

PARENT & STUDENT  
**All-School Handbook**  
2025–2026



OAK GROVE SCHOOL

FOUNDED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

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THE ART OF LIVING AND LEARNING

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# Overview Table of Contents

ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE.  
YOU CAN ALSO USE THE SECTION LINKS AT THE BOTTOM OF EACH PAGE.

|                                                      |           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Welcome to Oak Grove School</b>                   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>The Basics</b>                                    | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>OGS Parent Council Digital Handbook</b>           | <b>32</b> |
| <b>Early Childhood Program (Preschool - Grade 2)</b> | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Upper Elementary Program (Grades 3-5)</b>         | <b>47</b> |
| <b>Middle School (Grades 6-8)</b>                    | <b>51</b> |
| <b>High School (Grades 9-12)</b>                     | <b>61</b> |
| <b>Sister Schools</b>                                | <b>78</b> |
| <b>A Climate for Inquiry</b>                         | <b>79</b> |



# The Arts of Living & Learning

## AT OAK GROVE SCHOOL

The Arts of Living and Learning are embedded in the school's culture, curriculum, classroom practice, and expectations of student learning.

### The Art of Inquiry

observation • questioning • fact-finding • research • self-reflection

### The Art of Communication

speaking • writing • listening • collaboration

### The Art of Academia

knowledge and application of academic standards, conventions,  
and disciplines in core subject areas

### The Art of Engagement

attention • self-direction • self-motivation • self-regulation  
metacognition or learning how one learns • examining one's own thinking

### The Art of Aesthetics

sensitivity and appreciation of beauty in all forms  
finding the artist within • artistic expression

### The Art of Caring & Relationship

Self: self-understanding and awareness • making healthy choices  
Others: self-reflection and awareness in relationship • non-violent communication  
service to the common good

Local & Global Communities: service and citizenship

The Environment: mindful stewardship

Oak Grove School is a living, learning community and therefore these “arts” should not be perceived as fixed but dynamic in nature and in a constant state of review.



OAK GROVE SCHOOL  
The Art of Living and Learning

# Welcome to Oak Grove School

Dear Parents and Students,

As a Preschool through 12th-grade school, Oak Grove attempts to assist a child's journey through the early years of play and wonderment into the middle years of adolescent questioning, experimentation, and deep searching of the self. Then, hand in hand we continue into young adulthood and the rigorous demands of college preparation, life preparation, and the serious examination of our place in the world. In the process, we hope to keep alive that same quality of play and wonderment we began with in Preschool by making learning meaningful.

We do all this in a place that we strive to make safe and secure for true inquiry and love of learning to take place. We see our school as a place where we can relax enough to risk examination of our relationships with nature, ourselves, one another, and the world. We are collectively — faculty, staff, students, and parents — responsible for creating such an environment, in that each of us has the power to either help or hinder this endeavor.

You have chosen to be part of a unique community that depends on a seamless connection between home and school. The Oak Grove School Parent & Student Handbook has evolved over the years to help facilitate the smooth functioning of school life by communicating the general philosophy and procedures of the school.

We ask both parents and students to become familiar with the contents of this Handbook. Parents can assist their younger children in understanding and following these guidelines by reading relevant passages aloud and discussing the importance of the guidelines. As students mature, we expect the onus of responsibility to shift increasingly to the student and away from the parents; in keeping with this, Middle School and High School students sign the Handbook before school begins.

Welcome to Oak Grove School!

**Jodi Grass**

Head of School

## A Brief History

Jiddu Krishnamurti and the Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America founded Oak Grove School in 1975 as one of a group of international schools. The original three students and two teachers met in an old ranch building near the present Krishnamurti Library on McAndrew Road on the East end of Ojai. The school moved to its current location in Meiners Oaks, where the Pavilion was constructed in 1977, followed by the Elementary School and Main House during the 1978-79 school year. The High School, Early Childhood classrooms, and Student Center were added in 1984, at which time Besant House opened as a family-style boarding program for High School students. The Art Building was constructed in 1996. The school now has approximately 240 students and 73 full- and part-time faculty and staff.

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## Oak Grove School Mission Statement

Inspired by the original intent and statement of philosophy left by the school's founder J. Krishnamurti, the mission of Oak Grove School is to assist students in developing those qualities of mind, heart, and body that will enable them to function with excellence, care, and responsibility in the modern world. In addition, it is the intention of the school to offer a place where the whole community can inquire together into the perennial questions of humankind and explore an approach to life that is whole, mindful, and intelligent.

### The school does this by:

- Providing a well-rounded and challenging academic experience balanced with a rich extracurricular program in fine, performing and practical arts, physical fitness, environmental and outdoor education, community service, and travel.
- Creating an environment for learning – A Climate of Inquiry – that is safe, friendly, non-competitive, and encourages open-mindedness and a spirit of inquiry.
- Encouraging close relationships between students and teachers, as well as close contact between school and home, and open, honest, and caring communication protocols among all members of the school community.
- Supporting an approach to learning that emphasizes depth over coverage, project-based learning, a model of student-as-worker/teacher-as-coach, a genuine appreciation of each student's unique capabilities, and the balance of traditional testing with authentic assessment practices such as portfolios, demonstrations of learning, and student exhibitions.
- Encouraging students to use their minds, bodies, and hearts well through the overarching themes expressed within The Arts of Living & Learning that are embedded in the school's culture, curriculum, classroom practice, and expectations of students.

## Recommended Reading on Krishnamurti & Education

The following books on education are recommended reading for parents whose children attend Oak Grove School.

- *Education and the Significance of Life*, J. Krishnamurti
- *Think on These Things*, J. Krishnamurti
- *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- *Punished by Rewards*, Alfie Kohn

# The Basics

## Table of Contents (ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE)

- [School Hours](#)
- [Attendance & Tardiness](#)
- [Absences](#)
- [After-School Hours](#)
- [After-School Care & Summer Programs](#)
- [Illness Policy](#)
- [Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity](#)
- [The School Office — Main House](#)
- [Teacher Response-time to Messages](#)
- [Main House Copy Machine](#)
- [Technology Policy](#)
- [Visitors](#)
- [Lost & Found](#)
- [Expectations for Dress](#)
- [Expectations for Intimate Behavior](#)
- [Birthdays](#)
- [Communication & Conflict Resolution Protocols](#)
- [Homework](#)
- [Student Reports](#)
- [High School](#)
- [Food & Lunch](#)
- [Campus Care & Property](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response](#)
- [Health & Safety](#)
- [Pastoral Care](#)
- [DEIB Statement](#)
- [Sexual Health & Wellness](#)
- [Harassment/Bullying](#)
- [Parking Lot Safety](#)
- [Seat Belts & Speed Limits](#)
- [On-Campus Driving](#)
- [Carpooling](#)
- [Parent Drivers for Field Trips](#)
- [Field Trip Permission Slips](#)
- [Safety while Driving](#)
- [Camping & Outdoor Activities](#)
- [Parent Involvement](#)
- [Parent Engagement](#)
- [Fundraising — Annual Giving](#)
- [Volunteer Hours](#)
- [Parent Council](#)
- [Parent & Student Feedback](#)
- [Admissions & Financial Concerns](#)
- [Financial Aid Policy & Procedure](#)
- [Re-enrollment](#)
- [Budget](#)
- [Information Resources](#)
- [Governance & Administration](#)
- [Oak Grove School Board Statement on Climate Crisis](#)
- [The Leadership Team](#)

## School Hours

- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday:**

- *Preschool:* 9:00am to 12:00pm (Before Care, 8:15 to 9am)
- *Preschool Extended Day:* 9:00am to 2:30pm (Before Care, 8:15 to 9am)
- *Kindergarten:* 9:00am to 2:30pm (Before Care, 8:15 to 9am)
- *Grades 1–5:* 8:15am to 2:30pm
- *Grades 6–8:* 8:15am to 3:30pm
- *Grades 9–12:* 8:30am to 3:15/4:30\*pm
- *\*H.S. extends through 4:30pm when participating in one of the Fit for Life seasons*

- **Wednesday**

All classes end at 12:00pm, school-wide, or 12:30pm (H.S. Only)

## Attendance & Tardiness

It is best for 1st–12th grade students to arrive at school 5–10 minutes before their first class. This gives time to greet friends and to put away lunches, jackets, books, etc. Students are asked not to come before 7:50am, however, because teachers are preparing for classes and are unavailable for supervision.

If your child arrives at school more than 10 minutes after their class begins (1st–8th grades), parents are required to come to the Front Office and sign their child in. High School students are required to sign in at the High School Office.

If it is necessary for your child to leave the campus during school hours, parents are required to sign their child out (and back in) at the Front Office. High School students must sign out (and back in) at the H.S. Office and parents must give permission for students to leave campus.

## Absences

If your student will be absent, please call in as early as possible. For Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle School, please call the Front Office at 805-646-8236. For High School students, please call extension 111. Repeated absences interfere with the continuity of the learning experience. For more specifics on the Middle School and High School Attendance Policy, please see the specific Handbook Agreements. The school requests that medical appointments be scheduled after school and that family trips take place during school vacations.

## After-School Hours

Students may remain on campus after school in the following instances:

- at the request of a teacher (with parental approval)
- if they are enrolled in after-school options such as After-School Care (K-5th)
- if they are engaged in an athletic or arts event sponsored by the school.

All parents are expected to arrive on time for their child's pick-up. Students (excluding Preschoolers & Kindergartners) who have not been picked up within 15 minutes (5 minutes for Preschool & Kindergarten) of their dismissal will be walked to the Elementary After-School program.

Campus is closed at 5:00pm daily unless there is a meeting or special event scheduled.

## **After-School Care & Summer Programs**

The school provides a no-cost Before Care program for Preschool and Kindergarten students between the hours of 8:15-9:00 am. An After-School Care program is available for a fee for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade, from the end of the school day until 5:00pm. Summer program options are published each year in the early Spring.

## **Illness Policy**

A school is a unique environment where students, teachers, and staff are in close contact on a regular basis, and illness can spread quickly. To ensure the health and safety of all persons on campus, please do not bring your child to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness. Symptoms of illness include fever, lethargy, pale skin, green nasal mucus, vomit, headache, and/or complaints of discomfort, including being tired. If a student develops symptoms while at school, they will be sent to the Infirmary, to determine if a call should be made to the parent for pick-up.

After illness has passed (i.e. no fever or vomiting for at least 24 hours) and students are exhibiting improving symptoms, they may return to school. If a student feels well and has only residual symptoms – occasional coughing, sneezing, clear runny nose – they may return to school.

If someone tests positive for COVID-19, Oak Grove School recommends the following:

- Stay home for at least 5 days after start of symptoms (Day 0) or after date of first positive test (Day 0) if no symptoms
- After Day 5, if symptoms have resolved or are mild and improving and fever has been resolved for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), you may return to school
- Anyone returning before Day 10 should wear a mask while indoors

If your student is exhibiting symptoms related to seasonal allergies or asthma, we ask you to provide a note from your healthcare provider. Notes from healthcare providers are valid for 90 days.

In keeping with County Health Department requirements, all cases of head lice must be reported to the school immediately. In the event of exposure to head lice, children are checked; if there are any lice or nits, the student must stay home until they are gone. Lice control information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/>.

## **Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity**

Over-the-counter medicines (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, homeopathic supplements, etc.) and prescription medicines (albuterol, antibiotics, etc.) may be dispensed to your student only when a

medical authorization form is completed and on file in the Infirmary. A parent/guardian may complete the section for over-the-counter medication; a physician must complete the section for all prescription medications. The medical authorization form includes the required dosage and dosing intervals. This form is available in the Front Office and the High School Office.

If there are restrictions regarding physical education (P.E.) class, recess, or any other activity for one to three days, a parent/guardian must provide a note excusing the student. Any physical restriction lasting longer than three days requires a doctor's note.

The Head of School or designee shall make available epinephrine auto-injectors at school for providing emergency medical aid to any person suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an anaphylactic reaction.

The Head of School or designee shall make naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist available at school for emergency medical aid to any person suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an opioid overdose.

## **The School Office – Main House**

The Front Office and Main House are open from 7:45am to 4:00pm during school days. The telephone voicemail is active at all times, and all messages left on voicemail will be responded to as quickly as possible. In order to ensure uninterrupted class time, please contact your child at school only in case of an emergency. Messages can be left for teachers via classroom voicemail, email, or in mailboxes in the Main House. If you wish to confer with one of your child's teachers, please schedule an appointment in advance.

## **Teacher Response-time to Messages**

Ever-changing technology continues to challenge teachers, parents, and students to be mindful about how we communicate with each other. There is a growing expectation that ParentSquare messages and phone messages will be answered instantly. In keeping with our intention that communication is caring and compassionate, [this ParentSquare message and telephone message response policy](#) is in place. Please check with your specific program for more details.

## **Main House Copy Machine**

Business machines such as the copy machine, fax, and school computers are for school use only.

## **Technology Policy**

At Oak Grove, we are intentional about how, when, and why we integrate technology into the lives of our students. As a progressive Preschool–12th grade school, we place the needs of children and adolescents at the center of our decision-making, and we believe that what young people need most is not more technology, but more connection, more presence, and more meaningful engagement with the real world.

While we acknowledge that digital tools have a role to play in contemporary education, we are **deliberately tech-wary**: cautious in our adoption, critical in our evaluation, and committed to protecting the developmental integrity of childhood and adolescence.

## **Our Core Beliefs**

### **Human Relationships Are Irreplaceable**

Learning is relational. The teacher-student relationship, peer collaboration, and face-to-face engagement are at the heart of how children grow. Technology may assist, but it will never substitute for the depth of human presence.

- **Childhood Deserves Protection**  
Young children need time to play, explore, and make sense of the world with their hands, hearts, and whole bodies. We shield our youngest students from unnecessary exposure to screens and digital tools, especially during the foundational early years. Our classrooms are screen-free up through 2nd grade.
- **Technology Should Serve Deep Learning—Not Displace It**  
We value depth over speed, original thinking over automation, and authentic struggle over convenience. Our curriculum is designed to cultivate reflection, curiosity, and creativity—not dependence on digital shortcuts.
- **Slow Is a Strength**  
In a culture of acceleration, we choose to go slowly and thoughtfully. We resist trends that promise efficiency at the expense of attention, focus, and the inner life of students.
- **Digital Literacy Is Essential**  
When we do engage technology, we teach students to ask hard questions: Who made this, and for what purpose? What are the ethical implications of its use? What do I gain—and what do I lose—when I use this tool?

### **Technology Use Is Intentional and Age-Appropriate**

Our approach to technology evolves as students grow. We introduce tools with care and context, ensuring they are developmentally aligned and support—not interrupt—cognitive and emotional development.

## **Whole Human**

Our mission is to prepare students to shape the future with wisdom, empathy, and courage. That means cultivating their capacity for attention, discernment, collaboration, and care.

Oak Grove's tech-wary stance reflects a profound respect for the unfolding of human potential and a belief that education should nourish the mind, body, and spirit in equal measure. We commit to ongoing reflection and dialogue as we navigate these questions with our students, families, and faculty.

## **Computer Use Policy**

As a progressive learning community, we aim to cultivate student agency, focus, and accountability. At the same time, unrestricted personal device use can lead to distraction and place an undue burden on teachers. This policy introduces clear expectations and shared responsibility around technology use, rooted in trust, structure, and care.

## Key Guidelines

- **PK-2nd Grade:** Classrooms are screen-free, and students do not use computers or tablets.
- **3rd Grade:** Computers are thoughtfully introduced, and use is limited to literacy tools.
- **4-8th Grade:** 1:1 School-provided devices (Chromebooks) are introduced in a scaffolded process that encourages digital literacy and citizenship.
  - Devices are closely monitored through teacher supervision and digital filtering.
  - Devices may only be used inside classrooms and within the view of teachers.
- **High School: Students may bring their own devices**
  - Students must register their devices with the school network to access WiFi.
  - Network monitoring is used to detect and prevent use of VPNs and stealth browsing.
  - Unregistered or non-compliant devices are blocked.
  - Students who do not have a personal computer may check out a school-issued device for the school year. Students also have access to school devices on a temporary basis when needed.
- **Teacher-Prompted Use Only**
  - Devices may only be opened when explicitly directed by a teacher.
  - Clear routines and classroom signals guide usage.
- **Natural Consequences for Misuse of Technology**
  - Misuse may result in the temporary use of a school-issued device or a tech-free plan.
  - Repeated infractions may require a permanent tech-free plan or a specific plan of support.
- **Learning Resources Accommodations**
  - Students with learning or sensory accommodations will have individualized technology plans.
  - Plans will be communicated to students, families, and teachers.
  - School-provided devices will be fully equipped to support documented needs.

## Mobile Devices Policy

Parents and caretakers are asked to observe our intention to have a cellphone-sensitive campus and to put phones away and on silent while visiting. Thank you!

This policy was created in order to support an environment that is focused on the here and now. The increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as an opportunity to minimize the steady stream of electronic input. While technology is used at times for approved school purposes, its use is discouraged for social or personal reasons. Therefore, we ask students, staff, and parents/caregivers to observe the following:

1. Student usage rules are as follows

- Mobile devices include smartwatches and any kind of device that can be used to send text messages, emails, make phone calls, play games, take photos, play music, or access the Internet.
  - PK-5th Grade MAY NOT bring mobile devices to campus.
  - 6th- 12th grade may bring mobile devices to campus, but must turn them in to the designated office staff upon arrival. Students may check and send quick messages to and from caregivers/parents at the end of the school day at the designated area.
2. If a student is seen using a mobile device on campus, it will be collected immediately and returned to them after school hours.
  3. Parents/caregivers and students can communicate by phone through the landline phone system available in the Front Office, High School Office, and in the classrooms.
  4. Adults may use a mobile device to capture images and videos in an inconspicuous way, but are asked to refrain from editing and posting until out of view of others.
  5. All members of our community, including parenting adults, are asked to refrain from walking anywhere on campus with their devices out and in view of others.
  6. Infirmaries on campus are screen-free zones.

## Media Exposure

Among the issues with which the school staff is centrally concerned is popular culture's influence on children. Through music, film, video games, the internet, and print, children are subjected to highly potent messages about life. The impact of such messages is revealed regularly in children's conversations, artwork, dress, and play. The 21st-century media boom threatens to supplant both family and school as primary sources of information and values.

Parenting adults and teachers are not powerless in the face of this. It is the task of both parenting adults and teachers to cultivate critical judgment so that children can become discriminating adults. It is not possible to shield students entirely from popular media even while still young, but it is a parental responsibility to regulate and monitor their access to it. Every person has daily opportunities to choose how to act, what to eat, wear, or acquire, and to focus on the level of attention given to moment-to-moment experiences.

## Artificial Intelligence

At Oak Grove, we are committed to nurturing creativity, critical thinking, empathy, and ethical citizenship in a rapidly evolving world. As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into society, we recognize its potential to enhance learning, creativity, and efficiency, as well as the responsibility to guide its use with care, equity, and integrity.

- **Human-Centered Learning**

AI is a tool to support—not replace—human connection, reasoning, and expression. Our pedagogy will continue to prioritize authentic relationships, student voice, and meaningful inquiry. We embrace the promise of AI with humility, curiosity, and discernment. As a

progressive school, we are committed to helping our students become not simply skilled users of AI—but thoughtful, ethical stewards of its potential, including an understanding of the social, environmental, and equity issues.

- **Transparency and Academic Integrity**

Students must always be honest and explicit about when and how AI tools are used in their work. Using AI to generate or complete assignments without expressed permission and without properly citing is considered a violation of our academic integrity standards.

- **Equity and Accessibility**

We are committed to ensuring equitable access to AI-related learning opportunities and addressing digital divides. AI tools will not be required for student success, but may be made available in a supported and inclusive way.

