. Placement tests that are aligned to state-adopted content standards in mathematics;
 - c. Recommendation, if any, of each student's 9th grade mathematics teacher based on classroom assignments and grades provided at the beginning of the school year;
 - d. Final grade in mathematics on the student's official, end of the year 8th grade report card;
 - e. Results from all placement checkpoints, including at least one (1) placement checkpoint within the first month of the school year as described in Section 2, below.
2. The Charter School will provide at least one (1) placement checkpoint within the first month of the school year to ensure accurate placement and permit reevaluation of individual student progress. All mathematics teachers responsible for teaching 9th grade students will assess the mathematics placements for each 9th grade student assigned to the teacher's mathematics class. The teacher's assessment will take into consideration factors which may include, but are not limited to, the student's classroom assignments, quizzes, tests, exams, and grades, classroom participation, and any comments provided by the student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and/or the student's other teachers regarding the student's mathematics placement. Based on the assessment, the teacher will then recommend that the student remain in the current mathematics placement or be transferred to another mathematics placement, in which case the teacher shall specify the mathematics course or level recommended for the student.
3. The Charter School Head of School, or his or her designee, shall examine aggregate student placement data annually to ensure that students who are qualified to progress in mathematics courses based on their performance on objective academic measures included in Section 1 of this policy are not held back in a disproportionate manner on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background. The Charter School shall annually report the aggregate results of this examination to the Charter School Board.
4. The Charter School offers clear and timely recourse for each student and his or her parent or legal guardian who questions the student's placement, as follows:
 - a. A parent/legal guardian of any 9th grade student may submit a written request to the Charter School Head of School, or his or her designee, that:
 - i. Requests information regarding how the student's mathematics placement was determined. Within five (5) days of receipt, the Charter School Head of School or designee shall respond in writing to the parent/legal guardian's request by providing the information, including the objective academic measures that the Charter School relied upon in determining the student's mathematics placement.
 - ii. Requests that the student retake the placement test, in which case the Head of School or designee will attempt to facilitate the retest within two (2) weeks.

- iii. Requests reconsideration of the student's mathematics placement based on objective academic measures. Within five (5) school days of receipt, the Charter School Head of School or designee shall respond in writing to the parent/legal guardian's request. The Head of School or designee and the student's mathematics teacher must assess the objective academic measures provided by the parent in conjunction with the objective academic measures identified in Section 1 and 2 of this policy. Based on this assessment, the Head of School or designee must determine whether the most appropriate mathematics placement for the student is the student's current placement or another placement, in which case the Head of School shall specify the mathematics course or level recommended for the student. The Head of School's or designee's response must provide the determination as well as the objective academic measures that the Head of School or designee relied upon in making that determination.
 - b. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Head of School or designee requires additional time to respond to a parent/legal guardian's request, the Head of School or designee will provide a written response indicating that additional time is needed. In no event shall the Head of School's or designee's response time exceed one (1) month.
 - c. If, after reconsideration of the student's mathematics placement by the Head of School or designee, the parent/legal guardian is dissatisfied with the student's mathematics placement, the parent/legal guardian may choose to sign a voluntary waiver requesting that the student be placed in another mathematics course against the professional recommendation of the Head of School or designee, acknowledging and accepting responsibility for this placement.
5. The Charter School shall ensure that this mathematics placement policy is posted on its website.
6. This policy is adopted pursuant to the Mathematics Placement Act of 2015, enacted as Education Code Section 51224.7.

Advanced Placement Test Preparation

At Silver Oak High School we afford students a variety of opportunities to prepare for an AP exam in the following ways:

- Students mentor with a teacher who has expertise in the field of the AP exam.
- Students are enrolled in the respective class, with AP extension assignments required.
- The college counselor works closely with students to determine their chosen universities' specific departmental AP requirements for admission.
- Students are given the option of digital courses specifically tailored to preparing for specific AP exams.

- Students are provided with additional curricular materials, which support exam preparation.

