WHS Parent Information about Moodle – September 2009

Moodle is an online course management tool that all teachers at WHS will use to post online information about their course, including homework, online resources, schedules, etc. Moodle also has many built-in tools that provide teachers a way to augment their classrooms with 21st century learning activities such as discussion forums, chats, online quizzes, journals, blogs, wikis, glossaries and databases. All students are required to use a username and password to access their Moodle courses so this will provide a secure environment for students to learn to use online tools in a responsible and safe manner. It will also provide a secure place for students to interact with other students and their teachers and to submit and post their schoolwork.
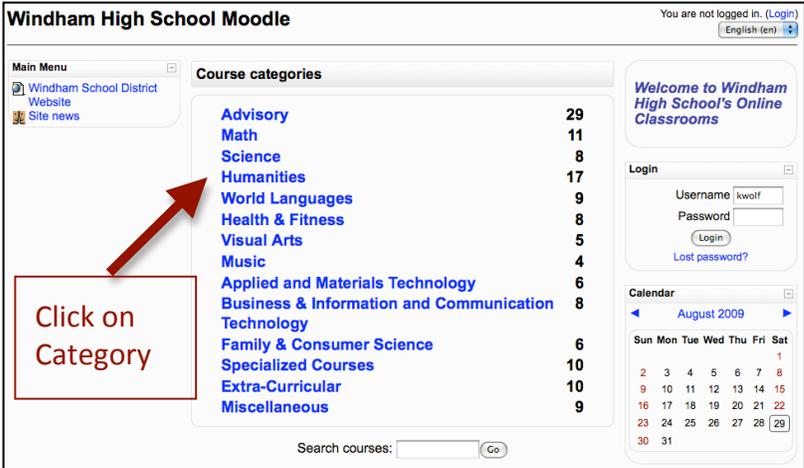
Moodle can help parents stay in touch with what their students are doing in their classes. Teachers have the flexibility to utilize Moodle in a variety of ways, but each teacher will post the course syllabus, information about themselves, and their contact information at the top of each of their courses. Most teachers will use Moodle to regularly post homework assignments and schedules. Teachers may provide additional resources that students can use so parents should encourage their children to utilize their Moodle courses regularly.

As a parent, you will access your child's Moodle courses as a "guest" and be able to see all resources and links published there. Each teacher should provide you with the guest password to their course – every teacher has a different password for each course.

Since Moodle runs more efficiently on Firefox (a free alternative Internet browser), it is suggested that you go to firefox.com and download and install Firefox before logging on to Moodle. The students' Macbooks are already configured with Firefox and students are instructed that they must use the Firefox web browser for Moodle – it will not work properly in Safari (Apple's web browser application).

Access WHS Moodle at the web address: whsmoodle.windhamsd.org

> This link is also available from the WHS Website. www.windhamsd.org → High School (link on top nav bar) → Academics (link in left nav column) → Moodle

To access each course, first click on the course category name to open each category, then locate the course. Courses have the teacher's name and subject in the description to assist you in locating it. Once you locate the course, hover over the course name to show the web link and click on it to login. This screen will appear:

Students are instructed that passwords should NEVER be shared with anyone. We request that parents do not request their child's passwords and instead use this guest access system to gather information about their child's courses at WHS.

Once you request a guest access, a screen will appear asking you for the 'enrolment key' (note – original author of Moodle is from Australia so you may see variations of English spellings). These are the guest access passwords your child's teachers provide. Enter the password and click on <Enrol me in this course. Note that you will need to use this password every time you access this Moodle course.

Your browser may prompt you to save the password – we recommend that you do not do this as it is not a safe practice.

Once logged into Moodle as a guest, you will see that each course is laid out a little differently by each teacher. There are blocks on the left and right sides and topic

sections down the center of the screen. Icons appear in front of each link in the main topic sections to indicate what type of activity they are – links to resources, assignments to upload, discussion forums, journals, etc.

You should make sure to close out the browser window when you are done using Moodle if you are using a shared computer. Moodle stores passwords in browser cookies that are kept as long as a single instance of the application is running.

There is a gradebook in Moodle but parents should realize that PowerSchool is the primary tool used by WHS teachers for grading. Some Moodle activities may be graded and teachers will port those grades over to PowerSchool.