

# **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2022-23**



**OTSEGO ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS**

**ALAMO ELEMENTARY  
DIX STREET ELEMENTARY  
WASHINGTON STREET ELEMENTARY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Letter from the Principals**

Welcome to Your Otsego Elementary Schools!

We are looking forward to an exciting and successful school year. We have prepared this handbook so that we may bring about a better understanding between the schools, parents, and students. We ask for your help and cooperation so that together we may effectively provide your child with a rewarding and enriching educational experience. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly and then place it in a convenient location for quick reference.

On behalf of our staff, we would like to extend an invitation for you to visit our schools, attend your children's programs, and to become an active member in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). As we begin the 2022-23 school year, we hope that if you have any questions or concerns, you will reach out to your child's teacher or us. We are happy to have you and your children with us at Otsego Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Knight, Principal, Washington Street Elementary

Nicole Knight-Lucas, Principal, Alamo Elementary

Mark VanderKlok, Principal, Dix Street Elementary

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**School Directory**

Alamo Office	694-7600
Alamo Attendance	694-7680
Alamo Fax	694-7699
Alamo B.A.S.E.	694-7635
Dix Street Office	694-7700
Dix Street Attendance	694-7780
Dix Street Fax	694-7999
Dix Street B.A.S.E.	694-7745
Washington Street Office	694-7800
Washington Street Attendance	694-7880
Washington Street Fax .	694-7899
Washington Street B.A.S.E.	694-7835
Transportation Office	694-7940
Superintendent's Office	694-7900
Central Office Fax	694-7999
Director of Instruction	694-7904
Community Education	694-7405

**Non-Discrimination Statement**

The Otsego Public School District complies with all federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, or any other legally protected characteristic, in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. Upon request to the Superintendent, the District shall make reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to participate in any building activity. The Board designates the following individuals to serve as "Compliance Officers/Title IX Coordinators" for the District.

Anna Starr, School Social Worker: 694-7500

## **Tobacco, Drug and Weapons Free Schools**

The Otsego Board of Education passed the following resolution to be effective January 1, 1992:  
"To Provide A Positive Role Model for Our Students And To Provide A Healthy Environment For All, Our School Buildings and Grounds Are Designated As TOBACCO FREE AREAS."

**The Otsego Public School District is a smoke, drug and weapons free campus.** The use or possession of any tobacco products, drugs or drug paraphernalia or weapons on school grounds, in buildings, parking lots and in vehicles on school property is prohibited by state and federal laws. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. It is hoped that our parents will cooperate with this policy in the best interest of our children.

## **BUILDING SCHEDULES**

### **Beginning and Ending Times:**

**Alamo - 8:30 a.m. - 3:53 p.m.**

**Dix St. - 8:20 a.m. - 3:43 p.m.**

**Washington St. - 8:30 a.m. - 3:53 p.m.**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Attendance Law and Board Policy** - Michigan law requires that whoever has custody or charge of any child between ages 6-18 (unless the child has already completed high school graduation requirements) shall assure that the child attends public school during the entire year. Michigan law requires that the student's attendance be continuous and consecutive for the school year fixed by the school district.

**Notification of Absence** - If a student must be absent from school, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to properly report the absence. To properly report the absence, the parent/guardian must call the attendance office the day of the absence and leave a message on the answering 11 machine before 9:00 a.m. If a parent/guardian has not contacted the office regarding attendance, written notification by the parent/guardian must be within 48 hours or the absence will be coded as unexcused. If a student will be absent for an extended period due to illness, the parent/guardian need not phone in daily but should keep the school updated on the student's condition and request make-up work for completion at home.

**Attendance Requirements** – Students are expected to be in school on time, every day. Please attempt to schedule appointments during non-school hours. The following guidelines have been established to encourage good attendance habits for your child.

- Five Absences: Parent/guardian will receive a letter from the school
- Seven Absences: Letter will be sent to parent/guardians warning of truancy referral and a meeting will be scheduled with administration. Therefore, after 7 absences the student will be considered unexcused for each additional day, unless proper documentation is provided for the absence. Documentation previous to the 7th day a student is absent can be provided by a parent/guardian. Verification will be requested for additional absences beyond the 7th day from a physician, dentist, orthodontist, optometrist, or other appropriate medical personnel.
- Ten Unexcused Absences: Student will be reported truant to the Allegan County Truancy Officer

## **Two Types of Absences: Excused and Unexcused**

- Excused absences include: illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health, or other reason approved by the principal.
- Unexcused absences (i.e., oversleeping, faulty personal transportation, family trips that are not pre-arranged at least 2 days prior to the absence, lack of timely notice to the school office to report the absence). Prearranged excused absences must be approved by the principal.

