



# Octorara Kindergarten - 6th Grade Parent/Guardian Handbook 2023-2024

*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.

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 Every Learner's 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 foster a culture of high expectations in a safe, secure, and inclusive environment, empowering every learner to pursue the skills necessary to maximize their opportunities for success.

### **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.

**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 the complete policy below. Please email the excuses directly to the school.

OPLC: Mrs. Danette Balistreri, Building Secretary at [dbalistreri@octorara.org](mailto:dbalistreri@octorara.org)

OES: Mrs. Deb Mattis, Building Secretary at [dmattis@octorara.org](mailto:dmattis@octorara.org)

OIS: Mrs. Dorothy Lomboy, Building Secretary at [dlomboy@octorara.org](mailto:dlomboy@octorara.org)

Failure to submit an excuse note or email 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           | Court Appearance                |
| Death in Family   | +Health Care Appointments       |
| Impassable Roads  | Quarantine                      |
| Religious Holiday | *Pre-Approved Educational Trips |

+Whenever your child has a medical 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?**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 9:15 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 9:15am, please park your car in a visitor parking spot, walk your child into the office. 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: dlomboy@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 8:30 a.m.** 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 8:30 a.m.** 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.
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 2023-2024 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 or during Sneak-a-Peek 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 3:20 p.m, if they want their child to be held at the building until they arrive. The child must be picked up no later than 3:45 p.m.*

**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. 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.
- 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.

Failure to comply with the bus rules may result in disciplinary action.

### **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 of your child's school. (School staff cannot supervise bus stops.)

## **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, process writing and guided reading .

### **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 2023-2024 is scheduled for April 22 - May 10. More specific information will be communicated to parents closer to the testing window. 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 through the MTSS process.

### **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. 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) may 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. Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips.

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

### **I. 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 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

The Elementary Schools have identified three main schoolwide expectations that are taught directly to students and defined during their classroom meetings.

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

If a child is having difficulty making positive choices, there are several different ways negative behaviors can be addressed. We hope that by recognizing a student's positive behaviors, this will eliminate negative behaviors.

Teachers at the OPLC & OES will begin each day with Morning Meeting time to promote Social and Emotional learning. Teachers at the OIS will be using the resource Discovery Education.

Morning Meeting is a learning structure where students gather in a circle and engage in a brief and positive way to support them to be their best selves and do their best learning for the day. Beginning the school day with Morning Meeting helps students to feel safe, welcome, and ready to learn. By prioritizing fifteen to twenty minutes in the beginning of the day for Morning Meeting, we can give students an opportunity to make positive social connections both student-to-student and student-to-teacher. There are many ways to infuse academics into Morning Meeting as well. Students will review concepts that have been taught as well as create excitement for the learning planned for the day ahead.

Morning Meeting supports students by:

- Starting the day on a positive note
- Creating a positive learning community
- Providing opportunities to learn and practice social and emotional skills, habits, and mindsets
- Encouraging cooperation and teamwork
- Practicing speaking and listening skills
- Fostering reflective thinking and conversations that connect to learning throughout the day

### **Discovery Education**

OIS staff are dedicated to providing our students with a quality education that includes a program for character development. As a school community, we are committed to providing a safe space and a sense of belonging for our students through a supportive school culture. We expect each student to take personal responsibility to do his or her best as well as have the courage to hold others accountable to do their best through building connections with adults and their peers.

To implement these activities, the Intermediate School has been organized into Discovery Groups consisting of students & staff from each grade level. The multi-grade level setting promotes a larger sense of community in the school.

Students spend time each school day with their Discovery Family. We are focused on making connections with our students and providing activities to build a supportive school community. All students will participate in activities and reflect on their participation. Activities include: School & Community Service, Intramurals, and Cooperative Games. Students also participate in Discovery Lessons based on our key words and concepts. During the 2023-2024 school year OIS students will learning the following Discovery Education themes:

- Destiny
- Humility
- Truth
- Champion
- Courage
- Curiosity

### **BULLYING**

#### **What is Bullying?**

As defined by School Board policy 249, bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a district setting and/or outside a district setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.

2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the district.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

### **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**

According to School Board Policy 237, the Board prohibits the personal use of any electronic device by any K-6 students while in district buildings, on district property and grounds, and at school sponsored activities

An electronic device that is possessed by any student in school buildings or on district property must remain powered off and kept out of sight at all times.

