

Uncharted Shores Academy
Homeschooling
GUIDE



*We are all captains of our education,
Charting our own course.*



SAILING INTO UNCHARTED SHORES

Uncharted Shores Academy (USA) opened its doors in 2007 as a charter school dedicated to providing guidance and support to Homeschooling families. Along our uncharted journey, we have developed classes, activities, and events that not only have supported homeschool families through the years, but have developed into a full onsite classes at school attended by many students who have never been in a home study situation at all! However, our heart still belongs to the homeschooled child, and we are dedicated to partnering with parents as we embrace a family-style method of learning employed by all our credentialed teachers throughout the school.

You may be jumping into the homeschooling waters with both feet, totally exhilarated by the excitement of starting a new adventure with your family, or your experience may more be described as falling off the side of the ship, overwhelmed by a sea of uncertainty, knowing that you would have to learn to swim or you would certainly sink! Either way, or even if you are somewhere in the middle, you will find that there are others who share your experiences and have had similar feelings. Know that we will be there right alongside of you, keeping those adventurous parents surging forward without losing sight of the firm educational shore while simultaneously providing support to the sinking parents until they are swimming on their own.


With that in mind, we provide you with this guide to sailing into the uncharted seas, and arriving safely with your child at the shores of your educational destination.

ON WHICH SHIP DO YOU SET YOUR SAILS?

Just as there are many types of sailing craft, there are many reasons to homeschool, and it is important to identify where you fit in because not everyone is going to board the same ship! The curriculum you choose, the schedule you keep, the methods you employ will largely depend upon why you set off on this voyage of discovery in the first place. So, let's explore the ship on which you have sailed off on this remarkable journey and see what we can do to help set your sails and guide you into the wind . . .

Religious Schooling: Traditionally the largest group of homeschoolers has been those who turn to schooling at home in order to instill in their children their religious values and beliefs without the influence of the secularism and peer pressure found in public schools. These families often buy their own religious-based curriculum and may be associated with other homeschool groups. Although they may already have a clear view of what they want to do, USA is ready to offer field trips, opportunities for presentations, events, elective classes, sports, music, and other activities to enrich their child's education.

Philosophical Schooling: Many homeschooling parents are proponents of a specific philosophy, including (but not limited to) Classical Education, Charlotte Mason Education, Waldorf, Montessori, literature-based, project-based, and unit studies. Each of these educational philosophies are compatible with specific curriculum which can be purchased with USA school funds. Moreover, USA's commitment to partnering with parents lends these families the freedom to pursue their philosophy of choice with full support from the school.



Crisis Schooling: These are parents who had their children in school at one point, but were disappointed by the experience. In many cases, the decision to homeschool is triggered by some incident that brings to a climax years of frustration with the traditional public schools. They turn to homeschooling only because they feel that the system that they had relied on has let them down; they are homeschooling more out of desperation than out of conviction. In trying to solve problems and do what's best for their child, they selected homeschooling as the only option left to them. Because the decision is often made quickly and with little background into what it will really mean, this group often comes to homeschooling with the least amount of preparation. USA can give these parents the simplified curriculum, instructional support, and connections with other homeschoolers that they may need to be successful. Often, as parents take off on their own, they find themselves moving from the "crisis" mode into one of the other homeschooling ships, joining like-minded families in a pursuit of homeschooling excellence!

Military Schooling: Military families often move from place to place during their child's educational years, so some families choose to educate their children at home in order to keep the continuity and consistency of their child's education continuing despite these moves. USA can provide these families with a variety of curriculum, both online and book-based, which they can plan to continue to use no matter where they may go in the future. And while they are with us, they will be able to participate in a full spectrum of school activities, just as if they were in school full time.

Roadschooling: Then there are the families who have decided to pack up and take their lives and education on the road. This has become so popular, that these families have been given the name, "Roadschoolers!" If the family maintains a residence connection in Del Norte County and keeps contact with the homeschool teacher, they can continue to have the school's support throughout their trip. However, should the family just sell all their possessions and pack up into an RV, with no "home address" connection, they will have to follow the laws and regulations of any state in which they spend more than a couple of weeks, and USA cannot count them as a resident student.

Free Range Schooling: Also known as unschooling, student-led education, or interest-led learning, this is a teaching method in which students study topics which interest them rather than follow a pre-defined curriculum. As USA is a public charter school receiving state revenues for education, we must follow the prescribed state standards and independent study laws. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to allow for the independence and freedom of the Unschooling philosophy. However, if a family is willing to partner with us in the education of their child, they may find that the perks of programs, field trips, and activities offered by USA is worth the effort of putting a little structure into the lives of their family.

Temporary Schooling at Home: Finally, there's the family that is entering schooling only temporarily, due to some unavoidable situation which makes it difficult or impossible for their child to attend school. Although this family may only be with us a few months or a year, USA can provide the materials they need to be successful and integrate back into the classroom. In fact, since USA provides full day classes as well, it may very well be our very own classrooms that the child may be integrating back into!



