



OAK GROVE SCHOOL  
The Art of Living and Learning

# Parent & Student ALL-SCHOOL Handbook

2021 - 2022



<https://oakgroveschool.org> | [office@oakgroveschool.org](mailto:office@oakgroveschool.org)  
Phone: (805) 646-8236 | Fax: (805) 646-6509  
220 W. Lomita Avenue - Ojai, California 93023  
Accredited by CAIS and WASC

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Welcome to Oak Grove School</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Brief History</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Oak Grove School Mission Statement</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommended Reading</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Basics</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Early Childhood Program (Preschool &amp; Kindergarten)</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Elementary Program (Grades 1-5)</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Middle School (Grades 6-8)</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>High School (Grades 9-12)</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Sister Schools</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>A Climate for Inquiry</b>	<b>105</b>



# The Arts of Living & Learning

## AT OAK GROVE SCHOOL

The Arts of Living and Learning are embedded in the school's culture, curriculum, classroom practice, and expectations of student learning.

### The Art of Inquiry

observation • questioning • fact-finding • research • self-reflection

### The Art of Communication

speaking • writing • listening • collaboration

### The Art of Academia

knowledge and application of academic standards, conventions, and disciplines in core subject areas

### The Art of Engagement

attention • self-direction • self-motivation • self-regulation  
metacognition or learning how one learns • examining one's own thinking

### The Art of Aesthetics

sensitivity and appreciation of beauty in all forms  
finding the artist within • artistic expression

### The Art of Caring & Relationship

Self: self-understanding and awareness • making healthy choices  
Others: self-reflection and awareness in relationship • non-violent communication  
service to the common good

Local & Global Communities: service and citizenship

The Environment: mindful stewardship

Oak Grove School is a living, learning community and therefore these "arts" should not be perceived as fixed but dynamic in nature and in a constant state of review.



OAK GROVE SCHOOL  
The Art of Living and Learning

# Welcome to Oak Grove School

Dear Parents and Students,

As a Preschool through 12th grade school, Oak Grove attempts to assist a child’s journey through the early years of play and wonderment into the middle years of adolescent questioning, experimentation, and deep searching of the self. Then, hand in hand we continue into young adulthood and the rigorous demands of college preparation, life preparation, and the serious examination of our place in the world. In the process, we hope to keep alive that same quality of play and wonderment we began within Preschool by making learning meaningful and significant to life.

We do all this in a place that we strive to make safe and secure in order for true inquiry and love of learning to take place. We see our school as a place where we can relax enough to risk examination of our relationships to nature, ourselves, one another, and the world. We are collectively — faculty, staff, students, parents — responsible for creating such an environment, in that each of us has the power to either help or hinder this endeavor.

You have chosen to be part of a unique and wonderful community that depends on a seamless connection between home and school. The Oak Grove School Parent & Student Handbook has evolved over the years to help facilitate the smooth functioning of school life by communicating the general philosophy and procedures of the school.

We ask both parents and students to become familiar with the contents of this Handbook. Parents can assist their younger children in understanding and following these guidelines by reading relevant passages aloud and discussing the importance of the guidelines. As students mature, we expect the onus of responsibility to shift increasingly to the student and away from the parents; in keeping with this, Middle School and High School students sign the Handbook before school begins.

Welcome to Oak Grove School!

**Jodi Grass**

Head of School

# A Brief History

Jiddu Krishnamurti and the Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America founded Oak Grove School in 1975 as one of a group of international schools. The original three students and two teachers met in an old ranch building near the present Krishnamurti Library on McAndrew Road in the East end of Ojai. The school moved to its current location in Meiners Oaks, where the Pavilion was constructed in 1977, followed by the Elementary School and Main House during the 1978-79 school year. The High School, Early Childhood classrooms, and Student Center were added in 1984, at which time Besant House opened as a family-style boarding program for High School students. The Art Building was constructed in 1996. The school now has approximately 220 students and 65 full- and part-time faculty and staff.

---

## Oak Grove School Mission Statement

Inspired by the original intent and statement of philosophy left by the school's founder J. Krishnamurti, the mission of Oak Grove School is to assist students in developing those qualities of mind, heart, and body that will enable them to function with excellence, care, and responsibility in the modern world. In addition, it is the intention of the school to offer a place where the whole community can inquire together into the perennial questions of humankind and explore an approach to life that is whole, mindful, and intelligent.

### **The school does this by:**

- Providing a well-rounded and challenging academic experience balanced with a rich extracurricular program in fine, performing and practical arts, physical fitness, environmental and outdoor education, community service, and travel.
- Creating an environment for learning – A Climate of Inquiry – that is safe, friendly, non-competitive, and encourages open-mindedness and a spirit of inquiry.
- Encouraging close relationships between students and teachers as well as close contact between school and home, and open, honest, and caring communication protocols among all members of the school community.
- Supporting an approach to learning that emphasizes depth over coverage, project-based learning, a model of student-as-worker/teacher-as-coach, a genuine appreciation of each student's unique capabilities, and the balance of traditional testing with authentic assessment practices such as portfolios, demonstrations of learning, and student exhibitions.
- Encouraging students to use their minds, bodies, and hearts well through the

overarching themes expressed within The Arts of Living & Learning that are embedded in the school's culture, curriculum, classroom practice, and expectations of students.

# Recommended Reading on Krishnamurti & Education

**The following books on education are recommended reading for parents whose children attend Oak Grove School.**

- Education and the Significance of Life
- Letters to the Schools – Volume I
- Letters to the Schools – Volume II
- Revolutionary Minds by Paul Herder
- Beginnings of Learning
- Krishnamurti on Education
- Life Ahead

# The Basics

## Table of Contents

- SOC (Safely On Campus)
- School Hours
- Attendance & Tardiness
- Absences
- After-School Hours
- Childcare, After-School, & Summer Programs
- If Your Child Is Sick
- Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity
- The School Office — Main House
- Teacher Response-time to Messages
- Telephones & Copy Machine
- Technology Policy
- Visitors
- Lost & Found
- Dress
- Expectations for Intimate Behavior
- Birthdays
- Communication & Conflict Resolution Protocols
- Homework
- Student Reports
- High School
- Assessment
- Class Placement
- Food & Lunch
- Campus Care & Property
- Health & Safety
- Sexual Health & Wellness
- Parking Lot Safety
- Seat Belts & Speed Limits
- On-Campus Driving
- Carpooling
- Parent Drivers for Field Trips
- Field Trip Permission Slips
- Safety while Driving
- Camping & Outdoor Activities
- Parent Involvement
- Parent Meetings
- Fundraising — Annual Giving
- Volunteer Hours
- Parent Council
- Parent & Student Feedback
- Admissions & Financial Concerns
- Financial Aid Policy & Procedure
- Re-enrollment
- Budget
- Information Resources
- Governance & Administration
- The Leadership Team

## SOC Plan (Safely On Campus)

For the most up to date information, please read the school's [Safely On Campus plan](#).

## School Hours

- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday:**

- Preschool 9:00am to 12:00pm (Before Care, 8:15am to 9am)
- Preschool Extended Day 9:00am to 2:30pm (Before Care, 8:15am to 9am)
- Kindergarten 9:00am to 2:30pm (Before Care, 8:15am to 9am)
- Grades 1–5 8:15am to 2:30pm
- Grades 6–8 8:15am to 2:45pm
- Grades 9–12 8:30am to 3:15pm/4:30\*pm
- *\*H.S. extends through 4:30pm when participating in one of the Fit for Life seasons*

- **Wednesday**

All classes end at 12:00pm, school-wide, or 12:30pm (HS Only)

## Attendance & Tardiness

It is best for 1st – 12th grade students to arrive at school 5-10 minutes before their first class. This gives time to greet friends and to put away lunches, jackets, books, etc. Students are asked not to come before 7:50am, however, because teachers are preparing for classes and are unavailable for supervision.

If your child arrives at school more than 10 minutes after their class begins (1st-8th grades), parents are required to come to the Front Office and sign their child in. High School students are required to sign in at the High School Office.

If it is necessary for your child to leave the campus during school hours, parents are required to sign their child out (and back in) at the Front Office. High School students must sign out (and back in) at the H.S. Office.

## Absences

If your student will be absent, please call in as early as possible. For Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle School, please call the Front Office at 805-646-8236. For High School students, please call extension 111. Repeated absences interfere with the continuity of the learning experience. For more specifics on the Middle School and High School Absence Policy, please see the specific Handbook Agreements. The school requests that medical appointments be scheduled after school and that family trips take place during school vacations.

## **After-School Hours**

Students may remain on campus after school in the following instances:

- at the request of a teacher (with parental approval)
- if they are enrolled in after-school options such as childcare (K-6th)
- if they are engaged in an athletic event sponsored by the school

All parents are expected to arrive on time for their child's pick-up. Students (excluding Preschoolers) who have not been picked up within 15 minutes (5 minutes for Preschool & Kindergarten) of their dismissal will be walked to the Elementary After-School program.

Campus is closed at 5:00pm daily unless there is a meeting or special event scheduled.

## **Childcare, After-School, & Summer Programs**

The school provides a no-cost Before Care program for Preschool and Kindergarten students between the hours of 8:00-9:00am. An After-School program is available for a fee for students in Kindergarten through 6th grade, from the end of the school day until 5:00pm. Summer program options are published each year in the early Spring.

## **If Your Child Is Sick**

A school is a unique environment where students, teachers, and staff are in close contact on a regular basis, and illness can spread quickly. To ensure the health and safety of all persons on campus, please do not bring your child to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness. If a student develops symptoms while at school, they will be sent to the Infirmary in the Front Office to determine if a call should be made to the parent for pick-up.

In keeping with County Health Department requirements, all cases of head lice must be reported to the school immediately. In the event of exposure to head lice, children are checked; if there are any lice or nits, the student must stay home until they are gone. Lice control information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/>.

## **Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity**

Over-the-counter medicines (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, homeopathic supplements, etc.) and prescription medicines (albuterol, antibiotics, etc.) may be dispensed to your student only when a medical authorization form is completed and on file in the Infirmary. A parent/guardian may complete the section for over-the-counter medication; a physician must complete the section for all prescription medications. The medical authorization form includes the required dosage and dosing intervals. This form is available in the Front Office.

If there are restrictions regarding physical education class, recess, or any other activity for one to three days, a parent/guardian must provide a note excusing the student. Any physical restriction lasting longer than three days requires a doctor's note.

## **The School Office – Main House**

The Front Office and Main House are open from 7:45am to 4:00pm during school days. The telephone voicemail is active at all times, and all messages left on voicemail will be responded to as quickly as possible. In order to ensure uninterrupted class time, please contact your child at school only in case of an emergency. Messages can be left for teachers via classroom voicemail, email, or in mailboxes in the Main House. If you wish to confer with one of your child's teachers, please schedule an appointment in advance.

## **Teacher Response-time to Messages**

Ever-changing technology continues to challenge teachers, parents, and students to be mindful about how we communicate with each other. There is a growing expectation that email and phone messages will be answered instantly. In keeping with our intention that communication is caring and compassionate, [this email and telephone message response policy](#) is in place. Please check with your specific program for more details.

## **Telephones & Copy Machine**

The school's telephones are available only for school business. Students are asked to make after-school, social, or carpool arrangements before coming to school in the morning. Business machines such as the copy machine, fax, and school computers are for school use only.

## **Technology Policy**

This policy was created in order to support an environment that is focused on the here-and-now. Increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as a time to minimize the steady stream of electronic input. While technology is used at times for academic purposes, its use is discouraged for social or personal reasons. Therefore, we ask students, staff, and parents/caretakers to observe the following:

1. Students may use computers and tablets for academic purposes as determined and supervised by the teacher. Phones are not used for academic purposes.
2. Student usage rules are as follows:
  - High School students may not use mobile devices on campus between arrival and 4:30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and between arrival and 12:00pm on Wednesday.
  - High School students must put mobile devices away as soon as they arrive on campus and have them turned off and in a locker or backpack during school hours.
  - Students in the 4th through 8th grade may bring mobile devices to campus, but must turn them in at the parking lot upon arrival. They will not have access to them for the duration of the school day. Students may check and send quick messages to and from caretakers/parents at the end of the school day at the Main House parking lot bench.
  - Preschool through 3rd grade students may not have mobile devices

on campus.

3. If a student is seen using a mobile device on campus, it will be collected immediately and returned to them after school hours.
4. Faculty and staff may use computers, tablets, and phones for work-related purposes in a discreet manner. Phones should be out of sight and on silent mode when outside of the classroom or office.
5. Parents and caretakers are asked to observe our intention to have a cell phone use-sensitive campus and to put phones away and on silent when on campus.
6. Parents/caretakers and students can communicate by phone through the landline phone system available in the Front Office, High School Office, and in the classrooms.
7. Adults may use a mobile device to capture images and videos in an inconspicuous way, but are asked to refrain from editing and posting until out of view of others.
8. All members of our community, including parents, are asked to refrain from walking anywhere on campus with their phone out and in view of others.

## Visitors

Parents are welcome on campus, and we ask that you check in with the Front Office before walking around the campus. We ask that all visitors register at the Front Office to receive a nametag. Classroom observations must be arranged in advance with the Director of Admissions.

## Lost & Found

The school maintains Lost-and-Found bins in the Main House, on the Upper Elementary field, by the Early Elementary/Middle School bathrooms, in the High School staff lounge, and in front of the Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms. Lost-and-Found items are periodically displayed in the Main House parking lot and on the Preschool playground fence. Unclaimed items are given to a charity at the end of each semester.

All jackets, sweatshirts, and other outer garments, as well as backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, and other easily misplaced items should be labeled clearly with the student's first and last name.

## Dress

- **Expectations for Dress**

Students are asked to dress in a manner that reflects consideration of what is appropriate to a community and place of learning that includes a broad spectrum of constituents (the very young, parents, faculty, guests, etc.). Consensus over time has established that the community as a whole feels most comfortable in an environment where the focus is placed on inner worth rather than outer appearance; where students wear modest, comfortable, functional, and practical

attire rather than extremes in fashion.

- **Appropriateness**

Clothing should not be distracting or offensive in the learning environment (provocative or drawing inordinate attention to the wearer). Students must cover belly buttons, cleavage, and underwear. Clothing must cover underwear; skirts, dresses, and shorts must be of a reasonable length (i.e. provide **complete coverage** of the buttocks and underwear when standing, sitting, kneeling, or bending over).

- **Dress code**

Students may not wear clothing with logos depicting drug/alcohol/tobacco use, profanity, violence, items related to gang activity, or other images that could cause offense or discomfort to a viewer. No symbols or items that are disrespectful regarding, but not limited to, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin may be worn on campus or at any school-sponsored event. Staff will address dress code issues with students individually; a student may be given alternative clothing to wear, parents may be contacted to bring alternative clothing, or the student may be sent home to change clothes.

- The Early Childhood Program does not allow media items (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.) and has a few variations on the above dress code. Please refer to ECP section of the handbook for details.

- **Shoes**

State law requires shoes to be worn at all times on school campuses, with the exception of preschool students when inside the preschool play yard. (This includes staff, parents, children, and all guests.) Students are required to wear closed-toe athletic shoes (sneakers/tennis shoes are appropriate) for physical education classes and sports activities.

- **Variety of activities**

Students engage in a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor activities, including ceramics, art, and physical education. Choice of clothing should not interfere with full participation. Students need to wear appropriate PE attire (shorts, sweats, and t-shirts).

- **Weather**

Temperature can vary 30 degrees within a single day; therefore, students should consider dressing in layers.

- **Suggestions**

- Consider the impact of clothing items that promote consumerism and media images.
- Consider sending your child to school with additional shoes to be used for sports and active play.

## **Expectations for Intimate Behavior**

Students in the older grades sometimes form romantic relationships with classmates — this is normal. However, the school asks that students in this situation refrain from public displays of affection while at school in respect for the unique environment of the school setting.

## **Birthdays**

The school asks that parents celebrate children’s birthdays at home, and that parties include everyone in the class when possible. If only some students are invited from a class and not all, feelings can be easily hurt. All invitations should be handled through the mail, email, or by phone rather than distributed at school. Gift-giving and discussions about party plans belong outside of school hours.

Children’s birthdays are acknowledged in various ways in homerooms. Some parents and children like to bring a birthday snack for others to enjoy on the birthday. If this is the case, we request that the birthday snack be healthful and nutritious and not candy or highly processed or sugary foods.

## **Communication & Conflict Resolution Protocols**

*“Communication is not only the exchange of words, however articulate and clear those words may be; it is much deeper than that. Communication is learning from each other, understanding each other; and this comes to an end when you have taken a definite stand about some trivial or not fully thought-out act.”*

-Krishnamurti, “Letters to the Schools”

In line with the school’s intent, a mindful approach to communication and conflict resolution is extremely important. For that reason, we have developed a communication protocol and ask that everyone follow it.

### **Preamble**

Nurturing students’ social and emotional growth by actively assisting them in resolving interpersonal conflicts is at the core of our mission. We encourage students (and parents) to see conflict not as a “problem” but as an “opportunity” for students to learn about themselves and others and their relationship to the world. It is an opportunity to develop communication and conflict resolution skills that will last them a lifetime.

All Oak Grove teachers are trained and experienced in strategies that help students deal with conflict. Too numerous to list, here are a few examples: P.A.W.S.S. (put attention within for sixty seconds), I-messages, empathic listening, the Council process, the no-fault zone game, Wheel of Choice, Peace Bridge, Non-violent Communication, and the self-reflection process.

Most teachers are attentive to when students are struggling to deal with an interpersonal challenge, but when incidents happen at school that teachers may not be aware of, students are encouraged to “ask a teacher for help” in the same way they would “ask for help” with an academic problem. Students and teachers can also ask for assistance from

the Director of the Elementary Program, Dean of the Middle School, or the Director of the High School.

Teachers can only assist students if they are aware of the conflict a student is dealing with. Parents can help! If your student describes an interpersonal problem happening at school, ask them what adult they spoke with, and if they answer “No one,” please encourage them to speak with a teacher and “ask for help.” Remember that conflict is a part of life and learning. When you hear about a problem from your child, help them bring it to the attention of a teacher so that teachers can help with fact-checking and exploring feelings and needs together. Please help teachers to support your child with conflicts at school by responding calmly and trusting that the school will take the necessary steps to help students reach understanding and resolution.