## **Digital Literacy and Ethical Awareness**

Students are guided to develop critical awareness about AI, including:

- How AI tools are trained and their potential for bias
- The difference between fact and AI-generated fabrication
- The social and ethical implications of automation and data privacy
- The environmental and social justice costs and consequences of AI generation.

## **Faculty and Staff Use**

Educators and staff may use AI to support planning, communication, and administrative tasks, with an emphasis on transparency, human oversight, and responsible data use. AI will not be used to assess or replace human observations when evaluating students.

## **Evolving Practices**

AI technologies are changing rapidly. Our policies and practices will be revisited as needed to stay aligned with current research, community values, and the lived experiences of our students and staff.

## **Visitors**

Parents are welcome on campus, and we ask that you check in with the Front Office before walking around the campus. We ask that all visitors register at the Front Office to receive a nametag. Classroom observations must be arranged in advance with the Director of Admissions.

## **Lost & Found**

The school maintains Lost & Found bins in the Main House, on the Upper Elementary field, by the Early Elementary/Middle School bathrooms, in the High School Office, and in front of the Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms. Lost & Found items are periodically displayed in the Main House parking lot and on the Preschool playground fence. Unclaimed items are given to a charity throughout the year.

All jackets, sweatshirts, and other outer garments, as well as backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, and other easily misplaced items should be labeled clearly with the student's first and last name.

## Expectations for Dress

### Understanding the Dress Code

We appreciate the value that dress has for self-expression and want students to be comfortable and free to learn and fully participate in their educational experiences. At all times in a community setting, we balance the needs of individuals and the whole. We also notice the over-sexualization that occurs in certain items of dress, and want to break the connotations that occur with certain items of clothing; while also maintaining professional attire. Consensus over time has established that the community feels most comfortable in an environment where the focus is placed on inner worth rather than outer appearance. Research also demonstrates that finding value based on inner worth leads to greater self-esteem. Students are asked to dress in a manner that respects the values and worldviews of a broad spectrum of constituents (the very young, parents, faculty, guests, etc.). Questions you may ask yourself before walking onto campus are, "Can I walk in a straight line without holding my pants up and my undergarments not showing?" "Is what I'm wearing suitable for the activities that will occur in my day?"

### Appropriateness

Students must wear a top, a bottom, and shoes. These clothes should cover undergarments, and they must be opaque. Clothing should be functional for school activities. Tops must cover the breast area, allowing for full flexibility and range of motion to accommodate the many activities throughout the day, while still keeping the chest area and undergarments covered. Similarly, bottoms must comfortably cover the entire buttocks and undergarments through each of the day's activities. (ex: sagging, mini skirts, whale tail)

### Variety of Activities

Students engage in a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor activities, including ceramics, art, and physical education. Sometimes activities are planned ahead and sometimes activities develop to give space for emergent learning and play. Choice of clothing should allow for full participation. Students need to wear P.E. attire that enables comfort and coverage while playing sports (shorts, sweats, t-shirts, etc.). This functional clothing allows students to participate in any event or activity in the day.

### Weather

Temperature frequently varies 30 degrees within a single day; therefore, students should consider dressing in layers.

### Shoes

State law requires shoes to be worn at all times on school campuses, with the exception of Preschool students when inside the Preschool play yard. (This includes staff, parents, children, and all guests.) Students are required to wear closed-toe athletic shoes (sneakers/tennis shoes are appropriate) for physical education classes and sports activities.

### Dress Code Safety

Students may not wear clothing with logos depicting drug/alcohol/tobacco use, profanity, violence, items related to gang activity, or other images that could cause offense or discomfort to a viewer. No symbols or items that are disrespectful towards any individual or group identity characteristics,

such as but not limited to race, ethnicity, ability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin may be worn on campus or at any school-sponsored event.

### **Suggestions**

Consider the impact of clothing items that promote consumerism and media images. Consider sending your child to school with additional shoes or materials to be used for sports and active play.

### **Observance**

If there is non-observance of the dress code expectations, a student will be approached individually. Oak Grove staff will follow up with individual students as needed. A student will be given an opportunity to put on other clothes they have with them, they may borrow alternate school clothing, or parents may be called to bring alternative clothing.

## **Expectations for Intimate Behavior**

Students in the older grades sometimes form romantic relationships with classmates — this is normal. However, the school asks that students in this situation refrain from public displays of affection while at school in respect for the unique environment of the school setting.

## **Birthdays**

At Oak Grove, we are mindful of the subtle yet powerful ways in which inclusion, kindness, and sensitivity are cultivated in daily school life. Birthdays are important milestones, and we want to honor each child while upholding our shared values of community and belonging.

We ask that birthday parties be celebrated outside of school hours, and that invitations—particularly when extended to only a few classmates—be shared privately through personal mail, email, or phone, rather than at school. Feelings can be easily hurt when some children are excluded. When possible and developmentally appropriate, we encourage parenting adults to consider inviting all classmates. When a minority of classmates are excluded, it can have serious ramifications for the social dynamic within the classroom.

Birthday acknowledgments may happen at school and must be coordinated directly with the classroom teacher (MS Advisory Teacher and, for high school students, with the Dean of Student Life and Culture). Some families choose to bring a small snack to share at school on their child's birthday. If so, we ask that the snack be healthful and nourishing—avoiding candy and overly processed or sugary treats.

Thank you for helping us uphold a learning environment that supports both the joy of individual celebration and the deeper values of care, awareness, and inclusion.

## Communication & Conflict Resolution Protocols

*"Communication is not only the exchange of words, however articulate and clear those words may be; it is much deeper than that. Communication is learning from each other, understanding each other; and this comes to an end when you have taken a definite stand about some trivial or not fully thought-out act."*

-Krishnamurti, "Letters to the Schools"

In alignment with the school's intent and ethos, we recognize that how we communicate—and how we move through conflict—is as important as what we say. A thoughtful, relational approach supports not only resolution, but the modeling of integrity, humility, and mutual respect for our students.

Because we value presence, clarity, and courage in our conversations, we have developed a communication protocol as a guide. We ask that all members of our community—students, parenting adults, and staff—follow this shared framework. It helps ensure that concerns are addressed directly and compassionately, that misunderstandings are met with inquiry rather than assumption, and that relationship remains at the center.

As adults in a learning community, we are always teaching—especially in how we show up for one another. As Krishnamurti reminds us, "Relationship is the mirror in which we see ourselves as we are."

### Preamble

At Oak Grove, we see conflict not as something to be feared or avoided, but as a natural part of life in relationship—and an essential part of learning. Navigating interpersonal challenges offers all members of our community—students, staff, and parenting adults—opportunities to grow in self-awareness, empathy, and the skills of meaningful communication.

Supporting students' social and emotional development by guiding them through conflict is central to our mission. Through these experiences, students practice perspective-taking, strengthen emotional intelligence, and learn how to work through difficulty with curiosity and care. These are life skills that extend far beyond school.

All members of the faculty and staff are trained in age-appropriate strategies to support conflict resolution, including methods such as empathic listening, I-messages, Council, restorative circles, Nonviolent Communication, and other reflective and relational tools. These practices are used to help students with peer challenges, and to support respectful, open communication among adults and across the school community.

We ask that all community members—students, parenting adults, and staff—see moments of conflict or misunderstanding as invitations to pause, seek understanding, and connect with one another. If a student or adult needs help navigating a difficult situation, we encourage reaching out to a trusted teacher, staff member, or program director. At the High School, the Dean of Student Life and Culture is available to help mediate and support students with challenging dynamics.

Families play an important role in this process. If your child shares something concerning from

school, we encourage you to ask whom they've spoken with, and if needed, help them connect with a teacher. It is through our shared commitment to mindful communication and trust in the process that we can support one another—and grow as a community rooted in compassion, attentiveness, and respect.

## **General Concerns**

At Oak Grove, we value a school culture built on mutual respect, deep listening, and compassionate communication. In a small, close-knit community, relationships are central—and how we navigate tension, questions, or concerns becomes an important part of what we model for our students. Whether a concern arises between students and teachers or between parenting adults and faculty, we ask that everyone approach such moments with curiosity, care, and the willingness to engage directly and respectfully.

### **Step One: Inquire**

**When your student brings a concern:** Ask your student open-ended questions with curiosity and care, keeping in mind their developmental stage and your own emotional responses. Children and teens often share only parts of an experience, filtered through their growing perspectives. Pausing to listen deeply—without jumping to conclusions—can reveal important context and support your child in making meaning of their experience. This approach models empathy, critical thinking, and helps prevent unnecessary conflict or miscommunication.

**When you have a concern:** If you've seen or experienced something directly that gives you pause, take a moment to reflect before responding. Consider whether you have the full picture—there may be context or nuance that isn't immediately visible. Approaching the situation with openness and generous assumptions can create space for clearer understanding and more meaningful dialogue.

### **Step Two: Speak Directly and Compassionately**

If a real concern exists, speak directly with the person involved before bringing in others. Face-to-face conversations are best—written communication often lacks nuance. Let your intention be connection, not blame.

### **Step Three: Seek Support if Needed**

If direct dialogue doesn't bring resolution, reach out to the appropriate Student Support Team member:

- **Preschool–2nd Grade:** Homeroom Teacher and Director of Early Childhood
- **Grades 3rd–8th:** Homeroom Teacher/MS Advisory Teacher and Director of Upper Elementary and Middle School
- **High School:** HS Advisory Teacher, Dean of Student Life and Culture, and Director of High School

### **Final Step: The Head of School**

If thoughtful attempts at understanding and repair have not resolved the issue, it may be brought

to the Head of School. The Head will consider the perspectives shared and discern a course of action in alignment with the school's intent and the well-being of the community.

### **Student to Teacher & Parenting Adult to Teacher Conflict Resolution**

We encourage students to speak directly with their teacher when questions or concerns arise. Learning to communicate clearly and respectfully with adults is an essential skill—and one that strengthens confidence, emotional awareness, and mutual trust.

Navigating challenges in a relationship is not something to avoid, but a powerful opportunity for growth. When students engage directly with their teachers, they begin to build the foundation of empathy, courage, and accountability. As Krishnamurti reminds us, relationship is central to learning.

Of course, support is available. If a student is unsure how to begin, we encourage them to seek help from a trusted adult—whether a teacher, administrator, or parenting adult—who can guide or accompany them in initiating the conversation. In this way, we model and scaffold the social and self-advocacy skills we hope to see flourish.

Conflict, when approached with curiosity and care, becomes a pathway to greater understanding.

### **Parenting Adult to Teacher**

When a concern arises, we ask that parenting adults reach out directly to the teacher and schedule a time to meet in person or by phone. This initial step—rooted in open, respectful dialogue—often brings clarity and understanding.

Experience has shown us that most questions and concerns are resolved at this level, through thoughtful and direct communication. As we model for our students, honest conversation grounded in curiosity and care builds trust and strengthens relationships.

Taking the time to speak directly fosters connection—and helps ensure we are all working together in the best interest of the student.

### **Parent to Parent Conflict Resolution**

At Oak Grove, we recognize that misunderstandings and conflicts are a natural part of human relationships. While the school does not intervene in parent-to-parent dynamics, we ask that all parenting adults engage with one another in the spirit of the same respectful, thoughtful communication we strive to model for students.

Young people learn not only through curriculum, but through the lived examples of the adults around them. When parenting adults navigate differences with composure, curiosity, and courage, children internalize those qualities as part of their own developing moral compass.

We ask that families use the guidelines we hold within our school culture: Begin with clarification and fact-finding (Step One), followed by direct, face-to-face communication when possible (Step Two). Speaking honestly and with kindness, while holding space for complexity and emotion,

creates a foundation for trust and mutual understanding.

Ultimately, the way we relate to each other—especially in moments of tension—shapes the emotional ecology of our school. We invite you to join us in modeling compassionate, grounded, and respectful engagement for the benefit of your child and our entire learning community.

### **Preferred mode of communication**

ParentSquare is our official communication platform, and we ask parenting adults to use it for all school-related communication with teachers, administrators, and other parenting adults.

### **When to Skip the Communication Protocol**

There are certain serious circumstances in which it is appropriate—and necessary—to bypass the standard communication protocol and report directly to the Head of School or another designated administrator.

These situations may include:

- Allegations or observations of **violence** or threats of violence
- Suspected or confirmed **criminal activity**
- Incidents that meet the **legal or psychological definition of bullying**, including repeated and targeted intimidation, power, aggression, or exclusion that prevents the victim from getting help
- Reports of **harassment, discrimination, or abuse** of any kind (verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual)
- **Urgent safety concerns** involving students, staff, or the broader community
- Situations where going through the standard communication chain would increase or exacerbate risk of harm or retaliation

If you're unsure whether a concern warrants bypassing the Communication Protocol, we encourage you to act with care and report it to the Head of School or a trusted school leader.

At Oak Grove, safeguarding the wellbeing of our students, staff, and families is our highest responsibility. Prompt and courageous reporting allows us to respond swiftly, justly, and with compassion.

### **Homework**

Homework is an opportunity for practicing skills outside of the classroom environment and for reinforcing the transfer of knowledge and skills. Homework is also an opportunity for students to share what they are learning in school with families at home. Please see program sections for specific details.

## Student Reports

Progress reports for Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle School, and High School students are written two times each academic year and serve to update parents on the academic skills and progress students have made.

## Food & Lunch

A child's state of mind and capacity to learn are deeply related to their physical condition, which necessitates a wholesome diet. To learn effectively, children should come to school well-rested and have had a healthful breakfast. The staff requests that food brought to school for snacks, lunch, or any school outings be nutritious and healthful vegetarian choices. Our goal is to help children build a relationship with food where they are increasingly able to independently recognize hunger, identify what they need to eat, enjoy their food, and stop eating when they've had enough. We do this by actively exploring, together with students and parents, food-related and other health issues and encouraging parents and students to read labels and understand the ingredients in food as part of the educational program for all students.

At the core intent of the school is an exploration of one's relationship to, and therefore responsibility for, the natural world. This includes examining how our food choices impact the planet – therefore Oak Grove is a vegetarian campus. This includes the Lunch Program, food brought onto campus, and participating in all school-sponsored activities off-campus.

Occasionally, while in transit to sporting events, trips involving air travel, and travel out of state, students are asked to bring money to purchase meals of their own preference.

- **Student Store/Snack Carts**

As part of their fundraising efforts, Middle School and High School Student Councils offer snacks for purchase to classmates. In alignment with our food philosophy, we support Student Councils to consider the following:

1. Sourcing
2. Nutritional value
3. Impact on the environment.

We ask students to abide by the following guidelines:

1. No artificial ingredients
2. No palm oil
3. Minimal packaging
4. Minimal caffeine (High School only)
5. No caffeine in Middle School.

- **Bake Sales**

Occasionally classes host bake sales to raise funds for various causes. We ask families to abide by the following guidelines for the foods that they provide:

1. Fresh-baked

2. No artificial ingredients
3. No palm oil.

We encourage students organizing bake sales to be sensitive to dietary restrictions by providing options for people who are gluten-free, vegan, or have a nut allergy. This includes clearly labeling ingredients for the safety of all students and staff.

- **Lunch Program**

Oak Grove offers an optional vegetarian Lunch Program, prepared daily on campus, for 1st through 12th grade students. The intention of this plant-based lunch program is to use high quality, organic, and non-GMO local produce and ingredients to create nutrient-rich, balanced meals that strengthen our personal relationship with food and surroundings.

- **Potlucks/Events**

Sometimes parents are asked to bring healthful vegetarian food to school events. To avoid excessive use of paper and plastic products, we ask that parents bring the necessary reusable plates and utensils for their family's use.

## **Campus Care & Property**

- **Clean-up**

We ask all members of the community to stop and pick up litter if they see it on the paths or anywhere else as they walk around campus. All Oak Grove students participate in maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the campus. Each homeroom or Advisory class is responsible for specific areas of campus such as the picnic tables, Pavilion, etc.

- **Facility Use**

- **Library**

The Library – “The Owl’s Nest” – is available for use with staff supervision during campus hours. Our library is staffed by a part-time Librarian. Students are welcome to check out books (one to two books per person, per visit, for two weeks, renewable). If a book is lost, the family will be asked to replace it whenever possible. Elementary Library phone: 646-8236 ext. 213.

- **Play Areas**

Children may be in play areas only when supervised. The school takes precautions to ensure the safety of the students on all play structures during regular school hours. School staff members supervise the play structures and the playing fields on a rotating basis during lunchtime and other play periods. Playgrounds are closed after school and on weekends. In the Early Childhood Program (ECP), we ask that parents say good-bye to school at the end of the child's program. Playgrounds are in use then by other groups or are unsupervised.

- **Basketball & Tennis Courts**

The basketball and tennis courts are available for physical education classes and after-school sports., and for recreational use by boarding students. Special written permission must be obtained from the Head of School for use of these facilities by

Oak Grove parents, students, or community members at other times. Parents must accompany elementary-age students after school hours or on weekends.

## **Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response**

Oak Grove School takes the safety of students and staff with the utmost seriousness. OGS guidelines relating to Sexual Misconduct are organized within the categories of Prevention and Response. The school has preventative measures in place, such as annual staff training and ongoing education for students of all ages, as well as parent education. The school also has a series of policies and structures in place to effectively and consistently manage responses to allegations of sexual misconduct. All staff are certified and trained as mandated reporters in the state of California. Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected or known instances of abuse.

Guidelines, curriculum, training, and policies for both prevention and response are reviewed annually, revised, and strengthened in consultation with industry experts to ensure they continue to align with current best practices.

### **Prevention**

- **Environmental Safety:**

- OGS classroom and office doors are glass doors providing high visibility. Classrooms and offices have unobstructed windows to increase visibility. Teachers and staff are required to keep window shades open and unobstructed at all times during the school day and while students are on campus. If necessary due to the glare of the sun, a teacher may temporarily draw the blinds. This may not happen when a teacher is alone with a student.
- Campus bathrooms are single-use (inside each bathroom there are stalls, which provide students privacy), except for two bathrooms designated for 1st-3rd grade students only and the Preschool bathroom. These bathroom entry doors are left open at all times so activity can be visible and are closely monitored by staff in the multiple classrooms that face them.
- Interstitial Spaces: All OGS staff are trained to manage safety for students in interstitial spaces around campus. Staff and faculty are assigned responsibilities to monitor and keep students safe in all interstitial spaces (hallways, parking lots, and near and around bathrooms).

- **Employees are expected:**

- To engage in professional behavior at all times. Interactions with students should be interruptible and observable.
- Not to friend, follow, or comment on students' social media until after they are 18 *and* have graduated.
- Not to use personal email to communicate with students.
- If an employee must text communication with a current student, they must add a third party included in the conversation (a colleague or the student's parenting adult).
- Not to comment on the appearance of a student or colleague.

- Not to pay special attention, give preferential assignments, or develop a uniquely close relationship with a specific student that would not otherwise be offered to any student.
  - Not to touch a student without permission (e.g. “Do you want a hug?”). If an employee must make physical contact with a student (when they are injured, being physically violent, having a tantrum, etc.), the adult sportscasts the touching (e.g. “I am going to hold your body still until you calm down.”)
  - Not to be in a room alone with a student with the door closed or blinds drawn.
- **Hiring Policies:**
    - Recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes are continually updated and expanded upon to reflect the school’s commitment to student safety, ensuring that new community members have a clear understanding of and share our commitment to the policies, procedures, and ethos that reinforce this commitment.
    - Background Checks: All adults working for Oak Grove School (part-time and full-time staff, teachers, coaches, trip chaperones, etc.) are required to go through a legal background check. As part of our hiring process, we require everyone to have a Livescan (fingerprint background check).
    - Once the individual has completed the background check, the school receives two reports, one from the CA state database and one from the FBI database. These reports can reflect no criminal history (no results) or they may list prior criminal offenses.
    - If an individual has a clean report, but later commits an offense, the school receives notification.
    - In the event of receiving a report of any criminal offense, the Head of the School is notified immediately.
    - Beyond new employees, the school also requires background checks from independent contractors who will be working directly with students (theater program, summer camps, sports coaches, etc.). We also require background checks for any subcontractors who might need to access school premises for work (e.g. plumber, electrician, fire department, etc.) while the school is in session.
    - Visitors, mail carriers, and package delivery workers who need to access the campus while students are present are escorted by staff, are monitored while on campus, and do not have direct contact with students.
    - Additional training and certifications are required for all non-employee adults acting as chaperones on camping trips.
  - **Onboarding Staff Training:**
    - The staff attends both certified Harassment Prevention and Mandated Reporter training, each year. Documentation of training certifications is maintained in their Human Resource files.
    - Staff receives [Pastoral Care Onboarding training](#), covering the topics of sexual misconduct prevention and response, as well as [grooming](#) and expectations for maintaining professional boundaries with all students.

