

# edcentre.ca

Northern Saskatchewan's Online School

## 2020-2021 Student Handbook

Any age. Any time. Any place.



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## **Section A – About Us**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to edcentre.ca Online School (Masinahikana School).

Your education is likely the best investment you can make for your future. Online learning offers a flexible way to complete high school on your own terms. We hope you enjoy your experience as you participate fully in the online learning experience.

Communication is the key to succeeding in the online learning community. The most important thing you can do as you progress through the learning activities is to communicate with other students and your instructor. Students are encouraged to use the toll free phone numbers, 1-888-299-5680 for general information and registering or 1-844-425-8946 to contact your instructor directly. All students are encouraged to participate in live web conference sessions and to take advantage of live tutorial sessions.

### **The Team**

Principal/Instructor: Dean Squires

Instructor: Kelly Haydukewich

Instructor: Kona Guest

Instructor: James Armstrong

Instructor: Joni Menz

Office Support & Registrar: Krista de Feijter

## **edcentre.ca Origins**

The original “Masinahikana School” was established in 1987 as a “trapline” school by Northern Lights School Division to meet the needs of students who were spending large amounts of time away from their home communities or live with their families in isolated areas. Over the years distance learning solutions were provided to students through print based correspondence along with scheduled visits through Northern Lights School Division staff.

In 2001 the Headwaters Project was initiated through federal Smart Communities funding. Resources were developed and research was conducted to explore how communication technology might be used to provide a flexible way for Northern Saskatchewan residents to complete high school in their home communities. An online school was established and resources were developed to provide for completion of grade 10. The online distance learning component of Masinahikana School was a natural extension for Northern Lights School Division. The original Kindergarten to grade 9 “trapline” school was expanded to include online high school courses.

Although the project began as an attempt to address the needs of returning young adults, it has evolved into a service that accommodates all northern residents who need a flexible way to complete high school. A full selection of courses is now offered from grade 10 through to grade 12.

The team at edcentre.ca is committed to helping Northern Saskatchewan residents complete their high school education. The vision and mission statements below guide all of the daily actions at the school.

## **Our Vision**

edcentre.ca Online School will provide and facilitate access to flexible distance learning opportunities for Northern Saskatchewan residents.

### **Mission Statement:**

edcentre.ca Online School will:

1. Assist individuals to reach their personal potential through flexible distance learning alternatives that respect personal lifestyle, language and culture.
2. Provide learning opportunities for completion of high school that would not otherwise exist for Northern Saskatchewan residents.



## Partnership

edcentre.ca Online School is a partnership between Northern Lights School Division ([NLSD](#)) and Northlands College ([NLC](#)). The partnership provides distance learning service to a wide range of students within Northern Saskatchewan. This means school age learners and adults are accommodated in their own communities across the north. Some of the many student scenarios who use our service include:

- School age students including grade 9 students transitioning into grade 10
- In school students that are completing credits for a variety of reasons including the experience of online learning to prepare for online post-secondary programs
- Home schooled students
- Young parents at home
- Individuals who spend large amounts of time away from home or live in isolated areas
- Adults working full time or part time
- School age or adult students coping with short term or long term illnesses at home
- Adults completing grade 12 full time
- Graduates completing or upgrading additional credits to meet admission requirements for post-secondary programs and/or trades programs

## Section B – edcentre.ca Online Learning

### Is Online Learning Right for You?

The main advantage of online learning is flexibility and convenience, but online learning can be a lot more challenging than it may seem. It is extremely important to have a realistic idea of what it will take to be a successful online learner. Read the following items to see if you have the skills and specific educational prerequisites needed to take online courses with edcentre.ca:

#### 1. Able to Work at a Grade 10 Level or Higher

School age students are required to have the prerequisite courses outlined by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and adult students are required to have either the prerequisite course or edcentre.ca required course that provides the educational foundation for other courses. (See Entrance Criteria & Program Information for more information.)

#### 2. Persistence

Successful online students need to tolerate and work through technical problems, seek help when needed, work regularly in their course, and persist through learning challenges. Never give up!

#### 3. Time Management Skills

This skill has to be learned, and once you do, it will benefit you throughout your entire life. Work daily on your course (minimum weekly activity is necessary). Review the outline of the course and make a plan for completing the major assignments. Keep in regular contact with your instructor to review your progress.

#### 4. Communication Skills

Remember, we are here to help! Please let us know what your needs are and when and what your challenges are so that we can help as best we can. Use the tools the instructor has set out for contacting them. Some examples are the online course messenger system called “Messages”, email, live web conference rooms, and phoning during regular office hours. Communication is key!

