



DOGWOOD HILL SCHOOL OAKLAND, NJ

~ A nice place to grow. ~

Parent/Student Handbook

2026 - 2027 School Year

Student Bill of Rights & Responsibilities

"I have the right to ...

be respected

a safe school

share different opinions

receive an education

receive support from others

a peaceful, pleasant environment

be free from taunting

I am responsible to ...

respect everyone else

protect the learning environment

listen to what others have to say

do my best in class

lend support to others in need

behave in an appropriate manner

refrain from teasing others."

Dear Dogwood Hill Families,

Welcome to the 2026-27 school year! In order to provide a central location for important information for the upcoming year, we created the Dogwood Hill School Parent/Student Handbook. The information enclosed within provides the information necessary to ensure a safe and productive school environment. As always, the partnership between Dogwood Hill staff and families is essential to the success of our students.

This handbook is a small addition to the sense of community we strive to enhance at Dogwood Hill School. In addition to procedural school information, PTO sponsored events are outlined as well. We are always looking for volunteers to assist with the various activities we provide annually for our students. If something piques your interest, please reach out to the PTO leadership team or attend a meeting to get involved. We look forward to your assistance in making our PTO events as successful as possible!

Please take a few moments to review this handbook and keep it handy where you can refer to it throughout the year when you have a question about school. At any time, if you have a question about the school routine, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help in any way we can.

It is our hope, that by jointly presenting this handbook, we may further ease the transition for both parents and students for the 2026-27 school year. With a strong school and family partnership, we look forward to providing the best possible school experience for our students!

Sincerely,

Sean P. Bowe, Principal

Erin Bischer, PTO President

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights for New Jersey went into effect in September of 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the major components of this law. As you review the definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB), please understand that inappropriate behavior that does not meet the criteria of the law will be addressed according to the student Code of Conduct.

Definition: "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, that is reasonably perceived as being *motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic*, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 and 15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or creates a hostile educational environment for a student by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Staff Training: All teachers, administrators and school board members receive annual training regarding anti-bullying initiatives in the district and regarding the requirements of the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights.

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Each school district in New Jersey is required to identify a district-wide anti-bullying coordinator. This person is charged with coordinating the Anti-Bullying Program for the school district, as well as collecting and reviewing instances of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying. The Superintendent of Schools appoints the District Coordinator and this person's name and contact information is to be posted on the school district's web site.

School Anti-Bullying Specialist: Each school has a School Anti-Bullying Specialist appointed to chair the School Safety Team. This specialist should either be a school psychologist, counselor or an individual similarly trained. The name and contact information of the school specialist is to be posted on the school's web site. This person is charged with investigating allegations of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

School Safety Team: The School Safety/Climate Team is chaired by the School Anti-Bullying Specialist and includes a school administrator, an additional teacher and a parent. The parent member of the team will not have access to particular student information regarding any specific allegation of intimidation, harassment or bullying. The team works to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school environment by focusing on the on-going systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues.

Timelines: The legislation provides strict timelines regarding the investigation of alleged instances as well as possible responses. Parents of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be notified. Additional timelines are provided if either party wishes to appeal the finding of the School Safety Team to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

If you have any questions regarding the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, please contact the School Anti-Bullying Specialist, Mr. Verile, or me.

Thank you.

Regards,

Sean P. Bowe

Sean P. Bowe

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Arrival

Each morning, children should arrive between 8:45 and 8:55 A.M. Students are marked **tardy after 9 A.M.** Students will proceed directly to their classroom when entering the building. Be sure that your child(ren) is(are) in school on time, so he/she(they) will be in the classroom by 9 A.M.

Alternatively, **please do not bring your child(ren) to school prior to 8:45 A.M, as there is no adult supervision before that time.** If you arrive prior to 8:45 A.M. please have your child remain in the car until a staff member is present to assist in the arrival process. If you anticipate a conflict with our arrival time, please check with our office about the Wyckoff YMCA Before Care Program.

Arrival Procedures

Please remember that the safety of all of our students is the primary concern. It is important to follow the flow of traffic around all of the parked cars both in the morning and afternoon.

- Follow the signs for traffic flow in the parking lot.
- If you arrive prior to 8:35 A.M. you will stop at the cone by the digital sign.
- At 8:35 A.M., the cone will be removed and you can proceed around the middle parking spots and stop at the crosswalk.
- Once the bus students are unloaded, you will be waived forward to begin drop-off.
- Pull up to the yellow curb in front of the building. Please make sure you pull up as far as you can to facilitate an efficient arrival.
- When your vehicle is stopped curbside, please make sure your child has their belongings ready to go and **independently** exits the door closest to the curb.
- Please do not exit your vehicle in the drop off line. If your child cannot exit independently, please roll down your window and ask a staff member to open the door. We are happy to assist.
- If you choose to park, please be sure to cross to the sidewalk using the crosswalk.
- There are three separate entrances for our students.

Kindergarten through Grade 2: Door 8 -Located on the right side of the main entrance stairway

Grades 3 through 5: Door 7 -The door closest to the upper blacktop area

- Students will proceed to their classrooms upon entry.

Assembly Programs

A variety of assembly programs are planned during the school year. Parents and relatives are welcome at these programs, which are designed to complement the regular curriculum and expose students to the arts.

Attendance

Regular attendance is a vital prerequisite to the success of every child. However, when it becomes necessary to keep children home due to illness or other reasons, Tabitha's law requires that parents call the school to apprise us of such an absence. Please do so by 9 A.M. on the day of the absence. For your convenience, a message may be left on the school's voicemail, (accessible 24 hours per day, seven days per week) at any time during the prior evening to inform us of an absence as well. A student returning from an absence of any length must bring in a letter that explains the reason for the absence, signed and dated by you, the child's parent or legal guardian. If a student is going to be absent for an extended period of time, a note must be sent into the main office or to the school nurse.

Students absent from school for any reason are responsible for the completion of all missed assignments. Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, deprive the student of the classroom experience deemed essential to learning. Regular school attendance is required in order for the Board of Education to fulfill its responsibility of providing a thorough and efficient education for each student. As such, Board

Regulation 5410 (Promotion and Retention) requires children to be in attendance for 162 or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which he/she is assigned. Any student who accumulates an excessive number of absences will be referred to the school's Intervention and Referral Services committee, and the student's parents will be required to attend a conference with the building Principal.

While we understand and appreciate the value of family vacations, please make every effort to coordinate your time away with the school calendar. Scheduling vacations while school is in session is disruptive to the learning process and places children at a decided disadvantage upon their return to school. In most cases, **we will be unable to provide homework in advance** when a vacation is scheduled while school is in session.

Tardiness should be avoided for the same reasons and because it interrupts the school day for the other children. Arriving to school on time underscores the importance of the educational process and promotes responsibility and a sense of community for the student. If a student is tardy three times, a letter will be sent to the child's parent/guardian outlining the importance of having the student arrive to school on time. Where a child continues to be tardy (more than three times), the parent/guardian will be required to have a conference with the Principal, teacher, counselor or school nurse to determine the cause of the repeated tardiness and to develop strategies to address the problem.