## Ongoing Education and Awareness

- **Staff**

- The school conducts multiple training sessions throughout the year on disparate topics relating to sexual misconduct prevention, including updates and reminders on guidelines and expectations for healthy relationship boundaries with students, mandated reporting, trauma-informed responses, and student support – annually for all adults, including sessions before students arrive at the start of the school year.
- Teachers and staff are trained in all-staff professional development settings, as well as age/stage-banded settings.
- The school continually clarifies the mandatory reporting obligations of its employees for any reports of reasonable suspicion involving potential child abuse or neglect.

- **Students**

- Oak Grove School's Pastoral Care Program and Infirmary Services provide ongoing community programming in support of student health and wellness. Through the Counseling Program, students have access to a trained professional who can support them in building skills for health and wellness and who can refer students/families for additional support outside of campus.
- The School Counselor, the Head of School, and the Program Directors meet regularly to review and develop action plans to support individual students.
- The school provides counseling resources and confidential support in connecting students and families to outside resources.
- Students receive training from the School Counselor, teachers, and staff on healthy ways to navigate stress, understanding when to involve an adult, and accessing available support resources.
- Beginning in Preschool, continuing through 12th grade, students are exposed to the [Sexuality Health and Wellness curriculum](#) (encompassing the full spectrum of gender and sexual identities) which educates students in age-congruent ways on issues of health and wellness, such as maintaining healthy relationships, identifying and finding support for unhealthy relationships, power and coercion within relationships, affirmative consent, healthy decision-making, self-care, and more.
- Elementary, Middle, and High School students are instructed and supported in talking to any trusted adult on campus if they are made to feel uncomfortable or have safety concerns.
- Students and parenting adults are made aware that issues relating to safety on campus are immediately routed to the HOS to ensure proper procedural steps are taken.
- All staff are informed and regularly reminded of the proper protocol for reporting incidents.
- Information is posted throughout the HS campus so that students are routinely reminded of how to seek support for interpersonal issues and find and access support resources.

- **Parenting Adults**
  - Through the ongoing Parent Education curriculum, parenting adults are encouraged to explore topics relating to their student's safety and wellbeing, which includes Sexual Health and Wellness.
  - Parenting adults have ongoing access to school resources that include a breadth of topics related to student safety, harm reduction, affirmative consent, grooming, etc.
  - Parenting adults are supported in their questions and concerns through their child's teacher, Program Director, and Head of School.
- **Response**
  - The School's sexual misconduct reporting procedure is continuously updated and expanded to best meet the needs of the community.
  - All OGS staff are certified mandated reporters and are legally required to report suspected/known abuse of a child under 18 years old.
  - All allegations of sexual misconduct against a student are reported to Child Protective Services.
  - The school provides supportive measures for students who report sexual misconduct.
  - Oak Grove School has strengthened practices for responding to student discipline related to allegations of sexual misconduct including, for example, communication with a student's subsequent schools or colleges, not awarding diplomas, expulsion, and exclusion from future school events and activities.
  - Students and staff are routinely reminded of the reporting procedure.
  - Staff members who hear about a report involving the safety of any student or staff on campus are to report directly to their supervisor and the Head of School.
  - Students, parenting adults, and staff members are encouraged to tell the School Counselor or any trusted adult if/when an incident has occurred or if they heard information about an incident.

## Health & Safety

- **Immunizations**

California state law requires all children be fully vaccinated in order to attend Preschool and grades K–12. Requirements apply to both public and private schools. Depending on the student's age, diseases for which immunizations are required include Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (*Hib*), Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (*whooping cough*), Poliomyelitis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B, and Varicella (*chickenpox*). California state law also requires public and private schools to maintain current immunization documentation for all enrolled students. Documentation that fulfills state requirements are (1) a current immunization record of all vaccines received from birth to the present; (2) a catch-up vaccine schedule that meets all criteria for conditional admission status; and/or (3) a valid medical exemption issued through the California Immunization Registry for Medical Exemptions (CAIR-ME). For more information, please refer to the "Immunizations" page on our website under "Parent and Student Resources." Oak Grove School also recommends visiting Shots for Schools, a comprehensive vaccine information site from the California

Department of Public Health (CDPH), and discussing questions or concerns with your personal family physician.

- **Accidents**

Every precaution is taken to safeguard students at school and on field trips. If an accident occurs, immediate first aid will be given and parents or the designated emergency contact will be notified. If we are unable to reach the family or doctor, the student will be treated at the nearest emergency hospital while efforts to contact the family continue. The signed medical release form grants necessary treatment. The school provides student accident insurance for covered medical expenses (see Accident Insurance).

If an accident occurs during school hours or on a school activity and parents wish to file a claim with the school's Accident Insurance Carrier, the school Business Office will initiate a claim form based on the teacher's accident report. The parents are responsible for completing the form and for submitting medical bills on a timely basis, as well as for filing a claim with any other medical insurance they may be carrying. The family's personal medical insurance issues a report of their coverage for the accident, which must be processed by the school's Accident Insurance Carrier. See the school Business Office for details.

- **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

For full details of the Emergency Preparedness Plan, please see the OGS website. A copy is also located in the Front Office. We encourage all families to be familiar with the plan. The school employs a text message alert system that enables us to immediately notify every Oak Grove parent via text message in the case of an emergency (fire, earthquake, etc.). The school will not release students to anyone other than a parent or designated person whose name appears on the Emergency Release Form. For this reason, it is imperative that this information be kept up-to-date. Parents or guardians seeking to retrieve their children must sign for their release.

## **Pastoral Care**

At Oak Grove, we are committed to serving the whole student. The Pastoral Care Program is designed specifically to offer support for students and staff, so that each is able to show up intentionally and engage authentically, as this generates a sense of belonging and community. Once we are present and feeling connected, we are then able to flower in excellence.

### **Pastoral Care Time**

PCT takes place during the first 15 minutes of the school day for PK-12th grade students and all OGS staff.

- The intention of Pastoral Care Time is to create a grounding opportunity for students and teachers alike at the beginning of the school day. To ground, in this sense, means to slow down and connect with where we are, physically, mentally, and/or spiritually. This time of intentional slowness acts as an explicit transition from what happened last night or before school to this new, present school day, so that we may fully engage in the rest of what the day holds.

## **Physical Space**

The Counselor's office and infirmary in the High School support this purpose.

- This is a space for all staff and faculty, as well as H.S. students, to rest, check in, and be cared for.

## **Direct Support for Students**

- Student support may be directly sought out by High School students, or adults may connect a student to Pastoral Care.

## **Team Support for PK-12th grade**

- Teacher(s), Program Director(s), and Head of School work together with the Pastoral Care Coordinator when needed.
- Support is provided for teachers in their relationships with students and parents.
- Support is available for teachers so that they can fully show up for student relationships.

## **Advisory Program**

- Advisory curriculum is coordinated in grades 6th-12th.

## **Pastoral Care**

- Wellness activities on campus are coordinated, including collaboration among: Pastoral Care Team; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee; Libraries; Sexual Health and Wellness; Parent Education; Program Directors.

## **DEIB Statement**

All Children Belong Here. This is Our Promise to You.

- We work to build an open, safe, and mutually respectful school community in which each child and each family is an important and equal member.
- We work toward never allowing differences of any kind to be an excuse to make fun of, exclude, or hurt you.
- We work to listen carefully and lovingly to what worries you and give you thoughtful, age-appropriate information and support.
- We work to nurture you to feel strong and proud about yourself and your family.
- We work to facilitate your skills to be friends with classmates who are alike and different from you.
- We work to honor your family's importance to you by building respectful partnerships with them.
- We work to provide support to you and your family when you feel stress, anxiety, or fear because of family hardships or because of current events or acts of prejudice or hate.
- We work to uproot our own personal biases and will speak out against prejudice and bias wherever we encounter it.
- We work to examine all school policies and practices through the lens of equity and make any changes needed to actively keep these promises.

We are in this together — working for a world where every child is protected and honored, exactly as they are.

*Adapted from Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards, "Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves," Second edition. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).*

## **Sexual Health & Wellness**

At Oak Grove School we recognize that sexual health education begins at birth, and that our students' physical, social, and emotional well-being is critical to lifelong healthy relationships with oneself and others. This is reflected through many aspects of the learning day, from Preschool to High School. A comprehensive and integrated sexual health curriculum includes age- and developmentally appropriate, medically accurate information on a broad set of topics related to sexuality including reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, emotions, intimacy, body image, media literacy, consent, abstinence, contraception, disease prevention, sexual orientation, and gender.

### **More about Oak Grove's Sexual Health and Wellness Approach**

A comprehensive and integrated sexual health curriculum brings to the surface our core values of self-understanding, global citizenship, and care for others. Physical, social, and emotional well-being are critical to a student's lifelong healthy relationship with self and others.

Sexuality, in and of itself, intersects and overlaps with every aspect of healthy development. Therefore, a comprehensive sexual health education must include the biological, socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information); the affective domain (feelings, values, and attitudes); and the behavioral domain (communication, decision-making).

### **Shared Sexual Wellness Definitions**

#### **Sex**

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. While these sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as there are individuals who possess both, they tend to differentiate humans as males and females. In general use in many languages, the term sex is often used to mean "sexual activity," but for technical purposes in the context of sexuality and sexual health discussions, the above definition is preferred.

#### **Sexual Health**

A state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected, and fulfilled. (WHO, 2006a)

## Sexuality

Sexual health cannot be defined, understood, or made operational without a broad consideration of sexuality, which underlies important behaviors and outcomes related to sexual health. The working definition of sexuality is that a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.

## Sexual Rights

There is a growing consensus that sexual health cannot be achieved and maintained without respect for, and protection of, certain human rights. The working definition of sexual rights given below is a contribution to the continuing dialogue on human rights related to sexual health.

The fulfillment of sexual health is tied to the extent to which human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. Sexual rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in international and regional human rights documents and other consensus documents and in national laws.

The application of existing human rights to sexuality and sexual health constitute sexual rights. Sexual rights protect all people's rights to fulfill and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health, with due regard for the rights of others and within a framework of protection against discrimination.

Rights critical to the realization of sexual health include:

- the right to equality and non-discrimination
- the right to be free from torture or from cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment
- the right to privacy
- the right to the highest attainable standard of health (including sexual health) and social security
- the right to marry and to found a family and enter into marriage with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to equality in and at the dissolution of marriage
- the right to decide the number and spacing of one's children
- the right to information, as well as education
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and
- the right to an effective remedy for violations of fundamental rights.

The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.

## Resources

Resources Oak Grove has available which we suggest families have at home:

[Talking to your Child about Sex and Sexuality](#)

## Harassment/Bullying

Nurturing students' social and emotional growth by actively assisting them in resolving interpersonal conflicts is at the core of our mission. We encourage students and parents to see conflict not as a "problem" but as an "opportunity" for students to learn about themselves and others and their relationship to the world. It is an opportunity to develop communication and conflict resolution skills that will last them a lifetime.

All Oak Grove teachers are trained and experienced in facilitating strategies that help students deal with conflict. Too numerous to list, a few examples include: Council process, compassionate communication, and the self-reflection process.

Teachers are attentive to the times when students are struggling to deal with an interpersonal challenge. Teachers and staff support students in developmentally appropriate ways to learn skills around conflict. When incidents happen at school of which teachers may not be aware, students are encouraged to "ask a grownup for help" in the same way they would "ask for help" with an academic problem. Students and teachers can also ask for assistance from the Program Directors.

Teachers can only assist students if they are aware of the conflict a student is dealing with. Parents can help! If your student describes an interpersonal problem happening at school, ask them what adult they spoke with and if they answer "No one," the next step is to encourage them to speak with a teacher or trusted adult and "ask for help." Conflict is a major part of life and learning. When you hear about a problem from your child, please listen to them with simple curiosity, allowing them to offload feelings. Help them bring it to the attention of a teacher so that teachers can help with fact-finding and exploring feelings and needs together. Please help teachers to support your child with conflicts at school by responding calmly and trust that the school will take the necessary steps to help students reach understanding and resolution.

## Harassment and Bullying

Although learning to navigate social conflict is a key aspect of the learning program at Oak Grove, there are times when a conflict is beyond what is considered manageable to a student, based on their development and/or a power differential with other students. At these times, conflict between students can fall into the realm of harassment or bullying.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, welcoming, and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is a behavior that can be damaging to healthy social development. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

## Why do we need an Anti-Bullying Policy?

Oak Grove School wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threats, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore this policy promotes practices within the school to reinforce our vision and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

## What is Bullying? (Intent+Sustained+Power Imbalance)

- Intent: Intent toward targeting a specific person or targeting a characteristic. Intent to cause emotional or physical harm.

- Sustained: Sustained as a pattern over time or continuous in a single incident (won't stop when asked to stop).
- Power Imbalance: Student who is being "bullied/harassed" is or is perceived as vulnerable, someone who cannot defend themselves by way of their own action or by being prevented from asking for help from adults.

Bullying is the targeted and repeated intention to harm, intimidate, or coerce another student who is perceived as vulnerable, who cannot defend themselves by way of their own action or by being prevented from asking for help from adults.

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, verbal, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disableist, ageist, antisemitic, or cyber. Bullying is usually persistent and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone else.

With the advance in new technologies, Oak Grove is aware of an increased risk of cyberbullying using emails, instant messenger, social networking sites, and public websites inappropriately.

### **Who can students talk to if they have any concerns about Bullying?**

- Pastoral Care Coordinator or School Counselor
- Homeroom/Advisory Teacher
- Specialist Teacher
- Program Director
- Front Office Staff
- Any other staff on campus (all OGS staff are trained to respond to children needing help when navigating social conflicts).

Once the school has followed the Conflict Resolution Protocols and has determined, through fact-finding, communicating to all parties, etc., that bullying is occurring, the student(s) bullying will be removed temporarily or permanently while the best course of action is determined to ensure that such behavior will not occur again.

### **Responses will vary depending on the nature of the incident, but may include:**

1. Creation of a Plan of Support to prevent further bullying
2. Liaison with parents/guardian/social worker
3. Counseling
4. Involvement of external agencies
5. Formal recording on transcripts
6. Addendum(s) to enrollment contract
7. Suspension
8. Expulsion from Oak Grove.

### **Anti-Bullying Strategies:**

- Regular student education at all ages around healthy communication, permissible behavior, collaborative conflict resolution
- There are multiple adults monitoring students during school, breaks, lunch times, after school, and the interstitial spaces around campus

- Working with students to practice and build strong situational awareness and non-violent conflict resolution skills
- Working with parents and students to encourage students to tell a trusted adult when something occurs at school that is upsetting
- Fostering strong teacher-student relationships so students feel comfortable in reporting any issues.

#### **Anti-Bullying Advice to Parents/Caregivers:**

- A great deal of bullying is CYBER-BULLYING. Please regularly monitor your child's use of texting, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media sites. Access to these is out of the school's control when your child is not in school.
- TALK to your child with warmth and sensitivity on a regular basis, so any problem is easier to share.
- ENCOURAGE your child to practice advocating for themselves and to go to a trusted adult at school when they need help with a social conflict.

#### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review:**

The school reviews this policy annually and assesses its implementation and effectiveness.

## **Parking Lot Safety**

#### **Parking Lot Guidelines:**

- Please drive slowly and heed traffic signs.
- Park your car in the designated areas.
  - No parking in the fire zone between High School and Preschool (along the road).
  - No parking under oak trees (on dirt), as this may damage their shallow roots.
  - No parking by the Art Building or along the fire road.
- Please do not park your car in the driveway area in front of the Main House at any time.
- Get out of your car and walk children to the car to prevent children running in the parking lot, unless you are using the "drop-off zone" in front of the school garden.
- Do not leave your car idling while waiting for your child.
- Help keep driveways clear and un-blocked while waiting for your child.
- Arrive on time for prompt pick-up.
- Please make after-school plans prior to the school day to avoid confusion.
- Please make a quick goodbye. The more people in the parking lot, the more confusing it is for teachers, parents, and students.
- Dogs are not allowed on campus. Please leave pets safely in vehicles during pick-up and drop-off.
- Cars cannot be left parked on campus during non-school hours unless the driver is involved in a school activity.

## Seat Belts & Speed Limits

All drivers are expected to drive within posted speed limits and ensure that every passenger wears a seat belt. As required by law, younger children must be in an appropriate car seat.

## On-Campus Driving

### Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards

**(all wheeled transport other than cars and motorcycles)**

We love that so many of you walk and ride (bikes, scooters, one-wheels) to school. Thank you for making a choice that is both good for your body and for our environment. With more and more families and staff making this choice, we have updated some of our parking lot safety protocols.

**When arriving to and departing from campus on foot, please use the human gate at the bottom of the driveway. If you are on a bike, skateboard, scooter, or one-wheel, please take Besant Road**, adjacent to the Ranch House, and enter through the H.S. athletic field gate. We are now asking that all non-automobile forms of transportation be locked in the bicycle racks at the H.S., which are located next to the Outdoor Education Shed. Once your transport is locked up, please walk through the High School to access the internal walking paths.

If you have to cross Lomita Road on your way to campus, we ask that you use the crosswalk at Meiners Oaks Elementary School and walk along the school side of the street to Besant Road (if on wheels), or through the Ranch House parking lot until you reach the bottom of our driveway (if on foot). We ask that you use the crosswalk at the base of the driveway to access the human gate on the other side. Use the sidewalk up the driveway.

Drivers, please be aware of the crosswalk at the base of the driveway as well as those in the parking lots.

**Helmets are legally required for all minors who ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards in public areas.** Hallways and atrium areas are off-limits to bikes, scooters, and skateboards. The use of motorized scooters is prohibited by the Ojai police for anyone less than 16 years of age.

## Carpooling

Carpooling is encouraged. Please make sure children know who is picking them up and that the school office is informed of any changes (in Preschool and Kindergarten, inform teachers of changes). Oak Grove School does not assume any responsibility for carpool arrangements or for any liability arising from carpooling.

## Parent Drivers for Field Trips

We appreciate parent support on field trips! If parents are driving their own vehicle, a copy of their insurance coverage must be on file in the school's Business Office. The minimum amount of coverage for liability and bodily injury is \$100,000 and \$300,000 respectively. If parents volunteer to drive a school van, they must complete a DMV form, provided by the Business Office, along with providing a copy of their driver's license, at least two (2) days before the date of the field trip.

## Field Trip Permission Slips

At the beginning of the school year, Kindergarten through 12th grade parents sign an Ojai Valley

Field Trip Permission form. This allows groups to take local field trips within the Ojai Valley at any time. For field trips outside of the Ojai Valley, each K-12th teacher will send home a permission form stating date, time, and particulars of the planned field trip. This form must be signed and returned to the teacher before the trip. Students may not participate in out-of-town trips without written parental permission. All Preschool field trips require a signed permission slip, even within the Valley.

