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Octorara Kindergarten - 6th Grade Parent/Guardian Handbook

Maximizing Opportunities for Success

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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students,

This handbook provides you with necessary information about our District, school, policies, and procedures. Some information may vary slightly due to COVID restrictions and guidance from the Department of Health, Chester County Health Department and Pennsylvania Department of Education.

You will find important issues such as attendance policies, parent drop-off and pick-up procedures, discipline policies and other information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our team. Open communication and a team approach is the key to a bright and successful future.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Krista Lease, OPLC Principal

Mr. Brian Dikun, OES Principal

Dr. Christian Haller, OIS Principal



Maximizing Opportunities for Success

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A. OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Octorara Area School District, through a partnership among school, community and family, is to promote educational excellence in a safe, secure environment, empowering our students with the skills necessary to be successful, responsible members of society.

BELIEFS

Octorara Area School District is a community of learners, which nurtures in each person the skills necessary to shape the future with respect and integrity.

We Believe:

- Everyone is capable of learning.
- A safe, secure environment is essential to a positive school experience.
- Everyone has value, has something to contribute and should be treated respectfully.
- Every student has the right to an education, and the school district has the responsibility to provide every student with the opportunity to obtain a high quality education.
- Individuals are responsible and accountable for their actions.
- The responsibility for learning is shared by students, home, and school community.
- All students should be challenged to reach their full potential.
- Freedom of discussion is critical to a quality education.

OCTORARA K-6 MISSION STATEMENT

The Octorara Primary Learning Center, the Octorara Elementary School and the Intermediate School are a learning community that fosters a safe, respectful, positive environment in order for all students to be successful. By establishing strong relationships within the learning community and high expectations for achievement and growth, we believe each student will be intrinsically motivated to reach his/her full potential.

OCTORARA K-6 VISION STATEMENT

The Octorara Primary Learning Center, the Octorara Elementary School and the Octorara Intermediate School strives to equip our diverse community with the skills and attitudes all members need in order to become independent, responsible life-long learners.

STUDENT AND STAFF RIGHTS

Students and staff have the right to learn in a peaceful and uninterrupted environment. Students and staff have the right to be safe in school and on play areas. Students have the right to decline recitation of the pledge of allegiance and saluting the Flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions. Students and staff have the right to try new ideas and activities without fear of intentional embarrassment. Students and staff have the right to be treated courteously and respectfully by others. Students have the right to an educational program of the highest standards.

STUDENT AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Students and staff have the responsibility to treat every person with kindness, courtesy, and respect. Students and staff have the responsibility to treat our school property and possessions with care and

respect. Students and staff have the responsibility to make our school a safe place in all areas. Students and staff have the responsibility to participate in all learning activities, putting forth one's best effort. Students have the responsibility to listen when adults are speaking. Students and staff have the responsibility to listen well to one another.

PARENT AND ADMINISTRATOR RIGHTS

Parents and administrators have the right to express their greatest hopes and expectations for our students' learning. Parents and administrators have the right to be heard by one another, by our students, and by our teachers. Parents have the right to know the progress of their children.

PARENT AND ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and administrators have the responsibility to ensure our students' safety. Parents and administrators have the responsibility to be an active voice in our students' learning. Parents and administrators have the responsibility to listen well to one another, to the students, and to the teachers. Parents and administrators have the responsibility to ask questions and seek answers about our students' learning. Parents and administrators have the responsibility to work together to continue to develop the educational opportunities available

B. NON-DISCRIMINATION

Octorara Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

For information regarding civil rights, grievance procedures, or services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons, contact the Director of Student Services at the Octorara Area School District, 228 Highland Road, Suite 1, Atglen, Pennsylvania, 19310, Phone # (610) 593-8238.

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Octorara Area School District to maintain: "a learning and working environment that is free from harassment." (Per School Board Policy No. 248)

C. ADMISSION TO SCHOOL

When may my child enter school?

All children must be five years of age before September 1 of the new school year in order to attend kindergarten. All children must be six years of age before September 1 for entrance to first grade unless he/she has completed kindergarten in another school/District. Please contact the registration office for details about registering new students or visit the OPLC web page under Kindergarten Registration for information.

D. ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE/LATENESS

Pennsylvania law requires all children to attend school each day that school is in session. The following attendance guidelines apply to all students.

What should I do when my child is absent?

Within three (3) days of your child's return from an absence, the parent/guardian must submit a note with

the child's first and last name, the name of the child's teacher, the dates of absence(s) and the reason for the absence. Each day of absence is unlawful until a note is received from a parent or a medical physician (for 3 or more days missed in a row and/or anytime a child is out and sees their physician). Please see complete policy below. Please email the excuses directly to the school.

OPLC: Mrs. Danette Balistreri, Building Secretary at dbalistreri@octorara.org

OES: Mrs. Deb Mattis, Building Secretary at dmattis@octorara.org

OIS: Mrs. Connie Good, Building Secretary at cgood@octorara.org

Failure to submit an emailed excuse within three (3) school days of the absence(s) could result in the absence(s) being recorded as "unlawful."

When is an absence considered excused?

Illness

Death in Family

Impassable Roads

Religious Holiday

Court Appearance

+Health Care Appointments

Quarantine

*Pre-Approved Educational Trips

+Whenever your child has a mental, dental, or eye doctor appointment, such notes from medical staff will prevent imposition of consequences for excessive absences. You should bring a note or send an email from that office to the school.

*1 per year- approval at the discretion of the principal for a maximum of 5 school days.

What is the district's attendance policy?

If a student misses three (3) consecutive days of school, a doctor's note is required to excuse those absences. When a student has accumulated three (3) unlawful absences, a letter will be sent from the school noting that the absences are unlawful.

When a student has accumulated four (4) unlawful absences, a certified letter will be sent from the school noting the absences are unlawful. After four (4) unlawful absences, a SAIP (Student Attendance Improvement Plan) meeting will be recommended and facilitated by the school counselor. A SAIP is an action plan to eliminate barriers to help improve school attendance.

When a student has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences, the parent/guardian may be issued a citation for the fifth unlawful absence and a citation for each unlawful absence thereafter, according to the PA School Code. If a student misses seven (7) days total (lawful or unlawful), a letter will be sent from the school noting that absences have become chronic.

If a student misses ten (10) days total (lawful or unlawful), a second letter will be sent from the school indicating that all future absences will be considered unlawful, unless a note from a physician or court official is given to the child's teacher. Without a physician's or court official's note, all subsequent absences shall be considered unlawful and the parent shall be cited according to the PA School Code.

What if my child misses a significant number of school days?

Parents may not excuse their child for more than 10 school days. Absences exceeding 10 days requires an excuse from a medical practitioner and administrative discretion to be considered an excused absence. If a child is absent without excuse for three days in a school year, the school will issue a warning letter to the

parents indicating consequences for habitual truancy. If a child is absent without excuse for a fourth day, the school will invite the parents to attend a School Attendance Improvement Conference to develop a plan to improve the child's attendance. The conference will occur whether or not the parents attend. If a child becomes habitually truant (6 or more unexcused absences), the school will refer the child to a school or community-based school attendance program or Children, Youth and Family Services (CYF). The school may also file truancy citation(s) with the District Magistrate.

How does being late/leaving early affect my child's attendance record?

Students arriving after the school day begins at 8:45am will be considered tardy. Time lost due to unexcused tardiness is cumulative and is converted into days of unexcused absence. Documentation from a physician and/or court appearance is needed to excuse tardiness.

