



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 February 2025

Dear Oak Tree Families,

Want to spend quality time with your child? Build his or her reading skills, and help him or her learn to love books? Well, you can do all three when you read aloud together. Here are some suggestions.

Read regularly, aim for 10-15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to a busy day. Bring along a book while waiting for an appointment or during a sibling's sport practice. Curl up together with a book when you are finished working for the day and dinner is cooking. Take turns choosing books. And while your child may want to hear their favorite repeatedly, use your turn to try new titles and different genres.

Have your child participate while you read. They can turn the pages, or finish sentences that rhyme or even fill in words they can read. Go slowly so there is time to understand the story and look at the illustrations. But do not forget to be playful too! Use different voices for different characters, or substitute family names for a character's name. Remember February 5th is World Read Aloud Day, so it is a perfect week to begin!

Stay warm and Happy Valentine's Day!

Kindest regards,

Patty Dinsmore

Patricia J. Dinsmore
Principal



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING – TIPS FOR AT HOME

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a framework that gives students the skills to recognize and manage emotions and help solve problems effectively by establishing positive relationships. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), encouraging SEL yields positive results for students, adults, and school communities. Parents can use these tips to help foster SEL at home.

- **Focus on Strengths** When your child brings home a test, talk first about what they did well. Then talk about what can be improved. Praise specific strengths, don't just criticize things that were done wrong.
- **Ask Children How They Feel** When you ask your child about their feelings, the message is that feelings matter, and you care. It shows the importance of being a good listener and helps children feel heard in a way that fosters a strong parent-child relationship.
- **Be Willing to Apologize** Parents need to be able to apologize to their children if what they said was not what they meant. Calmly explain what you really wanted to say. By doing this, you're being a good role model. You're showing how important it is to apologize after hurting someone. You are teaching that it's possible to work through problems with respect for the other person.
- **Give Children Choices—and Respect Their Wishes** When children have a chance to make choices, they learn how to solve problems. If you make all their decisions for them, they'll never learn this key skill. Giving children ways to express preferences and make decisions shows that their ideas and feelings matter.
- **Ask Questions to Help Children Solve Problems on Their Own** When parents hear their child has a problem, it's tempting to step in and take over. However, this can harm a child's ability to find solutions on their own. A helpful approach is to ask good questions. Examples include, "What do you think you can do in this situation?" and "If you choose a particular solution, what will be the consequences of that choice?"

Don't forget to check out our Social Emotional Newsletter!



CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on February 19 and 20. Kindergarten will also have conferences on February 18. More information will be coming home. The portal to sign up opens on February 5 and will close on February 12.

GIVE KIDS A SMILE MONTH

The New Jersey Dental Association sponsors the Annual Give Kids a Smile Month in February. The Give Kids a Smile Month kicks off on Friday, February 7, 2025 and continues through the month of February. All children in New Jersey who do not have dental insurance are eligible for a free dental exam and care this month. The dental exams are by appointment only. The Give Kids a Smile Month website is www.njda.org/gkas and all information about locations and appointments can be found at this site. Appointments book very quickly so please do not wait to make an appointment. All children must have a signed parental consent form to be seen by the dentist.

February is Dental Health Month. It is never too early to start your children with healthy oral habits. Plenty of water, healthy snacks, limited sugary drinks and snacks and daily oral hygiene are key to a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Children in elementary school are so excited to lose their primary teeth. Even though these first teeth do fall out, it is still important to take proper care of primary teeth.

Good oral care begins in the first year of life as primary teeth are erupting through the gums. Infant's gums can be wiped with a damp cloth to remove harmful bacteria even before the teeth come through the gums. When teeth have erupted through the gums, a soft toothbrush can be used. Infants and young children should not be put to bed with a bottle as sugars from formula, milk or juice can sit on the teeth and gums harming the enamel on the teeth. Children should begin regular dental visits at age three and continue seeing the dentist regularly to ensure a healthy mouth.

Encourage your child to brush their teeth regularly at least twice a day and after meals if able. Monitor their teeth brushing habits until you are confident that they are doing a thorough job and check on their progress periodically.