In the event of an outside appointment during school hours, a written request to the school office must be provided on or before the day of the appointment. The student will be paged when his/her parents/guardians come to the school office to sign him/her out.

In the case of an emergency, the parent or guardian must come to the main office to sign out their child before he or she can leave the building. No child will be permitted to leave school grounds unescorted during the school day.

Awards Assembly

Students are honored for various achievements in a variety of areas. This special assembly is held in mid to late June. Beginning this year, the following awards will be distributed to recognize student achievement:

- **Principal's Award**
This special award will be given to a fifth grade student who consistently displays the traits associated with all Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) throughout the year.
- **Academic Excellence Award**
This award will be distributed to fourth and fifth grade students who earn an "A" on their report cards in all five major subject areas (Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) during every quarter, and at least an, "S," for Satisfactory in every other area.

- **Effort Award**

This award will be distributed to fourth and fifth grade students who earn a "Consistent" rating in all of the effort categories in the "Work Habits and Social Development" section of the report card during all four quarters.

- **Fire Prevention Poster Contest**

Students in grades K-5 have the opportunity to submit a poster to promote fire safety during Fire Prevention Week in October. The student awarded first place at each grade level are recognized for their accomplishment.

- **Music Recognition**

Certificates of recognition will be distributed to those fourth and fifth grade students who participate in the elementary band, strings, and/or choir programs.

- **Student Council Recognition**

Certificates of recognition will be distributed to third, fourth, and fifth grade members of the Student Council.

- **Safety Patrol Recognition**

Certificates of recognition will be distributed to members of the School Safety Patrol. Students in Grade five are eligible.

Back-to-School Night

This adult-only evening will provide you with an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and to review the year's curriculum. This is a great time to meet other parents, become a PTO member, and volunteer for various events during the course of the year. More information will be sent home in the beginning of September.

Balanced Literacy

Beginning with essential phonics instruction in the primary grades, the Balanced Literacy Program is a comprehensive, differentiated approach to reading and writing instruction that is designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. More information will be presented at our annual Back to School Night.

Birthdays

Simple treats may be sent in on a child's birthday. The birthday treat selected should have the ability to be easily distributed to each student (refrain from anything that requires cutting or adding additional condiments). Please be sure to check with your child's teacher regarding any allergies among the students in the class. Birthdays are recognized in the morning announcements as well as in the classroom.

In the interest of student health and safety, ***please do not send in goodie bags for the class***, as they will not be distributed. It is also requested that all private invitations be distributed outside of school. Thank you for your cooperation!

Cafeteria Food and Beverage Prices

Please see the monthly menu and pricing on the District's web site: [Food Services](#). Any family who may qualify for free/reduced lunch must apply annually. Click here for an application: [Free/Reduced Lunch Application](#).

Change of Address, Telephone Number or Email Addresses

To maintain effective communication between the school and home, please notify the main office of any changes to pertinent information (i.e. your address, telephone number, emergency contacts, etc.) during the course of the year so that we may update our records. Please note contact information can also be updated using the Parent Portal.

Character Education

Throughout the year, students will be recognized for consistently displaying the characteristics associated with the Josephson Institute's Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship). Teachers will regularly integrate lessons related to each Pillar into their daily plans. In addition, students will be assigned to one of four root groups and have the opportunity to earn points for their K-5 team for demonstrating positive character. One student from each grade level will be recognized for earning the most points in the grade level. The K-5 root group that earns the most cumulative points over the marking period will be recognized with a special event to celebrate their accomplishment. Special assembly programs and classroom lessons will also support character education themes throughout the year.

Class Trips

During the year, students may have the opportunity to participate in field trips that reinforce or supplement classroom instruction. Parents or guardians are notified of the details of the trip in advance and are encouraged to give their child(ren) permission to attend. A permission slip must be signed by each child's parent or guardian and returned to school prior to the trip. There will be a fee associated with many of the class trips. Parents are urged to contact the building Principal or School Counselor if payment becomes problematic. No child will be denied the opportunity to participate in a class trip because of financial hardship. Only class parents will be permitted to attend class trips with the students.

Code of Conduct

An elementary District-wide Code of Conduct has been created to ensure our goal of delivering an outstanding education to every child. Focusing on growth in social behavior and on balance in all things, we discipline appropriately for misbehavior and give guidance in social problem solving. When a negative behavior persists, we will call home to communicate the problem and to work with you toward a permanent solution.

On the first day of school and throughout the year, the teachers will discuss behavioral expectations with students. The complete Code of Conduct can be found in Appendix A.

Daily Schedule

Regular School Hours

First Bell (School Doors Open)	8:45 A.M.
Late Bell (Homeroom Begins)	9:00 A.M.
Dismissal	3:10 P.M.

Minimum Day Schedule

First Bell (School Doors Open)	8:45 A.M.
Instruction Begins	9:00 A.M.
Dismissal	1:00 P.M.

Please Note: **No lunch is served on minimum days.**

Delayed Opening Schedule

Please see "DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING" below.

Delayed School Opening

A delayed opening procedure has been established to enable all elementary schools to begin classes at 10:30 A.M. when weather conditions make it necessary to do so. If a delayed opening or emergency closing is announced, a reverse 911 message will be disseminated to notify parents. We request that you do not bring your child(ren) to school prior to 10:20 A.M. on such days since the weather conditions might adversely affect our staff members' ability to arrive in time to provide supervision any earlier. Transportation companies will be notified and adjust their schedules accordingly. Any changes to the regular schedule due to inclement weather or any other unanticipated reasons will also be posted on the district's web site.

Directory

The Dogwood Hill Directory is a school-wide listing of student's names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. The Directory, funded by the PTO, is published in the autumn of each school year for Dogwood Hill families.

Dismissal

Student dismissal will take place at **1:00 P.M.** while on a **minimum day** schedule and **3:10 P.M.** on a **full day schedule**. Please adhere to the following procedures at student dismissal regardless of weather conditions:

- Approach the parking lot from the top of Dogwood Dr. and make a right into the parking lot. Only buses are permitted to make a left into the parking lot during dismissal.
- Follow the signs for traffic flow in the parking lot.

- Pull up as close to the drop-off sign, located at the end of the sidewalk in front of the building, as you can. The more cars picking up concurrently, the more efficient dismissal will proceed.
- Students will be staged in different areas in the front of the school with their homeroom teacher.

5th Grade- Door 7

4th Grade- Sidewalk by retaining wall to the right of main entrance

3rd Grade- Right side of front steps

2nd Grade- Left side of front steps

1st Grade- Front sidewalk to the left of main entrance

Kindergarten – Front sidewalk closest to the lower playground

- As teachers and your child see your car, they will be dismissed to enter your vehicle.
- If you do not see your child coming once curbside, please roll down your window, tell a staff member your child's name and teacher so we can get them for you.
- Please do not exit your vehicle for any reason while in the pick-up line.
- Once your child is safely in the car, proceed to the exit.