#### 5. Basic Technical Skills and Access to a Computer Connected to the Internet

You will need to know how to create new documents, use a word processing program, navigate the internet, and download necessary software.

#### 6. Motivation and Independence

In order to be successful you must first want to succeed. Online learning requires, independence, motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity. Have you given thought to your own personal reasons for being successful in school? Perhaps its personal pride and accomplishments or maybe you are seeking a wider range of opportunities available to you with a higher education.

#### 7. A Good Study Environment

It is important to have a place without distractions and noise in order to give your full attention to your online course work. Try to be aware of internet surfing time as it is very easy to get lost in time as you go from site to site. Set up good lighting and comfortable seating (ergonomics).

## **What Does the Online Student Experience Look Like?**

Online students have access to their courses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Nearly all the resources needed to complete the course will be online. An instructor is assigned to each course. Students can contact their instructor from 8:45 to 3:45 (closed at lunch) to arrange for one on one assistance. Regular office hours are from 8:30 to 4:30 (closed at lunch) for general inquiries. Alternatively, students may email instructors with questions outside the office hours and a response will be returned when the instructor returns to work. Final grades can be entered onto transcripts continuously through the school year.

The edcentre.ca Online School uses a combination of tools to ensure that students have a positive learning experience:

- Course content is nearly all online and available at any time. The online courses are offered in an open-source learning platform called Moodle.
- Students connect with the instructor and other students through a virtual classroom area. Learning activities, instructions, announcements, discussion areas, live chats, grades, and multimedia presentations are all found in the virtual classroom area.
- Instructors are available to students by telephone or live web conference (interactive computer video chat) Monday to Friday from 8:45 – 3:45. Successful students contact their instructors and other students on regular basis to clarify instructions, discuss writing or solve problems together.

### **Benefits of a Mixed Approach to E-Learning**

- Students have the ability to manage their own schedules
- Increased success rate through a student centred approach
- Regular student to student and student to instructor interaction
- Interactive audio and visual learning tools
- Ability to establish an online learning community
- Real-time feedback
- Make friends with other students from other communities

### **Instructor Site Visits**

Throughout the year, the edcentre.ca Online School instructors visit different locations throughout the north called site visits. Site visits are a great opportunity to meet your instructor and other online students in your area. Visits are often coordinated so that students may gather in one location. In situations where this is not possible, the Instructor may be able to make a home visit. If instructors are aware of how your workspace is organized, they are in a better position to make suggestions.

## Computer Requirements

Before applying to start an online program, you should make sure you have regular access to a computer (stand alone or laptop) with internet access and are able to download software to this computer. Tablets and phones have many drawbacks for this purpose and should only be used as a temporary solution. The following list of software programs should be downloaded before applying:

- Use Firefox or Chrome as your Internet Browser (free)
- Adobe Reader is required for the Application as well as the online courses (free)
- QuickTime and Adobe Flash Player for view videos (free)
- Word processing software (Word, Open Office, & Google Docs are examples)

## Entrance Criteria

- Entrance is open to Northern Saskatchewan adults and school-aged students who are prepared academically to start at a Grade 10 level or higher.
- Applications for students currently enrolled in another school must be approved by the local school career counsellor or student support person, an administrator, and a parent or guardian (if under the age of 18).
- Students **outside** the jurisdiction of Northern Lights School Division and Northlands College may be accepted when there is room in the course, and a tuition fee will apply (see Fees and Payment Criteria section).

## Courses

We provide all the core courses and a variety of elective courses to fulfill the requirements of obtaining a Grade 10, 11, or 12 level as determined by Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Program guidelines. The course list can be viewed on our [website](#).

Determining which course a student will start with will depend on availability in the course, the student needs, and prerequisites determined by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and edcentre.ca policy. For more information on prerequisites view the details of the Regular and Adult Program information.

All courses are based on Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Curriculum guidelines with approximately 100 hours of instructional time. The actual time to complete an online course can vary depending on the ease a student finds the course material and the quality of attention spent on learning.