#### **Penalties for Violations**



The Board authorizes building administrators, teachers, and security personnel to confiscate a student's electronic device when used in violation of this policy.

All confiscated electronic devices shall be delivered promptly to the building administrator's office. Confiscated devices shall be returned to the student at the end of the school day for a first offense, and only to a parent/guardian for a second or subsequent offense.

Building administrators may impose additional disciplinary actions against students for violations of this policy, including suspensions from school or recommendations for expulsion from school as warranted by the specific facts and circumstances in a particular case.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the ability of the building administrator or his/her designee to grant approval for the use of an electronic device by an elementary student because of the student's urgent health and safety needs, or in the event of an emergency.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the provision or use of an electronic device by an elementary student as stated in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Service Agreement.

#### V. Restrictions of Trading Cards, Toys, Personal Items

Students are prohibited from bringing trading card paraphernalia, toys and games to school without written permission from a teacher or administrator. **If any item is brought to school, it is not the school's responsibility if the item is lost, damaged or stolen.**

#### 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.*

<b>LEVEL I</b>	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 days) Other inappropriate behaviors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Conference with student</li><li>2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>3. Loss of recess privileges</li><li>4. Detention</li></ol>
<b>LEVEL II</b>	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"><li>1. Conference with student</li><li>2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>3. Loss of recess privileges</li><li>4. Detention</li><li>5. Loss of social privileges</li></ol>
<b>LEVEL III</b>	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"><li>1. Conference with student and parent</li><li>2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>3. Loss of recess privileges</li><li>4. Detention</li><li>5. Loss of social privileges</li><li>6. In-School Suspension</li></ol>
<b>LEVEL IV</b>	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 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Conference with student and parent</li><li>2. Notify parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>3. Loss of recess privileges</li><li>4. Detention</li><li>5. Loss of social privileges</li><li>6. In-School Suspension</li><li>7. Out-of-School Suspension</li><li>8. Contact law enforcement</li></ol>

### **J. ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER / INTERNET USAGE (Board Policy 815)**

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.

### **K. 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).
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, disrupts the learning process, 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.

### **L. 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.

### **M. AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS & PICTURES**

#### **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.

#### **May my child be video recorded on school property?**

The district shall place video surveillance equipment in strategic locations throughout district buildings and grounds to assist in securing district property. The district shall provide proper notice to students, parents/guardians, staff and others that video surveillance may occur on district property at any time.

Recordings from video surveillance equipment are the property of the district and shall be maintained, used and/or destroyed under the supervision, direction, and control of district officials. Recordings shall be subject to other applicable Board policies, including policies concerning confidentiality of student and staff records, and shall be subject to applicable requirements of state and federal law and regulations.

#### **Are school pictures and publicity pictures taken each year?**

##### **Fall & Spring 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.

**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.

**N. 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.

**O. 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.

## **P. 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.

### **What are the PA State Mandated Health Services?**

#### **Definition from the PA School Code:**

*“The Pennsylvania State Health Act mandates that all school age children have certain health screenings and exams throughout their schooling years. **Height, weight, and vision screenings are required for ALL children in ALL grades EVERY year.**”*

In addition, the following are also required:

- **Kindergarten/First Grade (original entry)** – hearing screening, physical and dental exams
- **Second Grade** – hearing screening
- **Third Grade** – hearing screening and dental exam
- **Sixth Grade** – physical and scoliosis exam

### **What health screenings will my child receive at school?**

Health screenings are done throughout the year by the school nurse in the school building. Students are screened individually. Confidentiality and privacy are strictly adhered to. If a parent wants their child to opt out of the state required screenings, please contact the school nurse by September 15th and complete the “Opt Out” form located [here](#) , in which case physician performed screenings must be provided to the school.

All failed screenings will be re-tested. If there is a second failure, a referral letter will be mailed home. Please have these issues corrected as vision and hearing may affect a child’s academic progress. If there is a financial concern, please contact the school nurse for available resources.

