

# Teacher's Handbook

Welcome, Sage Homeschool Teachers



## **\*Table of Contents\***

Introduction-----	2
Criteria of an Online Class-----	3
Qualities of a Good Online Teacher-----	4
Dos and Don'ts of Teaching-----	8
Cultural and Social Differences to Expect-----	10

## Introduction

This handbook outlines some of the most important qualities and techniques a teacher must possess. As well as the dos and don'ts of online teaching. Each Sage Homeschool Teacher is expected to read and be familiar with all of this handbook's rules and guidelines.

Every student will have selected an online homeschool curriculum that their family wishes to be taught to their child. This curriculum will have many different subjects and complete lessons for each one. No class planning or preparation is needed because all of the school materials will be presented by the online homeschool. It is your responsibility to follow this curriculum as closely as possible and teach the classes that are within it to the best of your ability.

Each enrolled student will have four one-on-one lessons each day with their chosen online curriculum. Four 40-minute classes with a 10-minute break for both teachers and students between each session.

The first time meeting a new student will be a review of the homeschool curriculum they have picked and a decision about the goals they want to meet for the coming school year. Each week a new smaller goal should be set so progress can be shown, and the student has a feeling of achievement. Day one is also for getting to know each other so classes can move forward smoothly in the future.

If you at any point have a questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to your office manager or anyone on our U.S. team as well. We are here to support you every step of the way.



### Criteria of an Online Class

It has been shown that a video chat (like skype or zoom) with both the teacher and the student talking and showing their faces through a webcam is most engaging and supportive for students. Children tend to learn best online when the following elements are met within a classes:

1. When the teacher is working from a desk not a whiteboard or chalkboard.
2. When the teacher is closer to the camera, and it feels more like a face-to-face conversation, this makes relating to the teacher and the subject matter easier for the student.
3. When a lesson has good sound and video quality it is much better for the students' understanding and participation in classes.

Creating a teaching environment that encourages focused attention and commitment to learning is important. Think of a library, study hall, or an in-person classroom. All of these places have a calm and quiet energy with no distractions to the students. When teaching, be sure to encourage your student to choose a place for online classes in their home that has these qualities whenever possible, so that the child can be fully present in their studies.

It takes time to get used to online teaching. From the different types of programs, to how to communicate with a student on the other side of the world. Practicing video calls with a friend, family member, or colleague to get used to the video call program can go a long way in preventing technical issues in your classes.

Some basic rules to keep for each class are to send the meeting ID 24 hours in advance to the student so they can easily start class the next day without any wait as well as to the management team so classes can be supervised. Another rule is the student is to share their screen at all times (excluding brakes) so that teachers can see exactly what is being worked on to ensure that lessons are being followed.



### Qualities of a Good Online Teacher

There are many qualities that an effective and successful teacher must have. Below is outlined the top five most important traits that parents and students look for in a teacher. They are: patience, flexibility, emotional IQ, communication skills, and self-discipline.

A combination of all of these qualities is what a great teacher needs to possess whether they are online or in person.

- 1. Patience** - You will meet a wide variety of students, each with a different background and personality. Each child will have different areas of weakness and strength academically. All of them will have different expectations for their teacher. It is important that you have the patience to try to understand them and teach them in a way that each student can benefit the most from.
  
- 2. Flexibility** - An effective teacher is one who adjusts to the needs of their students. These needs can range from academic to emotional. A teacher is effective only when they're able to adapt quickly and change their techniques. These are the top three ways a teacher needs to be flexible:
  - a. Time – Each student will learn at a different speed: certain subjects may go quickly because the student finds it to be easier or because it is their favorite. But another subject or concept may take more time than expected. It is important to be able to adjust how much time is spent on each topic depending on your student's understanding of it. The key is that a student never feels rushed in any way and has the ability to learn at their own pace.
  
  - b. Teaching style – Be prepared to customize your teaching style to the needs of your student. Each child has a different way of learning and remembering information. There are 7 common ways to learn something, you need to be able to teach with an understanding of each type, even if a student demonstrates a combination of two or more of the following:
    - I. Visual** – individuals who prefer to learn with maps, graphs, diagrams, charts, photos, videos, and other visual tools. The best way to teach these students is by showing them the relationship between different ideas visually.

## Handbook for Sage Homeschool Teachers

- II.** *Auditory* – individuals who learn best when they take in information spoken out loud. They learn best when information is presented to them in a video as well as when there are discussions about a subject.
- III.** *Kinesthetic* – individuals who prefer to learn by doing. They enjoy a hands-on experience which helps them to understand something better. The best way to teach a kinesthetic learner is through personal experience, practice, examples, or simulations.
- IV.** *Reading and Writing* – information is best for them when it's in words, whether that's by writing it down or reading it: to them, text is more useful than anything else. To get a reading and writing learner to engage and understand a lesson, have your student take notes and describe charts and diagrams by written statements. This will help them remember classes and the visual components that they would otherwise likely forget.
- V.** *Logical and Analytical* – these students depend on logic and analytical skills to understand a particular subject. These types of students search for connections, causes, patterns, and results in their learning. A teacher can engage and motivate them by asking questions that require explanation, using material that activates problem-solving skills and stimulating students to reach conclusions based on facts or reasoning.
- VI.** *Social and Linguistic* – these types of students favor lessons that include peer work or some kind of participation. Class participation with someone else helps them to better understand a subject. Teachers can motivate these types of students by asking questions and sharing stories.
- VII.** *Solitary Learners* – these students are the opposite of social learners. They prefer to study alone without having to interact with others. Individual assignments are this student's strength. Teachers can help these types of students by recognizing their individual accomplishments and letting them work on their own.