- **General Concerns**

Student-to-Teacher & Parent-to-Teacher Conflict Resolution

Small school communities such as ours depend on honest, reflective, sensitive, and caring forms of communication among students, parents, and teachers that above all consider what we are modeling for growing children. We ask all members of our community to consider the following when met with a concern or conflict.

- **Step One: Asking questions, fact-finding, & clarifying situations before taking action**

In the world of mediation and conflict resolution, it is often the case that a conflict could have been avoided had the parties involved gathered more information. Sometimes a concern is based on limited information, a misunderstanding, or a rumor followed by a misinformed reaction that then escalates into conflict. If a student or parent has a concern, we ask that the first step taken be to speak with the parties involved with an open mind, ask questions and clarify before passing judgment or passing information on to others. This approach can often resolve concerns before they become conflicts.

- **Step Two: Direct communication with the other party**

When a genuine concern or conflict is evident, the first attempt at a resolution must be directly with the other party. We ask that students and parents do this before speaking to uninvolved parties which frequently complicates the original problem. We also ask that communication be made by setting up a face-to-face meeting with the other party.

Please Do Not Use Email to Communicate Sensitive Issues.

- **Step Three: Mediation**

If Steps One and Two do not result in satisfactory resolution, students and parents should seek help with mediation from the relevant Student Support Team:

- **Group C – 5th Grade**

Homeroom teacher, Director of Elementary Program

- **Grades 6th – 12th**

Homeroom Teacher or Advisor, Dean of the Middle School

- **Early Childhood Programs**

ECP parents should contact the Director of ECP

- **Final Step**

When all possible attempts at resolution have been exhausted, the Head of School will be contacted by the Student Support Team. If this final mediation does not result in resolution, the Head of School will consider the various points of view and decide what action to take. For High School students, the Head of School, High School Director, and selected faculty may, in serious cases, set up a student/staff disciplinary committee to hear and resolve the issue.

- **Student-to-Teacher Conflict Resolution**

Younger students have two options: they can ask their parents to represent them or they may represent themselves. High School students usually represent themselves. A meeting should be arranged directly with the teacher. If a student needs help in making this direct communication, they should ask another adult or their parents to assist.

- **Parents-to-Teacher Conflict Resolution**

Parents are asked to contact the teacher directly and set up a meeting to discuss the issue. Experience has borne out that this step usually resolves the issue.

- **Parent-to-Parent Conflict**

Occasionally, misunderstandings or conflicts arise between parents. While it is not appropriate for the school to interfere in parent-to-parent relationships, we ask that parents adhere to the same communication and conflict resolution protocols that we are modeling for the children at school. Please always use respectful language when communicating with other parents, and if a concern or conflict arises, utilize the communication protocols outlined above in Step One (fact-finding/clarification) and Step Two (direct and in-person communication). There is nothing more powerful for children than seeing their parents use mindful and compassionate communication and take a calm approach to resolving conflict. Parents are their children's most important role-models and teachers!

- **Middle School & High School Conflict Resolution Disciplinary Protocols**

(please see Middle School and High School Sections)

## **Homework**

Homework is an opportunity for practicing skills outside of the classroom environment and for reinforcing the transfer of knowledge and skills. Homework is also an opportunity for students to share what they are learning in school with families at home. Please see program sections for specific details.

## **Student Reports**

Progress reports for Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle School students are written two times each academic year and serve to update parents on the academic skills and progress students have made. Reports will be emailed to parents following each semester in January and June. Parents can obtain a paper copy of reports by contacting the Front Office.

## **High School**

In order to meet University of California entry requirements, students in Grades 9-12 receive letter grades at the end of each semester. Semester grades and narratives are sent home via email in January and June. Semester grades are recorded on the students' official High School transcript. Mid-semester progress is articulated at the mid-semester student-led parent/teacher conferences that take place in October and March. High School students attend both October and March conferences with their parents. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences during the year.

## **Assessment**

Oak Grove teachers recognize that children learn best when they are actively involved, when they get feedback from one another and the teacher, when they make choices and build on what they already know, and when authentic assessment is an integral part of the process. In authentic assessments, students generate answers instead of choosing answers; the tasks are relevant and meaningful; there may be more than one correct answer; the assessment task is a learning experience in itself where students are actively involved in creating, producing, explaining, or doing something; and the assessments both audit and improve achievement. Students are periodically asked to complete self-assessments.

Oak Grove's faculty does not believe that standardized tests alone accurately measure how well students think and solve problems, what subjects they know in-depth, or how responsible they are for directing and evaluating their own learning, but standardized testing is also an increasing reality of the educational world. Oak Grove believes it is important to support test-taking skills in order to ensure that all students have the skills to perform well on standardized tests and are prepared for whatever future endeavor they may choose. In order to support testing skills, students in Grades 3-8 are taught test-taking strategies and perform practice tests each year. In the Middle School, students are given more opportunities to practice standardized testing as part of the academic program, including timed writing, specific testing strategy instruction, and practice tests. Students in the 8th grade will receive instruction that looks specifically at success on the Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT), which is often required when applying to attend a private High School.

High School teachers develop a grading system which is articulated at the beginning of each course. Although teachers develop criteria for assessment, students are also encouraged to set standards for themselves and participate in self-evaluation in order to promote self-responsibility for learning. Students are not ranked, and grade or score comparison is discouraged. In order to meet college entrance guidelines, High School students take exams such as the PSAT, the SAT, the PLAN, the ACT, and Subject Tests. SAT preparation is incorporated into the curriculum wherever possible.

## **Class Placement:**

### **Early Childhood, Elementary, & Middle School Groups**

Children learn to walk, talk, read, and run at different ages, and the school exercises educational responsibility by placing each child where they will have optimal opportunities to learn and grow in a relaxed manner, respecting the developmental stage of each student. The faculty places students in classes based on what works best for each student and for the school as a whole. With this as a goal, many variables are considered in determining where students are placed. Students may spend more than one year with a homeroom teacher. In placing each student, the school is in partnership with parents in balancing social, emotional, and academic needs based on observations, conversations with the student, written evaluations, and previous school history.

## **Food & Lunch**

- **Vegetarian Campus**

While students are not required to be vegetarian, out of respect for Krishnamurti's wishes, the school is a vegetarian campus. Students, parents, and staff are asked not to bring or eat meat, fish, or fowl on the Oak Grove campus or on any school outing or activity, including field trips and camping.

- **Hot Lunch Program**

The school kitchen offers an optional vegetarian Hot Lunch for Kindergarten through High School students (see current year Tuition Schedule for details). Organic produce is harvested seasonally from the school's garden and local farms and used to supplement other items in the lunch. Hot Lunch fees are paid annually with the Tuition Agreement.

- **Potlucks/Events**

Parents are asked to bring healthful vegetarian food to school events. To avoid excessive use of paper and plastic products, we ask that parents bring the necessary plates and utensils for their family's use.

- **General Food-related Health**

A child's state of mind and capacity to learn is deeply related to his or her physical condition, which necessitates a wholesome diet. To learn effectively, children should come to school well-rested and having had a healthful breakfast. The staff requests that food brought to school for snack, lunch, or any school outings be nutritious and healthful choices, rather than highly sugared and/or highly processed products such

as candy, soda, gum, or other junk food. Our goal is to help children build a relationship to food where they are increasingly able to independently recognize hunger, identify what they need to eat, enjoy their food, and stop eating when they've had enough. We do this by actively exploring, together with students and parents, food-related and other health issues and encouraging parents and students to read labels and understand the ingredients in food as part of the educational program for all students.

## **Campus Care & Property**

- **Clean-up**

We ask all members of the community to stop and pick up litter if they see it on the paths or anywhere else as they walk around campus. All Oak Grove students participate in maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the campus. Each homeroom or High School group is responsible for specific areas of campus such as the picnic tables, Pavilion, etc.

- **Facility Use**

- **Library**

The Elementary Library – “The Owl’s Nest” – is available for use with staff supervision during campus hours. Our library is staffed by a part-time Librarian. Students are welcome to check out books (one to two books per person, per visit, for two weeks, renewable). If a book is lost, the family will be asked to replace it whenever possible. Elementary Library phone: 646-8236 ext. 213.

- **Play Areas**

Children may be in play areas only when supervised. The school takes precautions to ensure the safety of the students on all play structures during regular school hours. School staff members supervise the play structures and the playing field on a rotating basis during lunchtime and other play periods. Playgrounds are closed after school and on weekends. In the Early Childhood Programs (ECP), we ask that parents say good-bye to school at the end of the child’s program. Playgrounds are in use then by other groups or are unsupervised.

- **Basketball & Tennis Courts**

The basketball and tennis courts are available for physical education classes, after-school sports, and for recreational use by boarding students. Special written permission must be obtained from the Head of School for use of these facilities by Oak Grove parents, students, or community members at other times. Parents must accompany elementary-age students after school hours or on weekends.

## Health & Safety

- **Immunizations**

California State law requires that children be fully vaccinated in order to attend Preschool and Grades K-12. Requirements apply to both public and private schools. Depending on the student's age, diseases for which immunizations shall be documented include (1) Diphtheria, (2) Haemophilus Influenzae Type B, (3) Measles, (4) Mumps, (5) Pertussis (whooping cough), (6) Poliomyelitis, (7) Rubella, (8) Tetanus, (9) Hepatitis B, and (10) Varicella (chickenpox).

California State law also requires public and private schools to maintain current immunization documentation for all enrolled students. Documentation that meets state requirements are (1) a current immunization record of all vaccines received from birth to the present; (2) a catch-up vaccine schedule that meets all criteria for conditional status; and/or (3) a temporary or permanent medical exemption.

For further immunization criteria, please refer to Current Immunization Requirements as of 2019, an informational document provided during the enrollment process. Oak Grove School encourages families to visit the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) site [ShotsForSchool.org](http://ShotsForSchool.org) for more comprehensive vaccine information and to discuss questions or concerns with their personal family physician.

- **Accidents**

Every precaution is taken to safeguard students at school and on field trips. If an accident occurs, immediate first aid will be given and parents or the designated emergency contact will be notified. If we are unable to reach the family or doctor, the student will be treated at the nearest emergency hospital while efforts to contact the family continue. The signed medical release form grants necessary treatment. The school provides student accident insurance for covered medical expenses (see Accident Insurance).

If an accident occurs during school hours or on a school activity and parents wish to file a claim with the school's Accident Insurance Carrier, the school Business Office will initiate a claim form based on the teacher's accident report. The parents are responsible for completing the form and for submitting medical bills on a timely basis, as well as for filing a claim with any other medical insurance they may be carrying. The family's personal medical insurance issues a report of their coverage for the accident, which must be processed by the school's Accident Insurance Carrier. See the school Business Office for details.

- **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

For full details of the Emergency Preparedness Plan, please see the OGS website. A copy is also located in the Front Office. We encourage all families to be familiar with the plan. The school employs a text message alert system that enables us to immediately notify every Oak Grove parent via text message in the case of an emergency (fire, earthquake, etc.). The school will not release students to anyone

other than a parent or designated person whose name appears on the Emergency Release Form. For this reason, it is imperative that this information be kept up-to-date. Parents or guardians seeking to retrieve their children must sign for their release.

## **Sexual Health & Wellness**

At Oak Grove School we recognize that sexual health education begins at birth, and that our students' physical, social, and emotional well-being is critical to lifelong healthy relationships with oneself and others. This is reflected through many aspects of the learning day, from preschool to high school. A comprehensive and integrated sexual health curriculum includes age and developmentally appropriate, medically accurate information on a broad set of topics related to sexuality.

### **More about Oak Grove's Sexual Health and Wellness Approach**

A comprehensive and integrated sexual health curriculum brings to the surface our core values of self-understanding, global citizenship, and care for others. Physical, social, and emotional well-being are critical to a student's lifelong healthy relationship with self and others. Sexual health education begins at birth and at Oak Grove is infused through many aspects of the learning day, beginning with preschool through high school. The Oak Grove sexual health curriculum includes age- and developmentally appropriate, medically accurate information on a broad set of topics related to sexuality, including reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, emotions, intimacy, body image, media literacy, consent, abstinence, contraception, disease prevention, sexual orientation, and gender.

Sexuality, in and of itself, intersects and overlaps with every aspect of healthy development. Therefore, a comprehensive sexual health education must include the biological, socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information); the affective domain (feelings, values, and attitudes); and the behavioral domain (communication, decision-making).

### **Shared Sexual Wellness Definitions**

#### **Sex**

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. While these sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as there are individuals who possess both, they tend to differentiate humans as males and females. In general use in many languages, the term sex is often used to mean "sexual activity," but for technical purposes in the context of sexuality and sexual health discussions, the above definition is preferred.

## **Sexual health**

A state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected, and fulfilled. (WHO, 2006a)

## **Sexuality**

Sexual health cannot be defined, understood, or made operational without a broad consideration of sexuality, which underlies important behaviors and outcomes related to sexual health. The working definition of sexuality is that a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.

## **Sexual rights**

There is a growing consensus that sexual health cannot be achieved and maintained without respect for, and protection of, certain human rights. The working definition of sexual rights given below is a contribution to the continuing dialogue on human rights related to sexual health.

The fulfilment of sexual health is tied to the extent to which human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. Sexual rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in international and regional human rights documents and other consensus documents and in national laws.

The application of existing human rights to sexuality and sexual health constitute sexual rights. Sexual rights protect all people's rights to fulfill and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health, with due regard for the rights of others and within a framework of protection against discrimination.

Rights critical to the realization of sexual health include:

- the right to equality and non-discrimination
- the right to be free from torture or from cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment
- the right to privacy
- the right to the highest attainable standard of health (including sexual health) and social security
- the right to marry and to found a family and enter into marriage with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to equality in and at the dissolution of marriage
- the right to decide the number and spacing of one's children

- the right to information, as well as education
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and
- the right to an effective remedy for violations of fundamental rights.

The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.

## Resources

Resources Oak Grove has available which we suggest families have at home:  
[Talking to your Child about Sex and Sexuality](#)

## Parking Lot Safety

### Parking lot guidelines:

- Please drive slowly and heed traffic signs.
- Park your car in the designated areas.
  - No parking in the fire zone between H.S. and Preschool (along the road).
  - No parking under oak trees (on dirt), as this may damage their shallow roots.
  - No parking by the Art Building or along the fire road.
- Please do not park your car in the driveway area in front of the Main House at any time.
- Get out of your car and walk children to the car to prevent children running in the parking lot, unless you are using the “drop-off zone” in front of the school garden.
- Do not leave your car idling while waiting for your child.
- Help keep driveways clear and un-blocked while waiting for your child.
- Arrive on time for prompt pick-up.
- Please make after-school plans prior to the school day to avoid confusion.
- Please make a quick goodbye. The more people in the parking lot, the more confusing it is for teachers, parents, and students.
- Dogs are not allowed on campus. Please leave pets in vehicles during pick-up and drop-off.
- Cars cannot be left parked on campus during non-school hours unless the driver is involved in a school activity.

## Seat Belts & Speed Limits

All drivers are expected to drive within posted speed limits and ensure that every passenger wears a seat belt. As required by law, younger children must be in an

appropriate car seat.

## **On-Campus Driving**

### **Bicycles, Scooters, & Skateboards**

Students are asked to walk their bikes, scooters, and skateboards up and down the main entrance hill, on the paths, and through all parking lots during school hours from 7:30am to 4:30pm. These same devices should be walked at all times through the High School hallways, regardless of time. **Helmets are legally required for all minors who ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards in public areas.** Bikes, scooters, and skateboards are to be locked/parked in the bike racks provided and not to be ridden during school hours on campus or parked outside classrooms. Hallways and atrium areas are off-limits to bikes, scooters, and skateboards. The use of motorized scooters are prohibited by the Ojai police for anyone less than 16 years of age.

### **Carpooling**

Carpooling is encouraged. Please make sure children know who is picking them up and that the school office is informed of any changes (in Preschool and Kindergarten, inform teachers of changes). Oak Grove School does not assume any responsibility for carpool arrangements or for any liability arising from carpooling.

### **Parent Drivers for Field Trips**

We appreciate parent support on field trips! If parents are driving their own vehicle, a copy of their insurance coverage must be on file in the school's Business Office. The minimum amount of coverage for liability and bodily injury is \$100,000 and \$300,000 respectively. If parents volunteer to drive a school van, they must complete a DMV form, provided by the Business Office, along with providing a copy of their driver's license, at least two (2) days before the date of the field trip.

### **Field Trip Permission Slips**

At the beginning of the school year, parents sign an Ojai Valley Field Trip Permission form. This allows groups to take local field trips within the Ojai Valley at any time. For field trips outside of the Ojai Valley, each K-12 teacher will send home a permission form stating date, time, and particulars of the planned field trip. This form must be signed and returned to the teacher before the trip. Students may not participate in out-of-town trips without written parental permission. All Preschool field trips require a signed permission slip, even within the Valley.

### **Safety while Driving**

All drivers are expected to drive within the posted speed limits and ensure that students are wearing seat belts. Students are expected to be courteous and safe while riding in staff- or parent-driven cars or school vehicles. Electronic devices may be used only at the discretion of, and with the permission of, both the teacher and the driver. Generally, this is discouraged. Parents are asked to be aware of appropriate radio stations, consulting with the supervising teacher ahead of time. Eating, singing, and car games are also within the driver's authority. (General school guidelines regarding meat and junk food apply on all school outings.) If student behavior becomes distracting to the driver, the driver should

pull over, stop the car, and address the situation immediately. Students are expected to help clean vehicles after field trips.

## **Camping & Outdoor Activities**

Camping and outdoor activities are an integral part of Oak Grove’s curriculum. Valuable skills are learned and relationships are built during these outdoor experiences. Students are expected to participate in them as in any other class activity; they are not considered as “extra” but rather as an essential aspect of the curriculum. Parents are discouraged from packing for older children, but instead are asked to carefully supervise so that necessary items are remembered and unnecessary items are left behind. When students label and pack their own supplies and equipment, they have more of a sense of what they are taking and how to keep track of it. Useful camping items include tents, backpacks, hiking boots, and lightweight, compact sleeping bags and pads. Since camping trips provide important opportunities for building independence, only parents of the very young (Grade 1 and under) are invited to join trips. Developing personal independence and connection among class members and teachers is an integral part of the Oak Grove outdoor education program. Parents are a valuable part of our team when they support their child’s growth and development in these areas.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents are integral to Oak Grove School. Your active participation is beneficial for the students and the whole school. When you choose Oak Grove for your child(ren), you are choosing a school where you are welcome to participate and expected to contribute to the well-being of the whole educational community. It is important for parents and staff to work together to create a consistent environment for the children. Parents are urged to meet with teachers immediately concerning any problems that may arise during the course of the year.