Requests for early excusal for medical appointments or other urgent reasons will be considered if a note is presented from the parent or guardian at the beginning of the school day. Early excusals will not be permitted for activities such as lessons, practices, athletic events or babysitting. After five (5) early dismissals accumulated in a school year, a doctor's note or other corroboration that the dismissal is excusable may be required.

How are children excused for family trips?

Educational trips are permissible. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit the Educational Trip Request form describing the educational value of the trip to the principal for **pre-approval** at least five (5) days in advance. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may pick up the Educational Trip Request form in the school office or on the school's website under "Parents" tab. Educational trips that are not pre-approved will be recorded as "unexcused." Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not to request more than a total of five (5) consecutive school days during the school year for educational trips. There will be only one approved trip per year. Even though these days are excused absences, they are counted in the seven (7) day and ten (10) day letters a parent may receive for chronic absences.

Students are expected to make-up all missed work. Please contact your child's teacher prior to leaving for the trip to determine the best way for the work to be done.

ALL TRIPS TAKEN DURING STANDARDIZED TESTING WILL NOT BE EXCUSED. PLEASE REFER TO THE DISTRICT CALENDAR.

How can my child make up his/her missed class work or homework during absence?

If your child misses one day of school:

- Please do not call the main office for assignments.
- Upon your child returning to school the next day, he/she is to request from the teacher any missed work to take home.

If your child misses two or more days of school:

- In order to request work to be sent home, you must contact the main office no later than 10:00 a.m. of the day of pickup.
- Work will be available for pick up at the end of the school day.
- Be sure your child returns the completed assignments to her or his teacher when they return to school.

E. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

8:30 - 8:45 - Students Arrive
8:45 - Start of the School Day
8:50 - Announcements
3:20 - Parent Pick-up
3:25 - 3:45 - Bus Calls

What should I do if my student is arriving late to school?

At the OPLC If you are dropping off between 8:45 and 9:25 am, the student will be marked late but will not need to be signed in or walked to the main office anymore. A staff member will be standing at the front entrance to open the door for your student, take their late note, provide the student with a late pass, and then send the student to their classroom. If you are dropping off after 9:30am, please park your car in a visitor parking spot, walk your child into the office. Parent/child must wear a mask when entering the building. Secretary will record that the child is present and notify their teacher.

At the OES and the OIS if students arrive after 8:45am students will enter the school building through the office and present their tardy note to the building secretary. The tardy will be documented as an unexcused tardy, without the appropriate documentation for excusal (doctor's note, court notice or bereavement notice). Parents are also allowed to email the tardy note to the building secretaries (OES: dmattis@octorara.org; OIS: cgood@octorara.org).

What should I do if I drive my child to school?

When dropping children off at school, parent(s)/guardian(s) must use the designated parent drop-off area by the curb painted yellow. **Please drop off students in between the signs.** Drop-off starts at 8:30am and students must be in homeroom by 8:45am. Students must exit from the right of the vehicle onto the sidewalk. Parent(s)/guardian(s), for safety concerns, are **NOT** to use the bus lane to drop children off. Cars are **NOT** to be parked in handicapped parking areas and the drop-off area. Please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the drop-off area. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not allowed to walk their students into the building.

May my child arrive early to school?

CHILDREN ARE NOT TO BE DROPPED OFF TO SCHOOL BEFORE 8:30am. We do **NOT** have staff available to monitor student safety. Students who are not participating in a school-sponsored activity or a teacher's help class **should not arrive before 8:30am.** Students should arrive between 8:30am and 8:45am.

What should I do if I am picking my child up at school for dismissal?

Parent Pick-Up

1. Please refrain from using your cell phone during pick-up when students are being dismissed.
2. During parent pick-up, cars will line up in the pick up and drop off lane in the upper parking lot.
3. Students on the parent pick up list will be called to the hallway by the parent pick-up exit and wait until their car is at the front of the line.
4. Staff members will radio to staff inside for students to be dismissed in order of the cars in line.
5. Do not leave your car for any reason.
6. The staff member outside will help load the student if needed.

Parent Pick-Up Name Cards

- Every student may have up to two Parent Pick-Up (PPU) name cards available for their family to use for the 2020-2021 school year.
- PPU cards will be given to parents before the start of the school year. To get your PPU card, parents/guardians will need to come into the school office during the designated times before the start of school and show their identification.
- If you are unable to get your PPU cards during the designated times prior to the start of school, you will need to come into the school office once school starts and show your identification then receive your PPU cards.
- When you enter the PPU lane, have your pick-up card visible through the windshield. The card must be in place until your child is in the car.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) who send in notes to pick-up their child at the end of the day need to follow the same procedure. If a parent is running late, they must call the office by 3:20pm, if they want their child to be held at the building until they arrive. The child must be picked up no later than 3:45pm

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) ARE NOT PERMITTED TO COME INTO THE SCHOOL BUILDING OR GO TO THE CLASSROOM TO PICK UP THEIR CHILD.

What if I need an earlier dismissal?

Early dismissals are discouraged because of disruption of instructional time. However, if an early dismissal is absolutely necessary, then an email request must be sent to the building secretary and teacher on the morning of that dismissal stating the reason and designating the time you will arrive to pick up your child. The student will be called to the office once you arrive at the office. You must wear a mask when you are in the building. From 3:00pm to 3:20pm, classroom instruction and procedures will not be interrupted for early dismissals unless a note is presented from the parent or guardian at the beginning of the school day for medical appointments or other urgent reasons.

May someone other than a parent or guardian take my child from the school?

Children are released only to a parent or guardian or an emergency contact. Identification ***MUST*** be produced to ensure everyone's safety. **The person picking up the child must have their name on the child's emergency list.**

The school is legally responsible for the safety of all children during the school day. In keeping with the policy, to assure that children are released only for proper reasons and into proper hands, it becomes prudent that:

1. No student is released from school on the basis of an invalidated telephone call.
2. Children of estranged/separated/divorced parents are released only upon the request of the parent(s) whom the court holds directly responsible for the child. If a court order is not in place, both parents, with proper documentation, will be permitted to sign their child out of school. School personnel will not make custody decisions.
3. Children may also be released to emergency contacts as documented on the emergency form.

If your family is involved in custodial concerns, which puts your child at risk, please notify the building counselor. **Custody papers MUST be kept on file at the District Office and the individual school office.**

F. BUS INFORMATION

Who can answer my questions about busing?

Althouse Transportation – (610) 593-8215

What are the bus rules?

- Be seated immediately upon boarding. (Seats hold three children.)
- Cooperate and listen to the directions of the bus driver.
- Observe orderly conduct on the bus in actions and words. Screaming and shouting is subject to disciplinary action.
- Refrain from distracting the driver.
- Remain seated between boarding and leaving the bus.
- Refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Keep arms, legs, head, and belongings inside the bus.
- Refrain from throwing anything in or out of the bus.
- Refrain from damaging the bus.
- Refrain from physically hurting other passengers.
- When exiting the bus, students seated in the first row shall exit first.

How is my child assigned to a bus?

Althouse Transportation Inc. assigns all students to buses and bus stops. Students must ride their assigned bus and must board and disembark at their assigned stop. Students can only be assigned to one bus for each direction.

How can I change that assignment?

Permanent Changes: Requests for a permanent change due to a change of residence, babysitter, or other reasons must be done through the school district's contractor, Althouse Transportation Inc. Please call Althouse Transportation at (610) 593-8215 for authorization for any bus changes and when approved, Althouse Transportation will then notify the office at the OPLC, OES or OIS.

Bus Pass Request: Only requests for a five-day bus change or more (no requests will be granted for less than five days). Please call Althouse Transportation at (610) 593-8215. If the requested change involves a bus, which is full, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified and the child will then ride his/her regular bus. This notification must be made no less than two (2) days prior to the requested date.