Thank you for your cooperation in making our arrival and dismissal as safe and efficient as possible.

- **IMPORTANT! At this level, students may NOT leave school grounds unescorted without your prior written consent.** If you wish to provide your child with such permission, you must sign a release and return it to the main office. Unless otherwise indicated, your signature will grant such permission to your child for the entire school year.
- **Changes in Dismissal Preferences**
For a variety of safety and security reasons, parents/guardians wishing to change daily dismissal preferences may do so with prior written and signed notification only. Phone calls will not be accepted. Every effort should be made to supply the school with such written requests at least twenty-four hours prior to the date of the change. The only exception to this is if a parent or guardian requests that their child is picked up by an adult listed on their child's emergency contacts. In this case, a phone call is acceptable because the signed emergency card acts as written permission.

Dress Guidelines

A copy of the guidelines governing student dress can be found in Appendix B. Please review it with your child(ren).

Emergency Drills

****Drills are dictated by state law and NJDOE requirements.**

In accordance with State Law, fire drills, bus drills and other emergency responses are planned by the Principal's Office and participated in by all students and adults. The New Jersey Legislature requires one fire drill and one other emergency drill per month. An email notification will be sent home the same day of the monthly emergency drill each month as required by state law.

Emergency Contacts

In the event a parent or guardian is not home and it is necessary to reach him/her, it is imperative that an emergency name and telephone number be submitted via the parent portal over the summer. A health Emergency Card may also be sent out in September or to obtain additional contact information. The person should be available during the day and, if possible, live in Oakland or the surrounding area. Should the name or telephone number be changed, please update the contact information in the parent portal and/or notify the office as soon as possible.

Forgotten Articles

In an effort to teach personal responsibility, parents are discouraged from bringing in any forgotten books, homework, musical instruments, lunches and/or other materials. No child will go hungry; he/she will be able to charge lunch on any day a lunch or lunch money is forgotten at home. After school, children may reenter the building to retrieve forgotten items.

Global Education

During an exciting two-week period, students at each grade level study a specific country, exploring its culture, geography and history. Parents, grandparents, and other guest speakers often serve as valuable and wonderful resources.

Guidance

Dogwood Hill Elementary School offers the services of a School Counselor. In addition to individual counseling, the School Counselor also provides students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of small group sessions that focus on a specific need (e.g. social skills, character, etc.).

Halloween Parade

Students have the opportunity to parade the grounds in costumes. Parents are asked to send costumes to school with their children on the morning of the parade. Class parents will be present to assist younger students. Children will not be permitted to leave school to change into their costumes. In the interest of safety and security, children may not wear masks in school. They will, however, be permitted to wear them during the parade. All of our families are also invited to see the parade. A notice containing additional

details will be provided as we approach Halloween.

Health Services

A school nurse is here to provide first aid and a variety of health-related services. Periodic height, weight, vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings are held. Please contact the school nurse if a child has a contagious disease or is being treated for one. Please also contact the school nurse if your child requires medication during school hours. Medication cannot be administered without a signed doctor's order.

Homework

Homework is an extension of class work. As such, it will be assigned on most days. If your child is not bringing home homework assignments on a regular basis, please contact your child's teacher. Kindergarten and first grade students will have between 10 and 25 minutes of homework per night; second and third graders will have between 25-45 minutes; and fourth and fifth graders will have between 45 and 60 minutes.

Instrumental Music Concert

Students in Grade 4 may elect to play a string instrument, while students in Grade 5 have the option of playing a string or band instrument. Lessons meet one time per week during the school day. In addition to fostering a love of music, the program also emphasizes character education, collaboration, and responsibility. On one very special evening in late May or early June, the fifth grade orchestra students and the fifth grade instrumental music students from all three Oakland elementary schools join together to produce an unforgettable evening of music, while our beginning strings students in the fourth grade will showcase their talents at a special event in May or June.

Intervention and Referral Services/Response to Intervention (RTI)

The Oakland Public Schools are fervently committed to establishing a safe and secure learning environment that promotes high standards of academic achievement along with the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of every child. We are equally as committed to eliminating any barriers that might have an adverse impact on a student's achievement or overall well-being—whether those barriers are academic, behavioral, or medical in nature. If and when children experience any such barriers, their classroom teachers will devise strategies in an attempt to meet their individual needs. If those strategies fail to adequately address any existing concern, the classroom teacher may then elect to refer a child to the school's Intervention and Referral Services Team (I&RS/RTI).

The purpose of the I&RS/RTI team, which consists of the building principal or designee, the referring teacher, the school nurse, the guidance counselor, the building reading specialist, the building mathematics specialist, and a member of the Child Study Team, is to target the specific area(s) of concern by devising innovative strategies for the teacher and/or other school personnel to implement for a specified period of time. At the

conclusion of the intervention period, the team will reconvene to assess the effectiveness of the strategies that were selected for implementation. Additional recommendations from the I&RS/RTI team will depend on the effectiveness of the original interventions. If the strategies have proven to be effective, the team may recommend leaving them in place until the areas of concern have been ameliorated. However, if the original interventions have not achieved the desired outcomes, the team could either recommend additional strategies or make a referral to the Child Study Team for an evaluation.

While a referral to the Child Study Team could result from the I&RS/RTI process, it should be noted that an original referral to the I&RS/RTI Team does not constitute a referral for special education services; nor does it guarantee that any such services will be rendered in the future. As per district policy, parents will receive written notification if their child is referred to the I&RS/RTI team. While parents have the right to attend the meeting, it is not mandatory that they do so. If parents elect not to attend the meeting, the referring teacher or the assigned case monitor will contact them to provide a summary of the outcomes from the meeting.

L.E.A.D. Program

The fifth-grade students at Dogwood Hill participate in the Nationally Recognized L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) Program. This twelve-session course is led by a specially trained L.E.A.D. officer from the Oakland Police Department.

Lost & Found

The school maintains a Lost and Found collection. Unclaimed items are displayed for parents several times throughout the year. Any items still unclaimed at the conclusion of the school year will be donated to a local charity.

Lunch/Recess

Student lunch periods are divided into two twenty-minute sessions: one for lunch and one for recess.

11:47 - 12:27 -- Fourth and Fifth Grade

12:27 - 1:07 -- Kindergarten and First Grade

1:07 - 1:47 -- Second and Third Grade

Children may either bring their own lunch, or they may elect to buy lunch. If eligible, students may receive lunch on a free or reduced basis. Each student will receive an information sheet and application for the Federal reduced price or free lunch program. Children may also purchase milk, juice, and assorted snacks. Menus are posted on the Dogwood Hill website under the 'Parent Information and Forms' tab.

Parents can also use [PaySchools Central](#) as a resource to fund your child's lunch account using a secure online portal. This allows students to use a pin code to charge against

their balance. Detailed information about this service is provided prior to the start of each school year. Please keep in mind families may still utilize checks or cash to fund their child's account.