## **Parent Meetings**

Attendance at parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and all-school meetings is required. Attendance at Parent Education meetings is strongly recommended. Please see specific programs for more detailed information.

## **Fundraising - Annual Giving**

Tuition covers about 80% of the cost of your child’s Oak Grove School education. The school therefore depends on the generosity of parents, grandparents, and friends to raise the additional 20% needed to meet the operational budget. Annual Giving offers a tax-deductible way of helping to bridge this 20% gap.

We expect each parent to donate to the best of their ability to the Annual Fund. The amount of your donation is personal and confidential.

## **Volunteer Hours**

Each family is asked to volunteer a minimum of 25 hours annually, including at least five hours specifically toward major fundraisers.

## Parent Council

The Parent Council is an organizational body of parent volunteers. The Parent Council meets monthly in the Main House. It is composed of volunteers from each class. Parent Council representatives attend homeroom meetings and monthly Parent Council meetings. These representatives work as the communication liaison between the Parent Council and the child's homeroom community. Also, it is through the Parent Council that parents oversee the organization of fundraising events, school socials, community outreach, all-school meetings, staff appreciation, guest speakers, Open House, Ojai Day, and other events. The Chair or Co-Chair of the Parent Council also acts as a communication liaison between Parent Council and the Oak Grove School Board.

The Parent Council is a great way to get involved and provide much needed parental support and input to the school. It is a way to get to know the whole school — a place to work together as parents to help make the school all that it can be. Parents who are interested in representing a homeroom group for a school year can communicate this interest to their child(ren)'s class teacher(s) or the Parent Council chair(s). Additionally, there are sign-up forms available at many of the back-to-school events, including New Parent Orientation, the Welcome Back Coffee, and Back-to-School Night.

The following are some of the ways to get involved:

- Fundraising & community outreach events
- Parent Council
- Fund development
- Recruitment & public relations support
- Miscellaneous office assistance
- Hot Lunch program support
- Library filing & other help
- Classroom support
- After-School programs
- Garden & maintenance projects
- Technology support
- Many other needs that vary from year to year
- Admissions events
- Student productions

All parents are welcome to attend Parent Council meetings either regularly or as drop-ins, whether or not they are actually members of the committee. Parents may add agenda items one week in advance of the meeting by contacting the Chair of the Parent Council, either by email or telephone. Meeting dates are listed on the monthly school calendar.

## Parent & Student Feedback

Parent and student feedback is an essential component of the continued growth of our

school. While not all feedback can be acted on, we still welcome fresh ideas for school-wide improvement. Teachers regularly ask younger students for informal feedback, and older students are given several opportunities in the year to give feedback to their teachers. Parent feedback is gathered periodically via an online survey.

## **Admissions & Financial Concerns**

- **Admissions Policy**

Oak Grove School does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment, or otherwise because of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or age, in violation of existing state or federal laws or regulations. Oak Grove is authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant students.

- **Required Documentation**

The following forms must be completed for students to be enrolled and to attend school:

- Enrollment Contract
- OGS Contact & Release Form
- Emergency Contact Form
- California State Immunization Record (all grades)
- Additional forms are required for Preschool students.

- **Money Matters**

Oak Grove is intentionally small in order to provide a safe, caring educational environment where each student is known well. We are also fortunate to have a beautiful 150-acre campus to explore and delight in. Meeting payroll for our teachers and meeting the demands of maintaining this beautiful campus is a responsibility that cannot be met unless we receive each and every tuition dollar projected in our budget. Delayed or delinquent accounts put a burden on the school, undermine relationship within our small community, and put the school in financial danger. As a non-profit school, we depend on all parents to make tuition payments on time. Delayed or delinquent accounts may result in:

- a student being asked to leave the school (in such cases, families are still responsible for paying the tuition in full)
- a student may not be eligible for financial aid
- a student may not be eligible for re-enrollment.

- **No Refunds Policy:**

Like all other independent schools, Oak Grove budgets and plans with the expectation that all students enrolled will remain for the full school year. For this reason, no portion of tuition or fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event that a student is absent, withdraws, or is asked to leave the school for

disciplinary reasons. Please refer to the Enrollment Contract for more information.

All financial information is strictly confidential and will only be released to those with financial responsibility for the student. If you have questions about your account, please call the Business Office at 805-646-8236 ext. 130.

## **Financial Aid Policy & Procedure**

Oak Grove School benefits from a diverse student body and is committed to maintaining a need-based financial aid program for students who are a good match for the school, but who cannot afford full tuition. However, our financial aid funds are limited and vary year to year. Each year, Oak Grove School awards need-based financial assistance to a limited number of families. Funds are not sufficient to serve all applicants, and priority is given to re-enrolling students. Financial aid grants are typically no more than 25% of tuition and there are no 100% awards. The majority of financial aid awards are a small percentage of full tuition. Financial aid is available at all grade levels, from Preschool through High School. Some specific funded scholarships are available (contact the Admissions Office for information). Parents and friends wishing to sponsor a student (gift is not tax-deductible) may contact the Head of School or the Business Office.

Parents and friends wishing to establish future scholarship opportunities should contact our Development Director.

School and Student Services (SSS), a service of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), is utilized for the application process. This service is used by more than 200 independent schools and has been found to be the most equitable system for determining financial need. Please be aware, however, that the school can rarely grant aid equal to determined need. Families must apply for financial aid annually, remaining eligible by demonstrating significant need and by keeping their student's school account in good standing.

All information received by Oak Grove School regarding financial aid is strictly confidential. Information on how to complete the SSS forms online is available from the Admissions Office. Families should be prepared with all relevant information (income, taxes, etc.) in December for completion of forms. Priority consideration is given to applications submitted by mid-January for the following school year.

## **Re-enrollment**

Enrollment Contracts are sent out in late February for re-enrollment, with a non-refundable deposit due in March to hold a student's place for the following year.

A student's continued enrollment is dependent on compliance with all policies and guidelines in the Enrollment Contract, the Parent & Student Handbook, and when applicable, the High School Handbook Agreement and the Besant House Boarding Guidelines. Enrollment Contracts for a new school year are issued only when all financial obligations for the previous year are complete.

## Budget

Tuition income, class size, staff salaries and benefits, educational program and facilities, financial aid and fund-raising are interdependent in the budget planning process. The OGS Finance Committee meets regularly to monitor the current budget, review financial reports and oversee the school's financial plan, assist the Head of School in preparing the following year's tuition, fees, and overall operating budget, and address long-range, deferred maintenance, and capital improvement plans.

## Information Resources

- **Email**

Our communication tool of choice is email. We therefore expect parents to check their email regularly and notify the Front Office if email addresses change. Both teachers and administrators use email to communicate regularly with parents. As per our Communication Protocol, we ask that parents and teachers do NOT use email to communicate sensitive or difficult issues that would be better addressed by phone or face-to-face.

- **School Newsletters**

"This Week at Oak Grove" is an email communication sent out weekly with information about school events, pertinent dates, and reminders.

- **Website**

Parents and students will find a variety of information and downloads at [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes news, program information, photos, newsletters, calendars, menus, schedules, special events details, and Parent Council announcements. In addition, there is information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often, and parents are encouraged to check it frequently.

## Governance & Administration

### Where to Direct Questions:

- **Oak Grove School Board**

The Oak Grove School Board (OGSB) is responsible for assisting the Head of School in determining and meeting the long-range needs of the school. The OGSB membership is drawn from KFA Trustees, past and present parents, OGS alumni, and interested community members, all of whom bring specific wisdom, expertise, fundraising potential, or perspective to the Board. Current committees include: Finance Committee, Campus Planning Committee, Fund Development Committee, Parent Council, WASC Committee, and Nominating Committee. Members are appointed each year by the Nominating Committee, which is happy to receive notices of interest from parents or recommendations. Direct all questions regarding school governance to the Chair of the OGSB.

- **Head of School**

The Head of School is responsible for the overall day-to-day administration and operations of the school, with the assistance, input, and support of other administrators, staff, and faculty.

Direct all questions regarding general school philosophy, policies and procedures, all-school safety issues, problem-solving and/or mediation when all other avenues have been exhausted (see Communication and Conflict Resolution Protocol) to the Head of School.

- **Director of Early Childhood Program (ECP)**

The Director of ECP is responsible for the day-to-day operations of all aspects of the ECP (Preschool, Kindergarten & Parent Education). Direct all questions related specifically to the ECP Program, including general curriculum, educational programs, student placement, and student discipline to the Director of ECP.

- **Director of Elementary Program**

The Director of the Elementary Program is responsible for coordination of the elementary, Grades 1-5. The Elementary Director works closely with the Director of Teaching and Learning in the support of teachers and students. The Elementary Director works closely with the Head of School and the Director of Teaching and Learning in the support of teachers and students.

- **Director of Middle School**

The Director of the Middle School is responsible for coordination of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The Middle School Director serves as a communication and problem-solving link to the Head of School regarding all issues to do with the High School.

- **Director of High School**

The Director of the High School is responsible for the day-to-day operations of all aspects of the High School and serves as a communication and problem-solving link to the Head of School regarding all issues to do with the High School.

- **School Faculty**

The Oak Grove faculty is a group of professional individuals who have sought the school for its sensible and sensitive approach to learning. They have varying credentials (all full-time homeroom and core subject teachers hold teaching credentials), undergraduate and graduate degrees, and experience, and share an appreciation for Oak Grove's unique learning atmosphere. The teachers set the tone for the learning environment and facilitate the implementation of the school's intent.

Direct all questions about your child's academic, personal, or social progress, or information regarding your child that may influence school behavior (e.g. family sickness, death, parental absence, separation, divorce), as well as questions regarding school assignments, homework, etc. to your student's homeroom, core subject teacher, or specialist teacher.

- **Director of Admissions**

The Director of Admissions is responsible for all aspects of recruitment, retention, and admissions in the school and works closely with the Director of Outreach to support full enrollment at the school. Direct all questions regarding enrollment or re-enrollment and student placement to the Director of Admissions.

- **Director of Outreach**

The Director of Outreach is responsible for all marketing and outreach opportunities regarding the school and works closely to support the Director of Admissions in recruiting and retaining students and families. Direct all questions regarding marketing and school outreach opportunities to the Director of Outreach.

- **Director of Operations**

The Director of Operations is responsible for all non-instructional aspects of the school (campus planning, maintenance, kitchen, and front office). Direct all questions regarding non-instructional issues to the Director of Operations.

- **Director of Development**

The Director of Development is responsible for all fundraising events and activities in the school and works closely with the Fund Development Committee of the OGSB, as well as the Head of School, to ensure that the school reaches its fundraising goals. Direct all questions regarding fundraising to the Director of Development.

- **OGS/KFA Business Manager**

The Business Manager is responsible for the overall smooth functioning of the Business Office and works closely with the Head of School and OGS Finance Committee in developing, implementing, and overseeing school budgets. Direct all questions regarding tuition payments or billing concerns to the OGS/KFA Business Manager.

- **High School Registrar**

The High School Registrar is responsible for assisting the Director of the High School in the smooth running of the High School and its administrative office. Direct all questions regarding High School schedules, reports, conferences, events, and transcripts to the High School Registrar.

- **Alumni Association**

The Alumni Association is made up of students and families who have attended Oak Grove School. There is an alumni event in the middle and at the end of each school year. More information regarding alumni affairs is available on the school's website.

- **Accreditation & Memberships**

Oak Grove School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The school is also a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Education Records Bureau (ERB), The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), the

National Council for Social Studies, the National Association of Elementary Principals, the Ojai Valley Neighborhood for Learning, and the Ojai Chamber of Commerce.

- **Administrative Structure - Krishnamurti Foundation of America**

Oak Grove School is the largest activity of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA). Other activities of the KFA include Krishnamurti Publications of America, Krishnamurti Center (including Archives, Library, and Pine Cottage), and the Pepper Tree Retreat. The KFA Board of Trustees oversees all KFA activities but designates authority and responsibility for the Oak Grove School to the Oak Grove School Board.

[www.kfa.org](http://www.kfa.org)

## The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is currently made up of 8 members who oversee the major areas of the school. It is made up of the following positions:

Head of School	Jodi Grass
High School Program Director	Russ Bowen
Elementary/Middle School Program Director	Ron Schindel
Early Childhood Program Director	Laurie Cornell
Business Manager	Sandra Torres
Director of Operations	Jacqueline Valle
Director of Admissions	Krista Swanner
Director of Outreach	Warren Petersen

# # #

# Early Childhood Program

## Preschool & Kindergarten

“The years which a student spends in a school must leave behind in him a fragrance and delight.”

J. Krishnamurti, “On Education”

## Table of Contents

• Welcome!	30
• About the Early Childhood Programs at Oak Grove School	30
• Preschool	30
• Kindergarten	30
• The Basics (Hours)	30
• After-School Care	31
• Parent Education	31
• Parent-Teacher Conferences	31
• Communication between School & Home	32
• Arrivals & Departures	32
• Parking	33
• Clothing	33
• Snacks & Lunch	33
• Health	34
• Injuries at School	35
• Bringing Toys to School	35
• Play-dates	35
• Birthdays	35
• Field Trips & Permission Slips	36
• Rainy Days	36
• Art & Messes	36
• Television & Media Exposure	37
• Family Environment	37
• Borrowing Classroom Library Books	38
• Toilet Learning	38
• General All-School Rules	38
• Asking Questions — Who to Ask	38
• Oak Grove School Conflict Resolution Policy & Protocol	39
• Welcome!	40

## Welcome!

The staff of the Early Childhood Programs extends a warm welcome to all new and returning Preschool and Kindergarten children and their families. When your child enrolls in our Early Childhood Programs, you become a member of this learning community of teachers, parents, and caregivers working as partners to support young children. You help create its atmosphere, and our collective spirit makes the school what it is!

## About the Early Childhood Programs at Oak Grove School

The Early Childhood Programs consist of two Preschool groups, "Geckos" and "Iguanas," a Kindergarten, and a Parent Education program. Our faculty includes professional, qualified teachers, as well as an ECP Director. We maintain a dedicated interest in the healthy growth and development of young children and their families and believe in the value of parent participation in a child's school experience.

Early childhood is a time when intelligence, heart, and a sturdy sense of self are nurtured. Our mission is to encourage in young children their joy of discovery and spirit of inquiry by offering them experiences that make learning come alive. We deeply value play and see it as a vital part of a child's construction of knowledge. We support the development of the whole child, with a curriculum and environment organized to foster the growth of each individual in the areas of intellectual, social, emotional, and physical skills. We see children as competent, capable beings.

## Preschool

Preschool is often a child's first step out of the home and an opportunity for young children to learn to trust new adults. As children become more at ease with separation, they begin to form peer relationships and increasingly become part of a group. Preschool provides children a wide range of experiences in a safe, nurturing environment with a special emphasis on social-emotional development based on the values of community and empathy. Teachers support Preschoolers in developing social skills, personal responsibility, emotional awareness, and skills in peaceful conflict resolution. We honor and nurture the whole child, with an understanding that children learn at their own pace and have unique talents and learning needs.

## Kindergarten

Kindergarten is designed for 5- to 6-year-olds and is a step from Preschool into the wider school community. It builds the foundation for social maturity and academic learning while remaining responsive to the here-and-now of the young child's experience.

## The Basics (Hours)

- **Preschool Hours:**
  - Regular Day: 9:00am-12:00pm, Monday-Friday
  - Extended Day: 9:00am-2:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
  - Noon (12:00pm) dismissal for all programs on Wednesday
  - Before Care is available, free of charge, from 8:00-9:00am, Monday through Friday, and takes place in the Preschool play yard with Preschool teachers.

- **Kindergarten Hours:**

- 9:00am-2:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- Noon (12:00pm) dismissal for all programs on Wednesday
- Before Care is available, free of charge, from 8:00-9:00am, Monday through Friday, and takes place in the Kindergarten classroom with Kindergarten teachers.

## **After-School Care**

This program is offered to Kindergarten through 6th grade students on the elementary playground with the Director of Aftercare, from 2:30-5:00pm MTuThF and 12noon-5:00pm on Wednesdays. Parents are billed for hours used at the end of each month.

## **Parent Education**

Once a month all parents participate in an evening Parent Meeting with their child's teachers. (These monthly parent meetings continue throughout the Oak Grove school years.) At least one adult from each family is required to attend. At these meetings, teachers facilitate dialogue with parents about classroom experiences and issues of early childhood, with the goal of building our knowledge and understanding of each other from meeting to meeting. All-school business is also shared as needed.

In addition, we offer monthly Parent Education meetings that are held in the morning during school hours. They are facilitated by the ECP Director and also include a rotation of all the teachers from ECP and Early Elementary. Parent Education meetings provide an opportunity to wonder out loud, deepen understanding of our individual children, their relationships and growth, and of child development in general. We place high value on this aspect of our program and urge families to attend.

The goal of our Parent Education program is to build community and to increase self-understanding, balance, and joy in family life. Observing and discussing children together as a team helps us all become more conscious in our parenting and enriches our community.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Preschool Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year, in October and again in March. Please note that Preschool takes a Friday off both in October and March for conferencing.

Kindergarten Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year, once in October and once in March, for one week during the afternoons. School ends at 12:00noon, Monday through Friday that week, with After-School care is available on the elementary playground from 12noon until 5:00pm.

Conferences are an opportunity to continue building partnership between teachers and parents, as well as a time to share observations, ask questions, and discuss anything that might be coming up for your child and/or family. The more the teachers and Director

know about each child, the better their understanding can be, and the deeper their relationship with the child can become. It is our goal to help each child receive the utmost support possible from their school experience.