Encourage healthy eating and snacking. The permanent teeth that arrive in your child's elementary years are the teeth they will have for a lifetime.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL NURSE, MRS. MCNUTT

February is Heart Health Month and it is never too early to start your children with heart healthy habits. Daily exercise and a healthy diet are essential for a lifetime of heart health. Some fun things for your family to try that are also heart healthy are:

- Playing out in the snow, making a snowman or snow fort
- Ice skating or roller skating
- Bundle up and take a family walk in the snow or just be outside on a brisk winter day
- Try fun family recipes and make mealtime family time. Your children can help by washing vegetables, setting the table or picking a menu.
- Homemade pizzas are fun and children can put many colorful vegetables on their pizza like peppers, tomatoes or olives.
- Many fruits are in season in the winter and a fun winter fruit salad with apples, oranges and bananas is a heart healthy treat for snack, dessert or breakfast.



RIDE WITH CHARACTER



Congratulations to Bus 23 for being awarded January's Bus of the Month Award as part of our positive behavior bus incentive program, which ties directly to our Rising Stars program. Each Oak Tree student received a certificate of recognition and two star tickets. We are so proud of them!!!

DATES TO REMEMBER:



February

5	Conference Portal Opens for Parents Grade 3 Dental Visits
6	Hour of Code Night (Grade 3 only/Lottery)
7	Friday Frenzy/Sports Jersey Day/Donate \$2
10,11	School Dental Visits (K-1)
11	Falcon Leadership Recognition Ceremony
12	Parent Portal Closes for Conferences School Store
14	Kids Heart Challenge Celebration FALCON Fest Pep Rally 4 Hour Session/In-Service PTA Bagel Sale RAE's Rewards Friday Frenzy/Wear RED/Donate \$2
17	School Closed
19	Conferences/4 Hour Session Student Council Snack Sale
20	Conferences/4 Hour Session/Evening PTA Snack Sale
21	4 Hour Session PTA Snack Sale Celebration Day/Game Day Friday Frenzy/Hat Day/Donate \$2
22	PTA Sweetheart Dance
25	Grand Falloons Assembly
28	RAE's Rewards Grade 2 Dental Visits Friday Frenzy/PJ Day/Donate \$2

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

During the month of February, we will be focusing on the value of "friendship". For our students, we define friendship as "showing someone that you care about them by being kind, spending time, and sharing." During our guidance lessons this month students will learn about the importance of friendship, how to be a kind friend, and how to solve disagreements with friends. Students will continue to have the opportunity to earn star tickets throughout the day when they display exemplary behavior related to the value of friendship, or any previously learned "Word of the Month".

Our Mindful Practice for February is Mindful Seeing. Mindful Seeing means paying attention to what we see. We can notice details of things which we may not have noticed before. This practice is a great way to relax. It also helps us notice how others may be feeling (by observing facial expressions and moods) – so we know how to be a good friend to them. We are excited to see our students demonstrate kindness to one another. Please continue to join us in showing

our enthusiasm for your children's dedication towards learning and displaying these important values each month. Have a wonderful and friendly month!



FALCON LEADERSHIP AWARD

Demonstrating commitment and outstanding citizenship, these four students were selected by their grade level teachers to win the Falcon Leadership Award. Each student received a certificate, a leadership medal, a special gift, and their names placed on a hallway bulletin board and our outside digital sign. Congratulations to:

- K Brittany Jiminian Lopez
- 1 Aadhya Jadawala
- 2 Advik Daddala
- 3 Saraya Rushing

ATTENDANCE AND PLANNED EXTENDED ABSENCE POLICY

Regular attendance is a requisite for success in school. New Jersey law requires that students attend school regularly and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Please stress the importance of daily school attendance to your child. There are times throughout the school year when families may find it necessary to take their children out of school for an extended period. Our Board Policy addresses the criteria that should be followed should this occur. If you will be taking your child out of school for an extended period, kindly provide a letter from the parent/guardian to the school addressing the number of days and dates the child will be missing school.