New Jersey Student Learning Assessment

The **NJSLA-A** (New Jersey Student Learning Assessments-Adaptive) is New Jersey's computer-adaptive statewide testing program for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3–5. It adjusts question difficulty based on student responses within grouped sets of items to measure proficiency against the New Jersey Student Learning Standard. Students in grade 5 will also take the NJSLA Science assessment.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal can be used to view school information, along with current information related to your child's educational experience. All parents will receive log-in credentials for their children. Parents are strongly encouraged to utilize the portal to keep all contact information up to date. Student report cards are provided quarterly and will only be accessible through the Parent Portal.

To access the portal, simply navigate to the district's home page ([Oakland Public Schools Website](#)) and click on the "Parent Portal" link on the menu bar on top of the page.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent conferences are held each fall. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child(ren)'s education by attending these important conferences. Evening appointments will be prioritized by necessity, which will be determined on an individual basis. Sign Up Genius will be utilized to schedule your conference. Further information will be provided as we approach conferences.

Parent/School Communication

A strong home/school partnership is necessary for success in school. It is essential for the wellbeing of the children that ongoing communication is maintained between home and school. This can happen through PTO meetings, phone call or note to the teacher, a phone or note to the principal, teacher/parent conferences, etc. Look for dates of regular school meetings and events on the Dogwood Hill Newsflash and on the PTO calendar.

Parking

Visitor parking is located in the middle section of parking spaces in the front of the building. The rear parking lot and outer perimeter of the front lot is reserved for teachers and staff. If parking off school property, please obey posted traffic signs to avoid being ticketed.

Physical Education

Grades K-5 are not required to change their clothes for Physical Education class. They are required to wear sneakers during PE.

Picture Day

In the fall of every school year, student portraits are taken. Notices will be sent home to inform families of the date and the various packages available for purchase.

PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization is a collaborative partnership among parents and staff members, whose mission is to continually enhance the learning environment for Dogwood Hill students. This is accomplished through active involvement, including assisting and coordinating programs identified in this handbook. These programs are made possible through fund raising and parent volunteers. Monthly meetings are held in the Dogwood Hill library, and all PTO members are invited to attend.

Newsflash

A Newsflash is emailed to parents to provide important school information, upcoming events and community happenings throughout the school year. If you happen to miss the email, the Newsflash is also posted on our PTO website: [PTO Newsflash](#). Although we make every effort to minimize paper communications, there are some instances throughout the year where paper notices are sent home as well.

Safety

Your child(ren)'s safety is our first priority. A high degree of cooperation between the home and the school is crucial for teaching children about effective safety habits. You can help us in this endeavor by urging your child(ren) to do the following:

1. Start for school early enough to arrive before the 9:00am tardy bell.
2. Walk on the sidewalk, wherever possible.
3. Cross streets only at specified crossings.
4. Refuse to enter or approach strange automobiles or to talk to strangers.
5. Proceed directly to school or home.
6. Be considerate to smaller children and schoolmates.
7. Return to the school office if their ride or the person who is responsible for taking them home does not arrive within a reasonable period of time.

Safety Patrol

The Oakland Board of Education recognizes the value of a school safety patrol as a means of preventing accidents, instructing pupils in good habits, and providing opportunities for leadership training. As such, fifth grade students are given the opportunity to serve on the school safety patrol. All eligible students may apply for appointment; however, no student will be permitted to serve without the written consent of a parent/guardian. All applicants must acknowledge the possible hazards of safety patrol duty and agree that in case of injury no liability will be attached to the Board or to any employee of the Board. Selection of applicants will be made on the basis of demonstrated sense of responsibility, good citizenship, leadership capacity, maturity, and academic proficiency. Members of the safety patrol must attend a training program before they may assume their duties. Safety patrol members will serve for one school year. A student may be removed from the safety patrol for violation of the school rules, failure to maintain the high standard of conduct expected of school safety patrol members, or for not fulfilling their responsibilities adequately.

Members of the safety patrol may be assigned to control and direct student traffic on school grounds, on school buses, on sidewalks and paths adjacent to a street or roadway, and across streets and roadways. No school safety patrol member shall be permitted to direct or place himself or herself in the path of vehicular traffic. All students will be instructed to respect the authority of school safety patrol members in the performance of their duties.

Snacks

Students at all grade levels may bring in a healthy snack to enjoy at the designated time for their grade. Candy or other sweets should not be brought in as a regular snack.

Special Education and Related Services: Referral Services

At any time during the year, either the school or a child's parents may initiate a student referral to the District's Child Study Team. Such referrals are generally initiated when a child is experiencing ongoing difficulties with the general academic curriculum even after interventions have been attempted in the general education setting. Procedures for such referrals are governed by Board Regulation 2460.1 as follows:

Parent Initiated Referral

When a parent makes a written request for an evaluation to determine eligibility for services:

- a. The written request shall be received and dated by the Director of Student Personnel and Special Services;
- b. The written request shall be immediately forwarded to the office of special services/special education;
- c. A file will be initiated to include a timeline for processing the referral including the date that initiates the twenty-day timeline for conducting the

referral/identification meeting and any forms used to open a case;

d. Upon receipt of the referral a request for a summary and review of health and medical information regarding the student shall be forwarded to the school nurse who will transmit the summary to the CST;

e. The Director of Student Personnel and Special Services will convene a referral/identification meeting within twenty calendar days (excluding school holidays, but not summer vacation) of the date the request was received by the district;

f. A "Notice of a Referral/Identification Meeting" will be sent to the parent(s);

g. The notice will contain "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE) Booklet; and

h. The referral/identification meeting will be attended by the parent(s), CST, and regular education teacher.

School Initiated Referral

Referral of a student to the CST may be made by administrative, instructional, or other professional staff to determine eligibility for special services when:

a. It is determined (optional: through the I&RS Committee) that interventions in the general education program have not been effective in alleviating the student's educational difficulties.

b. It can be documented that the nature of the student's educational problem(s) is such that an evaluation to determine eligibility for services is warranted without delay.

c. The Director of Student Personnel and Special Services, through in-service training, shall ensure that students are referred who may have a disability, but are advancing from grade to grade.

(1) A student with a disability, who is advancing from grade to grade with the support of specially designed services, may continue to be eligible when:

(a) As part of the re-evaluation, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student continues to require specially designed services to progress in the general education curriculum; and

(b) The use of functional assessment information supports the IEP team's determination.