The school believes that certain reasons for absences are not appropriate for elementary students. Among these are: shopping trips, baby-sitting, and helping at home. The school also believes that it is most appropriate for families to schedule vacations and appointments to correspond with scheduled school vacations and after-school hours in order to avoid taking students out of school. If a student leaves and returns on the same day (for a doctor's appointment, etc.) he or she will be marked absent for ½ day if gone more than one hour. If it becomes necessary to take a vacation during school time, we require that parents notify the school two weeks prior to their child's absence. Make-up work, supervised by parents, will be due the day the child returns. At that time, the child is expected to be prepared to take all missed tests. In some cases, additional make-up assignments may be required. The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence.

**Pre-Arranged Absences** - Pre-arranged Absence Forms, which may be obtained in the Office, are required for all absences of more than one day, for which advance notice is available. The forms are only used if a student will be absent an entire day.

Arrangements for an absence of this type should be completed within the required period of time prior to the absence. Failure to properly submit an advance absence form will result in unexcused absences. These forms are generally not used for absences scheduled by the school.

**Tardiness** – Each student is expected to be in his/her assigned location throughout the school day. Students arriving late to school must come to the office to sign in and get a tardy pass before reporting to class. A student shall be considered tardy if he or she arrives after the starting bell for either morning or afternoon. Students arriving after the first hour will be marked absent for the a.m. Students leaving school more than an hour before the end of the day will also be marked absent in the p.m.

**Vacation During the School Year** – All vacations must be pre-excused. It is the parent's responsibility to obtain a pre-excused slip from the main office at least five days prior to the scheduled absence. Make up work will be issued according to the recommendation of the teacher (before the student leaves or upon returning). It is not recommended that students go on vacation while school is in session; however, we will excuse up to 7 additional days for family vacation.

### **Late Arrival - Early Departure**

Parents are required to report to the office and sign students in or out for late arrivals or early departures.

### **Reporting Absences**

Each time a student is going to be absent, parents are expected to call the school. The Attendance Numbers are:

Alamo Elementary 694-7680

Dix Street Elementary 694-7780

Washington Street Elementary 694-7880

Please leave a message reporting the following information:

1. Caller's name and relationship to the student
2. Child's Name
3. Grade and Teacher
4. Reason for Absence

For prolonged absences, homework can be requested to be picked up at the end of the day.

Please call your Elementary School's Attendance Number before 9:00 a.m. for each day of your child's absence. Those parents who have neglected to report their child's absence may be contacted, at work if necessary, to determine their child's whereabouts. This procedure ensures our children's safety.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

#### **Breakfast and Lunch Programs**

Students may purchase lunch and breakfast on a daily or weekly basis. \$2.35 daily for lunch and \$1.40 daily for breakfast. Milk is \$0.50.

Students planning to have breakfast at school should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before classes begin. Students who must charge a lunch can. There is a limit of 2 unpaid charges.

Application forms are available in the school offices for families who may qualify for free or reduced price lunches and breakfasts.

#### **Textbooks and Supplies**

All textbooks and workbooks are provided without cost to the parents. If a child loses or damages a book, he or she will be required to pay for the replacement.

Pencils, paper, and other supplies are given to students in reasonable amounts. Many children enjoy bringing some of their own supplies to school but they are not required to do so.

#### **Lost and Found**

All articles of clothing which are found should be taken to the lost and found box. Valuables such as money, jewelry, etc. should be turned in to an office person. Children should report a loss of clothing to the teacher. With permission, a child may go to the lost and found to look for lost articles during recess time or at dismissal. Items not claimed by the end of the year will be donated to charity.

**Telephone Usage**

The office telephones are not to be used by students except in case of emergency.

**Phone Messages**

On the occasion that a student will need to receive an urgent communication from home, please call the school prior to 2:00 p.m. After that time, we will make every attempt but cannot guarantee a message will be received before dismissal.

**Field Trips**

As part of our program, students take part in field trips. Parents are notified of such trips. Written permission is required for all out-of-district field trips. Due to our liability insurance regulations, parents who accompany field trips as chaperones are not allowed to bring pre-school age children with them on their buses. Parents who plan to chaperone, and plan to drive themselves, should not bring pre-school age children with them either, since they will not be able to concentrate on their responsibilities as a chaperone.

**SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY****Severe Weather Policy**

It is the Otsego School Board's policy that children remain at school during severe weather, a tornado watch, or a tornado warning. When a warning is in effect for the immediate area, school will not be dismissed until the tornado warning is lifted.

Parents and guardians picking their students up are asked to follow the sign-out procedure.