## **Safety while Driving**

All drivers are expected to drive within the posted speed limits and ensure that students are wearing seat belts. Students are expected to be courteous and safe while riding in staff- or parent-driven cars or school vehicles. Electronic devices may be used only at the discretion of, and with the permission of, both the teacher and the driver. Generally, this is discouraged. Parents are asked to be aware of appropriate radio stations, consulting with the supervising teacher ahead of time. Eating, singing, and car games are also within the driver's authority. (General school guidelines regarding meat and junk food apply on all school outings.) If student behavior becomes distracting to the driver, the driver should pull over, stop the car, and address the situation immediately. Students are expected to help clean vehicles after field trips.

## **Camping & Outdoor Activities**

Camping and outdoor activities are an integral part of Oak Grove's curriculum. Valuable skills are learned and relationships are built during these outdoor experiences. Students are expected to participate in them as in any other class activity; they are not considered as "extra" but rather as an essential aspect of the curriculum. Parents are discouraged from packing for older children, but instead are asked to carefully supervise so that necessary items are remembered and unnecessary items are left behind. When students label and pack their own supplies and equipment, they have more of a sense of what they are taking and how to keep track of it. Useful camping items include tents, backpacks, hiking boots, and lightweight, compact sleeping bags and pads. Since camping trips provide important opportunities for building independence, only parents of the very young (Grade 1 and under) are invited to join trips. Developing personal independence and connection among class members and teachers is an integral part of the Oak Grove outdoor education program. Parents are a valuable part of our team when they support their child's growth and development in these areas.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents are integral to Oak Grove School. Your active participation is beneficial for the students and the whole school. When you choose Oak Grove for your child(ren), you are choosing a school where you are welcome to participate and expected to contribute to the well-being of the whole educational community. It is important for parents and staff to work together to create a consistent environment for the children. Parents are urged to meet with teachers immediately concerning any problems that may arise during the course of the year.

## **Parent Engagement**

Krishnamurti said of Oak Grove School: "This school here is entirely different from other schools in India and in England. Here the parents are involved in it, which is a new kind of experiment, because if the children are going to be different, the parents must also be different, otherwise there is a contradiction between the children and the parents, and there will be conflict between

them. So to avoid all that, we thought it would be right that the parents as well as the teachers and the students work together as a family unit....So, will the parents also be concerned with the total development of their children and of themselves, with the help of the teachers, all together?"

In the spirit of this shared learning and sense of responsibility to discover what is of the utmost importance afresh alongside our students, we encourage and expect our parenting adults to be actively involved in the various Parent Engagement opportunities made available by the school. There are a variety of ways parenting adults can and must participate authentically:

- 1) **Mandatory Parenting Adult Meetings:** These meetings include our All-School informational and community-building events like our Back-to-School Night and our Open House. We also have 4-5 class meetings throughout the school year which offer parenting adults the opportunity to engage with each other, the teachers and sometimes, the students, through informational sharings (re: age and stage developments, curricular explorations, camping excursions or field trips, etc.), student presentations, and class discussions.
- 2) **Parent Education Events:** These educational offerings involve learning around a particular topic. Examples include social-emotional health, sexual wellness, social justice, and technology.
- 3) **Building Connection Teas with Your Program Director and Teachers:** These more casual gatherings, offered periodically, offer parenting adults time to build relationships with one another and to engage in conversations with school staff around emergent issues.
- 4) **K Discussions:** These morning offerings, twice weekly (see calendar for specific timing), offer parenting adults and staff members (sometimes students too) the opportunity to engage with the Teachings of our founder as a means to further understand what they reveal to each one of us, as fellow inquirers. These dialogues invite participants to set aside the authority of belief, dogma, opinion, and any other aspect of "the known" in order to come upon something new together, or "the unknown." The quality of relationship that exists in these settings is truly unique and asks nothing of its participants except to be open, genuinely curious, and serious in their sense of what shared learning can blossom into.
- 5) **Adult Pastoral Care Time (PCT):** These weekly offerings allow parents the opportunity to go within, as do their children during the first part of their school day, through mindful, reflective exercises which might include meditation in the quiet room, painting with watercolors, and nature walks.
- 6) **Volunteering:** There are a variety of ways parents can volunteer to support the development and maintenance of our beautiful community of learning. These opportunities will be shared throughout the year via ParentSquare.

## Fundraising - Annual Giving

Tuition covers about 80% of the cost of your child's Oak Grove School education. The school therefore depends on the generosity of parents, grandparents, and friends to raise the additional 20% needed to meet the operational budget. Annual Giving offers a tax-deductible way of helping to bridge this 20% gap.

We expect each parent to donate to the best of their ability to the Annual Fund. The amount of your donation is personal and confidential.

## Volunteer Hours

Each family is asked to volunteer a minimum of 25 hours annually, including at least five hours specifically toward major fundraisers.

## Parent Council

The Parent Council has an important role at Oak Grove by ensuring that the parental perspective is represented and taken into account and that the parent body has robust engagement. Parents recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.

Parent Council plans and implements an array of activities designed to support operational and strategic initiatives of the school and that contribute to the stated mission and philosophy of the school to work with parents as partners.

Specifically, Parent Council is responsible for planning and/or supporting the following events:

- Back-to-School Coffees in August and January (collaboratively with Admissions)
- Family Picnic (P.C. event only, with staff support)
- Pumpkin Carving
- Winter Staff and Faculty Party (P.C. plans and implements)
- Open House (through volunteer coordination in collaboration with Admissions)
- Holiday Market (coordination with Student Councils)
- Day of Reading (leads and executes with staff support)
- Fundraising Tea Decorations Committee
- Faculty and Staff Appreciation
- Parent Engagement Opportunities (P.C.-initiated plan)

Parent Council also supports the following through promotion:

- Parent Education (promoting with parents)
- Spirit Days
- General School Events

In addition to supporting its own initiatives, Parent Council supports the following financially:

- Winter Solstice Market, Holiday Market
- High School Prom
- Teaching Tools
- Parent Education

### CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair are to provide leadership, guidance, and direction to the structure and operation of the Council. Specific duties include:

- Holds overall responsibility for the operations of the Parent Council
- Plans the agenda, schedules, and conducts meetings
- Meets monthly with the Head of School

- Serves as calendar coordinator, ensuring P.C. programs and meetings are included in school calendar
- Collects and reviews Parent Council materials
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all committees
- Speaks at Back-to-School Night
- Serves as the parent representative to the Oak Grove School Board
- Recruits one to two class representatives for each grade

#### SECRETARY

Records the meeting notes after each meeting and sends them to the Class Reps to share with the parents in their class. Secretary also posts volunteer needs on ParentSquare, sends meeting reminders, and sends thank you notes to volunteers. Specific duties include:

- Assists the P.C. Chair and assumes the duties of the Chair when needed
- Attends all P.C. meetings
- Acts as volunteer coordinator, working closely with class parents and committee chairs
- Acts as new family coordinator
- Other duties as assigned by the Parent Council Chair

#### TREASURER

Creates the budget for the coming school year with the Chair and Secretary. Specific duties include:

- Monitors P.C. expenses and expenditures
- Keeps accurate accounts of all financial transactions of the P.C. and provides an oral financial report at P.C. meetings
- Handles payment and ordering for P.C. and its events
- Records and submits receipts for reimbursement and invoices for P.C. events to the Business Office
- Attends all P.C. meetings
- Tracks Teaching Tools Fund disbursements/reimbursements
- Other duties as assigned by the Parent Council Chair

#### CLASS PARENT REPRESENTATIVE (1-2 per grade)

Represents their class to the Parent Council. Specific duties include:

- Builds community within their grade (facilitating two small connection opportunities per year, in August/September & January/ December)
- Reaches out to families to welcome them to the school
- Posts monthly P.C. updates to ParentSquare
- Encourages parent attendance and participation in school activities
- Coordinates volunteers for P.C. and school events and activities

## Parent & Student Feedback

Parent and student feedback is an essential component of the continued growth of our school. While not all feedback can be acted on, we still welcome fresh ideas for school-wide improvement. Teachers regularly ask younger students for informal feedback, and older students are given several opportunities in the year to give feedback to their teachers. Parent feedback is gathered

periodically via an online survey.

## Admissions & Financial Concerns

- **Admissions Policy**

Oak Grove School does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment, or otherwise, because of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or age, in violation of existing state or federal laws or regulations. Oak Grove is authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant students.

- **Required Documentation**

The following forms must be completed for students to be enrolled and to attend school:

- Enrollment Contract
- OGS Contact & Release Form
- Emergency Contact Form
- California State Immunization Record (all grades)
- Additional forms are required for Preschool students

- **Money Matters**

Oak Grove is intentionally small in order to provide a safe, caring educational environment where each student is known well. We are also fortunate to have a beautiful 150-acre campus to explore and delight in. Meeting payroll for our teachers and meeting the demands of maintaining this beautiful campus are responsibilities that cannot be met unless we receive each and every tuition dollar projected in our budget. Delayed or delinquent accounts put a burden on the school, undermine relationships within our small community, and put the school in financial danger. As a non-profit school, we depend on all parents to make tuition payments on time. Delayed or delinquent accounts may result in:

- a student being asked to leave the school (in such cases, families are still responsible for paying the tuition in full)
- a student may not be eligible for financial aid
- a student may not be eligible for re-enrollment

- **No Refunds Policy:**

Like all other independent schools, Oak Grove budgets and plans with the expectation that all students enrolled will remain for the full school year. For this reason, no portion of tuition or fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event that a student is absent, withdraws, or is asked to leave the school for disciplinary reasons. Please refer to the Enrollment Contract for more information.

All financial information is strictly confidential and will only be released to those with financial responsibility for the student. If you have questions about your account, please call the Business Office at 805-646-8236 ext. 130.

## Financial Aid Policy & Procedure

Oak Grove School benefits from a diverse student body and is committed to maintaining a need-based financial aid program for students who are a good match for the school, but who cannot afford full tuition. However, our financial aid funds are limited and vary year to year. Each year, Oak Grove School awards need-based financial assistance to a limited number of families. Funds are not sufficient to serve all applicants, and priority is given to re-enrolling students. Financial aid grants are typically no more than 25% of tuition and there are no 100% awards. The majority of financial aid awards are a small percentage of full tuition. Financial aid is available at all grade levels, from Preschool through High School. Some specific funded scholarships are available (contact the Admissions Office for information). Parents and friends wishing to sponsor a student (gift is not tax-deductible) may contact the Head of School or the Business Office.

Parents and friends wishing to establish future scholarship opportunities should contact our Development Director.

FACTS is utilized for the application process. This service is used by more than 200 independent schools and has been found to be the most equitable system for determining financial need. Please be aware, however, that the school can rarely grant aid equal to determined need. Families must apply for financial aid annually, remaining eligible by demonstrating significant need and by keeping their student's school account in good standing.

All information received by Oak Grove School regarding financial aid is strictly confidential. Information on how to complete the SSS forms online is available from the Admissions Office. Families should be prepared with all relevant information (income, taxes, etc.) in December for completion of forms. Priority consideration is given to applications submitted by mid-January for the following school year.

## Re-enrollment

Enrollment Contracts are sent out in February for re-enrollment, with a non-refundable deposit due in March to hold a student's place for the following year.

A student's continued enrollment is dependent on compliance with all policies and guidelines in the Enrollment Contract, the Parent & Student Handbook, and when applicable, the High School Handbook Agreement and the Besant. Enrollment Contracts for a new school year are issued only when all financial obligations for the previous year are complete.

## Budget

Tuition income, class size, staff salaries and benefits, educational program and facilities, financial aid and fund-raising are interdependent in the budget planning process. The OGS Finance Committee meets regularly to monitor the current budget, review financial reports and oversee the school's financial plan, assist the Head of School in preparing the following year's tuition, fees, and overall operating budget, and address long-range, deferred maintenance and capital improvement plans.

## Information Resources

- **ParentSquare**

Our communication tool of choice is the ParentSquare app. We therefore expect parents to check the app regularly for communications from teachers and administrators.

ParentSquare can be configured to notify users via text, email, and in-app. Please ask your student's teacher or Program Director if you need help configuring the app. As per our Communication Protocol, we ask that parents and teachers do NOT use ParentSquare to communicate sensitive or difficult issues that would be better addressed by phone or face-to-face.

- **Website**

Parents and students will find a variety of information and downloads at [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes news, program information, photos, newsletters, calendars, menus, schedules, special events details, and Parent Council announcements. In addition, there is information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often, and parents are encouraged to check it frequently.

## Governance & Administration

### Where to Direct Questions:

- **Oak Grove School Board**

The Oak Grove School Board (OGSB) is responsible for assisting the Head of School in determining and meeting the long-range needs of the school. The OGSB membership is drawn from KFA Trustees, past and present parents, OGS alumni, and interested community members, all of whom bring specific wisdom, expertise, fundraising potential, or perspective to the Board. Current committees include: Finance Committee; Advancement Committee; Campus Planning Committee; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee; Health and Safety Team; Parent Council; WASC Committee; and Nominating Committee. Members are appointed each year by the Nominating Committee, which is happy to receive notices of interest from parents or recommendations. Direct all questions regarding school governance to the Chair of the OGSB.

- **Head of School**

The Head of School is responsible for the overall day-to-day administration and operations of the school, with the assistance, input, and support of the Leadership Team, staff, and faculty.

Direct all questions regarding general school philosophy, policies and procedures, all-school safety issues, problem-solving and/or mediation when all other avenues have been exhausted (see Communication and Conflict Resolution Protocol) to the Head of School.

- **Director of Early Childhood Program (ECP)**

The Director of ECP is responsible for the day-to-day operations of all aspects of the ECP (Preschool-2nd Grade & Parent Education, After-care Program). Direct all questions related

specifically to the ECP Program, including general curriculum, educational programs, student placement, and student discipline to the Director of ECP. The Director of the Early Childhood Program works closely with the Head of School.

- **Director of Upper Elementary and Middle School**

The Director of the Upper Elementary and Middle School Program is responsible for coordination of Grades 3-8. They work with the Head of School and the Director of Teaching and Learning to support teachers and students.

- **Director of High School**

The Director of the High School is responsible for the day-to-day operations of all aspects of the High School and serves as a communication and problem-solving link to the Head of School regarding all issues to do with the High School.

- **School Faculty**

The Oak Grove faculty is a group of professional individuals who have sought out the school for its sensible and sensitive approach to learning. They have varying credentials (all full-time homeroom and core subject teachers hold teaching credentials), undergraduate and graduate degrees, and experience, and share an appreciation for Oak Grove's unique learning atmosphere. The teachers set the tone for the learning environment and facilitate the implementation of the school's intent.

Direct all questions about your child's academic, personal, or social progress, or information regarding your child that may influence school behavior (e.g. family sickness, death, parental absence, separation, divorce), as well as questions regarding school assignments, homework, etc. to your student's homeroom, core subject teacher, or Advisory teacher.

- **Director of Advancement**

The Director of Advancement is responsible for all aspects of recruitment, retention, and admissions in the school, works to support full enrollment, and is also responsible for all marketing and outreach opportunities regarding the school. Direct all questions regarding enrollment, re-enrollment, student placement, and school outreach opportunities to the Director of Advancement.

- **Director of Operations**

The Director of Operations is responsible for some of the non-instructional aspects of the school (campus planning, maintenance, kitchen).

- **OGS Business Manager**

The Business Manager is responsible for the overall smooth functioning of the Business Office and works closely with the Head of School and OGS Finance Committee in developing, implementing, and overseeing school budgets. Direct all questions regarding tuition payments or billing concerns to the OGS Business Manager.

- **Accreditation & Memberships**

Oak Grove School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The school is also a member

of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Education Records Bureau (ERB), The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), the National Council for Social Studies, the National Association of Elementary Principals, and the Ojai Chamber of Commerce.

## **Oak Grove School Board Statement of Concern and Intent related to the Climate Crisis**

As members of the Oak Grove School Board, we acknowledge the challenges of the global climate crisis facing our school community and school communities throughout the world. The crisis underscores Krishnamurti's intent to create a "place that is whole, sane, and intelligent" and where relationships and inquiry are approached with trust and affection.

The OGSB wholeheartedly commends the school's staff and students for developing an abiding and creative ecological ethos across all aspects of its programs and community. At this critical juncture in history, we are urgently called upon to understand what actions contribute to more sustainable living.

The OGS Board pledges support of the school community and its OGSB committees as we develop strategic plans to reduce waste, pollution, and our carbon footprint and take to heart the question, **"What does it mean in daily life to respect the living Earth?"**

The list below is a testament to some of the school's comprehensive actions in the past and a statement of OGSB firm support for further creative action:

- reviewing climate science/ecological literacy across all departments
- reviewing K-12th grade health and climate science curricula
- integrating ecological practices across campus/classrooms
- reducing carbon emissions: carpooling, biking, walking
- funding 100 percent renewable energy on campus
- funding/procuring electric school vans
- retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency
- planting trees
- xeriscaping; landscaping for water efficiency
- evaluating long-distance travel programs/carbon emissions offsets
- greening kitchen practices; reducing food waste
- removing paved/impervious surfaces; increasing rainwater capture
- reducing paper/copy machine use
- eliminating single use containers
- establishing an ECO-Library
- creating valley-wide restorative projects with other schools and school boards in Ojai and Ventura County.

Sincerely resolved,

OGSB members

## The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is currently made up of seven members who oversee the major areas of the school. It is made up of the following positions:

|                                                |                  |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Head of School                                 | Jodi Grass       |
| Director of the High School                    | Jodi Grass       |
| Director of Upper Elementary and Middle School | Ron Schindel     |
| Director of Early Childhood Program            | Laurie Cornell   |
| Business Manager                               | Sandra Torres    |
| Director of Operations                         | Jacqueline Valle |
| Director of Advancement                        | Joel Keeler      |
| Dean of Studies                                | Will Hornblower  |

# # #

# Early Childhood Program

## Preschool - 2nd Grade

“The years which a student spends in a school must leave behind in him a fragrance and delight.” J. Krishnamurti, “On Education”

### Table of Contents

(ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE)

- Welcome!
- About the Early Childhood Program at Oak Grove School
- The Basics (Hours)
- After-School Care
- Communication between School & Home
- Arrivals & Departures
- Parking
- Clothing
- Food & Lunch (see “The Basics” section)
- Health
- Bringing Toys to School
- Play-dates
- Field Trips & Permission Slips
- Cold & Rainy Days
- Art & Messes
- Borrowing Classroom Library Books
- Toilet Learning
- General All-School Rules
- Asking Questions — Who to Ask
- Welcome!

## Welcome!

The staff of the Early Childhood Program extends a warm welcome to all new and returning Preschool, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade children and their families. When your child enrolls in our Early Childhood Program, you become a member of this learning community of teachers, parents, and caregivers working as partners to support young children. You help create its atmosphere, and our collective spirit makes the school what it is!

## About the Early Childhood Program at Oak Grove School

The Early Childhood Program consists of Preschool, Kindergarten, and our lower elementary grades (1st and 2nd). Early childhood is a time when intelligence, heart, and a sturdy sense of self are nurtured. Our mission is to encourage in young children their joy of discovery and spirit of inquiry by offering them experiences that make learning come alive. We deeply value play and see it as a vital part of a child's construction of knowledge. We support the development of the whole child, with a curriculum and environment organized to foster the growth of each individual in the areas of intellectual, social, emotional, and physical skills. We see children as competent, capable beings.

## The Basics (Hours)

- **Preschool Hours:**
  - Regular Day: 9:00am–12:00pm, Monday–Friday
  - Extended Day: 9:00am–2:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
  - Noon (12:00pm) dismissal for all programs on Wednesday
  - Before Care is available, free of charge, from 8:15–9:00am, Monday through Friday, and takes place in the Preschool play yard with Preschool teachers.
- **Kindergarten Hours:**
  - 9:00am–2:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
  - Noon (12:00pm) dismissal for all programs on Wednesday
  - Before Care is available, free of charge, from 8:15–9:00am, Monday through Friday, and takes place on the Kindergarten playground or in the classroom (depending on the weather) with Kindergarten teachers.
- **1st & 2nd Grade Hours:**
  - 8:15–2:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
  - Noon (12pm) dismissal for all programs on Wednesday.

