

# Oak Knoll School

1895 Oak Knoll Lane Menlo Park, CA 94025 (650) 854-4433



## Otter Expectations Parent and Student Handbook 2018-2019

## **A Note to Parents and Students:**

School discipline is a cooperative effort between the students, faculty, parents and administrators. Every attempt is made to enforce the rules consistently. We believe in a restorative model: building students' confidence, providing opportunities for students to get involved, resolving conflict through discussion, and having the student take ownership. Thoughtful and logical consequences will be determined based on the child's needs and the severity of the incident. Consequences are meant to teach students about taking responsibility for his or her actions. Parents may or may not be notified depending on the severity of the incident.

This handbook was designed for Oak Knoll students and parents. Teachers will be spending time in class reading and discussing these expectations together. We encourage you to do the same at home.

Throughout the year, we will also be having assemblies for our lower and upper grade students to revisit Oak Knoll expectations and acknowledge our students' hard work and compassionate choices. Questions regarding the expectations defined in this handbook are welcomed.

Thank you for your support,

*The Oak Knoll Staff*

## **Guidelines for Oak Knoll Parents:**

*Oak Knoll is a big school with a lot of students, parents, staff and neighbors. In efforts to provide a responsive and positive experience to our community, alongside promoting a healthy integration of work and life for our staff, we have identified guidelines. Following our lead using this information will hopefully support your needs and result in smooth communication, solution-focused problem solving, and top-notch customer service. Our administrators, teachers and staff are here to help; we have your child's best interest in mind. We recognize that mistakes can happen, and we are willing to hear your feedback. We ask that you respect our approach and use these practices and protocols as a road map.*

- **Problem Solving:** We believe our students are capable of solving many of their own problems. If your child can attempt to solve the issue on his/her own, please encourage him/her to try; it's a valuable confidence-building moment.
- **Teaching Independence and Responsibility:** As part of our Growth Mindset work, we teach our students that we learn from making mistakes. If your child forgets his/her instrument and/or assignment, it is an opportunity for him/her to handle it on their own. Our staff appreciates when you allow this learning to happen.
- **Positive Outcomes:** Focusing concerns on needs and solutions leads to positive outcomes for everyone.
- **Teacher First:** Always start with the classroom teacher. Share your concern or seek clarity; our staff is open to feedback.
- **Further Support:** If you have met with the classroom teacher, and you or your child feels further support is necessary, please contact our school counselor Nicole Scott, school psychologist Jenny Ryan or our Assistant Principal Leah Kessler. If the counselor/psychologist/AP feels it is necessary to involve the principal, she will do so right away.
- **School Issues:** Should you find yourself wishing to address a more global issue, you are welcome to contact our office manager, Cathy Petersen (cpetersen@mpcsd.org) who will direct your request to the appropriate staff member(s), including the principal Mrs. Gracia.
- **Work-Life Integration:** We believe the evenings and weekends should be focused on family. We encourage our staff and community to disconnect over weekends and breaks. We will return email within 2 workdays.
- **Student Focused:** We believe our teachers should be focused on students during the school day, therefore, e-mail and phone messages will be returned before and after school. If for any reason, you need to get a message to your child during the day, call the Oak Knoll office (854-4333).
- **Respect Our Neighbors:** We have great neighbors and ask that you show appreciation and respect to them and their property when coming to and from our campus.

*We are a community who must work hard and be nice, so our Oak Knoll students can have the best year yet!*

# 1. ATTENDANCE & APPOINTMENTS

## Student Attendance:

Menlo Park City School District is committed to offering students the very finest education and our families and community the highest performing schools. School attendance will be used as one of the indicators of a school's performance and ranking.

Consequently, the only excused absences are for student illness, student medical appointments, exclusion for failing to meet immunization requirements, student attendance at a funeral of one's immediate family, religious observance, court appearance, and shadow days. All other absences will be marked "unexcused." Our aim is to have our overall attendance at 98%. You can help us reach this goal by seeing that your child attends school everyday and working with your child's teacher and school administration when your child must be absent. Thank you in advance for supporting our schools and continuing to make education your child's number one priority.

- School starts at 8:10. Students are expected to be on time!
- When absent, parents are expected to notify the school via SchoolMessenger (<https://go.schoolmessenger.com>) by 8:45 A.M.
- Students who are late will be marked tardy. Excessive tardiness is disruptive to a student's education and will be reported on student records.
- Parents are expected to communicate with the classroom teacher in advance about student appointments scheduled during school hours. The teacher will send the student to the office at the appropriate time. The office likes to limit phone calls and other interruptions to the classroom.

