



Oak Tree Elementary School

The Monroe Public Schools, in collaboration with the members of the community, shall ensure that all students receive an exemplary education by well-trained, committed staff, in a safe and orderly environment.

Principal's Newsletter September 2024

Dear Oak Tree Families,

Welcome to a brand new school year at Oak Tree Elementary School! I hope that you and your family had a relaxing, safe, and enjoyable summer. The time flew so quickly! I am confident that 2024-2025 will be another successful and exciting one for all of us. Our teachers, paraprofessionals, office staff, and custodians have worked very hard throughout the past two months to ensure we are ready.

This year Oak Tree welcomes the following new staff as well as those who are transfers to our school:

Bridget Tjarks -	LLD Teacher
Nicholas Ratigani-	Physical Education Teacher
Amanda Gonzalez -	ESL Teacher
Meryn Borquist -	Media Specialist

Each school year brings a sense of excitement, eagerness, nervousness, and sometimes even tears. Our staff is working diligently to plan engaging learning experiences and innovative educational activities for our students. I encourage you to establish an open line of communication between you and your child's teacher. We will be making a concerted effort to keep you informed through Connect 5, flyers, newsletters, updates, reminders, and of course, our website.

Back to School Night will take place on September 17. More details regarding this informative evening will be coming home shortly.

Your support and involvement are extremely important to us and crucial to our school's success. We welcome your input as we strive to make Oak Tree School the very best. Please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher or myself with questions, concerns, and thoughts at (609) 655-7642 or via e-mail. Again, a warm welcome to Oak Tree School!

Kindest regards,

Patty Dinsmore

Patricia J. Dinsmore
Principal

patricia.dinsmore@monroe.k12.nj.us



**When children come home at the end of the day
The question they're asked as they scurry to play is
"Tell me what you did today?"
And the answer they give makes you sigh with dismay.
"Nothing, I did nothing today."
Perhaps nothing means that I played with blocks,
Or counted to ten, or sorted some rocks.
Maybe I painted a picture of red and blue
Or heard a story of a mouse that flew.
Maybe I watched the gerbils eat today,**

Or went outside on the swings to play.
Maybe today was the very first time
That my scissors followed a very straight line
Maybe I led a song from beginning to end,
Or played with a special brand new friend.
When you're in school
And your heart has wings,
"Nothing" can mean so many things.



Oak Tree Social Emotional Learning Vision - Social Emotional Learning is the foundation for human growth and development. We strive to create a safe, nurturing, equitable environment in which students, staff, and families will feel included, valued, engaged, and respected. Authentic partnerships and meaningful instruction, which foster strong connections, will empower learners to grow in their skills of communication, relationship building, collaborative problem-solving, and resiliency, where everyone reaches their highest potential.



SCHOOL HOURS - 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

Students8:55 AM - 3:24 PM
Kindergarten AM.....8:55 AM – 11:29 AM
Kindergarten PM.....12:50 AM – 3:24 PM

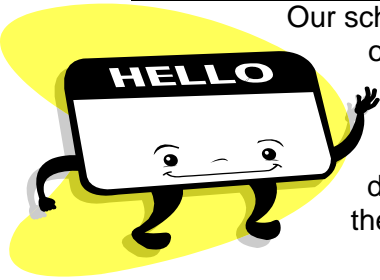
Four-Hour Session Hours

Grades 1 – 3.....8:55 AM – 12:55 PM
Kindergarten AM.....8:55 AM – 11:29 AM
Kindergarten PM.....10:21 AM – 12:55 PM

Delayed Opening

Grades 1 - 3..... 10:55 AM - 3:24 PM
Kindergarten AM.....10:55 AM - 1:09 PM
Kindergarten PM.....1:10 PM – 3:24 PM

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VISITORS TO OAK TREE



Our school district requires all visitors to identify themselves and state the purpose of their visit upon entering our buildings. Visitors are required to sign in at the office, present valid identification, and wear their visitor’s badge in a prominent place on their person. Our staff has been instructed to question anyone who is not wearing a badge. Anyone wishing to sign out a child during school hours must be authorized to do so and must properly identify themselves with a picture ID, such as a driver’s license.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

You are invited to our Back to School Night which will be held on September 17. This is a great opportunity to visit your child's classroom, meet his/her teacher, and get an overview of our educational programs. Please make time to attend this informative evening. A more detailed schedule will be sent home shortly.