## After-School Care

This program is offered to Kindergarten through 5th grade students on the elementary playground with the Director of After-School Care, from 2:30–5:00pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 12noon–5:00pm on Wednesdays.

## Communication between School & Home

**Information about school-related activities will reach you through:**

- Regular teacher messages and posts via ParentSquare
- A monthly calendar of upcoming events posted on the website
- The OGS website is [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes calendars, photos, videos, newsletters, special events, menus, Parent Council, announcements, and school forms. There is also information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often.
- The required Parent Meetings inform parents in more depth, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Please be sure to check daily for communications so you will be aware of the “goings-on” of school.

Teachers use their cellphones as clocks, cameras, and emergency phones when on the playground. If you need to get a message to teachers, please call the Front Office. Teachers do not check ParentSquare during the school day. If a message is sent, we will do our best to reply within 24 hours. On Fridays, our intention is to return messages on Monday. We’re all navigating a new era with the expectation of instant communication. It is our sincere hope to slow down and bring more thoughtful responsiveness to this process.

## Arrivals & Departures

We ask that parents set up support systems (e.g. grandparents, friends, caregivers, etc.) to be utilized in the event of unexpected delays. If your pick-up plan changes, please call the classroom to let us know.

Authorization to Pick Up: No child will be released to a person who is unauthorized by a parent/caregiver to pick up the child. We must have written or verbal authorization for changes in this respect. For Preschool, be sure to remind your pick-up person to sign your child out on the attendance sheet with a legal signature. Signing in and out, with your first and last name, is a state licensing requirement in Preschool.

- **“Clean” Good-byes:**

It is important that you be on time, or early, to pick up your child. When “Good-bye Circle” ends, either at 12pm or 2:30pm, we say good-bye to each other and to school. This is the time to help your child put on shoes, gather their lunch box and belongings, and say a clear good-bye to the school campus. It is confusing for kids if play time begins anew. Teachers are busy with cleaning up to prepare the facility for the next day. If parents need to talk with each other, please do this outside of the playgrounds and classroom while supervising children, as they are now in your care.

## Parking

- **Preschool & Kindergarten**

Please park in the circular area outside the Preschool playground. It is important to walk your child into and out of school so that they are safely supervised in the parking area.

- **1st & 2nd Grade**

Please park in the Main House parking lot if you are walking your child to class. If your child

is capable and comfortable to walk to class on their own, please utilize the drive-through drop-off in front of the Main House.

## **Clothing**

School is a place to relax, enjoy, and learn. Please send children in old, washable play clothes to allow them maximum opportunity to participate in a wide variety of creative learning situations, often using materials such as paint, play-dough, sand, mud, or food. Smocks are available, but accidents happen (our paint is washable but some colors may stain). Be sure that your child wears clothes that are meant to be dirty, because they will be! Please leave costumes at home. There are many materials provided which children may use to create pretending costumes at school.

Sturdy play shoes are a must. State law requires shoes to be worn on campus by all of us, and children need them to successfully navigate our play spaces and expansive campus. Children may go barefoot on the Preschool playground.

One or more full changes of clothes, preferably marked with your child's name, must be brought to school, especially for hot days or rainy days! These stay at school in your child's personal cubby. Please check daily for wet or soiled clothes, and send another change of clothes to school right away as needed.

Temperatures can vary 30 degrees within a single day in Ojai; it helps to dress in layers. Please label sweaters, jackets, hats, lunch boxes, everything (!), so lost items can find their way back to you. This helps save time and loss of clothes. Check the Lost-and-Found box on the front porch or on the playground fence often.

Children have a cubby with their name on it for special belongings, outerwear, extra clothes, or backpack. Please check every day before going home to ensure the safe return of all personal items. Artwork will also be placed in cubbies.

## **Health**

[Please refer to "The Basics" section titled "Illness Policy."](#)

## **Bringing Toys to School**

We ask children to leave all personal toys at home. Please talk to the teachers if your child needs a "comfort" object, such as a security blanket or special "stuffy" while at school. We welcome sharing items such as beloved books or nature finds like bird's nests. There may also be times throughout the year when teachers invite children to bring things to school, like a piece of fruit for "friendship salad" or a stuffed animal to measure. Absolutely no toy swords, guns, or weapons of any kind may be brought to school.

## **Play-dates**

We ask that parents make play-date plans for children in advance, away from school. Our policy with the children is that "It's not okay to talk about play-dates at school." This encompasses planning them and talking about the one they're anticipating or remembering — because others may feel excluded and feelings may be hurt. When kids beg for a play-date at pick-up time, we remind them and parents that play-date planning happens at home.

## Field Trips & Permission Slips

We may plan local field trips. We usually choose destinations in the Ojai community (fire station, trolley ride to the park, local farms, post office, etc.). Parents will be notified before each trip and asked to sign a field trip release for each trip from school. Parent cars may be used to help with transportation, providing that you have an appropriate car seat for each child and adequate auto insurance (proof of this must be on file at school).

We welcome extra parents to volunteer as field trip guides. The more adults who travel with us, the more opportunity for each child's questions to be heard. Extra hands are extremely helpful, so please feel free to invite yourself.

## Cold & Rainy Days

On rainy days, students engage in "rainy day hikes" around campus, use roofed outdoor areas for play, and enjoy inside spaces. Please be sure your child has a rain jacket, rain boots, and any additional rain gear they may need to ensure they will enjoy our rainy days. Since Ojai is a temperate climate, we ask parents to bring children warmly dressed for outdoor play on rainy and cold or windy days. Children will definitely play outside and their clothing will get wet. With rubber boots, raincoat, and hat, we will go puddle-hopping and explore the properties of drips and gutters as the rain pours down and collects in deep spaces. If you are a volunteer that day, dress warmly yourself, as adults are outside, too!

## Art & Messes

Children will be encouraged to participate in a variety of art activities, some with lovely results and some pretty quirky. Whatever your tastes, please be appreciative of children's imagination, enthusiasm, creativity, and courage to use materials in their own way. We aim for uniqueness, self-expression, hard work, experimentation, and involvement.

Please do not paint or draw for children. When a child asks adults to "draw a cat" and they do so, it can give kids a feeling of hopelessness — a feeling that they will never be able to draw such a "good" (i.e. representational) cat themselves, and they may stop trying.

We don't tell children what to paint or ask them what they've painted. Instead we acknowledge the effort, feeling, or colors seen in the painting. Instead of asking, "What is it?" it's more helpful to say something like, "What a lot of black," or "That must have taken a long time."

Remember that in young children's art, the finished product is not nearly so important to the child's growth as the process — the experimentation with form, texture, color, or the feelings of frustration, fierceness, fear, or joy expressed. For the young child, creating with art materials is an excellent opportunity for developing positive self-appraisal. We encourage you to display your child's work in your home, since this can spark conversation with you about their day at school.

## Borrowing Classroom Library Books

The lending policy for classroom books is that one book may be borrowed by a child for one day, due back on the child's next school day. A parent signs the book out on the clipboard that day and signs it back in again the next day. Please return the borrowed book before checking out another

one and replace missing or damaged books right away. We encourage you to use the public library as your primary source of borrowed books.

## **Toilet Learning**

Licensing requirements for our Preschool program require children to be potty independent. Because our facility is not licensed for changing diapers or pull-ups, we require parents to stay on campus if their child is in a diaper or pull-up or if their child has regular accidents at school.

We encourage children to undress themselves for toileting. In order to support children with this we ask that they have clothing that is easy to take off and put on (such as pants with elastic waistbands) and please: no belts, overalls, buttons up the back, etc. that are frustrating to the child and reinforce dependence on an adult.

Toilet accidents at school are taken in a matter-of-fact way. We don't scold or punish children for having an accident. We simply help them into dry clothes and encourage the habit of dryness. In case of accidents, be sure your child has changes of underpants, socks, etc. available. Children become so involved in certain projects that it is easy to forget to make a dash for the toilet. Please understand and try not to express shock or anger if your child should need to use this change of clothes while at school.

Children use the bathroom whenever needed, with an adult keeping an eye out for them. We keep the children safe while encouraging independence in toileting.

## **General All-School Rules**

At Oak Grove, we ask students not to damage equipment, buildings, trees, plants, or animals that live at school. All insects, lizards, and snakes on campus are protected from being collected and/or caged. No students may play with sticks anytime or anywhere on campus. Shoes are to be worn at all times outdoors (with exceptions for water play or inside the Preschool play yard).

We ask students not to bring or use electronics at school. We also ask adults not to use cellphones at school, as this interferes with attunement to children's needs.

## **Asking Questions – Who to Ask:**

- **Teachers:**  
Questions about your child's academic, personal, or social progress. Please inform teachers if your child is experiencing any unusual stress at home, like family sickness, death, parental absence, separation, or divorce, so that teachers can take the situation into account in their daily work with your child.
- **Director of Early Childhood Program:**  
Questions about child development, general ECP curriculum, school safety, ECP student admission and placement, and financial aid concerns. Questions regarding general school philosophy, policies, and procedures.
- **Head of School:**  
Problem-solving and/or mediation when all other avenues have been exhausted (see Conflict Resolution Policy).

- **Business Office:**  
Questions regarding tuition payments or billing concerns.
- **Director of Advancement:**  
Questions regarding enrollment or re-enrollment.
- **Oak Grove School Board Chair:**  
Questions regarding school governance.
- **Executive Director & Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America:**  
Questions regarding KFA activities -- publishing, archives, library and study center, workshops, gatherings and dialogues, information about international trustees meetings, and other projects.

## Welcome!

Again, welcome! We teachers are excited by the chance to work together with you to enhance growth for all of us. Children live in the here-and-now. Their questions, current ideas, feelings, and passions really matter. Meeting children where they are, encouraging them to ask questions, make meaningful decisions and share their thinking, is what powerful learning and teaching are all about.

We are creating a unique community together here at Oak Grove, a place where children and adults are free to explore, to express themselves, to make friends, to solve problems creatively, and to be themselves. Other parents will tell you: the more they put into the experience, the more they grew along with their children!

We look forward to our time together.

# # #

# Upper Elementary Program

## Grades 3-5

### Table of Contents

(ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE)

- Welcome!
- School Hours
- After-School Care
- Conferences
- Communication between School & Home
- Homework
- Injuries at School
- After-School Plans
- Birthdays
- Rainy Days
- Welcome!

## Welcome!

Welcome to the Upper Elementary Program at Oak Grove School! The staff of the Upper Elementary Program extends a warm welcome to all new and returning children and their families. When you enroll your child at Oak Grove, you become a member of this learning community of teachers, parents, and caregivers working as partners to support children. You help create its atmosphere, and our collective spirit makes the school what it is. The Upper Elementary Program offers a progressive approach to education which is steeped in collaboration and teamwork, creativity, imagination, critical thinking, and problem-solving. We look forward to a partnership of collaboration and inquiry.

## School Hours

### Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday

8:15am to 2:30pm

**Wednesday:** All classes end at 12:00noon.

## After-School Care

This program is offered to Kindergarten through 5th grade students on the Elementary playground with the Director of After-School Care from 2:30-5:00pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday and 12:00pm-5:00pm Wednesday.

## Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences for Elementary grades are held twice annually in October and March. The school requests that both parents or primary caregivers attend these conferences if at all possible. Upper elementary conferences are student-led in March. Additional meetings with teachers are encouraged and can be requested at any time during the year.

## Communication between School & Home

**Information about school-related activities will reach you through:**

- Regular teacher posts and messages via ParentSquare
- Notices posted on the parking lot white boards
- The OGS website is [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes calendars, photos, videos, newsletters, special events, menus, Parent Council, announcements, and school forms. There is also information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often.
- The required monthly Parent Meeting informs parents in more depth, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Please be sure to check daily for communications so you will be aware of the “goings-on” of school.

Teachers usually check their phone and ParentSquare messages before the school day begins (prior to 7:45am) and at the end of the school day (time varies according to the teacher), but may not be able to respond immediately. Teachers will, however, make every effort to respond to

parents' ParentSquare Messages and phone messages (805-646-8236) within 24 hours during the week. On non-school days — weekends and holidays — the expectation is that emails and phone messages will be answered on the first day back (typically a Monday). During the school day when teachers are with students, teachers do not typically check messages. Urgent messages should be conveyed by class telephone and routed through the Front Office.

## **Homework**

For Upper Elementary students, homework builds autonomy, independent thinking, and specific skills. Homework is the responsibility of the student, not the parents, and is an indicator for teachers of what students can complete on their own. Parents are asked to support students in providing a quiet work space.

## **Injuries at School**

Minor injuries sustained in school will be handled by the teachers and/or the Infirmary staff. Soap, water, and band-aids will be the extent of the first-aid rendered. In case of a more significant injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. Each child must have an Emergency Consent form on file at school. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. The school maintains a parent's signed consent form agreeing to necessary medical care. Please keep the school up-to-date on emergency phone numbers and other pertinent information.

## **After-School Plans**

We ask that parents make play-date plans for children in advance, away from school. We discourage children from talking about their after-school play-date while at school as others may feel excluded or experience hurt feelings. Scheduling play-dates after school in the parking area is difficult for parents and students alike and can cause a safety issue as children move through the parking lot. Please make every effort to make plans ahead of time.

## **Rainy Days**

On rainy days, Upper Elementary students are often eager to play outdoors. Please send your student with appropriate rain gear and a change of clothes and shoes on rainy days. There are covered areas to support outdoor activity for those who choose not to be out in the rain.

## **Welcome!**

Again, welcome! We are excited to work together with you in the special partnership of Upper Elementary education. We are creating a unique community together here at Oak Grove, a place where children and adults are free to explore, to express themselves, to make friends, to solve problems creatively, and to be themselves.

We look forward to our time together.

# # #

# Middle School

## Grades 6-8

### Table of Contents

(ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE)

- Welcome!
- Middle School Community Norms
- Care of Space
- Drugs & Alcohol Policy Aim
- Tobacco & “Vaping”
- Homework
- As a Member of the Oak Grove School Community
- Academic Integrity
- Attendance Policy
- Excessive Absences
- Signing Out/In
- Family Trips
- Cutting Class
- Parenting Adult Absence
- Illness
- School Trips
- Visitors
- Leaving Campus
- Electronics
- Cellphone Policy
- Laptops, Computers, & Tablets
- A.I. – Artificial Intelligence
- Harassment
- Disciplinary Protocols
- Behavior
- Suspension
- Expulsion

## Welcome!

Our Middle School Program honors the delicate yet sometimes challenging transition from childhood to adolescence. Our teachers aim to tap into each student's unique interests through an exploration of their natural creativity, asking deep and abiding questions, practicing clear communication, and engaging in vibrant thinking. The following items are part of our Student Handbook which we review carefully within our Middle School community at the beginning of each academic year. Students and families sign this document as an agreement at the beginning of each academic year.

Please also take time to review the All-School Handbook topics at the start of this document.

## School Hours

- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday:** 8:15am to 2:45pm
- **Wednesday:** All classes end at 12:15pm.

## Middle School Community Norms

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect Oak Grove students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, to support the school in a positive manner, and to work hard. We highly value trust and integrity.

Students are asked to use intelligence and conscience to guide everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School. Students are expected to do their own school work and not use or borrow help from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. A student's name on their school work affirms a student's honor. Students will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material, do harm to others or to school property. Students agree to act with honesty and kindness, and will expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

While the school is committed to creating forums for ongoing discussion of these and other issues in order to reach clarity and understanding, the following policies have been developed in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the school from all perspectives (students, teachers, parents, administration, the law, etc.). Agreement to comply is an act of consideration and respect for an environment conducive to learning. A student who demonstrates a continued disregard for the policies outlined in either this Handbook Agreement and/or the Parent & Student Handbook may be asked to leave the school. Both parent and student must sign this Agreement.

## Care of Space:

### Maintaining Our Beautiful Campus is Our Responsibility

We ask Middle School students to be particularly attentive to keeping the decks, hallways, classrooms, and surrounding grounds orderly and clean.

## **Drugs & Alcohol Policy Aim:**

To provide an alcohol-free and drug-free environment for students on campus and at all school-related events and trips. Ultimately, however, it is our aim that Oak Grove School students refrain from using controlled substances during adolescence.

One very important goal of an Oak Grove education is to help students understand the value of learning and health, and of remaining drug-free during adolescence. We expect our students to avoid the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal drugs, including steroids and other performance-enhancing substances. Drug use has an impact on brain chemistry and development, general physical health and sleep patterns, and affects motivation, organizational abilities, and social interactions.

We expect our students to be clear-headed and mentally active in the classroom, at all school events, and in the evenings and on weekends as they pursue their homework assignments and extracurricular activities. These expectations are part of the contract outlined in the Student Handbook through which students take full responsibility for their education and their behavior.

### **Drugs and alcohol are not permitted:**

- on the school grounds
- at any school-sponsored function
- at any school-sponsored field trip
- at any event at any other school
- in transit to and from our school events and field trips and those at other schools.

Possession or use at school or school-related functions includes being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, even if the actual consumption of alcohol or drug took place elsewhere. STUDENTS FOUND TO BE SELLING, USING, DISTRIBUTING, OR UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL WILL BE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT TO THE THIRD LEVEL OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL.

Creating a safe and substance abuse-free environment is important to us. We ask that parents help create such an environment by agreeing to:

- Provide a safe environment where alcohol and drugs will not be made available to youth during parties or gatherings in your homes
- Be present to supervise parties in your homes
- Communicate with the appropriate parenting adult if you observe a minor under the influence
- Communicate with any parenting adult who observes your child using drugs and/or alcohol
- Take precautions to prevent parties being held at your home in your absence
- Tell your child/ren that you do not want them to use drugs or alcohol during adolescence.

## **Tobacco & “Vaping”**

Tobacco use and vape pens are prohibited. Nicotine is an addictive drug, and its use is contrary to the development of a healthy mind and body. Students who use tobacco and/or vape pens will be referred to the Head of School, who will determine the best course of action which may include suspension or expulsion from school.

## **Homework**

Homework is an opportunity for practicing skills outside of the classroom environment and reinforcing the transfer of knowledge and skills. Homework is also an opportunity for students to share what they are learning in school with families at home. Homework is assigned on a regular basis and is important to the educational program at Oak Grove. Homework is tailored to serve different purposes at different levels, taking developmental appropriateness into account.

Homework also builds autonomy, independent thinking, and specific skills. Homework is the responsibility of the student, not the parents, and is an indicator to teachers of what students can complete independently. However, parents are asked to support students in managing time, completing assignments, and organizing homework materials.

Students are expected to independently complete homework assignments that are high quality, reflect learning and insight, and are turned in by the due date. Middle School students can expect to spend on average 60–120 minutes a night on homework. Although general guidelines exist for the amount of homework for each group, there will be times when extra time and effort will be necessary, such as when completing a research paper; at other times, less homework will be required, such as before camping trips or theater performances.

Standards for acceptable homework reflect the level of the student and the nature of the assignment. Unacceptable or incomplete homework should be made up, with arrangements made individually between student and teacher.

We ask that each student have a workstation in the home, outside of the bedroom, preferably in a common space. Homework area should have a working computer, printer, and a supply of paper and printer cartridges. Homework should be printed at home so when students come to school, they are prepared for class. Teachers will not print homework for students.

## **As a Member of the Oak Grove School Community:**

- I will let my intelligence and conscience be my guide in my actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School.
- I will not give or receive unauthorized aid as defined by my teacher both explicitly and implicitly, from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. On all my work, my name affirms my honor.
- I will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material.
- I will not do harm to others or to our school.
- I will act with honesty and kindness, and I expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity, in and out of the classroom, is essential. Cases of academic dishonesty will be considered major infractions and will be handled through the Disciplinary Protocol. Plagiarism, the use of another person's material in a paper or presentation without giving proper credit to the author, is an example of academic dishonesty. Cheating can be copying someone else's homework, copying information from the internet or other published material, or dishonestly acquiring information about a test. Cheating also includes assisting another student in any of these activities. The copying of another's work, including the work of an outside tutor, inside or outside the classroom, and presenting it as one's own is contrary to the school's goal of developing academic integrity.