No bus changes are approved during the first two weeks of school.

What happens if my child misbehaves on the bus?

Bus drivers will report, in writing, incidents of misbehavior to Althouse Transportation. At that time, Althouse Transportation will notify the building principal who will then address the children involved. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed of bus problems. Consequences for misbehavior may include:

1. A principal/student conference
2. Parental notification
3. A written exercise of ways to prevent a future problem
4. A loss of bus riding privileges
5. Other disciplinary action deemed appropriate

If your child is having problems on the bus, contact Althouse Transportation at (610) 593-8215 BEFORE contacting the school. If the problem is not resolved through Althouse Transportation, please call the office. (School staff cannot supervise bus stops.)

K-6 Bus Discipline Steps

1 ST offense/ Written Report	parent notified, written conference, student may be assigned a seat
2 nd offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 1 day
3 rd offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 3 days
4 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 5 days
5 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 10 days
6 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 30 days
7 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 60 days
8 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 90 days
9 th offense/Written Report	parent notified, conference student + counselor, possible suspension from bus 180 days

G. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT STATEMENT

Who determines the curriculum?

In conjunction with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Octorara Area School District is committed to establishing high academic standards for all students, kindergarten through grade 12. Curriculum is based on the Pennsylvania State Standards and Core Standards, in correlation with input from every teacher and administrator through the process of Curriculum Planning. The Octorara Area School Board approves additions, deletions, or other changes.

What is my child taught each year?

Classrooms, supported by the use of state and federal mandated standards, assist children’s learning across the curricular areas for Language Arts (Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Expressive Writing, Handwriting, Listening Skills, and Speaking Skills), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, Art, Music, Digital Literacy (with STEM-related activities embedded within), and STEM/TECH ED in 3rd through 6th grade. Teachers provide students with opportunities to build knowledge and meaning through active, hands-on exploration in a variety of designs, which include large and small group instruction, individual and partner activities. The most effective methods utilized by teachers include specific, scientifically research-based instructional techniques, language and methods, active student engagement, and differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all learners while supporting high quality expectations of students. Parent(s)/guardian(s) learn more about the curriculum at our “Back-To-School Night” and parent conferences, as well as at parent workshops and daily discussions with their child about school.

How is my child being instructed in English Language Arts (ELA)?

The OPLC is unique in that our reading program consists of two ELA core components. Within these two components, students receive focused instruction on the five critical areas of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. In the first component, students receive explicit phonics instruction based on their instructional reading level using “Project Read,” followed by Guided Reading Groups using various leveled readers. The second component is our English Language Arts instruction, which follows a heterogeneous approach, where students are exposed to Shared Literature, Grammar, and Process Writing.

The OES and the OIS utilize the reading/writing workshop model which follows a heterogeneous approach, where students are exposed to Shared Literature, Grammar, and Process Writing.

How is my child being instructed in math?

Students receive focused math instruction using the GoMath Series as well as explicit instruction. All instruction is aligned with the Pennsylvania and Core Academic Math Standards. Throughout the year, students will participate in a wide variety of mathematics activities through hands-on experiences, discussions, and inquiry-based learning. The GoMath Series, as well as other math resources, technology and manipulatives assist teachers in maximizing student achievement.

Must all children participate in all classes?

All children are expected to participate in the full curricula of their grade level including health, digital literacy, S.T.E.M/Tech. Ed., art, physical education, and music. A doctor's excuse is required for exemption from physical education. When able, physical education is adapted to meet the needs of the student prior to exemption.

How can I tell how my child is doing in school?

There are several ways: Parent-Teacher conferences, report cards, assignment books, homework, assessments, progress monitoring, student interaction and discussions, and projects.

- #1 Parent - Teacher Conferences-** Parent conferences are held in the fall and the spring. At this time your child's classroom teacher and reading teacher will share with you a cumulative summary of your child's progress. Conferences may be scheduled at other times by contacting your child's teacher.
- #2 Report Cards-** Each school year consists of three (3) trimesters. At the end of each trimester, a formal progress report is sent home for all students.
- #3 Assessments-** Teachers evaluate student's **independent** academic mastery through various tests, quizzes and assignments/projects.
- #4 Progress Monitoring-** Progress monitoring gives teachers instant insight into the effectiveness of instruction and tracks progress to specific benchmark goals. Student growth is closely monitored to determine if the instruction is effective and if the child is progressing at the appropriate rate.
- #5 Student Interactions and Discussions-** Listening and speaking are two out of the four language domains which are critical for academic success. **Independent** mastery of skills such as following directions, paraphrasing, organizing and problem solving are essential literacy strategies.
- #6 Homework-** Children who do their homework each night are practicing what their teacher has taught. By helping your child to develop a "homework habit" of adopting a study schedule, selecting a good place to work, and checking all assignments, you are setting an excellent precedent. The school board has set the guidelines for homework as no more than 10 minutes per night multiplied by the grade the student is in.

- Kindergarten - Few or no assignments
- Grade 1 - Ten (10) min.
- Grade 2 - Twenty (20) min.

- Grade 3 - Thirty (30) min.
- Grade 4 - Forty (40) min.
- Grade 5 - Fifth (50) min.
- Grade 6 - Sixty (60) min.

- #7 Standardized Tests-** Student progress is now measured through the PA State System of Assessment (PSSA) in grades 3 through 8. Results are mailed to parents. Specific skills are identified and compared with students living in districts similar to Octorara locally and nationally. PSSA (Pennsylvania State System of Assessments) testing for the 2020-2021 has not

been determined yet. It is critical that your child attend school on testing days. We are accountable for meeting State and Federal standards. Student scores are reported directly to the State and Federal Departments of Education. Questions about these tests may be directed to the school counselor or principal.

How may I help motivate my child during the school year?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may help their children by:

- Reading with him/her daily.
- Ensuring he/she has a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast.
- Establishing a morning & evening routine.
- Developing a "homework habit."
- Ensuring he/she attends school on time.
- Having good communication with your child's teachers.

What if my child is experiencing difficulties in school?

For students experiencing difficulty, the OPLC, OES, and OIS implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to provide tiered interventions based on assessment data and teacher observation. You should also contact your child's teacher, if you are concerned. Other sources of help are the School Counselor, Reading Specialists, Intervention Specialist and/or Principal.

What is the Title I Reading Program?

This is a federally funded program. It provides additional guided practice for the development of reading skills and strategies that are being taught in the classroom.

What is the I.S.T.?

The purpose of the Instructional Support Team is to help students be more successful in school. The Instructional Support Team consists of the child's Classroom Teacher, Intervention Specialist, Reading Specialist, School Counselor, Principal, and Parent. The IST Program (Instructional Support Team) assists classroom teachers and parents in planning and implementing strategies designed to help students who are experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties.

Does my child need special services?

Gifted Services: Services for the Mentally Gifted are provided in accordance with PA Chapter 16 (Special Education for Gifted Students). Octorara Area School District uses a system of data collection and universally administered assessments to identify students who may be in need of gifted services. The screening varies depending on the grade level in which the tests are administered to all students. If a parent feels that his/her student may require gifted services, he/she may contact the school counselor, classroom teacher, or school principal. More information can be found on the School District website (Departments: Special Education Services).

Special Education Services: Special Education services are provided in accordance with PA Chapter 14 (Special Education Services and Programs). A student may be eligible for special education if the student:

1. has an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, hearing impairment, deafness, speech or language impairment, visual impairment (including blindness), autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities **and**
2. needs special education, as determined by an evaluation team.