## Available Programs

- Regular 10 / 11 / 12
- Adult 12

## Regular Program – 24 Credit Policy

Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
minimum 8 credits	minimum 16 credits	minimum 24 credits (5 of which must be at the 30 level)
<p><b>compulsory courses are:</b></p> <p>English Language Arts A 10 and English Language Arts B 10;</p> <p>Social Studies 10, History 10 or Native Studies 10;</p> <p>Science 10;</p> <p>Mathematics 10;</p> <p>3 electives at level 10 or higher.</p>	<p><b>compulsory courses are:</b></p> <p>English Language Arts 20;</p> <p>Mathematics 20;</p> <p>6 additional elective credits at level 20 or 30.</p>	<p><b>compulsory courses are:</b></p> <p>English Language Arts A 30 and English Language Arts B 30;</p> <p>Social Studies 30: Canadian Studies or History 30: Canadian Studies or Native Studies 30: Canadian Studies;</p> <p>a science 20 or 30;</p> <p>a social science 20 or 30;</p> <p>2 credits in arts education or practical and applied arts at level 10, 20, or 30;</p> <p>Wellness 10, Physical Education 20 or Physical Education 30.</p>

### Regular Program Prerequisites

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education outlines prerequisite requirements for the regular program. Students should be careful when switching to different courses to make sure they will not be short credits by missing the necessary prerequisite course. The official [Prerequisite Requirements for Regular Programs](#) document can be found at [education.gov.sk.ca](http://education.gov.sk.ca).

Adults can be accommodated in either the Regular Program or the Adult Program.

## **Adult 12 Program – 7 Credit Policy**

The Adult 12 Program is recognized by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. It has the same standing as obtaining Grade 12 through the Regular Program and can meet all criteria for post-secondary entry. In order to be considered an Adult student defined by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, you must either be 18 years of age and out of school for at least one year or 19 years of age and older.

<b>Adult Grade 12</b>
minimum 7 credits/5 credits at the 30 level
<b>compulsory courses are:</b>
English Language Arts A 30 and English Language Arts B 30;
One Canadian Studies History 30: Canadian Studies, or Native Studies 30: Canadian Studies, or Social Studies 30: Canadian Studies;
One mathematics at the 20 or 30 level;
One science at the 20 or 30 level;
Two electives at level 30 (one may be a Prior Learning Credit – see below).

### **Adult 12 Prerequisites**

For successful completion of courses it is imperative that students have the appropriate academic foundation. Adult students who have not obtained any 10, 20, or 30 credits, or require a stronger foundation for the Adult 12 courses may be required to begin in the Grade 10 compulsory courses or with the necessary 20 level prerequisite course(s).

### **Prior Learning Credit**

The prior learning credit is intended to acknowledge those adults returning to pursue an Adult 12 who bring sufficient learning and work experiences to be recognized for a high school credit. A maximum of one prior learning credit may be used as a part of the seven credits required for the completion of an Adult 12 Program. When nearly completing the sixth course of the Adult 12 Program, contact your instructor or the school directly to inquire whether the Prior Learning Credit will work for your situation.

### **Departmental Exam Challenges**

Departmental exams for certain 30 level courses can be challenged by Adult students. Exams should be set up at least one month before writing by calling Student Services at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (1-306-787-6012) and make arrangements to write at one of the Official Writing Centres.

## Section C – Enrolment Process

### Registration Schedule

Applications are accepted and processed on a **continuous** basis throughout the school year until the last school day of March. This is also the deadline for existing students to request a new course. Applications received after this deadline are held for the next school year.

### Returning Students

An application is required each school year a student requests to take courses with edcentre.ca. Only one application is required per school year. Course additions can be requested by contacting the instructor or the school directly (see Student Enrolment section).

### Application Completion Requirements

1. Computer connected to the Internet
2. Printer connected to the computer
3. Adobe Reader (free) installed on your computer

### Email Address

It is the edcentre.ca Online School's policy that every student has a working email address that is school appropriate and is checked frequently after sending in their application. **It is important to check your inbox and junk mail regularly throughout the school year for any correspondence sent from the school.**

### Completing the Application Form

- 1) The Online Application Form is found on the school website, edcentre.ca, under the Registration Menu. Complete the application form **on the computer**. General instructions are at the top of the form with a review section on the bottom of the last page that gives the final steps of the application process. Please take time to complete the application completely and accurately. **Hand written or incomplete applications will not be accepted.** Print the completed application form, then sign and date page 1 and gather any other necessary information and signatures on page 2 (see below).
  - Applicant is under 18 years of age: Parent/Guardian information, signature, and date is required on **Section A** of page 2.
  - Applicants attending another school at the same time as requesting to take an online class must complete **Section B**. A [supplemental form](#) will be completed and sent in by the base school.
  - Applicants receiving funding in order to attend our school must have **Section C** completed and signed by the supporting organization.