We are dedicated to supporting students who are interested in taking Advanced Placement Exams as part of a larger commitment to their future success in college.

AP Support Guidelines

1. Students are enrolled in the college prep class during the first quarter.
2. By September 30th (or February 15th for 2nd semester classes), students who are interested in taking the AP test in that subject will sign up with their teacher's and parents' permission. Students will need to have met the criteria for Honors work to be eligible:
3. The faculty will design supplemental AP materials for each student. This supplemental work will be the student's AP work for the course.
4. Silver Oak High School will not be a testing site for the AP exams.

It is important to note that...

- Colleges look favorably on students who have the initiative to look for AP outside their school's course offerings.
- Silver Oak High School classes are rigorous and focus on a student's deep understanding of subject area. The Silver Oak High School profile indicates that the school supports students to prepare for the AP exam in addition to their regular class work.

Advanced Placement Exam (AP)

About 50 years ago the College Board devised a standardized test, the AP exam, as part of their Advanced Placement Program. Since then, in response to complaints about poor college preparation, many public and some private schools devised classes designed specifically to pass these exams. However, a recent study by researchers at Harvard University and the University of Virginia has found that it is questionable whether these courses actually prepare students for success in college. Quoting Philip M Sadler of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Harvard University Gazette reports that "AP courses do not contribute substantially to student success in college."

At Silver Oak High School we will NEVER "teach to the test." We recognize comprehensive, standardized testing as only one kind of evaluative tool and one which often emphasizes skills, such as short-term memory, that do not support the long-term academic goals of the student. The Harvard study found that "the best predictors of success in college science courses to be high school classes that... value depth over breadth." Classes at Silver Oak High School do value depth over breadth. Silver Oak High School students are evaluated in ways that address multiple intelligences and give a more complete appraisal of

the student's mastery of the subject. Our curriculum and methods emphasize analytical writing, participation in seminar, and creative problem solving in a group setting that require our students to explore their subjects in greater depth than that of typical AP courses. Typical AP courses prepare students for an exam. Preparing students for future success in college and life is our primary goal.

Classroom Ambiance

As the environment of the classroom is expected to be calm and peaceful, the students are expected to use appropriate volume and tone. All members of the community are to respect each other's personal space. It is expected that the students be prepared for class by having their individual/group work done and by bringing the necessary books and materials to class on time. As a part of the Montessori high school, students are expected to participate in all classroom activities. Care and maintenance of the classroom is a community responsibility.

Individual Work/Homework

Academic excellence is an important pillar of the Montessori high school. Parents can keep track of student's progress through the PowerSchool online program. A student, parent, or teacher can call a conference at any time deemed necessary. Students are encouraged to complete missing work during individual work time.

Students should use their individual work time, in class, each week, productively. Teachers will monitor this time. Students should then spend ninety (90) minutes in undistracted (ideally supervised) study/reading time each night. This is considered "homework". Parents should monitor Internet usage, social networking, emailing, IM, games, etc. during this time. The ninety (90) minutes of study/homework time is an average time needed – some students may need more time if they have difficulty reading complex material or have added advanced work. If study time is excessive, then please have the student keep a log and contact his/her advisor so that difficult areas can be addressed. Also, consider using the audio support for reading material that is provided if that can be helpful.

If a student does not complete his/her individual work for a particular class, on time, then he/she is not prepared for class. If students have excused absences, they should refer to the study guide for assignments and make an agreement with the teacher to complete missed work.

Absence Policy

An absence is time away from highly interactive classroom activities of lessons, dialogue, group work, "warm-ups" etc. and cannot be made up. Please note that each college prep subject requires four (4) hours of in-class coursework each week. Therefore, multiple truancy letters may result in the loss of academic credits. A student must complete sixty-four (64) Carnegie Hours of credits in each class, each semester, in order to earn credit for that course. Therefore, if a student misses more than thirteen (13) hours of class time (more than 20%), due to absences and/or tardies, he/she will earn no credit (NC) for that class.