## Communication between School & Home

### Information about school-related activities will reach you through:

- Regular teacher emails
- Weekly school updates sent by email, called "This Week at Oak Grove"
- A monthly calendar of upcoming events, sent electronically
- Notices posted on the ECP kiosk or classroom doorways
- The OGS website is [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes calendars, photos, videos, newsletters, special events, menus, Parent Council, announcements, and school forms. There is also information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often.
- The required monthly Parent Meeting informs parents in more depth, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Please be sure to check daily for communications so you will be aware of the "goings-on" of school.

Teachers use their cell phones as clocks, cameras, and emergency phones when on the playground. If you need to get a message to teachers, please use the classroom telephones — for Preschool: **805-646-8236 ext 230** and for Kindergarten: **805-646-8236 ext 229**. Teachers do not check email during the school day. If an email is sent, we will do our best to reply within 24 hours. On Fridays, our intention is to return emails on Monday. We're all navigating a new era with the expectation of instant communication. It is our sincere hope to slow down and bring more thoughtful responsiveness to this process.

## Arrivals & Departures

We ask that parents set up support systems (e.g. grandparents, friends, caregivers, etc.) to be utilized in the event of unexpected delays. If your pick-up plan changes, please call the classroom to let us know.

Authorization to Pick Up: No child will be released to a person who is unauthorized by a parent/caregiver to pick up the child. We must have written or verbal authorization for changes in this respect. Be sure to remind your pick-up person to sign your child out on the attendance sheet with a legal signature. Signing in and out, with your first and last name, is a state licensing requirement in Preschool.

- **"Clean" Good-byes:**

It is important that you be on time, or early, to pick up your child. When "Good-bye Circle" ends, either at 12pm or 2:30pm, we have said good-bye to each other and to school. This is the time to help your child put on shoes, gather their lunch box

and belongings, and say a clear good-bye to the school campus. It is confusing for kids if play time begins anew. Teachers are busy with cleaning up to prepare the facility for the next day. If parents need to talk, please do this outside of the playgrounds and classroom while supervising children, as they are now in your care.

- **Cell phone-Use Free Zone**

We ask that you do not use cell phones at school, especially at “Hello” and “Good-bye” times. Your child has missed you and is ready to reconnect with you.

## **Parking**

Please park in the circular area outside the Preschool playground or the spaces above it. Leave the space free along the road between Preschool and High School, as this is a fire zone. It is important to walk your child into and out of school so that they are safely supervised in the parking area.

## **Clothing**

School is a place to relax, enjoy, and learn. Please send children in old, washable play clothes to allow them maximum opportunity to participate in a wide variety of creative learning situations, often using materials such as paint, play-dough, sand, mud, or food. Smocks are available, but accidents happen (our paint is washable but some colors may stain). Be sure that your child wears clothes that are meant to be dirty, because they will be! Please leave costumes at home. There are many materials provided which children may use to create pretending costumes at school.

Sturdy play shoes are a must. State law requires shoes to be worn on campus by all of us, and children need them to walk and run to and from the parking lot or the “baby oak tree.” Children may go barefoot on the Preschool playground.

One or more full changes of clothes, preferably marked with your child’s name, must be brought to school, especially for hot days or rainy days! These stay at school in your child’s personal cubby. Please check daily for wet or soiled clothes, and send another change of clothes to school right away as needed.

Temperatures can vary 30 degrees within a single day in Ojai; it helps to dress in layers. Please label sweaters, jackets, hats, lunch boxes, everything (!), so lost items can find their way back to you. This helps save time and loss of clothes. Check the Lost-and-Found box on the front porch or on the playground fence often.

Children have a cubby with their name on it for special belongings, outerwear, extra clothes, or backpack. Please check every day before going home to ensure the safe return of all personal items. Artwork will also be placed in cubbies.

## **Snacks & Lunch**

Since young children sometimes don’t eat breakfast, have small stomachs, and need a nutritional boost between regular mealtimes, we plan for a mid-morning snack every day. It makes kids feel safe to know that they will be able to eat at school when they get

hungry.

Lunch boxes should be made of metal, hard plastic, or a well-sealed cloth bag to prevent ground squirrel problems. Please be sure that snack is wholesome, not “junk food.” Families have different values around food which we respect, but at Oak Grove we exclude sugar, meat, and highly processed food. Nutritious snacks improve health, dispositions, learning ability, and provide needed energy. We ask that lunch containers be free of all media images.

The school asks that children not share their food so that parents may monitor their child’s diet more accurately. In an effort to curb consumption of plastics and cut down the amount of trash generated on campus, please pack snack items in reusable containers clearly marked with your child’s name. Cloth napkins also help children begin to understand ecological concepts like “reduce, reuse, recycle” in a concrete way.

Teachers and children participate in regular cooking projects together. Parents are welcome to volunteer to create a cooking project with children during school, following dietary restrictions for their child’s group. Check with teachers to make a plan with them if you wish to volunteer. Cooking and eating together are great bonding and learning experiences for children. With cooking curriculum we create opportunities to try foods from other cultures and learn different ways of eating foods, along with practicing independence by pouring and serving independently. Washing up dishes and tools is a natural and enjoyable part of the process.

## **Health**

For the protection of your child as well as the others, please do not send children to school if there is any symptom of illness. Your children should stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- A cold less than 3 days old
- A sore throat or earache
- Swollen neck glands
- Fever
- Nausea or vomiting
- Red or discharging eyes
- A rash
- Appear listless, drowsy, flushed, show loss of appetite or any behavior noticeably out of the ordinary.

Children may not re-enter school less than 24 hours after their fever has subsided. A note from your pediatrician is required when a child has a frequent runny nose due to allergies, sinus, etc. Upon a child’s return to school following a serious illness, surgery or broken bone(s), a doctor’s note is also required.

If your child has any allergies or health problems, please let the ECP Director know. If a

child has been exposed to a communicable disease, the Director must be notified before bringing the child to school. If you learn that your child has a contagious disease, please let us know as soon as possible, so that we may alert other parents to watch for symptoms. Children stay home from school until no longer contagious (a doctor's note is needed to confirm this). Please call the Front Office if your child will be absent from school.

## **Injuries at School**

Minor injuries sustained in school will be handled by the teachers. Soap, water, and band-aids will be the extent of the first-aid rendered. In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If unable to reach you, we will call your child's physician listed on your medical form. Each child must have an Emergency Consent form on file at school.

If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. The ECP Director will be in charge of making decisions regarding the care of your child. The school maintains a parent's signed consent form agreeing to necessary medical care. Please keep the school up-to-date on emergency phone numbers and other pertinent information.

## **Bringing Toys to School**

We ask children to leave all personal toys at home. Please talk to the teachers if your child needs a "comfort" object, such as a security blanket or special "stuffy" while at school. We welcome sharing items such as beloved books or nature finds like bird's nests. There may also be times throughout the year when teachers invite children to bring things to school, like a piece of fruit for "friendship salad" or a stuffed animal to measure. Absolutely no toy swords, guns, or weapons of any kind may be brought to school.

## **Play-dates**

We ask that parents make play-date plans for children in advance, away from school. Our policy with the children is that "It's not okay to talk about play-dates at school." This encompasses planning them and talking about the one they're anticipating or remembering -- because others may feel excluded and feelings may be hurt. When kids beg for a play-date at pick-up time, we remind them and parents that play-date planning happens at home.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very important to children of this age, and children like to share birthdays with their friends at school. Birthdays are important occasions in growing up, and parents are encouraged to spend some time at school that day. If you wish to provide a special snack for your child's birthday, please contact the teachers in advance. Remember that any food treat needs to be made without sugar, meat, or refined, processed foods. In addition, teachers will let you know about food allergies or dietary guidelines for other children in the group.

Instead of food, you might want to create a special art project for children to make and take home. If there will be a separate, private party to which all the children are not

invited, please do not distribute invitations or discuss it at school.

## **Field Trips & Permission Slips**

For older Preschoolers and Kindergartners, we may plan local field trips. We usually choose destinations in the Ojai community (fire station, trolley ride to the park, local farms, post office, etc.). Parents will be notified before each trip and asked to sign a field trip release for each trip from school. Parent cars may be used to help with transportation, providing that you have an appropriate carseat for each child and adequate auto insurance (proof of this must be on file at school).

We welcome extra parents to volunteer as field trip guides. The more adults who travel with us, the more opportunity for each child's questions to be heard. Extra hands are extremely helpful, so please feel free to invite yourself.

## **Rainy Days**

On rainy days, Preschoolers and Kindergartners engage in "rainy day hikes" around campus, use roofed outdoor areas for play, share our inside space, and share other spaces, like the High School Student Center. Our covered porch is set up with painting easels or sensory tables and activities for rain water exploration.

Since Ojai is a temperate climate, we ask parents to bring children warmly dressed for outdoor play on rainy and cold or windy days. Children will definitely play outside and their clothing will get wet. With rubber boots, raincoat and hat, we will go puddle-hopping and explore the properties of drips and gutters as the rain pours down and collects in deep spaces. If you are a volunteer that day, dress warmly yourself, as adults are outside, too!

## **Art & Messes**

Children will be encouraged to participate in a variety of art activities, some with lovely results and some pretty quirky. Whatever your tastes, please be appreciative of children's imagination, enthusiasm, creativity, and courage to use materials in their own way. We aim for uniqueness, self-expression, hard work, experimentation, and involvement.

Please do not paint or draw for children. When a child asks adults to "draw a cat" and they do so, it can give kids a feeling of hopelessness — a feeling that they will never be able to draw such a "good" (i.e. representational) cat themselves, and they may stop trying.

We don't tell children what to paint or ask them what they've painted. Instead we acknowledge the effort, feeling, or colors seen in the painting. Instead of asking, "What is it?" it's more helpful to say something like, "What a lot of black," or "That must have taken a long time."

Remember that in young children's art, the finished product is not nearly so important to the child's growth as the process — the experimentation with form, texture, color, or the feelings of frustration, fierceness, fear, or joy expressed. For the young child, creating with art materials is an excellent opportunity for developing positive self-appraisal. We encourage you to display your child's work in your home, since this can spark

conversation with you about their day at school.

## **Television & Media Exposure**

Among the issues with which the school staff is centrally concerned is popular culture's influence on children. Through music, film, video games, internet, and print, children are subjected to highly potent messages about life. The impact of such messages is revealed regularly in children's conversations, artwork, dress, and play. The 21st century media boom threatens to supplant both family and school as primary sources of information and values.

Parents and teachers are not powerless in the face of this. Clearly it is the task of both parents and teachers to cultivate critical judgment so that children can become discriminating adults. It is not possible to shield students entirely from the media even while still young, but it is a parental responsibility to regulate and monitor their access to it. Every person has daily opportunities to choose how to act, what to eat, wear, or acquire, and to focus on the level of attention given to moment-to-moment experiences.

"TV programming and advertising selectively portray and powerfully reinforce a materialistic orientation toward life. Advertising exhorts us to consume more while our instincts for human survival tell us we need to learn how to live with less." -Duane Elgin, "Voluntary Simplicity"

## **Family Environment**

Parents who enroll a child at Oak Grove are asked to support and encourage a family environment that reflects the intention of the school. Some examples of practices in the home that are consistent with those employed at school are listed here. These suggestions may be discussed in Parent Meetings:

- "Wondering out loud" with children, rather than jumping to judgment
- Setting clear, consistent, firm boundaries and limits and following through with logical consequences rather than using rewards and punishments
- Respecting children's individuality, learning style, and pace
- Establishing family time and family meetings
- Establishing quiet times or times of solitude
- Giving age-appropriate responsibilities to develop life skills and mutual responsibility
- Relating to nature and caring for the environment
- Attending to choice of healthful food and exercise
- Addressing media issues thoughtfully.

## **Borrowing Classroom Library Books**

The lending policy for classroom books is that one book may be borrowed by a child for one day, due back on the child's next school day. A parent signs the book out on the

clipboard that day and signs it back in again the next day. Please return the borrowed book before checking out another one and replace missing or damaged books right away. We encourage you to use the public library as your primary source of borrowed books.

## **Toilet Learning**

Licensing requirements for our Preschool program require children to be potty independent. Because our facility is not licensed for changing diapers or pull-ups, we require parents to stay on campus if their child is in a diaper or pull-up or if their child has regular accidents at school.

We encourage children to undress themselves for toileting. In order to support children with this we ask that they have clothing that is easy to take off and put on (such as pants with elastic waistbands) and please: no belts, overalls, buttons up the back, etc. that are frustrating to the child and reinforce dependence on an adult.

Toilet accidents at school are taken in a matter-of-fact way. We don't scold or punish children for having an accident. We simply help them into dry clothes and encourage the habit of dryness. In case of accidents, be sure your child has changes of underpants, socks, etc. available. Children become so involved in certain projects that it is easy to forget to make a dash for the toilet. Please understand and try not to express shock or anger if your child should need to use this change of clothes while at school.

Children use the bathroom whenever needed, with an adult keeping an eye out for them. We keep the children safe while encouraging independence in toileting.

## **General All-School Rules**

At Oak Grove, we ask students not to damage equipment, buildings, trees, plants, or animals that live at school. All insects, lizards, and snakes on campus are protected from being collected and/or caged. No students may play with sticks anytime or anywhere on campus. Shoes are to be worn at all times outdoors (with exceptions for water play or inside the Preschool play yard).

We ask students not to bring or use electronics at school. We also ask adults not to use cell phones at school, as this interferes with attunement to children's needs.

## **Asking Questions – Who to Ask:**

- **Teachers:**  
Questions about your child's academic, personal, or social progress. Please inform teachers if your child is experiencing any unusual stress at home, like family sickness, death, parental absence, separation, or divorce, so that teachers can take the situation into account in their daily work with your child.
- **Director of Early Childhood Programs:**  
Questions about child development, general ECP curriculum, school safety, ECP student admission and placement, and financial aid concerns. Questions regarding general school philosophy, policies and procedures.

- **Head of School:**  
Problem-solving and/or mediation when all other avenues have been exhausted (see Conflict Resolution Policy).
- **Business Office:**  
Questions regarding tuition payments or billing concerns.
- **Director of Admissions:**  
Questions regarding enrollment or re-enrollment.
- **Director of Development:**  
Questions regarding fundraising.
- **Director of Outreach:**  
Questions regarding school news, calendar, upcoming events.
- **Oak Grove School Board Chair:**  
Questions regarding school governance.
- **Executive Director & Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America:**  
Questions regarding KFA activities -- publishing, archives, library and study center, workshops, gatherings and dialogues, information about international trustees meetings, and other projects.

## **Oak Grove School Conflict Resolution Policy & Protocol**

In line with the school's intent, a mindful approach to conflict is extremely important. Small school communities such as ours depend on honest, reflective, sensitive, and caring forms of communication that above all consider what we are modeling for growing children. We ask all members of our community to consider the following:

- **Step One:**  
**Asking Questions, Fact-finding, and Clarifying Situations before Taking Action**  
In the world of mediation and conflict resolution, it is often the case that a worsening conflict could have been avoided had the parties involved gathered more information. Sometimes a concern is based on limited information, a misunderstanding, or a rumor followed by a misinformed reaction that escalates into conflict.  
  
If a student or parent has a concern, we ask that the first step be to speak with the parties involved with an open mind; ask questions and clarify before passing judgment or passing information on to others. This approach can often resolve concerns before they become conflicts.
- **Step Two: Direct Communication with Other Party**  
When a genuine concern or conflict is evident, the first attempt at resolution must

be directly with the other party. We ask that parents do this before speaking to uninvolved parties, which frequently complicates the original problem. We also ask that communication be made by setting up a face-to-face meeting with the other party. Please do not use email to communicate sensitive issues.

- **Parents & Faculty/Staff**

Parents are asked to contact the faculty or staff member directly and set up a meeting to discuss the issue.

- **Students & Faculty/Staff**

Students in Early Childhood are represented by their parents. If a faculty or staff member is the other party, then a meeting should be arranged directly with the faculty/staff member.

- **Step Three: Mediation**

If Step One and Two do not result in satisfactory resolution, parents should seek help with mediation in the following order:

When the concern involves a teacher or faculty/staff member who is not the child's homeroom teacher: First, seek the assistance of the child's homeroom teacher and ask them to meet together with you and the other party. Second, seek the assistance of the Director of Early Childhood Programs.

When the concern involves your child's teacher(s), seek the assistance of the ECP Director.

- **Final Step**

When all possible attempts at resolution have been exhausted, the Head of School should be contacted. If this final mediation does not result in resolution, the Head of School will consider the various points of view and decide what action to take.

## **Welcome!**

Again, welcome! We teachers are excited by the chance to work together with you to enhance growth for all of us. Children live in the here-and-now. Their questions, current ideas, feelings, and passions really matter. Meeting children where they are, encouraging them to ask questions, make meaningful decisions and share their thinking, is what powerful learning and teaching are all about.

We are creating a unique community together here at Oak Grove, a place where children and adults are free to explore, to express themselves, to make friends, to solve problems creatively, and to be themselves. Other parents will tell you: the more they put into the experience, the more they grew along with their children!

We look forward to our time together.

# # #

# Elementary Program (Grades 1-5)

## Table of Contents

• Welcome!	43
• School Hours	43
• After-School Care	43
• Parent Education	43
• Conferences	43
• Communication Between School & Home	43
• Homework	44
• Snacks & Lunch	44
• Health	45
• Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity	45
• Injuries at School	45
• Camping	46
• Field Trips & Permission Slips	46
• After School Plans	46
• Birthdays	46
• Rainy Days	47
• Family Environment	47
• Television & Media Exposure	47
• General All-School Rules	47
• Oak Grove School Conflict Resolution Policy & Protocol	48

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Elementary Program at Oak Grove School! The staff of the Elementary Program extends a warm welcome to all new and returning children and their families. When you enroll your child at Oak Grove, you become a member of this learning community of teachers, parents, and caregivers working as partners to support children. You help create its atmosphere, and our collective spirit makes the school what it is! The Elementary Program offers a progressive approach to education which is steeped in collaboration and teamwork, creativity, imagination, critical thinking, and problem-solving. We look forward to a partnership of collaboration and inquiry.