Unexcused Absences and Truancy: It is critically important that all students attend school each day unless there is a valid reason for an absence (see above section). As such, students may only have two (2) unexcused absences within a given school year. Upon the third unexcused absence of the year, the student can be considered truant per MPCSD Board Policy 5113.1. Truancy is a technical term that means you have missed too much school.

In accordance with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California school districts are required to monitor and address chronic absence as it is an essential LCFF accountability measure within the pupil engagement section of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

In order to encourage attendance and align our district policies to the LCAP requirements, MPCSD has created an attendance plan. At 3 unexcused absences, an attendance letter from the school is sent home to families. A conference with a site administrator and a plan for good attendance habits is developed and agreed upon. At 8 unexcused absences, a student is defined as a "Habitual Truant" and the case is referred to the Director of Students Services for the Menlo Park City School District. Parent attendance at the Student Attendance and Review Board is required for students with 10 unexcused absences. Parents are encouraged to notify the school for extenuating circumstances. Parents of students who miss more than 10% of the school year or have extended absences will be notified and this notification will become part of the student's permanent school record.

Independent Study Program and Independent Study Plans (ISP): We realize that many parents take their children on educationally related trips and out of school for other enriching experiences. Menlo Park City

School District is now pleased to offer an Independent Study Program uniquely tailored to your child's educational program. This will allow your child to be away from school equipped with appropriate educational curriculum and materials.

To arrange an Independent Study Plan (ISP) for your child, please contact the office at least 5 days prior to the planned absence. Upon successful completion of the ISP, which includes submitting all assigned work and returning the signed form to the office for the principal's signature, the student's absence will be coded as "ISP" which is an excused absence, instead of as "U," or unexcused.

## **2. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

### **Arrival**

- Playground supervision is provided before school starting at 7:55 A.M. School starts at 8:10. Students are expected to be on time!
- Visitors on Campus: For the safety of our students, all visitors must report to the office and sign in upon arrival at school. At check in, all visitors will receive a visitor nametag for identification purposes. Parents are welcome on campus, and must check in at the office in order to obtain a visitor nametag.

### **Dismissal**

- School dismissal is at 2:55pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and at 1:25 on Thursday
- On district minimum days, school dismissal is at 11:20am.
- Parents/caregivers may meet students outside the classroom, by the flagpole, or by using our carpool system.
- Students being picked up by carpool MUST report to the front of the school immediately.
- Supervision is provided after the dismissal bell at the carpool and bus pick-up areas. There is NO after school supervision on the playground.
- For safety, students are expected to know their pick-up plans each day. Please do not use the office phone or teacher email to arrange playdates.
- Students should report to the office if they are not picked up or if they are unsure of their pick up plans. If students are repeatedly picked up late, you will be asked to enroll in our on-site after care program.
- Students who remain on campus after school hours are expected to have parent/adult supervision.
- Students riding the bus must have a parent note if their pick up plans have changed. Students without a note must get on the bus.

### **3. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AROUND CAMPUS**

- Students are expected to WALK in the hallways, in the rooms, to lunch, and to the bus.
- Students are expected to follow classroom rules and not disrupt the learning of others.
- Students are expected to use appropriate language.

### **4. PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY**

- Students are expected to leave personal belongings, which may cause disruption, at home.
- Students are expected to be responsible for their belongings. Oak Knoll School is not responsible for the loss of personal belongings.
- Students are expected to keep smartphones and smartwatches OFF and in their backpacks while on campus. Students should use the office/classroom phone to call home during school hours.
- Students are expected to treat all school property and the property of others with care and respect.
- Parents and students are expected to respect our rule that dogs are not permitted on campus during or after school hours.

### **5. INTERNET AND COMPUTER/IPAD USE**

- Students are expected to use the Internet appropriately at school and home. Inappropriate use of the Internet at school (and at home when related to schoolwork or other students) will be dealt with as a disciplinary action.
- Parents are expected to closely monitor their children when using the computer and report any issues/concerns.
- Students are expected to sign and abide by the district Technology Agreement, which will be enforced.
- Students are expected to use and treat the school technology equipment responsibly.

### **6. DRESS GUIDELINES**

- Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. Students dressed inappropriately will be asked to change.
- Shorts/dress length must be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Shirts must cover the entire stomach
- No sagging shorts or pants
- Makeup is not permitted at school

- Students should wear the appropriate footwear for recess and PE classes.