### **What Immunizations are required?**

#### **FOR ATTENDANCE IN ALL GRADES children need the following:**

- 4 doses of tetanus\* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria\* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles\*\*
- 2 doses of mumps\*\*
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles)\*\*
- 3 doses of hepatitis B

- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease

**FOR ATTENDANCE IN 7TH GRADE:**

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap)
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)

**FOR ATTENDANCE IN 12TH GRADE:**

- 2nd dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine

**These requirements allow for the following exemptions:**

- Medical reason (with documentation from doctor)
- Religious belief
- Philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction

*An exemption [form](#) must be filed with the school nurse. If your child is exempt from immunizations, he/she may be removed from school during an outbreak.*

\*Usually given as DTP or DTap or DT or Td    \*\*Usually given as MMR

**When must you keep your child home from school due to illness?**

SYMPTOMS	My Child Must be Kept Home?
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> Frequent loose or watery stools compared to child’s normal pattern</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> – if child looks or acts ill; if child has diarrhea with fever or vomiting; if child has frequent episodes</p>
<p><b>Fever</b> Fever is greater than 100.0F without medication</p>	<p><b>Yes-</b> student must be without a fever for 24 hours without use of medication before returning to school</p>
<p><b>Flu Symptoms</b> Fever over 100.0F with cough or sore throat.    May have headache and body aches</p>	<p><b>Yes-</b> symptom and fever free for 24 hours without use of medication</p>
<p><b>Coughing</b> Severe, uncontrolled coughing or sneezing</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> – medical evaluation is necessary</p>



<b>Mild Respiratory or Cold Symptoms</b> Stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough	<b>No</b> – may attend if able to participate in learning activities
<b>Rash WITH Fever</b> Body rash without fever usually does not require to be kept home	<b>Yes</b> – seek medical evaluation
<b>Vomiting</b> Two or more episodes in the past 24 hours	<b>Yes</b> – until vomiting resolves or the physician decides it is not contagious. Observe for other symptoms of illness and dehydration
<b>ILLNESS</b>	<b>My Child Must be Kept Home?</b>
<b>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</b> Pink color of eye <b>AND</b> thick yellow/green discharge, crusting on lashes	<b>Yes</b> – until 24 hours after treatment. A physician note is required.
<b>Fifth's Disease</b>	<b>No</b> – Child is no longer contagious once the rash appears
<b>Lice</b> Live lice or nits ½" to scalp	<b>Yes</b> - until treated, must be cleared to return by school nurse
<b>Ringworm</b>	<b>No</b> – area must be covered
<b>Strep Throat</b>	<b>Yes</b> – for 24 hours after treatment begins and is able to participate in learning activities

### Confidential Nurse Form

A new Confidential Nurse form must be completed each school year providing current information, updated diagnoses, and medications. Please complete and return to school as soon as possible. This signed form is required to treat your child. The form can be located [here](#).

### Medications

Per PA State law, students may not carry any medication on themselves, prescription or over the counter. Medications that need to be taken during the day must be sent in with signed parent permission and a physician order. The Medication Permission form is available [here](#) or from your school nurse.

### **Chronic Illnesses or Disabilities**

If your child has a chronic illness or disability that will need care during the school day, please contact the school nurse so that a plan may be developed with you, your physician, and the school nurse. This plan may be an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) or an Individual Health Care Plan (IHP).

### **Injuries Occurring at School**

At times students may be injured at school. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with first aid. When major injuries occur, such as possible sprains or fractures, head injuries, etc., every attempt will be made to contact the parent. A physician referral will be made if needed. Follow-up with the school nurse with any plan of care. 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.

### **Occurring at Home**

If your child is injured outside of school, **notify the school nurse with any care that may be needed through the school day. A physician report is required for any activity restrictions.**

### **Dental Services**

According to the Octorara Area School District's Dental Services Program, dental evaluations will be performed on students in grades **1, 3, and 7**, who did not return a completed private dental examination form.

### **Dental Evaluations**

Dental evaluations are done throughout the school year by a certified school dental hygienist. Students are screened individually, to assure privacy and confidentiality. If a parent does not want their child to receive a dental evaluation at school, they must return a completed private dental examination form prior to the start of dental evaluations. If you did not receive a private dental examination form, you may find one [here](#) or contact the school dental hygienist or school nurse. Referral letters will be sent home to students that may have a dental issue. Please have any dental needs corrected and return the completed dental referral letter to school. If there is a financial concern, please contact the school nurse or school dental hygienist for available resources.