c. Performance measurement – The last way a teacher needs to be flexible is how to mark the progress and overall performance of each student. Giving tests, quizzes, or exams is the most common way to check how much information is being remembered and applied from classes. However, that is not the only way to tell how well a student is doing in their studies. Examples of other ways to check progress could be: if a student is understanding concepts faster than before, giving longer or more detailed answers to questions, and showing more confidence and enthusiasm in their studies. These are all things that can show progress without the need of a test, quiz, or exam that may only take place a few times in a school year. The most important thing is to be flexible in your definition of progress measurement and encourage each student to do their best.

**3. Emotional IQ** - An online teacher must also work to build a relationship with the child whom they are teaching. For online classes to be most successful, it is required that the student feels safe, relaxed, and eager to do the lessons. Respect on both sides of the class is key. Look out for these signs to be more emotionally intelligent with your students:

- Does a smart student appear unusually confused by a topic?
- Does a student seem pre-occupied with a phone or other distraction?
- Is a student making mistakes with a simple question that they have gotten right in the past?
- Is a talkative student suddenly more quiet and withdrawn?

These are often the red flags that must never be ignored. Your emotional IQ will help you deal with the different moods and situations of your students. It is important to always be kind and considerate when there appears to be any problems.

This skill is also extremely important with the younger students that will be most likely experiencing school for the first time. It is up to the teachers to show them a love of learning and encourage students to do their best. This supportive educational foundation will serve them for many years to come.

## Handbook for Sage Homeschool Teachers

**4. Communication Skills** - An effective teacher is one who can convey any subject in an understandable form to the students. Effective communication includes: speech, clarity, use of appreciation, gestures, and much more. If the student understands what is being taught to them, then your goal has been achieved. Effective communication includes:

- Use of examples to enhance a topic
- Being a patient and calm listener
- Speaking clearly and audibly so that you are easy to understand
- Using gestures and facial expressions while explaining things to bring the topic to life
- Being careful to pronounce words and phrases correctly
- Not using slang or phrases that the student does not understand

There are many different issues you could face in a class. It is your job to address them professionally and keep clam. If a teaching technique is not working, try another method. If a student is becoming frustrated by something move on and come back to that topic later with a new approach.

**5. Self-Discipline** – One of the best ways to teach is to show by example. If you are on-time, prepared for class, positive about the lesson, and ready to teach with kindness and patience you are showing your students what kind of behavior and mindset is ideal for learning. It is important to maintain professionalism and hold yourself to the same standard that you expect your students to maintain.



### Dos and Don'ts of Teaching

There are many different types of teaching and learning techniques and therefore, there is no one answer to each question or problem. Below is a list of a few important dos and don'ts to follow when teaching.

- DO be on time and be consistent
- DO be as professional as possible
- DO work as a team and share experiences with other teachers
- DO use body language to produce a positive, encouraging environment
- DO use active listening and communication skills
- DO follow the chosen curriculum of each student
- DO acknowledge student's hard work & accomplishments
- DO set goals and establish specific, measurable objectives
- DO have the sound and video on at all times during the lessons
- DO reinforce progress and aim for a student to be independent
- DO set boundaries with social interactions
- DO be positive & encourage students to give classes their best efforts
- DO understand your student's frustrations and try to help them
- DO make sure students clearly understand each task that is given to them
- DO ask questions to find out what the student understands
- DO combine theory with practice as often as possible
- DO make each lesson a solution to a problem
- DO show that you care about helping solve problems
- DO understand the communication style of each student



## Handbook for Sage Homeschool Teachers

- DO create a safe, non-judgmental environment for students
- DO reach out to parents when necessary
- DO be culturally sensitive and aware of your own biases and prejudices



- DON'T give students the answer, work with them to solve it on their own
- DON'T be inconsistent
- DON'T lie or exaggerate to students
- DON'T talk just to fill the silence – silence can be a good thing
- DON'T correct your student's grammar when they are speaking
- DON'T ask the students personal questions
- DON'T ridicule, tease, or yell at your student
- DON'T have a distracting workspace such as: sounds in the background
- DON'T make assumptions about your student's beliefs or culture
- DON'T stay with a topic that is causing too much frustration
- DON'T be afraid to ask for help or tips from faculty or staff
- DON'T talk about your personal issues or opinions with students
- DON'T talk about religion, politics, or money with students

### Cultural and Social Differences to Expect

Teaching a student online that lives on the opposite side of the planet is of course going to present some cultural and social differences. It is important to note that no one culture is correct or incorrect, they are all simply unique. Certain words can completely change meaning even though you will both be speaking English. Such as, copy/notebook, rubber/erasure, mobile/phone, photo/picture, etc.

Also, school in the U.S. on average is much easier than school in India. Especially in math and science. The average U.S. K-8 classes are not as advanced or complex as what you may be used to.

It is important to understand that education in the U.S. does not present the same amount of pressure on students as it so often does in India. Classes tend to be simpler and more relaxed with easier topics covered and the more difficult subjects only taught in detail at a university level.

We are here to help you and your students succeed and are more than happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. If there is anything you would like to have clarified or explained further do not hesitate to contact us.