- 2) Scan and email, mail, or drop off completed and signed form. Fax services may be interrupted during school holidays and other extenuating circumstances and is not a preferred means to receive applications. Please call after faxing to ensure the information has been received. Mailing applications takes the longest amount of time. If you use this method make sure enough time is given so deadlines are not missed.
- 3) Check your email and junk mail for instructions or information on fee payment arrangements 1-4 days after sending in your application. We will contact you if:
  - any information is missing
  - learning needs are not clear or you have requested “I’m not sure which course you would like to start with”.
  - we need to share further information to assist you in your learning needs and goals

### **Fees and Payment Criteria**

After we have received your application an email will be sent out with information on payment options if a fee applies. Payment options include cheque, money order, cash, and Interac e-transfer. Do not send in payments before receiving an email. edcentre.ca does not reimburse fee payments.

#### **1) No Fees:**

This applies to applicants if:

- a) 21 years of age or under, in the service area (see title page or inquire), and not enrolled in any another school.
- b) 21 years of age or under who apply before September 30th, not enrolled in another school, and is outside the service area.
- c) 21 years of age or younger and in a Northern Lights School Division school.
- d) Any student taking a full time Northlands College program – indicate this on the form and are required to fill out Section B and have a Student Support Worker signature in order for the Adult Registration Fee to be waived.

#### **2) Adult Registration Fee: \$30** (Northern Saskatchewan Adult Students only – refer to the cover page for inclusive Northern area). This applies to the applicant if:

- a) 22 years of age or older and reside in the service area.

The Adult Registration Fee must be paid **before** starting the online course. In order to expedite starting the course, please take a copy of your cheque or money order and include with the application (proof of payment). If we have not received payment within 30 days you will be withdrawn from the course until payment is received. The \$30 Adult Registration Fee allows the student to take as many courses as they can fit into their schedule, taking one course at a time, during the current school year. Please note: additional course requests must be done before the last work day of March.

#### **3) Tuition Fee: \$500**

This applies to the applicant if:

- a) You reside in the northern area (see cover page), 21 and under in the school year, and attending a school or adult program centre other than a Northern Lights School Division School or Northlands College program.

- b) You reside in Saskatchewan, but outside of the service area (see cover page), and are age 15 and older. Students in this category may be accepted on a limited basis.

Individually Paid Tuition – must be paid before the student starts the course. An email will be sent with payment information options if this fee applies to you. Please do not send in payment before receiving an email or confirmation from the school that this fee applies to you.

Tuition Fees paid by an Educational Organization– The person authorizing payment of the tuition fee is to complete, date and sign Section C - Payment Authorization on the application form. We will send an invoice shortly after the student is set up in the online program. If payment is not received within 30 days of the student's online program start date they will be withdrawn from the class until payment is received.

### **Student Enrolment**

Once all the information is established and applicable fees have been paid or proof of payment has been provided (see Fees and Payment Criteria), an email is sent with all instructions and information to get started as an online student. Please remember to check your inbox and junk mail. It is the **students' responsibility to call** in a timely manner if the welcome email has not been received.

During peak registration times, (September, October, and February) enrolments may take up to 4 working days once all information and applicable fees are received in full.

### **Course Registration**

Students will have access to one online course at a time. Students can contact their online instructor or the office to request an additional course when they are near to completing their existing online course.

In order for an online course to be deemed complete, a student must complete all mandatory course assignments and achieve a passing grade in the class within edcentre.ca's school year deadlines, which may vary from face-to-face schools.

## **Section D – edcentre.ca Online Students**

### **Plan for Success**

Distance learning can be a very rewarding experience if you are willing to plan for success. Without a plan and commitment you will not succeed. Here are some suggestions:

1. Schedule your time
2. Eliminate distractions
3. Communication is key - contact your instructors regularly
4. Organize your work
5. Ask for help
6. Stick with your schedule
7. Never give up!

### **Required Student Activity**

Daily course activity is the best case scenario for successful completion of a course. A minimum of weekly activity is required by all students. If more flexibility is required, it is the responsibility of the student to determine a schedule of completion with the instructor.

School based students will be closely monitored and are expected to be working during the school period allotted by their base school with the additional flexibility to work after school hours from anywhere there is a computer connected to the internet.

### **Digital Responsibility**

- Presenting content that is not your work must include credit to the original author.
- Sharing thoughts and ideas enriches the internet. Learners are encouraged to share and interact with others online in a respectful manner.

### **Communication**

- Dialogue and interaction are encouraged in the online environment.
- Appropriate language is expected in the online course environment. Comments and dialogue should be positive and respectful of others.
- In an effort to promote academic success, it is expected that all participants will use conventional writing standards for discussion areas and writing submissions.
- Texting and chat abbreviations are not commonly found in published writing, and therefore should not be used in the formal classroom topic areas.