A parent must call the school before 9:00am if the student is going to be absent.

Excused Absences*

Student Illness
 Student Medical/Dental Appointment
 Funeral Services
 Religious Holidays
 Court Appearances
 Independent Health Fitness Competitions

Unexcused Absences**

Unverified Absences
 Holidays/Vacations
 Leaving campus without permission
 Personal reasons
 Cutting Class
 Suspensions

* A doctor's note must be submitted to the office, for absences due to illness, of more than three (3) consecutive days. Doctors' notes are needed to verify medical, therapeutic and dental appointments. A note from the court clerk is required for court appointments.

Parents/Guardians must clear absences, within 24 hours, immediately following an absence. After this time frame, the absence will remain **unexcused**. Students who are absent three days in one quarter without an excuse will receive a truancy letter.

**** Students will receive an "NC" grade for any work that is due during an "Unexcused Absence".**

Late Arrival

Attendance will be documented daily, by the Attendance Coordinator, on PowerSchool. Students arriving after 8:45am need to first check in with the office and then proceed to class. After four "tardies", an alert will be sent to parents and a conference will be held with students and parents to discuss measures to ensure that the student arrives at school on time. Please note that each college prep subject requires four (4) hours of in class coursework each week. Therefore, multiple "tardies" may result in the loss of academic credits.

Early Dismissal

Students who need to leave before the end of the school day (4:00pm) should be aware that they will receive an "absence" for the classes missed. Students are expected to make routine medical/dental appointments before or after school hours. Keep in mind that Wednesday is a minimum day, and therefore Wednesday afternoons are the best times to make medical appointments. Upon leaving school, parents must sign their students out on the sign-out sheet located in the office. If the student is driving him/herself, a parent will need to inform the school in writing prior to the student leaving early.

If a student leaves campus without checking out with the office, the absence is considered as truancy and cannot be excused. When students are returning from medical/dental appointments, they must check back in at the office before going to class.

Semester - Long Classes

Each academic class is sixteen (16) weeks long, each week accumulating four (4) hours, adding up to sixty-four (64) hours of class time per semester. Students who have absences (excused or unexcused) from any class that total more than thirteen (13) hours (20% of class

time) will earn no credit (NC) for that class for that semester.

Intersession

The January intersession is five (5) days long, so students must participate in four (4) of the five(5) days to earn credit.

Group Work

There is group work required for each academic class. It is each group member's responsibility to take an active part in his or her group's activities. Students who fulfill their obligations and participate in the activities of their group will receive credit for the group's work.

Group projects should be completed in class for freshmen and sophomores. This allows the teacher to assist the students in planning, delegating, and implementing the work in an effective and efficient way. By junior and senior years, students will have practiced the necessary skills to do group work outside of class, if so desired.

If there is difficulty with group members participating in a project, then the faculty member will be consulted for a plan of action.

Assessments

Assessments are given at the closure of bodies of work. Assessments may include written tests, project work, or group presentations. All assessments will be taken or presented on the day scheduled. Major assessments must be mastered with at least an 80%. A retest/re-present will be offered for all freshmen and sophomores who do not reach mastery. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher for retaking a test/re-presenting a project. A student, who needs to retake a test, in order to master the material, needs to do so outside of class time, unless the student and teacher agree to an in-class time.

After School Tutoring Program

The faculty at Silver Oak High School offers a formalized tutoring program from 4:00 until 4:30pm. Though in past years faculty members were always available afterschool for extra help with individual assignments, this year the format is organized to address specific skills in the core subject areas. Each faculty member provides support in his/her core subject matter, to any student in need, regardless of grade level. In this way any student is able to get support four days per week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday) in Math, English, Social Studies, Science and Spanish. Support for Mandarin, Digital Media and Psychology will be provided two days per week. Currently this is an optional program for all Silver Oak

students. However, it is a requirement for those students who do not attain mastery, in any core subject, at the end of any marking period..