Anti-Bullying Information

The most recent information regarding anti-bullying can be found on the district website at www.monroe.k12.nj.us and will also be available as a link on the Oak Tree website. Should you have any questions, please contact us at 609-655-7642.

INFORMATION UPDATE

The Monroe Township School District is continues to use an automated communication system called Connect 5. This system enables the district to dispense important information (e.g. school closings, delays, etc.) to staff, parents and students in a very short time frame. **It is therefore very important for Emergency Forms and Information Forms to be completed on Genesis. Please include your current address, home, work and emergency telephone numbers.** It is *very important* that we have up-to-date phone numbers and addresses in case of emergencies, both in our school records and for the Connect 5 Network. Please note that only individuals who are listed on the form will be allowed to pick up your child from school.



PARKING PROCEDURES

Just a reminder that school buses and staff use the parking lot to the right of the school. Oak Tree parents and visitors may use the visitor parking lot located in the front of the school. Thank you for helping us to provide a safe environment for all our youngsters.



SCHOOL BUS FLASHING LIGHTS - STOP!

All residents are reminded that the state of New Jersey requires motor vehicles to **stop** when school buses are loading and unloading student passengers. School buses display red flashing lights whenever they pick-up or drop off students. Also, would you please share the following important rules with your child:

School Bus Safety Rules

1. Be on time.
2. Never run to or from the bus.
3. Stand back from the curb.
4. Don't push or shove.
5. Stay in your seat.
6. Don't yell or shout.
7. Always obey the driver.
8. Wait for the driver's signal before crossing.
9. Always cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus
10. Never crawl under a school bus.

Please review with your child the bus rules as outlined in our Code of Conduct. Thank you.

RIDE WITH CHARACTER

Ride with Character is Oak Tree's positive behavior program which ties directly to our Rising Star program. Bus drivers will keep track of positive behavior on their bus by placing stickers on the bus poster which also highlights the word of the month. At the end of the month stars will be counted and one bus will be recognized as Bus of the Month. Oak Tree students will receive two star tickets and a certificate.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL NURSE, MRS. MC NUTT

Welcome back to Oak Tree Elementary School. I hope everyone had a safe and relaxing summer. Please see below for some health office reminders for the upcoming school year.

Required Immunizations and Physicals

All new kindergarten and preschool students, as well as students transferring into Oak Tree School from a private school or another school out of state, will need a physical examination completed by their physician that should be submitted as soon as possible. Physical forms, as well as medication forms and asthma action plans, can be found on the Oak Tree School web site on the nurse's page.



Recommended Physical Examinations

Student physicals are required upon entrance into the school system in kindergarten. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a continuing relationship with a physician or other health care provider to ensure all students have regular physicals at each stage of development. These include one physical in each of the following developmental stages: Pre-kindergarten through grade 2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12.

Screenings

I will be performing health screenings on all students over the course of the year which include height, weight, blood pressure, vision, hearing and scoliosis. The screenings done at each grade level are determined by state guidelines. I will notify parents of any discrepancies that I may find after screening each child.

Attendance

Please enter your child's absence/tardy in the Genesis Parent Portal. State the reason for the absence as we do monitor illness patterns. A daily phone call will be made to any student whose parent has not notified the school of their child's absence.

Illness

Please keep your child home when they are sick. Students should not return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin. If your child is experiencing Covid like symptoms, please reach out to Mrs. McNutt our school nurse.

Medications

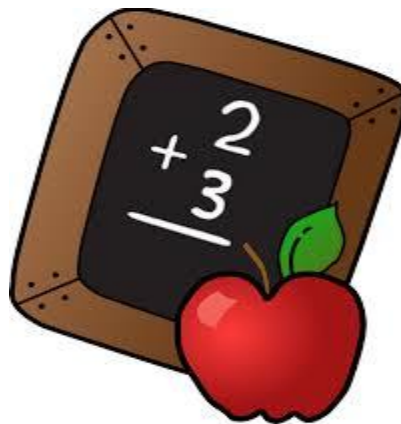
According to New Jersey State law, medications will not be given in the health office without a physician's order and parental consent. This includes Tylenol, Motrin, cough drops and cough medicine. Students aren't allowed to carry medication on their person or transport medication to school. Students determined to be capable of managing their own inhalers in school may carry their medication in school with a Self-Carry Order from their physician and parental permission. Self-carry medication order forms are available in the nurse's office or on the school web site.