The following procedure will be followed for a school initiated referral:

- a. A referral to the CST will be completed by the referring staff member;
- b. I&RS documentation including, but not limited to: teacher reports, grades and other relevant data (optional: the intervention record) shall be forwarded with the referral to the CST along with any other relevant data;
- c. I&RS documentation does not need to be forwarded for direct referral when the nature of the student's problem is such that the evaluation is warranted without delay;
- d. The referral should be dated upon receipt by the CST;
- e. A file will be initiated to include a timeline for processing the referral including the date that initiates the twenty-day timeline for conducting the referral/identification meeting;
- f. Upon receipt of the referral, a request for a summary and review of health and medical information regarding the student shall be forwarded to the school nurse who will transmit the summary to the CST;
- g. The Director of Student Personnel and Special Services will convene a referral/identification meeting within twenty calendar days (excluding school holidays, but not summer vacation) of the date recorded on the referral;
- h. A "Notice of a Referral/Identification Meeting" will be sent to the parent(s);
- i. The notice shall contain "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE); and
- j. The referral/identification meeting will be attended by the parent(s), CST, and regular education teacher.

The parent(s) must receive a copy of their child's evaluation report and any documentation leading to a determination of eligibility not less than ten calendar days prior to the eligibility conference in order to ensure the parent(s) has (have) a reasonable amount of time to review documentation prior to an eligibility conference.

Spirit Days

Generally, one day per month is designated as a school spirit day. These special days provide students and staff members with an opportunity to show their support for and pride in our school. Keep an eye on the monthly calendar, and encourage your child(ren) to catch the spirit by participating each month!

Student Council

Dogwood Hill student council affords students in the third, fourth and fifth grade to assume leadership positions that provide them with the opportunity to work with faculty advisors on a variety of school and community-based projects. Students who are interested in serving on the student council will become engaged in various aspects of the political process, including campaigning, speechwriting, and serving their constituents.

Telephone Use/Cell Phone/Smart Watch Policy

In accordance with New Jersey Public Law 2025, Chapter 195 (P.L. 2025, c.195), all public schools are required to implement a "bell-to-bell" policy prohibiting the non-academic use of personal internet-enabled devices—including cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, and similar devices—during the school day. At Dogwood Hill Elementary School, these devices must remain turned off or silenced and stored away from the beginning of the school day until dismissal, unless their use has been specifically authorized by school staff for an educational purpose or another exception permitted by law or district policy.

Our goal is to create a learning environment where students are fully engaged in instruction, build meaningful relationships with their peers and teachers, and are free from the distractions that personal electronic devices can create. We appreciate the partnership of our families in reinforcing these expectations. If you need to reach your child during the school day, or if your child needs to contact you, please communicate through the school's main office.

Toys/Personal Items

Students are **not permitted** to bring toys or games to school. The school will provide all games and equipment during the students' recess period. All toys and games should be left home, as they are often a distraction to the educational environment we work diligently to maintain. (*This includes card games, spinners, fidget cubes, etc.*) We thank you in advance for your support.

Transfers

Please notify the office as soon as possible if you plan to transfer your child to another school, even if the transfer is to take place the following year. This would provide the office staff with adequate time to process the necessary forms and records. Prior to the issuance of a transfer card, students must return all books and materials belonging to the school.

Visitors

In order to ensure the safety of our children and teachers, we require all visitors to adhere to the following procedures. Upon arriving at the main entrance, please ring the bell and look into the camera. You will be asked to provide your name and the purpose for your visit. Once you have been granted entrance, you must proceed to the main office. All visitors are required to sign in and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

Prior to exiting the building, please return to the main office to sign out. Adhering to this process is essential to keeping our students, staff and visitors safe.

Vocal Music Concerts

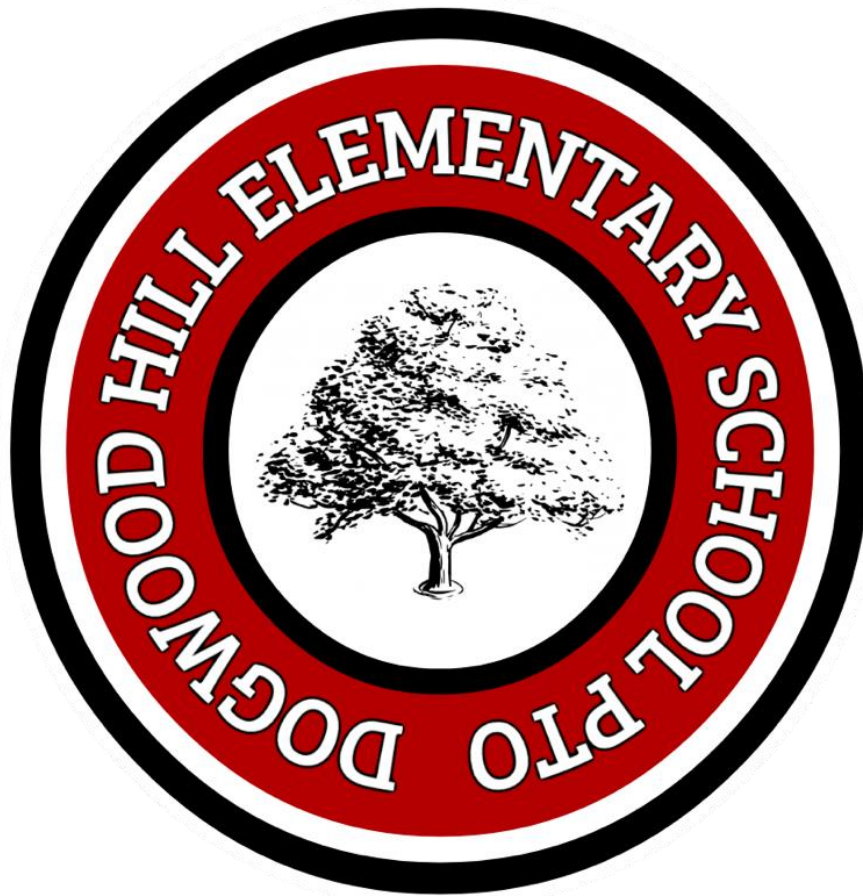
Fourth and fifth grade chorus students showcase their talent in two evening concerts per year. A performance during the school day also takes place in the for our students during the same school day. Families are invited to the evening performance to celebrate all of the preparation and hard work our students have put in throughout the year.

Wyckoff YMCA Before and After Care

The Wyckoff YMCA runs a before and after school program that is available for a fee. Call (201) 891-2081 or click on the link [Oakland Before/Aftercare](#) or more information.

PTO INFORMATION

2026-2027



PTO President – Erin Beischer
VP of Programs/Fundraising – Lise Debiak
VP of Class Parents – Katie O’Neil
Treasurer – Marco DeLeon
Corresponding Secretary - Shannon Kennedy
Recording Secretary – Cindy D’Alto

Contact Information

DHS PTO Address | 25 Dogwood Drive | Oakland, NJ USA | 07436

DHS PTO Email | dogwoodpto@oaklandschoolsnj.org

DHS Yearbook Email | dhsptoyearbook@gmail.com

DHS PTO Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742304729833310/>

DHS PTO Scholastic Book Fair Facebook |

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DogwoodHillScholasticBookFair/>

NewsFlash | <https://sites.google.com/oaklandschoolsnj.org/dogwoodpto/newsflash>

DHS PTO Website | <https://sites.google.com/oaklandschoolsnj.org/dogwoodpto/dhs-pto>

PTO Meetings

Regular meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the 3rd or 4th Wednesday of each month or as otherwise specified.