## **School Hours**

### **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday**

8:00am to 2:30pm - Grades 1-3

8:00am to 3:15pm - Grades 4 and 5

**Wednesday:** All classes end at 12:00noon.

## **After-School Care**

This program is offered to Kindergarten through 6th grade students on the elementary playground with the Director of Aftercare from 2:30-5:00pm MTuThF and 12noon-5:00pm Wednesdays. Parents are billed at the end of the month for hours used.

## **Parent Education**

Once a month all parents participate in an evening Parent Meeting with their child's teacher. At least one adult from each family is required to attend. At these meetings, teachers facilitate dialogue with parents about classroom experiences and developmental stages, with the goal of building our knowledge and sharing experiences. Teachers often discuss the upcoming academic focus, celebrate recently completed projects, and offer an opportunity for mutual support. All-school business is also shared as needed.

## **Conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences for Elementary grades are held twice annually in October and March. The school requests that both parents or primary caregivers attend these conferences if at all possible. Upper elementary conferences are student-led in March. Additional meetings with teachers are encouraged and can be requested at any time during the year.

## **Communication between School & Home**

### **Information about school-related activities will reach you through:**

- Regular teacher emails
- Weekly school updates sent by email, called "This Week at Oak Grove"
- A monthly calendar of upcoming events, sent electronically
- Notices posted on the parking lot white boards
- The OGS website is [www.oakgroveschool.org](http://www.oakgroveschool.org). This includes calendars, photos,

videos, newsletters, special events, menus, Parent Council, announcements, and school forms. There is also information on the school, its history and philosophy. The website is updated often.

- The required monthly Parent Meeting informs parents in more depth, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Please be sure to check daily for communications so you will be aware of the “goings-on” of school.

Teachers use their cell phones as clocks, cameras, and emergency phones when on the playground. If you need to get a message to teachers, please call your student’s classroom telephone: 805-646-8236. Teachers typically do not check email during the school day. If an email is sent, we will do our best to reply within 24 hours. We’re all navigating a new era with the expectation of instant communication. It is our sincere hope to slow down and bring more thoughtful responsiveness to this process.

Teachers usually check their phone and email messages before the school day begins (prior to 7:45am) and at the end of the school day (time varies according to the teacher), but may not be able to respond immediately. Teachers will, however, make every effort to respond to parent emails and phone messages within 24 hours during the week. On non-school days — weekends and holidays — the expectation is that emails and phone messages will be answered on the first day back (typically a Monday). During the school day when teachers are with students, teachers do not typically check email messages. Urgent messages should be conveyed by class telephone and routed through the Front Office.

\* Please note, most teachers do NOT use texting as a means of communication with parents.

## **Homework**

In the early elementary years, the goal of homework is to connect school and home, foster a positive attitude toward independent learning, and build a sense of responsibility and follow-through. Students will need support from adults in acquiring homework skills in order to complete assignments.

For upper elementary students, homework also builds autonomy, independent thinking, and specific skills. Homework is the responsibility of the student, not the parents, and is an indicator for teachers of what students can complete on their own. Parents are asked to support students in providing a quiet work space.

## **Snacks & Lunch**

The Hot Lunch Program at Oak Grove School is inspired by our founder, J. Krishnamurti, and makes space for us to awaken intelligence by preparing our meals with the principles of compassion. The intention of this plant-based lunch program is to use high quality, organic and non-GMO local produce and ingredients to create nutrient-rich, balanced meals that strengthen our personal relationship with food and surroundings. You may send a vegetarian lunch from home for your child or sign up in advance for the school Hot Lunch Program.

For the mid-morning snack break, please send foods that are wholesome. Families have different values around food which we respect, but at Oak Grove we exclude sugar, meat, and highly processed food. Nutritious snacks improve health, learning ability, and provide needed energy. We ask that lunch and snack containers be reusable whenever possible to limit waste.

## **Health**

A school is a unique environment where students, teachers, and staff are in close contact on a regular basis and illness can spread quickly. To ensure the health and safety of all persons on campus, please do not bring your child to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness. If a student develops symptoms while at school, they will be sent to the Infirmary in the Front Office to determine if a call should be made to the parent for pick-up. For the protection of your child as well as the others, please do not send children to school if there is any symptom of illness. Your children should stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- A cold or cough less than 3 days old
- A sore throat or earache
- Swollen neck glands
- Fever
- Nausea or vomiting
- Red or discharging eyes
- A rash
- Appear listless, drowsy, flushed, show loss of appetite or any behavior noticeably out of the ordinary

Children are welcome back to school 24 hours after their fever has subsided.

## **Administering Medicine at School & Restricting Activity**

Over-the-counter medicines (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, homeopathic supplements, etc.) and prescription medicines (albuterol, antibiotics, etc.) may be dispensed to your student only when a medical authorization form is completed and on file in the Infirmary. A parent/guardian may complete the section for over-the-counter medication; a physician must complete the section for all prescription medication. The medical authorization form includes the required dosage and dosing intervals. This form is available in the Front Office.

If there are restrictions regarding physical education class, recess, or any other activity for one to three days, a parent/guardian must provide a note excusing the student. Any physical restriction lasting longer than three days requires a doctor's note.

## **Injuries at School**

Minor injuries sustained in school will be handled by the teachers and/or the Infirmary staff. Soap, water, and band-aids will be the extent of the first-aid rendered. In case of a more significant injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. Each child must have an Emergency Consent form on file at school. If necessary, we will also call an

ambulance or paramedics. The school maintains a parent's signed consent form agreeing to necessary medical care. Please keep the school up-to-date on emergency phone numbers and other pertinent information.

## **Camping**

Closeness with nature begins early at Oak Grove School. The wooded campus is bordered by acres of oak groves and wetlands, and the curriculum and daily schedule provide for large blocks of outdoor activity. On any given day, children explore fields in search of seasonal insects and flowers, tend herbs and vegetables, sketch in a rose garden, or walk to the wetlands to observe the web of life through energy exchange. A familiarity and comfort in nature is emphasized across the school, and nowhere is this better manifested than in the camping program. Through a graduated sequence of trips, students build their confidence, self-sufficiency, awareness, and appreciation of beauty. Most importantly, they develop self-knowledge through a relationship with nature and each other. We require all students to fully participate in our camping trips. These trips provide opportunities for students to get to know themselves, their peers, and their teachers better, and they provide chances to overcome challenges of all sorts. Students learn practical skills related to traveling, camping, and backpacking.

## **Field Trips & Permission Slips**

At the beginning of the school year, parents sign an Ojai Valley Field Trip Permission form. This allows groups to take local field trips within the Ojai Valley at any time. For field trips outside of the Ojai Valley, each K-12 teacher will send home a permission form stating date, time, and particulars of the planned field trip. This form must be signed and returned to the teacher before the trip. Students may not participate in out-of-town trips without written parental permission. All Preschool field trips require a signed permission slip, even within the Valley.

## **After-School Plans**

We ask that parents make play-date plans for children in advance, away from school. We discourage children from talking about their after-school play-date while at school as others may feel excluded or experience hurt feelings. Scheduling play-dates after school in the parking area is difficult for parents and students alike and can cause a safety issue as children move through the parking lot. Please make every effort to make plans ahead of time.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very important to children of this age, and children like to share birthdays with their friends at school. If you wish to provide a special snack for your child's birthday, please contact the teachers in advance. Remember that any food treat should be free of excessive processing, sugar, and artificial ingredients whenever possible. In addition, teachers will let you know about food allergies or dietary guidelines for other children in the group. If there will be a separate, private party to which all the children are not invited, please do not distribute invitations or discuss it at school.

## **Rainy Days**

On rainy days, Elementary students are often eager to play outdoors. Please send your student with appropriate rain gear and a change of clothes and shoes on rainy days. There are covered areas to support outdoor activity for those who choose not to be out in the rain.

## **Family Environment**

Parents who enroll a child at Oak Grove are asked to support and encourage a family environment that reflects the intention of the school. Some examples of practices in the home that are consistent with those employed at school are listed here. These suggestions may be discussed in Parent Meetings:

- “Wondering out loud” with children, rather than jumping in to solve problems
- Setting clear, consistent, firm boundaries and limits and following through with logical consequences rather than using rewards and punishments
- Respecting a child’s individuality, learning style, and pace
- Establishing family time and family meetings
- Establishing quiet times or times of solitude
- Giving age-appropriate responsibilities to develop life skills and mutual responsibility
- Relating to nature and caring for the environment
- Attending to choice of healthful food and exercise
- Addressing media issues thoughtfully and creating a family media plan.

## **Television & Media Exposure**

Through music, film, video games, internet, and print, children are subjected to highly potent messages about life. The impact of such messages is revealed regularly in children’s conversations, artwork, dress, and play. The 21st century media boom threatens to supplant both family and school as primary sources of information and values.

Parents and teachers are not powerless in the face of this. Clearly it is the task of both parents and teachers to cultivate critical judgment so that children can become discriminating adults. It is not possible to shield students entirely from the media even while still young, but it is a parental responsibility to regulate and monitor their access to it.

“TV programming and advertising selectively portray and powerfully reinforce a materialistic orientation toward life. Advertising exhorts us to consume more while our instincts for human survival tell us we need to learn how to live with less.” -Duane Elgin, “Voluntary Simplicity”

## **General All-School Rules**

At Oak Grove, we ask all community members not to damage equipment, buildings, trees, plants, or animals that live at school. All insects, lizards, and snakes on campus are protected from being collected and/or caged. With safety in mind, no students may play

with sticks anytime or anywhere on campus. Shoes are to be worn at all times outdoors (with occasional exceptions for water play). We ask adults to model our cell phone use-free policy and not to use cell phones at school.

## **Oak Grove School Conflict Resolution Policy & Protocol**

In line with the school's intent, a mindful approach to conflict is extremely important. Small school communities such as ours depend on honest, reflective, sensitive, and caring forms of communication that above all consider what we are modeling for growing children. We ask all members of our community to consider the following:

- **Step One: Asking Questions, Fact-finding, and Clarifying Situations before Taking Action:**

In the world of mediation and conflict resolution, it is often the case that a worsening conflict could have been avoided had the parties involved gathered more information. Sometimes a concern is based on limited information, a misunderstanding, or a rumor followed by misinformed reaction that escalates into conflict.

If a student or parent has a concern, we ask that the first step be to speak with the parties involved with an open mind; ask questions and clarify before passing judgment or passing information on to others. This approach can often resolve concerns before they become conflicts.

- **Step Two: Direct Communication with Other Party:**

When a genuine concern or conflict is evident, the first attempt at resolution must be directly with the other party. We ask that parents do this before speaking to uninvolved parties, which frequently complicates the original problem. We also ask that communication be made by setting up a face-to-face meeting with the other party. Please do not use email to communicate sensitive issues.

- **Parents & Faculty/Staff:**

Parents are asked to contact the faculty or staff member directly and set up a meeting to discuss the issue.

- **Students & Faculty/Staff:**

Young elementary students may be represented by their parents. If a faculty or staff member is the other party, then a meeting should be arranged directly with the faculty/staff member.

- **Step Three: Mediation:**

If Step One and Two do not result in satisfactory resolution, parents should seek help with mediation in the following order:

When the concern involves a teacher or faculty/staff member who is not the child's homeroom teacher: First, seek the assistance of the child's homeroom teacher and

ask them to meet together with you and the other party. Second, seek the assistance of the Elementary Program Director.

When the concern involves your child's teacher(s), seek the assistance of the Elementary Program Director.

- **Final Step:**

When all possible attempts at resolution have been exhausted, the Head of School should be contacted. If this final mediation does not result in resolution, the Head of School will consider the various points of view and decide what action to take.

Again, welcome! We are excited to work together with you in the special partnership of elementary education. We are creating a unique community together here at Oak Grove, a place where children and adults are free to explore, to express themselves, to make friends, to solve problems creatively, and to be themselves.

We look forward to our time together.

# # #

# Middle School (Grades 6-8)

## Table of Contents

• Welcome!	51
• Middle School Community Norms	51
• Care of Space	52
• Drugs & Alcohol Policy Aim	52
• Tobacco & “Vaping”	53
• Homework	53
• As a Member of the Oak Grove School Community	53
• Academic Integrity	54
• Attendance Policy	54
• Excessive Absences	54
• Signing Out/In	54
• Family Trips	55
• Cutting Class	55
• Parent Absence	55
• Illness	55
• School Trips	56
• Visitors	56
• Leaving Campus	56
• Electronics	56
• Cell phone Policy	56
• Laptops, Computers, & Tablets	56
• School Property	57
• Harassment	57
• Disciplinary Protocols	57
• Behavior	59
• Drugs & Alcohol	59
• Suspension	60
• Expulsion	60
• Camping & Trips	61

## Welcome!

Our Middle School program honors the delicate yet sometimes challenging transition from childhood to adolescence. Our teachers aim to tap into each student's unique interests through an exploration of their natural creativity, asking deep and abiding questions, practicing clear communication, and engaging in vibrant thinking. The following items are part of our Student Handbook which we review carefully within our Middle School community at the beginning of each academic year. Students and families sign this document as an agreement at the beginning of each academic year.

Please also take time to review the All-School Handbook topics at the start of this document.

## School Hours

- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday:** 8:00am to 3:15pm
- **Wednesday:** All classes end at noon.

## Middle School Community Norms

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect Oak Grove students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, to support the school in a positive manner, and to work hard. We highly value trust and integrity.

Students are asked to use intelligence and conscience to guide everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School. Students are expected to do their own school work and not use or borrow help from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. A student's name on their school work affirms a student's honor. Students will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material, do harm to others or to school property. Students agree to act with honesty and kindness, and will expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

While the school is committed to creating forums for ongoing discussion of these and other issues in order to reach clarity and understanding, the following policies have been developed in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the school from all perspectives (students, teachers, parents, administration, the law, etc.). Agreement to comply is an act of consideration and respect for an environment conducive to learning. A student who demonstrates a continued disregard for the policies outlined in either this Handbook Agreement and/or the Parent & Student Handbook may be asked to leave the school. Both parent and student must sign this Agreement.

## **Care of Space:**

### **Maintaining Our Beautiful Campus is Our Responsibility**

We ask Middle School students to be particularly attentive to keeping the decks, hallways, classrooms, and surrounding grounds orderly and clean.

## **Drugs & Alcohol Policy Aim:**

To provide an alcohol-free and drug-free environment for students on campus and at all school-related events and trips. Ultimately, however, it is our aim that Oak Grove School students refrain from using controlled substances during adolescence.

One very important goal of an Oak Grove education is to help students understand the value of learning and health, and of remaining drug-free during adolescence. We expect our students to avoid the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal drugs, including steroids and other performance-enhancing substances. Drug use has an impact on brain chemistry and development, general physical health and sleep patterns, and affects motivation, organizational abilities, and social interactions.

We expect our students to be clear-headed and mentally active in the classroom, at all school events, and in the evenings and on weekends as they pursue their homework assignments and extracurricular activities. These expectations are part of the contract outlined in the Student Handbook through which students take full responsibility for their education and their behavior.

## **Drugs and alcohol are not permitted:**

- on the school grounds
- at any school-sponsored function
- at any school-sponsored field trip
- at any event at any other school
- in transit to and from our school events and field trips and those at other schools.

Possession or use at school or school-related functions includes being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, even if the actual consumption of alcohol or drug took place elsewhere. STUDENTS FOUND TO BE SELLING, USING, DISTRIBUTING OR UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL WILL BE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT TO THE THIRD LEVEL OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL.

Creating a safe and substance abuse-free environment is important to us. We ask that parents help create such an environment by agreeing to:

- Provide a safe environment where alcohol and drugs will not be made available to youth during parties or gatherings in your homes
- Being present to supervise parties in your homes
- Communicate with the appropriate parent if you observe a minor under the influence
  
- Communicate with any parent who observes your child using drugs and/or alcohol

- Take precautions to prevent parties being held at your home in your absence
- Tell your child/ren that you do not want them to use drugs or alcohol during adolescence.

## **Tobacco & “Vaping”**

Tobacco use and vape pens are prohibited. Nicotine is an addictive drug and its use is contrary to the development of a healthy mind and body. Students who use tobacco and/or vape pens will be referred to the Head of School (first offense) and then be subject to mandatory enrollment in a smoking cessation program (second offense).

## **Homework**

Homework is an opportunity for practicing skills outside of the classroom environment and reinforcing the transfer of knowledge and skills. Homework is also an opportunity for students to share what they are learning in school with families at home. Homework is assigned on a regular basis and is important to the educational program at Oak Grove. Homework is tailored to serve different purposes at different levels, taking developmental appropriateness into account.

Homework also builds autonomy, independent thinking, and specific skills. Homework is the responsibility of the student, not the parents, and is an indicator to teachers of what students can complete independently. However, parents are asked to support students in managing time, completing assignments, and organizing homework materials.

Students are expected to independently complete homework assignments that are high quality, reflect learning and insight, and are turned in by the due date. Middle School students can expect to spend on average 60–120 minutes a night on homework. Although general guidelines exist for the amount of homework for each group, there will be times when extra time and effort will be necessary, such as when completing a research paper; at other times, less homework will be required, such as before camping trips or theater performances.

Standards for acceptable homework reflect the level of the student and the nature of the assignment. Unacceptable or incomplete homework should be made up, with arrangements made individually between student and teacher.

We ask that each student have a work station in the home, outside of the bedroom, preferably in a common space. Homework area should have a working computer, printer, and a supply of paper and printer cartridges. Homework should be printed at home so when students come to school, they are prepared for class. Teachers will not print homework for students.

## **As a Member of the Oak Grove School Community:**

- I will let my intelligence and conscience be my guide in my actions and endeavors

at Oak Grove School.

- I will not give or receive unauthorized aid as defined by my teacher both explicitly and implicitly, from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. On all my work, my name affirms my honor.
- I will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material.
- I will not do harm to others or to our school.
- I will act with honesty and kindness, and I expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity, in and out of the classroom, is essential. Cases of academic dishonesty will be considered major infractions and will be handled through the Disciplinary Protocol. Plagiarism, the use of another person's material in a paper or presentation without giving proper credit to the author, is an example of academic dishonesty. Cheating can be copying someone else's homework, copying information from the internet or other published material, or dishonestly acquiring information about a test. Cheating also includes assisting another student in either of these activities. The copying of another's work, including the work of an outside tutor, inside or outside the classroom, and presenting it as one's own is contrary to the school's goal of developing academic integrity.