Food Allergies

There are many students with food allergies in our school. Please follow your teacher's guidelines when sending snacks into the classroom as many students have dairy, egg and peanut allergies. Students requiring a peanut or dairy free environment in the lunchroom will be provided a safe, monitored place to enjoy their lunch. Parents of students with food allergies can contact the health office to learn about specific allergy information for foods available for purchase in the cafeteria.

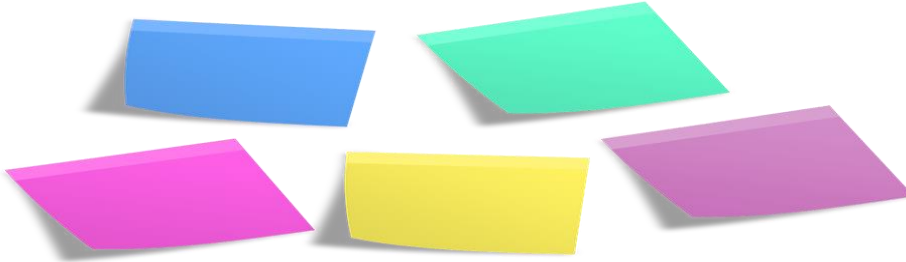
New Jersey Family Care

New Jersey Family Care is available to eligible families needing insurance for their children. If you would like information regarding this or available Middlesex County based clinics for required immunizations or physicals, please call the health office for information. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child through the course of the year, please do not hesitate to call the Nurse's office and speak with me. Together, we can work out a plan to meet your child's needs in the school environment.



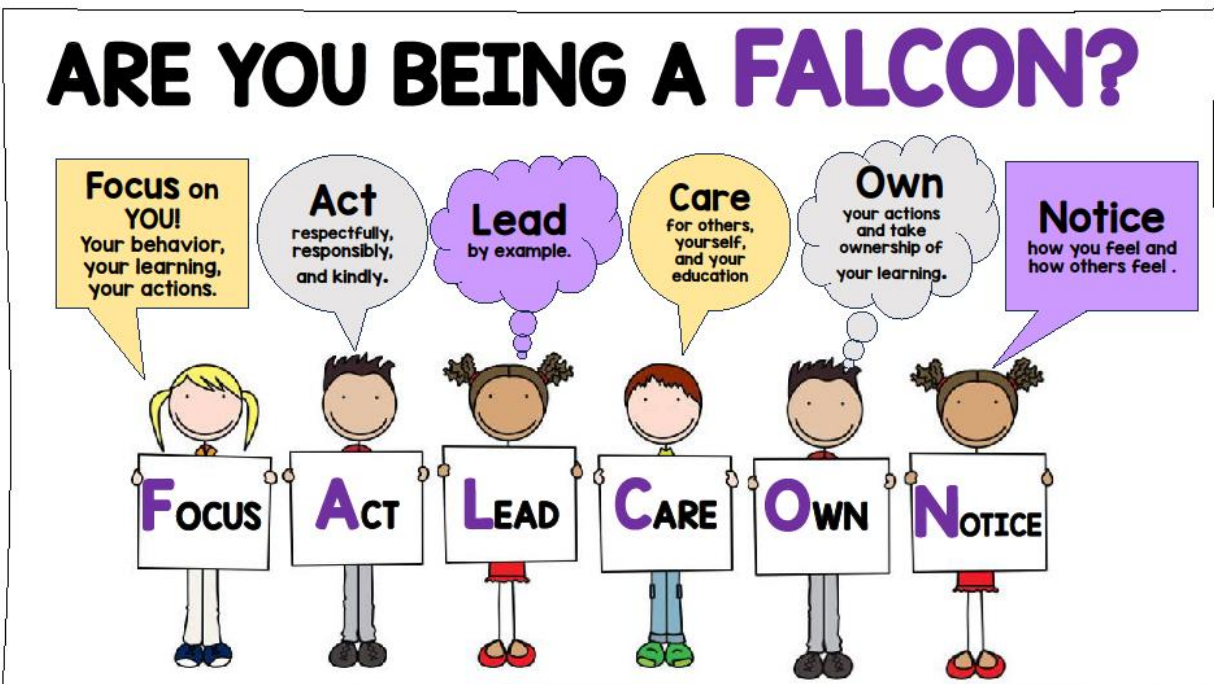
FORGET ME NOTS AT OAK TREE

- When your child forgets an item, bring it to the Oak Tree vestibule
- Take a label and fill it out with the necessary information (i.e. name, grade, teacher's name)
- Place the label on the forgotten item
- Place the item in the grade level bin
- Items will be delivered to the student by our security staff



FALCON

Stay tuned for more information about our brand new **FALCON** program!



