

## 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This is an annual notification to parents/guardians of their Rights and Responsibilities regarding minor students enrolled in the Oak Park Unified School District. The information contained in this letter and on the next several pages is important and should be read thoroughly. Although many of the areas cited are the same from year to year, new legislation adds significant portions and requires annual updates for your review and reference. Many sections describe your rights and the programs, policies and procedures in place within the district to support those rights. If you would like a more complete description or background on any section, please call the district (818) 735-3206 or ask your school principal at any time.

**Signatures Required** – We are requiring parents of all students to log into Parent Connect and electronically re-enroll their student(s). Parents will need to update the information as needed in each section and electronically acknowledge the receipt of mandatory forms & information for each student. When all changes are made, submit the changes, print & sign the confirmation form (1 copy per student). By signing and returning to your school site all the required information on the re-enrollment confirmation form, you are stating that you have read and understand the attached information. We ask that you keep this information during the school year and refer to it when you have concerns.

Your child will not be completely registered until the school receives the signed Re-Enrollment Confirmation form.

**Student Attendance & School Funding** – Everyone recognizes the importance of attending school on a regular basis. School districts no longer receive funding from the State of California for pupils who are absent from school. This includes all absences even those we classify as “excused”, i.e. illness, medical or doctor appointments, or for the purpose of attending the funeral of a member of the immediate family.

Additionally, school attendance rates are part of a new state accountability system for public schools meaning that attendance rates will be one of the ways in which school quality will be measured and schools compared to each other. In Oak Park, we have been experiencing some decline in attendance rates over the last several years BUT thanks to our parents and extra efforts on the part of the schools and the district we were able to raise our attendance rate last year a small amount from 97.24% the year before to 97.44%.

Our schools will receive state funding only for those students who actually attend school for all or part of a school day. We encourage you to think carefully about keeping your child out of school for reasons other than an illness. It is difficult for children to stay in touch with classroom activities and assignments and be fully engaged in school when they are not present.

If it is necessary to keep a child out of school for five (5) days or more, you may request an Independent Study Contract from the school office. Advanced notification is preferred, but each site will attempt to accommodate all requests. Independent Study Contracts may not be requested for absences of less than five (5) days and the assignments, by law, are due the day the child returns to school.

Students are considered TRUANT after three (3) unexcused absences. According to the Education Code, an unexcused absence is anything other than an illness, medical appointment, religious observance, or attending a funeral. The school district is required to notify parents after three trancies and a meeting must be scheduled to address the issue for any truancy beyond three (3). **We strongly suggest that you not remove students from school for vacations or excursions.** Students in California only go to school 180 days, which is less than many other states and most other nations, which leaves plenty of time for family activities the other 185 days. Let's make the most of them by ensuring your child is at school all 180 of them unless they are ill.

**In case of a disaster**, students will depart from school only when school and community authorities consider it safe and wise to do so. The school district, as well as each school site, has a disaster plan detailing specific procedures that are to be followed in emergency situations. The Enrollment, Daily Emergency and Disaster Release Information Form is a critical part of protecting your child(ren) in an emergency. Please fill this out with care and provide specific current information. Please complete the required information on each form with specific information you want the school to act upon during an emergency or disaster. **Remember to notify the school immediately if the information on these form changes during the school year.** Arrangements have been made with radio stations KVEN-1450AM and KHAY-100.7FM to broadcast emergency instructions.

**In the case of an accident or illness** involving your child, appropriate first aid measures will be taken and at the same time your child's emergency information card will be consulted for special instructions. The District does not provide medical insurance for students; however, information regarding purchasing low cost student insurance may be obtained through your school or district office. The District strongly recommends that parents provide local hospital emergency rooms with release forms so doctors may provide emergency medical treatment immediately if necessary. Forms are available at local hospitals and urgent care centers.

**Technology** – Given the expanding use of technology as an instructional tool, parents and students should become familiar with the District's Student Technology Acceptable Use Agreement. In order to assure appropriate use and security of the system, we require every student and their parent/guardian to acknowledge receipt of and agree to the terms of the Student Technology Acceptable Use Agreement. Parents will electronically acknowledge receipt of the Student Technology Acceptable Use Agreement through the re-enrollment process. Students will acknowledge receipt and agree to the Student Technology Acceptable

Use Agreement by logging into Student Connect and agreeing to the terms of use. Elementary students will be directed through this process with their class once school begins. With your electronic signature, you and your child agree to comply with the outlined policy and indicate that you understand your responsibilities related to the use of technology in the Oak Park Unified School District schools.