**School Closure Due to Inclement Weather**

In the event that weather conditions are such that school is to be closed, please listen to any of the following radio or television stations as they will be notified of our status. The district employs the Infinite Campus messenger system to contact families when school is closed or postponed for any reason. Please keep your phone number/email updated in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal so that you will receive the message if school is canceled or delayed. Local radio and television are another resource for school closing information. If school closes all school activities for that day will be canceled and/or postponed.

If school closes during the day, an Infinite Campus message will be sent to notify parents. Again, local radio and television stations will have the information as well. Families should have emergency plans in place (secondary child care; keys; etc.) and children should be aware of these.

**Accidents, Illness**

Should your child become ill or sustain an injury needing your attention, you will be contacted to pick him/her up at school. If you are not at home, we will keep the student at school unless immediate medical assistance is required. In that case assistance will be secured.



### **Closed Campus**

Students are not permitted to leave the grounds during the day unless a parent or guardian picks the child up. Students will not be allowed to leave school at recess time or lunchtime to go downtown or visit a friend's home. Students who ride the bus to school will not be allowed to visit the grocery store after arriving at school.

### **Weather and Recess**

All students are expected to go outside for the morning, noon and afternoon recesses EVERY day, dressed appropriately for the weather.

#### **EXCEPTIONS:**

- a. Inclement weather
- b. If a child has been seriously ill, parents must make a written request for the child to remain indoors for up to three consecutive days. If a longer period of time is necessary, a written statement must be submitted from a physician.

### **Head Lice, Scabies, and Pink Eye**

Please contact the school if your child has been diagnosed with head lice, scabies, or pink eye. Children with any of these problems are excluded from school and may not return until proof of treatment is provided by the parents. In the case of head lice, the student must be totally nit free.

### **Student Medication**

Otsego Public Schools shall not be responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of student illness. The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours will be permitted only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the student, or the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available during school hours.

For purposes of this policy, "medication" shall include all medicines prescribed by a physician and/or any patented or over the counter drug.

The total responsibility for dispensing or administering any non-prescribed (over-the-counter) drugs, preparations, and/or remedies shall rest solely with the parent(s) or legal guardian, and that student. Before any medication may be administered to any student during school hours, the Board shall require the written request of the parent. This document shall be kept on file in the office of the principal.

Only medication in its original prescription bottle, labeled with the date of prescription, student's name, and exact dosage will be administered and only in the presence of another adult.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Dress and Grooming**

Good grooming is important to the well being of every student. Children should be dressed appropriately for the existing weather conditions. During warm weather, students may wear shorts, T-shirts, and tank tops. However, halter tops, spaghetti straps, tube tops, half-shirts, mesh T-shirts, and tank tops with large arm or neck openings that expose the student's chest are not considered appropriate dress for school. Shoes must be worn at all times! Extremely short shorts, dresses and skirts are not to be worn to school.

Students are not to wear hats or coats in the building during school hours except when getting ready for recess or going home at the end of the school day.

The wearing of clothing advertising, promoting, or depicting tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, other drugs, profanity, vulgar suggestions, or making reference to anything that is of questionable moral value or is disruptive or detrimental to the learning environment is not permitted.

Students not dressed appropriately will not be allowed to attend class until the situation has been corrected. All decisions regarding dress code will be left to the discretion of the building principal.

### **Shoes and Boots**

When playgrounds are extremely wet, muddy, or snowy, children should wear boots and remove them as soon as they enter the building. We request that parents send extra shoes for them to keep at school for indoor wear during the wet season. In addition, tennis type shoes are required for gym class.

### **Playground Regulations**

Boys and girls who have good sportsmanship show it in the ways they act on the playground.

Following are rules for good behavior on the playground:

1. Use the playground in a safe manner for the following reasons:
  - a) To protect themselves from injury.
  - b) To protect others from injury and unpleasant playing conditions.
2. Share equipment with others and take their turns in a fair way.
3. Play in the proper area for the activity being played.
4. Walk around groups at play rather than across the area of play when such walking can interfere with the activity taking place.
5. Allow others to join in the game being played.
6. Learn the rules of the game then play and follow them fairly.
7. Settle misunderstandings and arguments in a peaceful way, seeking help if needed.
8. Listen carefully to those in charge of the playground and follow their directions.
9. Ask questions in a polite manner when they don't understand something.
10. Understand that the playground rules are set up so that all may get the most benefit from the playground in the safest ways possible
11. Respect others by speaking nicely to them and by refraining from name calling and mean teasing.
12. Seek help from the Playground Supervisors or Conflict Managers in time of trouble.
13. In case of a playground accident, keep out of the way, unless help is needed.
14. Stop playing and enter the building appropriately when the bell rings.
15. Understand that recess and lunch recess are a privilege-- not a right--and those who misbehave can lose the privilege of play.