Location: Dogwood Hill School Library

Action may be taken at all meetings. Each meeting lasts for approximately 1 hour.

—

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Wednesday, February 24, 2027

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

Wednesday, March 24, 2027

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Wednesday, April 14, 2027

Wednesday, December 16, 2026

Wednesday, May 19, 2027

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Wednesday, June 16, 2027

PTO Descriptions

Back-to-School Night

This adult-only evening will provide you with an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and to review the year's curriculum. This is a great time to meet other parents, become a PTO member, and volunteer for various events during the course of the year. More information will be sent home in the beginning of September.

Beautify Dogwood

There is an ongoing PTO committee to improve the physical appearance of our school and its grounds. Please consider helping to add to our environment by giving a few hours of your time. The appearance of the grounds at DOGWOOD HILL is a source of pride and makes a warm welcome, on a daily basis, to our students.

Book Fair

A book fair is held in the fall and the spring. The PTO committee sets up and coordinates volunteers to help with the event. Children visit with their classes and have an opportunity to purchase books of their own choosing. There is also typically an evening session scheduled to allow families to shop for books together.

Box Tops for Education

This is a fun and easy way of raising additional funds for the school. Classrooms that accumulate the most Box Tops for each contest are typically treated to a pizza party or some other special treat compliments of the PTO.

Class Parents

Two class parents coordinate classroom parties and make phone calls throughout the school year. Siblings are not permitted to participate in these class activities. Please be sure to coordinate all classroom activities with the grade level teachers. For example, what one third grade class does for a special event, should be what all third-grade classes do for that event. Prior to volunteering to be a class parent, please be sure to be familiar with all of the responsibilities for which you are applying. We appreciate all of your time and effort!

Class Parent Meeting

The PTO hosts this event to provide the selected class parents an opportunity to meet with their classroom teacher in a social atmosphere. This is planned for early in the school year.

Color Run

The Color Run is a fan favorite that takes place in May. Students who participate in the event complete a clearly marked running/walking course while teachers and volunteers toss different colored non-toxic chalk as they pass. In addition to the run, a DJ plays popular student friendly music, a food truck, and drinks are also available throughout the event. As a culminating part of the activity, all students and staff members assemble on the grass to throw their own 'colors' up in the air. It is a sight to see all of the colorful students and staff members at the end of the Color Run.

Cultural Arts

These events are P.T.O-funded school assemblies that are delivered by professionals. The Chairperson works with the Principal to determine which programs will be presented each year, and they coordinate the performance schedule with the school. A wide variety of diversified programs are offered for the enrichment of the children. Parents are welcome to share in these cultural experiences.

Directory

The Dogwood Hill Directory is a school-wide listing of student's names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. The Directory can be accessed through class parents.

Dogwood Day

A festival planned jointly by the school and PTO on a June morning to celebrate the school community. Athletic, art and social projects are accomplished by the students with teachers and parent volunteers.

Dogwood Hill Apparel Sale

During the early fall months, the PTO organizes a Dogwood Hill apparel sale. Various clothing including sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts, and sweatpants displaying our Dogwood Hill logo will be available for purchase. This is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate school spirit!

Family Bingo Night

A fun filled family evening for all Dogwood Hill families. A parent must accompany all students and younger siblings are invited. This event usually takes place in the month of September. This is a great opportunity for families to get to know each other and have some fun to kick off the new school year.

Fifth Grade Farewell

This special day for fifth graders is organized and implemented by a dedicated P.T.O. committee. During the last week of school, fifth grade students are treated to a celebration filled with music, fun, and wonderful memories of their experiences at Dogwood Hill.

Fifth Grade Hangout

This special day for fifth graders is organized and implemented by 5th grade teachers and Mr. LaCugna. On a day after school in October, our 5th graders play organized games to encourage teamwork and kick off the year as the leaders of our school. Games are followed by pizza and snacks. A communication regarding the date and event specifics will be shared a few weeks prior.

Fundraising (PTO)

The proceeds from several activities and events throughout the year provide funding for our P.T.O. budget, which in turn, is used to fund new programs, equipment, and other school gifts that directly benefit the children.

Holiday Boutique

Each year, the PTO organizes a "holiday boutique" that affords students the opportunity to purchase small and inexpensive gifts for their friends and families during the holiday season. Specific dates will be shared several weeks prior to the program.

Joe Guzzo Scholarship Committee

Members of this committee create an essay topic and judge the work of Dogwood Hill Alumni who are college-bound seniors at either Ramapo or Indian Hills High School. The scholarship is awarded to two students in late May or early June.

Membership

All guardians of Dogwood Hill School students are eligible to become members of the PTO. PTO members pay annual dues of \$30.00 per family which helps support the many activities and events the PTO organizes. Members have access to the online directory, PTO website, Newsflash, communication, and are eligible to volunteer for PTO events.

PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization is a collaborative partnership among parents and staff members, whose mission is to continually enhance the learning environment for Dogwood Hill students. This is accomplished through active involvement, including assisting and coordinating programs identified in this handbook. These programs are made possible through fundraising and parent volunteers. Monthly meetings are held in the Dogwood Hill library, and all PTO members are invited to attend.

PTO Calendar

This valuable schedule of events for our school year is distributed monthly. Please keep it in a safe and accessible place. For the most current information, the PTO calendar can be found here: [PTO Calendar](#)

PTO Newcomers Meeting

This is an informal, but informative half hour session held just prior to our first PTO meeting in September for families who are new to the Dogwood Hill school community.

Newsflash

The Newsflash is emailed to parents to provide important school information, upcoming events and community happenings throughout the school year. If you happen to miss the email, the Newsflash is also posted on our PTO website: [Newsflash](#). Although we make every effort to minimize paper communications, there are some instances throughout the year where paper notices are sent home as well.

Read-a-Thon

In the month of February, we kick off our biggest fundraising event of the year, the Read-a-Thon. This event highlights the importance of reading for pleasure. Each student will complete a reading log indicating the number of minutes read over a multiple week period and earn prizes based on the number of students who reach their daily reading goal, the percentage of students in each homeroom that meets their

reading goals, and the class who brings in the most donations. This is an exciting event that also has different rewards by meeting different fundraising goals. Rewards in the past have included Mr. Bowe wearing a silly wig, wearing a very silly costume, and if we meet our final goal a school wide assembly to celebrate our reading accomplishments.

School Supplies

A list of required school supplies is posted to the school website prior to the start of each new school year. The lists are organized by grade level. Click here to access the supply list for each grade: [Supply Lists](#)

Spirit Days

Generally, one day per month is designated as a school spirit day. These special days provide students and staff members with an opportunity to show their support for and pride in our school. Remember to wear our school colors, red and white. Keep an eye on the monthly calendar, and encourage your child(ren) to catch the spirit by participating each month!