## **7. SAFETY**

- Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are against the law and are not allowed at school.
- Never bring anything to school that is dangerous or dangerous looking, including toy weapons and matches.
- Students must wear a bike helmet when riding to and from school. Please see the attached Bicycle Safety guide for reminders.
- Students are expected to park and lock bikes to the bike racks. Bikes should not be on campus.
- Scooters, rollerblades and skateboards that are used as a means of transportation may be WALKED to the classroom. They must be well marked with your name. Leave skate shoes at home.

## **8. BUS BEHAVIOR- all School Buses and SAMTRANS**

- The bus driver is in charge of the bus and all the children riding on the bus.
- Students are expected to follow the bus rules and listen to the bus driver. Rules will be enforced and repeated poor behavior will result in loss of bus privileges.

### **Bus Guidelines:**

- *Listen to the bus driver.*
- *Stay in your seat while the bus is moving.*
- *Keep the bus clean. There is no eating or drinking on the bus.*
- *Be courteous to others. Talk quietly.*
- *Never throw anything on the bus.*
- *Treat the bus driver, the bus and the equipment with respect.*

## **9. LUNCH TABLES, RECESS, AND PLAYGROUND:**

- To establish good habits and routines, students will be sitting by class to eat their lunch. Our goal is to have open seating.
- It is important that we keep our students with food allergies safe. Students must sit and eat during snack/recess and lunchtime. Walking around with food is unacceptable.
- Students are expected to follow the directions of the yard duty supervisors.
- Students are expected to remember and responsible for following the lunchtime rules:
  - *Stay seated at the table except to throw away your trash.*
  - *Clean up all of your trash on the table and underneath your seat.*

- *Stay at the table until you are dismissed.*
- Students are expected to go outside for recess. Students are not allowed to stay in the classroom without teacher supervision.
- All students must stay on the playground until the bell rings. Students should not be roaming around the school.
- Students should report playground problems to the yard duty. Playground rules and safety will be enforced.

### Playground Rules and Expectations:

- *Everyone is included at Oak Knoll.*
- *Stand up for what is “right” and encourage good behavior from your peers.*
- *Be a good sport! Only play a game that you are okay losing.*
- *No rough play: tackling or pushing.*
- *When playing tag games, play out on the field, not on the play structures.*
- *When using the slide, always go down, feet first and one at a time.*
- *No jumping from the swings, slides or other playground equipment.*
- *Be patient and wait for your turn on slides and swings and in games.*
- *Please report any broken or unsafe equipment to the yard duty.*
- *Keep our friends with food allergies safe; there is no food on the playground.*

## 10. ASSEMBLIES AND FIELD TRIPS

### Assemblies

- Students are expected to be a kind, quiet, courteous and welcoming member of the audience.
- Students are expected to listen and not distract others.
- Students who are not being respectful during assemblies will leave the assembly and go to the office. Poor behavior on a field trip can result in missing future field trips.

### Field trips

- Students are expected to be cooperative and responsible while traveling outside of the school.
- Students are expected to be respectful of others, including the bus driver, and the adults who are on the trip or at the visiting site.

## 11. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Student Health: Pupils attending school should be in good physical health, without signs of contagious diseases. Parents are asked to keep their sick children home until all signs of contagiousness such as



vomiting, diarrhea and fevers have subsided, medication free, for 24 hours. Communicable diseases should be reported to the school office so that exposure notices can be provided to parents.

**Student Injuries:** Basic first aid will be provided by designated school personnel. For more complex injuries and illnesses, parents will be notified and students must be picked up from school immediately.

**Medication at School:** If prescribed or over-the-counter medications are to be administered or taken during school hours, a Medication Authorization Form must be completed and returned to the school office with medication(s) before your child begins or returns to school. The student's parent/guardian and authorized health care provider must indicate on the authorization form if the student is allowed to carry and self-administer medication. For students who carry their own medication, it is recommended to have back-up medication in the school office. All medication must be in the original prescription bottle/package. Authorization forms must be completed annually. [California Education Codes 49423 and 49423.1]

**Head Lice:** We understand that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Our practices are meant to reduce embarrassment for students and anxiety for parents and school staff. Congruently, preventing unnecessary absences and the potential negative effects on academic performance are essential. Children found with live head lice (not nits only) shall be referred to the parent for treatment and temporarily excluded from school. In consultation with the school nurse, the principal may also send information about head lice home to all parents/guardians of the students in that class within 48 hours, with student privacy being of the utmost importance. For more detailed information regarding MPCSD Head Lice policy, see Board Policy BP 5141.33.

**Vision and Hearing Screenings:** The district provides vision and hearing screenings for all Kindergarten, 2nd, 5th and 8th grade students each year, and for students referred by staff or parents. These screenings are done by our district nurses. Parents may submit a written denial of consent if they do not want their child screened (California Education Code 49452.5).