### **Q. 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.

### **R. BREAKFAST and LUNCH PROGRAM**

The Octorara Area School District participates in the Community Eligibility Provision as of the 23-24 school year. Breakfast and Lunch will be provided at no charge to all students without the need to fill out an application of any kind. Students are encouraged to take both meals every school day.

Any questions should be directed to the food service director at 610-593-8238 ext. 30588.

All students are given an ID number which they will be required to use to purchase a la carte/snack items from the cafeteria. The student must have money with them or money in their accounts to purchase these items from the cafeteria. Deposits can be made online at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or the student may turn money in directly to the cashier.

Students caught stealing food or beverages from the cafeteria will be prosecuted as required by School Board policy.

### **S. 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. **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.

Types of volunteers are:

**Position Volunteer** – An adult applying for or holding an unpaid position with the district or a program, activity or service, as a person responsible for the child's welfare or having direct volunteer contact with children. Example: Tutors, Coaches, Activity Advisors

**Non - Position Volunteer**- Any individual who voluntarily provides services to the School District without compensation on a routine/repetitive basis, and who will work directly under the supervision and direction of a teacher or administrator employed by the district and does not apply direct services to the children or have unsupervised contact with students. Examples: Collecting tickets at events, working concession stands, day chaperones, PTO and homeroom parents.

Visitor- A visitor is defined as an adult 18 years or older, parent/guardian, adult resident, educator, official or other individual who is not a district employee or independent contractor, and who visits a school or attends or participates in a single event completed in one to two days and does not have unsupervised contact with students. Examples: Spring Fair, Field Day, District Assemblies, Guest Reader and Assist in classroom celebrations.

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.

If a parent would like to visit school it must be pre-arranged with school staff and pre-approved by administration.

### **T. 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?**

Staff at OPLC, OES, and OIS 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 School-wide Behavior Program and District Discipline Policy.

### **U. 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.

***V. Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Primary Learning Center***

Principal	Krista Lease	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10510
Building Secretary	Danette M. Balistreri	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10500
Principal's Secretary	Marcy Phillips	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10501
School Counselor	Sarah Kluge	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10531
Intervention Specialist	Jill Bright	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10131
School Nurse	Kristal Guertler	(610) 593-8350 ext. 10541

***Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Elementary School***

Principal	Brian Dikun	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20510
Building Secretary	Deb Mattis	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20500
Principal's Secretary	Susan Simpson	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20501
School Counselor	Michelle Moran	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20531
Intervention Specialist	Josh Irons	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20025
School Nurse	Tamela Cooper	(610) 593-8238 ext. 20541

***Important Phone Numbers for the Octorara Intermediate School***

Principal	Christian Haller	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40510
Building Secretary	Dorothy Lomboy	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40500
Principal's Secretary	Mary Jo Nines	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40501
School Counselor	Lisa Steiner	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40530
Intervention Specialist	Melissa Fanelli	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40516
School Nurse	Wendy Risch	(610) 593-4608 ext. 40540

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

## PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

August 28, 2023

Welcome to the Octorara Primary Learning Center, Octorara Elementary School, & Octorara Intermediate School. You should have received an email today with the 2023-2024 Parent/Guardian Handbook attached. It is also available on the OPLC, OES and OIS websites.

Please review the handbook on-line or in your email and sign and return this completed form as soon as possible. If you do not have access to a computer, please request a paper copy at the bottom of this form. This form and a copy of the handbook will be sent home for you to review and then sign and send back the form only.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge reading the Octorara K-6 Elementary Parent/Guardian Handbook. I agree to abide by the student handbook policies; including the Acceptable Use Policy regarding computer and internet usage found on pages 17 and 18, as well as the "Audio/Video Recordings & Pictures" section on pages 19 and 20.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The district will frequently use email and text to communicate. If you have an address, email or phone change, please contact your child's school office to let them know your changes.

Please check if applicable:

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send home a paper copy of the 2023-2024 Parent Guardian Handbook.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Krista Lease  
OPLC Principal  
[klease@octorara.org](mailto:klease@octorara.org)

Mr. Brian Dikun  
OES Principal  
[bdikun@octorara.org](mailto:bdikun@octorara.org)

Dr. Christian Haller  
OIS Principal  
[challer@octorara.org](mailto:challer@octorara.org)