These requirements are for your safety and happiness. Please accept these responsibilities in order that you may have these privileges.

## **Lunchroom Behavior**

When in the lunchroom, students are expected to behave in a polite manner at all times.

Students should:

- Wait quietly in line without pushing or shoving.
- Talk only in conversational tones.
- After receiving their lunch, sit at tables as assigned and remain seated until dismissed.
- Eat politely, using good manners.
- Clean up their eating area before leaving. This includes removing all paper products, food wrappers, food scraps and spills from the table and floor. All trash should be placed in appropriate receptacles. Lunchroom staff will be available to assist students with materials to clean up spills.

Parents wishing to visit with their children at lunch time must check in at the office by signing in and receiving a visitor badge. Parents also should check in with lunchroom employees.

Students who bring sack lunches should bring their own catsup, mustard, napkins, silverware, salt, pepper, etc.

## **Articles Brought to School**

Students are to bring only those items to school which are necessary for the completion of class assignments. Examples of items which are NOT allowed at school include: knives, lighters, matches, squirt guns and squirt bottles, caps, fireworks, bullets, toys, trading cards, gum, tobacco and alcohol products, and electronic devices.

Scooters, skateboards, roller skates and blades, used for transportation must be checked into the office during the school day.

## **Electronic Devices/Cell Phones**

Students may not be in possession of, or use, cell phones or other electronic communication devices (ECD) during the school day. Upon entering the building cell phones and other ECD's need to be stored in backpacks and kept in lockers. Students found to have a disallowed electronic device in class will earn a referral and the device will be confiscated. Students refusing to give their device to the teacher and/or administration will be disciplined for insubordination. Confiscated devices may be picked up the same day within ½ hour after school, or any day following. See consequences below for information about who can pick up the device.

Offense 1 – Student may pick up device

Offense 2 – 1 recess detention. Student may pick up the device.

Offense 3 – 2 recess detentions. Student may pick up the device.

Offense 4 – 2 recess detentions. Parent or guardian must pick up the device.

## **Bullying Rubric**

Bullying behavior is any repeated mean look, gesture, word or action that hurts a person's body, feelings, friendships, reputation or property.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Offense**

- Recorded verbal warning
- Restate definition

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense**

- 1 silent recess in office
- Student calls parent
- Problem solver sheet
- Restate definition

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Offense**

- 2 silent recesses in office
- Student calls parent
- Problem solver sheet
- Restate definition

## **Subsequent Offenses**

**Consequences based on frequency and severity and may include:**

- Loss of social lunch
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Parent meeting

- Student may have 1 extra recorded verbal warning at the discretion of the teacher.
- Problem solver sheets will not be accepted until completed correctly.
- ALL problem solver sheets must be signed by the parent and returned to school.
- Should there be a 4th offense in the yellow or red categories within a 3 month period, there will be a meeting with parents to develop an individual behavior plan for the student.
- Administration and staff reserves the right to evaluate each individual situation, and a student's actions may result in the loss of additional class or school activities.
- Students may also receive disciplinary referrals for incidents that are not bullying-related.

## **Yellow infractions**

- Behavior that would hurt another's feelings such as gossip, name calling, gestures, putdowns, teasing, social exclusion, etc.

## **Orange infractions**

- Behavior that could injure others or damage property such as play fighting, pushing, disrespect to adults, repeated verbal assault (taunting, ridiculing, harassment) etc.

## **Red infractions**

- Purposely causing injury to a person or damaging property.

**Harassment/Bullying**

Harassment of a student(s) by other students or any member of the staff is contrary to the Board of Education's commitment to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to learn and may violate Federal or State law. Harassment shall include any speech or action that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive learning environment; this includes hazing. Harassment can be racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual in nature. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances or any form of improper physical contact or sexual remark.

A report of such an incident should be made immediately to a teacher, counselor or principal. A complaint against a staff member should be taken to the principal. Such matters will be dealt with as confidentially as possible. All reports of harassment will be dealt with promptly and anyone found to have violated this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from the District in accordance with Board Policy Article IV Section 13.

**Selling Merchandise at School**

Selling of merchandise or distribution of literature by students is not allowed unless given permission in advance by the principal.

**Behavior at After School Activities**

Students are expected to follow school rules whenever they are in any school building or on school property. This includes students attending after school functions such as events at the high school.