Oak Park USD has adopted a 1:1 Chromebook program for all students in grades 5-12. This means that all students in grades 5-12 will need a District Chromebook device to fully participate in the educational program. OPUSD uses specific models of managed Chromebooks to ensure compatibility with the district network, educational software, and class management systems so students can enjoy the highest level of protection when accessing internet resources and engaging in collaborative learning experiences both while at school and at home. All district-managed Chromebooks will receive FULL SUPPORT from the District tech department, which will also provide loaner devices and process repairs even in the case of accidental damage.

Parents of students in grades 5-6 and 9-11 are highly encouraged to sign up for our heavily discounted Lease-To-Own(LTO) Chromebook program while students in 7th grade should still have their Chromebook from last year's pilot program. Students in Grades 8 and 12 will be issued existing district-managed Chromebooks since they are finishing the final year at their school site. In last year's 6th grade 1:1 Chromebook pilot, over 70% of the parents participated in the LTO program. We hope to have a similar response rate as we expand this to additional grade levels.

Under the law, OPUSD may not require parents to purchase or lease a Chromebook and will provide a device to students at no cost, however, these "borrowed" devices must be returned to the school at the end of each school year, just like a traditional textbook, and will not allow non-district Google accounts to be used on them at home (unlike lease or purchased Chromebooks). Lease-To-Own Chromebooks remain with the student through the summers and are fully owned by the family after all payments are made and the two-year lease term is up. For more information, please see the district website at [www.opusd.org/chromebooks](http://www.opusd.org/chromebooks).

I would like to urge you to take advantage of the LTO program or to purchase one outright from the district's vendor partner. The District has already acquired a Chromebook for each student since all students in grades 5-12 will need a device. When parents choose not to participate by leasing or buying a Chromebook, we must pay for the device from the same funds that operate our schools, pay our teachers, counselors, and support staff, and provide the educational experience that people come to Oak Park for. Please see the paragraph below about our financial situation.

**Oak Park Education Foundation** – Please pay special attention to the flyer from Oak Park Education Foundation (formerly Friends of Oak Park Schools). Under the new state funding mechanism for public schools, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), school funding levels are based on the types of students they educate. Schools that have higher numbers of economically disadvantaged children, English learners, or foster children receive significantly higher levels of funding. So, even though Oak Park schools rank in the top 1% in California in terms of student achievement, **the District now ranks 869 out of 994 school districts in**

**California** in terms of funding and the lowest in Ventura County. The Oak Park Education Foundation is our local education foundation that is in place to raise funds to support important programs in all of our schools. Our local funding through the school Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and Oak Park Education Foundation make the difference between mediocre schools, which is all the state will fund, and the great schools desired by our learning community.

**Pupil Fees, Donations and Fundraisers** - The Constitution of the State of California requires that we provide a public education to students free of charge. "Pupil fee" is broadly defined as a fee, deposit, or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil's parents or guardians, in violation of section 49011 and section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution, which require educational activities to be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families' ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

1. *A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.*
2. *A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, uniform, or other materials or equipment.*
3. *A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or uniforms associated with an educational activity. (Cal. Educ. Code § 49010(b).)*

A school district, and supporting parent-teacher organizations may solicit voluntary donations and voluntary participation in fundraising activities as long as the school district does not offer or remove course credit or privileges related to educational activities in exchange for money or donations. You can find FAQs on Pupil Fees and Donations on our website at <http://www.opusd.org/donationsguidelines>

Should any student or parent believe they were impermissibly charged a fee or required to provide materials or supplies that they would not have otherwise voluntarily paid or provided, an application for reimbursement may be filed with the District by calling (818) 735-3206. A student or parent can file a complaint relating to pupil fees with the principal of a school pursuant to the Oak Park Unified School District's Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Thank you for your continuing support and the wonderful partnership we share in educating our children. We wish you and your children a wonderful and successful school year.

Sincerely,



Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D.  
Superintendent