If a parent feels that his/her student may require special education services, he/she may contact the school counselor, classroom teacher, or school principal. Special education information, procedures and services are found on the School District website (Departments: Special Education Services).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act: Accommodation plans, known as Section 504 Plans, are provided in accordance with PA Chapter 15 (Protected Handicapped Students). 504 plans are developed and written for students who require accommodations due to an ongoing disability that substantially limits a major life function such as physical or mental functioning. These disabilities impact a student's ability to **access** instruction; they do not require specially designed instruction. If a parent feels that his/her student may require a Section 504 Plan, he/she may contact the school counselor, classroom teacher, or school principal. Additional information can be found on the School District website (Departments: Special Education Services).

English as a Second Language Services: Octorara Area School District shall provide an appropriate planned instructional program for identified students whose dominant language is not English. The goal of ESL services is to provide English Learners (ELs) with instructional support that will enable them to participate fully in their educational experience in our schools and in their social lives in our community. As a student enrolls and is identified as requiring ESL instruction, he/she will receive instruction and/or academic support from an ESL Program Specialist. Additional information can be found on the School District website (Departments: Special Education Services).

What is the role of the School Counselor?

To promote and enhance student learning. The school counselor delivers services for academic, career, and personal development.

H. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Does the OPLC, OES, or OIS offer any extracurricular programs?

During the 2020-2021 school year, extracurricular activities and programs may not be available due to health and safety protocol associated with COVID-19.

I. FIELD TRIPS

Will my child participate in field trips?

Field trips are used as a resource for teaching and learning and to support the curriculum. All children are expected to participate. However, the administration may exclude from participation in field trips any student with a history of disciplinary problems.

If field trips are scheduled, parent(s)/guardian(s) will pay the cost of the field trip for their child. Every student must return the required Field Trip Permission Form in order to attend.

May I chaperone my child on a field trip?

A specified number of parent(s)/guardian(s) could be needed to assist on all field trips. School field trips are designated for school purposes only and are NOT to be integrated as "Family Trips." Students attending the trip with the school MUST stay with his/her assigned chaperone at all times. As a chaperone, you and your child are expected to ride the bus to and from the field trip. It is also imperative that when chaperoning, your full attention is on the students and personal business (i.e. cell phone use/texting) is not taking place. Smoking is NOT permitted.

****All chaperones MUST follow the Volunteer Policy approved by the Board (See Appendix AA)***

Field Trip Medication Policy

The school nurse is NOT routinely available to attend field trips or legally permitted to delegate medication dispensed from the health office to non-nursing personnel. If your child has severe allergies or other serious medical issues, a parent may be asked to accompany the student on any educational trip.

Teaching staff may administer a student's medication during the field trip providing:

1. The medication is an inhaler and has documentation on file with the school nurse.
2. The medication is an epi-pen and the school personnel has had approved training to administer.

J. SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIOR PROGRAM

What is the reason for having a School-Wide Positive Behavior System?

To shift from a reactive and aversive approach for managing problem behavior to one that is preventive and positive by creating proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment. The system is based on a three-tier structure:

- **Tier I** prevention focuses on preventing the development of new cases of problem behaviors by focusing on all students and staff, across all school settings.
- **Tier II** prevention focuses on reducing the number of existing cases of problem behaviors by establishing efficient and rapid responses to problem behavior.
- **Tier III** prevention focuses on reducing the intensity and/or complexity of existing cases of problem behavior that are resistant to primary and secondary prevention efforts.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE PLC

Each classroom will be using the **Positive Action** program for recognizing good behavior as well as addressing inappropriate behaviors.

Positive Action program:

Each student will have a Positive Action Calendar to keep track of their progress. Each day a student has exhibited behavioral expectations they will add a plus to their calendar indicating that they have chosen positive actions that day. If a number is placed in the box for the day it indicates a skill that the student will need to practice and improve upon in the future. Our goal is to focus on positive behaviors and to help students learn that they have choices about their behaviors. We want them to learn that they can learn through practice.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE OES

Students participate in the GYRO behavior plan at OES. If a child's card remains on Green throughout the day they are following appropriate school rules. Before a student's card is flipped to Yellow a verbal warning may be administered by the teacher. Yellow serves as a warning, but if inappropriate behavior continues the student's card will be flipped to Red. If the behaviors are still occurring the student is sent out of the classroom to a neighboring classroom to reflect on their choices in written form. The GYRO program is meant to be a proactive form of classroom management and parents are informed daily of a child's behavior via a calendar that the students color the color they ended up on before leaving school each day. Please check your child's red homework folder daily for their GYRO calendar and homework for the night. If there are a number of color changes you may contact the classroom teacher to discuss behavior. Students receive small monthly rewards based on staying Green 80% for that month. Every three months there is a large reward that children earn by staying on Green 80% over the course of those months. Children not earning large rewards will participate in alternative activities the day of the reward. In order to participate in the school-wide end of the year GYRO picnic your student must remain on Green for an average of 80% for the entire year.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE OIS

The OIS uses a school-wide behavior plan to help students maintain positive behavior. The plan is called 4Behavior and it provides teachers and students with three simple school-wide expectations :

1. Be respectful to classmates, teachers and staff
2. Listen and follow directions
3. Work and play safely

Teachers monitor student behavior on a chart. Each time a student does not follow or meet an expectation, a different intervention is used.

1. Warning
2. Lunch detention
3. Phone call home
4. Discipline referral to the office

If you have any questions about the 4Behavior School-Wide Behavior Plan, please contact the office to discuss your concerns with the principal or assistant principal.

Positive Action

Positive Action is a systematic educational program that promotes an intrinsic interest in learning and encourages cooperation among students. It works by teaching and reinforcing the intuitive philosophy that you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions. The effects of the program range from increased academic achievement to dramatic reductions in problem behaviors.

Positive Action is based on the intuitive philosophy that we feel good about ourselves when we do positive actions. The Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle (TAF) illustrates how this works in life: our thoughts lead to actions and those actions lead to feelings about ourselves which in turn lead to more thoughts.



BULLYING

What is Bullying? (Information taken from violencepreventionworks.org)

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

This definition includes three important components:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

RULES AGAINST BULLYING AND HOW TO RESPOND TO BULLYING

- We do not bully others.
- We help students who are bullied.
- We include students who are left out.
- We tell an adult at school and an adult at home when somebody is being bullied.

OCTORARA K-6 DISCIPLINE POLICY

I. Philosophy

It is the purpose of the Octorara K-6 Discipline Policy to operate a school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend our schools.

Our priorities are educating children and helping them become resilient, capable people with a strong sense of self-esteem. Our discipline policies respect these priorities. When the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies and discipline procedures, subject to administrative discretion.

II. Code of Conduct

The students of the OPLC, OES, and OIS are expected to maintain good order and discipline in the school environment. Good order and discipline may be described as the absence of distractions, friction and disturbances, which interfere with the optimum functioning of the student, the class, and the school. It is also the presence of the friendly, yet businesslike, rapport in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually recognized and mutually accepted goals.

The Code of Conduct applies to all school activities wherever such events are held, and on any vehicles that are provided for student transportation. Any offense that adversely affects the good order, maintenance, or discipline of the school environment will initiate the discipline procedures.

III. Special Education

The Octorara K-6 District discipline policies administered to Special Education students will be administered in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations and standards.

IV. Restrictions of Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from bringing lasers, cell phones, beepers, electronic games, and other electronic devices to school without written permission from the building principal. If a student requires an electronic device for before/after school use, please contact the principal for permission.