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

I hope everyone had a rejuvenating summer break! We are so excited to be back in school and ready for another great school year. Each month we focus on a different character value, or “word of the month”. These “words of the month” are reinforced through monthly guidance lessons, daily morning announcements, teacher and staff reinforcement, and reward opportunities when students display these values. This year our words of the month will tie directly to our new **FALCON** program. When a student is “caught” showing these values they are given a Falcon Feather ticket which they place in their class ticket box. Falcon Feather tickets can be earned at any time throughout the day, including lunch and recess, and may be given by any staff member. At the end of each month, one ticket is drawn from each class at random. The student whose Falcon Feather ticket is picked is then able to choose a small reward, such as getting to be “Oak Tree Helper” and aid in a small task at the end of a school day. Additionally, our entire school is working together to achieve a certain amount of Falcon Feather tickets to earn our school-wide “Celebration Days”, which occur approximately every two months. These much anticipated “Celebration Days”, which include every student, are a slight variation of our normal routine such as getting to eat lunch outside or having a dance party during recess. Through our **FALCON** program students are motivated to engage in positive and pro-social behavior towards their peers. **FALCON** also fosters a strong sense of connection and cooperation at Oak Tree as we are all helping each other “do the right thing” and earn Falcon Feather tickets to achieve our school-wide “Celebration Days”. Students understand which behaviors are valued and expected of them here at Oak Tree and it gives our school a common language to explain these expectations. Teachers and staff continually reinforce to students that we are not just practicing these values to earn Falcon Feather tickets, but because it is the “right thing to do” and acting in these ways always makes us feel proud and helps to make our school the best that it can be. Our **FALCON** program will serve as our primary anti-bullying preventative measure.

Parent involvement in our character education program is vital to its success and to your children’s social and character development. In this newsletter you will find a description of the monthly value, information about the guidance lessons being taught in each grade, ways that we are practicing and reinforcing these values in school, as well as ways that you can practice these values with your children at home. More information can be found on the Guidance website on Oak Tree’s home webpage each month.

For the month of September, we are focusing on the important value of “Respect”. For our students, we define respect as, “treating others the way you want to be treated”. We remind students to pause and ask themselves this question many times throughout the day. Teachers and staff place a strong emphasis on using manners such as saying, “please”, “thank you”, “excuse me”, and so forth. Students are also taught how to “respectfully” disagree with others by using kind words. Students are taught what respectful listening and speaking looks and sounds like in the classroom and other places in our school. Other socially appropriate behaviors such as being friendly towards everyone and introducing ourselves are also reinforced. Parents can practice these skills with your



children at home by making manners a priority and talking with your children about how showing respect is beneficial for your children. Our students are very proud of themselves and love to share with staff members when they have acted in positive ways, even if they have not received a Falcon Feather ticket. Make it a point each day to ask your children about ways that they showed respect throughout the day and celebrate these moments with lots of praise and encouragement. The best way to help our students learn and show respect is by being good models of this in our everyday lives and by making it known that this is something that we value. We can't wait to see all the ways that our students show their respectful behaviors here at school. Have a great month!

STUDENTS BEING PICKED UP AT THE END OF THE DAY

As a reminder – if you plan on picking your child up from school today, or any day, you will need to log the pickup notification in Genesis. Information regarding this was sent with our opening day information. If you have not done so already, please log in to Genesis and record that your child will be picked up through the Daily Pickup Release notification. Be sure to include the following information:

- Child's name
- Date
- Authorized Adult (person picking up)
- Authorized Adult Contact Telephone
- Notes – please include your assigned Parent Pickup Number (this was the number assigned to you on a bright orange piece of paper in the mailing). If your child will be parent pick up every day, please indicate this in the note section.

Please note that this information needs to be in Genesis prior to 2:30, in addition to notifying the classroom teacher (via note in the morning or via e-mail). **If we do not have this information, then we assume your child is taking the bus and they will be placed on the bus for dismissal.** Attached is a [direction sheet](#) for your reference.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

4 First Day of School
17 Back to School Night

October

2 4 Hour Session
3 School Closed
4 School Closed
11 School closed
14 4 Hour Session/In-Service
16 Conferences/4 Hour Session
17 Conferences/4 Hour Session/Evening
18 4 Hour Session



Arrival and Dismissal

Please review the [information](#) attached. If you have not received your car placard, please call the school office.