Parents will be contacted in cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other instances where academic integrity has not been displayed.

## **Attendance Policy**

The school day begins promptly at 8:15am, which means that students should be in class ready to learn by 8:10am. At Oak Grove we say, "Five minutes early is on time and on time is late." If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the Front Office by 8:15am and leave a message. Attendance is taken in the classroom promptly at 8:15am.

Absences and tardiness jeopardize a student's academic, social, and emotional progress and negatively impact the whole class environment. We ask both parents and students to be considerate about getting to school or classes on time and to plan family holidays and appointments to minimize absences.

## **Excessive Absences**

Learning is dependent upon class participation. Therefore, it is important that students attend their classes regularly. A student who misses more than 10% of classes is classified as "chronically absent" according to the California Department of Education. This metric is important because it is closely correlated with academic success across grade levels. In special cases, a petition can be submitted to the Middle School teachers in advance for a leave of absence and study plan if a student is going to miss a week or more of school. Excessive absences are considered serious neglect of these guidelines and may be grounds for expulsion. Instead of the "expulsion," a meeting may be held with the Program Director/Head of School to determine how to proceed.

## **Signing Out/In — Early Departures & Late Arrivals**

A student will only be released to parents or other authorized persons as specified on the enrollment contract. Students must sign out in the Front Office upon departure; otherwise, the absence will not be excused.

Upon returning to school, a student must sign in at the Front Office.

## **Family Trips**

As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips that result in students missing school. Such absences hurt the student whose work is interrupted.

The Oak Grove curriculum is demanding; class attendance is crucial. If absence due to a family trip is unavoidable, the student should submit a request for special attendance consideration with their Advisor well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

## **Cutting Class**

Cutting class is defined as being absent from one or more classes without parental or school permission. It is a serious violation of policy and will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Protocol.

## **Homework Assignments & Make-ups**

When students miss school, they are responsible for getting assignments from other class members or their teachers. Students must be prepared to make up tests and/or quizzes within two days of their return to school, unless arrangements for an extension have been made with the teacher. The maximum extension is one week. Students who must be absent for scheduled medical procedures or for religious reasons are asked to turn in work due in advance or make arrangements with their teachers.

## **Parenting Adult Absence**

If parenting adults are away from home, they should notify the Middle School Registrar of the name of the guardian left in charge and leave phone numbers where the guardian can be reached.

## **Appointments During the School Day:**

Elective medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. If, however, such appointments are unavoidable, students must sign out and parents need to contact the school Registrar by note, phone, or ParentSquare message stating the reason, time of departure, and estimated time of return.

## **Illness**

[Please refer to "The Basics" section titled "Illness Policy."](#)

## **School Trips**

School trips are a regular part of the curriculum, and as such, trip participation is mandatory. Missing a trip will require make-up time and/or assignments for school missed during these weeks.

## **Visitors**

Students may not invite other students to campus without permission. All visitors must register at the Front Office in Main House and obtain a visitor's tag.

## **Leaving Campus**

In order to maintain a safe environment for all, Oak Grove is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus during school hours without documented permission from parents. The lunch

period is part of the school day — students must bring lunch to school or participate in the school's Lunch Program. A student discovered off campus without permission will be referred to the Director of the Middle School. Violations will be addressed by the Disciplinary Protocol.

## **Electronics**

### **(including cellphones, laptops, tablets, iPads, smart watches, & iPods)**

Increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as time to “unplug” from the steady stream of electronic input while they are at school. Therefore we ask both students and parents to be mindful of the following:

## **Cellphone Policy**

Students in Grades 6-8 may bring a cellphone to school but it must be “off” and stored in the Front Office until the student leaves campus. We ask that parents refrain from calling or texting students during the day. Urgent messages can be processed through the Front Office.

## **Laptops, Computers, & Tablets**

Increased accessibility to the internet requires sensitivity on the part of the user. We ask that computers be used ONLY for educational purposes while on campus and that they be used only WITHIN Middle School classrooms. Students are not permitted to use laptops/computers/tablets outside of classrooms unless expressly permitted by a teacher for an academic purpose. Absolutely no inappropriate material (sexually explicit material, etc.) may be viewed and/or listened to. Students should not be gaming, watching videos, etc. while at school.

If a teacher or staff member observes an electronic device of any sort being used in ways that go against the expectations of the school in a classroom, the device will be held until the end of the day.

## **A.I. – Artificial Intelligence**

AI is a potent tool that has the potential to revolutionize education, creating a dynamic and inclusive learning experience that nurtures critical thinking and empowers students to realize their full potential. This aligns perfectly with a core goal of an Oak Grove education, which is to facilitate the development of students' writing and critical thinking skills.

Therefore, AI tools can be employed to support research, enhance analysis, and aid comprehension of course materials, but their usage must be explicitly approved by the teacher. In all academic work, students are required to disclose and properly cite the use of AI tools. However, it is essential to note that AI is not to be utilized for generating essays, responding to prompts, or completing any form of writing assignments. A student should always check with their teacher before submitting an assignment if there is any doubt about whether the use of an AI tool is appropriate. A student's name on their work continues to affirm a student's honor and confirms that the work being turned in is fully their own.

## **Harassment**

All students must be allowed to work and study in an environment free from harassment and unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional

compliments or other generally acceptable social behavior. Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, personally offensive, or undermines or weakens morale. Any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, whether verbal, physical, visual, or electronic, is strictly prohibited. This includes: harassing messages communicated by email, the internet, or telephone; cyberbullying of any kind; sending sexually explicit or nude photos over the internet; demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises or preferential treatment or threats concerning student status; pressure for sexual activity; offensive, unwanted physical contact such as hugging, patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body; offensive unwanted sex-oriented verbal "kidding," jokes, or abuse; any other form of intimidation or unsolicited objectionable comments.

If a student becomes aware of harassment of any kind, whether it be personal or not, or feels that they are a victim of harassment, this information should be communicated immediately to the Director of the Middle School or to an Advisor. Any such complaint must be specific and should include all relevant information so that the school may conduct a thorough investigation. The Director of the Middle School is required to report such complaints to the Head of School. The school will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the school will take action to remedy the situation. The school will not tolerate any retaliation against a student who files a complaint or participates in an investigation regarding a complaint of harassment. However, anyone who makes a false claim of harassment will be subject to Disciplinary Protocol action, up to and including expulsion.

## **Disciplinary Protocols**

At Oak Grove School teachers do not engage in conventional systems of reward and punishment or fear-based, coercive, manipulative strategies, but seek to understand with the students the causes for behavior, and with the older students, the roots of cultural conditioning passed on for generations. The art of relationship and the very deep intelligence that Krishnamurti suggests, grow from asking questions and listening deeply to life and to each other. These inquiries into the "book of oneself and the mirror of relationship" are nurtured by care and attention.

At all times we strive to create a climate that is safe and conducive to learning for both staff and students. When behavioral difficulties arise, our intention is to resolve them by speaking directly to the person/student involved and utilizing the many varied strategies at our disposal. In most cases issues will be resolved this way. Sometimes they will not. For those cases we have a Disciplinary Protocol.

### **Step One: First Major Offense**

- The matter is referred to the Director of the Middle School.
- The student will receive a warning. The warning will go in the student's file.
- There will be a call or ParentSquare message home to the parenting adults.
- The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.
- Teachers and Director will create a Plan of Support.
- The student may be asked to go home for the remainder of the day.

### **Step Two: Second Major Offense**

- The student will receive a second warning. The warning will go in the student's file.
- There will be a call or message home to the parenting adults.

- The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.
- There will be a meeting with parents, Director of the Middle School, Class Advisor, and any other relevant parties.
- An agreement will be created and signed by the student, Director of the Middle School, and Head of School.

### **Step Three: Third Major Offense**

- The parenting adults will be contacted.
- The student will write an account of what happened.
- If the student violates the agreement drafted in Step Two, or there are new concerns, there will be a Disciplinary Panel hearing.
- Panels will be scheduled no sooner than 24 hours.
- The timing will be negotiated among the student, school, and parenting adult(s), and will be based on the situation.
- The Head of School and Director of the Middle School will appoint the members of the Disciplinary Panel, which will consist of the following:
  - Staff member directly involved in the incident
  - Staff person with no prior knowledge of the incident or direct relationship with the student (the objective is to have someone with no bias toward the student or situation)
  - Head of School
  - Director of the Middle School
  - Student involved
  - Student-appointed advocate.
- The student will appear before the panel, along with their self-appointed advocate. Advocates may be a staff member, parenting adult, coach, family friend, another student, etc.
- The Disciplinary Panel will decide on the appropriate consequence for the offense, which might include loss of privileges, lowering of grade, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.
- The panel will document its decision and a copy will go in the student's file.
- If the student is not expelled, an agreement is formed and signed by the Head of School, Director of the Middle School, student, and parenting adult(s).
- The Head of School approves all final disciplinary decisions.

### **Step Four: Further Offenses**

If the offense breaks the signed agreement, the consequence is per the agreement, which might include expulsion. In the case that the Disciplinary Panel's ruling in Step Three was not expulsion, any further offenses are brought before the panel.

The procedure will be identical to Step Three. A major offense is defined as an event or series of events that violate the rules of Oak Grove School, as described in the Handbook, and is sufficiently serious for staff to feel that the Director of the Middle School and parents need to be involved. Some examples: Repeated instances of disruptive behavior that have been addressed by several teachers, disrespecting teachers, non-compliance with teacher requests, refusal to do homework.

The following offenses will be brought directly before the Disciplinary Panel:

- drug and alcohol use
- instances of verbal or physical violence
- possession of weapons.

On occasions when the offense is severe enough to give cause for safety, at the discretion of the Head of School, a student may be asked to leave the school without convening a Disciplinary Panel. The final decision regarding the status of a student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

## **Behavior**

Fundamental to Oak Grove's philosophy is the provision of a safe environment for learning, both physically and psychologically. Everyone either contributes to, or detracts from, the creation of such an environment. Violation of the code of behavior is explained in the Parent & Student Handbook, including but not limited to use of vulgar/offensive language, language that glorifies or promotes substance abuse or other illegal activity, disruption of school activities or others' learning, not following teachers' instructions, intentional hurting (physical or psychological), or intentional damaging of property, and may result in removal from the class or the school. Such action will be taken on behalf of all students, in order to maintain conditions conducive to learning and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Disciplinary issues will be dealt with first by the classroom teacher, then if not resolved, by the Class Advisor and Director of the Middle School, and finally by the Head of School.

## **Suspension**

Students who are suspended may not attend class or school events. Work missed during suspension must be made up without outside assistance from the teacher. Any class material that is discussed during the suspension needs to be obtained from classmates. However, any homework assignments or exams missed while suspended cannot be completed and will result in a failing grade. This consequence may be recommended to the Head of School and the Disciplinary Panel. Suspension for behavioral infractions will be reported to the colleges to which the student is seeking acceptance. Students on probation whose behavior demonstrates a serious or recurring disregard for the spirit or the expectations of the Oak Grove School community will be placed on probation. Students who commit subsequent major Disciplinary Protocol violation while on probation are likely to be suspended or expelled from school.

## **Expulsion**

The Director of the Middle School and the Disciplinary Panel may recommend expulsion for a serious violation, even on the first offense or if, in their opinion, a student's continued presence is detrimental to Oak Grove School or to the student involved. When expulsion is recommended, a student is automatically suspended in the case that the situation needs to be reviewed. During the suspension period, the Head of School will review the matter with those involved before reaching a final decision. The final decision regarding the status of the student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

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# High School

## Grades 9-12

### Table of Contents (ALL TABLES OF CONTENTS ARE CLICKABLE)

- Welcome!
- School Hours
- Community Norms
- Attendance Policy
- Daily Attendance Procedures
- Behavior
- Care of Space
- Community Expectations
- School Property
- Academics
- Homework
- Academic Standing
- A.I. – Artificial Intelligence
- Study Hall Expectations
- Independent Study Courses & Expectations
- Protocol for Taking Non-OGS Classes for Credit
- Disciplinary Protocol
- High School Restorative Justice Protocol
- Harassment
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Disciplinary Reporting Policy
- Protocol for Requesting Transcripts & Letters of Recommendation
- Camping/Trips
- Fit for Life, Sports Requirements, & Outdoor Education
- Independent Study for Fit for Life
- Tardiness
- Absences
- Family Trips
- Cutting Class
- Homework Assignments & Makeups
- Parenting Adult Absence
- Appointments During the School Day
- Illness
- Examination Days
- College Visits
- Jupiter Record of Absences and Tardiness
- School Trips
- Leaving Campus
- Driving Policies for Day Students
- Electronics
- Cellphone Policy
- Laptops, Computers, & Tablets

## Welcome!

Welcome to the High School! Our High School program helps students develop life-long practices of intellectual discipline, clear communication, self-reflection, understanding, and focused thinking. We offer a challenging, college-preparatory curriculum that is approved by the University of California and designed to exceed admissions requirements for the most rigorous and selective universities across the country. Students and parenting adults sign an agreement to indicate they have carefully read and agree to the contents below.

## School Hours

Students are expected to arrive on campus by 8:25am to be ready for the start of school. Five minutes before the start is considered on time.

- Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday: 8:30am–3:15pm (Fit for Life: 3:25–4:30pm)
- Wednesday: 8:30am–12:30pm
- Friday: 8:30am–3:15pm

## Community Norms & Behavior

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect Oak Grove students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, to support the school in a positive manner, and to work hard. We highly value trust and integrity.

Students are asked to use intelligence and conscience to guide everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School. Students are expected to do their own school work and not use or borrow help from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. A student's name on their school work affirms a student's integrity. Students will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material, or do harm to others or to school property. Students agree to act with honesty and kindness, and expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

While the school is committed to creating forums for ongoing discussion of these and other issues in order to reach clarity and understanding, the following policies have been developed in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the school from EVERYONE'S perspective (students, teachers, parents, administration, the law, etc.). Agreement to comply is an act of consideration and respect for an environment conducive to learning. A student who demonstrates a continued disregard for the policies outlined in this Handbook may be asked to leave the school in order to maintain the integrity of the learning environment for all.

## Attendance Policy

Oak Grove School is a rigorous, college-preparatory school with a University of California-approved curriculum. Our pace is thus high and the amount of material covered in our

classes is substantial. Oak Grove School is an intentionally small school where every student has an immeasurable impact on our culture and learning. Presence is the first thing we share with each other in building working relationships and is key to the school's functioning. In order to be successful and contribute to the learning environment, it is essential that our students minimize absences and arrive on time for class. For these reasons, we encourage students to make responsible decisions about their use of time. Students are expected to be present at and arrive on time for all scheduled classes, assemblies, advisory meetings, athletic contests, appointments, and school or class trips.

#### Daily Attendance Procedures

If a student will be absent from or late to school for any reason, a parent should inform the High School Office at 805-646-8236 ext. 111 or via ParentSquare by 8:15 am of the day of the absence or tardiness. In some cases a staff member may call to verify that an email or phone message did indeed come from parents. We ask that parents explain the reason for the absence to the Administrator to help us determine whether the absence can be excused. According to the California Education Code, the school must know the nature of the absence to excuse it. If a student is absent for 10% of any class, the parenting adults will be contacted and a plan of support will be put in place for the student. This will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

#### Signing Out/In

- A student will only be released to parents or other authorized persons as specified on the enrollment contract. Students must sign out in the High School Office upon departure; otherwise, the absence will not be excused. A parenting adult must give permission for a student to leave campus.
- Upon returning to school or if arriving late, a student must sign in at the High School Office.

#### Tardiness

School starts at 8:30am. Students who are late to school for any reason must first report to the High School Office and sign in to be officially checked in. This applies even though time spent checking in at the attendance office will further delay the student's arrival to class. Frequent tardiness to class disrupts the learning environment and slows a student's academic and personal progress. If a student is tardy four times in a four week period, they will not be allowed to attend off-campus lunch the next month. Parenting adults will be contacted if there is a pattern of tardiness.

#### Absences

At Oak Grove School, an absence is defined as being absent or tardy to any class or school activity by more than 20 minutes. In California, chronic absence is typically defined as being absent for any reason for at least 10% of the school year. In line with the California Education Code, our attendance policy is that students can be absent without consequences in any class for up to 10% of a class as long as the absences are excused. Excessive absences will have an impact on grades. Some classes will have their own policy that addresses excessive absences; please review course syllabi for individual policies.

#### Excused Absences

Excused absences are those resulting from illness, injury, family emergency, team sport competition, a music, dance, or theater performance, field trip, court appearance, or religious observance.

As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips

that result in students missing school. Such absences hurt the student whose work is interrupted. The Oak Grove curriculum is demanding; class attendance is crucial. If absence due to a family trip is unavoidable, the student should submit a request for special attendance consideration with the Director of the High School well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences. “Personal business” or “family trips” are generally not acceptable reasons for absence. However, we recognize that sometimes extraordinary opportunities arise for extracurricular enrichment, which may require a student to be off campus.

#### Doctor’s Notes

The school requires a doctor’s note after an absence due to illness of five consecutive days or longer. A doctor’s note may also be required for classes missed due to medical appointments.

#### Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences result from official school suspensions or breaches in attendance policy such as cutting class, parenting adult failure to communicate the reason for an absence, student failure to sign out/in upon early school departure or late arrival, and departing early for or returning late from a vacation without obtaining prior permission from the Director of the High School.

Unless approved by the Director of the High School in advance, whenever a parent gives a student permission to be absent for reasons other than those stated under Excused Absences above, the absence is deemed unexcused, and the student may receive a zero or failing grade for homework or tests missed during that period. Such absences are serious offenses against school policy. A student with an unexcused absence can expect school action.

#### Cutting Class

Cutting class is defined as being absent from one or more classes without parental or school permission. This includes Advisory, electives, and Fit for Life. It is a serious violation of policy and will be dealt with through the Restorative Justice Protocol.

#### Leaving Campus

In order to maintain a safe environment for all, Oak Grove is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus during school hours without documented permission from parenting adults. Lunch is part of the school day; students must bring lunch to school or participate in the school’s Lunch Program. A student discovered off campus without permission will be referred to the Director of High School. Violations will be dealt with through the Restorative Justice Protocol.

#### Homework Assignments & Make-ups

When students miss school, they are responsible for getting assignments from other class members or their teachers. Students must be prepared to make up tests and/or quizzes within two days of their return to school unless arrangements for an extension have been made with the teacher. Students who must be absent for scheduled medical procedures or for religious reasons are asked to turn in work due in advance or make arrangements with their teachers.

#### Parenting Adult Absence

If parenting adults are away from home, they should notify the High School Office of the name of the guardian left in charge and provide phone numbers where the guardian can be reached.

#### Appointments During the School Day

Elective medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. If, however, such appointments are unavoidable, students must sign out and parenting adults need to contact the High School Office by note, phone, or ParentSquare message stating the reason, time of departure, and estimated time of return.

#### Illness

Please refer to “The Basics” section titled “Illness Policy.”

#### Final Examination Days

Students and their families must make every effort to avoid absences during final examinations. Unexcused absences on these days may result in a “zero” on the missed final examination.

#### College Visits

Students are encouraged to visit prospective colleges during the Spring Break of their junior year and the summer before their senior year. However, we recognize that sometimes seniors may want to visit colleges during the fall or spring semester of their senior year. For this reason, senior students have the option of taking up to four excused absence days to visit the colleges they are considering if the Dean of Student Life and Culture approves the visits. When a senior will miss classes for any other business relating to the college application process, they must also clear it with the Dean of Student Life and Culture.