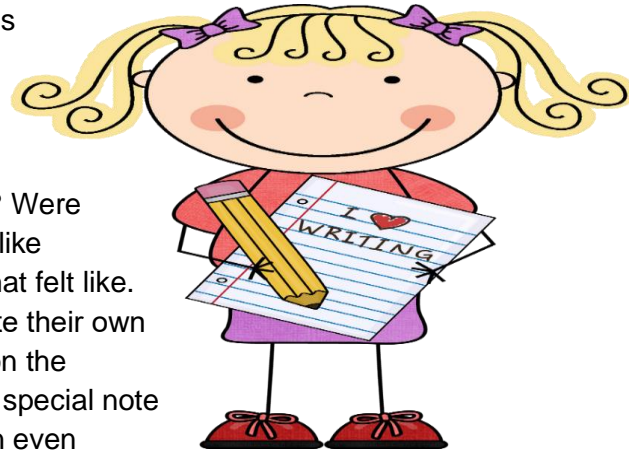


NEWS FROM THE READING SPECIALIST

Dear Parents,

Here are a few ways to inspire reading and writing at home this month.

- Listen to the story “A Crankenstein Valentine” by Samantha Berger. Then talk about a time you or your child felt cranky. How did you deal with those feelings? Were you able to find some happiness at the end of the day like Crankenstein did? Try writing or drawing about what that felt like.
- Get creative for Valentine’s Day! Help your child to write their own cards to family and friends. Together, look for clip art on the computer to design your own card. Then either write a special note or show your child how to type their message. You can even practice reading recipes to make a delicious Valentine’s Day snack.
- Read the story “Dragons Love Tacos” by Adam Rubin. When a little boy discovers that dragons like to eat tacos, he decides to host a taco party for them. Look out though- make sure you don’t serve spicy salsa with those tacos! Help your child to make a Text to Self Connection: Even though the little boy’s dragon party turned into a disaster due to spicy salsa, he tried to show he cared by throwing the party for them. How can you show people you care about them? What could you do?



Make Friday and Saturday nights “Camp Night” at your house. Build a “tent” with blankets, couch cushions and pillows. Then climb inside your tent and read with a flashlight.

- Get the whole family together to listen to some of your favorite stories. I’ve done this a bunch of times with my children and it’s one of their favorite activities! Don’t forget the popcorn so you can share a snack with your stories!

Happy Reading,
Mrs. Kappus
Oak Tree’s Reading Specialist



Happy Valentine's Day

FALCON



NEWS

CARE/ECE

ECE registration 2025-26 will begin on April 1st and Falcon Care registration will begin on June 2nd. Parents can click the tab on the Monroe Township School District's website to register under District Services. ECE & Falcon will be on the drop-down menu and there will be links to register. If students have already attended Falcon Care, they must re-register each year to input the new schedule. **Schedule changes and registrations will stop being accepted by August 4th.**

JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

Once again, Oak Tree will be participating in the annual Kids Heart Challenge. The event will conclude February 14th with a school wide Pep Rally and Dance Party!!! Last year, our school raised over \$20,000.00!!! Way to go! Scan the QR code below or click here to get started:

Thank you,
Mr. Boukema and Mr. Ratigan

<http://www2.heart.org/goto/oaktreeheartheroes>





STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

For the month of February and Valentine's Day, Student Council is asking our Oak Tree Families to write down or draw a picture of something they love most about our school on the heart that will be sent home on Wednesday, January 29th!

You may decorate it however you like. Be CREATIVE and please cut it out. They are due to Miss Guerrero by February 12th! Once they are returned, they will be hung up in Oak Tree to show love to all the amazing things that make Oak Tree what it is 😊 Thank you for your participation!!

COMING SOON!

Read Across America Spirit Week

March 3	Favorite Color Day
March 4	Slipper/Crazy Sock Day
March 5	Silly Story/Outfit Day
March 6	Animal Day
March 7	Pajama Day/Reading Train





MONROE TOWNSHIP

Softball

**SPRING 2025
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

APRIL - JUNE SEASON

OPEN FOR GIRLS AGES 5 & UP

SCAN TO REGISTER



OR VISIT [MONROENJSOFTBALL.COM/REGISTRATION](https://monroenjsoftball.com/registration)

**EARLY BIRD BEFORE FEB 14TH: \$125
AFTER FEB 14TH: \$150**

REGISTRATION CLOSING MARCH 8TH

**VOLUNTEER COACHES WELCOME!
VISIT [MONROENJSOFTBALL.COM/VOLUNTEER](https://monroenjsoftball.com/volunteer)**