**STUDENT CONFLICT MANAGERS**

Conflict Managers serve their school by helping other students resolve conflicts. They work in pairs and are trained and scheduled for duty by the elementary counselor. It is recommended that students from upper grades serve as Conflict Managers for their peers. When they are on duty, Conflict Managers assist disputing students in the peaceful expression and resolution of their conflicts by using a prescribed problem-solving process. The process is voluntary. No one is forced to see Conflict Managers to resolve a dispute; students have the option to speak to the playground supervisors or principal if necessary. Conflict Managers are facilitators, not judges or disciplinarians. They help students express their conflicts and find their own best resolutions.

Pairs of Conflict Managers watch the playground during lunch recess. At least two pairs of students are on duty at once and wear bright vests with "Conflict Manager" on the back. When the Conflict Managers see students in conflict, they offer them assistance. If the disputing students agree, Conflict Managers take them to a quieter part of the playground to work through the process.

Conflict Managers are scheduled to be on duty once a week during lunch recess. Because they work for all grade level lunch times, the Conflict Managers are out of class for approximately one hour on duty days. They are responsible for making up any work missed during this time.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Firm, fair and consistent school wide discipline is important to the continuity and effectiveness of the entire school program. We need your parental support for our efforts for this to occur.

The rules and consequences listed below are intended to promote good behavior in our halls, lunchroom, and on our playground. Staff members are here to promote this good behavior and make sure the rules are consistently followed. Flagrant violations of the rules will be noted and turned in to the office. It then becomes the responsibility of the principal to make sure consequences are consistently carried out.

### **GENERAL SCHOOL RULES FOR ALL BUILDINGS:**

Respect yourself and others

Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

Only use kind words and actions.

Act safely at all times

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS OF RULES**

Whenever a disruptive student is sent to the principal's office for disciplinary action, the following alternatives will be considered and used at the discretion of the principal:

- Conference with the student
- Phone call to parents
- Special assignment
- Detention
- Parent/Principal conference
- Loss of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Immediate removal from school to home or parent's place of employment by principal
- Suspension from school
- Referral to appropriate legal, social, or educational agency
- Temporary isolation until parents are available for conference

### **Possession of Illegal Substances**

Students who are found to have tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or controlled substances in their possession on school property will be suspended from school for up to five days for the first offense.

Students who are found to be distributing or selling tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or controlled substances on school property will be suspended from school for up to ten days for the first offense.

In addition, the appropriate County Sheriff's Department will be informed of these matters.

Repeat offenders for possession or distribution of controlled substances will be subject to further disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

**Weapons/Threats**

Students in possession of weapons and students who make threatening statements will be subject to disciplinary action according to school policy and state law. Disciplinary action may be up to and including suspension and expulsion.

**GENERAL INFORMATION****Otsego Virtual Academy**

Students participating in the Otsego Virtual Academy K-12 are expected to comply with guidelines and rules in effect in the Michigan Pupil Accounting Manual regarding attendance procedures. The school will share these expectations with students and parents at the start of each year. These students will be expected to have contact with their teacher of record and/or their mentor at least twice per week.

Virtual academy students are welcome to come to the school if they need help in any way. Virtual academy students will be afforded the same opportunities as other students in terms of participation in extracurricular activities, awards, and school services. They also will be expected to participate in mandatory state assessments. Virtual Academy students will receive their own student handbook which outlines other requirements, academic integrity, discipline, attendance/truancy and other aspects of student life.

**Report Cards**

Progress reports are sent home three times a year. Students in Developmental Kindergarten through Grade 2 do not receive letter grades for all academic subjects. The end of the year report will indicate promotion, placement, or retention. Promotion shows the student is ready for the next grade, placement indicates the child is not completely prepared for the next grade but retention is not beneficial at this time, and retention places the student in the same grade level as the previous year. Parents are asked to review and discuss the report card with their child and contact the school immediately if they have questions.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year, fall and spring. Parents are encouraged to participate in these meetings as they play an important part in their child's education. Parents shouldn't hesitate to contact the teachers at school if they are concerned about their child's academic or social progress. Open communications between the school and parents are essential for a good overall learning environment.

**Bus Notes**

A note from the parent must be sent to school when a child must ride a different bus, get off at a different stop, or be picked up during or after school. When picking up students, the parents must go directly to the office and the student will be called from his/her classroom by the office. Children may then leave the school accompanied by the parent.

**Visitors**

Parents are welcome to visit after registering at the school office. Students may not bring visitors to school without permission of the principal and teacher.

**Treats**

Generally the use of food prepared at home is not recommended. Wrapped candies and baked goods from commercial establishments are encouraged.

**Library**

Students regularly check books out of the library. Lost or damaged books are expected to be paid for by the student. If a book is found after it has been paid for, the money will be reimbursed to the student.

**Pets in School**

Pets may only be brought to school after the parents have contacted the teacher. Generally, they should be brought to school by the parents for the visit and then taken home immediately. They are not to be left at school or sent to school with the student.