Parents will be contacted in cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other instances where academic integrity has not been displayed.

## **Attendance Policy**

The school day begins promptly at 8:00am, which means that students should be in class ready to learn by 7:55am. At Oak Grove we say, "Five minutes early is on time and on time is late." If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the Front Office by 8:00am and leave a message. Attendance is taken in the classroom promptly at 8:00am.

Absences and tardiness jeopardize a student's academic, social, and emotional progress and negatively impact the whole class environment. We ask both parents and students to be considerate about getting to school or classes on time and to plan family holidays and appointments to minimize absences.

## **Excessive Absences**

Learning is dependent upon class participation. Therefore, it is important that students attend their classes regularly. More than ten absences a semester can seriously jeopardize re-enrollment. In special cases, a petition can be submitted to the Middle School teachers in advance for a leave of absence and study plan if a student is going to miss a week or more of school. Excessive absences are considered serious neglect of these guidelines and may be grounds for expulsion.

## **Signing Out/In — Early Departures & Late Arrivals**

A student will only be released to parents or other authorized persons as specified on the

enrollment contract. Students must sign out in the Front Office upon departure; otherwise, the absence will not be excused.

Upon returning to school, a student must sign in at the Front Office.

## **Family Trips**

As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips that result in students missing school. Such absences hurt the student whose work is interrupted. The Oak Grove curriculum is demanding; class attendance is crucial. If absence due to a family trip is unavoidable, the student should submit a request for special attendance consideration with their Advisor well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

## **Cutting Class**

Cutting class is defined as being absent from one or more classes without parental or school permission. It is a serious violation of policy and will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Protocol.

## **Homework Assignments & Makeups:**

When students miss school, they are responsible for getting assignments from other class members or their teachers. Students must be prepared to make up tests and/or quizzes within two days of their return to school, unless arrangements for an extension have been made with the teacher. The maximum extension is one week. Students who must be absent for scheduled medical procedures or for religious reasons are asked to turn in work due in advance or make arrangements with their teachers.

## **Parent Absence**

If parents are away from home, they should notify the Middle School Registrar of the name of the guardian left in charge and leave phone numbers where the guardian can be reached.

## **Appointments During the School Day:**

Elective medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. If, however, such appointments are unavoidable, students must sign out and parents need to contact the school Registrar by note, phone, or email stating the reason, time of departure, and estimated time of return.

## **Illness**

Any student who becomes ill during the day must go to the Infirmary in the Front Office. Before the student is released from school, a parent must be contacted and the student must sign out. If a student is ill for more than five days, not necessarily consecutive, in any two-week period, a doctor's note may be required to verify the illness. A note from a doctor may also be required if a student accumulates excessive absences due to a recurring illness. Excessive illness may result in assigning a grade of Incomplete in some or all of the student's classes.

## **School Trips**

School trips are a regular part of the curriculum, and as such, trip participation is mandatory. Missing a trip will require make-up time and/or assignments for school missed during these weeks.

## **Visitors**

Students may not invite other students to campus without permission. All visitors must register at the Front Office in Main House and obtain a visitor's tag.

## **Leaving Campus**

In order to maintain a safe environment for all, Oak Grove is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus during school hours without documented permission from parents. The lunch period is part of the school day -- students must bring lunch to school or participate in the school's Hot Lunch program. A student discovered off campus without permission will be referred to the Dean of the Middle School. Violations will be addressed by the Disciplinary Protocol.

## **Electronics**

### **(including Cell phones, Laptops, Tablets, iPads, Smart Watches, & iPods)**

Increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as time to "unplug" from the steady stream of electronic input while they are at school. Therefore we ask both students and parents to be mindful of the following:

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Students in Grades 6-8 may bring a cell phone to school but it must be "off" and stored in the Front Office between the hours of 8:00am and 3:15pm. We ask that parents refrain from calling or texting students during the day. Urgent messages can be processed through the Front Office.

### **Laptops, Computers, & Tablets:**

Increased accessibility to the internet requires sensitivity on the part of the user. We ask that computers be used ONLY for educational purposes while on campus and that they be used only WITHIN Middle School classrooms. Students are not permitted to use laptops/computers/tablets outside of classrooms unless expressly permitted by a teacher for an academic purpose. Absolutely no inappropriate material (sexually explicit material, etc.) may be viewed and/or listened to. Students should not be gaming, watching videos, etc. while at school.

If a teacher or staff member observes an electronic device of any sort being used in ways that go against the expectations of the school in a classroom, the device will be held until the end of the day.

## **School Property**

Included in the supplementary fees is a "rental charge" that covers the cost of textbooks, uniforms, etc. that are issued to students. Students do NOT own these books/uniforms and are required to turn them back in to their subject area teachers and/or coaches at the end of the year in reasonable condition. Families will be billed for items that are not returned or are returned but not in a usable condition (books with damaged spines or water damage, books that have been written in excessively, etc.).

## **Harassment**

All students must be allowed to work and study in an environment free from harassment and unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments or other generally acceptable social behavior. Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, personally offensive, or undermines or weakens morale. Any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, whether verbal, physical, visual, or electronic, is strictly prohibited. This includes: harassing messages communicated by email, the internet, or telephone; cyberbullying of any kind; sending sexually explicit or nude photos over the internet; demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises or preferential treatment or threats concerning student status; pressure for sexual activity; offensive, unwanted physical contact such as hugging, patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body; offensive unwanted sex-oriented verbal "kidding," jokes, or abuse; any other form of intimidation or unsolicited objectionable comments.

If a student becomes aware of harassment of any kind, whether it be personal or not, or feels that they are a victim of harassment, this information should be communicated immediately to the Dean of the Middle School or to an Advisor. Any such complaint must be specific and should include all relevant information so that the school may conduct a thorough investigation. The Dean of the Middle School is required to report such complaints to the Head of School. The school will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the school will take action to remedy the situation. The school will not tolerate any retaliation against a student who files a complaint or participates in an investigation regarding a complaint of harassment. However, anyone who makes a false claim of harassment will be subject to Disciplinary Protocol action, up to and including expulsion.

## **Disciplinary Protocols**

At Oak Grove School teachers do not engage in conventional systems of reward and punishment or fear-based, coercive, manipulative strategies, but seek to understand with the students the causes for behavior, and with the older students, the roots of cultural conditioning passed on for generations. The art of relationship and the very deep intelligence that Krishnamurti suggests, grow from asking questions and listening deeply to life and to each other. These inquiries into the "book of oneself and the mirror of relationship" are nurtured by care and attention.

At all times we strive to create a climate that is safe and conducive to learning for both staff and students. When behavioral difficulties arise, our intention is to resolve them by speaking directly to the person/student involved and utilizing the many varied strategies

at our disposal. In most cases issues will be resolved this way. Sometimes they will not. For those cases we have a Disciplinary Protocol.

### **Step 1: First Major Offense**

- The matter is referred to the Dean of the Middle School by staff.
- The student will receive a warning. The warning will go in the student's file.
- There will be a call or email home to the parents.
- The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.
- The student may be asked to go home for the remainder of the day.

### **Step 2: Second Major Offense**

- The student will receive a second warning. The warning will go in the student's file.
- There will be a call or email home to the parents.
- The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.
- There will be a meeting with parents, Dean of the Middle School, Class Advisor, and any other relevant parties.
- An agreement will be created and signed by student, Dean of the Middle School, and Head of School.

### **Step 3: Third Major Offense**

- The parents will be contacted.
- The student will write an account of what happened.
- If the student violates the agreement drafted in Step 2, or there are new concerns, there will be a Disciplinary Panel hearing.
- Panels will be scheduled no sooner than 24 hours.
- The timing will be negotiated among the student, school, and parent, and will be based on the situation.
- The Head of School and Dean of Middle School will appoint the members of the Disciplinary Panel, which will consist of the following:
  - Staff member directly involved in the incident
  - Staff person with no prior knowledge of the incident or direct relationship with the student (the objective is to have someone with no bias toward the student or situation)
  - Head of School
  - Dean of the Middle School
  - Student involved
  - Student-appointed advocate
- The student will appear before the panel, along with their self-appointed advocate. Advocates may be a staff member, parent, coach, family friend, another student, etc.
- The Disciplinary Panel will decide on the appropriate consequence for the offense, which might include loss of privileges, lowering of grade, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.
- The panel will document its decision and a copy will go in the student's file.
- If the student is not expelled, an agreement is formed and signed by the Head of School, Dean of Middle School, student, and parent(s).
- The Head of School approves all final disciplinary decisions.

#### **Step 4: Further Offenses**

If the offense breaks the signed agreement, the consequence is per the agreement, which might include expulsion. In the case that the Disciplinary Panel's ruling in Step 3 was not expulsion, any further offenses are brought before the panel.

The procedure will be identical to Step 3. A major offense is defined as an event or series of events that violate the rules of Oak Grove School, as described in the Handbook, and is sufficiently serious for staff to feel that the Dean of Middle School and parents need to be involved. Some examples: Repeated instances of disruptive behavior that have been addressed by several teachers, disrespecting teachers, non-compliance with teacher requests, refusal to do homework.

The following offenses will be brought directly before the Disciplinary Panel:

- drug and alcohol use
- instances of verbal or physical violence
- possession of weapons.

On occasions when the offense is severe enough to give cause for safety, at the discretion of the Head of School, a student may be asked to leave the school without convening a Disciplinary Panel. The final decision regarding the status of a student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

### **Behavior**

Fundamental to Oak Grove's philosophy is the provision of a safe environment for learning, both physically and psychologically. Everyone either contributes to, or detracts from, the creation of such an environment. Violation of the code of behavior is explained in the Parent & Student Handbook, including but not limited to use of vulgar/offensive language, language that glorifies or promotes substance abuse or other illegal activity, disruption of school activities or others' learning, not following teachers' instructions, intentional hurting (physical or psychological), or intentional damaging of property, and may result in removal from the class or the school. Such action will be taken on behalf of all students, in order to maintain conditions conducive to learning and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Disciplinary issues will be dealt with first by the classroom teacher, then if not resolved, by the Class Advisor and Dean of the Middle School, and finally by the Head of School.

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

In addition to being illegal, the possession, use, sale, and/or distribution of illegal drugs, alcohol, controlled substances, or intoxicants of any kind is unacceptable and contrary to the most basic intention of the school — to explore the possibility of increased attention and mindfulness. Violation of this policy is grounds for expulsion.

In certain cases, students may be allowed to remain if they agree to seek professional assessment and possible counseling, as well as satisfying other requirements determined by the school. Students who voluntarily indicate that they are struggling with a drug or

alcohol problem, prior to being caught violating this policy, will have their problem dealt with as a medical concern. Such information will be treated privately and discreetly; it will not be considered a disciplinary matter. This policy represents responsible and constructive support of any student struggling with the issues of drugs and alcohol. We trust that parents will join in this endeavor.

Creating a safe and substance abuse-free environment is essential to a healthy learning environment. We ask that parents help create such an environment by agreeing to:

- Welcome communication among parents regarding upcoming Middle School parties or gatherings.
- Provide a safe environment where alcohol and drugs will not be available to youth during parties or gatherings in their home.
- Be present to supervise parties in their home.
- Communicate with the appropriate parent if they observe a minor under the influence.
- Communicate with any parent who observes their own child using drugs and/or alcohol.
- Take precautions to prevent parties being held at their home in their absence.
- Clearly communicate to their child/ren that they do not want them to use drugs and/or alcohol.

Tobacco use is prohibited. Nicotine is considered an addictive drug, and its use is contrary to the development of a healthy mind and body. Students who use tobacco will be referred for counseling (first offense) and then be subject to mandatory enrollment in smoking cessation program (second offense).

## **Suspension**

Students who are suspended may not attend class or school events. Work missed during suspension must be made up without outside assistance from the teacher. Any class material that is discussed during the suspension needs to be obtained from classmates. However, any homework assignments or exams missed while suspended cannot be completed and will result in a failing grade. This consequence may be recommended to the Head of School and the Disciplinary Panel. Suspension for behavioral infractions will be reported to the colleges to which the student is seeking acceptance. Students on probation whose behavior demonstrates a serious or recurring disregard for the spirit or the expectations of the Oak Grove School community will be placed on probation. Students who commit subsequent major Disciplinary Protocol violation while on probation are likely to be suspended or expelled from school.

## **Expulsion**

The Middle School Dean and the Disciplinary Panel may recommend expulsion for a serious violation, even on the first offense or if, in their opinion, a student's continued presence is detrimental to Oak Grove School or to the student involved. When expulsion is recommended, a student is automatically suspended in the case that the situation needs to be reviewed. During the suspension period, the Head of School will review the matter with those involved before reaching a final decision. The final decision regarding the status

of the student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

## **Camping & Trips**

We require all students to fully participate in our Fall and Spring camping trips. These trips provide opportunities for students to get to know themselves, their peers, and their teachers better, and they provide chances to overcome challenges of all sorts. Students learn practical skills related to traveling, camping, and backpacking. Occasionally, there are medical or other reasons that prevent a student from fully participating in a trip. When this happens, the family must contact the Advisor no later than two weeks prior to the Fall trip and four weeks prior to the Spring trip to discuss the situation. Stringent criteria are in place for these situations; please contact the student’s Advisor for more information.

# # #

# High School (Grades 9-12)

## Table of Contents

• Welcome!	63
• Community Norms	63
• Behavior	64
• Care of Space	64
• Homework	64
• Honor Code	64
• Academic Integrity	65
• Arriving at School	66
• Daily Attendance Procedures	66
• Tardiness	67
• Absences	67
• Doctor's Notes	68
• Family Trips	68
• Cutting Class	68
• Homework Assignments & Makeups	68
• Parent Absence	68
• Appointments During the School Day	69
• Illness	69
• Examination Days	69
• College Visits	69
• School Trips	70
• Leaving Campus	70
• Visitors	70
• Off-Campus Lunch	70
• Electronics	71
• Cell phone Policy	71
• Laptops, Computers, & Tablets	71
• High School Disciplinary Protocol	74
• Camping/Trips	77
• Study Hall Expectations	77
• Independent Study Courses & Expectations	77
• Protocol for Taking Non-OGS Classes for Credit	78
• Protocol for Requesting Early Dismissal	78

## Welcome!

Welcome to the High School! Our High School program helps students develop life-long practices of intellectual discipline, clear communication, self-reflection, understanding, and focused thinking. We offer a challenging, college-preparatory curriculum that is approved by the University of California and designed to exceed admissions requirements for the most rigorous and selective universities across the country. The following items are part of our Student Handbook which we review carefully within our High School community at the beginning of each academic year. Students and families sign an agreement after reviewing this material.

### School Hours:

#### 5-day Weeks:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30am - 3:15pm (Fit for Life: 3:25 - 4:30pm)
- Wednesday: 8:30am - 12:05pm
- Friday: 8:30am - 3:15pm

#### 4-day Weeks (i.e. a holiday on Monday):

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30am - 3:15pm (Fit for Life: 3:25 - 4:30pm)
- Wednesday: 8:30am - 12:15pm
- Friday: 8:30am - 3:15pm

## Community Norms

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect Oak Grove students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, to support the school in a positive manner, and to work hard. We highly value trust and integrity.

Students are asked to use intelligence and conscience to guide everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School. Students are expected to do their own school work and not use or borrow help from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. A student's name on their school work affirms a student's honor. Students will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material, or do harm to others or to school property. Students agree to act with honesty and kindness, and will expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

While the school is committed to creating forums for ongoing discussion of these and other issues in order to reach clarity and understanding, the following policies have been developed in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the school from EVERYONE'S perspective (students, teachers, parents, administration, the law, etc.). Agreement to comply is an act of consideration and respect for an environment conducive to learning. A student who demonstrates a continued disregard for the policies outlined in this Handbook may be asked to leave the school in order to maintain the integrity of the learning environment for all. Both parent and student must sign this Agreement.

## **Behavior**

Fundamental to Oak Grove's philosophy is the provision of a safe environment for learning, both physically and psychologically. Everyone either contributes to, or detracts from, the creation of such an environment. Violation of the code of behavior is explained in the Parent & Student Handbook, including, but not limited to, use of vulgar/offensive language, language that glorifies or promotes substance abuse or other illegal activity, disruption of school activities or others' learning, not following teachers' instructions, intentional hurting (physical or psychological), or intentional damaging of property, and may result in removal from the class or the school. Such action will be taken on behalf of all students, in order to maintain conditions conducive to learning and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Disciplinary issues will be dealt with first by the classroom teacher, then if not resolved, by the Class Advisor and High School Director, and finally by the Head of School.

## **Care of Space**

Maintaining our beautiful campus is everyone's responsibility. We ask High School students to be particularly attentive to keeping the atrium, hallways, stone circle, Student Center, and surrounding High School grounds orderly and clean. Please do not affix anything to the outside of lockers.

## **Homework**

At the High School level, homework is considered an extension of learning. Teachers depend on students to complete assigned work in order to cover the curriculum. When students are neglectful of homework responsibilities, it can also impede the continued progress of the whole class. Students may need help or support at home in managing their time.

Homework is assigned for all academic classes. Students are responsible for the completion of all assigned homework. It is understood that the length of time for preparing assignments may vary from student to student. As a general rule, students should expect to spend an average of 90-120 minutes per night for their core classes. Students in Honors classes should expect to spend more time on their homework.

We ask that each student have a workstation at home with a working computer, printer, and a supply of paper and printer cartridges. Homework should be printed at home so when students come to school, they are prepared for class. Teachers will not print homework for students.

Continued neglect of homework will result in lowered grades and may lead to removal from class.

## **Honor Code**

Trust and integrity are essential ingredients in any community of people learning and working together, and this is especially so in our relatively small Oak Grove community. We expect our students to be honest with others and themselves, to be courteous in their relationships, to keep their word, support the school in a positive manner, and to work

hard. We highly value trust and integrity and expect all students to abide by the following Honor Code.