V. Restrictions of Trading Cards

Students are prohibited from bringing trading card paraphernalia, such as Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, Baseball cards, etc. to school without written permission from a teacher or administrator.

VI. Definitions of Discipline Terms

Time-Out - The temporary removal of a student from an activity to a designated area or classroom. Any teacher or school official for the purpose of redirecting a student's behavior may assign "Time-Out".

Detention - The requirement is that the student report to a specific school location and to designated teacher or school official. If the detention requires before-school or after-school attendance, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to arrange for transportation.

In-School Suspension - This is the removal of a student from class and assignment of that student to an alternative program, isolated from peers. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted.

Out-of-School Suspension - Suspension is the removal of a student from school for a designated number of days. During the period of suspension, all school-sponsored activities are eliminated. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to schedule and attend a conference.

Social Restriction - May be assigned by the teacher or administrator in conjunction with other types of discipline for repeated violations of the discipline policy. While on social restriction, students may not be permitted to attend school activities occurring before, after and/or during the school day, including but not limited to intramurals, PTO functions, certain assemblies and class trips. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified when social restrictions are imposed.

Coordinating Council - This is made up of an administrator, teacher and counselor.

Hearing - School officials are appointed by the School Board to sit, as fact finder and judge, with respect to student disciplinary matters.

DISCIPLINE LEVELS & CONSEQUENCES

These are guidelines for administrators to use when assigning consequences.

LEVEL I	Affection - inappropriate display of Disruptive behavior False information Shoving – pushing Throwing food or other cafeteria misbehaviors Vandalism (minor) Unexcused late to school (5 to 7 day) Non repayment of lunch money Other inappropriate behaviors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference with student 2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) 3. Loss of recess privileges 4. Detention
LEVEL II	Continuation of Level I behavior's or Disrespect for authority Obscenity or obscene gestures Racial slurs Cheating, lying Theft (minor) Unexcused late to school (8 to 10 days) Substitute teacher referral Horseplay Other disrespectful behavior Damage to or loss of school property	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference with student 2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) 3. Loss of recess privileges 4. Detention 5. Loss of social privileges
LEVEL III	Continuation of Level I or Level II behavior's or Fighting or physical endangerment Kicking, hitting, touching inappropriate places Threatening a student Insubordination Late to school (11+ days) Bus misbehavior (major) Harassment of a student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference with student and parent 2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) 3. Loss of recess privileges 4. Detention 5. Loss of social privileges 6. In-School Suspension
LEVEL IV	Continuation Level I or Level II or Level III behavior's or Alcohol - possession, use or distribution Pol. 227 Drugs - possession, use or distribution Pol. 227 Fireworks – possession, use or distribution Fire alarm – false alarm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference with student and parent 2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) 3. Loss of recess privileges

Theft (major)
Tobacco – possession, use or distribution Pol. 222
Vandalism (major)
Weapon – possession, use or distribution
Threatening a teacher or staff member
Harassment of a teacher or staff member
Assault
Terroristic threats

4. Detention
5. Loss of social privileges
6. In-School Suspension
7. Out-of-School Suspension
8. Contact law enforcement

K. ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER / INTERNET USAGE

The Octorara Area School District (OASD) has established an Internet connection for use by students and staff. The purpose of OASD's Internet access is to promote education and research and to support the district's curriculum.

As such, the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources; some of which may not be educationally valuable and may be deemed inappropriate and offensive. The OASD has taken precautions to ensure the educational use of the Internet. Our focus is less in controlling the environment, but more in providing individual users with the understanding and skills needed to use the Internet in ways appropriate to their individual educational needs.

Students, staff, and parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised that some sites may contain inappropriate material. School administrators and staff do not condone the use of such materials and do not permit use of such materials in the school environment. Students, who knowingly bring such materials into the school environment regardless of format, will be dealt with according to the discipline policies of the individual school building.

Use of the Internet is available to OASD students and staff who have agreed to this policy, have been trained in Internet use, and are using it in pursuit of an educational objective related to the district's curriculum. Students may only use the Internet under the supervision of a faculty member, thus minimizing the potential for misuse.

All users who will be interactive with the Internet must sign an acceptable use agreement. A sponsoring teacher or the library media specialist will distribute the student acceptable use contract. The signature of a parent or guardian is required for students currently under the age 18. The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Each user is held responsible for his/her actions and activity on the Internet.

Some examples of unacceptable use are as follows:

1. Displaying or copying offensive or inappropriate messages or pictures, examples of such messages include but are not limited to, those that are sexually oriented or controlled substance oriented;
2. Violating copyright laws, including illegal use of copyrighted software;
3. Loading or use of games or unauthorized programs, files or other electronic media is prohibited;
4. Uploading, creating, or knowingly transmitting computer viruses;
5. Vandalizing, defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy, hardware or software;
6. Using the network for any illegal activity;
7. Gaining unauthorized access to resources or databases;
8. Vandalizing the data, files, or e-mail of another user;
9. Intentionally wasting limited computer resources;
10. Using the network for financial or commercial gain;
11. Failing to delete downloaded/saved information from the hard drive after usefulness;
12. Using district equipment to access Internet for personal reasons unrelated to stated district goals or

objectives.

Users will abide by the following acceptable rules of network etiquette when using electronic mail.

These include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Users need to be aware that electronic mail is not necessarily private. Users should read only their own mail and are responsible for deleting it.
2. All users must sign their e-mail messages. Anonymous messages are prohibited.
3. Abusive language, swearing, or profanity will not be tolerated. "Flaming", the practice of sending abusive email to an inept user is forbidden. Harassing, insulting, or attacking others is also forbidden. Anyone who receives inappropriate email should forward the message to the Technology Coordinator and/or the Building Administrator.
4. Posting personal communications to a public forum like a news group without the original author's prior consent is prohibited.
5. **For safety purposes, do not reveal your personal address or phone number or that of other students or teachers. Never agree to meet an e-mail acquaintance in person unless accompanied by a parent.**

Abuse of the Internet, including e-mail, will result in denied access. Additional disciplinary action may be determined at the building level in accordance with the district's discipline policy. When appropriate, law enforcement agencies will be involved.

L. STUDENT ATTIRE

How should my child dress for school?

School dress should be appropriate for this age group. If dress interferes with learning, supports inappropriate attitudes or behaviors, or hinders health and safety, then the school must intercede. It is **required** that students wear sneakers on the day he/she attends physical education class.

IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT STUDENTS WEAR SNEAKERS AT ALL TIMES.

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Children should be comfortable and able to enter into all activities in a classroom or on the playground.
2. Neatness should be stressed in all choice of dress.
3. For safety reasons, all shoes worn for play **MUST** be secured with laces, straps, or other fasteners and contain no wheels. For example, flip-flops and heeley rollers should not be worn. Although Crocs meet our criteria, we request they not be worn due to safety concerns. Students need to dress appropriately on gym days (sneakers and pants).
4. Shorts/ skirts/ dresses are permissible during hot weather. The hem of shorts should approximately touch the fingertips when arms are hanging at the side. Fishnet, bare midriff shirts, see-through clothing, tie straps, halters, muscle or tank tops or beachwear **are not permitted**. **Shirt straps must cover the shoulders; otherwise, they are considered tank tops.** The building is air-conditioned and children are outside for a 20-minute recess, and summer shirts and shorts increase the risk of sunburn. If you are concerned about sunburn, please apply sunscreen to your child **prior** to sending him/her to school, as we are not able to apply sunscreen at school. One application will last all day.
5. All shirts must cover midriff area.
6. Cold weather requires the wearing of warm jackets, hats, mittens or gloves, and scarves for healthy outdoor play. **PLEASE LABEL ALL JACKETS, HATS, MITTENS, AND GLOVES WITH YOUR**

CHILD'S NAME. It is very helpful for the children to have all outer clothing and lunch boxes clearly labeled. Labeled items are immediately returned to children by the playground supervisors. **After a limited period of time, all Lost and Found items are forwarded to a charitable organization.**

7. T-shirts with wording that is offensive, vulgar, or which promotes attitudes or behaviors that are socially unacceptable or which are deemed inappropriate for students are not permitted.
8. Make-up, mascara, blush, eye shadow, lipstick should not be worn to school.
9. Undergarments are not to be worn as an outer article of clothing.
10. Pants, shorts, and shirts must be worn at the waist.
11. Jewelry that may impose a safety hazard to children is not permitted.
12. If a child wears a hoodie, he/she may not wear the hood during class in the building.
13. No hats during class unless for a spirit day.