**School Newsletters**

Each school publishes a weekly newsletter. Information about procedures, events as well as celebrations of learning are included each week. The school newsletter is one of the best sources of information specific to your school. Class or grade level newsletters are sent home periodically, too.

**Assignments of Student to Schools, Classes**

Elementary students are assigned to specific schools and classes by the administrative team. Such factors as geographic location, transportation, and class sizes are considered in these assignments. The Otsego Board of Education has also adopted a formal request form to be used for class placement. We ask parents to use this form if there are special circumstances that need to be considered in the placement process. This form is available at the school office and due on the last Friday of April for the following school year. Fulfillment of any request will be attempted but cannot be assured.

**Care of School Property**

One of the goals of public education is to teach young children to observe the rights of private and public property. The Board of Education is willing to accept the responsibility of repair and maintenance of all facilities and equipment as a result of the educational program, but cannot accept the responsibility of damage done maliciously to any part of the building or its equipment. Therefore, parents and/or guardians will be held responsible for damage done maliciously to any school property.

**Parenting**

Parents who are sending a child to school for the first time are encouraged to participate in "Parenting" classes offered by the Otsego Public Schools. For more information, contact one of the Elementary Principals.



## **HOMEWORK**

### **Purposes of Homework**

The Otsego Elementary staff and administration believe that limited amounts of homework on a regular basis will create a number of growth opportunities for our students. Some of the benefits of homework are:

- extend/develop concepts learned in school
- develop higher order thinking and problem solving processes
- develop school-related learning practices: responsibility, self-discipline, skill practice, test preparation, information sorting and gathering, organizational skills and study and focusing skills
- allow parents to be included in their child's learning and school experience.

### **Time expectations**

Homework time at the elementary level should be age appropriate and should increase gradually as children grow through the elementary years. Individual differences in abilities, study habits and concentration levels will all play a role in the time required to complete an assignment.

Often, homework will consist of work not completed during school that day. These assignments are generally due the next school day. Sometimes, practice work may be assigned, especially in the primary grades: practice with reading, math facts, spelling words or test preparation. Students in the primary grades may have tasks which require a few minutes while those in the later elementary may have from 30-60 minutes of work.

### **Homework and Absences**

Generally, students will be allowed two days to complete work missed for each day they are absent. For example, if a child is absent Monday, those missed assignments will be due on Thursday at the beginning of class. This will allow for students to gradually increase their work load as they recover from an illness. All missed work should be due within one week, except in cases of extended absence. Extended absences will be worked out on an individual basis.

### **Support for Parents**

Our Elementary Homework Planners for Grades 3-5 will hopefully make it easier for parents to know if there is homework each day and exactly what the assignments are.

We offer these tried and proven practices to parents for successful homework experiences:

- ask to see your child's Homework Planner daily
- provide a quiet place to work away from distractions (TV, music, etc.)
- establish a consistent homework time (before or after dinner)
- let your child know that you would like to see completed homework
- use incentives and praise for using the Planner and/or completing homework

### **Reading to Your Child**

We strongly encourage parents to read daily with your child all through the elementary grades even if no homework has been assigned. Research clearly shows a strong relationship between one-on-one reading activity and reading progress.

## **School Insurance**

A low cost group insurance policy covering school time accidents is available to all students. Applications and policy details are given to each student soon after school starts in the fall. Students who are not adequately covered by their parent's policy will find this insurance an inexpensive coverage for accidents which may occur while attending school, traveling to or from school or participating in non-athletic school sponsored activities. Full year, 24 hours per day coverage is also available. Please note: It is the parents' responsibility to purchase this insurance coverage and make all claims directly with the insurance carrier. The school is not liable for obtaining policy benefits.

## **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR CHILD**

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the students, but to all individuals who have access to Otsego Public School's programs and facilities.

A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parent involvement in this procedure is required by Federal and State law. Contact the special education office at 692-6233 or the building principal to inquire about evaluation procedures and programs.

### **Technology**

Students in grades Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> will receive 30 minutes of technology instruction each week. Students will learn how to use the interactive Web 2.0 tools. There will be an emphasis on integrating technology into everyday curriculum.

### **Music**

General Music class will be an important part of your child(ren)'s education. Students will learn about basic musical concepts such as rhythm, melody, harmony and form through the singing of songs, moving and listening to music of various styles and cultures and through the playing of simple percussion instruments.

### **Spanish**

Our Elementary Foreign Language Program has expanded to include all Kindergarten through fifth grade students. Each child will receive thirty minutes of instruction in Spanish per week. Vocabulary will be introduced by the Spanish teacher. Children will be given their own special name in Spanish. In the course of the year, pupils will learn many useful words and expressions. This will make it possible for them to say things in Spanish almost as easily as they say the same things in English.