#### Jupiter Record of Absences and Tardiness

Parenting adults and students have access to student tardiness and absence information via Jupiter, Oak Grove High School’s online learning management system. Students are expected to check this site on a regular basis and to correct any discrepancies noted with high school office staff within no more than two weeks of the date of the absence or tardy.

#### School Trips

School trips are a regular part of the curriculum, and, as such, trip participation is mandatory. Missing a trip will require make-up time and/or assignments for school missed during these weeks. Please see the section on High School trips under graduation requirements for more information.

## Behavior

Fundamental to Oak Grove’s philosophy is the provision of a safe environment for learning, both physically and psychologically. Everyone either contributes to, or detracts from, the creation of such an environment. Violation of the code of behavior is explained in the Parent & Student Handbook, including, but not limited to, use of vulgar/offensive language, language that glorifies or promotes substance abuse or other illegal activity, disruption of school activities or others’ learning, not following teachers’ instructions, intentional hurting (physical or psychological), or intentional damaging of property, and may result in removal from the class or the school. Such action will be taken on behalf of all students, in order to maintain conditions conducive to learning and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Disciplinary issues will be dealt with first by the HS Dean of Student Life and Culture, then, if not resolved, the Director of the High School will be involved, and finally, support will be given by the Head of School.

## Care of Space

Maintaining our beautiful campus is everyone's responsibility. We ask High School students to be particularly attentive to keeping the atrium, hallways, Stone Circle, Student Center, and surrounding High School grounds orderly and clean. Nothing may be affixed to the outside of lockers.

## Community Expectations

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect our students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, support the school in a positive manner, and to work hard. We highly value trust and integrity and expect all students to abide by the following.

### **As a member of the Oak Grove School community:**

- My intelligence and conscience guide me in my everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School.
- My actions reflect my care and respect for others and the school.
- I build trust with my peers and teachers by respecting their physical and personal space. I act with honesty and kindness, and I expect others to do the same.
- I understand that my actions contribute to and I am impacted by the environment that I help create, be it on campus or on a school outing, and I endeavor to be of service.

## School Property

Included in the supplementary fees is a "rental charge" that covers the cost of textbooks, uniforms, etc. that are issued to students. Students are issued textbooks and athletic uniforms to borrow and do NOT own these books/uniforms. They are required to turn them back in to their subject area teachers and/or coaches at the end of the year in reasonable condition. Families will be billed for items that are not returned, or are returned but not in a usable condition (books with damaged spines or water damage, books that have been written in excessively, a damaged uniform, etc.).

## Academics

Academic integrity, in and out of the classroom, is essential. Cases of academic dishonesty will be considered major infractions and will be responded to by the Dean of Student Life and Culture and any teachers affected. Plagiarism, the use of another person's material including artificial intelligence in a paper or presentation without giving proper credit to the author, is an example of academic dishonesty. Cheating can be copying someone else's homework, using AI to complete a written assignment, copying information from the internet or other published material, or

dishonestly acquiring information about a test. Cheating also includes assisting another student in any of these activities. The copying of another's work, including the work of an outside tutor, inside or outside the classroom and presenting it as one's own is contrary to the school's goal of developing academic integrity. Expectations differ somewhat from class to class and subject to subject, so students must be sure they understand what each teacher expects.

Parenting adults will be notified in cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other instances where academic integrity has not been displayed.

## **Homework**

At the High School level, homework is considered an extension of learning. Teachers depend on students to complete assigned work in order to cover the curriculum. When students are neglectful of homework responsibilities, it can also impede the continued progress of the whole class. Students may need help or support at home in managing their time.

Homework is assigned for all academic classes. Students are responsible for the completion of all assigned homework. It is understood that the length of time for preparing assignments may vary from student to student. As a general rule, students should expect to spend an average of 90-120 minutes per night for their core classes. Students in Honors classes should expect to spend more time on their homework.

We ask that each student have a workstation at home with a working computer, printer, and a supply of paper and printer cartridges. Completed homework should be printed at home so when students come to school, they are prepared for class.

Continued neglect of homework will result in lowered grades and may lead to removal from class.

## **Academic Standing**

Oak Grove High School students are considered to be in good academic standing when they are earning at least 70% or above in all of their classes. Students who fall below this standard by earning a D or F in any class will be put on Academic Alert until the grade is raised to at least a C- or 70%. While on Academic Alert, the student will make an arrangement with the teacher of the class in concern and with the Director, if necessary. Normally, the student will be asked to sit with the teacher from 7:45 to 8:30 each morning. Not making progress while on Academic Alert may result in not being able to return to Oak Grove School the following year. Students who are not in good academic standing may also be denied certain privileges and/or be required to attend additional study halls if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student.

- **Honors Courses**

At Oak Grove School we prefer to offer Honors options rather than Advanced Placement courses. Our Honors options generally qualify for the same GPA "bump" as AP courses. Many of our courses have Honors options. Honors options represent a significant increase in workload and homework, and the decision to do Honors should not be taken lightly. We discourage students from taking too many Honors courses and encourage them to pursue Honors only in courses and in subjects about which they feel passionate. In order to enroll

in an Honors course, the student needs to petition their teacher at the teacher's prompting at the beginning of a semester. Reasons for exclusion from Honors may include, but are not limited to: prior semester's grade of less than 93%, overall GPA concerns, general lack of preparedness, or a demonstrated lack of scholarly habits. In order to remain in the Honors section, students must maintain at least a C grade in the course.

## **A.I. – Artificial Intelligence**

AI is a potent tool that has the potential to revolutionize education, creating a dynamic and inclusive learning experience that nurtures critical thinking and empowers students to realize their full potential. This aligns perfectly with a core goal of an Oak Grove education, which is to facilitate the development of students' writing and critical-thinking skills.

Therefore, AI tools can be employed to support research, enhance analysis, and aid comprehension of course materials, but their usage must be explicitly approved by the teacher. In all academic work, students are required to disclose and properly cite the use of AI tools. However, it is essential to note that AI is not to be utilized for generating essays, responding to prompts, or completing any form of writing assignments. A student should always check with their teacher before submitting an assignment if there is any doubt about whether the use of an AI tool is appropriate. A student's name on their work continues to affirm a student's honor and confirms that the work being turned in is fully their own.

## **Study Hall Expectations**

When High School students at Oak Grove have a study hall in their schedule, they are expected to make good academic use of that time, treating it as any other academic period. Oak Grove does not prescribe a course of study for the time period but rather expects that students will choose how best to use that time for academic purposes. Examples of appropriate uses of time include working on homework, doing class readings, or in the case of students enrolled in an independent study course, working on that course. Students with study hall first through fifth period will work in a designated classroom with a designated teacher, unless other arrangements are made with the Director. Whether in a morning or afternoon study hall, students need to make use of that time well, and they will be expected to plan ahead to ensure that they are productive during that study hall. Supervising teachers will be available for help but cannot do extended one-on-one tutorials during study hall.

## **Independent Study Courses & Expectations**

High School students enrolled in online courses or other such courses should create a schedule for themselves to ensure that they finish all requirements of the course in a timely manner. They will be asked to complete an "Independent Study Plan" at the beginning of each semester. Oak Grove will not check up on students' progress on a daily basis, however conferences provide a natural checkpoint for the school and families to touch base on progress. The student, their family, the supervising teacher, and the Director will monitor progress on a daily and weekly basis. Oak Grove will ensure that a quiet place is provided for independent study course study hall work to be done.

## Protocol for Taking Non-OGS Classes for Credit

As a small school, Oak Grove strives to accommodate students' schedules to the best of its ability. When High School students are out of sequence, it is difficult to schedule required classes. When credit is given on the Oak Grove transcript for courses taken outside of Oak Grove, Oak Grove must verify that the coursework is equivalent to an Oak Grove School course. It is imperative that Oak Grove stands behind the credit of the coursework that is given on the transcript.

For that reason, all students considering taking classes outside of Oak Grove School for which they wish to get official credit, whether during the year or during the summer, must consult with the Director of the High School and get prior approval. Oak Grove may not give credit for coursework taken without prior approval. Oak Grove cannot guarantee that students who are out of sequence will get their required classes the following year.

Students wishing to take extra courses are encouraged to look for courses that supplement what they will take at Oak Grove, rather than replace the prescribed sequence of courses offered at Oak Grove.

## Disciplinary Protocol

At Oak Grove School teachers do not engage in conventional systems of reward and punishment or fear-based, coercive, manipulative strategies, but seek to understand with the students the causes for behavior, and with the older students, the roots of cultural conditioning passed on for generations. The art of relationship and the very deep intelligence that Krishnamurti suggests, grow from asking questions and listening deeply to life and to each other. These inquiries into the "book of oneself and the mirror of relationship" are nurtured by care and attention.

## High School Restorative Justice Protocol

In alignment with our philosophical approach to education and our core ethos as a school, Oak Grove's High School responds to student behavior through a restorative justice lens. We understand that at its most basic level, behavior is communication. Educating the whole child means seeing all behavior (academic, social, emotional, physical) from a growth mindset. With the skilled support of our faculty, through trial and error, our students have the greatest possibility of building emotional intelligence, social resilience, physical health, and academic excellence. The resulting consequences of an action may be, on a case-by-case basis, shared with the student body to ensure clarity, give a learning opportunity, and provide closure among the students.

Students are seen as competent humans who can take responsibility for their actions and can restore trust with adults and peers when trust has been broken.

When a student's behavior does not meet community standards, which are clearly articulated in the Student Handbook – signed by the student at the start of each new academic year – the faculty responds immediately, without shaming the student, by implementing a restorative protocol. When a faculty member is unable to respond immediately, they may ask another faculty member to step in on their behalf.

A restorative practice takes all aspects of the situation into account including:

1. Context (What were all the contributing factors that went into the incident, both at school and at home? Were the expectations made clear? Was anticipatory guidance offered? Has this been a situation building over time? Is this a repeated pattern of behavior? Is the behavior a way of communicating a larger concern?)
2. Student's response (Apologetic or defensive? Are they taking responsibility? Does the student understand what they did? Do they understand pathways available to them to repair the harm done and to rebuild positive relationships?)
3. The impact of the behavior (Who was impacted? What is the impact on the classroom and learning environment? What is the damage to property or body? Is it illegal?)

The responding adult (an adult who witnessed the behavior/result of behavior/had a direct report of behavior) acts swiftly, stopping whatever else is happening to implement the following:

1. Stop the behavior.
  - a. Clearly and firmly ask the student to stop the behavior.
  - b. Relocate the student(s) (remove them from the situation).
  - c. *If concerned for the safety of self or others, faculty members and students are instructed to call 911.*
2. Respond to the behavior, immediately. This might require asking another adult to step in to respond if the adult who witnessed/heard about the behavior is needed by other students at that moment (e.g. in the middle of class). Other adults who can be called at the moment include the Dean of Student Life and Culture, the Head of School, the Director of Upper Elementary and Middle School, and another faculty member who is not currently working with students.
  - a. Move students away from others for privacy.
  - b. Implement an immediate natural consequence.
    - i. If being disruptive during class, the student may be asked to work outside of class for the remainder of the period.
    - ii. If they are doing something deemed unsafe (e.g. walking away during a trip, play-fighting, pushing, kicking, etc.), the decision may be made to send them home.
    - iii. If they have something they are not allowed to have at school, the adult may confiscate it (if it is something illegal or lethal or if this is a repeated behavior, proceed to a more serious response).
    - iv. Inform parents before the end of the school day or before sending the student home, preferably by phone.
  - c. Engage in accepting meaningful responsibility/making amends/restoring justice and trust. This could be having the student write a reflection shared with those impacted by the behavior.

**IF A MORE SERIOUS (involving drugs, alcohol, violence, theft, etc.) RESPONSE IS NECESSARY:**

- Implement the steps above.
- Take notes on the facts from the point of view of everyone involved with curiosity questions (what happened, when, and who else was involved). Share back with the student(s) an understanding of what happened to achieve a common understanding.
- Inform the Dean of Student Life and Culture (if unavailable, the Director of the High School).

- Form a Disciplinary Panel (including the Dean of Student Life and Culture and the Director of the High School). The purpose of the Disciplinary Panel is to determine what is in the best interest of the student; if this is the moment when the student's learning can grow by staying at Oak Grove (if this is an “aha moment”) or if the student's learning is more likely to come from separating from Oak Grove. The Disciplinary Panel members are sensitive to power dynamics (gender, race, age, social status) which can affect perception. In addition, the Disciplinary Panel must take into consideration what is in the best interest of the school community. We have an obligation to the whole as well as the individual.
- Contact the parents (have them come to school for a meeting or meet by Zoom with the student present). This step must happen before sending the student home or at the end of the school day.
- Before the Disciplinary Panel meets, the student should prepare a statement to share with the Panel using the following questions:
  - a) What happened?
  - b) Explain why you made the choices you made.
  - c) Detail the impact of those choices on you, your family, your peers, and the school.
  - d) What you learned/how will this situation inform your future choices?
  - e) What do you recommend for restoring trust (consequences) with your family, your peers, and Oak Grove?

## Harassment

All students learn best in an environment must be allowed to work and study in an environment free from harassment and unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments or other generally acceptable social behavior. Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, personally offensive, or undermines or weakens morale. Any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, whether verbal, physical, visual, or electronic, is strictly prohibited. This includes:

- harassing messages communicated by email, the internet, or telephone;
- cyberbullying of any kind;
- sending sexually explicit or nude photos;
- demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises or preferential treatment or threats concerning student status;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- offensive, unwanted physical contact such as hugging, patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body;
- offensive unwanted sex-oriented verbal “kidding,” jokes, or abuse;
- any other form of intimidation or unsolicited objectionable comments.

If a student becomes aware of harassment of any kind, whether it be personal or not, or feels that they are a victim of harassment, this information should be communicated immediately to the Dean of Student Life and Culture, HS Counselor/Director of the High School or to any other trusted adult an Advisor. Any such complaint must be specific and should include all relevant information so that the school may conduct a thorough investigation. Any staff member receiving a complaint must The Director of the High School is required to report such complaints to the Head of School. The school will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the school will take

action to remedy the situation. The school will not tolerate any retaliation against a student who files a complaint or participates in an investigation regarding a complaint of harassment. However, anyone who makes a false claim of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

## **Drugs & Alcohol**

Policy Aim: To provide an alcohol-free and drug-free environment for students on campus and at all school-related events and trips. Ultimately, however, it is our aim that Oak Grove School students refrain from using controlled substances during adolescence.

One very important goal of an Oak Grove education is to help students understand the value of learning and health, and of remaining drug-free during adolescence. We expect our students to avoid the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal drugs, including steroids and other performance-enhancing substances. Drug use has an impact on brain chemistry and development, general physical health, and sleep patterns, and it affects motivation, organizational abilities, and social interactions.

We expect our students to be clear-headed and mentally active in the classroom, at all school events, and in the evenings and on weekends as they pursue their homework assignments and extracurricular activities. These expectations are part of the contract outlined in the Student Handbook through which students take full responsibility for their education and their behavior.

Drugs and alcohol are not permitted on the school grounds, at any school-sponsored function, at any school-sponsored field trip, or at any event at any other school. This includes transit to and from our school events and field trips and those at other schools.

Possession or use at school or school-related functions includes being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, even if the actual consumption of alcohol or drug took place elsewhere. A disciplinary panel will be formed when a student is found to be using, selling, distributing or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Creating a safe and substance abuse-free environment is important to us. We ask that parents help create such an environment by agreeing to:

- Provide a safe environment where alcohol and drugs will not be made available to youth during parties or gatherings in their homes
- Be present to supervise parties in their homes
- Communicate with the appropriate parent if they observe a minor under the influence
- Communicate with any parent who observes their child using drugs and/or alcohol
- Take precautions to prevent parties being held at their home in their absence
- Tell their child/ren that they do not want them to use drugs or alcohol during adolescence.

Tobacco use and vape pens are prohibited. Nicotine is considered an addictive drug and its use is contrary to the development of a healthy mind and body. Students who use tobacco and/or vape pens will be referred to the Head of School (first offense) and then be subject to mandatory enrollment in a smoking cessation program (second offense).

## **Disciplinary Reporting Policy**

Oak Grove School reports major Disciplinary Protocol measures taken to any college, university, scholarship program, or educational program that requests such information. The information is reported at the time of application. Major disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, suspensions and expulsions occurring while the student is enrolled in grades 9 through 12. When such measures are taken after the initial college application has been sent, Oak Grove School provides updated information reflecting the change in the student's status.

## **Protocol for Requesting Transcripts & Letters of Recommendation**

Official and unofficial copies of transcripts are issued through the High School Registrar's office. Students should fill out a transcript request, including where the transcript should be sent, form and allow at least two business days for the request to be processed. When students need letters of recommendation or evaluations from teachers or the Head of School, they should request those at least four weeks in advance of the deadline, to allow staff time to write a thoughtful letter or evaluation.

## **Camping/Trips**

We require all High School students to fully participate in our fall and spring trips, and our trip to India for Seniors. These trips provide opportunities for students to get to know themselves, their peers, and their teachers better, and they provide chances to overcome challenges of all sorts. Students learn practical skills related to traveling, camping, and backpacking. Occasionally, there are medical or other reasons that prevent a student from fully participating in a trip. When this happens, the family must contact the Director of the High School no later than two weeks prior to the fall trip and four weeks prior to the spring trip (the India trip will be handled on a case-by-case basis) to discuss the situation. Stringent criteria are in place for these situations; please contact the Director for more information.

## **Fit for Life, Sports Requirements, & Outdoor Education**

High School students fulfill their physical education requirement through participation in our Fit for Life Program and our camping program. Each season students are offered the choice of an interscholastic sport (Condor League Girls' & Boys' Volleyball and Soccer, for example), or another fitness activity (triathlon training, for example). In all cases, this requires practice or training after school from 3:25 to 4:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and games (during sports seasons) on Wednesdays and/or Saturdays.

- All students must participate in the Fit for Life Program as described above. Please see the Fit for Life syllabus for more details.
- All students must participate in fall and spring trips (and for Seniors, the India Trip and Pathless Projects).
- 8th grade students may be invited to participate in the practices for team sports.

# Outdoor Education

## Best Practices for Planning Backpacking Trips

Planning a five- to seven-day backpacking trip in California for high school students requires careful consideration of various factors to ensure the safety, well-being, and enjoyment of all participants.

## Outdoor Education Coordinator

The Outdoor Education Coordinator is responsible for planning all backpacking trips. This includes selecting trip leaders and chaperones.

An exploratory trip is recommended within two weeks of a scheduled backpacking trip. All information from this preview trip is shared with the trip leader and chaperones.

## Trip Leader

The trip leader should hike on a trail they have previously hiked so they are familiar with the route, hazards, time it takes, places to stop, etc.

The trip leader should always carry these **essentials**:

- First Aid Kit (appropriate to the size of the group – know how to use all items in your kit)
- Whistle
- Communication Device (appropriate to the area)
  - To communicate with emergency services
  - To communicate within the group (i.e. whistle, radios, etc.)
- Headlamp/Flashlight
- Lighter and Fire Starter
- Pocket Knife
- Map and Compass (plus knowledge of how to use them!)

## Chaperones

Chaperones must be able to work closely with the trip leader to support a successful backpacking trip for students.

- During the trip, chaperone duties include:
  - Support students while hiking, both emotionally and physically
  - Help ensure students are continuing to stay hydrated
  - Remind students to perform tick checks at regular intervals
  - Monitor students' feet for hot-spots to prevent blisters
  - Weigh in on possible route changes, if the conditions require it
  - Help gather group gear once camp is reached
  - Gather firewood with the group
  - Assist students in selecting sleeping sites and putting up tents
  - Help students pack up in the morning and make sure everyone has their group gear back in their pack
  - Assist with the hanging of group bear lines and setting up water filtration sites
  - Help cook and clean group meals

- Gather all food, snacks, and toiletries to be hung on bear lines at the end of the night
- Ensure all students are in their tents at the end of the evening
- Remain vigilant for any animal activity that may occur throughout the night.