The principal has the final decision regarding dress. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised of such decisions. If a student does not meet the above criteria, they will be sent to the nurse to either change their clothing or the parent will be called to bring in more appropriate attire. We respectfully ask parent(s)/guardian(s) to listen to weather forecasts and dress their children appropriately. We may not allow children outside if they do not have attire suitable for our windy and cold conditions. Jackets can always be left in the classroom if the temperature rises.

M. EMERGENCIES

What happens when school closes early?

Instruct your child with a prearranged plan in case of inclement weather or a building emergency. They need to know whether to go home on their regular bus, who will be at home to greet them, and who to contact in case of emergency. **It is imperative that we have accurate, up-to-date telephone numbers for each student's home and their parent's place of employment should we need to reach them in case of a school closing.** Updated student/parent/emergency information is required for the automated phone system to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s).

NO LAST-MINUTE REQUESTS FOR BUS CHANGES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

How will I know if school is opening late?

The district will notify parents/guardians via our phone call system. TV stations begin announcing school closings and late openings at 6:00am and continue throughout the morning. We have a 2 hour and 3 hour delay option.

N. AUDIO RECORDINGS, PICTURES, AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

May my child bring toys or electronic devices to school?

Toys, balls, electronic games, Silly Bands, portable CD players, iPods, Pokemon and other cards, etc., are **NOT** permitted to come to school unless they are a part of "show and tell" or another school project. **If any item is brought to school, it is not the school's responsibility if the item is lost or stolen.**

May my child be recorded audibly for educational purposes?

Certain students in your child's classroom might have the right to audio record or to receive teacher-made audio recordings of discussions that occur during instructional activities. These recordings could include the voice of your child. The child making the recording or for whom the recording is made will use the recording solely to support his or her ability to access and retain educational information. The recording

will be destroyed when it is no longer necessary for that purpose. Recordings shall not be maintained by or otherwise considered educational records of the District for any purpose.

Are school pictures and publicity pictures taken each year?

Fall Pictures:

- This is a pre-ordered package, which includes a composite picture of your child's classmates and teacher. There is no obligation to purchase these photographs. Your child's school will let you know when fall pictures and retakes will be.

Spring Pictures:

- Individual photographs are taken with a scenic background. This is an a-la-carte package, which is not pre-ordered. Picture packages are sent home via the honor system. Once again, there is no obligation to purchase these photographs. Unwanted pictures must be returned to the school office and payment for kept pictures must be returned within 24 hours. Please submit a note to the teacher if you do not want your child to have his/her spring picture taken.

Does the school use student pictures or work on their website or for public display?

To enhance and promote our school, student photos or work may be published on the district public Internet. A photo/image of a child will not include any personal identifiers. As you are aware, there are potential dangers associated with the posting of personally identifiable information on a website since global access to the Internet does not allow us to control who may access such information. These dangers have always existed; however, we as schools do want to celebrate your child and their work. If you, as the parent or guardian, wish to rescind this agreement, you may do so at any time in writing by sending a letter to the principal of your child's school and such rescission will take effect upon receipt by the school.

O. LOSS OF TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, UNPAID STUDENT ACCOUNTS, AND OTHER SCHOOL MATERIALS

What is the procedure to follow if my child loses a book or other school material?

When a student loses or damages material loaned to them, it is expected that they pay for the material lost. In the event that the material lost is later found in good condition, payment will be returned to the parent by a check from the District Office.

Library Policies and Procedures

Every week, students will have the opportunity to choose and check out two (2) books from the library. Library books are to be returned on the next library day. If the books are not returned to the library on the assigned day, the parent will receive an emailed overdue notice to remind him/her that their student has books to return to the library. Students with overdue books will still be allowed to choose one (1) book from the library, but must keep it at school until the overdue books are returned. Each week, if library books are not returned, the parent will receive an emailed overdue notice. Students are allowed to have up to three (3) books checked out at one time. Students with three (3) books checked out will not be allowed to check out additional books until the overdue books are returned, replaced, or paid for.

Replacing a Lost/Damaged Book

The replacement must be exactly the same as the lost/damaged book. For example: If the book in question is a hardback book, it must be replaced with a hardback book and not a paperback version of that book. Books from online book companies tend to be less expensive than those purchased from a bookstore.

Paying for Lost/Damaged Books

If a book is being paid for, cash or check is accepted. Please make checks payable to the school. Be aware that when we figure the cost of a book, we consider all aspects of the cost of that book, including the shipping and processing. Your check for lost/damaged books is sent to the district office to be deposited into the library account. If the book is found after the money has been deposited, reimbursement can be obtained by contacting the district office. Ultimately, our goal is to have all of the books returned to the library for all the children to enjoy. Please remember that library books are public property and need to be taken care of for the whole school community to share.

P. SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

School Counseling services at the OPLC, OES, and OIS focus on the social, emotional, and learning needs of children. Counseling is provided in individual or small group settings and through consultation with teachers and parent(s)/guardian(s).

How does my child get help from the school counselor?

Children can be referred to the school counselor by parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, principal or even themselves. In addition, the counselor reviews report card grades and standardized tests. She is aware of chronic absences, student misbehavior and/or classroom difficulties and may take the initiative in seeking out the student to provide assistance.

Q. HEALTH SERVICES

The OPLC, OES, and OIS are fortunate to have a full-time school nurse on its staff. The nurse provides for all necessary health care needs of our children.

Emergency Health Information Sheets:

Emergency information sheets are required for each student. **All information should be completed and updated by parent(s)/guardian(s) as changes occur.** Any change in phone numbers must be updated for the District's phone system, school office, nurse and teacher. Please specify if you want an ambulance called and a specific hospital. Students with special health needs are required to submit an annual medical update to the school nurse.

R. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Must my child have a physical examination?

Each child is required to have a complete physical examination before or during the kindergarten year. The child's physician can perform the physical examination. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to be present if the examination is performed at school.

Must my child have a dental examination?

Each child is required to have a dental examination during the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Grades. The school dental hygienist mails a form to all incoming students in these grades. The form is to be completed by the family dentist. If the form is not returned to the school, the school dental hygienist will complete the exam at school.

How can my child participate in the fluoride program?

The school dental hygienist implements the fluoride program. A Fluoride Tablet program is available for kindergarten-grade 6 students, through which children receive a fluoride tablet each school day dispensed by a school assistant.

Are my child's eyes checked?

A nurse will screen each child in K-6 to determine any visual deficiencies a student may be experiencing. If parent(s)/guardian(s) suspect problems, they should contact the school nurse or classroom teacher with their concerns. If suspicions are raised during the screening, parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified and requested to contact an eye doctor who will then determine the course of treatment.

Is my child's hearing checked?