Teacher Appreciation

This committee is responsible for coordinating the recognition of the teachers throughout the school year. They also plan a PTO sponsored luncheon in the month of May in celebration of Teacher Appreciation Day.

2026-2027 Dogwood Hill School PTO Calendar

Red - School Closed

Blue - Minimum Day

Orange - PTO Meeting

Green - School Spirit Day -
Wear Dogwood Gear or Theme Clothing

SEPTEMBER

7 Labor Day | School Closed
8 First Day of School
TBD Class Parent Meeting | 3:20 PM
14 Minimum Day | 1:00 PM Dismissal
14 Back to School Night
15 BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
23 PTO Newcomers Meeting | 6:30 PM
23 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
17 Family Bingo Night | 5:30 - 7:00 PM
21 Yom Kippur | School Closed
25 School Spirit Day
29 Picture Day

OCTOBER

1 Custodian's Luncheon
TBD Student Council Elections
5-9 Fire Prevention Week
12-14 Scholastic Book Fair
13 BOE Meeting | 7:00
16 Student Council Spirit Day | Fall Colors
21 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
26-30 Red Ribbon Week
26-30 Student Council Pumpkin Voting
23 School Spirit Day
30 Halloween Parade | 2:00 PM
TBD 5th Grade Hangout | 3:10 PM - 4:30 PM

NOVEMBER

TBD School Experience Auction
3 Election Day | School Closed
4 Marking Period 1 Ends
5-6 NJEA Convention | School Closed
12 & 13 Minimum Day | 1:00 PM Dismissal
12 & 13 Parent-Teacher Conferences
17 BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
11 Student Council Spirit Day | Jeans for Troops (red, white and blue)
13 Student Council Spirit Day | Dress Like a Teacher
17 Picture Retakes
18 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
23 School Spirit Day
25 Minimum Day | 1:00 PM Dismissal
26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday | School Closed

DECEMBER

8-10 Holiday Boutique
8 BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
16 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
23 Student Council Spirit Day | Wear Holiday Gear
23 Minimum Day | 1:00 PM Dismissal
24-31 December Recess | School Closed

JANUARY

1 New Year's Day | School Closed
4 School Reopens
5 BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
15 Student Council Spirit Day | Wear Kind Words
18 MLK Jr. Day | School Closed
20 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
22 Marking Period 2 Ends
TBD Winter Concert | 7:00 PM
25-29 Student Council Penny Wars
29 School Spirit Day

FEBRUARY

TBD Read-a-Thon
TBD Dogwood Date Night Bowling
5 Crossing Guard Appreciation Day
TBD BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
12 Student Council Spirit Day | Wear Red or Pink
15 School Officer Appreciation Day
15-19 Winter Break | School Closed
17 Random Acts of Kindness Day (Observed)
24 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
26 School Spirit Day

MARCH

1-5 Read Across America
TBD BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
8-12 Student Council Food Drive
15 Pi (3.14) Day Fundraiser
16-18 Scholastic Book Fair
17 Student Council Spirit Day | Wear Green
19 School Spirit Day
24 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
27 Good Friday - School Closed

APRIL

2 Marking Period 3 Ends
3 Good Friday | School Closed
4 School Librarian Day
9 Marking Period 3 Ends
14 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
16 Student Council Spirit Day | Earth Day
19-23 Spring Break | School Closed
27 School Bus Driver Day
28 School Secretary Day
30 School Spirit Day

MAY

1 School Principal's Day
7 School Lunch Hero Day
12 Nurses Day
TBD BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
TBD NJSLA Testing Grades 3-5
TBD Teacher Appreciation Week
14 Student Council Spirit Day | Wear Tie Dye
14 Color Run
19 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
21 School Spirit Day
28 Minimum Day | 1:00 PM Dismissal
31 Memorial Day | School Closed
TBD 5th Grade Spring Concert | VMS | 7:00 PM
TBD 5th Grade LEAD Field Trip

JUNE

4 Dogwood Day
TBD Orchestra Concert
TBD BOE Meeting | 7:00 PM
8 Primary Election | School Closed
11 Student Council Spirit Day | Wellness
16 PTO Meeting | 7:00 PM
28 Last Day For Students | Minimum Day
28 End of Marking Period 4, Report Cards Posted
28 5th Grade Farewell | 10:30-12:30 PM
29 5th Grade Clap Out | 12:30 - 1:00 PM

Parent Portal closes for the summer



Appendix A

Elementary Code of Conduct

Appendix B

Guidelines for Student Dress

Appendix A

Elementary Code of Conduct

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This Code of Conduct is offered so both parents and students know the basic rules and responsibilities in order to get the best possible education. Also included in this Code of Conduct, are the consequences students may face if the rules and responsibilities are not met, as well as the positive consequences for outstanding accomplishments. We ask that you please review this with your children in the Oakland Elementary Schools.

Attending School

Rule/Responsibility: Every student is expected to be at school every day, unless sick or dealing with a family responsibility. Being sick means that a parent or guardian has decided that because of a temperature or an illness, either the student would not be able to focus on schoolwork, or there is a very real chance that the student would make other people sick.

A family responsibility is a religious or family obligation that parents or guardians feel is very important and they truly believe is more important than going to school that day. Consequences: If a student does not attend school every day that they are able, the primary consequence is denying themselves the best possible education possible. The State of New Jersey has told the school districts that we have to have certain procedures, identifying other consequences for unexcused absences.

Classroom teachers may impose a consequence if unexcused absences result in the student missing a substantial amount of class work. They may have the student visit them early or stay after dismissal, so he/she can catch up to the class in academic areas. If a child is absent for three consecutive days, the school nurse will contact the parent/guardian. After ten absences, the school principal will conference with parents/guardians to develop strategies to ensure consistent attendance.

Excessive unexcused absences may affect grades and school performance. The school may involve the Intervention and Referral Service Team to brainstorm ideas to support the child's regular attendance.

Punctuality

Rule/Responsibility: Students are expected to be at school every day unless there is a legitimate reason for an absence. They are also expected to be to school and to class on time. At the beginning of every school day, teachers make important announcements, take attendance and lunch counts and review the schedule or any special events planned that day at school. Even if a child is only five minutes late, that means he/she will have missed some important information or will cause some things to be repeated, thus delaying the start of instruction. That is not fair to classmates who are on time.

Consequences: Being late to class can affect how well a student learns. Therefore, the most serious consequence is denying a student the best possible education. To avoid this, the teacher and/or principal may implement other consequences. The teacher will call parents to discuss why a student is late if this happens five or more times. If a student is late to school more than three times, the school nurse will contact parents/guardians to see if there is a health issue preventing the student from being to school on time. After continued tardiness, the principal will ask for a meeting with the parents and student.

Learn and Let Others Learn

Rule/Responsibility: Every student should do his/her best in every class. They also have to make sure they allow their classmates to do their best. Everyone should refrain from disturbing the learning environment, whether that is the classroom, the gym or the assembly hall.