## **12. RESPECT**

**Restorative Practices:** Our district schools continue to train and adopt the methodology from the International Institute for Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices are aimed at creating human connection between adults and students on campus, as well as engender an empathic school culture. Restorative Practices are woven throughout the district, including in social-emotional learning lessons, the climate at each of schools, and our behavior management systems.

**Bullying and Harassment:** In a positive school environment, there is no place for bullying, teasing, taunting, or harassment of any kind. We work hard to eliminate this kind of treatment and show everyone our schools are safe and inclusive. While a student will sometimes say, "Oh, I was just joking," or "I didn't really mean it," those words do not excuse any student from making others feel powerless. We simply do not tolerate this behavior.

The Governing Board recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student learning and school attendance and desires to provide safe school environments that protect students from physical and emotional harm. District employees shall establish student safety as a high priority and shall not tolerate bullying of any student.

[Complete Board Policy 5131.2](#)

**Bullying Definition:**

Under California law, “Bullying” is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils that constitutes sex harassment, hate violence or creates an intimidating or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (A) Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of harm to that pupil’s or those pupils’ person or property.
- (B) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
- (C) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
- (D) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

**Types of Bullying and/Harassment and Consequences**

Type	Examples
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, spitting, poking, throwing objects, taking personal belongings (such as a backpack), unwanted tickling, and so on. “Table topping” and “five-starring” are considered physical bullying.
Verbal	Taunting, teasing to hurt someone’s feelings, name-calling (can be swear words or racial slurs, but doesn’t have to be), threatening, gossiping, hurtful or harassing words, etc.
Psycho-logical	Spreading rumors (true or untrue), deliberately excluding someone from a group, extortion (getting money or belongings through threats), intimidation (making someone fearful), etc.
Sexual	Exhibitionism, voyeurism, propositioning, sexual assault, “pantsing”, physical contact of a sexual nature, sexually explicit or suggestive comments, jokes, and/or conversations, inappropriate drawings, etc.

Cyber	Verbal, psychological, and/or sexual bullying by electronic means, including, but not limited to, text messages, emails, postings on social media sites, etc.
-------	---

**Bullying Prevention**

To the extent possible, district schools shall focus on the prevention of bullying by establishing clear rules for student conduct and implementing strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate. Students shall be informed, through student handbooks and other appropriate means, of district and school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in bullying.

As appropriate, the district shall provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior.

Staff shall receive related professional development, including information about early warning signs of harassing/intimidating behaviors and effective response.

Students are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another student is being victimized. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall develop means for students to report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously.

School staff who witness an act of bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

The Superintendent, principal, or principal's designee may refer a victim, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate.

**Reporting and Filing of Complaints**

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying or who has witnessed bullying may report the incident to a teacher, the principal, a compliance officer, or any other available school employee. The staff member receiving such a report shall notify the principal of the report, whether or not a uniform complaint is filed. In addition, any school employee who observes an incident of bullying involving a student shall report his/her observation to the principal or a district compliance officer, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

When a report of bullying is submitted, the principal or a district compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with AR 1312.3. The student who is the alleged victim of the bullying shall be given an opportunity to describe the incident, identify witnesses who may have relevant information, and provide other evidence of bullying.

When the circumstances involve cyberbullying, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, the principal, or other employee so that the matter may be investigated. When a student uses a social networking site or service to bully or harass another student, the Superintendent or designee may file a request with the networking site or service to suspend the privileges of the student and to have the material removed.

### **Investigation and Resolution of Complaints**

Any complaint of bullying shall be investigated and, if determined to be discriminatory, resolved in accordance with law and the district's uniform complaint procedures specified in AR 1312.3.

If, during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

All complaint alleging bullying based on it protected status such as the actual or perceived characteristics of race or ethnicity, color, nationality, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or any other characteristic identified Educational Code 200 or 220, Penal Code 422.55, Government Code 11135, or based on association with a person or group with one or more of the actual or perceived characteristics may utilize the [Uniform Complaint Process](#).

If such reports or complaints of bullying based on protected status (including disability based) are reported to the site level, they will be forwarded to the district within several days and investigated and resolved by the district Compliance Officer within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint.

Consequences are determined following an investigation of the issue and the appropriate application of Education Code, MPCSD Board Policy and Restorative Practices. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits an act of discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or bullying may range from behavioral intervention and education up to and including suspension or expulsion.

*Oak Knoll students and parents are expected to read and discuss this handbook. Teachers will also be discussing these*

*expectations with their students.*

*Overall, use common sense and set a good example for others! Go OTTERS!*