All children in grades k-6 will be screened by the school nurse to detect hearing loss. Children with persistent hearing loss will be referred to a physician for further evaluation. Please keep the nurse and teacher informed of any diagnosis or treatment, which is being conducted through family arrangements. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers may refer children to the nurse at any time.

S. IMMUNIZATION

Must my child have shots to attend school?

State law requires every child to be immunized and to submit all necessary health records in compliance with Pennsylvania Public School Law **BEFORE ENTERING** school. The immunizations required include diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, rubella, mumps, hepatitis B and chickenpox. Specific requirements are found on the District's website.

T. SEVERE ALLERGY PROCEDURE

Due to several students having severe peanut/nut allergies, k-6 and special area classrooms, as well as a designated location in the cafeteria, will be peanut-free areas.

This means that any snack sent in for your child must not contain any ingredients containing peanuts/nuts or peanut oils. This also pertains to any treat sent in for parties or events. Peanut products can be hidden ingredients in other foods such as crackers, chocolate, cookies, etc., so really paying attention to labels is important.

This is a very serious matter. Any peanut/nut allergy reaction can be severe and even life threatening. We realize this will be an adjustment and greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions you may contact the school nurse or principal.

U. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES & HEAD LICE

When must my child stay home?

Children with a fever, vomiting, illness, condition preventing proper hygiene or that is contagious are NOT to come to school. The student must be fever-free without vomiting or on an appropriate treatment therapy for at least 24 hours. The State Department of Health regulates exclusion from school due to the following communicable conditions: Symptoms of impetigo, scabies, ringworm, pinkeye, Scarlet Fever, Chicken pox, head lice and/or viable nits.

When may my child return to school?

In cases of typical colds or simple illnesses, children should return to school as soon as possible. Requirements for readmission following prolonged absence or one due to communicable disease may include one or more of the following: Evidence of treatment, written permission from a doctor, normal temperature.

What are head lice & nits?

The adult head louse is a small wingless insect, which lives in the hair and feeds by sucking blood from the scalp. The female louse lays her eggs (nits) on individual hairs where it joins the scalp. The eggs hatch after a week to ten days. Head lice are **NOT a disease**.

How are lice spread?

Lice crawl and are spread mainly **by prolonged head to head contact** or by sharing personal items such as hats, clothing or brushes. Infection is most common among children ages 3-11, where lice may pass easily between playmates. Infection with head lice is NOT a reflection of personal hygiene, but is a result of personal contact.

How do you know if your child has head lice?

Lice are very small, but can be seen with the naked eye. Head lice or their eggs are usually found at the back of the head and behind the ears. However, the entire head should be inspected. The lice eggs, better known as “viable nits,” are attached within ½ inch of the scalp.

What can you do if you find lice or nits on the hair?

Promptly notify your school nurse. There are many ways to treat for head lice including: Wet combing, over-the-counter Pediculicides, or prescription medication. Contact your pediatrician for recommendations.

What can parents do to help prevent the spread of lice?

Young children are in close contact with friends. So, **weekly head inspections are strongly advised**. Pay close attention to the areas at the back of the neck and behind the ears. Another important step that parents/guardians can take is to brush the child’s hair regularly. Brushing can damage young lice before they become established and prevent them from laying eggs. **Keeping long hair in ponytails is strongly encouraged**. Promptly report head lice to the school nurse!

When may children return to school?

- Evidence of treatment
- Absence of live lice and/or viable nits
- Parent must escort child to school and be cleared by the school nurse to return to the classroom
- To view NEW District head lice physician’s orders/protocol see website: www.octorara.k12.pa.us/Domain/4
- The main changes are as follows: **We must protect confidentiality! There will no longer be classroom head lice checks. “Head Lice Notification” letters will no longer be sent home.**

V. PERSONAL INJURY

Will I be notified when my child is hurt at school?

School policies require that parent(s)/guardian(s) be notified of any injury to their child other than minor cuts or scrapes treated by cleansing and band-aids. The nurse’s office makes every effort to send a school nurse visitation slip home with your child every time he/she visits the nurse. This increases parent awareness of the child’s visit to the nurse’s office and provides information should a later symptom develop. At times the school nurse will need to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding an illness or injury. It is essential that all contact information remain current. **Please notify the school office of any changes to personal phone numbers, emergency phone numbers and emergency contact information.**

Are injuries covered by insurance?

Each September parent(s)/guardian(s) are offered the opportunity to purchase insurance for their children. Policy and enrollment information will be sent home with each student. This program is voluntary; however, school officials encourage participation, as the school is not responsible for paying medical costs.

W. MEDICATION

What if my child needs medication during the school day?

Please try to give your child all medicines at home by adjusting the schedule to his/her hours at home rather than in school. When this is not possible, the school nurse can administer medicine. All medications are to be brought to school by the student's parent/guardian. Students should not carry medication on the school bus. In order to avoid any confusion concerning the administration of prescription medication during school hours, the following requirements must be adhered to:

1. A doctor's note must accompany the medication with the following information:

- Diagnosis
- Name of medication
- Instruction for administration
- Any unusual side effects

2. All medication must be stored in the nurse's office in the original container and clearly labeled with:

- Student's name
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Instructions for administration

NO MEDICATION will be administered unless the previous requirements are met. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse. The Pennsylvania Public School Code, Section 1414.2(g) allows parents/guardians to request an exemption to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector for their student. In order to request this exemption, contact the school nurse to make an appointment.

Students should NOT carry cough-drops or other over the counter medication with them at any time.

Sunscreen

The school prefers that sunscreen be applied at home. However, if application is needed during the school day the PA School Code was amended to include sun protection measures for students. Section 1414.10 (2) of the PA School Code allows for the use of a self-applied non-aerosol topical sunscreen product by students in school. The school is not responsible for the use or application of the product.

For use during the school day, parents must:

- give permission by checking "yes" to the appropriate box on the Confidential Nurse Form
- Provide a topical FDA approved sunscreen to remain with the student
- Instruct child on the self-application of lotion
- Instruct child not to share with other students

X. HELP CLASSES

Octorara School District teachers have implemented a program of "**HELP CLASSES**" for students in Grades kindergarten-12. Help Class is a time set outside of the school day for the teacher to give a student more

specific attention and individualized instruction in areas of particular interest or need. Teachers invite children to attend Help Class, in person or virtually, with them on certain dates. During Help Class, the teacher and child will, among other things, review material, practice reading or math skills, make up missed work, learn new information, work on a project, or utilize the computers.

When is Help Class held?

Most teachers hold their classes from 8:00 - 8:30 am or after school. Help classes may also be held virtually. Students will need a ride to or from school for Help class. Teachers may also hold virtual help classes before or after school. If a teacher decides to hold a virtual help class they will email the students' parent(s)/guardian(s) with the link for the help class at least one day prior to the date of the help class. If students are invited, Help Class is strongly recommended for academic support.

When Help Class is requested by a teacher, a bus pass will be issued to the student that will designate a bus stop and time of pick-up. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are also able to drop the students off at school instead of having students take the early bus, but a bus pass will be issued regardless.

Must my child attend Help Class?

Attendance is not mandatory. However, we have found that children enjoy their Help Class time and look forward to their invitations.

Y. BREAKFAST and LUNCH PROGRAM

During the 2020-2021 school year, breakfast and lunch are free for all students. If that changes, refer to procedures below.

Breakfast is served daily from 8:30am-8:55am. The breakfast menu is available on the Octorara Area District Website -> Departments -> Food Services. If students qualify for free/reduced lunch (see "How much does lunch cost?"), they automatically qualify for free/reduced breakfast.