**As a member of the Oak Grove School community:**

- I will let my intelligence and conscience be my guide in my everyday actions and endeavors at Oak Grove School.
- I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, as defined by my teacher both explicitly and implicitly, from any source on exams, homework, quizzes, papers, or any other academic endeavor. On all my work, my name affirms my honor.
- I will not steal or violate others' property, either academic or material.
- I will not do harm to others or to our school.
- I pledge to act with honesty and kindness, and I expect others to be responsible and to do the same.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity, in and out of the classroom, is essential. Cases of academic dishonesty will be considered major infractions and will be handled through the Disciplinary Protocol. Plagiarism, the use of another person's material in a paper or presentation without giving proper credit to the author, is an example of academic dishonesty. Cheating can be copying someone else's homework, copying information from the internet or other published material, or dishonestly acquiring information about a test. Cheating also includes assisting another student in either of these activities. The copying of another's work, including the work of an outside tutor, inside or outside the classroom and presenting it as one's own is contrary to the school's goal of developing academic integrity. Expectations differ somewhat from class to class and subject to subject, so students must be sure they understand what each teacher expects.

Students will affirm their support of the school's Honor Code by writing on major assignments, if and as required by teachers, "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment."

Parents will be contacted in cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other instances where academic integrity has not been displayed.

• **Good Academic Standing & Academic Probation**

Oak Grove High School students are considered to be in good academic standing when they have at least a 2.0 GPA, or a C average, and are not failing any of their classes. Students who fall below this standard at the time of mid-semester conferences and/or end-of-semester grades may be put on academic probation. Not making progress while on academic probation may result in not being able to return to Oak Grove School the following year. Students who are not in good academic standing may also be denied certain privileges and/or be required to attend study halls if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student.

- **Honors Courses**

Many of our courses have Honors options. Honors options represent a significant increase in workload and homework, and the decision to do Honors should not be taken lightly. We discourage students from taking on too many Honors courses and encourage them to pursue Honors only in courses and in subjects they feel passionate about. Honors courses are open to students who had at least a 3.0 GPA or a B average in all their courses the year preceding the year they start their Honors course. In addition, they need to have received at least an A grade during the prior semester (93% and above) in the same subject they want to do Honors in and/or teacher approval. Students with lower than an A may petition the teacher for approval to take Honors. In order to remain in the Honors section, students must maintain at least a C grade in the course.

At Oak Grove School we prefer to offer Honors options rather than Advanced Placement courses. Our Honors options generally qualify for the same GPA “bump” as AP courses. However, in some rare cases, students who are highly motivated might, at the recommendation of the teacher, be eligible to take an AP class. Interested students should talk to their teachers.

### **Attendance Policy**

Oak Grove School is a rigorous, college-preparatory school with a University of California approved curriculum. We have 155-160 days of instruction in an academic year, including camping, in line with other independent schools. California public and charter schools have 170-180 days of instruction. Our pace is thus higher and the amount of material covered in our classes substantial. In order to be successful, it is essential that our students minimize absences and arrive on time for class. For this reason, through the daily routine at the High School, we encourage students to make responsible decisions about their use of time. Students are expected to be present at and arrive on time for all scheduled classes, assemblies, advisory meetings, appointments, and school or class trips.

### **Arriving at School**

**Classes begin at 8:30am. Students are expected to:**

- Be on campus in time for their first scheduled school obligation.
- Follow their daily schedules and attend all assigned classes, activities, and other school obligations.
- Stay on campus during school hours, with the exception of those juniors and seniors who have received parental permission for off-campus lunch privileges on Mondays and Fridays.
- If a student misses a class because of a doctor’s appointment, or if a student for any avoidable or unavoidable reason attends school for only part of a day, the student is responsible on that day for turning in any work due to the teacher(s) of the class(es) the student missed.

### **Daily Attendance Procedures**

All teachers will take attendance each period of the day. If a student will be absent from or late to school for any reason, a parent should inform the High School Registrar at

805-646-8236 ext. 111 or [hsoffice@oakgroveschool.org](mailto:hsoffice@oakgroveschool.org) by 8:00am of the day of the absence or tardiness. In some cases the Registrar may call to verify that an email or phone message did indeed come from parents. Parents can also write a note, as long as it includes contact information. We ask that parents explain the reason for the absence to the Registrar, to help us determine whether the absence can be excused. According to the California Education Code, the school must know the nature of the absence to excuse it.

### **Signing Out/In**

- A student will only be released to parents or other authorized persons as specified on the enrollment contract. Students must sign out in the High School Registrar Office upon departure; otherwise, the absence will not be excused.
- Upon returning to school, a student must sign in at the High School Registrar Office.

### **Tardiness**

Students who are late to school for any reason must first report to the High School Registrar and sign in to be officially checked in. This applies even though time spent checking in at the attendance office will further delay the student's arrival to class.

Frequent tardiness to class disrupts the learning environment and slows a student's academic progress. Advisors or teachers will contact the parents (and dorm parents as applicable) about any student who has been tardy to a class 3 times (first semester) or 5 times (second semester). Any student who has been tardy to a class more than 6 times (first semester) or 10 times (second semester) will be referred to the Disciplinary Protocol.

### **Absences**

At Oak Grove School, an absence is defined as being absent or tardy to any class or school activity by more than 20 minutes. In California, chronic absence is typically defined as being absent for any reason for at least 10% of the school year. In line with the California Education Code, our absence policy is that students can be absent without consequences in any class for up to 6 times in the Fall semester and up to 10 times in the Spring semester (16 times in the year, or 10% of our total number of instructional days), as long as the absences are excused.

### **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are those resulting from illness, injury, family emergency, team sport competition, a music, dance, or theater performance, field trip, court appearance, or religious observance. "Personal business" or "family trips" are generally not acceptable reasons for absence. However, we recognize that sometimes extraordinary opportunities arise for extracurricular enrichment, which may require a student to be off campus. In such cases, students are required to submit a request for special attendance consideration with the High School Director well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

Students who miss school due to excused absences are entitled to make up exams in the

case they have missed any. Homework is due on the day of return to school after the excused absence, unless the student has reached an agreement with the teacher for a later due date.

### **Doctor's Notes**

The school requires a doctor's note after an absence due to illness of five consecutive days or longer. A doctor's note may also be required for classes missed due to medical appointments.

### **Unexcused Absences:**

Unexcused absences result from official school suspensions or breaches in attendance policy such as cutting class, parent failure to communicate the reason for an absence, student failure to sign in/out upon early school departure or late arrival, and departing early for or returning late from a vacation without obtaining prior permission from the High School Director. Unless approved by the High School Director in advance, whenever a parent gives a student permission to be absent for reasons other than those stated under Excused Absences above, the absence is deemed unexcused and the student may receive a zero or failing grade for homework or tests missed during that period. Such absences are serious offenses against school policy. A student with an unexcused absence can expect Disciplinary Protocol action.

### **Family Trips**

As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips that result in students missing school. Such absences hurt the student whose work is interrupted. The Oak Grove curriculum is demanding; class attendance is crucial. If absence due to a family trip is unavoidable, the student should submit a request for special attendance consideration with the High School Director well in advance. Criteria for approving or denying a request for special attendance consideration include, but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences.

### **Cutting Class**

Cutting class is defined as being absent from one or more classes without parental or school permission. It is a serious violation of policy and will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Protocol. This includes Advisory, electives, and Fit for Life.

### **Homework Assignments & Makeups**

When students miss school, they are responsible for getting assignments from other class members or their teachers. Students must be prepared to make up tests and/or quizzes within two days of their return to school unless arrangements for an extension have been made with the teacher. The maximum extension is one week. Students who must be absent for scheduled medical procedures or for religious reasons are asked to turn in work due in advance or make arrangements with their teachers.

### **Parent Absence**

If parents are away from home, they should notify the High School Registrar of the name of the guardian left in charge and leave phone numbers where the guardian can be

reached.

## **Appointments During the School Day**

Elective medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. If, however, such appointments are unavoidable, students must sign out and parents need to contact the High School Registrar by note, phone, or email stating the reason, time of departure, and estimated time of return.

## **Illness**

Any student who becomes ill during the day must go to the High School Registrar. Before the student is released from school, a parent must be contacted and the student must sign out. If a student is ill for more than five days, not necessarily consecutive, in any two-week period, a doctor's note may be required to verify the illness. A note from a doctor may also be required if a student accumulates excessive absences due to a recurring illness. Excessive illness may result in assigning a grade of Incomplete in some or all of the student's classes.

## **Examination Days**

Students and their families must make every effort to avoid absences on examination days. Unexcused absences on these days may result in a "zero" on the missed examination.

## **College Visits**

Students are encouraged to visit prospective colleges during the Spring Break of their junior year and the summer before their senior year. However, we recognize that sometimes seniors may want to visit colleges during the fall or spring semester of their senior year. For this reason, senior students have the option of taking up to three excused absence days to visit the colleges they are considering if the High School Director approves the visits. When a senior will miss classes for any other business relating to the college application process, they must also clear it with the High School Director.

Criteria for approving or denying such requests include but are not limited to: academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences. The student must assume the responsibility for making up daily assignments and class notes, but missed quizzes and labs usually will not be re-administered. Therefore, the days for college visits must be chosen carefully. If a student does not follow this procedure, the absence is deemed "unexcused."

It is our experience that some students who take their three excused days in the fall desire to see more colleges in the spring after acceptance letters have been sent out. A senior student may apply to the High School Director for permission to take one to three extra days. In this case, the student must present a letter explaining their reasons for requiring extra time out of school. The High School Director will grant permission based on the student's academic standing, record of behavior, and accumulated tardies and absences. Students must understand that quizzes and labs usually will not be re-administered. The day of return to school, the student should be ready to assume all

curricular responsibilities. If a student does not receive prior permission to take extra visiting days, the absence is deemed “unexcused.”

### **Jupiter record of absences and tardiness:**

Parents and students have access to student tardiness and absence information via Jupiter, Oak Grove’s High School online learning management system. Students are expected to check this site on a regular basis and to correct any discrepancies noted with their teachers, Advisor, and/or High School Director, within no more than two weeks of the date of the absence or tardy.

### **School Trips**

School trips are a regular part of the curriculum, and, as such, trip participation is mandatory. Missing a trip will require make-up time and/or assignments for school missed during these weeks. Please see the section on High School trips under graduation requirements for more information.

### **Leaving Campus**

In order to maintain a safe environment for all, Oak Grove is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus during school hours without documented permission from parents. The lunch period is part of the school day – students must bring lunch to school or participate in the school’s Hot Lunch program. A student discovered off campus without permission will be referred to the High School Director. Violations will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Protocol.

### **Visitors**

Students may not invite other students to campus without permission of the Director. All visitors must register at the Front Office in Main House and obtain a visitor’s tag.

### **Off-Campus Lunch**

This applies on Mondays and Fridays and to 11th and 12th grades only. Students in 11th and 12th grade may apply for off-campus lunch privileges and must agree to abide by the guidelines. Parental permission in writing must be provided for students leaving campus for lunch. (See Off-Campus Lunch Permission Form.)

### **Driving Policies for Day Students**

1. During the first 12 months after you, as a minor, are licensed, you cannot drive between 11pm and 5am and you cannot transport passengers under 20 years of age, unless you are accompanied by a licensed parent or guardian, a licensed driver 25 years of age or older, or a licensed or certified driving instructor.
2. Therefore, students may not transport other students in their vehicles UNLESS they are accompanied by an adult or they are at least 18 years of age or they have had their license for at least 12 months.
3. Once you have had your license for 12 months, please give a copy of your license

to the High School office so that we know you are legally permitted to drive others in your car.

4. All drivers on campus must drive with care at a slow and safe speed (<15 MPH).
5. Any student who does not comply with the campus driving policies will lose on-campus driving privileges.
6. Students are expected to walk from one part of campus to another; students may not drive from the High School to the Art Building, for example.

### **Failure to Sign Out for Lunch**

- **1st time:** warning and email or phone call home
- **2nd time:** loss of off-campus privileges for a week (one Monday and one Friday) and email or phone call home
- **3rd time:** loss of off-campus privileges for the remainder of the semester and email or phone call home

### **Returning Late to Advisory after Off-Campus Lunch**

- **1st time:** warning and email or phone call home
- **2nd time:** loss of off-campus privileges for a week (one Monday and one Friday) and email or phone call home
- **3rd time:** loss of off-campus privileges for the remainder of the semester and email or phone call home

## **Electronics**

### **(including cell phones, laptops, tablets, iPads, smart watches & iPods)**

Increased use of electronics has become a notable distraction in the learning environment, and we ask students to view their time at school as time to “unplug” from the steady stream of electronic input. Therefore we ask both students and parents to be mindful of the following:

### **Cell phone Policy**

Students in grades 9-12 may bring a cell phone to school, but it must be “off” and kept in a purse, backpack, or locker between the hours of 8:00am and the end of that student’s school day, unless a teacher has given permission for its use. We ask that parents refrain from calling or texting students during the day. Urgent messages can be processed through the HS Office (the Front Office for ECP/Elementary/MS).

### **Laptops, Computers, & Tablets**

Increased accessibility to the internet requires sensitivity on the part of the user. We ask that computers be used ONLY for educational purposes while on campus and that they be used only WITHIN high school classrooms. Students are not permitted to use laptops/computers/tablets outside of classrooms unless expressly permitted by a teacher for an academic purpose. Absolutely no inappropriate material (sexually explicit material,

etc.) may be viewed and/or listened to. Students should not be gaming, watching videos, etc. while at school.

We ask that High School students refrain from carrying or using electronic devices outside the High School area unless under the supervision of a teacher and for academic purposes, such as taking photos or video for an elective class.

If a teacher or staff member observes an electronic device of any sort being used in ways that go against the expectations of the school in a classroom, outside of the High School grounds, or at times that are not permitted, the device will be held until the end of the day.

- **1st time:** Phone/device will be taken by the teacher and held until the end of the day. Parents (including dorm parents and guardians as applicable) and Advisor will be contacted.
- **2nd time:** Phone/device will be taken by the teacher and held until the end of the day by the teacher. Student will give their phone to the teacher daily at the start of the school day for five days and pick it up at the end of each day. Parents (including dorm parents and guardians as applicable) and Advisor will be contacted.
- **3rd time:** Phone/device will be taken by the teacher and held until the end of the day by the teacher. Student will give their phone to the teacher daily at the start of the school day for ten days and pick it up at the end of each day. Parents (including dorm parents and guardians as applicable), Advisor, and Director will be contacted.
- **4th time:** Same as third time, but in addition student moves to Step 1 of the Disciplinary Protocol. (See section on Disciplinary Protocol in this Handbook for more information.)

**School Property:** Included in the supplementary fees is a “rental charge” that covers the cost of textbooks, uniforms, etc. that are issued to students. Students do NOT own these books/uniforms and are required to turn them back in to their subject area teachers and/or coaches at the end of the year in reasonable condition. Families will be billed for items that are not returned, or are returned but not in a usable condition (books with damaged spines or water damage, books that have been written in excessively, etc.).

**Harassment:** All students must be allowed to work and study in an environment free from harassment and unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments or other generally acceptable social behavior. Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, personally offensive, or undermines or weakens morale. Any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, whether verbal, physical, visual, or electronic, is strictly prohibited. This includes:

- harassing messages communicated by email, the internet, or telephone;
- cyberbullying of any kind;
- sending sexually explicit or nude photos;
- demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises or preferential treatment or threats concerning student status;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- offensive, unwanted physical contact such as hugging, patting, pinching, or constant

- brushing against another's body;
- offensive unwanted sex-oriented verbal "kidding," jokes, or abuse;
- any other form of intimidation or unsolicited objectionable comments.

If a student becomes aware of harassment of any kind, whether it be personal or not, or feels that they are a victim of harassment, this information should be communicated immediately to the High School Director or to an Advisor. Any such complaint must be specific and should include all relevant information so that the school may conduct a thorough investigation. The High School Director is required to report such complaints to the Head of School. The school will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the school will take action to remedy the situation. The school will not tolerate any retaliation against a student who files a complaint or participates in an investigation regarding a complaint of harassment. However, anyone who makes a false claim of harassment will be subject to Disciplinary Protocol action, up to and including expulsion.

### **Drugs & Alcohol:**

Policy Aim: To provide an alcohol-free and drug-free environment for students on campus and at all school-related events and trips. Ultimately, however, it is our aim that Oak Grove School students refrain from using controlled substances during adolescence.

One very important goal of an Oak Grove education is to help students understand the value of learning and health, and of remaining drug-free during adolescence. We expect our students to avoid the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal drugs, including steroids and other performance-enhancing substances. Drug use has an impact on brain chemistry and development, general physical health, and sleep patterns, and affects motivation, organizational abilities, and social interactions.

We expect our students to be clear-headed and mentally active in the classroom, at all school events, and in the evenings and on weekends as they pursue their homework assignments and extracurricular activities. These expectations are part of the contract outlined in the Student Handbook through which students take full responsibility for their education and their behavior.

Drugs and alcohol are not permitted on the school grounds. Drugs and alcohol are not permitted at any school-sponsored function. Drugs and alcohol are not permitted at any school-sponsored field trip. Drugs and alcohol are not permitted at any event at any other school. This includes transit to and from our school events and field trips and those at other schools.

Possession or use at school or school-related functions includes being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, even if the actual consumption of alcohol or drug took place elsewhere. STUDENTS FOUND TO BE SELLING, USING, DISTRIBUTING OR UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL WILL BE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT TO THE THIRD LEVEL OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL.

Creating a safe and substance abuse-free environment is important to us. We ask that parents help create such an environment by agreeing to:

- Provide a safe environment where alcohol and drugs will not be made available to youth during parties or gatherings in their homes
- Being present to supervise parties in their homes
- Communicating with the appropriate parent if they observe a minor under the influence
- Communicate with any parent who observes their child using drugs and/or alcohol
- Take precautions to prevent parties being held at their home in their absence
- Tell their child/ren that they do not want them to use drugs or alcohol during adolescence.

Tobacco use and vape pens are prohibited. Nicotine is considered an addictive drug and its use is contrary to the development of a healthy mind and body. Students who use tobacco and/or vape pens will be referred to the Head of School (first offense) and then be subject to mandatory enrollment in a smoking cessation program (second offense).

### **Disciplinary Protocol**

At Oak Grove School teachers do not engage in conventional systems of reward and punishment or fear-based, coercive, manipulative strategies, but seek to understand with the students the causes for behavior, and with the older students, the roots of cultural conditioning passed on for generations. The art of relationship and the very deep intelligence that Krishnamurti suggests, grow from asking questions and listening deeply to life and to each other. These inquiries into the “book of oneself and the mirror of relationship” are nurtured by care and attention.

