



SCHOOL POLICY REVIEW

The 2024-2025 school year will begin on August 26, 2024. We are certainly looking forward to welcoming your children back to school. We hope that many of you will be attending Back-to-School Night. We appreciate the many parents who will join us to meet their child's teacher and learn about what their child will be learning this year.

We want to make certain that every student is able to achieve his or her potential to the fullest. With the many state and federal mandates, we are in an era of increased accountability. With this comes increased responsibility for everyone who works with your children. We also believe that the education of the children in the Owen J. Roberts School District is a **shared responsibility** with both parents and students. Therefore, throughout the year you will be hearing messages from the teachers and administrators about **our** responsibilities as well as **yours**. While you have expectations for what the educational program will provide, we also have expectations about what will happen during the balance of your child's day.

- **Attendance** – We expect that your children will attend school on a daily basis. Each school district in Pennsylvania is expected to maintain at least a 90% daily attendance rate to make adequate yearly progress under the "Every Student Succeeds Act" law. It is vital that children are in school and on time so that we can deliver the highest quality educational experiences. Please assist us by realizing that there is rarely a year when we do not have to cancel school due to snow; please factor in snow days when making your summer vacation plans. Please review the District activities calendar on our website (www.ojrsd.com) to familiarize yourself with the days that school is in session. Removing students from school for vacation or other activities can be detrimental to their education. In addition, it may affect the standardized test scores by which the District is compared statewide to all other 500 Pennsylvania school districts.
- **Truancy** – Truancy means missing school without a lawful excuse. Truancy will be strictly enforced according to District Policy 204, State Guidelines (BEC 24 PS 13-1327) and new mandates from the Courts of Chester County. If a child accumulates three unexcused absences the parents will receive a letter from the school notifying them of this fact. Upon the subsequent (4th) unexcused absence a citation will be filed with the local magistrate. Parents and/or students could face fines of up to \$300 per day.
- **Respect** – We expect that your children will respect the rules of the school, their teachers, and the rights of other students. Children cannot learn in an atmosphere that accepts bullying, harassment and intimidation; and it will not be tolerated. We will also reaffirm with all our staff members the expectation that they will model respectful behavior toward our students as well.
- **Responsibility** – Your children spend every day in classrooms with highly qualified teachers. We have focused our attention on the best practices in teaching and integration of technology to enhance student learning. We expect that your children will approach learning with a positive attitude and that they will, with your support, complete their assignments on time and to the best of their ability. We are ready to provide the support they need to make this happen. We also expect that children will come to school with all necessary materials including texts, assignment books, homework, and projects. Not being prepared with the necessary materials can be one of the biggest impediments to learning.
- **Support** – As we work collaboratively to assure that each child in this District receives the best education possible, we need your cooperation. If you have a question or concern, call your child's teacher. If you need assistance, let the principal know. We need your support in following up on what we are doing every day.

One of the keys to implementing the things mentioned above is to ensure that the school environment is safe and orderly. In order to make this happen, we have instituted a number of policies to enhance student safety and well-being. I am asking you to review these Board policies with your child:

- **Board Policy 218.1** is concerned with eliminating weapons in school. Briefly stated, **there are to be no weapons of any type on school property, including school buses, at any time.** Weapons are defined as anything that could cause bodily harm to another person. They include, but are not limited to:

any knife or cutting instrument
explosives
hunting knives
pen knives
firecrackers

any type of gun
"look-alike" weapons
BB guns
anything that is a replica of a weapon

For the safety of our students, we are very strict in our enforcement of this policy. You should also be aware that **the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandates an automatic expulsion for at least one year for any offense involving weapons.**

- **Board Policy 103** deals with harassment. Again, briefly stated, **harassment of anyone by someone else will not be tolerated in the schools.** While employee-to-employee harassment policies have been in place for many years, a more recent area of emphasis is student-to-student harassment. **If any student at any grade level feels that he or she is being harassed by another student or an adult, they should report this immediately to the building principal or to our Director of Human Resources, Title IX/Equal Opportunity Coordinator, at 610-469-5117.**
- **Board Policy 227 and Regulation 236A** help to insure a safe school environment by dealing with student smoking and student possession and/or use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Specific regulations implementing these policies are contained in each building's "Code of Conduct" which should have been received by all students. If students violate these policies, they can be suspended or expelled from school and will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. The District will pursue prosecution of offenders to the full extent of the law.
- **Board Policy 233** explains the District's policy on suspension and expulsion of students.
- **Board Policy 226** involves searches of students, student lockers, and student vehicles. During the past few years, we expanded our efforts to maintain a safe school environment by conducting canine searches of student lockers and possessions, including vehicles. We will continue those searches during this year and will do everything within our authority to assure that illegal drugs are not in our schools or on our property.
- **Board Policy 815** addresses student use of computers. The following is a summary of this policy:
 - All students will be assigned individual network usernames and passwords. Usernames and passwords are to remain confidential and shall not be shared with other students.
 - **All computers and peripherals are School District assets and are provided for educational purposes only.**
 - **All computer and network activity is subject to monitoring. All internet access will be logged and reviewed regularly.**
 - Students may not access other network user's personal folders, e-mail or other communications.
 - Students may not install software, screen savers or other utilities without consent of the District Technology Department.
 - Students must comply with all copyright laws.
 - Students may not use the network for illegal activities.
 - Students must follow network etiquette rules.

To ensure that all students understand the importance of these policies, they will be asked to accept them the first time they logged on to the network and will reconfirm their acceptance each time the policies and regulations are modified. Teachers of non-reading children will explain the policies and answer any questions prior to their use of computers.

- An orderly environment on our buses is critical so that the drivers can focus their full attention on the safe passage of your children to and from school. Parents, guardians, and students should be aware that school buses have cameras monitoring bus passengers. The cameras record sound and visual images. Camera recordings are reviewed by school officials for discipline and safety purposes and may be provided to police or used in school disciplinary proceedings. **Students should understand that their actions and words while on school buses will be recorded** – and that they should have no expectation of privacy when riding school buses. Riding school buses constitutes consent to the audio and visual recordings by the surveillance cameras.

We are here to provide the best education possible for all our students. Please help us accomplish this important mission by reviewing the summary of this information together as a family. If you would like a copy of any policy, it can be accessed on our website at www.ojrsd.com or you may contact the Administration Building at (610) 469-5100 to receive a paper copy. Most importantly, we want to work together with you to ensure a wonderful school year for your child.