Regular communication with other students and the instructor enhances the process. It is expected that students will make direct contact with their online instructor a minimum of once a week. This may be in the form of a telephone call, an email message, instant message, fax, a live tutorial session or meeting in person. This regular communication is vital to maintaining an ongoing dialogue about your progress.

Some courses include the use of scheduled live sessions. To access these sessions, students will be provided with links through their main course room area. Within these “live” online sessions, students may participate in group discussions, share files, make presentations, interact with the instructor and other students or listen to special presentations offered by “guests” to the course room area.

## **Student Progress**

Learning objectives are listed in each of the course descriptions. The learning objectives are a list of all of the things you should understand or be able to do as a result of course related activities.

In addition to checking your grades on a regular basis, it is necessary to check the assignment / activity area for feedback from your instructor. This is where you find out if you have understood the activity or if you need to revisit some ideas. Your grades and instructor feedback are available to you at all times. Your final grade should reflect how well you met the learning objectives for the course. If at any time you are unsure, call your instructor to discuss your overall progress.

## **Weekly Journal Entries:**

Some courses include a weekly opportunity for students to reflect on their learning. This is an opportunity to review what you have been doing and to plan for success. In some cases it may be an opportunity to review how you organize your time and your habits to get the most from your online learning experience.

## **Sending Assignments: Student-Instructor Responsibilities**

Communication for most assignments and activities takes place within the online classroom. Each course will have detailed instructions on how and where to send student course work, exams, and assignments. Check within your course area or discuss how to send assignments to your instructor. Course work, assignments, and exams should not be sent to the main school fax unless stated by your instructor.

Learning assignments and activities are intended as opportunities for growth. In most cases the first submission will be considered a first draft. Students will be invited to respond by revising and improving submissions.

Instructors will respond to submissions as they receive them. Generally, students can expect feedback within two business days, however, if students submit multiple assignments simultaneously a delay should be expected. Students may call instructors to discuss and clarify feedback, or to arrange for a live tutorial session. Instructors will attempt to help all students to achieve objectives within the course by ensuring that appropriate learning opportunities and tutorial assistance are available.

## **Grades**

Feedback is provided for all graded assignments and activities. When an instructor completes grading an assignment or activity, it is immediately posted to the online classroom area and the student may check for comments along with the grade.

## **Transcripts**

Final grades are submitted to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Student Records. These grades appear on student transcripts which can be then ordered online from [Ministry of Education](#). Grade 12 students' transcripts are mailed directly to the student from the Ministry of Education each month after a course is completed and the grade entered with the Ministry of Education. Therefore it is important to give us or the school / program centre you are based at a change of address if you move.

## **Inactivity**

If a period of over **one week of inactivity** is expected the student must inform the instructor or call the school directly. Students who do not maintain sufficient activity to complete the course may be asked to submit a new schedule for completion that follows edcentre.ca deadlines and policies.

## **Course Withdrawals**

Students often leave courses for a variety of reasons, i.e. acceptance in other programs, family responsibilities, or unexpected circumstances. Students who are inactive for more than 30 days and have not communicated the absence with the school will be withdrawn from their course until they contact the school to discuss new plans for completion.

## **Student Mentor Support**

We recognize that a whole community supports a student in their goals and endeavours. Student support can come from parents, instructors, friends, Elders, counselors, community members, funding agencies, and the list goes on. To help mentors support edcentre.ca online students in reaching their goals, a Mentor Block has been developed in the Online Course Area.

Student Mentors listed on page 2 (Sections A-C) of the Online Application can request to be set up with a login to see the progress of the student. Visit the [Mentor Support Section](#) or contact us for more information.

## **Awards**

### **A. Northern Saskatchewan Student Achievement Awards:**

Available to all students based with edcentre.ca Online School. Two students will be nominated each year to receive an award based on the following achievement criteria:

- Effort to succeed
- Academic achievement
- Participation in the online learning community
- Awareness and pride in northern lifestyles and heritage
- Special talents and interests
- Leadership within the online learning community
- Personal organization and time management
- Progress toward personal future goals

## **B. edcentre.ca Online School Awards:**

Students will be recognized on a yearly basis in the following categories:

### **1. Communication Award**

Criteria is based on students who communicate regularly.

### **2. Progress (Personal Achievement) Award**

This award is based on students who demonstrate significant progress towards achieving their academic goals.

### **3. Academic Achievement Award**

Students who demonstrate a high level of academic achievement meet the criteria for this award.

## **C. Completion Prize Draw**

For each course completion, the student's name is entered into a Completion Prize Draw during the school year. Draw dates will be posted on our website.