If students do not qualify for free/reduced lunch, but they would like breakfast, they **MUST** have funds in their account. Unlike lunch, students will not be permitted to charge a breakfast to their account.

Lunch:

Students have a daily lunch/recess period of 40 minutes. Students have a choice to bring their own lunch or purchase a hot entrée meal or cold sandwich meal (choice offered daily). Milk can be purchased separately. A menu will be posted on the Octorara School District website -> Departments -> Food Services

How is lunch purchased and paid for?

Option 1:

The district has implemented a system called Schoolcafe.com. This system allows parent(s)/guardian(s) to either go online to Schoolcafe.com or call a toll-free number to make payments to your student's lunch account using a check, credit card or debit card.

TO CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT, VISIT www.Schoolcafe.com or call a toll-free number (855-729-2328).

Option 2:

Students may buy their lunch each day by paying the cashier from their student account.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may send in money to place in their child's individual account. Checks are acceptable and recommended and should be made payable to "**Octorara Cafeteria Account.**"

All checks or money must be in an envelope, including the child's name, grade level and teacher's name.

How much does lunch cost?

Octorara participates in the “National School Lunch Program” which provides Reduced or Free Lunch for those who qualify. You may apply for the program through the District website -> Departments -> Food Services or you can log-on directly at www.paschoolmeals.com. Questions should be directed to the Food Services Director, Linda Neff by calling 610-593-8238 ext 3581.

What if my child forgets his/her lunch or lunch money?

If a student forgets to bring their lunch money or lunch to school or if he/she leaves their classroom without their lunch money or packed lunch, the student will be provided a meal from the cafeteria and the account is charged accordingly. Students may charge lunch; however, the number of lunches able to be charged may change, pending Board approval reflecting a new bill/law.

Negative Balances for School Lunches:

Several attempts will be made by the Octorara Area School District’s Food Service Program in order to resolve all accounts. All accounts must be resolved before the end of the school year.

Z. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Does the school have a parent organization?

The Octorara Primary Learning Center/Elementary School/Intermediate School PTO encourages a spirit of cooperation and understanding between home and school and furthers the welfare of the children and youth in home, school and community. All parent(s)/guardian(s) of K-6 students are automatically members of the K-6 PTO. Please visit the school’s website to link to the OASD K-6 PTO page and newsletter.

Are parent(s)/guardian(s) used as volunteers?

Parent(s)/guardian(s), as volunteers, can make a critical difference in the education of Octorara’s children. No experience is needed, only interest and dependability. However, at this time we are not allowing volunteers into the school building due to COVID-19. When volunteers are allowed back into our school buildings they will be asked to complete all necessary documents. **To ensure the safety of our students, the Octorara Area School District is requiring anyone volunteering in our schools for any reason to sign and return a Volunteer Disclosure Statement for EACH SCHOOL in which you intend to volunteer.** These forms may be sent home with your child at the beginning of the school year. They are also located in the school office and on our website. For specific volunteer information, please see below.

May younger siblings attend events when parent(s)/guardian(s) are volunteering?

Parent volunteers are always needed and welcome however, we must maintain guidelines and consistency for safety reasons. The following procedures be followed:

- Parent volunteers MUST let the classroom teacher know if they are intending to bring younger siblings to classroom events.
- During this time, younger siblings and/or infants must be monitored at all times by the parent and are not permitted to go unattended in learning labs or hallways.
- Younger siblings and/or infants are NOT permitted to accompany parent(s)/guardian(s) when providing instructional support within the classrooms and/or learning lab areas.
- Younger siblings and/or infants are NOT permitted to accompany parent(s)/guardian(s) during any party activities involving cooking in learning lab areas.

If the following guidelines are not followed, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to take the younger sibling home. The safety and academic focus of your children here at school is our number one priority.

AA. VISITATION PROCEDURE

When may I visit the school?

As of the 2020-2021 school year visitors are not allowed into the school building due to COVID-19. If guidance from Chester County Health Department changes and visitors and volunteers are allowed back into the school, the FBI, criminal background, and child abuse clearances must be on file with the district office. Types of volunteers are:

Assistive Volunteers: Those visitors/volunteers who will be under the direct supervision of an OASD staff member. These volunteers must have a valid ID and must have their “Volunteer Forms” on file. Those forms are attached to this handbook for your convenience. Examples of Assistive Volunteers would be classroom helpers, mystery readers, book fair volunteers, field day volunteers.

Independent Volunteers: Those visitors/volunteers are working with students independently without direct supervision from an OASD staff member. Along with the “Volunteer Forms” mentioned above, Independent Volunteers are required by Pennsylvania law to obtain clearances (FBI, criminal background, and child abuse) in order to visit/volunteer as an Independent Volunteer. Examples of Independent Volunteers would be field trip chaperones

Parents can get additional information and directions for obtaining the FBI, criminal background, and child abuse clearances on the OPLC/OES/OIS website or District website or by contacting the District’s HR department.

BB. RECESS

Recess is an important part of the day for all elementary school children. It provides exercise, a time to socialize, and an opportunity for children to take responsibility for their own play. Students should be prepared for all recesses to be held outdoors. The **only** exception to outdoor recess is wet weather, extreme cold, and playground accessibility.

What if my child is recovering from a cold or other illness?

In most cases, if a child cannot go outside, they should not be in school. However, there are times when a child is well enough for quiet activity but not active play. Therefore, children with a note from home will be permitted to stay indoors for one, or at most, two days. Any amount of time exceeding this will require a doctor’s excuse.

Who supervises the playground?

The OPLC, OES, and OIS lunch/recess supervisors supervise the lunch/recess periods.

How is playground discipline handled?

Playground supervisors are in charge on the playground and provide discipline as needed following the OPLC, OES, and OIS Schoolwide Behavior Program and District Discipline Policy.

CC. Homeless Students (McKinney-Vento Act)

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees school enrollment for anyone who, due to a lack of housing, does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Who is considered homeless?

Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95) defines homelessness as living in the following places due to lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence:

- In an emergency or transitional shelter
- In a motel, hotel, or campground
- In a car, park, public place, bus or train station, or abandoned building
- Doubled up with relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- In a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- In the above conditions and is a migratory child or youth

The definition of homelessness applies to children and youth with:

- Uncertain housing
- A temporary address
- No permanent physical address

Children and youth living in these settings meet criteria for the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and have special educational rights. They can attend the school they attended before becoming homeless or the school in the attendance area where they are currently living. If you are in one of the above-mentioned situations, please contact your child's building principal for assistance.

Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Primary Learning Center

Principal	Krista Lease	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1510
Building Secretary	Danette M. Balistreri	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1500
Principal's Secretary	Lisa Scanish	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1501
School Counselor	Dawn Baldt	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1531
Intervention Specialist	Jill Bright	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1131
School Nurse	Kristal Guertler	(610) 593-8350 ext. 1541

Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Elementary School

Principal	Brian Dikun	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2510
Building Secretary	Deb Mattis	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2500
Principal's Secretary	Susan Simpson	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2501
School Counselor	Michelle Moran	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2531
Intervention Specialist	Josh Irons	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2025
School Nurse	Margaret Michell	(610) 593-8238 ext. 2541

Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Intermediate School

Principal	Christian Haller	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4510
Building Secretary	Connie Good	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4500
Principal's Secretary	Mary Jo Nines	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4501
School Counselor	Lisa Stiner	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4530
Intervention Specialist	Heidi Ferry	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4516
School Nurse	Wendy Risch	(610) 593-4608 ext. 4540

**District Website Address:
www.octorara.k12.pa.us**