HOMESCHOOLING CONNECTIONS

USA offers many connections for the homeschooling parent which make homeschool easier and more fun:

1. **Homeschool Crews:** Family groups with similar philosophies and children of similar ages are offered the chance to connect with each other to plan social and educational activities as desired.
2. **Teacher Talk Time:** Online connections are offered with the homeschool teacher on a daily basis, and families have the teacher's phone number and email to keep contact throughout the year as needed. Appointments with the homeschool teacher are usually made weekly.
3. **Field Trips:** Trips are planned by teachers that tie into thematic units that families can study together. Homeschool crews may plan their own field trips as well.
4. **Nature Studies:** One of the perks of living in Del Norte County is our proximity to beaches, redwood forests, and mountains. There are a myriad of nature activity books available to homeschool families to make the most of these opportunities.
5. **Family Activities:** Specific skill-building family activities are often planned by teachers, such as making math games, engineering projects, or artistic books together as a family.
6. **Book Clubs:** Students get together with a teacher weekly to discuss books they read.
7. **Game Clubs:** Students get together with a teacher to play critical thinking games.
8. **Primary Circle Time:** K-3 students are invited to participate virtually in a morning routine with the teacher.
9. **Literary Magazine:** Writing workshops are provided by the teachers at various grade levels and the best stories, essays, and articles are published for distribution to the entire school, relatives, and friends.
10. **Spelling Bee:** Students in grades 2-8 are invited to participate in the Del Norte County spelling bee, usually held in March each year. We have had several homeschool first and second place winners in the past!
11. **Presentation Fair:** Presentation fairs are planned throughout the year, with opportunities for the homeschooling student to exhibit their science projects, artwork, research projects, and actually present orally through a speech or PowerPoint if desired!
12. **Musical Performance:** Piano or Choir recitals and Band performances are a regular part of the school year, and each year culminates with several musical dramatic performances tied into school subjects.
13. **Additional Electives:** Elective clubs are usually offered each year for grades 4-8, and sometimes for younger students. Students choices in the past have included band, choir, piano, violin, knitting, art, sewing, chess, astronomy, and role playing game clubs. The choices depend upon the availability of instructors and interest of students.
14. **Yearbook:** Parents are encouraged to send pictures of activities to our office staff at office@shoresacademy.com to be published in the annual yearbook.

HOMESCHOOLING ONLINE RESOURCES

Online resources for both students and parents may be found on the school's website: www.shoresacademy.com. Go to the *Charting Offshore Homeschool* link.



THE ROLE OF THE HOMESCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers do not teach daily online. That is considered “Distance Learning” and is not what we provide at Uncharted Shores Academy for the *Offshore* students. We provide parent-directed homeschool where parents instruct their children using curriculum designed specifically for the homeschooling parent. The teacher is available to support the parent in that endeavor and provide optional classes and activities that can enhance the child’s education.

At a meeting with the teacher, the following will usually take place:

1. The teacher will talk to the parent about the child’s progress and completion of assignments. If student is progressing faster or slower than expected, the teacher will assist the parent in adjusting the curriculum and provide additional materials as needed.
2. The teacher will review a sample of the child’s work in each of the four core subjects: math, language arts, science, and social studies. Parents may use their home-to-school folder to keep appropriate work samples in to bring to an in-person meeting, show the teacher work samples on the screen if meeting virtually, or talk to the teacher on the phone and mail/drop off work samples at school for the teacher. The teacher must collect the samples at least once a month. We need the “sample” to be on a piece of paper, so projects and activities may be photographed and printed or documented on paper. Some forms to assist with documentation are included in the Homeschool Parent Resources packet and can be found .
3. The teacher will assess the child’s progress. This can be completed in several ways:
 - a. Student presentation of projects and activities
 - b. Teacher/Student discussion of educational goals
 - c. Compiling a portfolio of student written assessments
 - d. Student essays and reports
 - e. Written products: lab reports, writing rubric scores, tests, etc.
4. Check with parent to ensure that there are appropriate supplies for student activities.
5. Answer questions that parent or student may have concerning the assigned activities.

The homeschool teacher is really the parent. The teacher at the school who oversees and evaluates the progress of the child we refer to as the Supervising Teacher because rather than direct teaching, they mainly supervise the homeschooling family in their pursuit of an education. Supervising teachers do teach optional classes for their students, but their main functions are to evaluate the student’s progress, equip the parent with the tools to teach their child, and provide the child with the materials needed for education.



*Enjoy your time with your children.
Experiment, Explore, Discover!
Homeschooling can offer a brand new way to
teach and learn; embrace the opportunity.
Teach the Child, Not Just the Curriculum!*

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