At all times we strive to create a climate that is safe and conducive to learning for both staff and students. When behavioral difficulties arise, our intention is to resolve them by speaking directly to the person/student involved and utilizing the many varied strategies at our disposal. In most cases issues will be resolved this way. Sometimes they will not. For those cases we have a Disciplinary Protocol.

## **High School Disciplinary Protocol**

- **Step 1: First Major Offense**
  - The matter is referred to the High School Director by staff.
  - The student will receive a warning. The warning will go in the student’s file.
  - There will be a call or email home to the parents.
  - The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.
  - The student may be asked to go home for the remainder of the day.
- **Step 2: Second Major Offense**
  - The student will receive a second warning. The warning will go in the student’s file.
  - There will be a call or email home to the parents.
  - The student will be asked to write a reflective essay.

- There will be a meeting with parents, H.S. Director, Class Advisor, and any other relevant parties.
- An agreement will be created and signed by student, H.S. Director, and Head of School.

- **Step 3: Third Major Offense**

- The parents will be contacted.
- The student will write an account of what happened.
- If the student violates the agreement drafted in Step 2, or there are new concerns, there will be a Disciplinary Panel hearing.
- Panels will be scheduled no sooner than 24 hours.
- The timing will be negotiated among the student, school, and parent, and will be based on the situation.
- The Head of School and H.S. Director will appoint the members of the Disciplinary Panel, which will consist of the following:
  - Staff member directly involved in the incident
  - Staff person with no prior knowledge of the incident or direct relationship with the student (the objective is to have someone with no bias toward the student or situation)
  - Head of School
  - Program Director
  - Student involved
  - Student-appointed advocate

The student will appear before the panel along with their self-appointed advocate. Advocates may be a staff member, parent, coach, family friend, another student, etc. The Disciplinary Panel will decide on the appropriate consequence for the offense, which might include loss of privileges, lowering of grade, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

The panel will document its decision and a copy will go in the student's file. If the student is not expelled, an agreement is formed and signed by the Head of School, H.S. Director, student, and parent(s). The Head of School approves all final disciplinary decisions.

- **Step 4: Further Offenses**

If the offense breaks the signed agreement, the consequence is per the agreement, which might include expulsion.

In the case that the Disciplinary Panel's ruling in Step 3 was not expulsion, any further offenses are brought before the panel.

The procedure will be identical to Step 3. A major offense is defined as an event or series of events that violate the rules of Oak Grove School, as described in the Handbook, and is sufficiently serious for staff to feel that the H.S. Director and parents need to be involved. Some examples: Repeated instances of disruptive behavior that have been addressed by several teachers, disrespecting teachers, non-compliance with teacher requests, refusal to do homework.

The following offenses will be directly brought before the Disciplinary Panel: drug and alcohol use, instances of verbal or physical violence, possession of weapons. On occasions when the offense is severe enough to give cause for safety, at the discretion of the Head of School, a student may be asked to leave the school without convening a Disciplinary Panel. The final decision regarding the status of a student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

In the High School, possible consequences that may be considered in the Disciplinary Protocol process (starting at Step 3), at the discretion of the High School Director and Head of School, include but are not limited to:

- **Loss of Privilege**

Students who demonstrate a lack of concern for the expectations of the school may have any or all of their privileges restricted or removed.

- **Lowering of a grade, withdrawal from class, or assigning a grade of Incomplete:**

The High School Director and the Disciplinary Panel may recommend these consequences to the Head of School for repeated and serious offenses, including but not limited to cheating or plagiarism. See Oak Grove High School Handbook Agreement.

- **Suspension**

Students who are suspended may not attend class or school events. Work missed during suspension must be made up without outside assistance from the teacher. Any class material that is discussed during the suspension needs to be obtained from classmates. However, any homework assignments or exams missed while suspended cannot be completed and will result in a failing grade. This consequence may be recommended to the Head of School by the High School Director and the Disciplinary Panel. Suspension for behavioral infractions will be reported to the colleges to which the student is seeking acceptance.

- **Probation**

Students whose behavior demonstrates a serious or recurring disregard for the spirit or the expectations of the Oak Grove School community will be placed on probation. Students who commit subsequent major Disciplinary Protocol violation while on probation are likely to be suspended or expelled from school.

- **Expulsion**

The High School Director and the Disciplinary Panel may recommend expulsion for a serious violation, even on the first offense or if, in their opinion, a student's continued presence is detrimental to Oak Grove School or to the student involved. When expulsion is recommended, a student is automatically suspended in the case that the situation needs to be reviewed.

During the suspension period, the Head of School will review the matter with those involved before reaching a final decision. The final decision regarding the status of the student asked to leave the school will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, who will meet with the family in the presence of a witness.

## **Disciplinary Reporting Policy**

Oak Grove School reports major Disciplinary Protocol measures taken to any college, university, scholarship program, or educational program that requests such information. The information is reported at the time of application. Major disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, suspensions and expulsions occurring while the student is enrolled in grades 9 through 12. When such measures are taken after the initial college application has been sent, Oak Grove School provides updated information reflecting the change in the student's status.

## **Camping/Trips**

We require all High School students to fully participate in our fall and spring trips, and our trip to India for Seniors. These trips provide opportunities for students to get to know themselves, their peers, and their teachers better, and they provide chances to overcome challenges of all sorts. Students learn practical skills related to traveling, camping, and backpacking. Occasionally, there are medical or other reasons that prevent a student from fully participating in a trip. When this happens, the family must contact the High School Director no later than two weeks prior to the fall trip and four weeks prior to the spring trip (the India trip will be handled on a case-by-case basis) to discuss the situation. Stringent criteria are in place for these situations; please contact the Director for more information.

## **Study Hall Expectations**

When High School students at Oak Grove have a study hall in their schedule, they are expected to make good academic use of that time, treating it as any other academic period. Oak Grove does not prescribe a course of study for the time period but rather expects that students will choose how best to use that time for academic purposes. Examples of appropriate uses of time include working on homework, doing class readings, or in the case of students enrolled in an independent study course, working on that course. Students with study hall first through fifth period will work in a designated classroom with a designated teacher, unless other arrangements are made with the Director. Whether in a morning or afternoon study hall, students need to make use of that time well and they will be expected to plan ahead to ensure that they are productive during that study hall. Supervising teachers will be available for help but cannot do extended one-on-one tutorials during study hall.

## **Independent Study Courses & Expectations**

High School students enrolled in online courses or other such courses should create a schedule for themselves to ensure that they finish all requirements of the course in a timely manner. They will be asked to complete an "Independent Study Plan" at the beginning of each semester. Oak Grove will not check up on students' progress on a daily

basis, however conferences provide a natural checkpoint for the school and families to touch base on progress. It will be up to the student and their family to monitor progress on a daily and weekly basis. Oak Grove will ensure that a quiet place is provided for study hall work to be done, along with supervision during the afternoon study halls (seventh and eighth period).

## **Protocol for Taking Non-OGS Classes for Credit**

As a small school, Oak Grove strives to accommodate students' schedules to the best of its ability. When High School students are out of sequence it is difficult to schedule required classes. When credit is given on the Oak Grove transcript for courses taken outside of Oak Grove, Oak Grove must verify that the coursework is equivalent to an Oak Grove School course. It is imperative that Oak Grove stands behind the credit of the coursework that is given on the transcript.

For that reason, all students considering taking classes outside of Oak Grove School for which they wish to get official credit, whether during the year or during the summer, must consult with the High School Director and get prior approval. Oak Grove may not give credit for coursework taken without prior approval. Oak Grove cannot guarantee that students who are out of sequence will get their required classes the following year.

Students wishing to take extra courses are encouraged to look for courses that supplement what they will take at Oak Grove, rather than replace the prescribed sequence of courses offered at Oak Grove.

## **Protocol for Requesting Early Dismissal**

All High School students are expected to remain at school until the end of the school day, including electives, study hall, and Fit for Life. Students must have four years of elective credit and Fit for Life credit as part of the Oak Grove graduation requirements. Attendance at electives carries the same weight as academic classes for Oak Grove and college admissions credit. If a student has a special situation and needs to leave school earlier than the end of the normal school day on a regular basis, we ask that the families submit the following to the High School Director so that we may consider the request:

1. The nature of the request (i.e. being excused from school every day after 7th period; being excused from 8th period 15 minutes early every Tuesday)
2. The reasoning behind the request (why the request is being made, how it will benefit the student, and why it requires missing school)
3. Verification from a coach or other mentor regarding schedules, hours of training, etc.

Oak Grove does not typically allow early dismissals, but in some cases we make accommodations, such as when we have student athletes competing at a high level with aspirations to continue competing post-high school. Requests should be submitted in writing to the High School Director for consideration. (If a student is requesting independent study for Fit for Life, please refer to that protocol.)

## **Protocol for Requesting Transcripts & Letters of Recommendation**

Official and unofficial copies of transcripts are issued through the High School Registrar's office. Students should fill out a transcript request form and allow at least 24 hours for the request to be processed. When students need letters of recommendation or evaluations from teachers or the Head of School, they should request those at least two weeks in advance of the deadline, to allow staff time to write a thoughtful letter or evaluation.

## **Fit for Life, Sports Requirements, & Outdoor Education**

High School students fulfill their physical education requirement through participation in our Fit for Life Program and our camping program. Each season students are offered the choice of an interscholastic sport (Condor League Girls' & Boys' Volleyball and Soccer, for example), or another fitness activity (triathlon training, for example). In all cases, this requires practice or training after school from 3:25 to 4:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and games (during sports seasons) on Wednesdays and/or Saturdays.

- All students must participate in the Fit for Life Program as described above. Please see the Fit for Life syllabus for more details.
- All students must participate in fall and spring trips (and for Seniors, the India Trip and Pathless Projects).
- 8th grade students may be invited to participate in the practices for team sports.

### **Independent study for Fit for Life:**

We encourage all students to participate in our athletic teams. However, if there are activities that a student is involved in preventing them from doing so, that student can apply for an independent study program. The program must reflect a comparable commitment to Oak Grove's Fit for Life class as well as presenting a direct time conflict. The student must submit a written proposal to the Athletic Director no later than the Friday prior to the beginning of each new season (fall, winter, and Spring) outlining their program, including times, dates, locations, and the name of their coach/trainer. If approved, the student must then keep a weekly journal documenting each session's activities and have their coach/trainer or parent sign each entry. Every other week the journal will be submitted to and checked by the Athletic Director. Missing or incomplete assignments will be considered equivalent to missing a class session.

The independent study option is not available as a tool for students to "opt out" of Fit for Life by designing their own P.E. program. It has been put in place to acknowledge that some students come to Oak Grove already involved in other athletic endeavors that take up a good deal of their time and do not allow them to also participate in Fit for Life.

Examples of this are as follows:

- Medical Exemption: Students who can produce a doctor's note indicating limitations on physical activity may qualify. In these cases an "alternative physical activity" can meet the requirements of Fit for Life.
- Existing Sport Commitment Conflicts with Fit for Life Times: Students who can verify that their existing outside sport conflicts directly with the Fit for Life schedule may qualify. Examples: Equestrian, Rowing Crew, Swim Team.
- Existing Sport Commitment Requires More than 6 hours a Week: Students who can

verify that their existing outside sport requires more than 6 hours a week of practice and game play may qualify. Examples: International Sailing, Club Sports, Competitive Golf.

We are committed to working together, and any other special circumstances that arise will be handled on a case-by-case basis. This will involve a discussion between the student, their parents, and school staff about the student's needs and/or the family's needs and the best way to support them within the framework of Fit for Life.

# # #



# Sister Schools

Krishnamurti started several other schools around the world. Should you wish to visit or contact any of them, here are the addresses:

## **Brockwood Park School**

Bramdean near Alresford Hants  
SO24 OLQ Besant Avenue  
UK  
[www.brockwood.org.uk](http://www.brockwood.org.uk)

## **Rishi Valley School**

Rishi Valley 517352  
Chittoor District  
Andhra Pradesh, India  
[www.rishivalley.org](http://www.rishivalley.org)

## **Rajghat Education Centre and Rajghat Besant School**

Rajghat Fort, Varanasi 221 001. Uttar Pradesh India [www.rbsvaranasi.com](http://www.rbsvaranasi.com)  
Sahyadri School  
BIBI (CHAS) Taluka  
Rajgurunagar District:  
Pune 413 510 India  
[www.sahyadrishschool.org](http://www.sahyadrishschool.org)

## **The School-KFI**

Damodar Gardens  
Adyar, Chennai 600 020  
India  
[www.theschoolkfi.org](http://www.theschoolkfi.org)

## **The Valley School**

17th KM Kanakapura Rd.  
Thatguni Post, Bangalore  
560 062 India  
[www.thevalleyschool.in](http://www.thevalleyschool.in)

## **Bal Anand (KFI)**

28 Dongersey Rd.  
Malabar Hill  
Mumbai, 400 006, India  
[www.kfionline.org/schools/balanand.asp](http://www.kfionline.org/schools/balanand.asp)

## **Pathashaala School (KFI)**

Pathasalai Street, Vallipuram  
Thirukazhukundram Taluk,  
Kancheepuram District 603 405  
Tamil Nadu, India  
[www.pathashaala.pcfl-kfi.org](http://www.pathashaala.pcfl-kfi.org)

# **A Climate for Inquiry**

The young are inheriting a complex world. It is a world in which rapid technological progress goes hand-in-hand with environmental, social, economic, and political crises. Must the young take the world as it is, accepting an education that enables them to “fit in” to society, or can they learn to question deeply what they see and respond creatively out of a sense of personal integrity that enables them to meet whatever life may bring?

Our children will face a future that we can hardly imagine, one that will require them to adapt, change course, change jobs, make room for the new, and hold multiple perspectives in play. A traditional education that simply requires students to take in information and retain it for testing just won’t do. We are increasingly called upon to recognize ourselves as members of an interdependent world community with responsibilities to the whole, not just our small part. As our founder J. Krishnamurti pointed out — we are the world.

We feel passionately that students need an approach to education that captivates student interest and helps them develop the life-long practices of self-discipline, hard work, commitment, and stick-to-itiveness, as well as those more subtle practices of looking at problems from multiple perspectives, grappling with ambiguity, and recognizing that the truth of things needs deep and abiding exploration. For that reason our curriculum offers opportunities for inquiry and project-based learning, and we augment traditional testing with authentic assessment practices such as portfolios, demonstrations of learning, and exhibitions. Our teachers are facilitators and coaches, emphasizing depth over coverage, and our students are empowered with self-responsibility and ownership of their own learning.

At Oak Grove School we are committed to educating young people to meet life as a whole. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but equal importance is given to an ongoing inquiry into the way we live our daily lives. Within the caring environment of Oak Grove School, students are encouraged to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, and actions and on those of others. Oak Grove offers a setting where students and staff can learn to live and work together harmoniously and intelligently. This process is liberating, for with growth in awareness and understanding of our behavior we can discover the immense potential of life and our possibility of living it to the fullest.

# **The (Original) Intent of Oak Grove School**

**By J. Krishnamurti**

It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane, and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation, not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little occurs beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship.

Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behavior. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and its misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful exploration into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.

A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man's endeavor, his search for beauty, his search for truth, and for a way of living without conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideals, theories, or belief, which bring about a contradictory attitude toward existence.

The school is concerned with freedom and order. Freedom is not the expression of one's own desire, choice, or self-interest. That inevitably leads to disorder. Freedom of choice is not freedom, though it may appear so; nor is order, conformity, or imitation. Order can only come with the insight that to choose is itself the denial of freedom.

In school, one learns the importance of relationship which is not based on attachment and possession. It is here one can learn about the movement of thought, love, and death, for all this is our life. From the ancient of times, man has sought something beyond the materialistic world, something immeasurable, something sacred. It is the intent of this school to inquire into this possibility.

This whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge, brings about naturally a psychological revolution, and from this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship, which is society. The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind.

The original "Intent" was written by J. Krishnamurti in 1975 when Oak Grove School was

founded. It was revised by Krishnamurti and the school staff in 1984 to its present form.

## **Statement Of Philosophy (1984)**

The intent of the Oak Grove School is to provide students with the skills necessary to function in the modern world, and at the same time to provide a foundation for inquiry into the perennial questions of human life. Consistent with the views of its founder, J. Krishnamurti, the school does not subscribe to any creed or ideology. Rather, it assists students in investigating enduring human issues with originality and an open-minded spirit. The Oak Grove School focuses on:

1. Intellectual depth/aesthetic and environmental sensitivity. These complementary elements are acquired through the pursuit of excellence in academic work and experience in music, drama, the fine arts, ecology, and outdoor education.
2. Social responsibility and emotional stability. These are fostered through close relationship between students and teachers as well as close contact between school and home, and the development of the ability to observe oneself and one's conditioning.
3. Physical vitality and knowledge of the human body. These are acquired through sports, games, and regular exercise; outdoor experiences such as hiking, camping and gardening; health education and a sound diet.

These areas of emphasis establish a safe environment from which to initiate individual and collective inquiries into the deepest questions that face human beings, while still providing the academic skills so necessary to function in our immediate world. We strive for a non-competitive atmosphere where physical, emotional, and intellectual safety exists and where there is respect for students' different levels of development.

In his sixty years of involvement with various schools around the world, Krishnamurti returned again and again to the themes that are central to his work: the fundamental importance of establishing right relationship among human beings; sensitivity to nature and responsibility toward the environment; the conditioning of the individual by society, and by his or her own subjective demands; the function of images and concepts in daily life; the roots of psychological suffering at the individual and collective level; inward freedom and order; the significance of death; and the questions of a quality of mind not bound by time and circumstance.

Those responsible for the Oak Grove School are committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel free to raise and investigate all of these issues, and any others of a similar nature. The format for this inquiry may develop from subject matter, a personal problem, or spontaneous curiosity. There is no formal curriculum for presenting Krishnamurti's work, and no student is required to "be interested" in Krishnamurti. The school maintains that true inquiry cannot be forced or artificially constructed in any way. Any collective endeavor in this area must be mutually forthcoming and, therefore, free.

# # #