### **Art**

The Elementary Art Program is designed to give students a wide range of experiences through the use of various media. The sequential program also focuses on individual creativity, interpretation, and presentation. With ever increasing knowledge and skills, art students develop from kindergarten through fifth grade.

### **Physical Education**

Physical Education is part of the total elementary curriculum in the Otsego Public Schools.

In order for your child to have a rewarding experience in physical education, have your child do the following:

1. Always wear gym shoes. This is important for your child's SAFETY.
2. Always try to do their best in each activity.
3. Be ready to listen and follow directions.
4. Respect others and be a good sport.

If a child has been seriously ill, parents must make a written request for a child not to participate for up to three consecutive days. If a longer period of time is necessary, a written statement from a physician may be requested.

### **Health**

All students in grades K-5 receive 30 minutes of Health instruction each week.

### **Special Services**

Education encompasses much more than the three R's. At the elementary level, we are concerned with the social and emotional development of students in addition to their academic progress. To this end, Otsego provides social work, elementary counseling, and school psychology services for students with special needs. If you are concerned with your child's social, emotional, or academic progress, feel free to contact us or to make a referral through the classroom teacher or building principal.

### **Student Support Services**

The Student Support Services Staff consults and collaborates with parents/guardians, support staff and other professionals as necessary in the role of advocating for children.

All children may work with the Student Support Services Staff through classroom guidance activities, small educational support groups, or individual one on one discussion. Children may request to see the Student Support Services Staff themselves or they may be referred by parents/guardians, staff or other adults. Parental permission is required for a student to participate in educational support groups.

### **Confidentiality is maintained except:**

1. In cases of suspected abuse or neglect.
2. If a child poses a danger to self or others.
3. The child and/or parent/guardian gives permission to share information.

The Student Support Services Staff strives to work together with parents/guardians to help their children achieve to the best of their ability. Please schedule appointments with the Student Support Services Staff by contacting the school office.

### **Title I Program**

Otsego Public Schools offer many educational opportunities to its students. One of these is the Title I. This program provides academic support to students.

### **Speech Therapy**

Speech therapy is available to eligible students having difficulty communicating. Milestones in speech development include the development of complex sentences after the age of five with the ability to relate two or more ideas in a single sentence. As a rule, children use understandable speech by age four and all speech sounds correctly by age eight.

### **Limited English Proficiency**

Limited proficiency in the English Language should not be a barrier to equal participation at school. It is a policy of Otsego public Schools that students identified as having limited English proficiency will be provided additional support and instruction to assist them in gaining English proficiency. Parent should contact the building principal to inquire about evaluation procedures and programs offered by the district.

### **Technology**

Otsego Elementary Schools offer a variety of technology for students' use in the learning process throughout their elementary years.

### **DRUG FREE SCHOOLS**

In accordance with Federal law, the Otsego Board of Education prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs by students on school grounds, in school or school approved vehicles, or at any school-related event. Drugs include any alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, dangerous controlled substance as defined by State statute, or substance that could be considered a "look-alike" controlled substance. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all students. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with due process and as specified in this student handbook, up to and including expulsion from school. When required by State law, the District will also notify law enforcement officials.

The District is concerned about any student who is a victim of alcohol or drug abuse and will facilitate the process by which he/she receives help through programs and services available in the community. Students and their parents should contact the school principal or counseling office whenever such help is needed.

### **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

#### **Preamble**

Otsego Public Schools provides access to technology resources including access to the Internet. These resources all interact internally within the district and externally to systems located all over the world. These resources are limited to educational purposes only. These purposes are to provide access to electronic resources to promote and enhance student and staff learning consistent with district educational goals and objectives. This acceptable use policy ensures that the use of the network by students and staff is done in an appropriate manner. Use of technology is a privilege and not a right. Users are obligated to respect and protect the rights of every other user and act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner. Failure to abide by this policy may result in loss of privileges, disciplinary action and/or legal action..

#### **District Resources**

Educational technology resources consist of, but are not limited to:

- Computers (Desktops, Laptops, and iPads)
- Handheld Devices (Palms)
- Software
- Communication Lines and Devices
- Graphing Calculators
- Printers

- CD-ROM Devices
- Scanners
- Digital Cameras
- Data Projectors
- Email
- Classroom Performance Systems
- Document Cameras
- Classroom Sound Systems
- MP3 Players

### **Internet Safety Measures**

#### **Internet Filtering – Federal:**

The Superintendent shall be responsible for directing appropriate District technology staff to bring all computers used by students and staff into full compliance with all federal requirements regarding Internet filtering software to assure that District discounts for Internet access and internal connection under the federal E-rate program are not jeopardized.