Chaperones should always carry these essentials

- First Aid Kit (appropriate to the size of the group – know how to use all items in your kit)
- Whistle
- Communication Device (appropriate to the area)
  - To communicate within the group (i.e. whistle, radios, etc.)
- Headlamp/Flashlight
- Lighter and Fire Starter
- Pocket Knife
- Map and Compass (plus knowledge of how to use them!)

## Comprehensive Planning

Best practices for comprehensive planning:

- Supervision
  - Trip leader and chaperones bring empathy, calm, and skills in leading activities to build emotional safety within the group.
  - Ideally, the trip leader and chaperones are certified in Wilderness First Aid. When that is not possible, at least one chaperone will be certified in Wilderness First Aid.
  - An experienced trip leader with outdoor leadership experience oversees the backpacking trip.
  - Maintain appropriate student-to-adult ratios to ensure adequate supervision and support throughout the journey.
- Selecting the Destination
  - Choose a backpacking destination suitable for students with varying skill levels and physical abilities. Consider factors such as trail difficulty, elevation gain, distance, availability of water, and accessibility.
- Obtaining Permits and Permissions
  - Determine if permits are required for camping and hiking in the chosen destination. Obtain necessary permits well in advance and ensure compliance with any regulations or restrictions.
  - Obtain parental consent and permission for student participation in the backpacking trip. Provide parenting adults with detailed trip itineraries and emergency contact information.
- Trip Itinerary and Route Planning
  - Develop a detailed trip itinerary outlining daily hiking distances, campsite locations, and water sources along the route.
  - Plan a manageable daily mileage and elevation gain suitable for the fitness level of participants, considering rest breaks and time for meals and activities.
  - Identify potential bail-out points or alternative routes in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.
- Gear and Equipment Preparation

- The Outdoor Education Coordinator conducts a safety check on all school-owned backpacking equipment one month before scheduled trips. Replacements are ordered, if needed, and trip leaders and chaperones review new equipment before the trip.
  - Provide students with a comprehensive gear list outlining essential items for backpacking, including tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, backpacks, clothing layers, footwear, food, water, navigation tools, and personal items.
  - Conduct gear checks to ensure students have appropriate and properly fitting equipment. Provide guidance on gear selection, packing techniques, and weight distribution to minimize pack weight and maximize comfort.
- Food and Meal Planning
  - Plan nutritious and lightweight meals suitable for backpacking, considering dietary restrictions, preferences, and cooking capabilities.
  - Emphasize the importance of proper food storage, waste management, and *Leave No Trace* principles to minimize environmental impact.
- Safety and Risk Management
  - Conduct a pre-trip safety session to review trip expectations, safety protocols, emergency procedures, and wilderness ethics with students and chaperones.
  - Ensure all participants are proficient in basic wilderness skills, including navigation, first aid, water purification, tick checks, and wildlife safety.
  - Implement a buddy system and establish communication protocols to ensure accountability and support among participants.
  - Keep everyone together by setting a pace that is manageable by everyone in the group OR
  - Set specific places to regroup every 20-30 minutes.
- Environmental Considerations
  - Educate students about the local flora, fauna, geology, and ecology of the backpacking area. Encourage responsible behavior and respect for the natural environment.
  - Emphasize *Leave No Trace* principles, including proper waste disposal, campsite selection, fire safety, and minimizing ecological impact.
- Contingency Planning
  - Develop contingency plans for potential hazards, such as inclement weather, medical emergencies, navigation errors, or equipment failures.
  - Equip the trip leader with a communication device, first aid kit, and other essential safety equipment.
  - Establish procedures for monitoring weather forecasts, assessing trail conditions, and making informed decisions regarding itinerary adjustments or evacuations if necessary.
- Post-Trip Evaluation and Reflection
  - Conduct post-trip debriefings to review the overall trip experience, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and gather feedback from participants.
  - Encourage students to reflect on their personal growth, challenges overcome, and lessons learned from the backpacking trip, fostering a sense of accomplishment and appreciation for the outdoors.

By following these best practices, organizers can plan a safe, educational, and memorable backpacking trip for high school students, fostering a lifelong love of outdoor adventure and environmental stewardship.

## **Independent Study for Fit for Life**

We encourage all students to participate in our athletic teams. However, if there are activities that a student is involved in preventing them from doing so, that student can apply for an independent study program. The program must reflect a comparable commitment to Oak Grove's Fit for Life class as well as presenting a direct time conflict. The student must submit a written proposal to the Athletic Director no later than the Friday prior to the beginning of each new season (fall, winter, and spring) outlining their program, including times, dates, locations, and the name of their coach/trainer. If approved, the student must then keep a weekly journal documenting each session's activities and have their coach/trainer or parent sign each entry. Every other week the journal will be submitted to and checked by the Athletic Director. Missing or incomplete assignments will be considered equivalent to missing a class session.

The independent study option is not available as a tool for students to "opt out" of Fit for Life by designing their own P.E. program. It has been put in place to acknowledge that some students come to Oak Grove already involved in other athletic endeavors that take up a good deal of their time and do not allow them to also participate in Fit for Life. Examples of this are as follows:

- Medical Exemption: Students who can produce a doctor's note indicating limitations on physical activity may qualify. In these cases an "alternative physical activity" can meet the requirements of Fit for Life.
- Existing Sport Commitment Conflicts with Fit for Life Times: Students who can verify that their existing outside sport conflicts directly with the Fit for Life schedule may qualify. Examples: Equestrian, Rowing Crew, Swim Team.
- Existing Sport Commitment Requires More than Six Hours a Week: Students who can verify that their existing outside sport requires more than six hours a week of practice and game play may qualify. Examples: International Sailing, Club Sports, Competitive Golf.

We are committed to working together, and any other special circumstances that arise will be handled on a case-by-case basis. This will involve a discussion among the student, their parenting adults, and school staff about the student's needs and/or the family's needs and the best way to support them within the framework of Fit for Life.

## **Tardiness**

Students are required to be on time to their first scheduled obligation at 8:30am. Students who are late to school for any reason must first report to the High School Office and sign in to be officially checked in. This applies even though time spent checking in at the attendance office will further delay the student's arrival to class.

Frequent tardiness to class disrupts the learning environment and slows a student's academic progress. Parenting adults will be contacted if there is a pattern of tardiness. If a student is tardy

four times in a four week period, they will not be allowed to attend off-campus lunch that month.

## **Absences**

At Oak Grove School, an absence is defined as being absent or tardy to any class or school activity by more than 20 minutes. In California, chronic absence is typically defined as being absent for any reason for at least 10% of the school year. In line with the California Education Code, our absence policy is that students can be absent without consequences in any class for up to six times in the Fall semester and up to 10 times in the Spring semester (16 times in the year, or 10% of our total number of instructional days), as long as the absences are excused. If a student is absent for 10% of any class, the parenting adults will be contacted and a plan of support will be put in place for the student. This will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

### **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are those resulting from illness, injury, family emergency, team sport competition, a music, dance, or theater performance, field trip, court appearance, or religious observance. "Personal business" or "family trips" are generally not acceptable reasons for absence. However, we recognize that sometimes extraordinary opportunities arise for extracurricular enrichment, which may require a student to be off campus. In such cases, students are required to submit a request for special attendance consideration with the Director of the High School well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

Students who miss school due to excused absences are entitled to make up exams in the case they have missed any. Homework is due on the day of return to school after the excused absence, unless the student has reached an agreement with the teacher for a later due date.

### **Doctor's Notes**

The school requires a doctor's note after an absence due to illness of five consecutive days or longer. A doctor's note may also be required for classes missed due to medical appointments.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences result from official school suspensions or breaches in attendance policy such as cutting class, parenting adult failure to communicate the reason for an absence, student failure to sign out/in upon early school departure or late arrival, and departing early for or returning late from a vacation without obtaining prior permission from the Dean of Student Life and Culture. Unless approved by the Dean of Student Life and Culture in advance, whenever a parent gives a student permission to be absent for reasons other than those stated under Excused Absences above, the absence is deemed unexcused, and the student may receive a zero or failing grade for homework or tests missed during that period. Such absences are serious offenses against school policy. A student with an unexcused absence can expect school action.

## **Family Trips**

As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips

that result in students missing school. Such absences hurt the student whose work is interrupted. The Oak Grove curriculum is demanding; class attendance is crucial. If absence due to a family trip is unavoidable, the student should submit a request for special attendance consideration with the Director of the High School well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

## **Cutting Class**

Cutting class is defined as being absent from one or more classes without parental or school permission. It is a serious violation of policy and will be dealt with through the Restorative Justice Protocol. This includes Advisory, electives, and Fit for Life.

## **Homework Assignments & Make-ups**

When students miss school, they are responsible for getting assignments from other class members or their teachers. Students must be prepared to make up tests and/or quizzes within two days of their return to school unless arrangements for an extension have been made with the teacher. The maximum extension is one week. Students who must be absent for scheduled medical procedures or for religious reasons are asked to turn in work due in advance or make arrangements with their teachers.

## **Parenting Adult Absence**

If parenting adults are away from home, they should notify the High School Office of the name of the guardian left in charge and leave phone numbers where the guardian can be reached.

## **Appointments During the School Day**

Elective medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. If, however, such appointments are unavoidable, students must sign out and parenting adults need to contact the High School Office by note, phone, or ParentSquare message stating the reason, time of departure, and estimated time of return.

## **Illness**

[Please refer to "The Basics" section titled "Illness Policy."](#)

## **Examination Days**

Students and their families must make every effort to avoid absences on examination days. Unexcused absences on these days may result in a "zero" on the missed examination.

## **College Visits**

Students are encouraged to visit prospective colleges during the Spring Break of their junior year and the summer before their senior year. However, we recognize that sometimes seniors may want to visit colleges during the fall or spring semester of their senior year. For this reason, senior students have the option of taking up to three excused absence days to visit the colleges they are considering if the Dean of Student Life and Culture approves the visits. When a senior will miss classes for any other business relating to the college application process, they must also clear it with the Dean of Student Life and Culture.

## **Jupiter Record of Absences and Tardiness**

Parenting adults and students have access to student tardiness and absence information via Jupiter, Oak Grove High School's online learning management system. Students are expected to check this site on a regular basis and to correct any discrepancies noted with their teachers, Advisor, and/or Dean of Student Life and Culture within no more than two weeks of the date of the absence or tardy.

## **School Trips**

School trips are a regular part of the curriculum, and, as such, trip participation is mandatory. Missing a trip will require make-up time and/or assignments for school missed during these weeks. Please see the section on High School trips under graduation requirements for more information.

## **Leaving Campus**

In order to maintain a safe environment for all, Oak Grove is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus during school hours without documented permission from parenting adults. The lunch period is part of the school day – students must bring lunch to school or participate in the school's Lunch Program. A student discovered off campus without permission will be referred to the Dean of Student Life and Culture. Violations will be dealt with through the Restorative Justice Protocol.

## **Driving Policies for Day Students**

1. Students are expected to follow California driving laws. See: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/educational-materials/fast-facts/provisional-licensing-ffdl-19/#:~:text=DL%20Restrictions,Parent%20or%20guardian>.
2. Once you have your license, please give a copy of it to the High School Office so that we know you are legally permitted to drive.
3. Student drivers on campus must drive with care at a slow and safe speed (<15 MPH).
4. Any student who does not comply with the campus driving policies will lose on-campus driving privileges.

5. Students are expected to walk from one part of campus to another; students may not drive from the High School to the Art Building, for example.
6. All students driving to campus must park in the designated spaces beyond the soccer field on Besant Road.
7. Students may park on campus for school events that take place during non-school hours, for example an athletic event on a Saturday or school dance.

## **Electronics**

**(including cellphones, laptops, tablets, iPads, smart watches & iPods)**

Increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as time to “unplug” from the steady stream of electronic input. Therefore we ask both students and parents to be mindful of the following:

### **Cellphone Policy**

Students in the 4th through 12th grade may bring mobile devices to campus, but must turn them in to the designated office staff upon arrival. They will not have access to them for the duration of the school day. Students may check and send quick messages to and from caregivers/parents at the end of the school day at the designated area.

### **Laptops, Computers, & Tablets**

Increased accessibility to the internet requires sensitivity on the part of the user. We ask that computers be used ONLY for educational purposes during class time when expressly permitted by a teacher. If a student must complete computer work during times outside of class, all computer work must be done at the Atrium table and again, only for educational purposes. Students must not watch videos, text message, or play games, etc. with their computers at any time during the school day, unless it is under the supervision of a teacher.

We ask that High School students refrain from carrying or using electronic devices outside the High School area unless under the supervision of a teacher and for academic purposes, such as taking photos or video for an elective class.

When a student is not able to follow these guidelines, the Dean of Student Life and Culture will collaborate with parenting adults to respond and work with the student on meeting these expectations. This might include having to be more closely monitored and/or use a school device that is checked in and out daily.

# # #

# Sister Schools

Krishnamurti started several other schools around the world. Should you wish to visit or contact any of them, here are the addresses:

## **Brockwood Park School**

Bramdean near Alresford Hants  
SO24 OLQ Besant Avenue  
UK  
[www.brockwood.org.uk](http://www.brockwood.org.uk)

## **Rishi Valley School**

Rishi Valley 517352  
Chittoor District  
Andhra Pradesh, India  
[www.rishivalley.org](http://www.rishivalley.org)

## **Rajghat Education Centre and Rajghat Besant School**

Rajghat Fort, Varanasi 221 001. Uttar Pradesh India [www.rbsvaranasi.com](http://www.rbsvaranasi.com)  
Sahyadri School  
BIBI (CHAS) Taluka  
Rajgurunagar District:  
Pune 413 510 India  
[www.sahyadrishschool.org](http://www.sahyadrishschool.org)

## **The School-KFI**

Damodar Gardens  
Adyar, Chennai 600 020  
India  
[www.theschoolkfi.org](http://www.theschoolkfi.org)

## **The Valley School**

17th KM Kanakapura Rd.  
Thatguni Post, Bangalore  
560 062 India  
[www.thevalleyschool.in](http://www.thevalleyschool.in)

## **Bal Anand (KFI)**

28 Dongersey Rd.  
Malabar Hill  
Mumbai, 400 006, India  
[www.kfionline.org/schools/balanand.asp](http://www.kfionline.org/schools/balanand.asp)

## **Pathashaala School (KFI)**

Pathasalai Street, Vallipuram  
Thirukazhukundram Taluk,  
Kancheepuram District 603 405  
Tamil Nadu, India  
[www.pathashaala.pcfl-kfi.org](http://www.pathashaala.pcfl-kfi.org)

## **Sahyadri School (KFI)**

Tiwai Hill, Tal  
Rajgurunagar (Khed)  
Pune District, Pin - 410513  
Maharashtra, India  
<https://www.sahyadrischool.org>

# **A Climate for Inquiry**

The young are inheriting a complex world. It is a world in which rapid technological progress goes hand-in-hand with environmental, social, economic, and political crises. Must the young take the world as it is, accepting an education that enables them to “fit in” to society, or can they learn to question deeply what they see and respond creatively out of a sense of personal integrity that enables them to meet whatever life may bring?

Our children will face a future that we can hardly imagine, one that will require them to adapt, change course, change jobs, make room for the new, and hold multiple perspectives in play. A traditional education that simply requires students to take in information and retain it for testing just won't do. We are increasingly called upon to recognize ourselves as members of an interdependent world community with responsibilities to the whole, not just our small part. As our founder J. Krishnamurti pointed out — we are the world.

We feel passionately that students need an approach to education that captivates student interest and helps them develop the life-long practices of self-discipline, hard work, commitment, and stick-to-itiveness, as well as those more subtle practices of looking at problems from multiple perspectives, grappling with ambiguity, and recognizing that the truth of things needs deep and abiding exploration. For that reason our curriculum offers opportunities for inquiry and project-based learning, and we augment traditional testing with authentic assessment practices such as portfolios, demonstrations of learning, and exhibitions. Our teachers are facilitators and coaches, emphasizing depth over coverage, and our students are empowered with self-responsibility and ownership of their own learning.

At Oak Grove School we are committed to educating young people to meet life as a whole. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but equal importance is given to an ongoing inquiry into the way we live our daily lives. Within the caring environment of Oak Grove School, students are encouraged to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, and actions and on those of others. Oak Grove offers a setting where students and staff can learn to live and work together harmoniously and intelligently. This process is liberating, for with growth in awareness and understanding of our behavior we can discover the immense potential of life and our possibility of living it to the fullest.

# The (Original) Intent of Oak Grove School

## By J. Krishnamurti

It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane, and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation, not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little occurs beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship.

Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behavior. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and its misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful exploration into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.

A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man's endeavor, his search for beauty, his search for truth, and for a way of living without conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideals, theories, or belief, which bring about a contradictory attitude toward existence.

The school is concerned with freedom and order. Freedom is not the expression of one's own desire, choice, or self-interest. That inevitably leads to disorder. Freedom of choice is not freedom, though it may appear so; nor is order, conformity, or imitation. Order can only come with the insight that to choose is itself the denial of freedom.

In school, one learns the importance of relationship which is not based on attachment and possession. It is here one can learn about the movement of thought, love, and death, for all this is our life. From the ancient of times, man has sought something beyond the materialistic world, something immeasurable, something sacred. It is the intent of this school to inquire into this possibility.

This whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge, brings about naturally a psychological revolution, and from this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship, which is society. The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind.

The original "Intent" was written by J. Krishnamurti in 1975 when Oak Grove School was founded. It was revised by Krishnamurti and the school staff in 1984 to its present form.

## Statement Of Philosophy (1984)

The intent of the Oak Grove School is to provide students with the skills necessary to function in the modern world, and at the same time to provide a foundation for inquiry into the perennial questions of human life. Consistent with the views of its founder, J. Krishnamurti, the school does not subscribe to any creed or ideology. Rather, it assists students in investigating enduring human issues with originality and an open-minded spirit. The Oak Grove School focuses on:

1. Intellectual depth/aesthetic and environmental sensitivity. These complementary elements are acquired through the pursuit of excellence in academic work and experience in music, drama, the fine arts, ecology, and outdoor education.
2. Social responsibility and emotional stability. These are fostered through close relationship among students and teachers as well as close contact between school and home, and the development of the ability to observe oneself and one's conditioning.
3. Physical vitality and knowledge of the human body. These are acquired through sports, games, and regular exercise; outdoor experiences such as hiking, camping, and gardening; health education and a sound diet.

These areas of emphasis establish a safe environment from which to initiate individual and collective inquiries into the deepest questions that face human beings, while still providing the academic skills so necessary to function in our immediate world. We strive for a non-competitive atmosphere where physical, emotional, and intellectual safety exists and where there is respect for students' different levels of development.

In his sixty years of involvement with various schools around the world, Krishnamurti returned again and again to the themes that are central to his work: the fundamental importance of establishing right relationship among human beings; sensitivity to nature and responsibility toward the environment; the conditioning of the individual by society, and by his or her own subjective demands; the function of images and concepts in daily life; the roots of psychological suffering at the individual and collective level; inward freedom and order; the significance of death; and the questions of a quality of mind not bound by time and circumstance.

Those responsible for the Oak Grove School are committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel free to raise and investigate all of these issues, and any others of a similar nature. The format for this inquiry may develop from subject matter, a personal problem, or spontaneous curiosity. There is no formal curriculum for presenting Krishnamurti's work, and no student is required to "be interested" in Krishnamurti. The school maintains that true inquiry cannot be forced or artificially constructed in any way. Any collective endeavor in this area must be mutually forthcoming and, therefore, free.

# # #