Consequences: The principal will be in charge of determining what kind of consequence a student faces, based on the disturbance to the learning process. Sometimes the disruption to the learning process is relatively minor. In these cases, teachers may notify the parents of the disruption and the consequence. It is expected that the teacher and building administrator have a clear understanding of what may be dealt with in the classroom and what must be brought to the attention of the building administrator.

Do Your Best on Assignments

Rule/Responsibility: All students should try to finish every assignment, whether it is a class assignment or a homework assignment, to the very best of their potential.

Consequences: The real serious consequence is the fact that students are gypping themselves from a great education if they don't try their best. The teacher may have no choice but to lower a grade if a student does not try their best on homework and class work assignments. The teacher may choose to have a conference with parents or to invite the student in for extra help.

Be a Good Citizen

Rule/Responsibility: Our school district has special rules about bullies and teasing in schools. We know that bullies are really children who are usually frightened about

something and want to act tough or mean to hide the fact that they are scared. The teachers and principals will work hard to help these children learn how to identify what is scaring them and to not be bullies.

Of course, while this is happening, they will also try to decide the best consequence for the bullying behavior. Again, a lot depends on the age and the maturity level of the student. Two students, one in third grade and another in seventh grade may use the same inappropriate word, for example, to a classmate. The third grade student may not even know what it means; they may have heard it on television or around town, and decided to repeat it. The older student, however, may know exactly what it means and is mature enough to know that it may be hurtful to a classmate.

The staff, teachers and/or principals, therefore, may provide different consequences to those students, even if the victims were both hurt the same way by the words spoken. It is expected, however, that when bullying behavior is reported, the staff will address it with both the victim and the perpetrator and discuss it with the parents of both students.

Causes for suspension or expulsion of students

School administrators shall take a variety of factors into consideration when determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures for student misconduct.

Those factors include the age and developmental maturity levels of the students involved, the degrees of harm, surrounding circumstances, the nature and severity of the behavior(s), incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior, relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

However, pursuant to New Jersey Statute 18A:37-2, grounds for the suspension or expulsion of students include, "the continued and willful disobedience, or of open defiance of the authority or any teacher or person having authority over him [sic], or the habitual use of profanity or of obscene language, or who shall cut, deface or otherwise injure any school property.

Conduct which shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion of a pupil guilty of such conduct shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:"

- a. Continued and willful disobedience;
- b. Open defiance of any teacher or other authority figure
- c. Conduct that places the physical well being of other pupils in danger;
- d. Physical assault upon another pupil or member of the school community;
- e. Taking or attempting to take, personal property or money from another pupil or member of the school community, by means of force or intimidation;
- f. Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to or destruction of school property;
- g. Unauthorized occupancy of any part of the school or other District-owned building and/or the failure to leave such a facility after having been directed to do so;
- h. Incitement which is intended to and does result in unauthorized occupation by any group of pupils or others of any part of a school or other District-owned facility;
- i. Incitement that is intended to and does result in truancy by other pupils;

- j. Knowing possession or knowing consumption of alcoholic beverages or controlled dangerous substances on school premises, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function, or being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or controlled dangerous substances while on school premises, a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function;
- k. Possession of a weapon (including all firearms) on school premises, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function; and
- l. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying, as outlined in Board Policy 5131.9 (NJSBA) 5512 (SEA).

Also pursuant to 18A:37-2.2, any pupil who commits an assault upon a teacher, administrator, board member, other school employee, or another student with a weapon, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the regular education program pending a hearing before the Board of Education. Any student removed from the regular education program shall be placed in an alternative education program or on homebound instruction, if an alternative education program is not available.

Positive Rewards

A Code of Conduct would not be complete, if it didn't also have a section on positive rewards. The Oakland Public Schools recognizes the hard work and good character of all of its students. Some, in particular, however, stand out for their accomplishments and/or efforts. For these students, the school district will offer special recognition. Below is a list of awards that will be given out each year in each elementary school.

Principal's Award

This award will be given to a fifth grade student who consistently displays the traits associated with all Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) throughout the year.

Academic Excellence Award

This award will be distributed to fourth and fifth grade students who earn an "E" (Grade 4) or an "A" (Grade 5) on their report cards in all five major subject areas (Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) during every quarter, and at least an, "S," for Satisfactory in every other area.

Effort Award

This award will be distributed to fourth and fifth grade students who earn a "C" (Consistent) in all of the effort categories in the "Work Habits and Social Development" section of the report card during all four quarters.

Student Council Recognition

Certificates of recognition will be distributed to third, fourth, and fifth grade members of the Student Council.

Safety Patrol Recognition

Certificates of recognition will be distributed to members of the School Safety Patrol. Students in Grade five are eligible.

CONCLUSION

This Code of Conduct cannot possibly cover every possible behavior or circumstance that arises in a public school. No code of conduct can do that. What you, the student, should keep in mind is that a lot of people believe you are very important and want the very best for you. You have certain rights as a student in the Oakland Public Schools, but you also have certain responsibilities that go along with those rights. To help keep the Code of Conduct simple, here are your Rights and Responsibilities:

"I have the right to...

**Be respected
A safe school
Share different opinions
Receive an education
Receive support from others
Be free from taunting**

I am responsible to...

**Respect everyone else
Protect the learning environment
Listen to what others have to say
Do my best in class
Lend support to others in need
Refrain from teasing others."**

Regards,

Elementary School Principals

Appendix B

Guidelines for Student Dress

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Although we feel strongly about celebrating each child's individuality, it is necessary to enforce certain guidelines with respect to student attire in the interest of maintaining student safety and establishing an environment that is conducive to learning and high standards for student achievement.

The following guidelines follow from Board of Education Policy and are in effect across the district:

- All attire should be neat, clean, reflect modesty, and be appropriate for a school environment;
- Apparel shall not be sheer, brief, low cut, or revealing so as to be embarrassing, distracting, or indecent;
- Shorts or short-like apparel may be worn during hot weather, but they must be neatly hemmed and long enough to ensure modesty;
- Exposure of undergarments is unacceptable. Cutoffs or frayed bottoms are not permitted, and shorts with distracting or suggestive words/images on them are not acceptable for school. Neither are lycra/spandex shorts permitted in school;
- Shirts with excessively low cut arm holes are not to be worn. Short shirts which leave the stomach area/midriff exposed are unsafe and not acceptable in school. Also, halter tops and spaghetti strap tops are not permitted;
- Footwear is required; however, beach thongs or flip flops are unsafe in a school environment and are not permitted;
- Hats, caps, or other headwear shall not be worn inside the school building;
- Unless required for a medical reason, sunglasses may not be worn during school;
- Graphics that are suggestively obscene or promote/depict an illegal substance on any garment are prohibited (e.g., alcohol, drugs, lewdness, profanity).
- Gang related clothing is prohibited.

With appreciation,