Student Internet activities will be monitored by the District to ensure that students are not accessing inappropriate sites. The District’s Network Operations Center shall have an internet filtering device that blocks access to content that is obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors.

#### **Acceptable Uses/Net Etiquette**

Among “acceptable use” items listed might include (but not limited to):

- Classroom activities as assigned and sanctioned by the school/teacher.
  - Research activities for classroom assignments.
  - Peer review of assigned work.
  - The exchange of project-related ideas, opinions and questions via email, message boards and other means.
1. Accessing information via the Internet for limited educational purposes such as: Local, state, national and worldwide information and news; correspondence with scientists and scholars; collaboration with peers on projects and problem-solving strategies.
  2. Access, via the Internet, the Science Learning Network (SLN), Library of Congress, Educational Resources and Information center (ERIC), Smithsonian Museums, university library catalogues, and other like sources in the pursuit of legitimate curricular goals.
  3. Proper e-mail and Internet etiquette is acceptable and expected, and should include:
    - Being polite and courteous in all communications and language.
    - Assisting others in the use of the system, and helping others who are looking for ideas or information.
    - Posting and sharing information that is interesting and helpful to other users.
    - Always using the network as a resource to further one’s own education and that of others.
    - Being mindful of network security, and immediately reporting any bugs, errors, or security problems to the system administrator.

## **Unacceptable Uses**

Among “unacceptable use” items listed might be (but not limited to):

- Transmitting or downloading any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulations. Including, but not limited to material that is copyrighted, threatening, harmful, sexist, racist, sexually explicit, obscene or protected by trade secrets.
- Accessing non-educational multi-use (chat rooms) talk sessions or “recreational” games.
- Engaging in any unauthorized commercial activity, product advertisement or political lobbying.
- Use of the school’s equipment by businesses or non-school sponsored community activities. Applications for such use should be submitted by request and shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the system administrators or advisory committee.
- Use of technology to distort the truth, lie, or to misrepresent someone else.
- Use of any technology intentionally to harm or harass anyone
- Vandalism – defined as any attempt to harm, destroy, or disrupt the operation of the network, hardware, software, or the data of any other use on the system or any other system including, but not limited to, the uploading, creation, or knowing transmission of computer viruses.
- Use of Social Networking Sites (i.e. MySpace, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and others).
- Tunneling or use of proxy sites to bypass the district’s internet filter.
- Posting of unauthorized pictures/videos of faculty/staff members/students on social networking sites (i.e. MySpace, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and others).
- Use of streaming music sites.

## **Disclaimer**

The school district makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services it provides. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries or service interruptions caused by unforeseen network problems or a user’s errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user’s own risk. The district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. The district does not guarantee that materials stored on the system will be private. Network administrators may review the information stored on the system to determine whether it is being used properly.

## **Safety Warning**

As a school district participant, it is expected that you will be respectful of the rights and privacy of others. When engaging in activities on web pages, email, and two-way communications, the following guidelines should be strictly adhered to:

- Never ask for or give information about (you, friends, teachers, locations).
  - Never list personal information, pictures, last names, or rosters on web sites or web pages.
  - Never give your password to anyone for any reason
  - Do not reveal your identity in any way. This includes your name, personal address, phone number, location, city, school name, team name or any other information that may give others information to identify you in any way.
  - Do not reveal the identity of others. This includes their name, personal address, phone number, location, city, school name, team name or any other information that may give anyone information to identify others (friends, teachers) in any way.
  - Immediately tell an adult if you receive anything that is inappropriate, threatening or uncomfortable.

- Never agree to get together or meet with anyone you meet online without permission of an adult.
- Never send photographs or anything else without the permission of an adult.
- Never use or accept abusive language, threats, or harassment.
- Never get involved with discussions on violence, hate issues, race or ethnic issues.
- Never violate ethical issues.
  - Never send or receive software that you have not created.

### **Consequences for Violation of Policy**

Any user violating or demonstrating the intent to violate any of the guidelines set forth in the acceptable use policy may face disciplinary action. Depending on the nature and severity of the policy violation or number of past violations, the district may take one or more of the following disciplinary actions (possible consequences may be, but are not limited to, the following):

1. Restriction or loss of use of technology resources
  - If technology is an essential component of education or job function it should be revoked only as a final option.
2. Disciplinary action imposed by the Administration up to and including expulsion from the district.
3. Restitution
  - Replacement cost
  - Reimbursement of cost for repair
  - Reimbursement of technician time
  - Law enforcement notification
  - Responsibility for unauthorized charges, expenses and fees
  - Mandatory training / in-service before further use is allowed
4. Legal action